

Nuclear Diplomacy Picks up Pace

The theme of nuclear cooperation is becoming increasingly important in the diplomacy by government leaders. From November 15 to 16, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and Minister Akira Amari of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) visited the United States and South Africa, respectively, conferring with the leaders of both countries, and reaching an agreement to promote cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. Amidst a heightened interest in nuclear energy worldwide, Japan is certain to place greater emphasis on the role of nuclear energy in its diplomatic relations with various countries.

Prime Minister Fukuda and President Bush Commitment to Nuclear Energy

On November 16, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda met with President George W. Bush at the White House in Washington. The two leaders agreed on a Japan-U.S. cooperation fact sheet that included such items as energy security, clean development and climate change. Referred to the stepped-up interest in nuclear energy in the Asia-Pacific region, the document also contained a pledge by the two nations to further promote cooperation in the nuclear energy field under the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) and the Japan-U.S. Nuclear Energy Joint Action Plan. The purpose was to offer the option of clean nuclear power generation without the emission of greenhouse gases, while also ensuring nuclear nonproliferation, nuclear safety, and nuclear security.

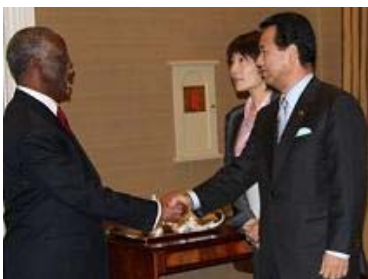


Also, the two leaders agreed to cooperate in the promotion of innovative technological development and the development of nuclear utilization for peaceful purposes, in order both to prevent global warming and to ensure energy security, while maintaining economic growth.

In 2008, the G-8 Summit will be held at Lake Toya in Hokkaido, Japan. At the recent Fukuda-Bush summit, Japan and the United States said that they would closely coordinate their activities there, as well as in new negotiations being held by the United Nations, in order to achieve concrete results in building an effective future framework to deal with the issue of climate change through efforts by individual industrial sectors.

Japan to Boost Relations with South Africa in the Nuclear Field

On November 15, Minister Akira Amari of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) made the first-ever visit to the Republic of South Africa by a Japanese governmental minister in his position. There, he conferred with President Thabo Mbeki, and the two nations pledged to boost their relations in the nuclear field.



While in South Africa, METI Minister Amari made a statement expressing the desire of Japan to use its technological prowess to help contribute to South Africa's promotion of nuclear power. President Mbeki expressed a strong determination to promote nuclear power, and demonstrated his desire to strengthen the relationship with Japan, listing the achievements of Japanese corporations in the nuclear field.

Also, the two nations agreed to build a mutually beneficial relationship that would link together Japan's technological strength with South Africa's resources. In the area of industrial cooperation, many fruitful discussions were carried out between the two sides in an extremely friendly atmosphere. Issues included a scheme to build up the business infrastructure environment, to systematize a

joint trade committee, and to get participation by the private sector.

In the next two decades, South Africa projects an increase in electricity demand of approximately 30GW. With powerful government support in the race to expand and enhance the country's power generation facilities, South Africa is now developing the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor (PBMR), a small-scale modular high-temperature gas reactor with an output of 165MW. The country has also drawn up plans to construct around ten light water reactor (LWR) units in the next 20 years, providing around 8GW to 12GW in new capacity.

Editor: Noriyuki Ishii, JAIF