

Report of the Forum - summary and comments from the participants.

**Moderator: Ryutaro Kurihara**



*Junior at Keio University, majoring in law, concentrating on the Constitution of Japan*

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***Post-forum Comment***

It was an honour to be the moderator for this year's U.S-Japan Youth Forum, especially as this year's topic was more significant than ever due to the 3.11 earthquake and the aftermath it has brought to Japan. In our gradual progress towards reconstruction, a reliable energy policy is definitely called for, and we had chosen this topic as this year's theme to think about the problems that lie ahead when leading a conclusion to the question "what should we do with nuclear power plants?"

In answering the question, the panelists and I kept in mind that it was our job to explore ideas on the future of energy policies based on our experiences and current energy policies in our home countries. It was a successful forum in that the panelists did not come to a rapid conclusion of eliminating or not eliminating the nuclear power plants, but exchanged opinions about possible conclusions and unconventional approaches in dealing with this difficult problem. I believe that the positive feedbacks from the audience show how we were able to encourage them to think about the problems that the world is currently confronting, through the heated discussion between the panelists and the Q&A session. I truly hope that what we discussed in this forum does not end in the forum but will continue affecting the participants and the audience in coming up with a better solution for the future.

I would like to show my greatest gratitude for all those that made this year's youth forum possible, especially for H.I.H Princess Takamado for joining us and enlightening us with a very inspiring speech after the discussion. I sincerely hope that, with all your support, the Youth Forum will continue to serve as a platform for the youths to convey their opinions to the world.

**1. Yasuhiro Oda (Japan)**



*A third-year undergraduate student studying medicine at the University of Tokyo*

Title: "Japan's Future Energy Policy"

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### ***Presentation Summary***

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant made Japanese people reconsider Japan's energy policy. We need to rethink how much energy we want, and how we want to generate them. Now about two thirds of the total population are for closing or decreasing the number of nuclear power plants. One of the lessons we learned from the accident is that nuclear plant accidents do happen. The probability is low, but there is a great distinction between zero probability and low probability. I therefore believe that Japan should eventually close all the nuclear power plants.

I suggest a mid-term goal on energy generation in 2030 where nuclear, thermal, and renewable resources respectively produce 15, 45, and 30 percent of the estimated consumption under 10 percent energy saving. Nuclear energy should shrink aiming at zero eventually. Until then, the Japanese government should apply revised safety regulation. Renewable energy should expand its share as much as possible. It is inevitable to invest in feasible resources and technological research. Thermal energy remains to be a major resource, so we should be conscious of its CO2 emission. Last but not least, power saving is an important and only way to avoid dramatic increase in electricity consumption.

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### ***Post-forum Comment***

The U.S.-Japan Youth Forum was a great opportunity for me not only to learn the current energy policy of Japan but also to discuss different countries' energy policies with panelists from each country. This opportunity was all the more precious because a medical student like me usually doesn't have much chance to take time and look into energy policies.

Before the forum, the panelists had three pre-forum discussions: once with Prof. Magosaki, once on Skype, and once right before the forum started. After hours of discussion, we came to know the differences in the lessons we learned from Fukushima accident and how we want to deal with nuclear power in each country. This enabled us to have a smooth discussion at the forum, since we knew each presenter's basic idea and its background before the forum started.

The discussion included two main points that were intensively discussed: one was the use of nuclear power, and another was the development and use of renewable energy. As for the first point, we had various opinions, from Germany's total abolishment of nuclear power plants to the U.S.'s dependence on nuclear power as the main resource. As a panelist representing Japan, where her nuclear policy hasn't been decided yet, I struggled to decide what to present as Japan's nuclear energy policy. After consideration, in the forum I stated my own opinion approving abolishment of nuclear power plants but in the long term, which probably looked like the middle way of Germany and the U.S. I hope it showed that Japan has been indecisive on this issue even half a year after the accident. As for the renewable energy topic, it was an interesting fact that all the panelists agreed about the importance of fostering technological research on renewable energy. However, we had different opinions on how fast technological advancement will be and when renewable energy can be one of the main resources. Finally I would like to thank all the supporters and staffs who enabled this forum.

