

U.S.–Japan  
Task Force  
on the  
Environment

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*The Politics and Ethics of  
Global Environmental Leadership*

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*Enclosed is a report of the U.S.-Japan Task Force on the Environment and the Search for a New World Order. Clearly, a dichotomy exists between each nation's national interests and global responsibilities; this is as true for Japan and the United States as for anywhere else. Formulating neutral ethical standards, harmonizing Western principles and Confucian "good examples," is an important means of assessing progress and determining possible linkages between universal and country-specific preferences. But this is a long-term process. We hope this report will help to serve that goal.*

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*The Carnegie Council is grateful to the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership for a generous grant and to the Association for the Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC) for its generous administrative support.*



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## *About the Project*

Analysts on both sides of the Pacific recognize the vital and pivotal role a United States-Japan partnership can play in addressing global environmental problems. This Carnegie Council project aims to enhance all of the ongoing efforts to assemble an action program for such a partnership through a systematic examination of the ethical principles underlying policy decisions in both countries. By focusing on Japan and the United States, the project effectively brings to a more manageable forum the ethical issues raised at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

Such a study is particularly needed at a time when the tensions in U.S.-Japan bilateral relations continue unabated and when rhetoric surrounding the relationship points to doubts about the existence of a shared moral vision. The study is designed to fuel a fruitful policy debate about American and Japanese leadership roles and responsibilities as well as the bilateral relationship itself, and about opportunities for both countries to work to find solutions to environmental problems in a rapidly changing context for the conduct of international relations.

The second seminar of the Task Force took place on October 14–16, 1992 in Tokyo, Japan. The Tokyo seminar, “The Politics and Ethics of Japanese and American Global Environmental Policy,” brought together delegates and observers of UNCED to explore the underlying ethical concerns at Rio, points of convergence relating to the normative content of policy options, and prospects for U.S.-Japan cooperation. Participants drew upon the experience at Rio and historical cases as evidence of Japanese and American preparedness to act, and sought to define the requirements for leadership. Building upon the observations of the first Task Force seminar, the report emphasizes the critical need for ethics as the only logical means for resolving environmental dilemmas that require making decisions which extend beyond national interest.

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*This report was prepared by Joanne Bauer, Director, Japan Programs and the Environment Project, the Carnegie Council.*

## *Overview of the Seminar*

There is no escaping the moral dimension of the issue of the global environment. Over two decades ago the title of the 1972 Stockholm conference report, *Only One Earth*, and the concept of “Spaceship Earth” captured by Kenneth Boulding began to register our shared responsibilities as caretakers of a fragile planet, responsibilities that transcend national boundaries. In the twenty years since Stockholm the international community has been roused by new scientific evidence. The global efforts to remedy the problem are marked by sophisticated interdisciplinary work within the natural and social sciences that demonstrate the interlinkages among the environment, poverty, women, trade, capital flows, economic development, and militarism. The Rio conference in 1992 was the quintessential exhibition of such efforts.

“Sustainable development” is the rallying cry for the environmental movement. Yet while the phrase poses the challenge it is not a ready-made prescription for action. It leaves unanswered the most fundamental ethical questions relating to distributive justice. As developed nations, what are our duties and responsibilities to the less developed countries of the South? Within our own borders, what are our responsibilities to the economically disadvantaged? What are our responsibilities to the earth itself? When does “sustainable development” require the subordination of national sovereignty? Who benefits? Who pays? Where must the sacrifices occur? Who or what process will make that determination? Whose environmental standards do we follow? How do we balance global responsibilities and national interests?

*With the economic and political stakes at Rio high, delegates routinely cloaked national interest in moral language in a deliberate effort to give weight to their arguments.*

As critical as the Rio conference was in elevating the environment on the agenda of nations and defining the linkages between environment and development, it did not eliminate the ambiguity sur-

rounding sustainable development. Neither did it sufficiently answer the questions raised above. With the economic and political stakes at Rio high, delegates routinely cloaked national interest in moral language in a deliberate effort to give weight to their arguments. Similarly, the ambiguity of the scientific evidence and the relatively small number of scientists called upon to explain their findings made science a convenient target of exploitation by nations pursuing political ends.

*To what extent can an examination of norms serve to minimize misunderstanding, and can ethical standards be adapted to improve prospects cooperative leadership by Japan and the United States?*

The objective of the second seminar of the U.S.–Japan Task Force on the Environment and the Search for a New World Order was to consider retrospectively the forces at work at the Rio Summit. In particular, we were interested in discerning the impact of ethical arguments: To what extent can an examination and comparison of norms serve to minimize misunderstanding, and how can ethical standards be adapted to improve prospects for cooperative leadership by Japan and the United States?

The seminar was organized around the following questions:

- What was the interplay between politics and ethics at UNCED? Are there instances where moral suasion succeeded?
- What were the central ethical issues at Rio? How well were they understood both generally and by Japan and the United States?
- What are the requirements—the duties and ethical responsibilities—for leadership?
- Where did the positions of Japan and the United States converge and diverge? Were the sources of disagreement normative, political, or economic? What, if anything, does this say about the prospects for joint leadership?

*James Morley of Columbia University, chairman of the seminar, opened with the following statement of its mission:*

Good morning to all of you in the Task Force. It is rather intimidating to chair a meeting like this with so much expertise around the table, but I'll do my best.

Since most of us have never met before, it may be well to remind ourselves what we share and why we have been brought together. As the personal introductions have already indicated, we hold in common a deep concern for the degradation of the environment. We also share a deep conviction that the United States and Japan, having played a significant part in creating the problem, bear an unavoidable responsibility for helping to find a solution to it. But how? How, indeed.

The general objective of the environmental movement seems to be clear enough: to secure a *sustainable* environment. But as the discussions at Rio made abundantly clear, there is little agreement as to what sustainability requires or who should pay the cost to achieve it.

It is to try to help cut through this muddle that we are here today—not by representing the material *interests* in conflict and trying to re-bargain the outcomes, but reflecting on the behavior at Rio and exploring whether a different approach—one that asks what are the *standards* by which the conduct of nations should be judged, that is, an *ethical* approach—might not help to show the way in the future. But where are we to find such standards?

One source—the one that came to mind most frequently, I think, at the meeting last June in New York—is the great religious, social, and philosophical traditions of our two countries. At that meeting, Americans and Japanese commentators on America saw American ethics as being embodied largely in the traditional values arising out of our frontier experience and the morality of Judaism and Christianity. Japanese and American commentators on Japan were inclined in parallel fashion to draw on the patterns of custom usually referred to as *shukan*, the wartime moral indoctrination in the schools called *shushin*, and the broader and older sentiments of *dotoku*, arising out of the teachings and feelings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto.

What is clear from that exploration is that our traditions are certainly capacious enough to yield principles of conduct that support the environment—just as they have also in the past provided principles justifying or ignoring its destruction. And there can be no doubt that there is an urgent need to identify and refurbish those principles that can be of contemporary assistance, for they hold the possibility of drawing the leading religious institutions ever more strongly to the environmental cause and winning the support of large masses of our populations. There can be no doubt also of the influence such rediscovered principles can have on the minds of our policymakers.

But that is not the source of ethical behavior that we are here to explore today. We do not propose to work from the outside in—that is, we do not propose to start with the identification of ethical principles we believe *ought* to be useful and then to explore the extent to which they have been or might be applied to the solving of practical problems. Rather, our purpose this time is to work from the inside out. We propose to examine actual practice, the experience, in fact, of you around this table who negotiated at Rio or participated elsewhere in the Rio process. We want you to tell us what standards helped you and others to find solutions to contentious issues and what issues remained unresolved at least in part for lack of accepted standards.

This, of course, is not an easy task. We still do not have fully accepted standards for resolving environmental issues within our own countries. As for global environmental issues, we must remember not only that the issues themselves are new, but also that we have no authoritative way to set the standards by which they may be resolved. We must rely rather on ourselves and on the hope that in the process of negotiation, we shall discover the standards required and that will in the end win global support.

It is therefore a very practical question we are asking at this conference: How far along are we in that process of discovery? Our method will be to begin by trying to evaluate the experience of the Rio Conference as a whole and then to analyze several of the specific negotiations undertaken there.

The Task Force was not comprised of philosophers or political theorists who debated what environmental ethical standards *ought* to be. Neither should this report be construed as a definitive statement on the ethical issues of the Earth Summit. Rather it is an assessment of how this particular group of Japanese and Americans, aware of their call to leadership, defined the ethical issues, how well they believe these issues were understood generally during the Rio process, and what particular moral standards they found to be most helpful as guidance. In selecting the participants we sought a mix of thoughtful delegates and observers of Rio with on-the-ground experience. We were joined by two representatives from developing countries—Malaysia and the Philippines—who added a critical dimension to the deliberations. Together, seminar participants provided a window on the ethical process of individuals in their home country when facing these policy decisions.

