

NUKE INFO TOKYO

Sep./Oct.
2001



Citizens' Nuclear Information Center

No. 85

3F Kotobuki Bldg., 1-58-15, Higashi-nakano, Nakano-ku, Tokyo 164-0003, JAPAN

URL: <http://www.cnic.or.jp/>

e-mail : cnic-jp@po.ijnet.or.jp

Kariwa Referendum: A New Blow to the Nuclear Program



Energetic campaigns were carried out by both sides prior to the referendum at Kariwa Village. Here, citizens against the "plu-thermal program" (the Japanese name for the MOX program) are in the middle of their tour of the village. The banner reads: "Stop Plu-Thermal with the Power of Women" (20 May, 2001. Photo by Kazuyuki Takemoto.)

MOX fuel utilization program meets a dead end

In a referendum held on 27 May 2001, the majority of Kariwa Village, home of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant, voted against the use of MOX fuel (see NIT No. 84, pp.1-2). Shortly after this, on 1 June, the mayors of Kariwa, Kashiwazaki City, and the governor of Niigata Prefecture met with each other and subsequently asked Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) to postpone the loading of MOX fuel. The company then

deferred the loading until the periodic inspection scheduled for one year later. Furthermore, on 16 July, the three officials reaffirmed their under-

CONTENTS

Effects of the Kariwa referendum	1-5
COP6, CO ₂ and nuclear promotion	6-8
The government's long-term outlook for energy supply and demand	9-11
Fukushima energy review committee	12
Anti-Nuke Who's Who: Daisuke Yoshida	13-14
News Watch	15-16

standing that the loading will be postponed as long as the Kariwa residents are against the plan. However, this does not mean that the three have given up on the use of MOX. Rather, they are hoping that the campaigns carried out by the government and utility companies will persuade the residents that MOX fuel use is after all necessary, and that they will be able to obtain official public consent through another referendum or a Village Assembly election.

The logical procedure would be for the three heads to abide by the residents' decision to reject the use of MOX fuel and withdraw their prior agreements on burning MOX with TEPCO, but the Mayor will "wait for," or rather force, residents' opinions to change. Such a response to the referendum result by local leaders mirrors the central government and electric companies' responses. They have essentially ignored the referendum result, and instead have increased their efforts to promote nuclear energy. The government and the utilities have played deaf to the defeat at Kariwa, and are preparing to fight back. On 21 June, in order to defend the Village from such schemes, the Kariwa Village Assembly adopted a statement calling upon the central government to respect the result of the referendum.

On the other hand, at Fukushima Prefecture, where the governor forced the postponement of the loading of MOX fuel in March, an Energy

Policy Review Committee (see p.12) has been set up to comprehensively review the prefecture's energy policy, including the MOX program. On 31 May, the Prefectural government held a "meeting for learning residents' opinions." Then, based on these views, it selected the four themes to be examined by the committee. The review committee will evaluate the opinions of scholars and experts, and will conclude its assessment in a year's time. Its proposals may be submitted to the central government as a policy suggestion.

Government and utilities in denial of their defeat

The postponements at TEPCO's Fukushima and Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Plants, in addition to the postponement at Kansai Electric Power Company's (KEPCO) Takahama Plant caused by the British Nuclear Fuels plc (BNFL) MOX fuel data falsification scandal, have dealt a serious blow to the government and utilities. This is exactly why they are reorganizing their campaigns for the promotion of MOX use and the nuclear fuel cycle, to prevent the anti-plutonium trend spreading any further.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC), together with TEPCO, KEPCO, and all other major power companies

Table 1 MOX program schedule according to the Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPC) released in Feb. 1997

Electric company	1999	2000	early 2000	~2010
TEPCO	Fukushima I-3	Kashiwazaki-Kariwa 3	1 reactor	0~1 reactor
KEPCO	Takahama 4	Takahama 3		1~2 reactors
Chubu			1 reactor	
Kyushu			1 reactor	
Japan Atomic Power Co.			2 reactors	
Hokkaido				1 reactor
Tohoku				1 reactor
Hokuriku				1 reactor
Chugoku				1 reactor
Shikoku				1 reactor
Electric Power Development Co.				1 reactor
Accumulative TOTAL	2 reactors	4 reactors	9 reactors	16~18 reactors

Table 2 Status of MOX fuel contracts as of the end of 2000

	Reactor	Assemblies	Contract	Fabrication plant	Note	
Manufacture completed	Takahama 4	8	KEPCO-Mitsubishi Heavy Industries-BNFL TEPCO-Toshiba-COMMOX (COGEMA 60%; Belgonucleaire 40%)	MDF (BNFL) Sellafield, U.K.	Use cancelled because of QC data falsification scandal	
	Takahama 3	8		P0 (Belgonucleaire) Dessel, Belgium	Loading postponed due to local opposition.	
	Fukushima I-3	32				
	Kashiwazaki-Kariwa 3	28				
Being manufactured	Takahama 4	?	KEPCO-Nuclear Fuel Industries-COMMOX	MELOX (COGEMA) Marcoule, France		
	Takahama 3					
	Fukushima I-3	220	TEPCO-Japan Nuclear Fuel-COMMOX			
	Kashiwazaki-Kariwa 3					

Compiled by Anti-Nuke News.

who operate nuclear power plants, are setting up offices for local promotion. Specifically, pressure from the government on local governments to promote nuclear energy will intensify, more subsidies will be dealt out, and the utilities will begin campaigns making exaggerated claims about the safety of nuclear power. No longer concerned about how they would look, the desperate promoters are now organizing their efforts for the final battle.

As though to support such efforts, in late June the ruling Liberal Democratic Party tried to force the adoption of a resolution in the Diet which promotes the use of MOX fuel. The draft of the resolution was called "A Resolution Relating to the Strengthening of Measures to Implement the MOX Program." The resolution draft stated that "...the importance and necessity of MOX use in the national energy policy will not be affected by [the result of the Kariwa referendum]" — an attitude which goes very much against what the Diet is meant to be, an organ which gives utmost respect to citizens' opinions. Citizens furiously campaigned against this draft resolution by holding opposition meetings and approaching politicians by phone, fax, and e-mail messages. As a result, opposition parties obstinately opposed the draft, and the ruling party had to give up on its adoption.

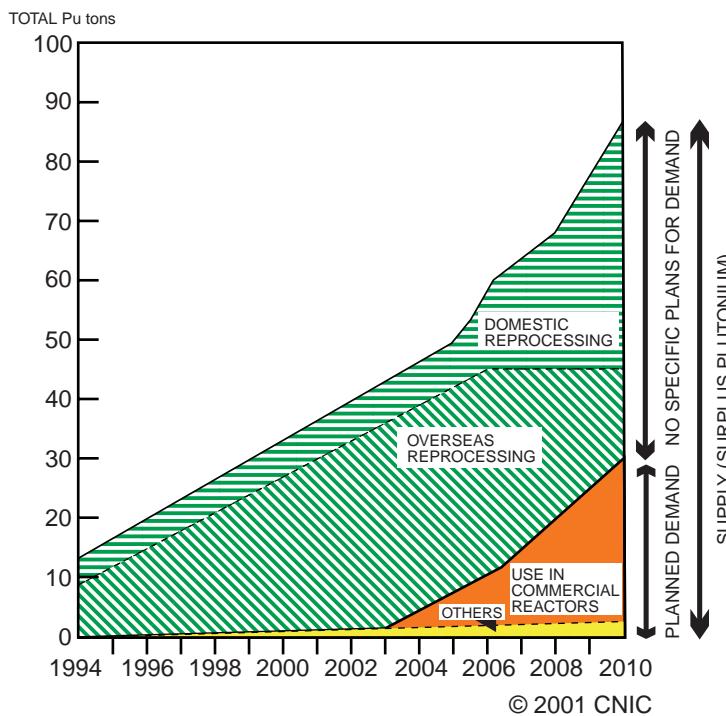
"National policy" and democracy

The media also tried to play down the result of Kariwa referendum. In particular, the editorial of the 28 May issue of the Yomiuri Newspaper, which openly promotes nuclear energy, was titled

"MOX is still necessary" and asserted that "[the referendum result] is disappointing and endangers Japan's nuclear power policy." The article stressed that the referendum is not binding, and that the existence of the state could be threatened if residents of a certain area can decide on the fate of a national policy which involves the entire nation. It also claimed that the safety of MOX has been proven, and that Germany (which decided to phase-out nuclear energy) does not oppose MOX, and concluded that "when a local decision harms the interests of the nation, the central government must take a firm stance."

Such arguments are consistent with the pronouncements of most of the pro-nuclear media, stressing the supposed benefit of all rather than the suffering of specific local areas. However, even in Japan, which has a limited political system of indirect democracy, there is no law entitling the central government to override the result of a referendum lawfully conducted by a local administration. The right of each citizen to hold opinions on matters deeply concerning their local area must be guaranteed before the will of the nation. The likelihood of nuclear energy undermining democracy, a possibility further enhanced by the current use of plutonium, a military substance, can readily be observed in the reality of present-day Japan.

