



Going Beyond Nuclear

New Energy Security Realities for Japan and the United States

 THE SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION

 | Wilson
Center

Report of the Fourth Annual Japan-U.S.
Joint Public Policy Forum
October 31, 2012

THE SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION

Established in 1986 as a private nonprofit organization with an endowment from The Nippon Foundation and the Japanese motorboat racing industry, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation's goal is to foster international understanding, exchange, and cooperation. The Foundation encourages surveys and research, develops human resources, invites and dispatches personnel, organizes international conferences, and other forums for discussion in cooperation with grantee organizations across the globe.

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For more information, contact the Asia Program at asia@wilsoncenter.org.

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According to the International Energy Agency, the surge in U.S. shale gas supply in particular will make the United States increasingly less dependent on fossil fuels. Petroleum demand in Asia including China and India, on the other hand, will continue to rise rapidly as populations grow and industrial bases expand. The broader trend among industrialized nations, however, is that of decline for oil imports as natural gas and other energy sources replace petroleum.



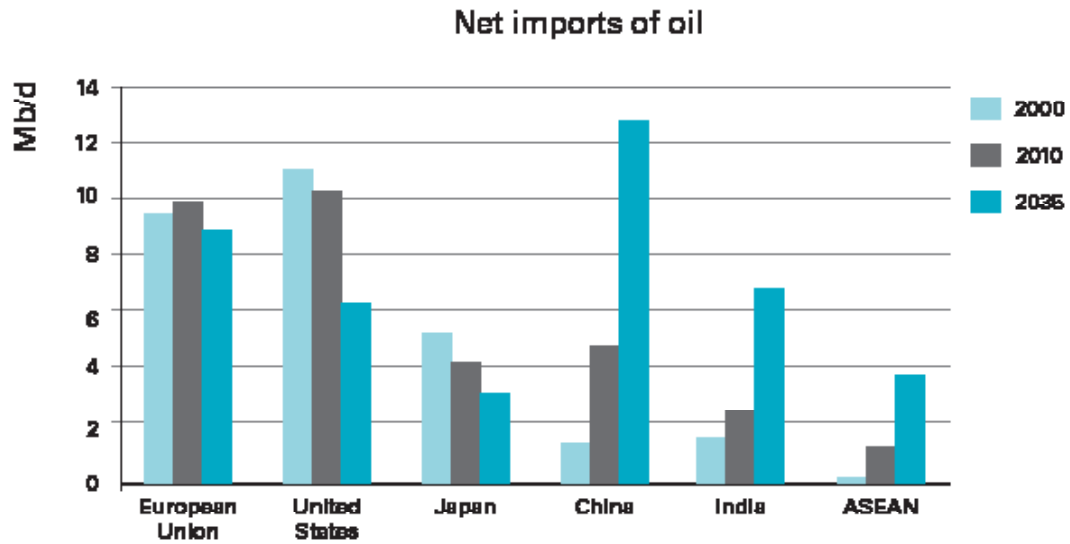
The Fukushima nuclear meltdown has forced Japan to reconsider its energy policy, and as the country continues to grapple with the aftermath of the crisis triggered by the March 2011 earthquake, public opinion remains deeply divided about the country's future energy policy including nuclear power. The United States, too, is facing its own challenges, as a bonanza in natural gas within its borders in recent years is redefining the meaning of energy independence. How both countries are looking beyond petroleum to meet their respective energy needs, and prospects for alternative energy sources including nuclear power, were the topics of discussion at the latest Japan-U.S. Joint Public Policy Forum, held in Tokyo on October 31.

About 150 energy experts and policymakers from both the United States and Japan took part in the day-long conference entitled *The Future of Energy: Choices for Japan and the United States*, which was the fourth annual conference held jointly by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. While the starting point of the conference was the consequences of the nuclear fallout as a result of the earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan in March 2011, discussions ranged far beyond Japan's nuclear prospects, as conference participants agreed that Japan's energy future could not be seriously discussed without continual reference to the global political as well as economic landscape.

A SHIFTING PARADIGM FOR ENERGY SECURITY

Strategizing Japan's energy policy based solely on the Fukushima disaster would be a folly, cautioned former International Energy Agency executive director **Nobuo Tanaka**. In his keynote speech, Tanaka argued that the bulk of new energy needs worldwide comes from Asia, as U.S. demand for oil imports is likely to decrease as its ability to produce natural gas within its own borders rises due to technological advances, while Europe turns increasingly to Russia to supply its energy needs. That would make Asia the only region in the world still heavily dependent on Middle East oil imports, and render Japan particularly vulnerable to any decreased U.S. military commitment to the Middle East as Washington looks less and less to the region to supply its energy needs, Tanaka said. As a result, Japan will need to retain its nuclear energy capabilities in order to ensure that its requirements are met regardless of any changes in U.S. military as well as energy policy.

OIL SUPPLY SECURITY IS THE ISSUE FOR ASIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY



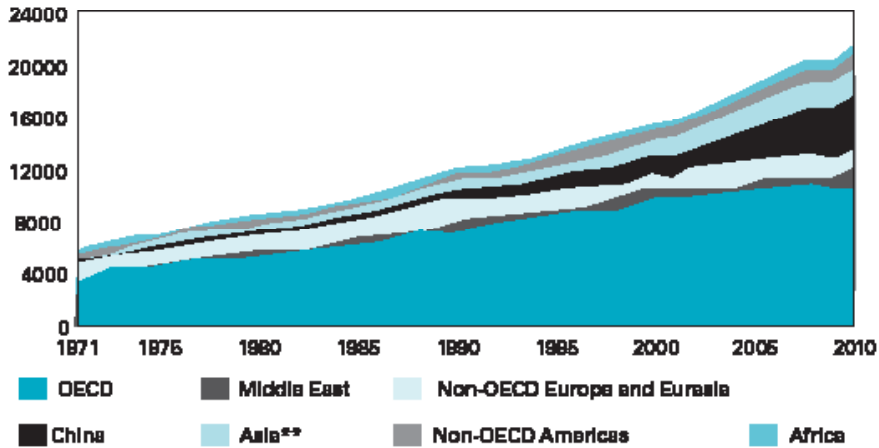
Source: International Energy Agency

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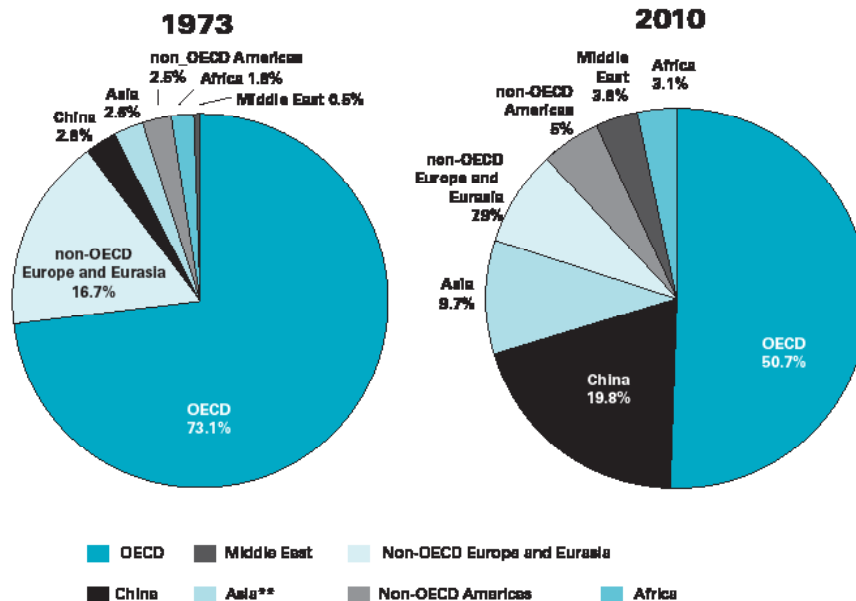
Given the prospect of decreasing crude dependence outside of Asia, Japan needs to re-evaluate the role nuclear power can play in meeting the country's needs in a realistic manner, Tanaka said, adding that dismissing the future potential of nuclear energy would be destructive to Japan's growth prospects. After all, an independent panel deemed that the Fukushima accident was a result of human error, and it is the government's duty to understand fully what had gone wrong, and what steps can be taken in the future to stop such accidents from happening, rather than terminating nuclear power programs altogether, Tanaka argued. He also stressed the need for Japan to be more energy independent as part of its security strategy, especially given that there is yet no collective energy security amongst East Asian nations, such as between Japan and South Korea, unlike in Europe.

