



SIMUN X

St. Ignatius Model United Nations

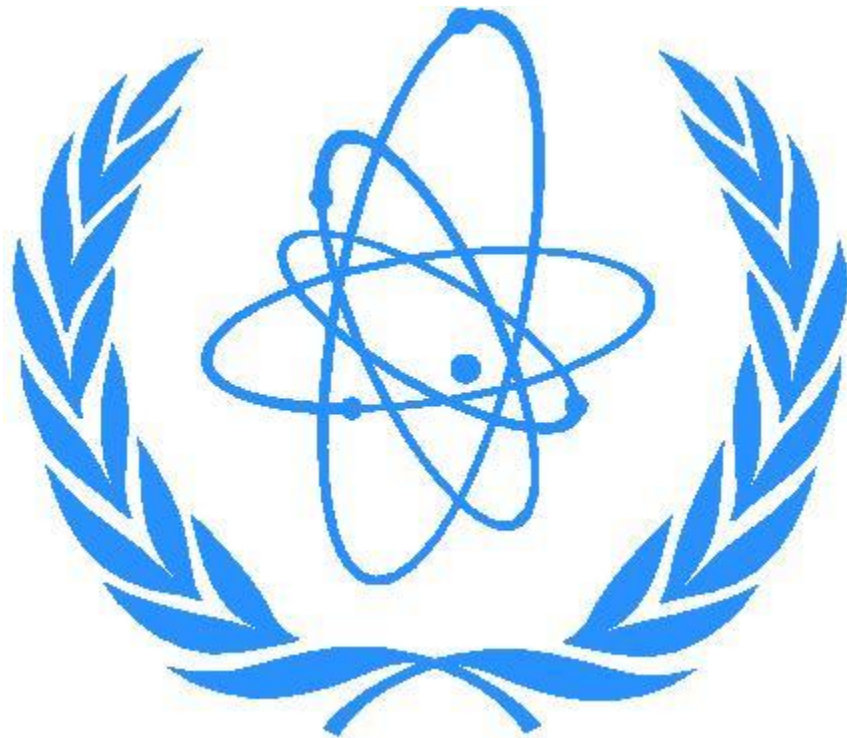
Tenth Annual Conference

IAEA

November 5, 2011

St. Ignatius College Prep | Chicago, IL

The International Atomic Energy Agency



Dear Delegates,

Hello! My name is Tom Wood and I will be your chair for this year's International Atomic Energy Agency at SIMUN X. I am looking forward to a great committee! I have been doing Model UN for all four years of my high school career, and was recently elected to the exec board. I have gone on many conferences both internationally and nationally. I hope to major in International Relations in college as well.

Yours in Diplomacy,

Tom Wood

Hello SIMUN X delegates! My name is Kent Hutchison and I'll be your Political Officer for the International Atomic Energy Association. This is my second year as a member of Model United Nations, and it is my privilege to welcome you to the 2011 IAEA general sessions. MUN is a passion of mine, but when I'm not MUNing it up, I play for the Ignatius baseball team and participate on our math team. I strongly encourage you to approach me with any questions or concerns that fall under my jurisdiction. My advice for SIMUN X IAEA? Prepare well, participate consistently, and have fun! Also, try to avoid plunging the world in nuclear war.

Sincerely, your PO,

Kent Hutchison

Hello, my name is Clare Egan! I am a sophomore at Ignatius and am going to be your Vice Chair for SIMUN X's International Atomic Energy Agency! I have been doing MUN since I was a freshman and enjoy it greatly. Besides MUN, I also run cross country.

Looking forward to committee,

Clare Egan



Topic 1: Nuclear Waste Disposal

The thaw of the Cold War had numerous consequences, both geopolitical and domestic, not the least of which was the large volume of nuclear waste created due to the dismantling of nuclear weapons created during the fevered arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Eastern bloc and the subsequent nuclear détente were achieved at the price of the creation of thousands of nuclear weapons. This scenario introduces questions pertaining to the safe disarmament of the weapons, an issue that could become the most damaging long-term pollution problem in the history of mankind. Should an effective disposal system for nuclear waste not be found, even the “winners” of the Cold War may eventually be compelled to wonder if the ends justified the means.

Though often overlooked by debates on the more obvious and immediate threat, operational nuclear weapons themselves, nuclear waste will pose an increasingly dangerous hazard in the coming decades. Few countries have competent, full-scale plans in place to safeguard against this ever-growing environmental disaster.

On a technical level, by-products of nuclear power and weapon creation are classified as “low level” radioactive waste (LLW) and “high level” radioactive waste (HLW). LLW accounts for almost 90 percent of all nuclear waste, yet comprises very little of its overall radioactivity. Nuclear power plants create most of the LLW stored today. LLW has a comparatively short half-life, meaning that the substance can be disposed of safely as regular waste after 10 to 50 years of storage. HLW, however, requires storage in excess of 100,000 years and emits high levels of radiation. Clearly HLW poses a significantly more dangerous long-term threat than does LLW.

To fully understand the ramifications of future regulation policy, it is vital to comprehend the current methods of nuclear waste containment, both short- and long-term. Short-term storage is meant mainly to reduce the radioactivity of LLW, but is also used on HLW. A substance’s level of radioactivity decays exponentially, allowing for the handling and proper disposal of some nuclear waste (mainly LLW) after as little as 10 years. Most, if not all, HLW ends up in long-term storage, where it poses many more difficult problems. HLW remains harmful to the environment, and therefore must be kept in isolation for tens of thousands of years.

Potential actions that could lead to nuclear contamination must be guarded against to prevent environmental catastrophe. Such actions pertaining to waste include: accidental uncovering, exposure due to earthquake activity, leeching into water supplies and malevolent actions by organizations wishing to use the materials in an aggressive manner. The results of any of these possibilities becoming realities would cause serious danger and may well imperil lives.

On a political level, nuclear waste disposal has long been contentious and therefore progress on the subject has been sluggish at times. Public influence based on popular culture often shape political decisions about nuclear waste disposal. The very term nuclear waste carries



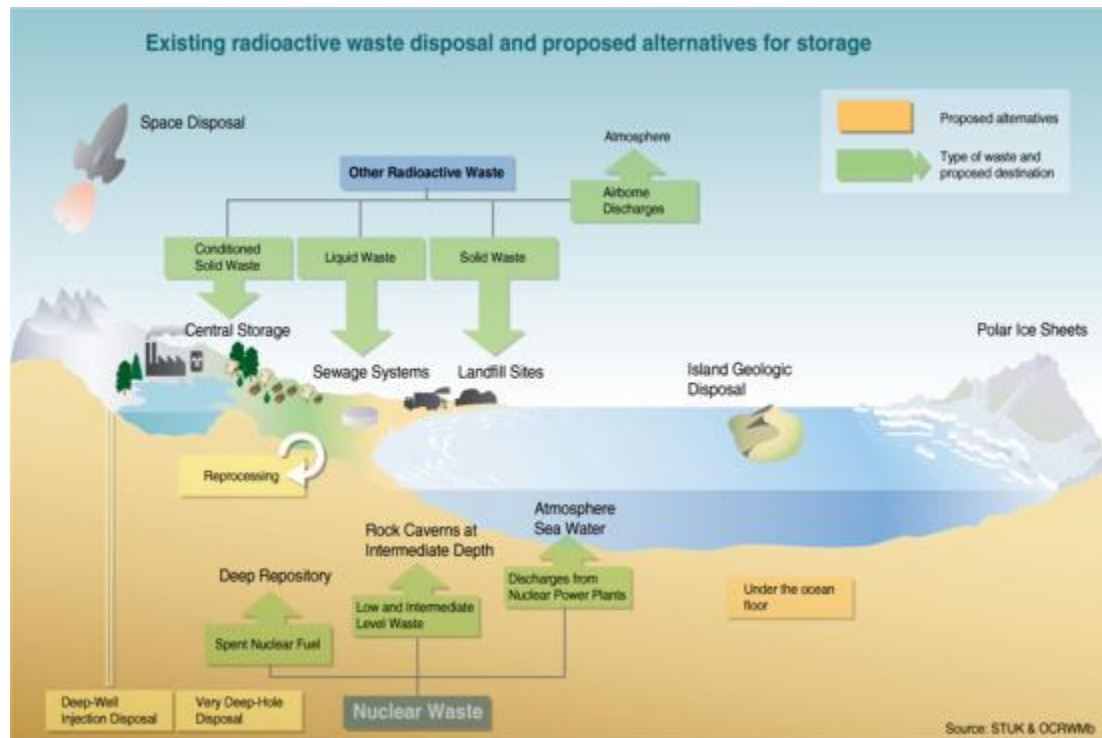
a reputation for spreading panic and dethroning progressive politicians wishing to tackle the issue publicly. The so-called NIMBY syndrome, or “Not In My Back Yard”, is a common cry of those wishing radioactive waste be placed away from where they live, work, or travel. The acronym is mentioned to illustrate the political difficulty of convincing the general population to accept huge potential risk with very little upside. Often mentioned in debate are the benefits of nuclear power plants (namely jobs) as well as the disadvantages of such plants (namely nuclear pollution).

According to the World Nuclear Organization, each country is presently responsible for the nuclear waste it generates. Delegation of the type of treatment of different categories of nuclear waste is left up to each country’s government. In the United States, for example, the federal government has taken responsibility for all HLW, while each individual state is responsible for safely disposing of the LLW it produces.

The issue becomes more complicated when international waste repositories are involved, as they are subject to some provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). That being said, the IAEA, and specifically the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE), stand as proponents of multi-national repositories in an effort to safely regulate the nuclear waste industry. A report by the INFCE supported centralized waste repositories as a method to ensure that radioactive substances are permanently isolated from the environment as well as to prevent the malevolent use of radioactive materials. Numerous other agencies and projects, such as ARIUS and Pangea, have issued proposals for the safe disposal of nuclear waste.

It is worth noting in conclusion that the obvious answer to decimating the supply of new nuclear waste through imposing a permanent moratorium on the creation of nuclear power plants and replacing them with contemporary coal fired plants, may not be a prudent possibility moving forward. Research suggests that coal fired power plants are much more damaging to long-term health than anything short of a blatant leak of nuclear waste. The margin of safety, or how close the average exposure is to the point where it provides direct evidence for harm to human health, is tens of thousands of times smaller for the production of nuclear waste than that of the by-products of coal power. The number of nuclear plants in the world will likely go up in the coming years, and as such, a capable plan is required for the disposal of nuclear waste.





Topic 2: Policy in Regards to Nuclear Security

The era of nuclear weapons has ushered in new problems, unforeseen by any international body. After the emergence of nuclear weapons and energy, safeguards were put in place to protect against the plethora of hazardous circumstances nuclear energy presents. In 2011 both the Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference and the IAEA Nuclear Safety Conference met to discuss the growing interest in political power and its influence on nuclear policy, the long term impact of the disaster in Japan, and the responsibility of private industries in the nuclear field, among many other topics. It is crucial to address these issues as the nuclear industry has informed governments worldwide that the globe is going to need a lot more nuclear energy in the coming years. Many of the nuclear industries are pushing to see more power reactors employed on every continent. With these industries becoming so enterprising, it is not hard to see the political risk involved.

The conferences mentioned above discovered gross malpractice in many of the Japanese nuclear power stations. The investigation that ensued after the accident revealed a legacy of non action and misuse of information. Not only that, but Japan was once accused (and later confirmed) of a cover up regarding crucial information inside the same Fukushima power plant. There seemed to have been a lack of aggression towards certain safety inspections and procedures. As a result, at the Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference, the director of the IAEA's Division of Concept and Planning, Jill Cooley, gave an address outlining what the International Atomic Energy Agency was looking to improve in the coming years. Ms. Cooley stressed the importance of getting the IAEA to be recognized as a preeminent verification agency

that has the support of the entire global community. Not only should it be supported by the community, Cooley stated, but the IAEA should be granted the resources and legal capabilities to implement new safeguards. Cooley mentions the IAEA's Department of Safeguards 2012-2023 three pronged strategy plan. The three main pillars consist of 1) assurances that states are meeting their safeguard protocols 2) detecting **early** the misuse of nuclear technology and 3) getting the IAEA involved in verification of nuclear arms control and disarmament. These three pillars bring along many needs for reform, chief among them being:

-ensuring support for the IAEA mission

-increasing investments in detecting of misuse of technology and technology malfunction. IAEA policy is universal but new information has come to light regarding how some safety plans are not compatible with newer or really old nuclear power stations and hopes to create new safeguards individualized for certain stations

-Financial support

-structured analysis for *individual* states, not just an all encompassing safeguards plan, this includes taking into account not just the size of a nation's nuclear program but the legal and governmental framework and a nation's transparency

-diversification of sources of information to the IAEA

-greater regional authority and helping state programs evolve safely while ensuring that states continue to or begin to open up to the idea of cooperating together across increasing differences in nuclear policy

-prioritizing resource needs within the limits that the IAEA has currently (both legally and financially) for investment in better technology, etc.

The IAEA is aggressively working to fulfill all parts of this plan to create a safer environment for nuclear energy to exist. Various independent agencies have pointed out that the incident in Japan may not have been so severe had Japan had the same resources as a nuclear giant such as the United States. The United States requires drills for station blackout regularly, while other countries, such as Japan, do not. The IAEA hopes, through conference, to share safeguard technology and procedures such as this one to put all nuclear powered countries on the same foot. By ensuring that the International Atomic Energy Agency has more support and a broadened horizon of power, granted to them by member states, it is hoped the future incidents such as the Fukushima power plant can be avoided and nuclear reactors can be made even safer as a source of energy.



BLOC POSITIONS:

The Nuclear West: The west has obtained advanced nuclear technology, not only in nuclear technology but in nuclear weapons as well. No major incidents have occurred in these countries recently and nuclear waste disposal is not huge issue as of now, it is very likely that it will be in the near future. All of the nuclear super giants are prepared for nuclear incidents with instant recovery plans. Dedicated to stopping nuclear proliferation in the world.

Asia: The two dominant nuclear figures in Asia in regards to nuclear power are China and North Korea. Of the two, North Korea has been creating the most controversy by developing a nuclear system. China has capabilities similar to the west but was recently devastated by the incident at the Fukushima nuclear power reactor.

Iran, Pakistan, North Korea: Countries suspected to have advanced nuclear capabilities but refuse to cooperate with the most international organizations to ensure that they are not working towards nuclear weapons. As a result, safeguards systems are lacking if existent at all and could result in devastation should something occur. Furthermore, since their nuclear programs are secret, they can/have attempted to get rid of nuclear waste in an undesirable fashion.

The only countries who have not signed the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) are: India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan

SOURCES and RESEARCH LINKS

<http://www.iaea.org/>

<http://www.nuclearfiles.org/>

<http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/29/2011-carnegie-international-nuclear-policy-conference/18g>

<http://www.iaea.org/>

