Japanese firms continuing investments in the real-estate markets, the Persian Gulf crisis, the favourable publicity and restrictions on foreign investments, negative media coverage, and the difficulties facing U.S. investment institutions.

Japanese investors are expanding their golf course purchases from the traditional targets of Hawaii and California. Recent buys have been in such locations as Idaho, Washington, Massachusetts, Colorado, Florida and Louisiana. Hidden Lakes Country Club, an 18-hole course in Sandpoint, Idaho, about 60 miles from the Canadian border, was purchased for undisclosed investors. Some were said to be Japanese.

The new owners intend to renovate and upgrade the facility.

The $28.6-million Indian Summer Golf and Country Club in Lacey, Wash., is scheduled for completion in 1992 and a golf school in Lacey also is planned.

In Massachusetts, Cape Cod Golf Properties, a subsidiary of the Nakamoto Group of Kobe, Japan, bought Holly Ridge Inc., which owns the Ridge Club, a 36-hole golf and residential community.

The Japanese have been very active in Florida and Louisiana. Turtle Creek Golf Club, near Rockledge, Fla., was sold in February to Tokyo businessman Shigeo Sekiya. Sabal Point Country Club in central Florida went for $5.5 million in March, and Sweetwater Country Club near Longwood, in Seminole County, was sold in April. The buyer was not revealed, but it may have been Japanese.

The Country Club of Louisiana is about to be sold for $20.5 million to Japanese businessman Hiroshi Furui. Other Japanese-owned courses in Louisiana include Le Triomphe Country Club, Broussard and Meadowlakes Country Club.

Colorado has also captured Japanese attention. Tokyo developer Kei Fujiki hoped to buy South Ridge Golf Course from the city of Fort Collins May 16, but the $8.2-million deal fell through because of a last-minute problem.

In La Veta, in the southern part of Colorado, Nihon Unix Co. Ltd. of Tokyo bought the 18-hole Grande Golf Club and Country Club. The reported purchase of $2.5 million is said to be a conservative figure.

In the Denver suburb of Englewood, Meridian Golf Course is believed a target of Central Sports of Japan.

Japanese investors seem to have switched from purchasing premium courses at premium prices in premium states to buying bargain courses at bargain prices in bargain states.

Golf is expected to remain high. The Japanese have agreed to buy Grandview Golf & Country Club and Meridian Golf Club in Colorado and Holly Ridge Golf Club in Sandwich, Mass., the first Japanese foray into New England.

There is a burgeoning of golf worldwide and the Japanese will continue to acquire golf courses," DeMyer said. "Japanese memberships will continue to impact the worldwide golf market into the next century.

"There don't believe in the Reagomics of Japanese golf. It will probably not trickle down much further than the top tier of the market. The rest of the market will depend on the old tried-and-true valuation method of cash flow."

EFFECT OF JAPANESE MARKET ON U.S.

Japan is a nation of 125 million people using 1.800 domestic golf courses. America has roughly twice as many people, but six times as many golf courses. "Compared to the United States, Japan has, and always will have a short supply of golf courses relative to the population," DeMyer said.

The number of rounds increased 7 percent annually from 1979-89, reflecting the Japanese growing love of golf. More courses are expected to open in 1991 than in any other single year in Japan. But environmental concerns, astronomical land prices and high interest rates will limit Japan's potential capacity to about 2,300 courses, DeMyer said.

"We foresee a long-term inability of the Japanese to meet their own golfing needs," he added. Private country club memberships have increased dramatically during the last decade. A survey of 685 country clubs in Tokyo revealed membership prices many times higher than in the United States. The difference is due, in part, to the types of memberships in the two countries.

Japanese memberships are an investment as much as a right to play. They are traded like securities, which buoy their price. Membership costs could drop in the near future, as they did for a short time in 1988, DeMyer said, reflecting the increase in course supply.

Japanese clubs that grab headliners are those with memberships of $1 million or more. But they are the minority. The greatest demand is for courses with membership costs below $200,000. A survey of courses scheduled to open in 1991 showed most in the $100,000 to $250,000 range with those between $250,000 and $500,000 still popular.

Importantly for would-be sellers or developers of U.S. golf properties, "We anticipate a re-trenching on the borders of Japan over the next few years as the supply of golf courses tries to catch up with the demand," DeMyer said. "During that time, overseas membership clubs targeted to the Japanese aren't likely to perform at their hoped-for levels. During the last few years, we may see a resurgence in Japanese tourism and golf activity outside of Japan." Still, higher prices for existing courses, joint ventures or selling memberships in Japan are not out of the question. Most U.S. clubs that have sold memberships in Japan are located in Hawaii and already owned by the Japanese. More membership sales are possible in Hawaii, which the Japanese can visit for a short vacation or long