

*Opening Remarks*  
*of the President of the NIDS*

Thank you for that very kind introduction.

I would like to start by thanking all of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here today at this symposium, which we had announced on the Japan Defense Agency Home Page and in various printed publications.

This is the first time that the National Institute for Defense Studies has organized this type of public symposium. As such, I think it would be a good idea to say a word about our purpose at the opening of this symposium.

NIDS has long invited scholars from all over the world to participate in an annual international symposium. In order to further NIDS research activities, we always selected a particular, opportune theme of global or regional concern. In principle, these symposia were not open to the general public. In recent years, however, large numbers of people have come to take a serious interest in security affairs. For this reason, we have decided to open up the event to a broader range of participants. Instead of only inviting noted scholars from Japan and abroad to interact exclusively with NIDS, we decided it was time that members of the general public have a chance to ask questions and express opinions, so that we could utilize their views, too, in our research activities and national defense policy.

Next, I would like to say a couple of words about why we chose this time to focus on the theme of “The Strategic Environment in Northeast Asia at the Beginning of the 21st Century.”

The 20th century has been called “the century of war.” The tone of this century has been set by two world wars and a long Cold War.

Now, a decade after the end of the Cold War, we are at last beginning to see efforts to establish a cooperative security regime in Northeast Asia, with security dialogue and defense exchange taking place among Japan, the United States, China, and Russia, albeit on a bilateral basis. We intend to examine the issue of whether it will be possible to establish a cooperative security regime in this region. The key elements of our discussion shall be: (1) a comparison of cooperative security, on the one hand, and deterrence and defense, on the other; and (2) an effort to obtain a clearer picture of the regional strategic environment in the early years of the 21st century.

With the 21st century quickly approaching, we cannot ignore the fact that Northeast Asia remains fraught with destabilizing factors, including territorial disputes and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Diversity is often cited as the most distinctive characteristic of Northeast Asia. We believe it is time to assemble the best minds from around the world to figure out a way for us to overcome our differences and make the 21st century “the century of peace and prosperity.”

I sincerely hope that the lively discussions, participated in by the audience as well, which take place here today and tomorrow will find a path to a brighter tomorrow for Northeast Asia.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank all of you once again for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here.

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Mr. Yasuhiro Ohgoshi  
President, National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS)