

PuPo 2017 Statement

Tokyo

24 February 2017

We, the undersigned, gathered in Tokyo from around the world for a two-day discussion of Japan's plutonium policy. The meeting brought together governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at community, national and international levels, with backgrounds ranging from engineering to law and diplomacy. We discussed Japan's plutonium policy as it relates to the US-Japan Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, which will reach the end of its 30-year term in 2018, in terms of US-Japan relations. In addition, we discussed the impacts that this agreement and Japan's plutonium policy have in the North East Asian region and the rest of the world. We recognize that Japan must make its own decisions about nuclear power in the best interests of its people, taking into consideration issues such as its effects on energy security and the environment. Yet Japan's plutonium policy has undeniable international and regional impacts, which, as a responsible nation, it must address in order to maintain regional and international peace, safety and stability. Japan clearly acknowledges this responsibility, as demonstrated by its international commitments—for example, in its joint declaration with the United States at The Hague Nuclear Security Summit in March 2014 where Japan mentioned “all Summit Communiqués’ spirit to minimize stocks of nuclear material” and said it would “encourage other countries to consider what they can do to further HEU (highly enriched uranium) and plutonium minimization.”

Some of the major conclusions we came to in our discussions were:

- 1) Many in countries neighboring Japan and the USA are deeply concerned about the security implications of Japan's stockpile of 48 tons of separated plutonium, as well as its plans to begin to separate up to an additional 8 tons annually at the Rokkasho reprocessing facility, starting in 2018. They regard this plutonium as both a proliferation threat, which could lead to heightened tension in the region, and a nuclear terrorism threat, due to its vulnerability to theft.
- 2) Although general awareness of the dangers of nuclear power generation has grown substantially since the Fukushima Daiichi accident, there is still a lack of interest on the part of the general public regarding the issues associated with reprocessing, including proliferation, nuclear terrorism, excessive cost and safety risks.
- 3) Reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel does not offer any advantages over storage and direct disposal with regard to radioactive waste management, energy security, or cost that would justify the major risks it poses. Japan should learn from other countries around the world that are pursuing safer, more secure and less costly alternatives – specifically dry cask storage pending deep underground disposal.

We therefore recommend that the governments of the United States and Japan:

Form joint commission(s), in the context of the US-Japan Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, to

- (1) Review the issue of the Rokkasho reprocessing plant in particular with regard to its implication for regional and international security.
- (2) Analyze ways of keeping Japan's existing separated plutonium safely and securely while mitigating the regional and international concern including the possibility of putting it under the Custody of IAEA.
- (3) Exchange information and analyses on plutonium disposition

and the government of Japan together with those of China and Korea:

1) Commit to a reprocessing moratorium in order to prevent the further accumulation of separated plutonium in the North East Asian region. Japan's government should lead the way by indefinitely postponing the startup of the Rokkasho reprocessing plant since Japan has already accumulated 48 tons of separated plutonium. Other governments in the region should follow this example by committing to suspend all activities and future plans to separate plutonium through reprocessing.

2) Conduct comprehensive reviews, during the moratorium/pause, on all aspects of their nuclear fuel cycle policies investigating alternatives for spent fuel storage and disposal. These reviews must involve independent third-party experts and must include all stakeholders. There must be vigorous public debate, in the media and other fora, with full disclosure of all information and data. All governments involved should respect the conclusion of these reviews and make changes in their plutonium policy according to their recommendations.

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