

DIJ Forum



In its series of public lectures, the German Institute for Japanese Studies will present on

Thursday 18 May 2006, 18.30 h

Professor Richard J. Samuels
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Japanese Grand Strategies: Past and Future

The history of Japanese security policy is one of periods of debate punctuated by a broad consensus. Once secure at home, Japan's leaders have constructed a coherent national security strategy on three separate occasions and are in the process of doing so again today. Each time they have had to deal with similar choices – Should Japan be closer to Asia or the West? Would Japan be safer if it were big or if it were small? Is wealth a prerequisite for, or the result of strength? And each consensus has come out differently.

Japan has long been doing what all states do to reduce risk and optimize gain in an uncertain world – it has hedged. It is not yet ready to let go of the United States – and, indeed, it may never wish to do so. But while Japan seems to be allowing itself to become more reliant than ever on the United States for military security, its dependence is balanced by new economic opportunities and greater military capability. Viewed this way, hedging is not only a way for Japan to reduce risk, but is also a way to create options. It is likely that when the repositioning and debates currently underway are resolved, Japan will not only have provided itself more security options than it now enjoys, but it will have done so on its own terms.

Richard J. Samuels is Ford International Professor of Political Sciences and Director of the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he is also Founding Director of the MIT Japan Program. He is also Chairman of the Japan-US Friendship Commission, an independent federal agency.

His most recent books are *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (2003) and *Rich Nation Strong Army: National Security and the Technological Transformation of Japan* (1994) – both from Cornell University Press.

The lecture will be given in English. It will take place on **Thursday 18 May 2006 at 6.30 p.m.** at the DIJ. Admission is free, space is limited, so please register with Ms. Dinkel at the DIJ.