

Possible Options for International Management of Plutonium Stockpile

- Implications for Denuclearization of Northeast Asia -

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ABSTRACT

(DRAFT)

Increasing stockpile of plutonium is one of the most important security risks we face today. A total of 520 tons of separated plutonium, which is equivalent to 85,000 Nagasaki bombs, exist now (as of the end of 2016), and is still increasing primarily due to civilian reprocessing programs. Roughly 60% of it (roughly 290 tons) is civilian plutonium and about 97% of it are owned by only four countries (UK [110], France [65], Russia [57] and Japan [48]), all of which have on-going civilian reprocessing programs. At the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit, the Hague Communique stated that “we encourage States to keep their stockpile of separated plutonium to the minimum level, both as consistent with national requirements.” There are also “excess” military plutonium stockpile, which is roughly 78 tons (US and Russia) which are not yet under international safeguards. Then more than 70% of plutonium stockpile are “non-military purposes” and thus should be kept safety and securely. It is an urgent task for international community to manage such large stockpile of plutonium and to reduce to minimum level as soon as possible.

This paper addresses possible international management options to deal with such large stockpile of separated plutonium, especially those of civilian and “excess” military plutonium. There are four possible options: 1) enhanced transparency by strengthening International Plutonium Management Guideline (INFCIRC/549), 2) International Plutonium Storage (under the custody of IAEA) of “excess” plutonium, 3) International Cooperation on Plutonium Disposition, and 4) Moratorium on commissioning of new reprocessing facilities.