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## **2. Ashley Hill (United States of America)**



*Graduated summa cum laude from Colgate University in 2011 with a BA in International Relations and Japanese Currently a research student at Kansai University on a Fulbright Grant*

Title: "U.S. Energy Policy Post-Fukushima"

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### ***Presentation Summary***

The 3.11 Fukushima Nuclear Accident has prompted a global rethinking of energy policy. For the U.S., which stands in the complicated position of needing to secure energy independence, reduce consumption of environmentally damaging energy sources, and at the same time maintain the same quality of lifestyle and affordability of energy, the immediate, realistic alternatives are hardly an improvement. In fact, they may represent as much or more danger than short- to medium-term continued reliance on nuclear energy. This unpleasant reality

is the real lesson of Fukushima: continued global reluctance and sluggish efforts towards funding and achieving technological breakthroughs in alternative energy has put humanity at the mercy of any number of unpredictable disasters, all of which are unacceptably catastrophic in terms of damage to and loss of human lives. 3.11 has made resolution of the global energy puzzle both much harder, and much more urgent. Until diversified, reliable, clean and sustainable energy alternatives are found, conservation, pollution reduction, management of appropriate new energy sources, technological innovation – and for the U.S. at least, nuclear power – are the only policy options.

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### ***Post-forum Comment***

Participating in the Youth Forum has been an extremely rewarding and enlightening experience which I hope expands and continues for many years ahead. As a panelist, this experience was great training for someone aiming for a career in academia, as it required a great deal of individual research and preparation, which formed the basis of fruitful discussion with the international group of panelists. However, by far the best part of the experience was the meeting and exchange of opinions, ideas, and points of view with well-read contemporaries from other countries. What we achieved through our discussions was of course intellectually stimulating, but has also renewed and increased my faith in discussion and international exchange for stimulating international cooperation and problem solving. The experience of putting myself in the perspectives of each of the participating nations' representatives gave me a handle on and a broader view of the issue that I could not have achieved alone. At the end, all of the panelists were on the same page, extremely well-researched, and in the ideal position to put on a panel discussion that effectively conveyed to the audience the nature of the issue and got into the core of many interesting and significant aspects surrounding the topic. I really feel that the structure of the Youth Forum not only develops the panelists who participate, but also puts on an extremely engaging event for the audience. The fact that the panelists are young and not exactly experts in the field keeps the discussion at a level that is accessible for the audience and invites them to engage personally and intellectually in the ongoing discussion. Viewed from my seat as a panelist, I was particularly impressed and honored by the attentive audience members and how eagerly they participated. I imagine that the Youth Forum's goals are probably just as described above: fostering international exchange, holding an engaging and enlightening forum about a contemporary issue of global importance, and developing program participants as well as the audience. As such, I think the program is successfully achieving its goals and I hope the model is adopted elsewhere. As a side note, another wonderful aspect of the program for panelists is the friendships made over the course of preparing for the day of the event and celebrating afterwards. Neither my college nor study abroad experiences allowed me to engage

at such a deep intellectual level or work together with such an international and intelligent group of people, and I am so grateful for the new relationships I have gotten out of participating.

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### **3. Yuqiao Feng (China)**



*Dual Degree Master candidate, studying Media and Governance at Keio University SFC, and Chinese Politics and Diplomacy at Fudan University.*

Title: “China’s Energy Policy and Its Future”

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#### ***Presentation Summary***

Yuqiao FENG will report its research on the current status and future development of China’s energy policy. First she will give a basic picture of the overall China’s energy reservoirs: energy resources are rich but unevenly distributed. Then, the speaker will introduce the priorities of China’s energy policy---- energy saving and self-supply capacity strengthening. On the one hand, China has saved enormous energy by increasing the energy efficiency; on the other, China was the 1st largest energy producer in the world to contribute to the energy supply.

In the end, the speech would illustrate China’s future policy—one is the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the other is the promotion of renewable energy. China’ nuclear power is mainly for civilian purpose, feeding 1.3 billion Chinese people. All the nuclear facilities are under strict safety regulations. China has huge demand for developing renewable energy. Solar and Wind power would be on the top of China’s choice for its renewable energy strategy, but the biggest obstacle lies in the constraints of power transmission from the west to the east of China, which is caused by the uneven distribution of resources. China needs more technology assistance and cooperation with advanced countries to solve this problem.

