The Growing Role of Non-State Actors in International Affairs

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I. The "Civil Society" as a Global Phenomenon

Civil society is a term most Japanese would probably find unfamiliar, but it is heard with increasing frequency in forums for international exchange and dialogue. The closest Japanese translation is *shimin shakai*, which is often used alongside the English term. A civil society is one in which the people are aware of their responsibility to be involved in public issues and are able to actively participate in the promotion of the public good. More recently, it has become common for writers overseas to use the term in conjunction with the promotion, on a worldwide basis, of the nongovernmental, nonprofit sector. In this sense, *civil society* is a general term for organizations and individuals who work to promote the public good from a *civilian* (i.e., civil) standpoint.

The main actors in the civil society are private organizations (further broken down into volunteers, nongovernmental organizations or NGOs, and nonprofit organizations or NPOs), policy research institutions, and international exchange foundations on the one hand, and philanthropists—individuals, organizations, and private foundations that contribute to the public good—on the other.

Much has been made of NGO activities in Japan in recent years. NGOs are private organizations involved in international cooperation, often in areas such as development and the environment. The term has lately been ap-

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plied to volunteer organizations engaged in domestic activities, but the term NPO is more generally used for private organizations working for the public good.

Internationally, there is little distinction made between NGOs and NPOs. Rather, these private organizations are lumped together into what is known as "the third sector," which is neither government nor market oriented. (This often breeds confusion at international conferences because there is a Japanese term that translates as "the third sector" that is used to refer to joint public–private projects.) Another term often heard is "the independent sector." We should note, however, that "civil society" is a broader term that encompasses volunteers and donors as well as organizations like NGOs and NPOs. It refers to the entire range of "unofficial" activities.

Several international projects are attempting to provide a more accurate picture of the scope and activities of the "civil society." Among the most promising is one headed by Professor Lester Salamon of the Institute for Policy Studies at Johns Hopkins University that, since May 1990, has been comparing nonprofit sector activities in twelve different countries.

An outline of his findings was recently published as The *Emerging Sector: An Overview.*[1] A paper discussing his findings also appeared in *Foreign Affairs* under the title "The Rise of the Nonprofit Sector."[2] Salamon argues that the activities of the civil society have seen a dramatic widening of scope on the global level in a phenomenon that he terms an "associational revolution." He goes on to postulate whether this might not have as great an impact on the world of the late twentieth century as the emergence of democratic states did on the late nineteenth century.

One of the assumptions underlying Salamon's comparative studies is that there is growing dissatisfaction with the role of the government and radical skepticism about traditional attempts to conceptualize society in terms of two sectors, the "state" and the "market." He then goes on to point out that the organizations and groups, which make up this third sector—whose format and organization classify them as the private sector, but whose aims lend them a strongly public character—have made great contributions to the solution of a wide variety of problems. They have, however, been largely ignored in academic research and general discussion. Interest is growing in the philosophical significance of the social systems exposed by this sector.

What Professor Salamon and other researchers emphasize is that the ac-

celerated pace of change in domestic and international environments, together with the growing diversity of social needs, has resulted in a proliferation of issues that cannot be addressed with sufficient precision or speed by either the government, which tends to be rigid and obsessed with traditional organizations, or the market economy, which is reaching the limits of its global development. This has expanded the space for action by nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations.

The stupendous efforts of volunteers in supporting the victims of the Kobe Earthquake in January 1995, did much to increase the interest among Japanese government officials and political leaders in the social role of NGOs and NPOs. As encouraging as this is, however, it should be seen within the context of the worldwide development of the civil society.

In point of fact, these private-sector organizations have been growing steadily in Japan over the past several years, and the social space for NGOs, NPOs, and volunteers to make active contributions has widened. Typical areas of activity include nursing care for the elderly, support for foreign workers, internationalization of local communities, and antipollution campaigns. It has become increasingly clear that the government by itself is unable to deal fully with either the growing complexity of social issues or the number of new issues coming to the fore.

The passing of the era of ideological confrontation has made government organizations ever more willing to recognize the activities of NGOs, NPOs, and volunteers. In some cases, most notably the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, government organizations are actually cooperating with private groups. Thus, the potential that the private sector has to contribute to society has recently come to be recognized in Japan also. The Kobe Earthquake and its aftermath provided a dramatic reinforcement of this and gave the civil society in Japan the momentum it needs for further development.

II. The "Civilian" Side Raises New Issues in Diplomacy

In conjunction with the growing interest in the civil society is an increase in discussion of the role to be played by "non-state actors" in foreign relations. Private-level policy research and dialogue in the area of international rela-

tions and private-level international exchange activities go by many names, among them "informal diplomacy," "citizen diplomacy," "people-to-people diplomacy," "supplementary diplomacy," and "grassroots diplomacy." Recently, it has become more common in international circles to emphasize the importance of these various forms of "diplomacy."

Personally, I am somewhat uneasy about the way in which private-level foreign exchange and cooperative activities such as those that I am involved in are lumped together with "diplomacy" in the strict sense of the word. I am firmly of the belief that foreign relations activities pursued from a nongovernmental, nonprofit standpoint generally should not attempt to directly contribute to the resolution of matters of concern between states. Nor should one's activities in these areas be judged in terms of the extent to which they contribute to such solutions.

Nonetheless, it is a fact that, as times change, these nongovernmental activities have become more deeply enmeshed in the maintenance and furthering of foreign relations.

Without getting into an academic debate on what constitutes "diplomacy," it should be obvious that today's "management of international relations" entails a far broader range of activities and efforts than "diplomacy" in the narrow sense of "efforts to maintain relations through negotiation." This situation, to the extent that it is true, creates the impression that "unofficial" activities have become more closely aligned to diplomacy.

One of the reasons commonly pointed to for the stronger ties of nonstate actors to diplomacy is the relative decline in national sovereignty.[3] The major reason given for this is the relative decline in communal awareness of the state due to the collapse of cold war structures and the deepening intermeshing of society at the international level.

Michael Clough of the Council on Foreign Relations has analyzed the American foreign policy decision-making process as having been monopolized by a handful of diplomats and expert groups, which were able to exert control because they were shielded by "threats and prosperity."[4]

During the cold war, there was a domestic consensus that authority needed to be concentrated at the center, first to combat the Soviet threat with military might, and second to achieve the economic muscle needed to exert world leadership. In the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the apparent inability of policy to deal with worldwide recession, however, foreign policy processes have become open to influence by a wide variety of domestic in-

terests groups.

Clough also notes that the globalization of American society has diluted the concept of "national interest," and argues that domestic ethnic groups and "global issue groups" now exert a decisive impact on foreign policy decisions.

Another commonly cited factor is the advance of telecommunications technology, which has made possible direct, instantaneous international communication and thereby weakened the comparative advantage that diplomats and foreign policy bureaucrats used to enjoy in the area of information access. A jointly authored paper by former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance acknowledges that the mass media has joined the Congress as a stronger player in the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy.[5]

The deeper involvement of non-state actors in foreign policy has raised new questions about the way in which diplomacy should be conducted. Obviously, this may at times create tension between the "bureaucracy" and the "civilians," especially in countries like Japan where there is a strong tradition of bureaucratic dominance. The bureaucracy is neither psychologically nor systemically prepared for civilians to be "poaching" on its area of expertise. Thus it exhibits a tendency to "hem in the development of 'civilian' power, only co-opting those activities it views as useful."[6] Still, it goes without saying that there are many within the foreign affairs bureaucracy that are sincerely trying to discover both how to conduct diplomacy for a new age and, from that perspective, build cooperative relations with civilian groups.

On the other hand, the civilian side has its share of people who have been unable to jettison the mentality of ideological conflict and tend to adopt a confrontative attitude toward the government in every situation. Some make so much of the independent nature of their activities as private organizations that they eschew all cooperation with the bureaucracy. Perhaps these tensions are, however, unavoidable in what are, after all, only recently changing circumstances.

Still, the emergence of the civil society is a worldwide phenomenon, and in both Japan and the countries with which it enjoys close ties, this trend can only grow stronger in the future. Thus it is all the more compelling for bureaucrats and civilians to understand the role of non-state actors and the

impact that they will have on the way in which foreign policy is conducted.

That understanding in place, it will be more vital than ever that the government and private sectors probe more deeply for ways in which constructive cooperation can be achieved.