### *Why is the Global Environmental Crisis Fundamentally a Question of Ethics?*

**T**he environment is fundamentally a moral issue because it requires making decisions on the basis of rationale that goes beyond national interest. It necessitates that “private” sacrifices—of individuals, communities, and nation-states—be made for the “public” good, i.e., for the common good. In determining a future course of action, decisions have to be made about where the sacrifices will be born. Ethics ought to insure that there is consistency in principles that will guide those decisions.

Some philosophers choose to evaluate ethics based upon their consequences: a choice is good or bad depending upon the outcome it produces. Yet this method presents a twofold problem. First, particularly in the case of the environment, we often cannot predict what the outcome will be. Global warm-

ing, for example, was an entirely unexpected and unintended consequence of the industrial revolution. As Henry Shue of Cornell University writes, “We never intended even to run the risk of raising average global temperature and disrupting agricultural seasons and rainfall patterns, much less to bring it about through our own economic activity.”<sup>1</sup> The second problem lies in determining the standard by which to judge consequences. Calculations of consequences will vary depending upon where one stands. When negotiating environment and development, it is natural that diplomats from different countries facing different economic and political conditions will assess consequences differently.

In the area of the environment, as several Task Force participants noted, so little is defined and there is so much at stake that ethical elements and political elements are inevitably intertwined. The global nature of the crisis readily portends a clashing of moral norms. As Joel Rosenthal of the Carnegie Council has stated:

Normative standards are not “received” in a benign or passive fashion: they are usually the result of some great struggle. The struggle over norms is usually a struggle for power and interests as much as a struggle over ideology. For better or for worse—usually both—norms reflect power considerations. Naturally, those in power are those who make rules, sometimes at the expense of weaker elements of society.<sup>2</sup>

What is required is that we distinguish between what is “right” morally and what is purely convenient or practical. In an unprecedented move, the authors of Agenda 21—the UN document outlining the general principles adopted in Rio—incorporated into the document the notion that ethics is

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<sup>1</sup>See Henry Shue, “Nuclear Winter and Carbon Summer,” draft paper prepared for Ethics, Security and New World Order Conference at the National Defense University, February, 1993.

<sup>2</sup>See also “Whose Environmental Standards?: Clarifying the Issues of Our Common Future,” first meeting report of the U.S.–Japan Environment Task Force.

an important component of sustainability, that development must be ethical as well as sustainable. They recognized that sustainable development does not necessarily equal ethical development. The message is that in setting ethical standards we must not give in to the temptation to let powerful individuals, groups, or countries dominate the debate.<sup>3</sup>

## *Understanding Japanese and American Environmental Ethics*

A principal objective of the Task Force was to better understand Japanese and American moral norms and to determine whether the environment can serve as a common denominator for cooperation. In combing the normative landscape for similarities and differences we wanted to consider how common norms can be promoted and whether differences can be resolved. It was worth asking ourselves, therefore, what are the sources of environmental ethics?

Lynton Caldwell, professor emeritus of Indiana University, explained that ethics in any society is an expression of its ethos, the defining characteristic of culture. Attitudes regarded as good in one culture or at one point in time may be bad or indifferent in another. Ethos is the product of beliefs, values, and intentions leading to behaviors, and it is formed and evolves in a time-space or historical context. To change the *ethics* requires a change in the *ethos*. This development occurs in a historical context which at any given time comprises the

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Shue argues that developing countries face a compounded injustice of not only lacking the resources to provide for basic needs, let alone being able to procure necessary environmental technologies; but also in coming to the bargaining table significantly disadvantaged politically by a history of international injustice. He argues that we must discern these considerations of justice that are intrinsic to the negotiations and address them. See Henry Shue, "The Unavoidability of Justice," in Andrew Hurrell and Benedict Kingsbury, eds., *The International Politics of the Environment*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

historical situational "environment" of a society in which its ethos, and derivative ethics, find expression.

The difference between the Japanese and American ethos has been marked by contrasting historical experience. Generally speaking, Japan is a highly developed homogenous and isolated culture, which has been disrupted (and acculturated) by foreign intrusion—chiefly by the United States. Japanese regard the elements of nature as "kami" (gods) which are responsible for the bounty as well as the volatility of their natural environment. The United States, by contrast, is a continental state of great diversity. Its common purpose since the settlement of America by Europeans was the subjugation and domestication of the continent. The environment was the enemy to be tamed, reduced to the intentions of the invaders. The "God-given" ethic of the pioneer was to make nature serve man. The ethic of conservation was to do this rationally with prudence. Recent expressions of love and respect for nature and the environment have been a protest against the past, against the old ethic of the pioneer.

*In an unprecedented move, the authors of Agenda 21—the UN document outlining the general principles adopted in Rio—incorporated into the document the notion that ethics is an important component of sustainability, that development must be ethical as well as sustainable. They recognized that sustainable development does not necessarily equal ethical development.*

Jiro Kondo, president of the Science Council of Japan, argued that it is also valid to consider culture as a function of climatic conditions. He drew from the work of Tetsuzo Watsuji, a professor of ethics at Tokyo Imperial University, entitled *The Cultural Climate* (1935). According to Kondo, Watsuji argued that Japan belongs to the group of "monsoon countries," with climate characterized by heat and high humidity. "When these conditions are combined, one cannot resist the immense power of nature. Consequently, patience characterizes the people of the monsoon countries." Europe, and by extension the United States, enjoys temperate climates and fertile soil where human labor and innovation can produce bountiful harvests. "It is no



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surprise, according to Watsuji, that Europe gave birth to rationalism.”

The ethos of Japan and the United States must be considered within their historical contexts. But today the situations of both societies are converging in many ways. This is largely a function of economics and mass communications. It is also indicative of the tentative nature of a people's relationship with their environment: As countries industrialize these relationships tend to evolve naturally into human detachment from the land.

Akio Morishima, consultant to the Japanese Environment Agency and professor of law at Nagoya University, concurred with Caldwell that the relationships between people and the environment are changing, particularly for the Japanese, who are commonly characterized as existing in harmony with nature. But Morishima also noted that the frontier ethic of nonlimitation no longer dominates the United States, where the wilderness has been conquered and resources exploited. Although relative to Japan resources are not scarce in the United States, Americans have come to understand the limited capacity of their natural environment.

Of the recognition of limits by both the United States and Japan, Caldwell notes:

We ought to recognize that convergence is occurring in a global context. We must be mindful not only of our

contrasting historical experience, but of our changing ethos in a universalizing world—a painful process for most societies.

### *The Problems of Defining Ethics of the Environment*

If defining ethical norms were simply a matter of turning to the Ten Commandments or the teachings of Confucius or adhering to traditional customs it would all be much simpler. “This is what ethics used to be,” explained Akio Morishima, professor of law at Nagoya University. But in the case of the environment, our religious and moral traditions often fail us. There is no religious or moral code that defines how humans should preserve the environment, and our loose cultural mores related to the environment—that we must be caretakers of God's creation, for example—are not serving us well in the face of the current crisis.

Morishima described ethics as a “mediator of a conflict of interest.” Ethics is impossible without a recognition that a conflict of interest exists. Ethical dilemmas arise when party *a* is stronger than party *b*. In the absence of ethics, the interests of party *a* will necessarily win out over party *b*. He described three different conflicts of interest related to the environment: 1) private vs. public interests; 2) man's interest vs. nature's interest; and 3) contemporary interests vs. the interests of future generations.

In the first case, public vs. private interest, when no one person is entitled to an “interest” (i.e. the global commons) ethics is critical to protecting that “interest.”

Take air quality, for example. No one person is entitled to the air: It is a common good. A manufacturing company has an *interest* in using or polluting the air to operate its factory, but it does not have a *right* to do so. Unless the firm voluntarily refrains from pollut-



Left to right: Ambassador Nobutoshi Akao, Ambassador Richard Benedick, and Hiroyuki Yanagitsubo.

ing, the air quality will be degraded. The same is true for biological diversity. When a landowner cuts trees to develop his land, only he as owner has the power to save the trees. To do so he must choose either to preserve the trees or renounce his claim to ownership. Why should he stop pursuing his interest? To leave forests for the next generation? Or to be a steward over the land for the common good? And so we must ask ourselves: What is the present condition of our ethics? Are ethics the motivation for self-restraint?

Compared with man, nature is the weaker party: It does not have a guardian or steward to assert its "interest," which in this case is survival. The need for ethics becomes ever more urgent and the determination of ethics ever more exacting in the face of the conflict of duties to future generations. As philosophers and political theorists in the West grappling with the environmental crisis are discovering, our moral and political theories are inadequate insofar as they are unable to accommodate the notion of intergenerational equity.<sup>4</sup> The reigning theories require a "class" in order to resolve political dilemmas; future generations are problematic because they cannot be defined as a "class" or "party." This points to the need to expand and enhance those theories.

## *The Ethical Content of UNCED*

In considering the ethical content of the Earth Summit, there was general agreement among participants that equity is fundamental. In other words, the documents drawn up at Rio must insure an

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<sup>4</sup> See Russell Hardin, "The Costs and Benefits of Future Generations," University of Chicago, 1991. In surveying the reigning political theories Hardin argues that they are inadequate in coping with the notion of future generations because it is an unspecified class. The theories require a definition of the "party" which either "arouses our sympathies" or does something that creates "moral consideration."



*Yoriko Kawaguchi, Deputy Director-General, Global Environmental Affairs, MITI.*

equitable distribution of benefits and sacrifices across nations in order to be morally correct. Identifying the need for equity is only the beginning of the ethical inquiry; discerning what constitutes "equitable" requires a tough examination of competing, culturally-specific ideas of desirable outcomes and the means of achieving them.

Another recurring theme within the Task Force discussions was the notion that the ethics of individuals are distinct from the ethics of governments. In democratic societies, politicians are beholden to the people who elected them and must consider the ideas and beliefs of their constituents. For example, United States government policies on family planning are responses to the moral claims of Americans as understood by their leaders. In assessing the ethical content of a particular country's policy stance, one also needs to consider how that particular issue is played out politically in the domestic context. To whom are the government leaders responding and why?

Likewise, the ethics of multilateral institutions involved in setting and administering global environmental policy (e.g. the United Nations Environment

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Program [UNEP], the UNCED Secretariat, the World Bank, the OECD, etc.) must be examined independently from the ethics of particular individuals, cultures, or societies. For example, many observers believe that UNEP, charged with drawing up the Biodiversity Convention, sent the document prematurely to Rio. The Convention ended up receiving disproportionate media attention when the U.S. administration refused to endorse it, and ironically derailing the proceedings at Rio.

Participants also agreed that it is not enough for nations simply to declare ethics. Ethics must be codified by specific and consistent standards in order to have any meaning. Otherwise, without a yardstick to measure whether actions represent moral or nonmoral values, a country can simply claim the moral high ground on an issue and never be held accountable.

Finally, there was a recognition voiced by both Japa-

nese and American participants that laissez-faire industrial and economic policies can have serious consequences for the environment. They noted that more and more people are coming to see that all political and ethical decisions on the environment will require an examination of the costs of not doing anything.

### *What are the Requirements for Leadership?*

**A**ware of their call to leadership, participants openly reflected on Japanese and American roles and responsibilities, the “ethics of leadership.”

Some of the views about leadership were revealed in pointed critiques of the United States’ role at UNCED. One Japanese participant argued that

The processes of judgment and methods of ethical reasoning are considered to be different between Japan and the United States. The United States tends to place greater emphasis on larger principles, such as freedom, democracy, human rights and self-reliance, whereas the Japanese are said to put greater stock in examples, or situational ethics.

Following are a selection of statements made by individual participants about the role of ethics in the environment. In order to further the effort to discern distinctions between Japanese and American approaches to ethics, a “J” (Japanese) or “A” (American) appears before each statement, designating attribution to an individual Japanese or American participant.

(J) To resolve tradeoffs; technology can eliminate the need for ethics.

(A) To determine preferred outcomes. (This suggests a utilitarian approach, where an act is

deemed moral or immoral on the basis of its consequences.)

(J) To determine how each country views its role and responsibilities.

(J) To resolve conflicts of interest between two or more parties based not on the exercising of power of the stronger party over the weaker party. (There are problems of definition when it comes to inter-generational and inter-species relations).

(A) To define “responsible use” of technologies.

(J) To distinguish between what is right morally and what is merely practical.

(J) To determine how to share the environment now that the limits to growth have become evident.

(J) To ameliorate (perceptions of) inequity.

(J) To insure constancy of policies.

## *The Politics and Ethics of Global Environmental Leadership*

“leadership is listening,” and that the absence of Americans at a number of the plenary sessions at Rio demonstrated a failure of leadership:

Initially at the plenary session, all the U.S. seats were empty. One of the roles of leader is to listen intently to others. Those plenaries were appeals from leaders of one country to another. This can be interpreted as a failure of the United States to discharge its responsibility as leader.

The emphasis on listening characterizes the role of a leader in Japan’s social context. On other occasions, during the course of the Task Force seminar, the imperative for industrialized countries to heed the insights of developing countries was repeatedly voiced by Japanese participants.

Another Japanese participant, alluding to the reasons given by the American delegation for not signing the Biodiversity Convention—that is, not accepting international commitments that cannot be kept and having the will to take no action when no action is called for—argued that staying involved in the process is key to strong leadership. Without effective implementation, the treaty has no worth. “How can [the United States] expect implementation if it is not party to the Convention?”

On the issue of “technology cooperation,” John Shlaes of the Global Climate Coalition emphasized the critical importance for the North to directly address the needs of developing countries:

“Technology cooperation” is a new notion that says you just don’t drop major installations in developing countries. You have to work with the sovereign countries in relation to what the development needs are. Even though we have certain technologies on the shelf, it is going to take time to develop the large-type technologies needed for solving problems of the developing world. We need to consider primarily what their needs are.

The question remains: Who is to make the needs assessment, the donor or the recipient country?

Echoing the comments of Jesse Ausubel of Rockefeller University at the first meeting of the Task Force in New York, participants in Tokyo asked: Why do we find these issues so compelling now?<sup>5</sup> Yoriko Kawaguchi of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) asserted that it is important to ask ourselves: Are these problems relative or absolute? Masahiro Hashimoto, also of MITI, raised a similar question during his presentation on the Biodiversity Convention:

The conservation of biological diversity alone is a singularly important activity as defined in Agenda 21, Article 14. It is a value. But can we say it is a moral value?

If we are to make the argument that environmental problems are absolute, then how do we explain why it took us until now—until after industrialization and our exploitation of resources—to raise these issues? To what degree is our interest in the environment inspired by a post-industrial, post-ideological quest for meaning? It is incumbent upon the United States and Japan as global leaders to consider deeply their motivations.

*To what degree is our interest in the environment inspired by a post-industrial, post-ideological quest for meaning? It is incumbent upon the United States and Japan as global leaders to consider deeply their motivations.*

Both American and Japanese participants also admonished that considerations of responsibility must take into account the potential for the South’s exploitation of the environment crisis in efforts to extract monetary concessions from the North. One American participant quoted Rizali Ismail,

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<sup>5</sup> See the comments of Jesse Ausubel of Rockefeller University in the report of the first Task Force meeting, “Whose Environmental Standards? Clarifying the Issues of Our Common Future.” This report may be obtained through the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs.

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Malaysia's ambassador to the United Nations, who purportedly made a strikingly forthright statement about power relations at the Earth Summit negotiations:

This is about sharing power. When it was East versus West, our development needs were ignored unless you were a marionette of the Soviet Union or the United States. Now, with the environment seriously frightening many people in comfortable paradise areas, for the first time people are taking us seriously. That is leverage, and we are not bashful about using it.

This, the American participant argued, is testimony to the true intentions of the South.

Environmental negotiations are an opportunity to address past injustices. Yet in order for these efforts to be successful, moral considerations must be accompanied by more candor in discussing roles and responsibilities in North-South relations—politically unsavvy as that may be.

Participants argued that the South is less aware of environmental problems than the North and that this "gap in problem consciousness" must be ad-

ressed in order for consensus to be achieved. One participant asked, "How are we going to develop a style of negotiation which bridges that difference in sense of urgency?" But Evan Garcia of the Philippine government disputed these ideas by reminding participants that it is the poor citizens of developing countries who best know the debilitating effects of environmental degradation. The challenge, all participants agreed, is to discover ethical principles that have a universality that all nations can adopt.

One Japanese observer remarked that it is practically impossible to construct a scenario for perfect equity. "What is important is that there is the appearance of equity." To create even the appearance of equity will necessitate a consideration by the North of the following challenges: 1) for Northern countries like Japan and the United States to demonstrate leadership, not only by providing economic aid and technology but also by changing their lifestyle; 2) for Northern countries to take care of environmental problems at home first, before setting out to change the world's patterns of production and consumption. In considering these points participants agreed that our own sense of urgency is simply not shared widely even in our populations.

Following is a sampling of the statements on the subject of North-South responsibilities:

(J) "Advanced countries are not responsible for everything as the developing countries often suggested at UNCED."

(J) "Water pollution is an example of a local or regional problem which cannot be blamed entirely on the North."

