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## **CULCON and the 21st Century**

Mr. Glen S. Fukushima  
Vice Chairman, US CULCON Panel

Thank you for your comments, Mr. Enoki. I believe I represent the US CULCON members in saying that we deeply appreciate and encourage your positive and constructive point of view. My comments will be brief.

CULCON has had many successes since its formation in 1962. It has served to focus both official and public attention on the important cultural underpinnings of the US-Japan relationship. It has worked to encourage translations, to improve the respective images of the two countries in each other's textbooks and media, to promote sharing of museum exhibits and documents, and to stimulate exchanges of educators, journalists and artists. In so doing, it has helped lay the foundation of friendship and trust that now forms the basis of the important security, political and economic relationship that the United States shares with Japan.

CULCON was created in an environment dramatically different from today's. The post cold war era in which we find ourselves has meant a fragmentation of the world political scene, diversification of United States and Japanese interests and a turning inward by both the United States and Japan.

Security, politics, economics, science and culture -- on all of these fronts it is vital that the relationship between our two countries be cooperative and mutually beneficial. A central problem confronting the bilateral relationship is the imbalance or asymmetry in each of these areas.

CULCON is uniquely positioned to address certain aspects of this imbalance in the changing environment of the bilateral relationship. It has begun to do so more actively. For example, we are trying to increase significantly the number of US undergraduates studying the language and culture of Japan. We would like to see more American and other foreign faculty members teaching in permanent positions in Japanese private and public institutions of higher learning. And we are trying to make each others' electronic information more accessible so that researchers, students, business persons and policy makers can make better-informed decisions.

Non-governmental organizations, NGO's, and the private sector are an increasingly strong presence in the arena of cultural relations. With its membership comprising both private and public representatives, CULCON should be encouraged to take advantage of this growing interest and seek new ways to promote collaboration.

With funding constraints in both countries a hard reality, this is not only prudent but necessary.

We began a process of modernizing CULCON in 1991, when the two sides agreed to abolish the old format of eight standing committees, institute task forces and establish permanent secretariats. This has enabled us to focus on specific issues of high priority. It has enabled us to move beyond recommendations alone to the implementation of those recommendations. That has all been extremely positive.

How do I see CULCON in the 21st century? We all agree that CULCON should be strengthened. That will be achieved either through funds for projects or a place at the policy table. As it is, CULCON is limited in its funds and authority. A significant increase in funds is unlikely, given budgetary environments here and in Japan. Therefore, a greater role in policy-setting discussions is the only viable solution. This means that CULCON must take on the task of actively addressing the important policy questions in cultural, educational and intellectual affairs between our two countries.

How shall we do this? I believe CULCON needs to continue to address a few issues at a time, ones that are concrete, specific and task-oriented. If CULCON wants more authority, it must earn it by actively identifying and addressing not the doors that are already open and heavily trafficked, but those that are closed or nearly closed. We need to examine those issues that are not getting enough attention, and that either are ignored or are not readily addressable by non-governmental organizations.

I also believe these issues are best addressed in a more informal setting than the formal plenary sessions that we have had since the beginning of CULCON. To have a freer and more productive exchange of ideas our meetings should be more frequent and less formal. This flexible scheduling will also benefit us in two additional ways: funding might be more productively used in smaller-scale events; and it will help CULCON keep pace with the world. In this age of the Internet, the two years between our plenary sessions is an eternity.

Let me conclude, Mr. Enoki, by saying that I fully welcome your positive and constructive comments. CULCON has a proud legacy of accomplishments over the past 35 years. It is our task now to ensure that, working together, we maximize our contribution to the enhancement of the special relationship between our two great countries, Japan and the United States.

Now, Mr. Enoki and I would like to encourage a lively discussion among our fellow CULCON members on the subject of our initial remarks, "CULCON and the 21st Century."