At TEPCO's general meeting, held a month after the Kariwa referendum, shareholders' wishes for nuclear phase-out were ignored. In his replies to shareholders' questions, TEPCO President Nobuya Minami stated, "recycling of uranium is for the benefit of future generations." "I am convinced that nuclear energy is the energy



Projected and historic supply and demand for Japanese plutonium
(Adjusted for the current delay in the MOX program.)

Assumptions: 1) Extracted plutonium is used to manufacture MOX fuel which is then burned in Fugen (Prototype ATR), Joyo (Experimental FBR), Monju (Prototype FBR), research and commercial reactors. 2) MOX use in commercial reactors will begin in 2003. 3) Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant will begin operation in 2005, and reach full operation in 2008.

source to replace oil...”; “we will disseminate true information to the residents, and will come up with more satisfactory responses. That’s democracy.” Citizens who are given no choice but to buy electricity from TEPCO, a world-class company, could not even feel angry but simply lost heart at this remark. Such an irresponsible reply can only be explained by incompetence — or by disdain for shareholders’ views.

Kariwa result weighs heavily on Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant

The failure of the MOX program is highlighting the problem of excess plutonium extracted by overseas reprocessing, and underlining the fact that the construction of Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant is unnecessary. The plant is scheduled to be completed in July 2005 and construction work is being carried out 24 hours a day, with the plant being about 60% completed.

The MOX use program is already behind

schedule, but initially two plants were to load the fuel in 1999, with 16~18 plants loading the fuel by 2010 (see Table 1). Originally about 40 tons of plutonium extracted in the U.K. and France were to be transported back to Japan in the form of MOX fuel. Then plutonium extracted domestically at Rokkasho would be used, with a plan to use about 70~75 tons by the end of 2010.

However, with the present situation, none of the MOX fuel that has been transported from Europe since 1999 has been loaded into reactors. At present, not a single electric company has specific dates set for the loading of MOX, or plans to have the fuel manufactured. Under such conditions, who could claim that there is an urgent need to construct the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant? The real issue is the problem of mounting quantities of excess plutonium caused by the failure of plans to use overseas-extracted plutonium. The issue of further extraction of plutonium should not even be put on the table for discussion.

Moreover, the plant's construction cost is now estimated at 2.14 trillion yen. It is certain that the cost will have risen further by its completion, and there is a strong possibility that the Japanese power companies, troubled with the deregulation of the electricity market, will not be using the “world’s most expensive plutonium.”

Meanwhile, there is a storage facility in Rokkasho Village for high-level radioactive waste produced by overseas reprocessing. There is also a disposal center for low-level radioactive waste and a storage pool for the reprocessing plant which has already been completed and stores spent fuel sent from across the country. This village, which receives spent fuel from various parts of Japan every month, thus has great importance to the utilities, not as a site for the reprocessing plant, but as a concentrated storage site of radioactive waste. From the governor of Aomori Prefecture to local residents, people of all levels

have a shared concern that, once the MOX fuel program proves to be a complete failure, Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant will not operate and instead become a storage facility for spent fuel.

Following the Kariwa referendum, Minister Takeo Hiranuma of METI went all the way out to Aomori Prefecture, where the postponement of MOX program was alarming politicians and citizens, to meet the governor. He assured the governor that the reprocessing plans at Rokkasho will be steadfastly pursued and asked for his cooperation with the "national policy" for the promotion of the construction of the plant. However, this visit is merely a maneuver by the minister, who wishes to further the real interests of the government and the power companies — to ensure that Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant will exist as an option for the storage of spent fuel, regardless of whether or not it will process fuel.

On 18 June 2001, coinciding with Hiranuma's visit, the ninth shipment of spent fuel arrived at Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant. It is becoming obvious to anyone who cares to look that the plant is becoming a spent fuel storage facility. To date, about 270 tons of spent fuel have been shipped to the plant. By the time of its completion, the plant is expected to be storing 1,600 tons of spent fuel transported by sea from across Japan.

Not only is the plant becoming a radioactive waste storage facility, but the exact nature of what is being stored there has become a serious concern. Upon the arrival of spent fuel at Rokkasho, local organizations have been measuring radiation doses from transport casks. Recently, there have been measurements of gamma rays which were more than twice the dose of previous shipments. This indicates that the transportation of higher burn-up spent fuel has began. Fuel that has been burned for longer period of time is called high burn-up fuel, and is more radioactive than fuel burned for shorter periods.

Power companies were initially shipping out lower burn-up fuel, but they prefer to ship out higher burn-up fuel to Rokkasho. This is to maintain low levels of radiation at their own power plant storage pools, and it is certain that more



Rokueimaru at Mutsu Ogawara Port on 18 June, 2001, as it unloads a cask of spent fuel brought to Rokkasho for "eventual" reprocessing.

radioactive, higher burn-up fuel will accumulate at Rokkasho. Rokkasho is becoming nothing but a "nuclear waste dump" in the eyes of the locals.

On 28 June, a month after the Kariwa referendum, the government released its outlook on long-term energy supply and demand (See pp.9-11.) It states that in order to meet the reduction target set by the Kyoto Protocol, Japan "must build 10~13 additional nuclear power plants to keep the CO₂ emissions at 1990 level." However, at COP6(part 2) held in late July in Bonn, Germany, the phrase "nuclear energy" was excluded from the CDM and JI mechanisms (see pp.6-8).

With the failure of fast breeder reactor development and postponement of the MOX program exacerbating the problem of surplus plutonium, and amid growing concern over the disposal of radioactive waste, the government and power companies were hoping to fool the public with their campaign that "nuclear energy is necessary for preventing global warming." But the weakness of such arguments was exposed on the world stage, and now the promoters of nuclear energy have nothing to fall back on but their own indefensible ambitions.

By Masako Sawai

Japan's Climate Change Policy and Nuclear Power

HATA, Naoyuki (Kiko Network)

Kiko Network

Kiko Network is a network of NGOs and citizens who are working in Japan on climate change issues. It was founded in April 1998 as a successor to the "Kiko Forum" — an association that worked toward COP3 (Framework Convention on Climate Change Kyoto Conference) held in December 1997. The network deals mainly with information dissemination, public awareness, networking with NGOs and citizens, and lobbying.

1. Environmental NGOs' basic position on the claim that "nuclear power aids global warming prevention"

Naturally, certain burdens should not be placed on the environment to combat another type of burden. Thus radioactivity, an environmental burden, should not be introduced into the environment to prevent global warming. Environmental NGOs working on climate change issues call for "a future without global warming or radioactivity" and maintain that nuclear power is not a technological option for reducing carbon dioxide (CO_2).

2. Japanese government's promotion of nuclear power for climate change prevention

(1) Japan's "Guidelines for Measures to Prevent Global Warming" call for nuclear expansion

One of the Japanese government's main strategies for global warming prevention is to expand the capacity of nuclear power. The government formed its "Guidelines for Measures to Prevent Global Warming" in June 1998

in order to meet its target, a 6% reduction in CO_2 emissions, set by the Kyoto Protocol. The guidelines state that CO_2 emitted from energy sources in the Kyoto Protocol's target period (2008~2012) must be kept at 1990 levels, and that additional construction of nuclear power plants is needed as a core policy for controlling emissions.

(2) "Global warming prevention" is just another slogan for nuclear promotion

In the first place, the main reason for promoting the establishment of nuclear power was to acquire a stable source of energy supply. But when the world's attention focused on climate change issues in the 1990s, "global warming prevention with nuclear power" became the new slogan for nuclear promotion.

However, the government did not plan the expansion of nuclear power capacity for the prevention of global warming. Nuclear expansion has been implemented through the government's "Long-term Program for Research, Development, and Utilization of Nuclear Power" (hereafter the Long-term Program) and the "Long-term Energy Demand and Supply Outlook" (hereafter the Outlook, see pp.9-11), but plans

for the construction of additional nuclear power plants were not made for climate change reasons. Specifically, the Outlook, revised in June 1998 after the Kyoto conference, set nuclear-generated supply of electricity at 480,000GWh for 2010, but this was exactly the same figure as the one in the previous Outlook, and thus was not set in response to the Kyoto Protocol. It is clear from this that the industry had given itself a convenient new slogan, "nuclear energy contributes to prevent global warming by not emitting CO₂," as climate change issues entered international debate.

(3) Plans for construction of additional nuclear power plants are unrealistic

Let us look at the reality of the government's plan for nuclear expansion. The Outlook prepared by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's (METI) Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy and revised in July 1998 stated that 20 additional nuclear power plants would be built by 2010. But even the Committee had to admit this was unrealistic, and reduced the number of new plants to 10~13 in its latest revision released in July 2001 (the number of plants to be constructed will fluctuate depending on the capacity of the plants). Even with that revised version, eight of the thirteen plants are scheduled to begin operation after 2008, only two years before the 2010 target, and it is clear that the accounts can only be made to balance on paper. There are only four plants under construction at the moment, and the possibility of building even this number is slim.

