August 22, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to encourage you to continue to engage with Japan on a joint effort to dispose of their plutonium stocks and to cooperate to deter the expansion of plutonium production in the region, and to request information regarding any plans you may have to further these objectives. As you are aware, the focus of U.S. nonproliferation policy has long been on preventing the spread of the capability to produce a nuclear weapon, especially uranium enrichment or reprocessing of spent fuel to acquire plutonium.

We are concerned that Japan and other countries in the region are considering reprocessing, as the proliferation risks of the civil use of plutonium far outweigh any of its commercial benefits. This fact played a major role in the Administration’s decision to terminate the construction of the MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility at the Savannah River Site. We are thus encouraged that the United States has recently persuaded Japan to defer the opening of its plutonium reprocessing facility at Rokkasho. While peaceful, the continued expansion of Japan’s stockpile of plutonium poses increasing proliferation risks, including by encouraging other countries in the region to acquire similar capabilities.

A key factor in Japan’s decision-making regarding the future of Rokkasho is the disposition of its existing stockpile of plutonium. Close cooperation with Japan in finding a safe and satisfactory solution to this shared challenge is essential. For this reason, we believe it is of great importance that the U.S. and Japan undertake a joint effort to develop methods to dispose of plutonium stocks that do not require the recycling of plutonium and to cooperate to deter plutonium production in countries such as China and South Korea. This could strengthen our hand in persuading North Korea to dismantle its nuclear infrastructure.

We encourage you to continue to engage with Japan on these issues, and look forward to receiving the requested information regarding these efforts. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
August 28, 2018

To: Mr. Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State
Copied: Mr. Rick Perry, Secretary of Energy
Mr. James Mattis, Secretary of Defense
Ambassador John Bolton, National Security Advisor to the President

RE: Message from Japanese Diet Members regarding reducing the Japanese Plutonium Stockpile

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

Please allow us to show our respect for your government’s recent efforts to promote peace and stability in the East Asian region through the US-DPRK Summit and ongoing negotiations to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

The US-Japan 123 Agreement let Japan reprocess its spent nuclear fuel to separate plutonium. However, we, as Japanese Lawmakers, feel a heavy responsibility for the extent to which the Japanese plutonium stockpile has grown and this large stockpile is causing the international community concerns regarding nuclear proliferation.

As tensions on the Korean peninsula begin to relax and the negotiations to denuclearize proceed, we understand that it is very important for Japan to reassure the international community that it has a realistic plan to reduce the plutonium stockpile within a reasonable time frame. This would also reduce anxieties in South Korea and the Peoples’ Republic of China (PRC), thus promoting peace and stability throughout the region. The positive effects may even reach beyond Northeast Asia to the Middle East region.

Unfortunately, if Japan limits itself to its current plans to dispose of its plutonium holdings by fabricating it into mixed oxide (MOX) fuel and irradiating it in a small number of Japanese power reactors, Japan will retain the vast majority of its holdings for many years. If it opens its plant at Rokkasho, this stockpile could easily grow again. We are extremely concerned about the risks of this approach and we believe that Japan should be switching to direct disposal methods, which the US is also investigating.

We are willing to urge the Japanese government to stop its plan on reprocessing spent fuel and to reduce our plutonium holdings concretely. We will also continue dialogue with US Congress members on this issue.

In the context of US-Japan cooperation moving in an effective non-proliferation direction, we believe that the US and Japanese governments should consider:

1) Working towards ending reprocessing in the Asian region and globally. Reprocessing spent fuel leads to increased separated plutonium and increased proliferation risks. Our governments should not rely on MOX program, which lacks economic rationality, for a regional commercial plutonium production pause.

2) Japan’s MOX program is, in reality, not progressing as planned and Japan cannot rely on this method to reduce its plutonium stockpile. Our two countries should cooperate to investigate and develop alternative methods of plutonium immobilization and disposal.

We believe that these measures would be in the common interests of all parties and would build security for all. We look forward to learning your own thoughts on these matters and hope that they soon will be the focus of direct discussions at senior levels between our governments.

Yours Sincerely,

Seiji OSAKA
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan
山崎 誠  衆議院議員
Makoto YAMAZAKI
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

長尾 秀樹  衆議院議員
Hideki NAGAO
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

柿沢 未途  衆議院議員
Mito KAKIZAWA
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

道下 大樹  衆議院議員
Daiki MICHISHITA
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

山本 和嘉子  衆議院議員
Wakako YAMAMOTO
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

初鹿 明博  衆議院議員
Akihiro HATSUSHIKA
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

阿部 知子  衆議院議員
Tomoko ABE
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan
山川百合子  衆議院議員  
Yuriko YAMAKAWA  
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

川田龍平  参議院議員  
Ryuhei KAWADA  
Member of the House of Councilors of Japan

高井崇志  衆議院議員  
Takashi TAKAI  
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

大河原雅子  衆議院議員  
Masako OKAWARA  
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

近藤昭一  衆議院議員  
Shoichi KONDO  
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

横光克彦  衆議院議員  
Katsuhiko YOKOMITSU
Hajime YOSHIKAWA
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

Shunsuke ITO
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

Mizuho FUKUSHIMA
Member of the House of Councilors of Japan

Yuichi MAYAMA
Member of the House of Councilors of Japan

Kantoku TERUYA
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan

Kiyomi TSUJIMOTO
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan