

## Public Symposium

### Thoughts on a New Era in Japan's External Security Policy

*2 February 2004  
Capitol Tokyu Hotel*

The Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS) held a public symposium in the form of a panel discussion on February 2, 2004. The topic of discussion was "Thoughts on a New Era in Japan's External Security Policy." This event was staged with the assistance of the Nippon Foundation.

The first speaker was Professor Kenichi Ito, president of the Japan Forum on International Relations. Professor Ito expressed his recognition that at present Japan is most definitely entering a new era in external security policy, and went on to point out that as an age of war is ending, an age of disputes is beginning. Professor Ito further noted that the world order currently taking shape is based on an expanded coalition of nations opposed to war, and



that the principal aims of Japan's new-era external security policy are in accord with this. In addition, the real world is divided into three camps: an advanced bloc, which is comprised of advanced democratic nations intent on spreading post-modern values; a modern bloc, which is comprised of rich countries with a strong military capability that adhere to modern values; and a chaotic bloc, comprised of states that are not even



capable of self-government. The advanced bloc is a coalition of nations opposed to war that do not wage war on one another, and which collectively influence the various countries in the modern bloc. However, some of the modern bloc nations tend to resist them, while the chaotic bloc harbors the roots of instability and has become a breeding ground for global terror. In light of these changes, Germany decided in May 2003 to reorganize its army; Japan,

however, remains mired in the past and is in many ways incapable of looking to the future. Professor Ito went on to point out that the actions of the USA in rushing headlong into an attack on Iraq also betray a bellicose attitude and in general represent a threat to the coalition of nations opposed to war. He added that at this point in time a consistent interpretation of world affairs is required.

The second speaker was Professor Yukio Sato, president of the Japan Institute of International Affairs. Professor Sato began by asserting that there is still an element of doubt as to whether the current situation constitutes a new era, especially as the Asia-Pacific region and the area around Japan are concurrently experiencing both an age of war and an age of disputes. Professor Sato continued by stating that this year will be one of tension for Japan, and that amid this tension Japan must also prepare

for the future. There are as many as five sources of this tension: the terrorism problem emanating from countries such as North Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the seeds of instability in East Asia, and the issue of Taiwan. Issues for Japan include use of the Self-Defense Forces, demonstration of Japan's overall power, the transformation in foreign policy, and Japan's assumption next year of a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. With each of these issues, there are growing problems.



The third speaker was Professor Akio Watanabe, president of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership. Professor Watanabe stated that at present the issue of security appears to be a complex one that has two distinct aspects—security problems in terms of the relations between countries, and international security from the perspective of international society as a whole. In North East Asia, national security still constitutes the cornerstone of a nation. As historical issues of national integration remain inconclusive, an age of war and an age of disputes are being experienced concurrently. Professor Watanabe added that the issue of international security is not simply a new problem that has arisen since 9/11, but one that must be considered in the context of a longer time-span. In Europe, with its post-modern ultra-nationalistic vision of the future, a horizontal approach to international security has been advocated. After 9/11, however, it is now essential to adopt a vertical approach in order deal with rogue states, duplicitous nations, and the non-state actors who run rampant in them. It seems likely that we are now entering a period that could be termed “the Second Cold War,” and which can only be described as a period of extremely prolonged instability. During this period the Japan-US



alliance will also have to adapt in order to fulfill a dual role. Professor Watanabe concluded by adding that Japan is simply being forced to decide whether or not it is prepared to participate in the construction an empire, but that Japan and the US both run the risk that building an empire might wear them down in mind and body. In the aftermath there would then be further dangers, such as the risk that the entire coalition of nations opposed to war might also be smashed.

The fourth and final speaker was Professor Taizo Yakushiji, research director of IIPS, who began by stating that since world affairs are undergoing a transition of historical proportions, it is inevitable that international political science and theory will also change. He went on to note that Japan has adopted the principles of international cooperation and, as a matter of course, provided support to Iraq as well, but that to Japan's neighbors, its intentions are somewhat unclear. He added that Japan has hitherto focused on activities in the economic sphere, but that at various times it should have sought to make ideological preparations for action in the security domain. As has been seen, however, in practice the government has consistently ducked this issue, for example, by interpreting the Constitution as granting it the right

to engage in collective self-defense. Thus, Japan should now address this conceptual issue with robust clarity.

The symposium concluded with a question-and-answer session in which the panelists drew attention to other key issues and offered suggestions for resolving them.