

THE US-JAPAN ROUNDTABLE  
TOKYO EVENT RECAP

*The Future of Nuclear Power in the United States and Japan*

Tokyo, Japan  
August 9, 2018

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On August 9th the Howard Baker Forum's US-Japan Roundtable had the pleasure of co-hosting a conference with Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) titled *The Future of Nuclear Power in the United States and Japan*. The event took place in Tokyo and followed a decommissioning conference and a day of government to government bilateral energy discussions. Approximately 90 member companies and speakers attended the full day program.

This US-Japan Roundtable Conference was the first in Japan since our founding in 2007. METI arranged the excellent venue and recruited very distinguished speakers from the Japan side. We were also supported by the US Departments of Energy and Commerce which assisted with logistics and provided a stellar lineup of top DOE officials. Along with members of the US-Japan Roundtable, many from the US Departments of Energy and Commerce Delegation attended the conference to hear remarks from the Honorable Dan Brouillette, Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Energy, the Honorable Mark. W

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Menezes, Undersecretary of Energy at the US Department of Energy, and the Honorable Theodore Garrish, Assistant Secretary for the Office of International Affairs at the US Department of Energy, as well as many others.

Scott Campbell, President of the Howard Baker Forum, Deputy Secretary Brouillette, Taizo Takahashi, Commissioner of the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy at METI, Chiyoji Kurata, Vice-Chairperson of Nuclear Power at the Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC) of Japan, and Douglas Rake, Senior Advisor to the US Nuclear Industry Infrastructure, gave opening remarks. All agreed that although it has been a challenging time for nuclear power in both the US and Japan, efforts and dialogues must continue to ensure the energy is used to provide safe, reliable, and clean energy across both nations. The rising power of China's and Russia's nuclear power sectors was discussed and it was made clear that the US and Japan must work together to provide countries seeking to grow their nuclear power industries with reactors that meet the highest safety and security standards.

Under Secretary of Energy Menezes, who gave a keynote address, highlighted the use of nuclear energy as a clean and reliable provider of energy to the United States. He outlined numerous government programs created to fund research and development of new nuclear energy technologies. Additionally, the Under Secretary emphasized the importance of revitalizing the existing nuclear fleets throughout the United States, a point also discussed by Carol Berrigan, Senior Director of Supplier and Workforce Policy at the

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Nuclear Energy Institute. Ms. Berrigan put nuclear power into a more positive context despite the challenges faced by the industry, focusing on the potential growth of the nuclear power sector by modernizing the current nuclear fleet. Akio Takahashi, President of the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum, did so as well during his remarks at the event's reception.

Both Shin Hosaka, Deputy Commissioner of the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy at METI, and Norio Atsumi, General Manager of the Nuclear Power Department at the FEPC, noted the importance of revitalizing the existing nuclear fleet in Japan while working to develop advanced reactor technology. Development of advanced reactor technology will be necessary for challenging China's and Russia's rise in the nuclear power sector, a factor discussed by Dr. Robert Ichord, who spoke on the challenge to US-Japan leadership in global nuclear energy. Emerging nuclear power markets across the globe will seek to partner with countries that already have established nuclear reactor builders to allow for their own domestic nuclear power production. China and Russia are expected to offer these services for less cost while compromising the safety standards included in the "gold standard," adhered to by the US and Japan.

Nader Mamish, Director of the Office of International Programs at the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, highlighted the necessity for regulators to strike a balance between innovation and safety throughout the nuclear power sector when he spoke on the role of the nuclear regulator in the United States. He stressed the importance for the

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regulator to remain agile and flexible in order to adapt to the changing technology and also commended the efforts put forth by Japan's nuclear industry to rebuild after the Fukushima Daiichi accident, which set an example for how to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. Assistant Secretary Garrish spoke to this point and noted that the licensing of a nuclear power plant is the most important action for the advancement of advanced reactors but the licensing costs in the US are so high that it risks stifling innovation and new reactor manufacture.

The conference offered an opportunity for industry, nuclear energy experts and policymakers to discuss the current and future state of nuclear power markets in the United States, Japan and globally. It was made clear that although the industry has faced challenging times in the wake of the Fukushima accident, nuclear must remain as a source for power throughout these two countries as it offers a reliable and clean base load power, helping the two countries to meet their energy security needs and climate goals. Furthermore, the US and Japan must work to develop their own advanced reactor technologies in order to respond to China's and Russia's efforts to expand into global markets placing our non-proliferation regime and safety culture at risk.