



The US-Japan Relationship

**Lecture by His Excellency Howard H. Baker Jr.
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Japan**

*ANA Hotel, Tokyo
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The Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS) held a commemorative event on the 15th anniversary of the founding of IIPS. His Excellency Howard H. Baker Jr., Ambassador of the United States to Japan, gave a speech entitled “The US-Japan Relationship.” The event was held at the ANA Hotel, Tokyo, on October 21, 2003, with the support of the Nippon Foundation.



Ambassador Baker commenced by offering his congratulations to IIPS for its accomplishment over the 15 years. He referred to the famous “Ron-Yasu” relationship between then President Reagan and Prime Minister Nakasone in the formative years of the Japan-U.S. relationship which had originated as a defensive shield against communism right after World War II but which has steadily matured into a bilateral partnership based on shared values and genuine mutual respect.



The Ambassador reiterated the US’s continued support for Japan’s quest for permanent membership on the UN Security Council as appropriate given Japan’s active diplomatic role and economic strength. He went on to describe the partnership not only in the security area, but in businesses and trade where Japan is the US’s largest trade partner outside of NAFTA and noted that the scale of mutual cooperation is a model for world economies. He also mentioned, however, that Prime Minister Koizumi has called for a doubling of direct foreign investment into Japan in five years.

Ambassador Baker related a story about several Japanese Diet members visiting Washington this summer. A member found that one of the latest achievements at the US Agricultural Research Center was a project in cellular biology that had been jointly developed with a Japanese scientist on an exchange program. The Ambassador commented that this story attests to the quiet cooperation and mutual enrichment that goes on everyday.

The Ambassador brought to our attention the results of his recent request for Embassy staff to describe what they think Japan will be like in ten years’ time. The consensus view was that Japan would continue to be innovative and democratic and that its fundamental cultural energy and mores would remain. His colleagues also said that they believe that Japan would actively pursue and defend its global interests as befits the great economic, cultural,





and international power it already is. In addition, Americans and Japanese across the spectrum are feeling more positive about each other. A recent poll shows that 77% of Japanese say that their country's relations with the US are in good shape. In their recent meeting in Tokyo, President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi pledged to continue their efforts in the framework of the six-way talks on North Korea, agreed to work together in the R&D of a missile defense system, and

pledged to work together to resolve any issues regarding the stationing of US Forces on Okinawa.

Ambassador Baker concluded his speech by expressing appreciation for the role that IIPS has played over the years in cultivating the close relationship between the two nations.