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ISD REPORT

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# *JAPAN'S FUTURE GLOBAL ROLE*

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INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF DIPLOMACY  
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## SUMMARY

During the past decade, Japan has emerged as an economic superpower while retaining a low diplomatic profile. This is a formula unlikely to last through the decade of the 1990s. Non-military forms of power increasingly determine the course of world affairs, and Japan is being thrust onto the world scene. Its capital helped fund the Gulf War, but its voice was not heard in decision-making circles. Japan resented "taxation without representation," while Western powers resented "checkbook diplomacy." These tensions will continue, and they must be dealt with. Japan must find a new international equilibrium for itself that balances its economic power and its role in international decision making.

Japan's search for its new role could prove disruptive for existing relationships with other states, especially the United States. Japan and the United States have already undergone considerable "psychological distancing" as this process has evolved. If not properly managed, the inevitable adjustments to the bilateral relationship could undermine what has been a vital stabilizing factor in the Asia Pacific region throughout the postwar period.

While recognizing that it is inherently for Japan to chart its own future, this report seeks to contribute to Japan's search for a definition of new roles. The analysis and recommendations are based largely, but not exclusively, on the proceedings of a conference on "Japan's Future Global Role" held at Georgetown University March 11 to 14, 1992. Cosponsored by the Japan Economic Institute of America and the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, that conference brought together some thirty Japan experts and international relations specialists (see Appendix A). JEI President Arthur Alexander, Paul Blackburn of ISD, and Georgetown Professor Daniel Unger organized the conference. Papers were presented by Kent Calder, Robert Gilpin, Keikichi Honda, Norman Levin, Edward Lincoln, David Mowery, Masashi Nishihara, Yoshio Okawara, Kenneth Pyle, Masaru Tamamoto, and Daniel Unger. Although the conference participants contributed ideas reflected in this report, they do not necessarily subscribe entirely to its contents, which are the sole responsibility of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. An edited volume of these papers will be published in 1993 as Daniel Unger and Paul Blackburn, eds., *Japan's Future Global Role*.

In this report the Institute suggests that Japan look beyond the immediate concerns of the present and encourages it to set its sights on fulfilling five general roles that over the long term will significantly enhance its stature in global affairs, while also bringing great benefit to the world community. Though beyond the scope of this report, an equally comprehensive agenda could be offered regarding actions the other major international actors might take to facilitate Japan's new posture in world affairs. The roles for Japan are those of:

## 2 *Japan's Future Global Role*

1. An active participant in global problem solving
2. A non-threatening, comfortably secure nation
3. A free trader
4. A responsible international corporate citizen
5. An open, cosmopolitan society

To highlight how these broad roles might be most effectively developed, the report offers twenty specific recommendations. The Institute recognizes that the Japanese government, other relevant bodies, and public opinion within Japan are in several cases already moving in the directions identified here. We applaud such movement and hope hereby to add our voices to the emerging consensus. The recommendations are:

1. Having joined the ranks of "first team" industrial democracies, Japan should abandon its "reserve player" mentality and participate more vigorously in the collegium of international leadership.
2. To buttress its claim to a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, Japan should demonstrate an ability to play a significant international peacekeeping role.
3. Japan should seek a larger role in arms control—for example, by continuing to pursue its proposal for an international registry of arms transfers and, in the process, building consensus regarding actual limitations on such transfers.
4. Japan should continue to expand the number of its citizens on the staffs of international bodies, particularly those with economic responsibilities, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
5. Japan should make internal structural changes that will give it a greater capacity for international leadership—for example, by expanding the Foreign Ministry and strengthening the Prime Minister's Office.
6. Even though Japan cannot compromise its basic position on the Northern Territories issue, it should nonetheless contribute substantial assistance to the nations of the former Soviet Union, with special attention to projects aimed at promoting financial stability, humanitarian relief, safety conditions in nuclear power stations, and the disposal of nuclear stockpiles.
7. Japan should encourage the Group of Seven leading industrial countries to better coordinate its approaches to major security, economic, human rights, and environmental issues—for example,



- by initiating G-7 consultations on funding United Nations peace-keeping, proposing regular meetings in various forums, and perhaps offering to establish a G-7 secretariat in Tokyo.
8. Japan should set a policy target of earmarking 3 percent of its gross national product for international contributions of all kinds.
  9. Japanese and U.S. leaders should continue to seek opportunities strongly to reaffirm the importance of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty as the cornerstone of their bilateral relationship and an essential element in maintaining stability in East Asia.
  10. Japanese and U.S. leaders should seek ways systematically to involve other regional actors in discussions of East Asian security and the role played by the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in that system.
  11. To help secure the success of the current GATT Uruguay Round, Japan should not only agree to open its rice market but also participate more actively in all aspects of those negotiations.
  12. Japan should take a leading role in making the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process a vital force for promoting a wide range of regional cooperation, including free trade, within the Asia Pacific region.
  13. Supplementing efforts already in progress within Japan, Tokyo should establish an international advisory body charged with proposing guidelines for "international corporate citizenship" by Japanese companies operating abroad.
  14. Japan should institute measures to open its internal market to foreign direct investment—including liberalizing its financial markets and offering greater opportunities for mergers and acquisitions by non-Japanese.
  15. In administering its official development assistance (ODA) program, Japan should (1) further untie its aid and (2) work much more closely with other donor nations to ensure compatibility of aid priorities, procedures, and evaluation criteria.
  16. Japan should provide greater access to its university and corporate laboratories engaged in basic research from which the international community could benefit, and significantly expand its collaborative research, especially in manufacturing and environmental technologies.
  17. The Japanese government should continue to give greater priority to improving the quality of life of its citizenry, in the spirit of Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's call for Japan to become a "lifestyle superpower."

4 *Japan's Future Global Role*

18. To help bring an end to the bitter memories of the war and place relations with its neighbors on a more positive footing, Japan should actively seek ways to resolve remaining claims arising from that period.
19. In order to achieve its announced goal of 100,000 foreign students by the year 2000, Japan should more aggressively expand opportunities for foreigners to attend Japanese universities.
20. Japan should vastly increase the range and substantive depth of both nongovernmental and official communication on major issues between Japan and other nations.

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Director

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