Rethinking human security

Achieving objectives demands cross-sectoral activities

Tadashi Yamamoto, president of the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), talks with SPF President Akinori Seki

Deepening understanding of human security

Akinori Seki: You took part in the roundtable published in SPF’s fiscal 2004 annual report, along with Sadako Ogata, president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and Keizo Takemi, a member of the House of Councillors of the National Diet. That roundtable focused on issues of human security. Today I’d like to ask you about the latest developments in this field.

Watching last year’s crop of year-end television programs here in Japan, I had the impression that while the conventional networks carried a lot of entertainment-type shows, the fare provided by some satellite networks included programs that made viewers think about human security in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, and Somalia. I felt that Japanese society was changing little by little.

Tadashi Yamamoto: The media have great influence. But my impression is that at present the Japanese media are engaging in little or no in-depth discussion of human security.

Seki: Another thing the year-end TV programs impressed on me was the speed of globalization and the slowness of the response to it. I was also led to think about the problem of disparities in wealth—the gap between rich and poor. To promote human security, I felt, we needed to think about a so-called global minimum. While some degree of disparity is inevitable in market economies, I believe thinking about ways to lessen global disparities is one approach to human security. Development assistance should be grounded in the philosophy of human security and applied in a way that doesn’t affirm societal disparities. There’s a need, I think, to emphasize this viewpoint.

Yamamoto: Encouraging greater public awareness by means of TV programs and the like is one necessary condition for promoting human security. Strengthening civil society organizations and getting politicians to deepen their understanding of this issue are also important. To help the process along, I have plans to take several Diet members to Cambodia and Vietnam using funds from a certain cosmetics company under the auspices of an AIDS project I’m involved with. I hope to get politicians to understand human security through activities like these.

Coordinating different concepts in the international community

Obuchi, then prime minister of Japan, articulated human security as a pillar of Japan’s foreign policy. Almost 10 years later, this concept is still not properly understood in Japan, including among people involved with international assistance.

Yamamoto: I agree. I believe Japan has a greater international role to play in this field. At present, however, there’s too little discussion of human security and too little effort to spread awareness of the concept in Japan.

Seki: I also wonder whether everyone who uses the term “human security” has the same understanding of what it means.

Yamamoto: Yes, there’s a need for a clearer definition—for consensus among people in the field regarding what human security means and how to go about spreading the concept. In October 2006, when the board of directors of the United Nations Foundation met in Tokyo, the foundation sponsored two symposia: “Japan and the United Nations” and “Japan’s Human Security Contribution through the United Nations and Other International Organizations.” Mr. Takemi and Ms. Ogata were invited to serve as panelists at the latter event. That symposium seems to have increased interest in human security among people connected with the foundation, including the chairman of the board, Ted Turner, and board member Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank and joint winner, with the bank, of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. It would be wonderful if JCIE and SPF were to develop joint projects aimed at raising the profile of human security in international relations.

Seki: Yes. International organizations and countries around the world need to reconsider the concept of human security and work together on the basis of a shared understanding. This calls for listening to the views of a variety of people and creating a process for building a global consensus.

Yamamoto: It might be a good idea, too, to investigate how much the term “human security” is used in U.N. fora—whether its use has increased or decreased, in what fields it’s most often used, and so on.

Seki: Prime Minister Obuchi articulated Japan’s stance in his 1998 speech, “Toward the Creation of a Bright Future for Asia,” in Hanoi, Vietnam. In view of the recent Southeast Asian financial crisis, he advocated building a social safety net. On the other hand, the Human Security Network, set up on the initiative of Canada and Norway, began work in 1999. Its idea of human security isn’t exactly the same as Japan’s. In other words, the international community doesn’t have a set idea of human security. Only the U.N. can bridge the gap, I think.

Yamamoto: In this context, the 2008 Group of Eight summit, to be held in Japan, is important. This will be the first G8 summit in Japan since the Kyushu-Okinawa summit of 2000. Wouldn’t it be a good idea to start campaigning to have human security made a key item on the agenda? How about creating a forum in which governments, political leaders, the nonprofit sector, and other actors can discuss this in the lead-up to the summit? It’s also worth considering mechanisms like small workshops and study groups to explore the prospects for cooperative activities in regard to human security. I think it’s important for such groups to lobby the government. The reason I suggest activities focused on 2008 is that there’s a greater likelihood that governments and political leaders will act. I also think it might be possible to get leading politicians to take an active role in strengthening the human security framework.

Focusing on individuals

Seki: In a global society, aid at the state level alone doesn’t necessarily solve problems. We have to think about an approach focused on individuals. Of course Japan is giving state-level aid, such as assistance for infrastructure. But when it comes to aid to bring about freedom from want or freedom from fear, a lower-level approach is needed. Naturally, bureaucrats aren’t necessarily going into the field to work directly. A variety of partners are playing different roles. We’ve been making a case for the importance of civil society and the nonprofit sector, but that doesn’t mean there are no problems...
on the nonprofit-sector side.

Yamamoto: Governments can no longer deal with the kinds of challenges that they face today by themselves. The promotion of human security demands a strong nonprofit sector, as well as cooperation across sectors. The guidelines of the Trust Fund for Human Security call for projects carried out by U.N. agencies in cooperation with NGOs and other local organizations. But cross-sectoral cooperation is Japan’s weakest point. One reason is that, so far, Japan has focused on government-led initiatives and isn’t used to civil society playing a major role. To address this weakness, it’s important to both strengthen civil society and make the point that government can’t do the job alone. To this end, civil society and government representatives need to discuss why cooperation across sectors is important.

Seki: Thanks to the efforts of Ms. Ogata and others, considerable progress has been made in creating a framework for aid based on this way of thinking, but organizational structures still haven’t been put in place.

Yamamoto: I hear that whenever Ms. Ogata talks about human security, 1,000 or so young people flock to hear her. When JCIE organizes lectures related to human security, too, astonishingly large numbers of people attend. There’s a huge gap between this conceptual level and the practical level. We tell ourselves we mustn’t leave things at the conceptual level but must discuss human security in ways that lead to real action, but maybe we’re not doing enough.

Providing needs assessment as well as specialist training

Seki: In addition to problems with attitudes and methods on the part of implementers, there are problems with assessing recipients’ needs.

Yamamoto: This is another area where Japan performs poorly. There aren’t many people who can write proposals. And there are almost no organizations or individuals capable of the process of writing proposals, obtaining funding, and implementing activities. Japan’s weak at engaging in cross-sectoral cooperation and coming up with ideas for projects. An important consideration, when thinking about human security that matches community needs, is how best to reflect the voices of the people of the community. This isn’t a matter of simply listening to community members and writing proposals. Someone needs to organize people to conduct needs assessment, project making, and proposal writing.

Seki: In other words, in addition to specialist training Japan needs a mechanism for support for organizations that conduct needs assessment. The NGO Japan Platform, of which you’re cochair, says that welfare, education, and peace building are all included in the concept of human security. One idea might be for Japan Platform to create mechanisms emphasizing training functions to support NGOs engaged in such activities and to develop human resources capable of conducting needs assessment and drafting proposals.

Yamamoto: We also mustn’t forget the importance of both empowerment and protection in the promotion of human security. Without people who want to empower others, nothing will happen. How does SPF go about finding such people?

Seki: Many people have attended advanced seminars to develop human resources involved in conflict prevention and similar activities that SPF has supported. There are also former members of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers who are now out of work and people who’d like to engage in this kind of activity but dare not because they’re worried about making a living after returning to Japan. It would be good if we could come up with a way to mobilize such people. The ideal would be an NGO with some government funding.

Yamamoto: I also think there’s a need to keep track of and identify what kinds of organizations and human resources exist to promote human security. When you look on the Internet, you see that forums and the like are held here and there just about every day. It would be extremely useful, it seems to me, if there were a way to get them to actually take part in projects.

Politicians creating a civil society support group

Seki: On another subject, the word public tends to be equated with public sector, that is, government officials. I feel there’s a need to question the division of labor among the actors in the public space.

Yamamoto: This is something that’s been discussed a great deal, and yet it has yet to be adequately covered. I think bureaucrats are trying to get back the power they used to have. It looks as though it’s become easier to create NPOs, but that’s not necessarily the case. Since the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities—the so-called NPO Law—was enacted in 1998, close to 30,000 NPOs have been created, but the average number of professional staff in each organization is only two, and the average term of employment is only two years. In other words, these NPOs are fragile and unable to engage in very intensive activities. As a result, they tend to become subcontractors, as it were, to municipalities and businesses—largely because of difficulty acquiring financial support.

Seki: If the Japanese government talks about “the need for nonprofit-
sector cooperation,” it should provide some funding.

Yamamoto: In order to efficiently fill the public space, bureaucrats need to recognize the value of the nonprofit sector and government needs to provide help, financial and otherwise. Too often, though, that doesn’t happen. This is because the world of bureaucrats is steeped in a long tradition of bureaucratic control. Here’s where getting politicians involved is important. The number of politicians with an NPO background has increased, so it should be possible to conceive of politicians organizing to create a cooperative setup to support civil society.

Seki: In other words, create a support group.

Yamamoto: Right. In order to stand up to bureaucrats, politicians need to fight for the public space. In so doing, I think it would be a good idea for them to cooperate with civil society. I also think they should utilize the media to shape public opinion. When the media cover civil society, the focus tends to be on charitable organizations. But NPOs need to adopt a more strategic vision, projecting an image of tough people who are trying to change things. We need to get the media to cover civil society more from that angle.

There’s another thing. When problems arise, sometimes I feel that government doesn’t cooperate properly with the media, so I sense the need for training programs for journalists, or at least international exchange among journalists. Recent-ly, when the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria took journalists on an international study tour, we arranged for two Japanese journalists to go along. Continued activities of this sort, I think, would change the way the media cover civil society.

**Achieving objectives through cross-sectoral activities**

Seki: Are people in poor regions aware of the wave of globalization? Do they recognize they have to accept it to some extent?

Yamamoto: I think the leaders, at least, know they can’t change things on their own. They understand that outside influences are great and that they need links with the outside to improve their situation. For some time we’ve had a positive response from leaders when we’ve extended a helping hand. In the past there may have been fears of outside interference, and this is an area where Japan has to be careful. For this reason, it’s important to work with the U.N. and other international organizations. What’s important, when extending a helping hand, is not to force things on the receivers, but to convince them of the importance of they themselves participating and give them the authority to do so.

Seki: People feel antipathy toward globalization because it’s been thrust upon them from outside.

Yamamoto: My travels to Africa in connection with AIDS initiatives has heightened my awareness of the importance of U.N. agencies. They are crucial in dealing with the kinds of issues you and I are discussing. Recently the number of Japanese NGOs working with U.N. agencies has increased. This makes redefining cooperative relations with the U.N. important. In a globalized international community, it’s only natural that U.N. agencies should play a different role from the one they used to. I believe that dealing with the new kinds of fear and poverty generated by globalization necessitates a reassessment of who does what.

Seki: In her 2006 Christmas TV address, Queen Elizabeth II said, “The pressures of modern life sometimes seem to be weakening the links which have traditionally kept us together as families and communities.” She also referred to the gap between generations and actors. In other words, gaps in values have opened up in various areas. It seems to me that this provides us with a hint as to how to think about human security and the role of the nonprofit sector.

Yamamoto: In building a regional community in East Asia, for example, functional cooperative relationships oriented on the concept of human security and related issues might be useful. We carried out joint research on AIDS and other communicable diseases in which both China and Taiwan participated.

I think human security provides an excellent framework for working together on shared transnational problems. Human security requires activities across sectors, involving not just government but also citizens and businesses. I believe this kind of functional cooperation will contribute to community building.

Seki: Yes. It’s also important to keep advocating that viewpoint, the idea of a variety of actors—government agencies, international organizations, aid organizations, the nonprofit sector, and others, including ordinary citizens—working together to achieve a given objective.

Yamamoto: If Japan, as a leader of East Asia, made a big contribution in that way, I think it would be welcomed.

Seki: I agree.
Scientific and technological progress has given rise to issues surrounding ethics and values, as seen in reproductive technologies, gene therapies, organ transplantation, and other areas of life sciences. Meanwhile, the granting of exclusive ownership of intellectual property (IP) has been justified on the grounds that patent rights help expand the public interest, but there is also a view that the privatization and protection of IP prevent the sharing of beneficial inventions and technologies and can hinder technological innovation.

To explore the balance between individual rights and the public interest in biomedical sciences, the relationship between the public interest and the market economy, and the place of citizens in all this, SPF has supported a variety of projects addressing bioethics and IP rights. Below two such projects ending in fiscal 2006 are examined.

**Searching for the best balance between IP rights and the public interest**

By Tetsuya Ishizuka
Associate Program Officer
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**The impact of IP protection**

Under the present IP regime, exclusive patent ownership is granted on the premise that this contributes to the public interest through technological innovation. While pro-patent policies have heightened awareness of IP protection in developed countries, warnings that this prevents adequate sharing of new inventions and technologies and thus can harm the public interest are also spreading.

The impact of IP protection on scientific research, which generates IP, is attracting particular attention as an international policy concern. To examine public-interest problems engendered by IP protection, SPF has supported the three-year (fiscal 2004–6) project International Comparative Analysis to Assess the Impact of Intellectual Property Developments on the Conduct of Science, carried out by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The project has been examining the impact of IP on scientific research by means of an international comparison of the results of questionnaire surveys in Europe, Japan, and the United States. This article discusses some of the results of the U.S. survey (http://sippi.aaas.org/Symposium_US/index/index.shtml).

**The use of IP in scientific research**

The survey, conducted in March and April 2006, targeted 8,000 AAAS members, randomly selected from the membership database stratified by employment sector (academia, industry, and so on) and field (biological sciences, engineering, and so on). Responses were received from 2,157 people (27% of the sample).

Asked whether they had acquired IP for use in their research since January 1, 2002, 32% of respondents said they had done so. Here “acquired” refers to the acquisition for use in research of “a patented technology, material, or method under some form of IP protection.” The biological sciences, including bioengineering and molecular biology, accounted for the highest proportion of acquisitions (34%). The majority of respondents who had acquired IP identified their most recent acquisition as a research tool, “a technology used to conduct research, but which is not the subject of the research itself.” This illustrates a key feature of current scientific research: the need, in order to generate IP, to acquire other IP. The results also revealed the prevalence of legal protection by means of patents in all industries and research fields.

Meanwhile, 32% of respondents who had acquired IP reported difficulties in accessing IP, an indication of the impact of IP protection. In all sectors, the most commonly reported difficulty was overly complex licensing negotiations. The breakdown by sector was 40% of industry respondents, 25% of academic respondents, and 23% of GNHC (government, nonprofit organization, healthcare organization, self-employed/consulting firm) respondents.

In addition to revealing the status of IP acquisition and protection in U.S. scientific research, the survey results indicate, interestingly, that one of the impacts of IP protection is that it impedes patent acquisition. It is expected that international policy debate on new mechanisms to encourage public utilization of IP as well as on IP protection will intensify. It is hoped that the results of this project will be widely utilized as one resource in advancing this debate.

SPF will continue to develop projects addressing the diverse issues raised by the interface between science and technology on the one hand and society on the other in the hope of contributing to the study of new alternatives and mechanisms and the stimulation of debate.
Providing public access to information on life sciences

By Tetsuya Ishizuka
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The commercialization and ethical impact of advances in biomedical sciences

The social impact of scientific and technological development is especially evident in the field of biomedical sciences. The development of prenatal diagnosis and other reproductive technologies, the introduction of genetically modified organisms, and expectations of medical technologies making use of stem cells have raised hopes that technological innovations in biomedical sciences will improve people’s welfare.

At the same time, these technological innovations have ethical implications for those in the field, such as anxiety over exclusive rights to new technologies by means of patents and issues of conflict of interest. In addition, the rapid development of biomedical research can intersect with various factors, including international and political issues, leading to complaints of the difficulty of gaining an overview and understanding of the broad range of issues involved.

Creation of a database accessible to the public

In view of the latent demand for sources of information on the relationship between biomedical sciences and the public interest that can be widely and easily accessed, SPF has awarded grants to Sophia University to carry out the three-year (fiscal 2004–6) project Building a Database for Life Sciences: The Market and the Public Interest (http://mtslab.cc.sophia.ac.jp/).

The database created under this project makes available (as of December 2006) 6,000 newspaper and magazine articles and scholarly papers published both in Japan and elsewhere on such issues as patent acquisition and conflict of interest in relation to commercial and ethical aspects of biomedical sciences. Other information and resources that can be accessed by anyone interested in the relationship between biomedical sciences and society include links to relevant websites and ethical codes of universities, medical bodies, and other organizations. There are also video clips of interviews with leading researchers in life sciences and other user-friendly features encouraging use by the general public.

In January 2007 Sophia University’s Life Science Institute sponsored a symposium, “Patent Issues in Life Sciences,” attended by almost 140 people. In addition to introducing the database, the symposium included a panel discussion featuring researchers on industry-academic partnerships, IP rights, and bioethics.

The symposium opened with an explanation of the features and value of the database by Associate Professor Hiroshi Yamanaka of Osaka University, who helped create the database together with Professor Takahiro Ueyama of Sophia University. This was followed by three reports. Shoji Sawai of Isshiki & Co. spoke on the process from university research in the field of biomedical sciences to patent acquisition. Professor Ueyama discussed the rapid increase in industry-academic partnerships in biomedical research and the importance of ensuring that universities play a leading public role. Associate Professor Koichi Sumikura of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies reported on new mechanisms for patent utilization that take the public interest into account.

The symposium ended with a panel discussion among the presenters and a guest panelist, Associate Professor Kazuto Kato of Kyoto University, who had attended a session of UNESCO’s International Bioethics Committee as an observer. The panel discussion and questions from the audience indicated a high level of interest in the public role of universities, the need for domestic debate on the public interest, and other aspects of the advance of biomedical sciences and its social impact.

The recent dramatic developments in biomedical research have led to heightened public concern, especially in Western countries. Even in Japan, which values scientific and technological research on the basis of a pro-patent policy, there are calls to stimulate and deepen debate on the relationship between science and technology on the one hand and society on the other.

It is hoped that use of the database created under this project will serve as one initiative encouraging such debate.
Guidelines for improving access to research-tool patents

Balancing the public interest and private rights

By Koichi Sumikura
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The patent system and the “tragedy of anticommons”

The patent system, which grants exclusive rights for those on the front line of research and development (R&D), can promote the creation of new technologies. But when there are a number of patent rights in relations to one technology, each with a different claimant, licensing negotiations can be laborious and time consuming. This makes it difficult for everyone to use the technology, and at worst can result in what is called the tragedy of anticommons. There are many such cases of conflict between the public interest and private rights in regard to intellectual property (IP) rights.

With the aim of seeking the optimal balance between the public interest and private rights and constructing a metatheory to address IP rights issues, SPF sponsored the International Intellectual Property Policy Forum in fiscal 2005 and fiscal 2006. As chair of the forum, I engaged in discussion and debate with enterprises, researchers in such fields as law, economics, and international relations.

Initiatives addressing research-tool patents

In the context of IP rights, discussion of research-tool patents has been especially vigorous for the past several years. To enable experimental plants and animals, cell lines, screening methods, and other research tools to lay the foundation for further research, third-party accessibility should be enhanced even when these tools are patented. In particular, there is a need to enable universities and other academic research institutions (hereafter I shall use the term “universities”) to refer to all such institutions conducting research that is at a stage where commercialization is not yet envisaged to explore diverse possibilities and engage freely in trial and error.

The first paragraph of Article 69 of Japan’s Patent Law, however, stipulates: “The effects of a patent right shall not extend to the implementation of the patent right for the purpose of experimentation or research.” The phrase “experimentation or research” is interpreted as referring only to experimentation or research regarding a patented invention itself—that is, experimentation or research regarding the invention’s patentability, functions, and improvement or further development; it does not extend to the use of a patented invention as a research tool. Even in North America and Europe, the use of research tools in academic research can be blocked by a patent holder.

After studying this problem in 2005 and into 2006, Japan’s Council for Science and Technology Policy issued “Draft Guidelines Regarding Research Licenses for Intellectual Property Rights Generated by R&D in Universities Capitalized with Government Funds.” The guidelines endorsed the principle that when patent rights obtained through government-funded university R&D and university R&D are used for nonprofit purposes, nonexclusive licenses should be granted. As for value, the guidelines recommended that such licenses be “royalty free in principle” or that “a reasonable royalty” be levied. The guidelines were approved at a plenary session of the council in May 2006.

Patent rights play an important role in promoting R&D and product development in the field of life sciences. This being the case, in September 2006 the council set up a project team to draft guidelines that would not limit licensors and licensees to universities and that could include R&D not capitalized with government funds.

On January 25, 2007, the team issued “Draft Guidelines Regarding Facilitation of the Use of Research-Tool Patents in the Field of Life Sciences.” They recommended that when a third party seeks permission from research-tool patent holders to use these patents in the research stage, except in cases where this would compromise business strategy consideration should be given to facilitating their use, such as by granting nonexclusive licenses, and that a reasonable value should be set. These guidelines went a step further than the previous ones in stating that it was desirable that licenses be granted to universities free (except for the costs accompanying provision of tangibles). The guidelines also recommended that, in connection with research-tool patents or related tangibles, data encouraging their use be disclosed and an integrated database enabling comprehensive searches be built.

These draft guidelines were approved by the thirty-second meeting of the council’s Expert Committee on Intellectual Property Strategy on February 6, and by the plenary session of the council on March 1. I hope for further progress in putting in place rules for research infrastructure aimed at promoting innovation in the field of life sciences.

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Reports from the Field

Japan and the South Caucasus
Fostering leaders in a distant but vital region

By Yorizumi Watanabe
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Leadership training seminar in a highly tense region

A seminar for training young leaders in the South Caucasian region was held October 31–November 2, 2006, in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, and I had the opportunity to take part as a lecturer. The seminar was part of the project Confidence and Capacity Building among Young South Caucasian Leaders, which is supported by the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund. This project has been underway since fiscal 2003, and I understand that it has already produced more than 50 graduates. I spoke about the tasks and prospects for Japan’s economic diplomacy, commenting on the structural reforms launched by the Koizumi administration, the Japanese economy’s recovery, and the new developments in Japan’s trade policy, including the conclusion of economic partnership agreements.

Thanks to the seminar, I was able to get a firsthand look at one of today’s tensest regions on the international political scene, and I am extremely grateful to SPF for that. Following are my observations on the South Caucasus—a region many Japanese are not very familiar with—making Georgia the focus of my comments.

Georgia’s unique ethnic and religious traditions

Georgia has the same name as the U.S. state of Georgia, the home of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. If you tell people, “I just took a trip to Georgia,” most will take it for granted that you went to the U.S. South, and so you must clarify that you mean the country in the South Caucasus.

We Japanese distinguish between the two by pronouncing the country’s name Gurujia, but that presents problems. The people of Georgia are not very comfortable when they hear us saying Gurujia, because our pronunciation derives from the Russian name for their country. Such feelings are not surprising, since Georgia was ruled over and occupied by Russia for a long period. The Georgians are not a Slavic people either ethnically or linguistically. In religious terms, Christianity entered the region prior to the Council of Nicaea in 325, and the Georgians take pride in their unique tradition of becoming a Christian people even before the establishment of Eastern Christianity. In their own language, the Georgians call themselves Kartvelians and their country Sakartvelo, which means “the place inhabited by Kartvelians.” Perhaps it would be proper to use this name, but for the sake of convenience I will call the country Georgia.

The Republic of Georgia has a population of 4.6 million, a land area of 70,000 square kilometers, and a per capita gross domestic product of $3,800. In April 1991 Georgia freed itself from the Soviet Union and gained independence. Together with Armenia and Azerbaijan, it lies in the narrow corridor of Transcaucasia, sandwiched between the large countries of Russia to the north and Turkey to the south. To the west is the Black Sea, and the region along the coast, which is famous for its scenery, is dotted with health resorts that during the Soviet era were favorites of top communist officials.

At the seminar sponsored by SPF, the host organization on the local side was the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS), an independent think tank. This is a small-scale organization that is able to conduct research efficiently and participate in diplomatic policy formulation thanks to its talented staff. Five young leaders each were selected from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to gather at GFSIS. We all stayed in the same hotel, had our meals together, engaged in discussions, participated in the seminar, and were occasionally treated to cultural entertainment, such as a “finger dance” performance.

Hardly had Armenia and Azerbaijan gained independence from the Soviet Union than they were plunged into war, and the scars have not totally healed. In Georgia, meanwhile, Russian rule still essentially prevails in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where Russian troops are stationed. Even today this remains a region plagued by complex and critical problems, as evidenced by the assassination in January this year of a well-known Armenian Turkish journalist by a young Turk. For such reasons there is great significance in SPF’s provision of a platform for building human relations transcending the enmities of the past.

Anything can happen in Russia-Georgia relations

What specifically are the issues confronting Georgia at present? I put this question to Archil Gegeshidze, a GFSIS senior fellow, in an interview he granted me during free time I had during the seminar. “The very existence of this small country is in danger,” he promptly replied. “These days I’m not surprised by anything.”
The greatest concern is, of course, the presence of Russian troops, which are still encamped on Georgian soil. Russia would like to see the ethnic Georgian population move out of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, with Russian settlers moving in to replace them. In late November 2006 a referendum was held in Abkhazia with Russian backing, and it is reported that the majority of the voters endorsed separation from Georgia and alignment with Russia. But since the referendum took place after the ethnic Georgians had been driven out, this result had been anticipated. It was in the midst of this tense situation, just when two Russians had been arrested by the Georgian police on charges of spying, that the Kremlin is nowhere strong enough to replace them in the region even more defiant than Georgia and the other South Caucasian states were to tilt further toward the West. A Georgian rapprochement with the West would also upset Moscow because the South Caucasian stretches from the Black Sea in the west to the Caspian Sea in the east. These two bodies of water are geopolitically and militarily important to Russia.

