

## US Diplomacy and the Situation in East Asia

Lecture by Professor Gerald Curtis  
Columbia University

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Capitol Tokyu Hotel

The Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS) hosted a lecture by Professor Gerald Curtis of Columbia University, who gave a speech entitled “US Diplomacy and the Situation in East Asia.” The event was held at Capitol Tokyu Hotel, Tokyo, on April 11, 2005 with the support of the Nippon Foundation.

At the beginning of his lecture, Professor Curtis pointed to a somewhat widespread optimism concerning the diplomatic policy of the Bush Administration in its second term as opposed to major criticism against it in the first term. Professor Curtis continued by noting the following.



In its second term, the Bush Administration has shown a move towards rectifying the existing policy as noted by self-questioning of its unilateralism. What is particularly noticeable is recognition of the significance of cooperation with allied nations.



The second term Bush Administration has received positive response in terms of its efforts towards improvement in relations with Europe and a prudent attitude toward the Iraq and North Korean issues. In addition, there have been new developments in the Palestinian issue, including the passing of Chairman Yasser Arafat, as

well as signs of a favorable turn in the situation.

Given the present circumstances, the basic foreign policy of the US

will not change dramatically whether the administration is ruled by the Republican Party or Democrat Party. However, this is due to a national consensus built concerning the international political environment after 9/11.

That is, although the stance toward the war against terrorism, in particular regarding preventive and preemptive action, would remain the same under a Democrat administration, there has been a significant shift in the meaning of the allied nations after 9/11.

If you look at the overall picture of the Japan–US relationship based on recognition of the above, it seems that the current Japan–US relationship is more favorable than it has ever been in the past. The biggest contributor to this situation is that Japan is considered to be exerting the greatest possible efforts, for instance, in the form of dispatching the Self-Defense Force (SDF) to Iraq, while acknowledging limits to its political measures. In addition, a relationship of trust between the leaders of the two nations is also contributive.



In recent years, partly due to a diluted sense of Japan as an economic threat, interest in Japan has diminished. On the other hand, a “China Shift” has occurred.

One of the causes for concern in the Japan–US relationship is the unfavorable assessment of the Bush Administration in Japan and major latent criticism against him. Such criticism may surface if triggered by development of some sort of event associated with the Iraq issue or China.

However, matters that call for serious concern regarding the Japan–US relationship are not found under current circumstances. Rather, a conflicting relationship with neighboring countries would be a far more serious issue for Japan.

After pointing out the above, Professor Curtis addressed the

significance of maintaining a firm Japan–US relationship, strengthening of the relationship with Asian countries pivoting on the Japan–US relationship, and improving the relationship with China and neighboring countries. He then answered questions from the attendees and concluded his lecture.

