

Opening Remarks *by the NIDS President*

I would like to welcome you here today as the host of this symposium.

I would also like to thank all of you for making the time in your busy schedules to attend this event.

This is the second time that the National Institute for Defense Studies has held such a public symposium; the first being the symposium on the “Strategic Environment in Northeast Asia at the Beginning of the 21st Century,” held in January of this year, with Professor Joseph Nye, Jr. and other speakers participating. Previously, we had often invited researchers, both domestic and from abroad, and held symposiums which were generally closed to the public. In view of the recently increasing interest in national security issues in Japan, however, we decided to open such symposiums to the public. In doing so, it is our hope that all of the participants may learn from the various views which are exchanged therein, and that both the quality and scope of discussion within Japan on national security issues may be further improved.

The theme of this year’s symposium is “War and Peace in the 21st Century: Reflections upon the Century of War.” This theme was selected for the following reasons. It is widely said that the twentieth century is the “Century of War.” As we prepare to enter the twenty-first century, it is very important for us to think about what forms war and peace may take in the next century.

The First World War, which was a total war fought with the total commitment of the national strengths of all of the major belligerents, broke out in part because of the disintegration of the balance of power of the nineteenth century system and the emergence of weapons capable of mass slaughter. This world war was the curtain raiser to the twentieth century. Together with the following Second World War, the main feature of wars in the first half of the century were their character as total wars. The last half of the century saw the Cold War, in which the United States and the Soviet Union, each with a huge nuclear arsenal, confronted each other across the globe. Because of this nuclear standoff, a “hot” war between the U.S. and the USSR did not materialize; however,

many regional conflicts did erupt during this period, such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Arab-Israeli wars, which were fought over ideologies, rights of self-determination and other causes. When one looks back at the two world wars and the many regional conflicts which followed, it is easy to understand why the twentieth century is labeled the “Century of War.”

Today, we are about to face the tenth anniversary of the end of the Cold War. While the possibility of a global armed conflict has diminished, we are witnessing the occurrence of complex and varied regional conflicts, fought over various ethnic, religious and other grounds. Simultaneously, a new trend is emerging, in which the advanced countries raise the banner of human rights and intervene for humanitarian reasons. In addition, the character of warfare is evolving, due to the development of military technology, which is backed up by advances in information and communications technology, and the increasing emphasis placed on conserving lives.

What possible effect will such post-Cold War changes and trends have on war and peace in the twenty-first century?

We hope that a comprehensive discussion on war and peace in the coming century shall take place during this symposium among the distinguished participants, who are all leading researchers in military history and strategy. While many events and projects are taking place before the dawn of the new century which aim to wrap up the old, a unique feature of this symposium is its focus on war.

I sincerely hope that a lively discussion will take place today and tomorrow, not just among the speakers but also among all of those in attendance, and that some sort of useful insight may be gained from this symposium on war and peace in the century to come.

In closing, I would like to thank you once again for attending this event.

October 7, 1999

Yasuhiro Ohgoshi
President
National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS)