

# Report of the Investigating Committee for the Relocation of the Diet and Other Organizations (Summary)

December 13, 1995

---

## Chapter 1: Reasons for intentions to relocate the national capital functions

- The history of Japan and other countries shows that relocation of the capital functions (the political center of a country) is an extremely effective means of ushering in a new age. Japan is now on the verge of relocating its national capital functions in the interest of vigorous promotion of reform in all aspects of national government for the 21st century. This would be the first such relocation that is not a result of a transfer of power at the top or military struggle, but instead derives from peaceful considerations.
- The current national capital of Tokyo is saddled with traffic congestion, a shortage of affordable housing, and various other serious urban problems spawned by gigantism and high density of population and resources. It is also relatively vulnerable to earthquakes and other disasters, and puts constraints on activities of international politics. In these and other ways, it is reaching its limits as a national capital.

### 1. Reform of Tokyo-centered structure

Beginning in the Meiji era, Japan threw itself into the task of nourishing the national strength, building a strong military, increasing production, and developing industry. This program was a concerted effort by the public and private sectors, and revolved around Tokyo. Reformation of this disposition would help to eliminate Tokyo-centered perspectives and mitigate gravitation to Tokyo on the part of people and enterprises.

### 2. Establishment of new political and administrative system

By relocating political and administrative functions on its own initiative, the government would promote the physical separation of the country's political and administrative center and its economic center. The relocation would therefore provide drive for deregulation, decentralization, and other aspects of wholesale reform.

### 3. New round of economic advancement

Investment for the construction of the new city would encourage a wide-ranging

expansion of the domestic demand and sustained technological innovation. This would have far-flung economic effects reaching outside as well as inside Japan and persisting into succeeding generations. In addition, by helping to rectify trade imbalances, the construction would contribute to easing economic friction with other countries.

#### 4. Reorganization of national spatial structure

The relative decline in its position in this context would lessen the gravitation to Tokyo and break the syndrome of snowballing concentration. It would also assist the formation of a more multilayered, multiuse network of communications and transport.

#### 5. Reinforcement of resilience to disasters

The national capital functions would be relocated to a site where there is little possibility of occurrence of an earthquake or other large-scale disaster at the same time as in Tokyo. The relocation would therefore disperse risk and increase the national resilience to disaster. Moreover, effective use of sites vacated as a result of the relocation would contribute to improving Tokyo's ability to resist disaster.

## **Chapter 2: Subjects of relocation**

- In the interest of simplicity and efficiency in government, the scope of functions to be relocated would be kept to a minimum in order to avoid inducing a new concentration in the new city.
- Of the National Diet functions, the subjects of relocation would include the House of Representatives, the House of Councillors, the secretariats and legislative bureaus of each house, offices of Diet member secretaries, and the National Diet Library.
- Of the administrative functions, the subjects of relocation would include the Cabinet, policymaking functions of a highly central nature, and central functions of crisis management. These should be relocated at the same time as the National Diet.
- Of the judicial functions, the subjects of relocation would include the Supreme Court. This should be relocated at the same time as the National Diet and the central administrative functions.
- Division of key nodal capital functions between two sites is not recommended.
- This is because such functions would have to be exercised in an integrated manner in order to assure the government's smooth operation.

## Chapter 3: Description of new city

### 1. Image of new city

- The goal is a new city that is open to the people of Japan and other countries. It would be constructed as a symbol of Japan's intended course, a new type of political and administrative city, and a full-fledged hub of international politics.
- The new National Diet building would have a design befitting the highest institution of national authority and yet give an impression of openness to the people. In front of it would be a square with lawns and waterside facilities for free assembly by the public, symbolizing its status as the heart of a democratic Japan.
- Set off by water and greenery, the central offices zone would contain an expansive layout of buildings and have an appearance that manages to be congenial and accessible as well as dignified. In their coloration and form, buildings would exhibit a distinctive character even while meeting basic guidelines.
- The new city would aim for a high degree of mobility while remaining human-centered and environment-friendly. It would be equipped with means of public transportation that show concern for street-side appearance and with an airport able to accommodate special aircraft for heads of countries. Transportation terminals and street corners would be signposted in several languages.
- The commercial and business zones would be cosmopolitan centers of bustling activity. Residential areas would constitute life environments that are pleasant as well as convenient.
- High-order information and communications facilities would be incorporated into the new city's urban infrastructure.

### 2. Scale and configuration

- While specifications of size could be modified depending on conditions at the site, the new city would measure about 9,000 hectares, assuming a maximum population of about 600,000 and construction from scratch.
- The new city would consist of several small urban areas centered around the zone containing the National Diet and other central governmental offices. The configuration would therefore be one of a cluster of small communities around a central city.
- The image of the new capital in spatial terms would be one of a group of small cities with populations ranging from 30,000 to 100,000, floating like an island in a sea of green, and with natural tracts stretching for a few tens of thousands of hectares around.

## Chapter 4: Promotion of the relocation

### 1. Phase 1

- The construction of the new city would be a long-term project. It would be promoted in phases for flexible adaptation to reform in all aspects of national government and any changes in the socioeconomic situation occurring in the interim.
- As the highest institution of national authority, the National Diet should be relocated during the Phase 1.
- This would exemplify the government's initiative in promoting the relocation.
- Besides the National Diet, Phase 1 should also see the relocation of the minimum requisite functions, including the Cabinet and policymaking divisions of the various ministries and agencies, to avoid impairing the smooth operation of government. During this stage, the new city would have a population of about 100,000 and cover about 2,000 hectares.
- The project should aim for holding the National Diet in the new city by about the tenth year after the start of construction. To this end, it would undertake the construction of the Diet building, other governmental buildings, and other facilities related to capital functions as well as housing, lodging accommodations, and the international airport.
- In the process of relocation, facilities of transportation and communications would be installed to smoothen the relocation and functioning during the temporary period of division between the new city and Tokyo.
- An information center and other disaster prevention facilities would be promptly constructed in the new city in order to establish a back-up information setup for the current system of preparedness for earthquakes and other disasters in Tokyo.