Perhaps because of its newness, this is a topic about which there is very little academic research or literature available, and that dearth of information is an international as well as a Japanese phenomenon. For the remainder of this article, I would like to discuss the trends that can be observed internationally and in Japan in civilian activities to maintain and improve foreign relations. I will then move on to consider the aspects of foreign relations to which civilian organizations are able to contribute. My standpoint will be a practical one gained from twenty-five years of promoting international dialogue and exchange as the leader of one of the few nongovernmental, nonprofit private organizations in Japan. It is my hope that this discussion will in some way help to move research and debate about these issues forward.

III. The Widening Role of "Civilians" and their Comparative Advantage over "Bureaucrats"

There is extraordinary variety in the non-state actors that have deepened their involvement in foreign relations. For example, in the early 1980s many Japanese communities developed "sister city" relationships with communities overseas as a way to promote "local internationalization." Unlike the sister city programs of the past, however, they went beyond the normal exchanges of formalities to engage in educational exchange, exchange of information on shared problems, and economic exchange. In the process, they built with other countries ties that were more practical and direct than anything seen before. Some of these relationships eventually expanded to the point that they were no longer just two-city partnerships, but multi-city cooperative relationships after adopting names such as the "northern bloc" or the "southern bloc." Many of these groups have made palpable contributions to regional development. A more recent trend has been for municipal governments to promote cooperation with developing countries.[7] In the late 1980s, as Japanese corporations began direct investment overseas, set-

ting up operations in the United States and other countries, they became aware of the need to be "good corporate citizens." This resulted in contributions to local nonprofit organizations and programs to promote volunteerism among their employees. These activities did not just benefit the companies; they were also indispensable to foreign relations as a whole.

Though a number of new actors have appeared on the international relations stage, the mainstream of the non-state actors are the nongovernmental, nonprofit policy research institutions, international exchange and cooperation groups, NGOs, and private foundations who make up the "civil society." They are involved in a variety of activities, all of which are oriented toward maintaining and improving international relations or promoting the good of the international community itself. There are also individuals who participate in international activities through these organizations. Heading up the foreign relations activities of local governments are "Internationalization Promotion Associations," nonprofit foundations located in each prefecture and semi-autonomous city. The associations have federated themselves into the "Local Government Internationalization Association." On the corporate side are nonprofit organizations like the Council for Better Corporate Citizenship and the "One Percent Club," which is run by the Keidanren.

Civilian involvement in foreign relations has widened in scope in recent years, making it all the more pressing that we consider the aspects of foreign relations to which these activities contribute or could contribute. Our focus should be on how to take advantage of our civilian nature and our "comparative advantage" over the bureaucracy. This perspective is essential to any discussion of the relationship between civilian and government roles, as well as for any attempt to define priority activities for civilian involvement.

Another perspective to bring to these discussions concerns the current or foreseeable position of Japan in the international community. The fact that Japan, having become an economic power, is now expected to take a more active role in the international community should be an important underpinning to any consideration of international activities on the civilian side.

Take, for example, international exchange. It should be obvious that it is no longer enough to have the goal of "promoting international friendship

and goodwill."[8] Any consideration of future activities must also take into full account changes in the international environment and the changes in international issues that will accompany them. For instance, as we contemplate international activities by the Japanese civilian sector, we must be aware of the development that is taking place in the Asia Pacific region and the increasing importance of this region to the international community.

1. Dialogue on the creation of a New World Order

The extent to which private policy research institutions contribute to the policy decision-making process is already a subject of much discussion. Those working for private-sector think tanks tend to set their goal as impacting national policy directly. Indeed, researchers in the United States often see this as an effective strategy to use when writing requests for financial support to various foundations. The classic model for research institutions is that of the "War and Peace Studies Project" initiated after the end of World War II by the Council on Foreign Relations with financial backing from the Rockefeller Foundation and the blessing of then-Secretary of State Cordell Hull. The project was instrumental in the subsequent establishment of the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. There are, however, many who take a negative view of any direct civilian influence on the process of policy formation. Henry Kissinger declared in his memoirs that in all countries most of the foreign policies held in high historical regard are initiated by the leaders of the country and opposed by the so-called experts.[9]

One of the most widely discussed ideas about think tanks in recent times is their characterization as "brokers of ideas." James Smith, however, derides the idea that experts at research institutions are able on their own to achieve policy changes given today's complex, interlocking network of social science experts, private foundations, civic groups, policy research institutions, and political-level councils. It is, he says, "audacious" and "mistaken."[10]

