



IIPS
Colloquium
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Re-examining Nakasone's Foreign Policy

Speaker Dr. Yoshihide Soeya,
Professor, Political Science, Faculty of Law, Keio University

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The Institute for International Policy Studies held a colloquium on December 19, 2003, on the theme "Re-examining former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's Foreign Policy." The colloquium featured guest speaker Dr. Yoshihide Soeya, Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law, Keio University.



Despite the title, the presentation was not a "personal evaluation or an expert evaluation of foreign policy of that period," but rather thoughts on the warp (Article 9 and the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty) in the post-war Japanese foreign policy from the viewpoint of Nakasone's foreign policy.

Professor Soeya explained that Japan's post-war foreign policy (the Yoshida Doctrine) contained two elements from opposite ends of the spectrum: Article 9 of the Constitution, created before the Cold War, and the Japan-US Security Treaty, developed amidst fears that the Cold War would spread from Europe into Asia. Nakasone's basic foreign policy position aimed to erase this incongruence by seeking an equal relationship with the US. Such a relationship was premised on amendments to the Japanese Constitution and autonomous self-defense.

This was followed by a discussion of Nakasone's "autonomous self-defense and non-nuclear middle power" argument. These two concepts would remove the warp in the Yoshida Doctrine, they were compatible with the foreign policy strategy, and they hinted at a third foreign-policy objective beyond the Yoshida Doctrine. In particular, it is extremely important to think constructively beyond the Yoshida Doctrine in modern Japanese society, and in this context it is possible to re-evaluate Nakasone's foreign policy.

At the conclusion of his discussion, Professor Soeya explained Nakasone's policy stance on Asia, which was vibrant and passionate while being founded on Japan-US relations.

There were several authorities on Nakasone foreign policy in the audience, which contributed to very lively discussions and poignant and wide-ranging questions. In his closing remarks, Professor Soeya posed the question: "was Nakasone a standoffish strategist?" to which an audience member answered, "he was an outstanding strategist."