

Improving Nuclear Governance: Lessons for and from the US and Japan

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Basic Challenges

- Balance between **accountability** to stakeholders and **independence** of national regulatory authority
- **Accountability** includes (but not limited to) transparency
- **Independence** defined (by NRC) as freedom from economic, policy, and political interests

Interests

- **Economic**

- Industry
- Local

- **Policy**

- Nuclear energy mix
- Economic development

- **Political**

- Local
- Regional
- National

Accountability

■ NRA

- Itself, laws
- Public
- International

■ Utilities

- Shareholders
- Local pop'n
- NRA

■ Govt/Diet

- Constituents
- Regional
- National

Caveats

- Unique to each country
 - Economic, policy and political interests
 - Regulatory and political systems
- So, solutions to achieving balance of accountability and independence may also be unique
- However, such a balance is key to long-term sustainability of nuclear power, which requires public trust and confidence

Themes from project (I)

- No nuclear regulatory system is static or perfect
- A crucial element of success is opportunity for transparency and public scrutiny of the nuclear regulator
- For regulator, structure should allow for objectivity, consistency, and high level of professionalism
 - ▣ In US, aided by independent NRC inspector general and Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS)

Themes from project (II)

- Ideally, independence does not result in isolation.
- But criticisms of isolation are not just from nuclear power advocates (who may focus exclusively on ability of government/industry influence on JNRA)
- Issue of accountability will not end with restarts

Politicization?

- Opportunities to exert undue influence will always exist
- Tempered by checks and balances in American political system, quite different from parliamentary system
- Imperfect

Some observations

- As JNRA matures, it should take opportunities to put in place structures and processes that are transparent
 - ▣ Leaving more work to expert, scientific staff (i.e., strengthen and professionalize advisory committees) would free up JNRA commissioners to adjudicate and strengthen continuity of decisions.
 - ▣ Enhancing public outreach beyond on-line presence in a structured way is possible without losing independence

Some observations

- Diet oversight
 - ▣ Special committees are limited in their scope and activities
 - ▣ Parties have established own groups (project teams) to process recommendations
 - ▣ Ability of Diet members to draw upon outside expertise appears to be limited and could be strengthened in informal ways

Some observations

- Role of civil society
 - A key stakeholder in nuclear energy but public opinion has shifted little on nuclear energy since Fukushima-Daiichi accident.
 - Whether nuclear energy flourishes (grows) in Japan or whether it is phased out, there still needs to be accountability and processes that the public can trust.
 - How transparent this needs to be for the Japanese public is an open question