****　**Opening Remarks**

**HASEGAWA Koichi**

I would like to thank you all very much for attending today.

The Japan PuPo 2017 for discussing the U.S.-Japan Nuclear Cooperation Agreement and Japan’s plutonium policy is taking place just one month after the inception of the new Trump administration. The new president, who upholds the slogan of “Make America Great Again” is in control of the nuclear button. A tweet or a presidential executive order can be revoked, but the button, once pushed to launch a nuclear weapon, cannot be unpushed.

Unfortunately for the world, we are now entering the frightening age of “post-truth” and “alternative facts”. Max Weber said that modern society is the era of disenchantment, rationalization and the devaluation of mysticism. The principles of modern society are to make rational judgements based on truth, discuss things rationally, and have sympathy for social minorities based on universal values such as freedom, justice, human rights and friendship, and these should have brought us great benefits.

The age of post-truth and alternative facts will, in the end, mean the age of brute strength and the age of power and money.

Until now, the first senior government official to visit Japan under a new American administration was always the Secretary of State, but this time, only two weeks after the birth of the new administration, it was the Secretary of Defense who, most unusually, visited Japan. What does this signify?

Japan, the Philippines and the U.S.A. One by one, top political leaders who propound we-firstism and anti-intellectualism have appeared on the scene, and international tension is rising. The post-war values that protected us for over 70 year are now approaching a crisis.

It is now nearly six years since the Fukushima nuclear accident. Both Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) and the Japanese government continue to dither over the investigation of the truth of the accident and the details of its causes. Not even one company manager, politician, senior government official or researcher has officially taken any responsibility for the Fukushima nuclear accident. Masao Maruyama’s criticism that responsibility for the Pacific War was concealed by a “structure of irresponsibility” is still with us even today.

The Fukushima nuclear accident was a severe accident equivalent to the Chernobyl nuclear accident, and it should be that we now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to alter Japan’s policy of nuclear power promotion and the plutonium use policy that we, late Jizaburo Takagi and the Citizens Nuclear Information Center have criticized down through the years. Crisis means chance.

Toshiba, which was at the center of Japan’s nuclear village, and which mired its hands with accounting fraud stemming from the costly buyout of Westinghouse in 2006, had massive losses of 500 billion yen last fiscal year and another more than 700 billion yen this fiscal year. It is on the brink of financial collapse. The French Areva is also facing a bankruptcy crisis.

A mere three nuclear reactors are operating in Japan at present. Since the Fukushima nuclear accident, of all the countries that have nuclear power plants, Japan has had the lowest nuclear power plant operating rate during these six years. In TEPCO’s region and in the Tohoku Electric Power Company’s region not one nuclear reactor has started up in the six years since “three-eleven”. There is currently no prospect in sight for nuclear reactor restarts in these regions.

We have been able to push the fast-breeder reactor Monju into a “decision to decommission”.

The policy line of the nuclear fuel cycle, which takes nuclear power plant expansion and the fast-breeder reactor as its premises, has at last become clearly untenable. A radical shift in Japan’s reprocessing policy, the determination to stop the reprocessing project, is being demanded at this very moment.

There is still the huge issue of what should be done with Japan’s nuclear power plants in the mid and long term, but for these two days I would like you to focus your discussions on the problems of the reprocessing policy and the policy line of plutonium use.

Where exactly are the contentious points of Japan’s reprocessing policy and policy line of plutonium use? How are America, South Korea, Taiwan and the world looking at Japan’s reprocessing policy and policy line of plutonium use? Let us all consider together these points over the next two days.

It is not with terror and violence that we will be able to counter the age of post-truth and alternative facts. Neither will this be achieved by obsequiousness, such as that of Prime Minister Abe, toward the U.S. government.

The way we will counter the age of post-truth and alternative facts is with the power of precisely perceived facts, fact checks, deliberation based on the analysis of facts, plus the power of rationality and rational thinking.

During these two days, I would like us all to engage in a rational discussion of the contentious points and issues of the reprocessing policy and the policy line of plutonium use based on facts, data and the shared value. I believe that we, all of participants today are sharing the most basic value that “Make the Earth Great Again. Make the Earth Great Again “.

Thank you