



IIPS
Colloquium
28 November 2003

Current State of Affairs in Washington regarding Issue of Non-proliferation of WMDs

Speaker Mr. Katsuhisa Furukawa,
Senior Research Associate
Monterey Institute of International Studies

Report by Hisao Maeda
(Senior Research Fellow, IIPS)

On November 28, 2003 the Institute for International Policy Studies held a colloquium on the current state of affairs in Washington in regard to the issue of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The colloquium featured as guest speaker Mr. Katsuhisa Furukawa, Senior Research Associate at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. Mr. Furukawa commented on a ranges of issues, including differences in the characteristics of the foreign policies and the stances towards Japan of the two major US parties, the situation surrounding talks on the North Korean nuclear issue, and attempts to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Furukawa started off by addressing a highly topical global issue—that of American unilateralism. He expressed the view that the implications of US unilateralism hold more significance for Europe than for Asia, where more emphasis is placed on alliances. He then contrasted the foreign policy leanings of the Republican Bush administration and the Democratic Party, stating that the Republican Party emphasizes alliance frameworks, while the Democrats (although stressing the importance of the United Nations) hew rather to a unilateralist mind-set.

On the subject of the current US-Japan relationship, Mr. Furukawa asserted that the presence within the Bush administration of many senior officials familiar with Japan and the high degree of personal trust between the two leaders have contributed to a relationship that is evidently of a closeness seldom seen at the highest levels. However, this unified view of Japan is largely confined to the Bush administration; moreover, among those that will follow the Bush administration generation there is a dearth of people with enthusiasm for the US-Japan relationship, and it is difficult to envisage a strong US-Japan relationship, should the Democratic Party assume power. For these and other reasons, it is vital to use the grace period afforded by the remaining year of the Bush administration's current term to devote serious consideration to developing and strengthening the US-Japan alliance relationship with a view to the future

Regarding the current problems in the Middle East, Japan faces challenges on two fronts—security and energy policy. Iran's adoption of a nuclear development program is exacerbating fears of Middle East instability. Moreover, the opinions expressed by the Democratic Party of Japan on the issue of Iraq constitute no more





IIPS
Colloquium
28 November 2003

than a reaction to US policy. Mr. Furukawa asserted that Japan thus needs to formulate its own general strategy.

Regarding the issue of North Korea, Mr. Furukawa stressed that the second round of six-nation talks will hinge on whether firm oral promises can be obtained regarding North Korea's abandonment of its nuclear policy and regarding guarantees of security for North Korea. At the same time, however, he identified various problems such as difficulties with later inspections and the adoption by North Korea of delaying tactics. In addition, the US is naturally expecting China to apply pressure on North Korea and has clearly expressed its dissatisfaction with the lack of any committed effort by China to expose illegal activities conducted by North Korea in Chinese territories such as Macao. Mr. Furukawa explained that the Proliferation Security Initiative is mistakenly perceived as a purely military initiative but that under the initiative, each country should also police its sea ports and air terminals according to national laws.

Questions from the floor covered a range of issues, including the characteristics of the foreign policies of the two main parties in the US (with the view expressed that the policies of both were rooted in unilateralism), the effectiveness of the six-nation talks, the degree of US awareness of the problem of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, US views on nuclear weapons for Japan, problems with Japan's Middle East policy regarding the negotiations over Iran's Azadegan oil field, and US policy towards Saudi Arabia. Lively debate on these topics ensued.