However, even one as negative about the policy advice of extra-government sources as Kissinger recognizes that think tanks and policy research groups can give a certain "perspective" to the policy process. They provide

vistas and frameworks, he says. A large part of this is because people in the government are often so busy with the issues of the moment that they have no time left over to consider policy from a long-term vantage point. James Smith criticizes the tendency of Washington policy research institutions toward an emphasis on "selling policies" and unending intellectual skirmishes. They should instead, he asserts, place greater emphasis on the process of searching for and educating people about policies that facilitate the accumulation of knowledge and on-going research which promotes organized dialogue between experts, leaders, and citizens, a dialogue that is essential to the premises of a democratic society.[11]

The reason that I emphasize civilian contribution to the creation of a New World Order is because of the need to grapple with this topic now that cold war structures are basically dead and a new interdependency is growing between states. These are times in which civilian groups are able to play an important role in joint international research and dialogue as the civilian level is able to consider national interests from long term wide ranging perspectives. In fact efforts in that direction have already begun in countries around the world. Research institutions from the United States, Europe, and Asia are working together on joint projects regarding these issues and the many international conferences and symposia bring together leaders from academia, research, business, politics, and journalism to debate them. This process will "form an important component of international opinion." Likewise, the participants "are in positions to exercise influence over government and public thought when they return home."[12]

Close cooperation between the bureaucracy and the civilians is possible in this process of research and dialogue. Government officials often attend, in a personal capacity, international conferences where policy is discussed and in many cases make contributions based on their work and experience. The Asian Regional Forum (ARF), a forum for government-level talks on a new framework for the security of the Asia Pacific region, was proposed by Japan in a July 1991 speech to the expanded foreign ministers meeting of ASEAN by then-Foreign Minister Nakayama. This proposal arose out of the activities of ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), a network of five private policy research institutions in ASEAN states. On the other hand, the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific (CSCAP), an organization set up likewise under ASEAN-ISIS

auspices, makes intellectual contributions as the agenda-setter for ARF discussions of regional security issues.

The situation is similar for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which in its fourth ministerial meeting established the Eminent Person's Group to provide advice on the APEC vision. The two reports produced by the council so far have been taken up by summit meetings, earning the council regard as an "agenda-setter" able to influence the content of summit discussions. Japan has also been involved in the establishment of wisemen's groups such as the United States-Japan Advisory Commission and the Korea-Japan Twenty-First Century Committee, which use policy research dialogue to provide "perspectives" and "agendas" to government-level discussions.

2. Dialogue and exchange as vehicles for developing trust

The establishment of APEC has prompted further discussion of the creation of a regional community for the Asia Pacific region. Communities, however, are not something that can be created entirely from government-level protocols and treaties. They require, as a growing number of people now realize, broader personal and organizational networks of trust and cooperation. Certainly the private sector played an enormous role in the rebuilding of the Atlantic community after World War II, as it also did in the process of creating the European Union.[15]

Of particular note is the Bilderburg Conference, which began in 1954 and has been held annually ever since, becoming a symbol of private-level dialogue between Europe and North America. But there are many other channels for European-American dialogue provided by private institutions in dialogue and policy research institutions in the United States, among them the Atlantic Institute, Wilton Park, and the Ditchley Foundation.

Private institutions in Europe and North America also promote dialogue between politicians, and in doing so have played an important role in strengthening U.S.-European relations. Within Europe, the most famous of the private-level dialogue is the Königswinter Konferenz (Anglo-German Conference), which was established in 1950 by a private female citizen. It functions as a forum for private and government leaders in Britain and

Germany and has played a significant role in relations between the two countries.

These forums provide opportunities for heads of state to sit down with private-sector opinion leaders to discuss solutions to policy issues, but even more important perhaps is the chance that participants have to develop networks of personal trust. Indeed, it is this aspect that is generally more valued.

The Shimoda Conference, which began in 1967, is an example of an on-going policy dialogue between Japan and the United States. Another on-going forum is the Trilateral Commission, which was organized in 1973 at a time when Japan was being asked to take on greater international responsibilities as a leading industrial country. The commission holds discussions based on joint research projects. For dialogue between the United States and Asia there is the Williamsburg Conference, which was organized in 1971 under the leadership of the Asia Society.