3. Nuclear power and reduction of CO₂ emissions

If the amount of CO₂ emissions per the generation of 1kWh of electricity is compared for different electricity sources, according to the calculations of the Central Research Institute of the Electric Power Industry (CRIEPI), nuclear

energy emits less CO₂ (about 1/30~1/60 of petro-thermal generation, and 1/3~1/5 of solar power generation). However, though the calculation includes estimates of emissions from the decommissioning of nuclear plants, it does not include the maintenance required for the final disposal of radioactive waste.

Meanwhile, setting aside the debate over nuclear power's advantageous "lower" CO₂ emissions, whether additional construction of nuclear plants in Japan will contribute to CO₂ reduction is an entirely separate issue. It is a scenario of emission "reductions" realized by building nuclear plants instead of thermal plants. In other words, it is formed on the assumption that demand will keep growing, with electricity supplied accordingly. If measures for energy conservation were promoted and demand managed, a different scenario would emerge.

Incidentally, with 10~13 additional nuclear plants (electricity supply 418,600GWh, about 100,000GWh more than current output), CO₂ emissions would amount to about 60 million tons less than what would be produced if the increased capacity were made up by thermal plants. This is only 5% of Japan's total CO₂ emissions for FY 1999 (assuming that the average CO₂ emissions of a thermal plant is 0.612kg/kWh, as calculated in the 1998 report of the Federation of Electric Power Companies, and that there are no emissions from nuclear plants when they are operating).

4. The trend that emerged at the "Bonn Agreement" for refraining from nuclear energy

On 27 July 2001, the resumed conference of the COP6 (the sixth session of the conference of the parties to the U.N. framework convention on climate change) was concluded in Bonn, Germany. At the conference, the Japanese government's retrogressive demands for substantial credits for sinks were adopted — seriously compromising qualitative reduction

requirements — but following intensive and difficult negotiations, a political agreement (Bonn Agreement) was reached on the outline of the rules for the Kyoto Protocol at a high-level segment, and the Protocol, which had been on its deathbed, was rescued one step before its demise.

This agreement should be noted for the fact that it turned down the Japanese government's demand to include nuclear energy as a technological option for the Joint Implementation (JI) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), provisions which allow industrialized countries to claim carbon credits for emission-cutting investments in non-industrialized countries or countries in transition economies. Instead, the agreement states that "[industrialized countries] are to refrain from using emission reduction units generated from nuclear facilities to meet their commitments" under such projects. It is not made explicit in the agreement, but from the negotiations that went on in Bonn, it is clear that such a sentence was included in view of the environmental burdens that result from nuclear energy.

In the Kyoto Protocol, methods of reduction within each country are left to the country's discretion. Japan has nuclear power as one of its main measures for meeting reduction targets. But now that the agreement has urged parties to refrain from using nuclear power to combat climate change because of the environmental burden of atomic energy, it is apparent that Japan can no longer cling to its anachronistic promotion of nuclear energy for the reduction of domestic emissions.

As a side note, Japan is the only industrialized country that focuses on nuclear energy as its central measure for global warming prevention. Though the new Bush administration in the U.S. is proposing nuclear energy for global warming prevention, it is quite doubtful that orders for new plants will be placed in America, and it is highly likely that the country's energy policy will change once there is a change in the regime.

5. Measures for CO₂ reduction without relying on nuclear energy

Nuclear energy supplies 29.7% of Japan's electricity, but only 13.0% of the country's total primary energy (FY 1999). Since nuclear energy can only provide energy in the form of electricity, it is important when evaluating this source of energy to put it into the context of the total energy supply instead of confining the debate to the electricity sector. Electricity demand within the total energy demand (the electrification ratio) has been growing in Japan, but there is an increasing number of cases in which electricity is being used when it would in fact be more desirable to directly use gas or oil, for example for heating, cooling, and cooking. This trend calls for some careful consideration.

Also, the transport sector hardly uses electricity for its energy supply, and thus nuclear energy is no use for CO₂ reduction in this area (CO₂ emissions from the transportation section increased 23% between 1990 and 1999). If CO₂ emissions can be reduced by implementing measures for expansion of public transportation and better traffic demand management, and if further improvements can be made in vehicles' fuel efficiency, we could meet reduction targets without depending on nuclear energy.

It is perfectly possible to reduce CO₂ in the industrial, commercial, and household sectors — not by relying on nuclear energy, but by implementing measures promoting energy conservation and new energy.* In any case, it is much more realistic to depend on such measures than to rely on nuclear power plants that will most likely not even be built.

*A joint research project conducted by Kiko Network and other NGOs completed in October 2000 showed that it is quite possible to meet Japan's 6% reduction target without relying on nuclear energy; alternative energy policies were shown to be entirely adequate. <An English-language summary of this report is available. Please contact Kiko Network at (tel) 81-3-3263-9210, (fax) 81-3-3263-9463, or (e-mail) kikotko@jca.apc.org>

Government's Energy Policy to Intensify Nuclear Promotion

1. Introduction

Recently, there have been a number of political developments which have offered a glimpse into Japan's future energy policy. In its Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has completed a report on the outlook of energy supply and demand for the years up to FY 2010. At the same time, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party is in the middle of efforts to establish the Basic Energy Policy Bill, which promotes nuclear energy. The report and the bill go hand in hand, forming a framework for the promotion of nuclear energy.

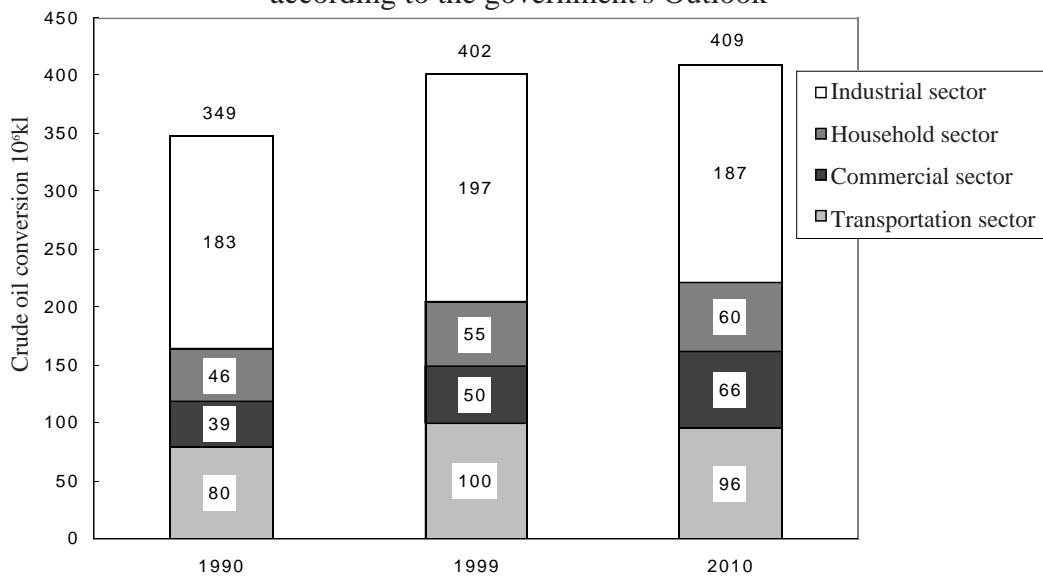
2. Government's outlook on long-term energy supply and demand

On 28 June, after about a year of deliberation, the report on the long-term energy supply and

demand outlook (hereafter the Outlook) was put together. After a final revision, this Outlook was released in July under the title "Report on Future Energy Policy." The Outlook presents the targets of Japan's comprehensive energy policy, which is prepared by METI's Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy. The Outlook has been revised a number of times in the past. The most recent revision has set goals reflecting some consideration of environmental concerns. The Outlook is not binding, but it has considerable influence on the economy and society.

Fig. 1 shows the Outlook's estimate of energy demand up to 2010, based on current levels of consumption. It is assumed that energy conservation will be successfully promoted amongst manufacturers, household appliance makers and car makers, but that electricity consumption will increase in sectors related to the everyday life of individuals, such as the household and the transport sectors. As a result, if the current level of

Fig 1. Final energy consumption in Japan according to the government's Outlook



Compiled by CNIC on basis of data from the Outlook.

consumption is to be continued as the Outlook predicts, about 20 million t-C more CO₂ will be emitted compared to the reduction target promised at COP3.

Thus further energy conservation measures, the introduction of new energy and fuel conversion were evaluated for improving global warming prevention measures. Fig. 2 shows the suggested composition of electricity sources after the implementation of such measures. The standard case only evaluates the existing environmentally-friendly energy measures, and the target case was prepared for meeting the COP3 target. An apparently impressive target was set for the introduction of new energy, 11,500 GWh, but this is only a small percentage of the total energy supply. There were discussions on imposing carbon (environmental) tax upon implementing energy conversion from coal to natural gas, but there was strong opposition mainly from the coal industry, and thus the possibility of imposing a tax was only alluded to in the report.