(A) "Look at Japan and Indonesia. After the war, in free independent Indonesia with foreign aid available, the economy was diminishing. Japan, defeated in the war, devastated and demoralized, pulled itself together and has be-

come now a great power in the world, a great economic power.... If we continue to flagellate ourselves and say we're guilty of this inequity in the world, we are only telling part of the truth."

(A) "The environmental problem is considered to be a question of overconsumption by the North. But whose products are we going to consume less of?"

(A) "While the South did not have an independent environmental agenda, it did see an opportunity to leverage Northern concerns about the environment into more resources for development."

Referring to the alleged contradiction between U.S. domestic forestry policy, which emphasizes the preservation of jobs over the environment, and its more conservationist approach at Rio, Lynton Caldwell remarked: "The United States cannot tell other countries what to do in the area of forestry without getting its own forestry policy in shape." The theme of the North's hypocrisy was echoed by Yoriko Kawaguchi who said, "The recent actions of the North demonstrate a dismissiveness of its own newly declared moral precepts." One observer suggested that we ought to consider whether it is possible to codify different lifestyles for different stages of development, and that perhaps this should be our focus as leaders. This suggestion was quickly dismissed by another participant, who argued that while it might be an ideal long-term goal, trying to change our lifestyle is an impractical means of responding to the immediate problems we face.

Again, the discussion returned to the challenges confronting the North. As one American put it:

We think so hard about what the needs of the Third World are going to be and whether they can be satisfied. If you are going to stabilize the growth of Japan or the United States at the present level, I should hate to be the political leader that recommends that. The decisions are equally tough in the advanced countries if you are going to slow down growth and reduce per capita income.



*Kazuo Aichi, former Director-General of the Environment Agency, comments at the Task Force as Diet colleague Takashi Kosugi looks on.*

## *Responsibility to Whom?*

**I**n determining their role in addressing the environmental crisis, global leaders must first consider: To whom or what are they responsible? To what extent must Northern countries assume responsibility for the crisis? What does the North owe to the South and to the class of environmental refugees, victims of irresponsible practices of authoritarian regimes? What happens when conflicts arise between the obligations to one's citizens and one's moral obligations abroad?

Ethics and politics come together in debates about how conceptions of sovereignty play into the resolution of conflicts. As revealed above, participants concurred on the need to respect the free will of nations while promoting and encouraging a shared sense of urgency. Both American and Japanese participants hesitated to couch the consequences of potentially harmful developing country policies—such as the importation of hazardous wastes, transmigration, logging in inhabited forest areas, and lax regulations on polluting industries—in terms of human rights. They did, however, recognize a host of complex issues requiring donor countries to make difficult decisions about how to balance environmental justice considerations with considerations of sovereignty and their own geopolitical interests.

Sandy Vogelgesang of the U.S. State Department reiterated the American position of distinguishing between civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic and social rights on the other. In the United States, there remains a long-standing reluctance to speak in terms of environmental rights in the same way that one refers to political and civil liberties or protection against torture. "There are many reasons for this U.S. policy, not the least of which is the enormity of the cost of guaranteeing such rights, the practical prospect of being able to do so."

Seiji Kojima of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed the question of what principles would be applied in the disbursement of \$7.7 billion in envi-

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ronmental overseas development assistance (ODA) pledged at the Earth Summit. Citing Japan's ODA Charter, he reported that Japan considers it very important that "environmental conservation and development be pursued in tandem."<sup>6</sup> He also argued in favor of respecting sovereignty, although he made no mention of what measures would be taken in the case of recipient government abuses against its own citizens.

Bearing in mind that the comprehensive coordination of conflicting interests among its people is best managed by each recipient country, Japan will give appropriate advice to the recipient governments and will assist, when deemed appropriate, in the building of infrastructure at the locations for resettlement.

Several participants emphasized another duty of the government official negotiating international treaties: the duty to one's citizens. Debates about intervention aside, they argued that leaders in democratic societies have a primary ethical responsibility to the people who elected them. Leaders must act on behalf of the interests of their citizenry, as well as in its best interests, and that may sometimes require not accepting an international commitment, no matter how valid it may be. To do otherwise is impractical not only from the standpoint of domestic political survival, but also because the negotiator risks not being able to deliver on the international agreement. As Edward Malloy, minister-counselor at the American embassy in Tokyo asserted:

An obvious historical example is the League of Nations and how we accepted that internationally but could not deliver back home. Governments

are not empowered to sacrifice the national interest at a negotiating table if they are going against the electorate's interest. It has got to be worked through their own national process. In this sense, negotiations on climate change, etc., are not processes of the least common denominator, but of the highest common denominator.

John Shlaes, the representative American businessperson at the table, asserted that all the agreements—on climate change, biodiversity, and forestry—were drawn up too quickly. He expressed concern that leaders were too anxious to bring home an environmental package, and that they must first step back and evaluate the multiple impacts these policies will have: on how we govern ourselves in the future; what the arrangements will do to a society's economic underpinnings; and what it is going to do to national competitiveness, both economic and political.

One Japanese participant noted that while President Bush was an easy target of criticism, leaders of other developed countries also essentially said that if UNCED does not improve the lives of their people, they will not cooperate with the process. Koichiro Fujikura of Tokyo University also pointed out that a government leader cannot act without the consent of his or her constituents. Fujikura said,

One perspective I find not well-represented is the taxpayer's perspective. I, for one, personally already feel I'm heavily taxed. At Tokyo University where I teach, we have been under severe budget constraints. Now in this situation I really feel that asking taxpayers to shoulder the extra burden of an international environmental fund is a difficult proposition....We don't have a strong enough ethical argument to convince people of the need to sacrifice.

A means of resolving the conflicts that arise between obligations to one's electorate and obligations to the

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<sup>6</sup> Mr. Kojima drew from the recently published "Wagakuni no Seifu Kaihatsu Enjo," (Japan's Official Development Assistance) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 6, 1992. For further details on Japan's ODA, copies in English of this annual publication may be obtained through the Association for the Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC), 23 Mori Building, 1-23-7 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan 105.



global commons is to acknowledge that the duty to lead is in part a duty to educate. This requires honesty and integrity in clarifying scientific and environmental realities, both at home and abroad, and in developing broad-minded policy. It also means an open and independent news media that can both inform the public and challenge the government. In the United States, for example, to reach carbon dioxide stabilization with a population that is increasing at about 2 percent a year will be a political impossibility unless a coherent policy is formulated and articulated to the American people. The duty to educate is also to be realistic about what ameliorating results our technologies can provide.

## *The Ethics of Technology Dependence*

**T**ransferring appropriate environmental technologies and effectively administering development funds are recognized as key to redressing both North-South inequity and the global environmental crisis. In addition to serving environmental needs both at home and abroad, research and development of technologies strengthens national security, both economic and military. It also provides a means of obviating some tough political and moral decisions by creating “win-win” situations. Therefore, it is tempting for industrialized economies, such as Japan and the United States, to rely upon environmental technologies in response to the global mandate for policy change. One Japanese participant offered the following view of the relationship between ethics and technology:

Why does environmental policy involve ethics? The answer might be that many people believe that there is a trade-off between environmental preservation and economic growth, and because of this trade-off, they feel that ethics is required to strike the balance .... With an economic problem, such as a national recession, a decision must be made between fiscal deficit

and domestic economic stimulus and this is a trade-off. In the case of the environment, we need not have a pessimistic view that there is a moral dilemma that nobody can solve. Anybody who reads a Samuelson textbook on economics knows that in order to enhance the utility of production, technology plays an important role .... So to solve the trade-off between environmental issues and economic growth, we should apply the same theory; in other words, solve environmental problems through the promotion of technologies.

Technologies can provide a greater range of choices insofar as they allow for development and growth that is environmentally safe. But to the extent that they do, how do we respond to both Northern and Southern assertions of the “right” to technology? Who has the choice to develop and profit from environmental technologies is a central equity issue of North-South relations. We must recognize that technology has widened the gap between rich and poor. So far, technology development has proceeded without regard or intention for the imbalances it has caused. Is it enough to say that the North will consider the needs of the South?

*For industrialized economies, it is tempting to rely upon environmental technologies as the answer. The research and development of technologies not only strengthens economic security, it often provides a means of obviating some tough political and moral decisions.*

Lynton Caldwell of Indiana University emphasized limits to technology dependence. Noting that “in practical affairs we have separated economic and environmental aspects of the world that are inseparable in reality,” he laid more emphasis upon the question of whether technologies would be used wisely than upon their remediation potential. In stating his position, Caldwell offered a contextual explanation of the dramatic changes of the current era:



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The context of this issue in our time should be the realization that we find ourselves in one of the greatest fundamental transitions in history.... The expansion of the human population to preempt nearly all inhabitable areas of the globe began in the fifteenth century chiefly out of Europe and cannot be repeated. The twentieth century saw the occupation of the remaining land and the spread of new, powerful, and unprecedented technologies. Human impacts upon the planet grew in orders of magnitude. Demands upon water, forests, and effects upon the atmosphere have no precedent in scope. From now on humans will have to deal with scarcities not all of which technology can cure. Foresight and restraint will be needed to a degree not compelling in the past.