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#### ***Post-forum Comment***

The U.S-Japan Youth forum is a great platform for young people who care about the international affairs to discuss common questions. This year’s topic is future energy policy, which is very on-time and valuable after 3.11 Fukushima accident.

Above all, it is a good opportunity for me to study both China and other countries' energy policy, including that of renewable energy, nuclear energy, fossil energy. Exchanging ideas gave me broader and wiser perspective of this issue.

Second, I feel so proud to hear the feedback that some Japanese audience started to know Chinese government has made big contributions to the low-carbon society and environment protection, after my presentation about China's energy policy. Sometimes, domestic news is so biased that doesn't cover the whole story. However, people-to-people communications would much help to strengthen the bilateral understanding.

Last but not least, the friends I have made in this forum mean a lot to me, a foreign student far away from home. I am grateful that such a forum could bring us together!

Many thanks to the sponsor, organizer, and all of the participants!

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#### **4. David Funtowicz (France)**



*Currently in the second year of special graduate program in nuclear engineering at the University of Tokyo. Graduated from Mines Engineering school Nantes (France) in 2010 as a Nuclear engineer.*

Title: "Energy policy decision process"

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#### ***Presentation Summary***

To be able to find the right energy policy for a country is, in my opinion, a question that cannot be answer directly. The complexity of this problem has to take into account many different constraints, like environmental and economical. Thus consequences of a policy have to be well assets and known and the acceptance of public is also very important. With Fukushima accident, many countries changed their energy policy and made huge plan and decisions in the shock of the tragic accident and were, in certain cases, more emotional decision than rational decisions than can lead to more harm than benefit. However, it is expected from policy maker to be rational and ensure that policy is made for the best of the people and the country. Consequently the questions that I would like to discuss with everyone are about the energy policy decision process. Furthermore, I would like to discuss the role of the people in this

process, and finally, the role of international agency such as IEA in the ongoing energy mutation.

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### ***Post-forum Comment***

The Topic of this year youth forum, Energy policy, was very well adapted to the current hot topics of discussion; it was thus suited and very interesting to work into. Coming from Nuclear engineering background, I apprehended this discussion because of the political point of view needed. However, it was a formidable exercise well handled by the moderator and much instructive, not only by the point of view new to me but also the diversity of the panelist and topics get onto. It was interesting to see the difference of objectives and expectations in the presentation of the other panelist's country energy policy. I must say my point of view changed over certain point, especially on the German energy policy which was one of the main point discussed during the Forum. I reached what I was looking for by attending this forum and I hope the other panelist and audience too.

However, some point may be interesting to improve, especially about the role of the audience. From my point of view, the audience, who is in my sense the most important part of the people coming to such events, should have more time to ask questions which can lead to interesting discussion subjects. Nevertheless, the panelist discussion was already very rich in topics, as in this kind of discussion, and some topics must have been shortened already.

Finally this forum has been an interesting opportunity in my study to look into the topic I will certainly work in, the energy industry, from another point of view, the political aspect. This has been possible thanks to the generous sponsors, audience and smart panelists and I am very grateful to all. I hope this idea of youth of different countries discussing together will expand with as much interesting topics and people as this one was.

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### **5. Markus Winter (Germany)**



*A second-year student in the Master of Public Policy program at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo.*

Title: “German Energy Policy”

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### ***Presentation Summary***

In sum, my opinion – which is in favour of shifting away from fossil and nuclear energy sources towards renewable energy – on the future of energy policy rests on three arguments: First, the costs of nuclear energy (as of fossil energy) are grossly understated and that of renewable forms of energy are overstated. Second, a turnaround in energy policy (such as undertaken by Germany) has to be seen as a package deal and more than just a nuclear phase-out. In fact, it is a much broader investment in replacing environmentally damaging and dangerous fossil and nuclear energy sources by renewable energy supplies. Third, I regard a reorientation of energy policy towards renewable energy sources as an option without any alternative. It is the only way to make our way of living sustainable. A swift and strong legal approach is the only realistic way to achieve this end.

