Taking Stock: Plutonium in Northeast Asia
International House of Japan
Iwasaki Koyata Hall
June 28, 2018
10 am to Noon

The future of nuclear energy in Northeast Asia continues to be uncertain seven years after the devastating accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. In Japan, the process of restarting nuclear power plants has been slow. In South Korea, safety issues and restructuring of nuclear regulation has slowed anticipated growth. Even China, which is building more than half of all nuclear power reactors under construction worldwide, has slowed its projected growth.

This increasingly sober environment for nuclear power coupled with plans for closing the fuel cycle raises significant questions. With depressed growth in nuclear energy and low fuel prices, recycling spent fuel continues to be uneconomic and no technical panacea for solving nuclear waste issues. What is the future of the closed fuel cycle in Japan and what are the challenges? As a leader in transparency regarding its plutonium stockpile, are there additional measures Japan can undertake to promote confidence regionally? How much and what kinds of information should countries with such capabilities share with each other? Can measures in Northeast Asia help influence global progress in reducing risks from stockpiled plutonium?

Please join us for a stimulating discussion among U.S., Japanese and Korean experts. Speakers include Sharon Squassoni (George Washington University), Ryan Shaffer (Manfield Foundation) Masakatsu Ota (Kyodo News), Alan Kuperman (University of Texas at Austin), Jorshan Choi (UC Berkeley Nuclear research Center), Yongsoo Hwang (Korean Atomic Energy Institute), and Thomas Countryman (Arms Control Association).

About the project: With generous support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, this George Washington University project has focused on how to enhance transparency regarding fissile material to promote nuclear security in three areas: nuclear programs in nuclear weapon states, states that have or are developing nuclear-fueled naval ships, and states with civilian reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. The results of the research will be published in early fall 2018.
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Agenda

10:00 am  Welcome and Introduction
Sharon Squassoni, George Washington University
Ryan Shaffer, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation

10:05 – 10:30 am  Case Studies in the use of plutonium in the civilian energy sector
Moderator: Sharon Squassoni, George Washington University
Alan Kuperman, University of Texas at Austin

10:30 – 11:30 am  Reducing Plutonium Risks in Northeast Asia
Moderator: Masakatsu Ota, Kyodo News
Jorshan Choi, UC Berkeley Nuclear Research Center
Yongsoo Hwang, Korean Atomic Energy Institute
Sharon Squassoni, George Washington University
Tom Countryman, Arms Control Association

11:30- 12:00 pm  Questions and Answers

Speakers and Moderators

Jor-Shan Choi  (USA) is affiliated with the UC Berkeley Nuclear Research Center of the Nuclear Engineering Department (NED) at the University of California in Berkeley (UC Berkeley) since 2012. He was a consultant/visiting scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) from 2012 to 2017. He was also a visiting professor at Tokyo Institute of Technology in 2012 and continued as a mentor for its DOJO Program on Nuclear Safety and Security till 2018. From 2008 to 2011, he was a Project Professor for the G-COE Program on nuclear sociology at the University of Tokyo. Before that, he worked at LLNL for 21 years (1987 to 2008) during which, he worked at the International Atomic Energy Agency from 1998-2001 and was a Science Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University in 1995-96. He also taught two years at the NED of UC Berkeley from 1991-93. Prior to joining LLNL in 1987, he had 13 years of industrial experience working for Bechtel Corporation.

Thomas Countryman  (USA) has been Chairman of the Arms Control Association since 2017. The ACA is a nonpartisan NGO that analyzes key national security issues and advises the executive branch, Congress and the public on choices that promote global security and reduce risk from weapons of mass destruction. He retired from the Senior Foreign Service in January 2017 after 35 years of service. At that time, he served simultaneously as acting Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, and as Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation, a position he held since September 2011. The ISN Bureau leads the US effort to prevent the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their related materials, and their delivery systems. Previously he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs (2009-10), and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs (2010-11), with responsibility for the Balkans region. He served overseas at US Embassies in Belgrade, Tunis, Cairo, Rome and Athens; and served in the US at the United Nations, the White House and the Pentagon.
Yongsoo Hwang (ROK) is Principal Researcher, Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute in Daejon, Republic of Korea. Previously, Dr. Hwang was the Director General of the Strategic Policy and Research Center in the Korea Institute of Nuclear Non-proliferation and Control, KINAC. He has been in KAERI for more than 27 years, with expertise in spent fuel management, including the total safety assessment of a deep geologic disposal of spent nuclear fuels, and in nuclear non-proliferation. He served as a Member of the Advisory Committee for the Korean Nuclear Safety and Security Commission (NSSC) and the 1st Public and Stakeholder Engagement Task Force Team to solve the spent nuclear fuel management issues in the ROK. Dr. Hwang also served as an Advisory Member for the IAEA Director General on multilateral nuclear arrangements between 2004 and 2005. He was a Visiting Fellow at CSIS at DC between 2010 and 2012. He is an advisor for the Department of Reunification and the Agency for WMD Verification for DPRK issues. Dr. Hwang received his MS and PhD from University of California Berkeley, at Department of Nuclear Engineering, and his BS from Seoul National University.

Alan Kuperman (USA) is Associate Professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin, and founding Coordinator of the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Project (NPPP.org). In 2017-2018, he led a comparative global study of MOX fuel fabrication and use, PlutoniumForEnergy.com. His books include Nuclear Terrorism and Global Security (2014), and recent publications include “Nuclear Nonproliferation via Coercion and Consensus,” in International Cooperation on WMD Nonproliferation (2016). Kuperman has made invited presentations to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Congress, the Department of Energy, and the National Academy of Sciences. Prior to his academic career, he worked in Congress, where he drafted a provision of the 1992 Energy Policy Act that restricts U.S. exports of bomb-grade uranium. Kuperman holds a Ph.D. in political science from M.I.T., an M.A. in international relations from Johns Hopkins University, and an A.B. in Physical Sciences from Harvard University. In 2013-2014 he was a Senior Fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace, and in 2009-2010 a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Masakatsu Ota (Japan) is a Senior and Editorial writer at Kyodo News, a position he has held since April 2009. He reports on a variety of nuclear issues, non-proliferation and the U.S.-Japan security relationship. Ota is also Visiting Professor of Waseda University and Nagasaki University. Ota is the author of nine Japanese books on nuclear and security issues. He recently published Nichibei Kaku Domei (US-Japan ‘Nuclear’ Alliance). Ota was awarded the Vaughn-Uyeda Prize in April 2007 for his investigations into the history of the U.S.-Japan security relationship, the history of the Second World War and his series of scoops on U.S. nuclear policy. He was also awarded the Peace Cooperative Journalist Fund Prize in December 2009 for his investigative reports into the secret U.S.-Japan nuclear deal during the Cold War. Ota received a B.A. in political science from Waseda University and a Doctorate from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo in 2010.

Ryan Shaffer (USA) is the Director of Programs at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation. Major programs under Mr. Shaffer’s leadership include the U.S.-Japan Nuclear Working Group and Regulatory Oversight Workshop, the U.S.-Japan Space Forum, the U.S.-Japan Cooperation on an Integrated Approach to Transportation dialogue, the Rule of Law in Asia program, and the Thomas S. Foley Legislative Exchange. Mr. Shaffer is the editor of several Foundation publications including the U.S.-Japan Nuclear Working Group: Statement on Shared Strategic Priorities in the Aftermath of the Fukushima Nuclear Accident. He has also authored articles and chaired panels examining the post-Fukushima nuclear energy situation in Japan. Prior to joining the Mansfield Foundation, Mr. Shaffer served as a research analyst for the Washington office of the Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan.

Sharon Squassoni (USA) is Research Professor of Practice at the Institute for International Science and Technology Policy, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. From 2010 to 2018, she directed the Proliferation Prevention Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Her work in the government included positions at the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, the State Department and the U.S. Arms Control & Disarmament Agency. She has testified before Congress, and is a frequent commentator on nuclear energy, proliferation and nuclear weapons for U.S. and international print and other media outlets. She is on the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Advisory Board for PIR Center and the Board of the Center for Nonproliferation and Arms Control. She received her B.A. in political science from SUNY Albany, an MPM from the University of Maryland School of Public Affairs and a Master’s degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College, 1998.