### 2. Systems and techniques for construction of new city

- Because of its special public dimension deriving from its purpose of constructing a new city, the project should incorporate resolute systems and techniques.
- The new city would need to have an appearance befitting the political and administrative heart of a country and also effect a relationship of harmony and symbiosis with the natural setting. In this connection, the whole area should be viewed as a garden city belonging to the national citizenry, and a public entity should acquire as much of the land as possible. At the same time, it should adopt a lease holding system, whereby the public entity retains land ownership rights and controls the form of land use through lease contracts.
- Steps would need to be taken for advance prevention of land speculation in the relocation site and candidate sites and to promote land acquisition. There is a

need for effective use of large tracts of government-owned and other public land and for cooperation with the existing local communities.

- The national government would have to apply itself to the construction of the new city as a primary matter of its responsibility. It also would have to establish a formidable system for promotion of the work in an integrated and consistent manner throughout the entire area and the whole construction term.
- The project would have to move ahead in accordance with a fair and transparent process. It would have to bring together first-rate ideas and technology from both inside and outside Japan and breed an atmosphere of involvement by each and every citizen.
- In light of the need for coordinated promotion over a large area and of the rapid increase in demand for various urban administrative services, there would have to be fully adequate studies of the division of roles between the national government and local public bodies.
- The construction of the new city would basically be a job undertaken on the national responsibility. As such, the national government would have to furnish a proper level of support for the burden imposed on local public bodies, etc. There is a need for in-depth study of means for assuring the required financing.

## Chapter 5: Location of new city

### 1. Criteria in selection of location

- In light of the fundamental idea behind the relocation, the target image, and considerations associated with the relocation process, the following nine items are basic and special criteria that should be applied in selection of the location, and construction, of the new city.

#### (1) Location in Japanese archipelago

The site must not represent a great disparity of access from all parts of Japan.

#### (2) Distance from Tokyo

The site must be from about one to two hours (by train), and from about 60 to 300 kilometers, away from Tokyo. However, it must not be part of the greater Tokyo metropolitan area.

#### (3) International airport

The site must be served by an airport that is (or would be) capable of handling the craft of heads of various countries, that is no more than about 40 minutes' travel time from the center of the site, and that would definitely be placed into service no later than ten years from now.

#### (4) Ease of land acquisition

The site must enable prompt and smooth acquisition of large tracts of land.

- About 2,000 ha during the Phase 1 only
- Land suitable for development of a group of cities with a final combined population of about 600,000 at maximum

#### (5) Safety from earthquakes and other disasters

Sites that are at risk of serious damage in the event of a major earthquake are to be avoided, as are sites in which volcanic eruptions could cause decisive damage.

#### (6) Safety against other natural disasters

Full provisions must be made to see that the occurrence of natural disasters does not greatly disrupt activities in the new city.

#### (7) Quality of terrain, etc.

Sites at very high elevations or with terrain containing steep slopes are to be avoided.

(8) Stability of water supply

Sites in which the emergence of a city with a population of 600,000 could put more of a strain on the water supply than does the current national capital are to be avoided.

(9) Distance from other cities

The site must be far enough away from cabinet-designated cities so that it would not be affected by “urban sprawl” from them. Sites that are more than 300 kilometers from central Tokyo could be considered if they are equipped with great advantages in respect of the other criteria.

2. Method of selection

- Efforts would have to be made to build a consensus on the relocation and site selection among the national populace and the local communities at the site. The site is to be selected through a fair and transparent procedure.
- Ultimately, the site selection will be formally made by the National Diet. In advance of this formal determination, an impartial selection body composed of specialists should be established for selection of candidate sites.



## **Chapter 6: Timing of relocation**

- Within the next roughly two years, the selection body will select two or more candidate sites, and the National Diet will make a formal selection.
- The construction of the new city would begin by the start of the 21st century and would symbolize the winds of reform in all areas of national government in the spirit of the new century.
- The National Diet would be held in the new capital beginning no more than about ten years after the start of construction.

## Chapter 7: Fresh beginning for international city of Tokyo

- The excessive concentration of population, facilities, and services in Tokyo is inviting an imbalance in national land use. The associated congestion is causing a host of problems and inducing economic inefficiency. The relocation of functions associated with Tokyo's status as the national capital would concern only a scant share of its total population, facilities, and services. Over the medium and long terms, however, even this minimal decentralization could go a long way in alleviating the overconcentration.
- Although the nurturing of cities into cores of business in their respective regions is an important policy in this connection, there are limits to its effectiveness for extensive resolution of the problem of overconcentration in Tokyo. As such, it would have to be joined by relocation of national capital functions.
- The relocation would have to be used to stimulate a new phase of advancement for Tokyo as an international capital. The national government, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and other concerned parties should make arrangements for preparation of a program for appropriate use of the roughly 210 hectares of land, mainly in central Tokyo, vacated by the relocation. The program must consider contribution to reinforcement of Tokyo's resilience to large-scale disasters, improvement of measures to make it a better place to live and work, and the remaking of economic, cultural, and transportation schemes from an international perspective as appropriate for a world-class city.
- Even after the formal relocation, Tokyo could continue to function alongside the new city as a main area of Japanese politics and diplomacy for a few decades. Thereafter as well, it would presumably continue to shine with pride as Japan's economic center, supported by a history of urban life and cultural activities going back to the old feudal capital of Edo.