There are also a number of wisemen's groups that have been established under agreements between the governments of Japan and other countries and which are administered by private-sector institutions. Rather than policy advice per se, these groups generally facilitate policy dialogues and the development of networks among opinion leaders.

The Japan-UK Year 2000 Group was first advocated by a Japanese Foreign Ministry official who was stationed in Britain and was surprised to find that most of the British opinion leaders that he initially came in contact with had attended the Königswinter Konferenz mentioned above. The committee was established under an agreement between the governments of Japan and Britain in 1985 and is run jointly by Chatham House (the Royal Research Institute of International Affairs) and the Japan Center for International Exchange, meeting on a regular basis. The German-Japan Dialogue Forum came about in 1993. That same year, the Japan-Korea Forum and the Japan-Israel Intellectual Exchange were established for the same purposes, all under government-level agreements.

Even though they have been increasing, there are still only limited opportunities for private-level dialogue and exchange designed to build trust between the opinion leaders of Japan and other countries. The need to reinforce the networks between private-sector organizations and leaders is obvious in the Asia Pacific region, which is attempting to build a community, but even here there are only a handful of organized and on-going ef-

forts toward this end. We have already touched on CSCAP, which was organized in 1994 by five ASEAN policy research institutions. This achievement was only possible because the institutions had been holding a series of dialogues and exchanges on security issues since the early 1980s and, in the process, relationships of personal trust had developed between their heads.[14]

We should note that the heads of these institutions together with some of the few intellectual leaders in Asia also contributed to the establishment of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC). The significance of the role to be played by networks of trust among private-sector institutions and leaders in promoting regional cooperation should thus be obvious, and this should inspire deeper recognition of how vital it is that these networks be enhanced if a regional community is to be built.

3. NGOs and participation in international cooperation

Among the members of the civil society, NGOs and volunteers dealing with such global issues as the environment, human rights, refugees, and development have in recent years had a particularly noticeable impact on foreign relations. "The dangers of development and the threat to the environment that had been overshadowed by the specter of atomic warfare have now burst into the limelight, and the inability of national governments to deal with them in an adequate manner has galvanized the NGOs." Further, "the deepening awareness of the interdependence of life, or our sharing a common fate, is changing conventional ideas about national sovereignty."[15] This too is expanding the range open to NGO activities. The reinvigoration of the United Nations coming within this context and the initiatives that it has taken have further promoted NGO international activities.

The UN Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 formally recognized the importance of nongovernmental organizations in the promotion of human rights and all humanitarian activities at the national, regional, and world levels. About half of the budget for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) goes toward the activities of NGOs. In the area of "preventive diplomacy," which has attracted more interest of late, belligerent countries and international institutions are increasingly relying on NGOs to assist in the settlement of ethnic disputes.[16] According to

some estimates, there are about five thousand NGOs from developed countries that are active internationally in a variety of fields.[17]

Ostensibly, people working for NGOs do not represent their countries' interests, but these private-sector organizations do give the people of their countries the opportunity to contribute to activities that benefit the international community and they are generally regarded as playing a role in discharging their countries' "international responsibilities." Sadako Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, recently remarked to a meeting of the Keidanren that while there are more Japanese NGOs seen working in refugee camps, their numbers are still nowhere near those of Europe or North America. This, she noted, gives the impression that Japan is less than enthusiastic about becoming involved. The development of Japanese NGOs, which has been slow compared to other industrialized countries, will be a great stimulus to the more active fulfillment of our international responsibilities as an economic power.

On the other hand, it is often pointed out that transborder ties between NGOs tend toward a relative reduction in national sovereignty. International NGO networks are growing rapidly in many areas, and with them there has been a commensurate growth in NGOs' influence in international affairs. This networking is taking place in many regions; it has been strong in the Asia Pacific region as well.

The general pattern is for NGOs from a single country working in the same area to form cooperative organizations, with these national organizations calling on their counterparts in neighboring countries for cooperation until a regional network eventually evolves. The increasingly common nature of regional issues whether environmental or developmental, has helped to spur this trend forward, and this has, in turn, had a significant influence on the development of community awareness in certain regions.[18]

Cooperative relationships have given NGOs more influence in the domestic decision-making processes of both developing and developed countries, including decisions on foreign policy. In one sense, NGOs play a role in reflecting in policy the interests of the broad, general populace. But the reverse is also true, for they just as often play the role of reflecting the interests of the international community. The participation of Japanese NGOs in these international and regional cooperative networks is an urgent challenge in the maintenance and improvement of Japanese foreign relations.