The declining state of Japan's nuclear industry can be gathered from the fact that the report

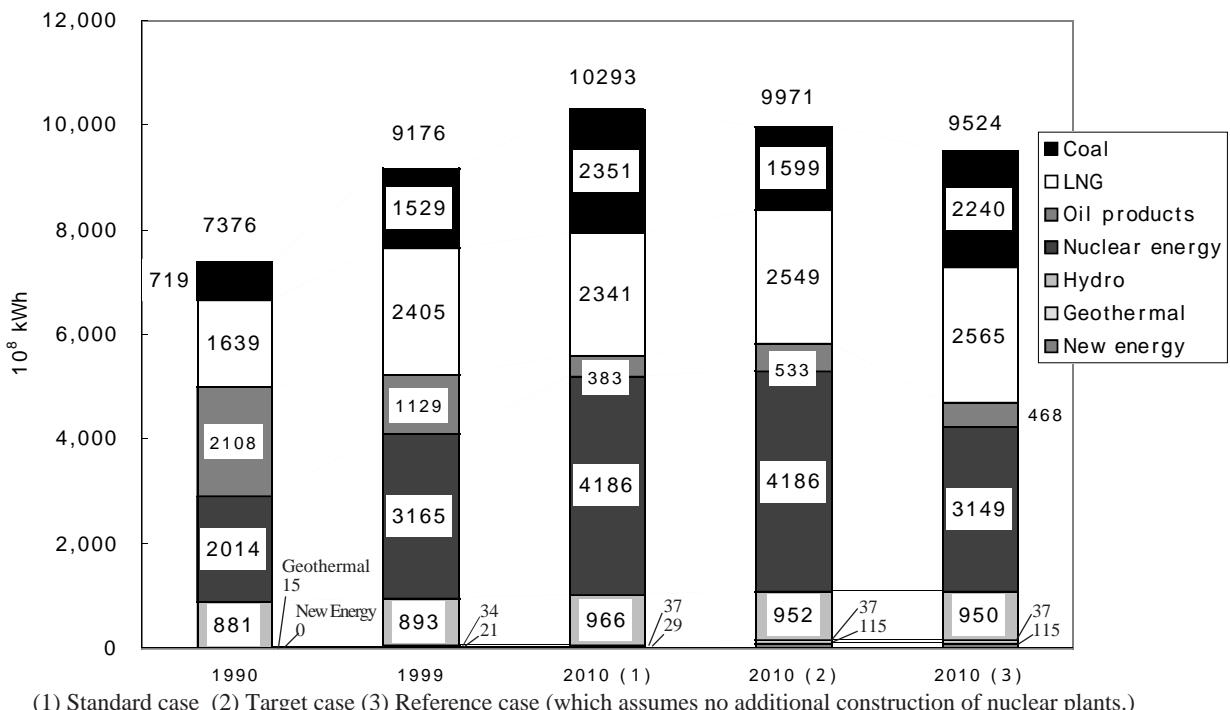
reduced the recommended amount of further increase in nuclear energy capacity, but still describes nuclear energy as one of the basic sources for electricity. The report goes as far as presenting a reference calculation for a case in which no further nuclear power plants are built (the far right graph in Fig.2). However, it does not give the assumptions for the calculations, and concludes that "there will be large economic loss" in such a case.

Meanwhile, it is highly doubtful that the consumption level targeted in this Outlook can be met, but specific and economical evaluations are being carried out for energy conservation and the introduction of new energy.

3. The Basic Energy Policy Bill

On the other hand, vigorous political efforts are being made in the Diet to influence the national energy policy, one of them being the Basic Energy Policy Bill prepared by the LDP's Comprehensive Energy Policy Committee in an attempt to set up a national energy policy which

Fig. 2 Composition of electricity sources in Japan suggested by the government's outlook



(1) Standard case (2) Target case (3) Reference case (which assumes no additional construction of nuclear plants.)

is backed by law.

This Bill gives its highest priority to “securing a stable supply of energy.” Priority is also given to “being environmentally friendly” and the “application of market theory.” Though it is not openly stated, judging from past policies of the LDP, it is obvious that nuclear energy is the main focus for “securing a stable energy supply.” They are somewhat shy in promoting the application of market theory. It is assumed that the energy crisis in California contributed to such hesitation, but it is also due to a desire to protect non-competitive nuclear energy and the existing power companies from deregulation of the electricity market.