ELECTRIC GENERATION BY REGION

World electricity generation* from 1971 to 2010
by region (tWh)



1973 and 2010 regional shares of electricity generation



John Bryson, former U.S. Commerce Secretary and currently a Wilson Center distinguished scholar, who delivered the conference's other keynote address, stressed the need for ensuring public safety to be paramount for nuclear operators, adding that "safety must take precedence over profits." Regarding the establishment of Japan's Nuclear Regulatory Authority in September 2012 in direct response to the Fukushima disaster, Bryson argued that an independent regulatory agency to oversee plant safety was critical, given that "some activities...are simply too important to be left solely to the private sector," and that the regulators must have strong technical competence to match their power. Moreover, he said that given Japan's limited natural resources, it is imperative for the government to continue investing in the development of "superior clean technology" that could be emulated worldwide. Japan and the United States must continue to work closely together to ensure global

safety standards and develop emergency plans, especially as Japan continues to be a global leader in developing energy efficiency and conservation technologies, Bryson said. “To the extent that any country’s electric power needs can be met in the future at lower total costs as a result of its commitment to the energy efficiencies that have been put in place here in Japan over the past 19 months, the total number of new power plants will be reduced. That, in turn, can mean our global economy can go forth with the potential for more widespread prosperity, including for the poorest people and nations, in the decades ahead. That is a worthy goal,” he added.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

Even if it does continue to invest in developing alternative energy sources, Japan still must rely on nuclear power to meet its near-term industrial needs. Both Japanese and U.S. panelists agreed that in order to ensure a steady supply of energy from its nuclear power plants in the future, restoring public confidence in nuclear safety is critical, with many adding that the government has not yet done enough to win back the trust of those impacted by the radioactive fall-out. At the same time, panelists from both countries agreed that Japan’s abandonment of its nuclear energy program would invariably lead to a loss in its position as a nuclear technology leader, which in turn would cause it to slip in the global hierarchy.


Still, the Fukushima disaster has had no direct impact on the prospects of the nuclear energy sector in the United States to date, partly because nuclear investments have plunged in the country since the Three Mile Island disaster of 1979. panelist broadly agreed that disinterest in revitalizing the U.S. nuclear energy sector is driven more by economics than any other sin-



gle consideration, including worries about safety, according to several participants. With ever-lower natural gas prices on the one hand, and opposition to dealing with nuclear waste from policymakers, environmentalists, and the general public on the other, nuclear operators themselves have been shying away from building new reactors as the allure of investing in costly energy projects has fallen steadily. There is also the expense of dealing with nuclear waste, as well as the cost of revamping older plants that require heavy reinvestment. Already, three of the 104 operating plants in the United States are expected to shut down as costs of keeping the ageing plants continue to rise.

Indeed, both the capital and operating costs of power plants is rising, with the cost of running the most expensive U.S. reactors averaging about 6 cents per kilowatt hour from 2009 to 2011. That represents a 13 percent increase per year in cost since 2007. One recent victim of the steadily rising cost of remaining in operation was the Kewaunee plant in Wisconsin, which was shut down in October 2012 as the cost of keeping it running became more expensive. Granted, power plants continue to face mounting opposition from environmentalists and other interest groups, and to be sure, backlash against nuclear power gained momentum in the United States following the Fukushima disaster. Yet unlike in Germany, where Japan's experience has had a direct impact in fizzling out German nuclear development, it is economic, and not political, considerations in the United States that are keeping demand for new plants at bay.

In 2002, for instance, industry analysts expected a revival in nuclear plants to reach about 30 new units, but it fell to five units in 2009, and is expected to fall further given the continued decline in U.S. natural gas prices. Worldwide, too, the International Energy Agency has cut back growth projections in installed nuclear power capacity worldwide by 10 percent, to 580 gigawatts, in 2035. Meanwhile,



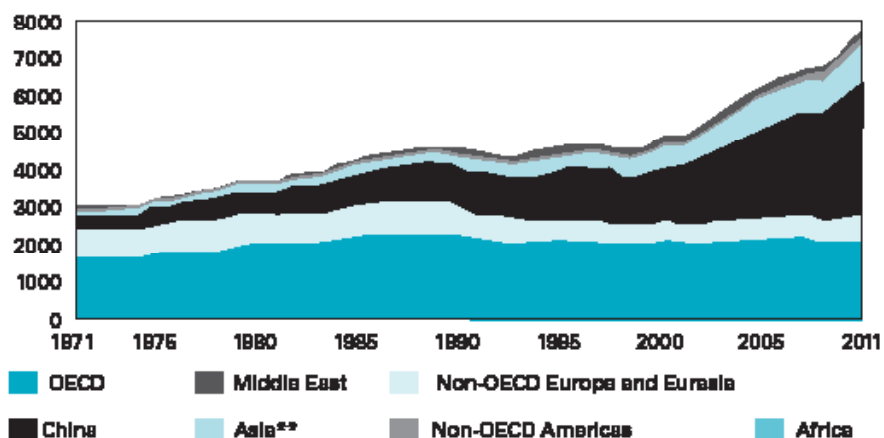
“ There are opportunities for the two countries to cooperate in strengthening nuclear safety standards both within their own borders, and working through international organizations. In the longer term, possibilities for bilateral cooperation in developing alternative energy resources including solar and wind remain high. ”

the IEA noted in its latest November 2012 World Energy Outlook noted that recent energy developments in the United States have a profound impact not just on the North American energy market, but on the global energy sector. The agency expects the United States to overtake Saudi Arabia and become the world's largest oil producer by around 2020, then become a net oil exporter around 2030. That in turn would make Asia the biggest player in international oil trade, and put greater responsibility on Asian nations not only to ensure security of strategic routes from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific, but also take the lead on developing new nuclear energy technologies.

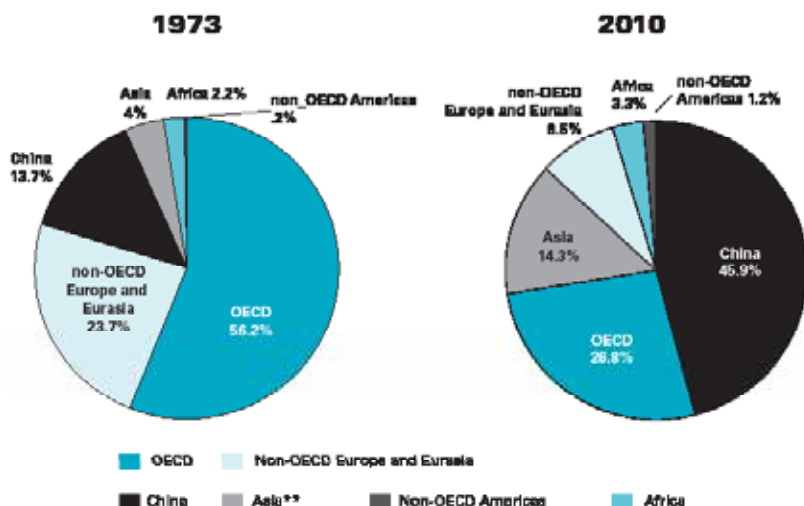
Certainly, the fact that both the United States and Europe will be able to produce more natural gas within its own borders and meet its domestic energy needs internally will mean that they will be less dependent on oil from the Middle East and other countries. As such, Asian nations including Japan will be pressed to become more responsible for securing energy supplies from risk-prone regions, according to several conference panelists.

COAL PRODUCTION BY REGION

Coal* production from 1971 to 2010
by region (Mt)



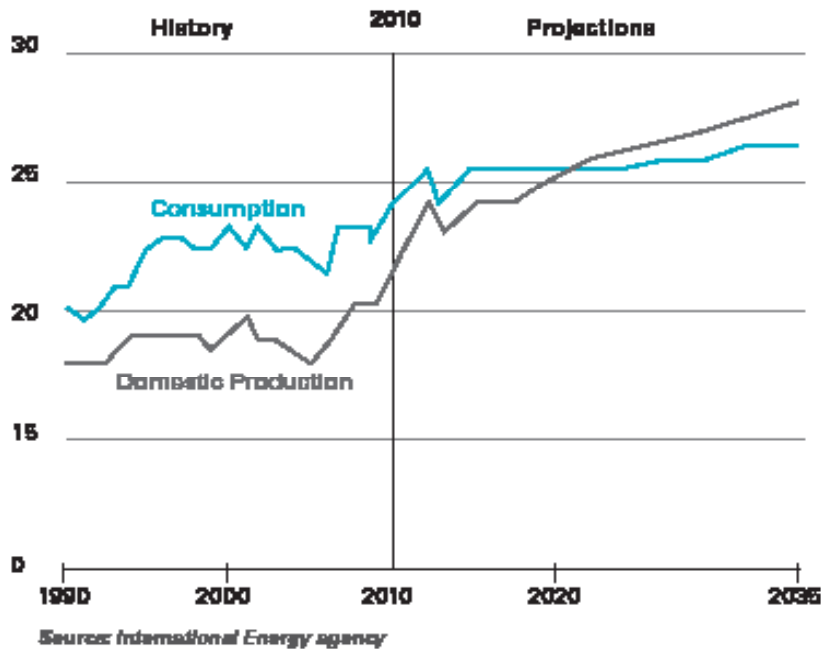
Coal* production from 1971 to 2011 by region (Mt)



PROSPECTS FOR RENEWABLES AND OTHER NON-PETROLEUM ENERGY SOURCES

U.S. policymakers are increasingly concerned, however, about Japan's reluctance to commit further to nuclear development according to panelist from the United States. The Three Mile Island accident led the United States to place a moratorium on its nuclear energy industry, effectively ending progress in developing civilian nuclear energy technology. That, however, has pushed the country to emphasize growth in other energy sectors, including hydraulic fracturing, better known as fracking, in recent years. Indeed, the International Energy Agency is now predicting natural gas will be the most used fuel in the United States by 2030. Certainly, the natural gas lobby is looking increasingly like its petroleum industry counterpart, and it may well be that natural gas interests will soon dominate the U.S. political scene to match their growing influence on global energy markets, panelist said.

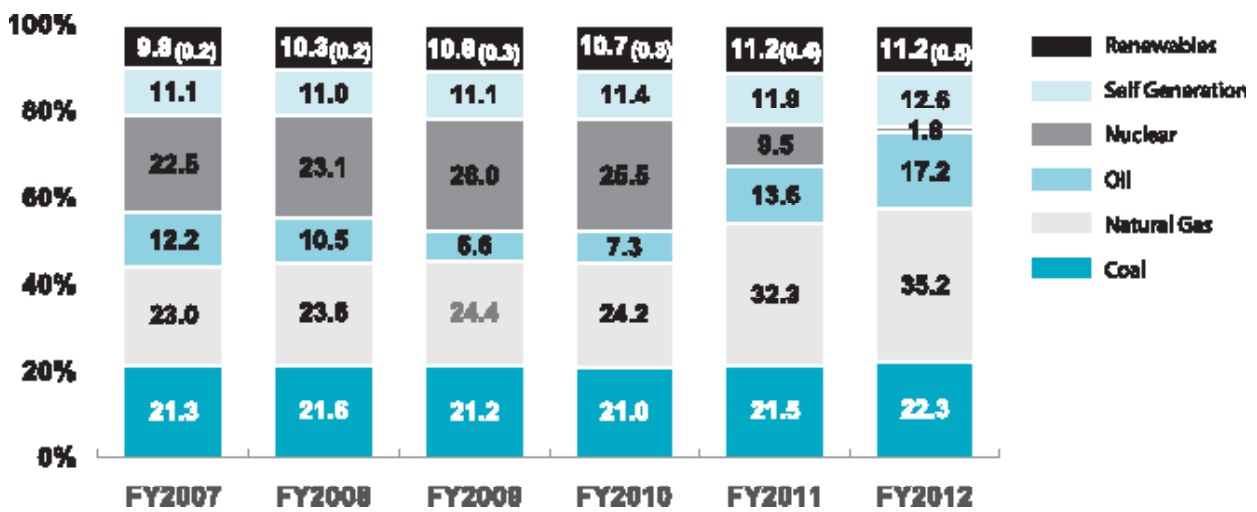
INCREASING NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION ALLOWS U.S. TO TRANSITION FROM NET IMPORTER TO NET EXPORTER OF NATURAL GAS



In the United States, excitement about the windfall in natural gas is already palpable, many panelist said. Business executives in the chemicals sector in particular have already noted a surge in interest among U.S. as well as foreign companies to build new state-of-the-art facilities in the United States precisely because of cheaper energy prices from natural gas. While other countries are also expected to take advantage of new technologies to access hitherto untapped natural gas supplies, some analysts expect the United States to remain ahead of the curve in fracking for another decade or so. Moreover, the economies of using natural gas are expected to enhance U.S. manufacturers' competitive advantage over their Japanese counterparts, which may further depress Japan's economic outlook.

Still, the shale gas bonanza may not be an unmitigated blessing for the United States, some Japanese participants warned. While it may lead to U.S. energy independence in the years to come, domestic opposition to aggressive fracking is already apparent, and the lobbying force of environmentalists together with some policymakers will remain a challenge for the drilling industry. In addition, the surge in natural gas supply may prevent the United States from pursuing a leading role in developing alternative energy sources including wind and solar, and decrease public appetite to develop energy efficiency technologies. That, in turn, could ultimately hurt U.S. growth prospects in going up the green economy hierarchy, according to several panelist.

JAPAN'S POWER GENERATION BY SUPPLY SOURCES



Source: Institute of Energy Economics Japan.

Whether or not Japan is able to reach a national consensus on the role of nuclear power in the future remains to be seen. While Japan continues to face an uncertain future regarding nuclear energy, continued partnerships with U.S. regulators, researchers, and corporations will remain essential if the industry is to regain the Japanese public's trust in nuclear technology. Moreover, strong relations with the United States will also be critical to ensure that technological advancements in the industry continue. Japan can ill-afford to follow the U.S. example in retreating from nuclear energy development, as Washington had following the Three Mile Island disaster. Japan withdrawing from its nuclear program would effectively weaken the civilian nuclear capabilities of both Japan and the United States, which would have considerable implications for the industry worldwide.

ASIA'S NATURAL GAS CHALLENGE

At the same time, the International Energy Agency noted the lack of an efficient regional gas market and suitable trading hubs contributing to still-high gas prices in Asia. The international organization has, however, pointed out that the Asia-Pacific region is rich in renewable energy sources, especially in Southeast Asia where the IEA estimates that geothermal power could cut back carbon dioxide emissions from current levels by 15 percent, which may in turn

prevent the average global temperature rising by 2 degrees Celsius. Certainly, Asia's energy challenges provides opportunities to lead in the development of new technologies across the region from China to India and Thailand.

What is clear is that as Japan mulls its new energy policy with the possibility of phasing out nuclear energy altogether over the next decade or two, the challenge will be to see how and whether nuclear power can remain a key component in the Japanese energy portfolio. Technological advancements have, however, already begun to shift industrialized nations away from Middle East crude oil, and that trend is likely to intensify in coming years. The United States will certainly become increasingly less dependent on Mideast oil, and that may have a significant impact on U.S. foreign and security policies as much as on energy security policy. What is clear is that the energy security realities of the past are changing rapidly for both Japan and the United States, and will influence how both countries move forward in ensuring a steady energy supply.

NEW LEADERSHIPS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Since the Joint Public Policy conference was held in October 2012, Japan has elected a new leader while the United States confirmed a second term for President Barack Obama. Since his election as prime minister in December 2012, Shinzo Abe has focused on reinvigorating the lackluster Japanese economy and creating new jobs, especially in the renewable energy sector. Indeed, part of his \$117 billion stimulus package in central government spending focuses on renewable energy development, which is expected to provide at least some of the 600,000 new jobs stemming from hefty public spending. Japan's private sector too has embraced the potential of developing new energy sources, with major Japanese banks expected to invest about \$19 billion into the solar power industry this year alone, up eight times from the previous year. If that is the case, then Japan will be the third largest market for solar power in 2013 .

Still, given the realities of Japan's energy needs, Prime Minister Abe is expected to remain cautiously optimistic about the potential of nuclear power despite the public backlash against resuming operations of existing plants. Questioned about the possibility of not only reactivating current plants but also building new reactors at a New Year's press conference in 2013, Prime Minister Abe said that "We will first of all determine whether or not to restart nuclear power plants on the basis of scientific safety standards. Then over the course of roughly three years we will assess the futures of existing nuclear power plants and transition to a new stable energy mix over ten years. The new construction or replacement of nuclear power plants is not a matter that is able to be determined immediately. Naturally this is an area in which we should make our determination in accordance with the principle of gradually decreasing our degree of reliance on nuclear power to the greatest extent possible."

"In addition, it is necessary for the national government to take responsibility for accelerating examination of the issue of spent nuclear fuel disposal. Beyond this, there is the matter of, first of all, whether or not a cheap and stable supply of electric power can be achieved. Judgments must be made regarding the situation of global fossil fuel supply risks. In addition, I would like for us to take a certain amount of time to examine the situation as we look ahead



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critically regarding the verification of the nuclear power plant accident and trends in the progress of safety technology,” he added. The Abe government has already publicly noted its hopes to restart nuclear power plants within the next three years, once their safety is assured by the Nuclear Regulatory Agency.

Developing alternative energy sources and using nuclear power as one means to meet energy needs whilst cutting back on greenhouse gas emissions is a goal that both Japan and the United States share. Certainly, there are opportunities for the two countries to cooperate in strengthening nuclear safety standards both within their own borders, and working through international organizations. In the longer term, possibilities for bilateral cooperation in developing alternative energy resources including solar and wind remain high.

At his second inaugural address in January 2013, President Barack Obama highlighted the need for the United States too to understand the consequences of energy use, and stressed the need for U.S. policymakers to address the challenges of climate change by investing in new energy technologies.

“We, the people, still believe that our obligations as Americans are not just to ourselves, but to all posterity. We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations. Some may still deny the overwhelming judgment of science, but none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires, and crippling drought, and more powerful storms. The path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult. But America cannot resist this transition; we must lead it. We cannot cede to other nations the technology that will power new jobs and new industries – we must claim its promise. That is how we will maintain our economic vitality and our national treasure – our forests and waterways; our croplands and snowcapped peaks. That is how we will preserve our planet, commanded to our care by God. That’s what will lend meaning to the creed our fathers once declared,” Obama said.

Excitement about the near-term gains through a windfall in natural gas is palpable. Business executives in the chemicals sector in particular have already noted a surge in interest among U.S. as well as foreign companies to build state-of-the-art facilities in the United States precisely because of cheaper energy prices from natural gas. While other countries are also expected to take advantage of new technologies to access hitherto untapped natural gas

supplies, some analysts expect the United States to remain ahead of the curve in fracking for at least another decade. Moreover, the economies of using natural gas are expected to enhance U.S. manufacturers' competitive advantage over their Japanese counterparts, which may further depress Japan's economic outlook.

In the nearer-term, though, as Japan debates its nuclear future, the development of shale gas in the United States raises new possibilities for the two countries to collaborate on both development and distribution of natural gas. Certainly, prospects for U.S. approval of exporting natural gas to Japan in particular will be closely monitored, and could strengthen cooperation between the two countries in pursuing energy security worldwide. Development of clean coal technologies too will be of interest between Japan and the United States and beyond. Yet the shale gas bonanza may not be an unmitigated blessing for the United States. While it may lead to U.S. energy independence in the long run, legislators will likely face continued opposition to aggressive fracking, and the lobbying force of environmentalists and other stakeholders will remain a challenge for the drilling industry. In addition, the surge in natural gas supply may prevent the United States from pursuing a leading role in developing alternative energy sources including wind and solar, and decrease public appetite to develop energy efficiency technologies. That, in turn, could ultimately hurt U.S. growth prospects in going up the green economy hierarchy. Ensuring the continued safe use of nuclear energy in conjunction with developing new energy technologies will be in the national interests of both Japan and the United States not only for economic growth, but also to ensure a sustainable environment. There are many challenges ahead for both Japan and the United States in developing sustainable energy policies. Both countries will need to balance their needs to grow their economies on the one hand, while addressing environmental issues on the others. While nuclear power may be part of the solution for the two countries, it is certainly not the only answer, and the impetus for both nations to work closely together to develop new technologies as well as regulating the safe use of nuclear energy will only increase in coming years.