4. Internationalizing domestic society

From the perspective of civilian involvement in foreign relations, it is not only the opinion leaders but the general populace that requires greater understanding of "diplomacy." Public education is an area that has received more emphasis from private-sector organizations in Europe and North America in recent years. Obviously, governments and their agencies also make "policy announcements," but even people within the government recognize the effectiveness of civilian activities, which are able to present policy options and debates from a more objective standpoint. Far from interfering in these activities, some governments are actively entrusting them to private organizations.

The World Affairs Council, which is active in nearly a hundred major U.S. cities, sponsors seminars and lectures, and even provides materials and teachers to local educational institutions. Major policy research institutions also attempt to provide their research findings to university students. For instance, the Brookings Institution publishes about two hundred thousand copies of its materials each year, of which between forty and fifty percent make their way into the hands of students, usually through their universities.

We have already seen how Japanese municipal and prefectural governments are becoming more involved in internationalization, and more of them are holding seminars on international issues as a way to increase the understanding of the general public.

The countries of Europe and North America have been actively engaged in programs to promote among the leaders of the future an understanding of international relations and contact with people from other countries. One of the groundbreaking programs in this area was the Salzburg Seminar established by Harvard University in Salzburg, Austria in 1947. The seminar, which is held for the "successor generation," had been attended by more than sixteen thousand people as of 1995. Similarly, the Atlantic Brücke established in Bonn in 1951 holds a U.S.-German Young Political Leaders Conference each year.

Exchange between young political leaders in Europe and North America is active, and social interaction is emphasized. These programs, however, basically give the leaders of the next generation opportunities for practical training in foreign relations. The Japan Center for International Exchange

has exchange programs with The American Council of Young Political Leaders and the Australian Political Exchange Council, but these activities are generally very limited.

5. International cooperation by private foundations

Another group that has played a major role in civilian-level foreign relations and has contributed to the solution of common issues facing the international community is private foundations. What should be emphasized here is that the financial support provided by foundations is essential to the groundbreaking, innovative activities undertaken by the civilian sector. Funding from fellow civilians ensures the autonomy of private organizations and enables them to capitalize on their civilian nature. It is private foundations that provide much of the support for the development of the global civil society, with contributions from companies and corporate foundations on the increase.

For example, the Ford Foundation of the United States has a $6.7 billion endowment from which it is able to draw an annual budget of $325 million. Currently, its major emphases are development cooperation and the promotion of democratic values and processes in international relations. To achieve these goals, it is working to strengthen private organizations. Other major American foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the MacArthur Foundation operate under similar guidelines, while in Europe, corporate foundations in Germany and Britain are extremely interested in these world trends. Though still small in absolute terms, private-sector foundations in Japan like the Toyota Foundation or the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the One Percent Club of the Keidanren are helping to increase corporate contributions to organizations and volunteers that make up the civil society.

Not only are foundation and corporate contributions and support becoming more global in nature, international and regional cooperation between those responsible for foundation and corporate contributions is also deepening. The U.S. Council on Foundations is promoting these sorts of cooperative relationships, and an international conference on Asian corporate philanthropy scheduled for Hong Kong in September of this year aims

to promote cooperation between corporate contributors in the United States and Asia. The Independent Sector a council for nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations in the United States, took the lead last year in establishing Civicus, a federation of foundations, NGOs, and volunteer organizations from around the world. In Europe, the European Foundation Centre has commenced a range of activities, while in Asia the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium established in December 1994 promotes philanthropy in this region. Growing international ties between supporter organizations can be expected to lend further strength to the international solidarity of the civil society.

IV. Further Strengthening the Role of Civilian Groups

This article has described the emergence of the civil society as an international phenomenon. It argues that "civilians" are playing a more active role in foreign relations in many countries, and discusses the roles to be played by civilian organizations in maintaining and improving international relations. It should be obvious that major changes are taking place both in the international and domestic social environments. Furthermore, civilian organizations are assuming a greater role in the international community and in relations between states over a wide variety of fields. This trend will only grow stronger in the future. However, as we have already noted, the development of the Japanese civilian sector has fallen markedly behind the expansion of Japan's position in the international community. One must therefore conclude that Japan has been greatly handicapped in its management of foreign relations, and in actively discharging its international responsibilities to cooperate in the resolution of global-scale issues.

As a responsible power, Japan is expected to cooperate with and contribute to international intellectual efforts to search for new international and regional orders. Japan is greatly constrained, however, by its lack of independent institutions and researchers who are able to participate actively in these efforts, from the long-term vantage point and free, unfettered thinking of a nongovernmental, nonprofit position. Japan may participate in the networks of trust that are developing among opinion leaders around the world, but it has few private organizations that are able to serve as catalysts

for this and it must content itself with being "underrepresented." One of the principal reasons for this is the relative lack of people who are committed to the necessary political perspectives, who maintain the deep personal relationships required for admission to these networks, and who are able to intellectually engage the people they are dealing with. This is unfortunate, for there are many instances when broad human ties reaffirmed by shared values and goals, have contributed greatly to the stabilization of relations between states.

The same is true of international cooperation between NGOs engaged in global issues. Being relatively undeveloped, Japanese NGOs are not able to participate or make contributions to a level commensurate with Japan's international position. The lack of private funding to promote the civil society, funding from foundations and other organizations dominated neither by the bureaucracy nor by the markets, has forced Japanese research institutions and core NGOs to turn to private foundations in the United States and other countries for a considerable portion of their support.

We have seen the potential for cooperation between the private sector and the bureaucracy in the international activities of the civil society and the expansion, in some senses, of their mutually complimentary relationship. In fact, it is often the case that the civilian side takes the lead in activities, but their significance is enhanced by the participation of the bureaucracy. It goes without saying that the government officials who are able to make such contributions are people who can draw on their experiences while still maintaining their personal opinions and dealing with others from a position of intellectual integrity.

For research institutions with direct ties to the government, the ability to participate in a meaningful way in international networks of institutions will depend on how independent they are, how much emphasis they put on substance, how tolerant they are of a variety of opinions, and how well they are able to maintain their own ties with foreign scholars, researchers, and opinion leaders.

But however many talented bureaucrats we have who are able to contribute to civilian activities and however many government-related research institutions we have that are able to transcend the impediments thrown up by their government ties, we will not be able to overcome our handicap in foreign relations unless we fundamentally strengthen the Japanese civilian

sector to keep pace with the dramatic expansion of civilian activities around the world. There are many new needs emerging in international relations that the bureaucracy alone will not be able to deal with and this, we would note, is further expanding the areas of contribution for the civilian sector.

Having reached this point in the discussion, we are forced to examine the issue of whether the Japanese bureaucracy is an impediment to the development of the civil society. Indeed, it is a fact that the efforts of volunteers during the Kobe earthquake triggered a rising chorus calling for the government to grant corporate status and tax-free contribution privileges to more nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations. Certainly, people involved in these activities see the Kobe earthquake as a catalyst that will help lay the proper foundations for the advancement of the civil society. The government has responded to recent debate in the Diet by establishing a "Ministerial Coordination Committee on Volunteer Issues," which is basically seen as a positive step, whatever reservations there may be that any hasty legislation by the government may be a step backwards and result in new regulations on support for volunteer and civic groups.

On the other hand, the Kobe tragedy also underlined the fact that there is ample space in Japan for volunteer groups and NGOs to develop, while forcing the government to recognize the potential of these civilian organizations to contribute to society. What civic groups need to be doing now is not asking for more support and understanding from the bureaucracy, but working on their own to deepen the general public's understanding of the comparative advantages that civilian groups have over the government.

Doing this will require, more than anything else, a strengthening of civilian activities. This means deepening the expertise of these nongovernmental, nonprofit groups, as well as promoting greater organization. Commissioner Ogata emphasizes that the reason the UNHCR seeks the cooperation of NGOs in aiding refugees is because NGOs are experts, and they are organized. It was because of the existence of such professional organizations that dialogue between the United States and Europe has continued throughout the post-war years into the present. Obviously, however, any private organization receiving tax breaks or using government funds for the public good incurs a duty to obey certain rules as well as an obligation to be accountable, particularly as regards the transparency of its finances.

We must eliminate the inconsistencies of complaints on the one hand

about overly compartmentalized government administration and, on the other, turf wars between different civilian groups. What is required is the tolerance and strength to share experiences and results and to develop wide cooperative ties—ties that include the bureaucracy. In other words, the civilian side should work itself to achieve professionalism, organization, transparency, and cooperativeness, for only then will it be able to win the cooperation of the bureaucracy, not as a supporter, but ultimately, as a partner.

As civilian organizations and leaders tread this difficult path of self-improvement, their greatest help will come from other domestic and foreign organizations and people who share their aims. We need not further belabor how networks such as this are already expanding around the world. These cooperative activities will enable civilian groups to augment each other's capacities and amplify each other's voices. Indeed, it is only when Japan plays a larger part in the international civil society that the civil society in Japan will be able to consolidate its ground.

When this happens, Japan will be more open to the outside world, and its people more aware of their responsibilities. Its government and people will also assume a more active role in the international community and be more engaged in the solution of global problems. Above all else, however, Japan will become a country with many trusted friends overseas.

The development of Japan's civil society is both a rising issue in foreign relations and an area that generates great expectations within the international community.

Notes

1. Lester M. Salamon and Helmut Anheier, *The Emerging Sector: An Overview* (The Johns Hopkins University, Institute of Policy Studies, 1994).
2. July/August 1994 issue. Japanese translation published in *Chuo Koron*'s October 1994 edition as *Fukushi kokka no suitai to hi-eiri dantai no daito*.
3. Several books and papers have been published on this topic recently. Among the best are: David Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson (eds.), *The Limits of State Autonomy: Societal Groups and Foreign Policy Formulation* (Westview Press, 1993); *Our Global Neighborhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance* (Oxford University Press, 1995); and John Farrington and David J. Lewis (eds.) *Non-Governmental Organizations and the State in Asia* (Routledge, 1993).
4. Michael Clough, "Grass-Roots Policy Making: Say Good-Bye to the 'Wise Men,'" in *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 1994).
5. Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance, "Bipartisan Objection for American Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1988).
6. Yoichi Funabashi, "NGOs as a Force for Civilian Power: How the 'Associational Revolution' is Changing the World," [*Shibirian pawa toshite no NGO*], in *Kokusai Koryu*, the quarterly journal of the Japan Foundation (January 1995, No. 66).
7. *Report on Survey of International Cooperation By Local Public Organizations: Towards Full-fledged Promotion of Municipal-level International Cooperation* [*Chiho kokyo dantai ni okeru kokusai kyoryoku no arikata ni kansuru chosa kenkyu hokokusho—Jichitai kokusai kyoryoku no honkakuteki suishin ni mukete*]; (Jichi Sogo Center, March 1995).
8. For a detailed discussion of the changes over time in the goals of civilian international exchange activities see my article "The Private Sector Role in International Exchange" [*Kokusai koryu ni okeru minkan no yakuwari*], in *Kokusai Koryu* (January 1995, No. 66).
9. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Little, Brown & Co., 1982), p. 445; see also the Japanese translation, *Kisshinja—Gekido no jidai* (Shogakkan, 1982).
10. James Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (The Free Press, 1991), p. 230.
11. Ibid. p. 237.
12. Itaru Umezu, "Report from the Front Lines of Intellectual Exchange" [*Chiteki koryu genba hokoku*], in *Gaiko Forum*, April 1995.
13. For a detailed analysis of the role and functions of private organizations in the development of European-American relations, see *The Role of Philanthropy* [*Firansuropi no yakuwari*], a report prepared by the Japan Center for International Exchange for the National Institute for Research Advancement in 1988.

14. Herman Joseph S. Kraft, "*Security Studies Institutes in ASEAN: Trends in the Post–Cold War Era,*" in Paul Evans (ed.) *Studying Asia Pacific Security,* (University of Toronto-York University Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, 1994), p. 22.
15. Funabashi, op. cit.
16. John Stremlau, "Antidote to Anarchy," *The Washington Quarterly,* (Winter 1995).
17. Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss, *Non-State Actors in International Organizations: Democratization of Global Governance* (Brown University, 1994).
18. Tadashi Yamamoto (ed.), *Emerging Civil Society in the Asia Pacific Community: Nongovernmental Underpinnings of the Emerging Asia Pacific Regional Community [Ajia taiheiyo chiiki kyodotai no kihon toshite no minkan hi-eiri katsudo no jittai chosa]* (Japan Center for International Exchange and Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 1995).