Are the problems we face so different from those of the past that we do not have the “tools” to solve them? At a minimum, we need to sharpen those tools through better technology assessment and changing business behavior. We also need to recognize that these problems are basically not technical, although at a second level of definition, technology may be applied their solution. In order to be effective, tools depend first upon an adequate comprehension of the problem and causes, and second upon a willingness to use the appropriate ones. The choice of tools should be guided by preferred outcomes and on this point society is often divided.



*Akio Morishima, Nagoya University, and James Morley, Columbia University.*

Historically, technologies almost invariably have been deployed before their full effects were understood. The management of technology must be treated as a major factor in the economy-environment relationship. Seen this way, technologies are not substitutes for ethics. Rather, mobilizing science and technology to cope with environmental change necessarily involves moral choice. The arguments on such questions of technology and the appraisal of science are at the root of the global and national environmental question and require continuing attention.

### *Building Consensus at UNCED: A Credit to Moral Suasion?*

UNCED was critical because it provided a truly global forum for reconciling competing interests both between and within the North and the South. Yet both Japanese and American Task Force participants agreed that Rio was flawed by fundamental misunderstandings about how to integrate environmental concerns with an ambitious development agenda. Participants asserted that both the North and the South were guilty of acting in their self-interest and for not treating the issue with sufficient seriousness. Consequently, UNCED was strong in terms of ultimate objectives, but weak in terms of firm commitments.

Given the atmosphere of distrust and the strong tendencies of countries to put national interest before global responsibilities, in what ways was consensus reached at UNCED? What were the forces at work? Toward the conclusion of his presentation on the ethical dimensions of the Earth Summit, Richard Benedick of the World Wildlife Fund stated:

I disagree with those who have said that the conventions and agreements that came out of this process represent the lowest common denominator, be-

cause during these hard negotiations, recalcitrant countries often found themselves isolated. Diplomatic pressures were applied. There was moral suasion and positions did change. There were unexpected breakthroughs.

Clearly there was general agreement on environmental principles as consecrated in the Rio Declaration, a non-binding set of principles on environment and development policy. Yet, continuing conflict revolving around the Rio principles reveals the difficulty in applying them. For example, there is a question as to how to apply the "Precautionary Principle" in the case of global warming. Does the need to "act in the face of uncertainty" even when science does not fully support policy measures necessarily translate into the establishment of targets and timetables? Or is it a means to camouflage national interests in the name of moral principles? In order to determine whether there is the political will to make the fulfillment of those commitments a priority at home, it is useful to consider: What were the breakthroughs, in terms of specific standards achieved at the Earth Summit? And were these a function of moral or political suasion?

At Rio, although there were differences within the Northern and Southern blocks, the deepest divisions in the debate over environmental standards were between North and South. The central conflict is embedded in the Rio principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities." This is the concept that all parties to an international accord undertake some obligations, but that these should vary according to the particular situation. Benedick noted: "Underlying this principle are fundamental questions of equity, ethics, and even blame.... The South deeply mistrusted the North, which the South considered 'environmental colonialists.'"

Task Force participants acknowledged the disadvantages the South faced at Rio. The South's gen-

eral experience in environmental rule-making is one in which the North "has the upper hand."<sup>8</sup> One American attributed the weakness of the South to the fact that it is difficult for most developing countries to send well-prepared experts. Consequently, the standards adopted usually reflect the experience and conditions of the developed countries. Moreover, once standards are developed, attention inevitably turns to questions of compliance, and political and economic pressure to comply can follow.

Some participants noted that compromise was not extracted only from a disempowered South. For example, the Biodiversity Convention required the North to set aside some of its concerns about intellectual property rights. Masahiro Hashimoto of MITI noted another case during the negotiations where the interests of Northern countries, namely France with the backing of Japan and others, gave way to the interests of Southern countries. This case concerned the recommendations for a "global list"—a list of important species and regions requiring responsible management by all countries. According to Hashimoto,

France adamantly pushed this. Japan also felt strong about it but eventually backed down. Developing countries opposed this on the grounds that it infringes upon their sovereignty. It was finally decided that conservation decisions, the method of conservation, would be determined by the host country rather than decided globally.

In general, participants did not see the Convention's recognition that individual nations are sovereign with respect to how they use their own natural resources as a product of moral suasion, but of politics. There was concern that inclusion of the statement on sovereignty provides an excuse and a legal loophole to enable countries to get out of doing what they should feel ethically bound to do: to conserve biodiversity under the other provisions of the treaty. Given that respect for sovereignty is already codified, one American argued, this is a "giant step backward": it demonstrates a failure to recognize the "global commons" in legal terms, even though

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<sup>8</sup>See also the comments of Allen Springer, Bowdoin College, in the first Task Force report, "Whose Environmental Standards? Clarifying the Issues of Our Common Future."

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all countries understand that biological resources transcend national boundaries.

Another case of Southern countries asserting their interests was in the area of population. Participants noted that the Vatican and a number of Latin American and fundamentalist Islamic countries (together with certain feminist groups) were successful in removing references to family planning in Agenda 21. There was by no means a “breakthrough” in the minds of Japanese and American participants; in fact one American called it “the greatest single failing of UNCED.” But it did point to the dilemma of reconciling the “undesirable” consequences of certain religious practices with the value of religious liberty.

*Task Force members questioned whether consensus is essential to achieving desired environmental results.*

Was UNCED the best forum for standard setting? Task Force participants questioned whether consensus is essential to achieving desired environmental results. Richard Benedick noted that although there were provisions for voting, “enormous efforts were expended on arriving at consensus.” A Japanese participant agreed: “It was too much! There ought to first be deliberations within the G7 or OECD, perhaps also involving some developing countries.”<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, it was acknowledged that without consensus, the classical “free rider” problem looms: each country would prefer to enjoy the global benefits of other states’ reductions in pollution without making sacrifices of its own and risking competitive disadvantage. For example, at Rio the European Community abandoned its commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000 when they found that there would be no similar commitment by the United States and Japan. As one Japanese participant noted, if Northern countries cannot keep commitments, it is difficult to see, without consensus among nations, how

developing countries will have the political will to make the required sacrifices. Koichiro Fujikura of the University of Tokyo stated soberly:

The only ethical basis we have to convince people of the need to shoulder the costs of the environment are the basic principles in Agenda 21. That’s all we have so far...

### *The United States and Japan: Kyosei (Symbiosis) or Kyoso (Competition)?*

**B**oth policymakers and observers agree that the time is ripe for U.S.-Japan cooperation on the environment. Given the enormous importance of the United States and Japan as the world’s two greatest economic powers, cooperation is essential. As Shuzaburo Takeda of Tokai University noted:

No single nation can play the role that the United States played in the past. But the United States and Japan can do it jointly. Together they account for 40 percent of GNP, 20 percent of world trade, and over 50 percent of R&D. Now 70–80 percent of Japanese people support global issues.

What is remarkable about the environment issue, in contrast to other areas of interaction between the United States and Japan, is that Japan is staking out policy positions independent of the United States. The fact that Japan signed the Biodiversity Convention while the United States did not is one explicit example. This is a significant departure from Japan’s behavior over the past fifty years during which time it maintained its allegiances to the United States in international circles. It reveals a new era in U.S.-Japan relations wherein mutual security configured on the East-West conflict no longer forms the basis for the relationship.

<sup>9</sup>“G7” refers to the Group of Seven Industrialized Countries—Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, United States—whose leaders meet annually to discuss a common economic and political agenda.

Not only can cooperation benefit the global commons, it can also serve the bilateral relationship. By reinforcing areas of common interest such as the environment and jointly pursuing the strengthening of institutions working on these issues, the United States and Japan can take an important step toward building a foundation for improved relations badly needed in the ensuing unstable environment of the post-Cold War era.

Task Force participants noted that on a number of occasions the United States and Japan acted in concert at the Earth Summit. "Both countries demonstrated pragmatism," remarked one participant. During climate change negotiations, there were joint interventions and efforts to make the convention a "framework" convention, rather than "pretending that at the early stage, hammering out specifics was possible." There was also joint cooperation in persuading other countries of the need for "pledge and review" of specific measures. Similarly, on forestry both countries agreed that any legal document should be a statement of principles rather than a convention.

Still, the question of the compatibility of the two nations remains, given not only the noteworthy differences between the two countries' economic, political, social, and legal structures, but also the often fiercely competitive nature of the relationship. Pragmatism alone cannot be the basis for the kind of U.S.-Japan partnership the world needs.