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### ***Post-forum Comment***

Participating in the panel discussion was in fact much more than just discussing a topic on a stage for one time. We had many discussions before the panel even started and continued to do so also after it ended. In that sense, the Youth Forum was a unique opportunity for me, first, to discuss intensively with other young people from different backgrounds, and second, to actually be challenged in my views from a much broader audience. As a student, mostly moving within the confined circles of university life, I rarely have the chance to exchange with professionals. The Youth Forum is one of the rare occasions bridging the gap between students and the ‘real world’, providing a fascinating opportunity to talk with professionals from business, embassies, and foundations.

But besides the fun of meeting new people and exchanging views, it also had very practical learning effects for me: I was forced to convey my message not in lengthy essays, but in concise statements and also in the light of spontaneous interjections by others. Debating skills are essential for any future career and for any participation in public discourse. In the Forum, I had the chance to train these abilities.

Furthermore, participating in the Youth Forum also instigated me to look into the important subject of energy policy in as much depth as I could. In the course of thinking about how to convey my message and what others might object to it, I became much clearer on my own views and what its strengths and weaknesses are. I hope I thereby could support the opinion-building process of other young people and show that this topic is not a *domaine réservée* for experienced academics and professional lobbyists.

Therefore, it is really time to say ‘thank you very much’ now for enabling this event



and giving me the chance to participate in such a Forum. It was fun and educative, like Sesame Street for grown-ups, and just like Sesame Street I hope you will enable this great Youth Forum for a long time.

Vielen, vielen Dank und Viele Grüße!

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## **6. Mizaël Poh (Singapore)**



*A third-year Japanese Studies undergraduate student at the National University of Singapore*

Title: “Southeast Asia: Can growth be managed without going nuclear?”

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### ***Presentation Summary***

Southeast Asia is a developing region with bright economic prospects. With growth, electricity demand is an issue governments would have to deal with. To tackle with this projected increase in energy demand, countries in Southeast Asia feel that adopting a nuclear energy programme is inevitable. Nuclear energy is an attractive option because it manages energy needs as well as the problem of carbon emissions. It also allows for greater participation in international affairs and dialogue, it provides energy security and it frees up fossil fuels for export. This is despite the fact that the region has a large potential in renewable energy.

What do I believe should be the way forward for Southeast Asia? Energy demand should also be managed with energy conservation, policy frameworks should be properly established to improve investor confidence in the renewable energy industry, and put more focus on R&D and test bed projects. If governments decide to commit to a nuclear energy programme, the government has to take on the responsibility of ensuring a zero accident record.

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### ***Post-forum Comment***

This is the first time that I have participated in any forum or conference as a panelist. There are three points that come to mind when I reflect upon my experience in the forum.

It was indeed a different and enriching experience to be sitting on the other side of the table this time round. I have learnt much not only through policy discussions with other panellists but also in public speaking. Looking back, I could have injected more humour and told a story or two during the discussion. A good panellist has to deliver in two aspects: discussion content and personal impression.

I appreciate the committee's efforts for inviting various students from different countries and regions to present to the audience a global view of energy and nuclear policies. What was more pressing to the Japanese audience was how could Japan move forward after 3/11 Triple Disasters in terms of their energy policy. The discussion over policy directions with respect to countries which currently have nuclear energy programmes proved to be interesting – many policy considerations were raised and debated over, putting onto the table useful insights and perspectives in the field of energy policy. As a Singaporean, as a youth in Southeast Asia, this has made me consider again, and more carefully about Southeast Asian governments' intentions to bring nuclear energy into their respective countries. The Southeast Asian region is an emerging region, and thus catching up with other developed countries and regions. It is hard to keep up with the many dynamic changes that have been taking place around my country; doing research on nuclear energy programmes for a region also proved to be a challenging task. However, this experience has allowed me to think about energy policy with more depth. As a youth who is living in a region where governments are looking at other countries to plan their development, it was a real privilege to listen to and then think upon the ideas and discussion points from a different perspective than mine.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Forum has also given me the opportunity to make new friends from Japan and all over the world. I am very privileged to have made friends with fellow panelists and other Japanese youths who were involved in the forum. With the Internet and social networking sites, it is now easy for friends in different countries to share news and ideas no matter where they are. I look forward to more casual discussions of ideas and current affairs with my newly-made friends from Japan and other countries.

To conclude, I have grown very much from this experience in Tokyo. I have learnt much: from policy considerations to public speaking skills. It has made a great impression on me, and being a youth, I will treasure this wonderful experience in many years to come.

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