The present Georgian administration is in favor of membership in the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In particular, if Georgia were to join NATO, the possibilities would improve for NATO’s construction of a corridor from Turkey, which is already a NATO member, across Georgia and Azerbaijan to the Caspian Sea. This would greatly diminish Russia’s military presence in the Black Sea, where Sevastopol is one of its leading naval ports, and it would also enable NATO to extend its reach to the Caspian Sea, which so far the Kremlin has been able to regard as virtually its own inland sea.

**Georgia’s considerable importance to Japan**

The United States has been strengthening its leverage in the South Caucasus, fully cognizant of the strategic significance of the region. Washington would very much like to see Georgia complete its transition to a market economy and fully establish the principles of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy, thereby becoming a success story among the former Soviet republics.

The perspective of energy security is of great significance. If Georgia became a full-fledged member of the Western camp, pipelines for oil and natural gas extending from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan across Azerbaijan into Georgia would be freed from domination by the Russian oil giant Gazprom. From Georgia these pipelines could run on into Turkey or across the Black Sea into Romania and Bulgaria, which are now EU members, thereby providing the European Union with stable supplies of natural gas.

Thus, the problems facing Georgia are by no means of concern only to Georgia and Russia. They are also of concern to all proper democratic states, Japan included. I believe for this reason that we should take pains to provide ongoing support to this country in the South Caucasus and to strengthen our relations with it.

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Yorizumi Watanabe graduated from Sophia University with a degree in philosophy in 1976 and finished studies in economics at the College d’Europe, Belgium, in 1978. He completed the course requirements in the doctoral program in international relations at Sophia University in 1990. He has been a professor in the Faculty of Policy Management at Keio University SFC (Shonan Fujisawa Campus) since 2005. Before that he served as an economic affairs officer in the Secretariat of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and in various posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including deputy director general of the Economic Affairs Bureau and special assistant to the minister for foreign affairs. During his time at the Foreign Ministry he had responsibility for many important matters, including negotiations for an economic partnership agreement with Mexico and Russia’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). His fields of special interest include international political economy, WTO and GATT law, and European integration.
Sasakawa Pacific Islands Journalism Fellowship 2006 — published by Pacific Magazine. A collection of articles by three journalists, one each from Fiji, Guam, and Saipan, awarded fellowships under the project Sasakawa Pacific Islands Journalism Fellowship. Invited to Japan mainly to cover the Japan-Pacific Islands Forum Summit Meeting held in Okinawa Prefecture in May 2006, the three journalists wrote articles on global warming, U.S. military bases in Okinawa, and other topical subjects that were published in Pacific Magazine, the project partner.


Central Asia: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing — by Eugene Rumer, Dmitri Trenin, and Huasheng Zhao, published by M.E. Sharpe. Outcome of the Central Asia and South Caucasus Project/Phase II.

In this issue’s lead article Tadashi Yamamoto, president of the Japan Center for International Exchange, talks about human security with SPF President Akinori Seki. Yamamoto took part in a roundtable discussion of the same subject in the 2004 annual report.

When we look at the Iraq situation, which remains bogged down despite the United States’ “new strategy,” the continuing chaos in Afghanistan, and other trouble spots around the world, we see clearly the importance, especially in societies without a firm state framework, of human security—an approach to security that focuses on individuals and emphasizes freedom from fear and freedom from want. But the concept of human security has not yet fully sunk in either domestically or internationally. Moreover, unfortunately there is still a sizable gap between understanding and application of the concept.

Here, I think, is where the private nonprofit sector, including grant-making foundations, can play a major role.

This issue’s “Special Reports” address technological development in the context of intellectual property (IP) management and the public interest. We also carry a report on Georgia, one of the nations in the Caucasus that used to be part of the Soviet Union.

The above topics may seem quite unconnected, but human security in a world in which the framework of the state is receding, IP management in postindustrial societies, and the post–cold war Caucasus are all quintessentially twenty-first-century issues. In fiscal 2007, too, all of us connected with SPF Voices aspire to continue providing insights into the trends of the times.

Yoshihiko Kono