What was apparent from the Task Force discussions is that there is a certain degree of mutual distrust that pervades the environmental relationship between Japan and the United States. The Japanese were disturbed and frustrated by what they perceived to be American inconsistency on environmental policy. Frustration revolved around the apparent contradiction in American environmental policy on whaling and driftnet fishing on the one hand, and on global warming on the other. In the former case, the Japanese argued, Americans insist that these practices be terminated until scientific evidence proves that stocks are not being depleted, whereas in the latter case, Americans have resisted measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions until



science proves them necessary. This is viewed by the Japanese as an example of American "double standards." One Japanese participant remarked:

In the case of driftnet fishing, the United States asks for proof via scientific research that the impact on the environment is not unreasonable before activities are resumed. But its principles are reversed when it comes to climate change. Here, the United States refuses to change, to reduce its levels of carbon dioxide emissions, until there is "proof" of global warming. This is a prime example of the contradiction in the positions of the United States.

Edward Malloy, a scientist by academic training, defended the U.S. position on climate change:

This is a question of the *degree* of scientific input. The American scientific community is quite active. The U.S. government supports over half the research in global climate change. And there is a great deal of doubt among many scientists, not necessarily of the process and long-term effect of it, but of the length of time it will take to get to that process.

Malloy reiterated the difficulty of getting more specific climate change commitments through Congress, given the "present body of scientific evidence."

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Richard Benedick suggested that the differences between the United States and Japan in their approach to science could be explained in terms of “the cultural values of ethical systems.” Japan, as a consensus-oriented society, has a tendency to accept general scientific consensus and act on it without insisting on absolute certainty. There is a certain flexibility in the Japanese approach.

In the case of the ozone hole, for example, initially the Japanese were very skeptical. But as we came at them with more and more science and involved their own scientists, they then at the very end, to the surprise of the European Community, which still resisted, came out in favor of a strong treaty, stronger controls in the chemical industry.

This pragmatism, Benedick claimed, has characterized the Japanese attitude on the climate issue. In contrast, the United States, which is more individualistic and adversarial, will tend to pay more attention to the iconoclast if there is no strong consensus. In other words, American policymakers tend to look at scientists who will support their ideas, even if this does not represent consensus.

U.S.-Japan normative dissonance was also witnessed in the area of biodiversity. This was not explicitly revealed at UNCED; both countries recognized the economic value of bioresources, and both agreed that the cost of resources ought to reflect that value. Yet differences that threaten friction did exist beneath the surface, many of which are rooted in mutual perception problems. Americans such as L. Val Giddings of the U.S. Department of Agriculture asserted that there is tremendous value-added that goes into making a resource commercially viable and that the strictly economic value of that resource is minimal. Rather, the true value is in the ecosystems as well as the intrinsic value of the genetic resources, aesthetic and otherwise.

Given this, American observers at UNCED saw the Japanese to be more concerned with “extractable values” and their pecuniary benefits than the eco-

systems themselves. They saw the Japanese as pragmatic and believing that what “works” must be right without taking into consideration the longer term impact on the biosphere. The Japanese at UNCED, on the other hand, regard Americans as lacking essential respect for other cultures. Their failure to fully grasp the notion of limited resources together with a weak sense of collective rights hinders their ability to conserve. Left unaddressed, this perception gap may serve to fuel suspicions of motives and hinder efforts to find common ground for cooperation.

Kazuo Aichi, a member of the Diet and formerly the minister of the Environment Agency, argued that Japan is in a good position to assert moral and political leadership because it can relate to both the Asian ethical perspective and the developing country perspective.

Many of the people in government charged with making policy are old enough to know the days in Japan immediately after WWII when Japan was developing. Furthermore, Japan has an advantage of having survived its own pollution crises and therefore can offer the world important lessons.

This was the very rationale that propelled Japan in the late 1980s under Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita to pursue a forward position on the environment.

*An essentially reactive Japanese style of policymaking tends to paint Japan, in the eyes of Americans, as an unreliable global partner. Many find this posture in the environmental arena particularly disappointing given raised expectations for a more proactive Japanese global environmental policy.*

Takashi Kosugi, also a member of the Diet and chairman of the Diet Committee on the Environment, drew distinctions between American and Japanese leadership roles. In doing so he came to the de-

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fense of the United States, noting its strengths—courage, military strength, creativity, a sense of justice, and diversity. He stressed that Japan, unlike the United States, is not part of a large cultural sphere and faces a much more tenuous relationship with its Asian neighbors. Consequently its style of leadership will be different.

In the case of Japan, courage might be interpreted as arrogance. Military strength is seen as aggression, not security. Trying to express a sense of justice may also be interpreted as cultural arrogance. Japan should not be like the United States, striking out to stem international disasters, because Japan will not be able to find arguments that are convincing enough to the world. The world knows too little about Japan to be able to endorse a value judgment by Japan.

This statement reveals an essentially Confucian ethic, that one should know their place. Kosugi argued that Japan should be a mediator, “paying close attention to all parties and helping to achieve a workable solution.” But this isn't the kind of leadership that Americans want or expect from Japan. An essentially reactive Japanese style of policy-making tends to paint Japan, in the eyes of Americans, as an unreliable global partner. It represents a tendency toward policy drift which is considered unacceptable for a global leader. Observers are finding this posture in the environmental arena particularly disappointing given raised expectations for a more proactive Japanese policy.



Task Force participants acknowledged that policy differences between Japan and the United States have much to do with the style of governance and the social contract between government and society. In the United States, the government responds to the moral claims of constituents, as reflected in its position on whaling and family planning. In the latter case, American retrenchment from leadership did not go unacknowledged by Japanese participants. Since the United States withdrew funding to the United Nations Population Fund, Japan has become the biggest contributor and will continue to offer strong financial backing for this area. Japan's policy, a participant suggested, is perhaps a more implicit response to both direct constituent concerns about the environment and a longer-term view of responsibility to keep Japan prosperous.

Despite misgivings, both Japanese and American participants argued that policymakers in both countries have just begun to focus seriously on the issue and that evidence suggests that this seriousness would be maintained. American participants insisted that there are important currents of change underway in the United States both in terms of public consciousness and business commitment, a foreshadowing of more progressive environmental policy. As one American participant declared:

We will be among the best performers on climate change at the end of the day—we were one of the first to move on ratification and we will unveil a national plan in January.

In the United States there is a robust political opposition that makes significant policy shifts possible. The 1992 election of Bill Clinton portends a more proactive American environmental policy. This contrasts with the effectively single-party political system of Japan. Lacking an effective opposition party, Japanese policy positions tend to evolve slowly as internal consensus is carefully forged.

In response to accusations that Japan's international perspective is limited and its interests parochial, Japanese participants pointed to ongoing efforts

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within the Japanese government to address the heavily domestic focus in Japan's environmental laws. Under the leadership of the Environment Agency, significant energy is being expended on amending the Basic Law on the environment to accommodate new global realities. How the battles among the various ministries involved in the process are resolved will be an indication of the future direction of Japan's global environmental policy.

What is important to recognize is that there are similarities in interests and challenges facing both Japan and the United States. In terms of reducing carbon dioxide emissions, for example, industrialists in Japan argue that it is impossible to conserve further, given the high cost of conservation. The United States is dependent on coal and will continue to find it politically difficult to create nuclear power plants and introduce carbon taxes. The challenge for both countries is an economic one to which each must rise.

### *Prospects for Partnership*

There is a continuing perception that the positions of Japan and the United States as global environmental leader were reversed between 1972 and 1992, the years between Stockholm and Rio. At Rio and during the negotiations leading up to Rio, Japan appeared to take the process more seriously than did the United States. Yet both Americans and Japanese Task Force participants acknowledged that at Rio neither country provided the leadership that countries were hoping for.

*One Japanese participant argued that "leadership is listening," and that the absence of Americans at a number of the plenary sessions at Rio demonstrated a failure of leadership.... American participants said that Japan must recognize that the world expects from it stronger and more active leadership.*

There is a need for both sides to blunt hard national positions and to take bolder steps to build global coalitions. These coalitions must be based upon

commonly understood and agreed upon normative standards. Japan and the United States, together with other countries, both North and South, must improve upon the dialogue on principles of environmental policy begun at Rio. There needs to be clarity concerning what style of leadership Japan and the United States will assume and whether that will suffice for the world community. Both Japanese and American participants agreed that the United States and Japan should resist the easy temptation to let competition in trade or technology hinder the cooperation on issues that are to the countries' mutual benefit. Finally, an American participant added, "we should also resist finger-pointing about who led or did not lead in a given meeting."

In terms of specific measures Japan and the United States can take together, the Task Force offers the following recommendations:

First, Japan and the United States should redefine the priorities for official development assistance, both bilaterally and multilaterally, so that there is greater focus on sustainable development. To that end, we can draw upon the report of the 1989 Schmidt Commission ("Facing One World"), the Rio Declaration, and Agenda 21.

Second, Japan and the United States need to work together to assure that there are clear assessments of environmental needs and to explore how national development plans are produced, ensuring that there is a multisectoral approach.

Third, the two countries have a commitment to implement Agenda 21. Doing so is going to require reforming the United Nations system. The United States and Japan need to ensure that there is close collaboration among relevant institutions such as UNEP and the major financial institutions.

Fourth, there needs to be a serious effort to coordinate the activities of the major donor countries. This requires moving the activity of the OECD beyond the level of discussion to taking bold actions. Duplication of activity or activity that works at cross purposes with sustainable development must be

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avoided. This will require coordination and clarification of terms for conditionality.

Fifth, more proactive leadership is needed by the United States and Japan. In addition, Japan must recognize that the world expects from it stronger and more active leadership. In order to guarantee the enlistment of Japan's active participation in the United Nations, serious consideration should be given to a permanent seat for Japan on the UN Security Council.

Sixth, Japan should seize the opportunity at the G7 meeting scheduled to take place in Tokyo in July 1993. This could be part of a push for practical policy that could have significant implications by ensuring greater OECD effectiveness.

Seventh, there should be continued follow-up on the proposals for a U.S.-Japan working group on the environment, a development of the Bush-Miyazawa Global Partnership Plan of Action agreement initiated in January 1992. The proposals speak to the notions of regional cooperation, regional environmental centers, and cooperation in pre-competitive technology areas. They serve not only environment and development, but also economic and political reform.

Finally, Japan and the United States need to talk more together. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has not followed up on the dialogue in Tokyo for almost three years. A bilateral task force from the environment agencies, foreign assistance agencies, and the foreign offices is needed so that the three perspectives can be brought to bear together in assuring that the two countries move forward vigorously.



*Former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita greets American Task Force participants. Left to right: Ambassador Richard Benedick, World Wildlife Fund; Lynton Caldwell, Indiana University; John Shlaes, Global Climate Coalition; Takeshita; and Edward Malloy, Minister-Counselor, American Embassy in Tokyo.*



## *Cultural Approaches to Global Environmental Problems*

Dr. Jiro Kondo

*Dr. Kondo is President of the Science Council of Japan. He was Chairman of the government's Advisory Panel on Environment and Culture and remains a key adviser to Japan on environmental ethics.*

**H**ello, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to discuss the potential for agreement between the United States and Japan on environmental ethics.

The idea of sustainable development stems from the report "Our Common Future," by the United Nations World Committee on Environment and Development, which recognized that worldwide cooperation is necessary to solve global environmental problems. Individual sacrifice may be necessary to limit the degradation of the environment. People must be aware that the amount of pollution caused by one person is not negligible. In order to establish the will to make sacrifices for the protection of the environment a common set of ethical standards must be developed. Thus, environmental ethics has captured people's attention. Through ethics, each nation can acquire the discipline to implement environmental agreements. It will not be easy, but negotiators from every country will have to set policy and make agreements that will enable the will and discipline of their peoples necessary to ensure compliance.

The character of a nation, its culture, is in part determined by its natural environment. This is because the climate and landscape of a country profoundly affects the temperament of its people. Tetsuzo Watsuji (1889-1960), professor of ethics at Tokyo Imperial University, published *The Cultural Climate* in 1935, which said that the peoples of the world can be classified into three categories: those who live in monsoon regions; those who live in the desert; and those who live in pastoral areas.

Watsuji wrote that in the monsoon region, which includes India, China, and Japan, the characteristic disposition of its inhabitants is passivity. When hot weather and high humidity are combined, one cannot resist the immense power of nature but only acquiesce to its whims. Patience, therefore, distinguishes the people of the monsoon countries.

Life in the desert is characterized by the constant quest for an oasis or spring to stave off thirst, he wrote, so its people learn to fear the tyranny of nature. Competition for scarce resources leads to violent conflict; only those who are assertive and aggressive survive.

Europe, however, possesses a wide range of climates, from the arctic north to the temperate south. The fertile soil may be converted into productive pasture through the labor of humans. The hand of man shapes the earth for his own benefit, and through careful management the land will yield fruit for generations. It is no surprise, said Watsuji, that under these conditions, Europe gave birth to rationalism.

Watsuji's theory may be criticized as being stereotypical. Nevertheless, we can notice that national characteristics are closely correlated with the local environment. Thus, an individual's view of the environment differs depending on their cultural climate. This diversity of perspective presents a significant obstacle to the development of a universal environmental ethics that is acceptable to all people, regardless of race, religion, or background.

Because of these differences, only science can provide the basis for an ethical approach that is acceptable to all peoples. Since so much remains unknown about our planet, it is imperative that databases and other resources on environmental conditions be developed to disseminate knowledge and establish a common understanding of the global environment.

What is ethics? Ethics is a basic philosophy for the existence of human beings. Humanity, or love of mankind, serves as the foundation for ethics. In order to establish environmental ethics in a global sense, we must recognize that humans are living

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beings coexisting with nature as part of the earth's biosphere.

Expressions of this are found in the Stockholm Declaration of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. The declaration notes the tendency of humans to exploit nature for achieving human prosperity. For sustainable development to succeed, we must abandon this archaic conception of the environment.

Ethics began with the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers, including Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It is the theory of conduct that is concerned with the formation and use of judgment of right and wrong. As the theory of conduct, ethics is concerned with the consequences of an action, not with intention. Philosophy, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with reason and motivation as the basis of action. Thus, ethics is understood as a branch of philosophy, although in many cases it is difficult to distinguish between the two.

After the Greco-Roman period, ethics combined with theology, where love of God was recognized as the supreme perfection. Saint Thomas Aquinas united Aristotelian ethics with the official philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church. Through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, ethics developed particularly in Britain, France, and Germany. One finds familiar names such as Adam Smith, Leibniz, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and others who contributed to the establishment of modern ethics.

In reviewing this history, one is struck by the fact that ethics originated in ancient Greece and developed in Europe. As a Western concept, ethics has nothing to do with Oriental or Arabic thought.

Shinto, meaning the way or teaching of the gods, is the indigenous philosophy of Japan. It was established prior to the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century. In the 1600s, Tokugawa unified the country under his feudal regime, and Confucianism was subsequently established as the model for the behavior of the samurai warrior.

While Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism all coexisted for centuries, it was not until the dawn of Japan's modern age in the 1860s that Japanese philosophers began to study Western science and thinking. It was only then that scholars began examining the teachings of European philosophers, particularly Kant and Hegel, entering them into the Japanese curriculum.

While respecting the diversity of national cultures and philosophical traditions, we must strive to form agreement on the fundamental importance of sustainable development. We must also recognize that science is the only thing that every country, independent of religion, character, or ethnicity, can agree upon as an objective basis for developing a global environmentally friendly culture. In Japan, the government's Advisory Panel on Environment and Culture, which I chaired, met regularly from 1989 to 1991, and issued a document, "Towards the Creation of an Environment-Friendly Culture," that recognizes this fact.

Shared environmental ethics must be acceptable to all nations of the world. Each country cannot be coerced, but should willingly accept standards of behavior. It will not be an easy task, but we must try to do so since we all share the common environment of our planet.



*Jiro Kondo (center right) prepares to address the Task Force. Seated with him from left to right are Lynton Caldwell, Indiana University; James Morley, Columbia University; and Koichiro Fujikura, Tokyo University.*

## APPENDIX B

### *List of Participants*

**Kazuo Aichi**

Former Environment Agency Minister  
Member, House of Representatives

**Nobutoshi Akao**

Ambassador for Global Environmental  
Affairs and Asia-Pacific Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**The Honorable Michael Armacost**

U.S. Ambassador to Japan

**Joanne Bauer**

Director, Japan Programs  
Carnegie Council

**Richard Benedick**

Senior Fellow  
World Wildlife Fund

**Lynton Caldwell**

Professor Emeritus, School of Public and  
Environmental Affairs  
Indiana University

**B. C. Y. Freezailah**

Executive Director  
International Tropical Timber Organization  
(ITTO)

**Koichiro Fujikura**

Professor of Law  
Tokyo University

**Evan Garcia**

First Secretary and Consul  
Philippine Embassy in Japan

**L. Val Giddings**

Senior Geneticist, Biotechnology, Biologics, and  
Chief, International Programs Branch  
Environmental Protection  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Hideki Hara**

The Japan Foundation  
Center for Global Partnership

**Takeshi Hara**

Editor  
Mainichi Shimbun

**Masahiro Hashimoto**

Deputy Director  
Biochemical Industry Division  
Ministry of International Trade and Industry  
(MITI)

**Shinichi Isashiki**

Director, Global Environment Division  
United Nations Bureau  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Masao Itoh**

Director, First Project Operation Division  
The Japan Foundation  
Center for Global Partnership

**Yoriko Kawaguchi**

Deputy Director-General  
Global Environmental Affairs  
Ministry of International Trade and Industry  
(MITI)

**Osamu Kobayashi**

Deputy General Manager  
Plant Siting and Environmental  
Protection Administration  
Tokyo Electric Power Company

**Jiro Kondo**

President  
Science Council of Japan

**Seiji Kojima**

Director, Research and Programming Division,  
Economic Cooperation Bureau  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

*The Politics and Ethics of Global Environmental Leadership*

**Takashi Kosugi**  
Member, House of Representatives  
Chairman, Diet Committee on the Environment

**Edward Malloy**  
Minister-Counselor  
Environmental, Scientific, and  
Technological Affairs  
United States Embassy in Japan

**Akio Morishima**  
School of Law  
Nagoya University

**James Morley**  
Professor Emeritus  
Columbia University

**Takuya Negami**  
Chairman, Global Environment  
Cooperation Task Force, Keidanren;  
Director and Executive Officer, Kobe Steel Ltd.

**John Shlaes**  
Executive Director  
Global Climate Coalition

**Yasuhiro Shimizu**  
Assistant Director  
Environmental Conservation Division  
Environment Agency

**Kazuo Takahashi**  
Program Director  
Sasakawa Peace Foundation

**Shuzaburo Takeda**  
Professor, Faculty of Engineering  
Tokai University

**The Honorable Noboru Takeshita**  
Former Prime Minister  
Member, House of Representatives

**Ken Takeuchi**  
Editor  
Asahi Shimbun

**Sandy Vogelgesang**  
Member, Task Force 2000  
U.S. Department of State

**Hiroyuki Yanagitsubo**  
Executive Director  
Association for the Promotion of International  
Cooperation (APIC)

**Michael Young**  
Deputy Under Secretary for  
Economic and Agricultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

## *OBSERVERS*

**Ian Austin**  
Dames & Moore

**Lena Lindahl**  
GLOBE Japan

**Michael McCabe**  
Office of Environment, Science and Technology  
Embassy of the United States to Japan

**Hiroshi Ohta**  
Columbia University

**Toshio Sato**  
Jiji Press

**Nobuhiro Tsukada**  
Association for the Promotion of  
International Cooperation (APIC)

## Agenda

*U.S.-Japan Task Force on the Environment and the Search for a New World Order*

*second meeting*

# Politics and Ethics in Japanese and American Global Environmental Policy

October 14-16, 1992

Kayu Kaikan • Tokyo, Japan

*Wednesday, October 14*

**14:00 - 15:00 Opening Remarks by Chairman and Introductions**

Meeting Chair **James Morley**, Professor Emeritus, Columbia University

**I. UNCED retrospective: UNCED and Ethics**

What ethical issues arose at Rio? (With regard to the Climate Convention? With regard to the Biodiversity Convention? With regard to the Earth Charter? With regard to Agenda 21?) How well understood are these issues?

Who is setting the standards globally? What degree of global compliance is there or can we predict will be? Where are most of the sacrifices occurring? To what degree are American and Japanese policies responsive to them? Are we reacting as Northern countries? Or as Eastern and Western countries?

Is it important that Japan and the U.S. (and Europe) harmonize views so that we speak with a single voice? Or will this lead to the "consolidation of contentment," making it difficult, if not impossible for developing country voices to be heard? In what cases is harmonization of developed country voices good? In what cases is it harmful?

What affected the outcome, i.e. method of negotiation, other concerns or priorities? What would make discussions more effective? What is the utility of conferences like UNCED? Should more be planned? If so, which issues are more suited for regional or bi-national fora?

What does this experience say about standard-setting and power relations? Are the circumstances likely to change? How do interpretations of the concepts of sovereignty, stewardship and economic beliefs play into the resolution of these conflicts? What are the competing notions of "fairness" and "justice"? How do they affect international environmental diplomacy?

What ethical issues remain to be clarified and what principles need to be formulated? What are the best fora for these discussions?

**15:00 - 15:40 Presenters**

**Michael Young**, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic and Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

**Nobutoshi Akao**, Ambassador for Global Environmental Affairs and Asia-Pacific Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

*The Politics and Ethics of Global Environmental Leadership*

15:40-16:00 Discussant

**Richard Benedick**, Senior Fellow, World Wildlife Fund

16:00-17:00 Open Discussion

18:00-20:00 OPENING RECEPTION

**The Hon. Noboru Takeshita**,  
Former Prime Minister of Japan

**The Hon. Michael Armacost**,  
U.S. Ambassador to Japan

*Thursday, October 15*

**II. UNCED Retrospective: Japan and the United States**

Were the U.S. and Japan allies at UNCED? On what specific items did the United States and Japan agree and disagree and why?

To what extent are the positions of the United States and Japan explained by similarities and differences in ethics? To what extent are they explained by economic and political interest?

Has the environment relationship between Japan and the United States changed significantly over the past two decades? If so, were there external factors that necessitated change or were there changes in internal political relationships?

How does the element of competition affect the role Japan and the United States play in the North-South debate? Does it enhance or inhibit prospects for partnership?

How can we work together to advance those areas where we are in agreement? How should we cope with our differences —by acknowledging the right of each to go its own way, or by setting up some kind of forum for trying to reach more similar or more compatible positions?

9:00-9:40 Presenters

**Akio Morishima**, School of Law, Nagoya University

**Masahiro Hashimoto**, Deputy Director, Biochemical Industry, Ministry of Trade and Industry

**L. Val Giddings**, Senior Geneticist & Chief, Biotechnology, Biologics and Environmental Protection, U.S. Department of Agriculture

9:40-10:00 Discussant

**Kazuo Aichi**, Former Director General, Environment Agency; Member, House of Representatives

10:00-12:00 Open Discussion

**III. Defining "Environment and Development": Japanese and American Perspectives of Rights and Obligations**

What significant new obligations were agreed to at Rio? What differences exist in interpretations of the rights and obligations of states at UNCED?

Are there differences in the ways in which Japan and the United States each define notions of freedom, democracy, sovereignty? Throughout UNCED, have we been talking about the same thing?

What is the present stage of the controversy between enforceability and sovereignty?

How inclined is the U.S. government and how inclined is the Japanese government to make respect for the "rights" laid down by UNCED a primary consideration in its domestic policy? In its foreign policy? What has been the experience so far? What lessons or messages can be drawn from Japanese and American human rights policy as indices of future global environmental policy?

In this matter are there problems between Japan and the United States? If so, how can we resolve them? Are there areas where we can be more mutually supportive? If so what are they and what should they be?

**13:30-14:00 Presenters**

**Sandy Vogelgesang**, Member, Task Force 2000, U.S. Department of State

**Seiji Kojima**, Director, Research and Programming Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**14:00-14:15 Discussant**

**Takashi Kosugi**, Member, House of Representatives; Chairman, Diet Committee on the Environment

**14:15-17:00 Open Discussion**

**18:00-20:00 U.S. EMBASSY RECEPTION**

*Friday, October 16*

**IV. Japan and the United States on Values and the "Ethics of Economics"**

At the first meeting it was acknowledged that while there are traditional values that are sustained in each society (e.g. in Japan, values of loyalty and harmony) other values are changing (e.g. in Japan, patterns of consumption replacing frugality, more vacations replacing a strict work ethic, etc.) Do traditional values lie at the core of Japan's long-term perspective? Have Japan's traditional values been changed or compromised? If so, what has caused this change? What about American collective values? Are American positions more a function of values or politics?

Japan and the notion of "creating values": How can we assess Japan's current ability

to promulgate universal values? What are the implications for Japan's leadership role?

Observers note the decreasing ability of the U.S. in the post cold war era to articulate universal values. How do we account for and understand this? Is it a question of time?

How do differences in U.S. and Japanese perspectives on individual rights and social responsibilities affect ethical judgement? How do differences in perspectives on the present and future consequences of societal choice—intentional or not—affect ethical judgement? In the cases of Japan and the U.S. are there any other factors?

**9:00-9:30 Presenters**

**Lynton Caldwell**, Professor Emeritus, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University

**Jiro Kondo**, President, Science Council of Japan

**9:30-10:30 Open Discussion**

**V. Prospects for Partnership**

Under what circumstances can the U.S. and Japan form a partnership? What would need to happen? Is the prospect of more regional arrangements,—e.g. Japan and Asia, NAFTA—more tenable or useful? What is the likely outcome? What constitutes an effective national environmental strategy in each country?

**10:30-10:50 Presenter**

**Koichiro Fujikura**, Professor of Law, Tokyo University

**10:50-11:45 Open Discussion**

**11:45-12:00 Chairman's Closing Remarks**

**Carnegie Council  
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