

## From New Delhi by Paul Zykofsky

### Relations with Japan improve

*A visit to Mrs. Gandhi from the founder of the Mitsubishi Research Institute pointed up the potential.*

**D**uring the past year there have been encouraging developments in the improvement of relations between India and Japan, the two great Asian nations. The visit of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to Japan, the visit of Japanese Foreign Minister Sakarauchi to India, and the meeting of the Indo-Japan Study Council in New Delhi on Nov. 9 are all steps toward increased cooperation. One of the participants in the Indo-Japan Study Council Meeting, Masaki Nakajima, represents a small but influential grouping amongst Japanese leadership circles who are enthusiastically encouraging the Japanese government—and business circles—to step up their interest in and attention to India.

Relations between Japan and India could become the most crucial bilateral question in Asia, one which might determine the region's political stability and development potential in the 1980s. The two nations combined represent the largest concentration of industrial capacity and skilled manpower in a region that comprises two-thirds of the world's population. Both nations have close relations with Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia. Southeast Asia would be a natural area for Japan and India to collaborate in aiding economic development.

Up to now, numerous factors have combined to create a political gap between Japan and India, including diverging bilateral relations with the superpowers and a not-insignificant fear on the part of many Japanese that India could emerge in future years as Asia's

economic superpower supplanting Japan.

In recent years, however, as East-West tensions have grown, a large degree of respect has emerged in Japan for India's non-aligned foreign policy as an important factor in maintaining world peace. The common perception in both countries that economic cooperation among nations is the foundation for world peace has helped catalyze the recent trend toward increased cooperation.

Mr. Nakajima, who met Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during his visit to New Delhi, is the founder of Mitsubishi Research Institute (the largest private think tank in Japan), and the author of a grand plan for North-South relations. He has called on the advanced countries to create a new independent fund, the Global Infrastructure Fund (GIF), to carry out "super-projects" in the developing sector.

Mr. Nakajima spoke in Delhi at the Indian International Center about his plan and about his views of India, and talked later to Indian journalists.

He told his New Delhi audience that "a few weeks ago I had an opportunity of talking to a few internationally minded persons who are all leaders in Japanese industry, and I asked them what country would be the best judge and moderator of the West and East of the world—and got a unanimous conclusion. The answer was India. . . .

"For the establishment of the GIF, we asked the world to take up peaceful

construction instead of wars. That means the transfer of armament monies to peaceful construction. It means some sort of disarmament policy, but it is not simple disarmament; it is substantial disarmament for peace."

Nakajima is also a former head of Mitsubishi Bank and Mitsubishi Steel Corporation. Over the period of two decades, his GIF would spend \$25 billion a year outside the World Bank-IMF system, which he calls "money-oriented" in their approach, to finance giant infrastructure projects, mainly in the power, transportation and irrigation areas. He has suggested 12 project ideas, including a major hydroelectric project in the Himalayas at the headwaters of the Brahmaputra River. Nakajima, who has been promoting this plan since 1977-78, has substantial backing from Japanese industrialists, intellectuals and economists, as well as certain politicians like former Prime Minister Fukuda. Nakajima expressed a deep appreciation of India and Indian culture. Nakajima speaks of his admiration of Indian civilization, and his heroes Asoka and Akbar, and how he read when he was young the dialogues of the Upanishad. In his New Delhi lecture, he recalled that, "About 50 years ago I was a student at the University of Tokyo studying political economy. In those days the Indian nation was struggling to acquire independence, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore were favorite names admired by young Japanese. The independence of new India was really an historical issue of mankind. You were the leadership of the newly-born countries. You condemned the colonial days of the old system."

*This column was adapted from an article that first appeared in the Indian weekly New Wave.*