-By Shihoko Goto

Northeast Asia Associate at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE OCTOBER 31, 2012
JOINT PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE AND PREVIOUS ANNUAL
MEETINGS, VISIT:**

<http://www.spf.org/jpus/symposium/001.html>

The presentation by former International Energy Agency Executive Director Nobuo Tanaka can be found at:

http://www.spf.org/jpus-j/pdf/symposium/001_04_tanaka.pdf

THE JAPAN-U.S. JOINT PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

The fifth annual joint public policy forum is scheduled to be held October 2, 2013 in Tokyo.

FOURTH ANNUAL JAPAN - U.S. JOINT PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

PROGRAM

OPENING REMARKS: JIRO HANYU

Chairman, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation

KEYNOTE SPEECH 1: JOHN BRYSON

The 37th U.S. Secretary of Commerce / Distinguished Public Scholar, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

KEYNOTE SPEECH 2: NOBUO TANAKA

Global Associate for Energy Security and Sustainability at the Institute of Energy Economics, Japan; former Executive Director, International Energy Agency

Q&A

John BRYSON, Nobuo TANAKA

David BURWELL (moderator), Director of the energy and climate program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

PANEL DISCUSSION 1: THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY: JAPANESE AND U.S. PERSPECTIVES

Tetsuya ENDO (moderator), Former Vice Chairman, Japan Atomic Energy Commission / Adjunct Senior Fellow, The Japan Institute of International Affairs

Robert McNALLY, Founder and President, The Rapidan Group / former Senior Director for International Energy on the National Security Council

Peter BRADFORD, Adjunct Professor, Institute for Energy and the Environment, Vermont Law School

Akihiro SAWA, Executive Senior Fellow, The 21st Century Public Policy Institute / Head of International Environmental Economic Institute

Hisashi YOSHIKAWA, Project Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo and Todai Policy Alternatives Research Institute

PANEL DISCUSSION 2: THE ALTERNATIVES: THE FUTURE OF FOSSIL FUELS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

David BURWELL (moderator), Director of the Energy and Climate Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

David PUMPHREY, Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Energy and National Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies

Kenji ASANO, Research Scientist, the Socio-economic Research Center, Central Research Institute of Electric Power Industry

Mikkal HERBERG, Research Director of the Energy Security Program, The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)

Ttsutomu TOICHI, Board Member and Adviser at the Institute of Energy Economics, Japan

CLOSING REMARKS:

Robert HATHAWAY, Director of the Asia Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars



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**THE JAPAN-U.S. PARTNERSHIP TOWARD A WORLD FREE OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS:**

October 21-22, 2009

The challenges of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are examined during this two-day conference, including possibilities for U.S.-Japan cooperation to increase impetus for deterrence. William Perry, former U.S. Secretary of Defense, and Yukio Satoh, Japan's former permanent representative to the United Nations, delivered the keynote speeches.



**LOOKING FORWARD: U.S.-JAPAN ECONOMIC
PARTNERSHIP IN THE POST-LEHMAN WORLD**

December 8-9, 2010

The impact of the global financial crisis and recessions in both Japan and the United States were examined during the conference, as panelists discussed possibilities for bilateral as well as global cooperation to deal with global economic uncertainties. Japan's former vice minister of finance for international affairs, Eisuke Sakakibara, and the Wall Street Journal's economics editor David Wessel presented the keynote addresses.



**JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES AFTER THE GREAT EAST
JAPAN EARTHQUAKE:**

October 27, 2011

Discussions on the aftermath of Japan's March 2011 post-earthquake reconstruction efforts and U.S.-Japan cooperation. Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and the National Defense Academy of Japan's President Makoto Iokibe were keynote speakers.