This bill will be officially adopted by LDP’s advisory committee, put on the table for negotiation between parties, and go through necessary procedures required by the policy deliberation committee and the general affairs committee, and then will be ready to be submitted as legislation by House members in the next Diet. There are, of course, people who oppose such a bill — a bill which ignores the worldwide trend towards nuclear phase-out and deregulation of the electricity market by seeking to sustain the ailing nuclear industry through legislation. The result of a survey conducted this June on current and prospective Diet members shows that, apart from the ruling party, most members were against the bill — a piece of legislation that would result in legally sustaining nuclear energy.

METI’s release of the long-term Outlook and the LDP’s efforts to prepare a basic energy law are closely related to each other. According to the bill, “a basic energy plan must be set up for a long-term, comprehensive, and strategic promotion of an energy supply and demand policy,” and “METI will draw up a plan upon receiving advice from the Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy.” Thus the Outlook will be upgraded into a legalized program, and the government will gain increased power over the industry and manufacturers. In other words, the government could force power companies to stick with nuclear energy even when, for good economic reasons,

the companies wish to free themselves from it.

Furthermore, the bill includes passages which place responsibility not only on the central government, but on local public organizations and industries not to endanger the stable energy supply. The clear implication is that citizens must quietly obey and cooperate with the government’s pro-nuclear energy policy. Under such legislation, for example, the result of the Kariwa Village referendum would have absolutely no significance.

4. Conclusion

There is no law in Japan which comprehensively lays out the nation’s energy policy. It can be argued that such a comprehensive law is necessary when it is considered that there are numerous laws, like the Electric Utilities Industry Law and the Energy Conservation Law, concerning particular aspects of energy issues. However, the preparation process of such a law must be completely open to the public. In spheres quite removed from the political actions of the government and the Diet, technology for new energy sources and energy conservation is rapidly developing, and there are an increasing number of citizens who wish for a lifestyle other than the current trend of mass consumption. Japan’s future should not be restricted by a handful of powerful people whose personal interests oblige them to promote nuclear energy.

The previous Outlook, released in 1998, aroused skepticism by its assertion that 20 additional nuclear power plants would be built by the year 2010. One of the reasons for preparing this new Outlook was to amend such unrealistic figure, and the number was reduced to 10~13 plants. But with only four plants currently under construction, and with the growing concerns over the safety of nuclear energy, the reality is that even meeting this revised figure will be difficult. The government stratagems discussed in this article are a part of a desperate attempt to preserve and expand the nation’s waning nuclear industry.

By Tadahiro Katsuta

Fukushima energy review committee: A challenge to the top-down energy policy

On 29 March 2001, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) announced that it would postpone the loading of MOX fuel at Fukushima I-3, which was scheduled to take place in May 2001. This was in response to the Fukushima Governor's firm wish, expressed in February 2001, to have the loading postponed for at least one year. The governor noted that public consent has not been reached on the use of MOX fuel and that concerns about nuclear energy have intensified due to the 1999 JCO accident and the BNFL MOX fuel data scandal.

In May 2001, the Fukushima Governor set up a one-year committee to review the Prefecture's energy policy. By doing so, he was able to automatically secure a one-year moratorium. With the postponements at two other plants, Japan's three plants which had specific dates for the loading of MOX have all had their plans postponed (see p.2, Table 1).

The review committee was intentionally set up to have a strong local flavor. Experts and scholars are invited as guest lecturers but are not included as committee members. The committee is headed by the Fukushima Governor; the vice-chairpersons being the Deputy Governor and the Chief of the Revenue and Expenditure Division. Together with the heads of all twelve divisions of the Fukushima government, this committee consists of 15 members.

The committee's four themes, announced on 12 June at its first meeting, are: 1) Science and technology, and human society in the 21st century; 2) Energy policy; 3) Nuclear energy policy; and 4) Local economic development. Meetings following the first one have been held in lecture-style format where experts give lectures as guest speakers before general discussion sessions. The meetings are open to the public.

Safety and economic concerns were not sufficiently strong considerations for the governor to stand up against a national policy — the MOX program. What gave the final push was the announcement by TEPCO on 8 Feb. 2001 that it would freeze

plans for the construction of all power plants for 3~5 years. There were immediate reactions from both central and local governments. Many local governments were perplexed by this announcement because of the vulnerability of the economies of small towns to such plans for large-scale power plants. On the other hand, the central government, which promotes additional construction of nuclear plants for "energy security" and "CO₂ reduction," expressed its dissatisfaction with TEPCO, which it said was "going against a national policy." Meanwhile, the governor, upon hearing of TEPCO's plan during a business trip to South Korea, immediately raised the possibility of postponing the loading of MOX.

TEPCO withdrew its announcement the very next day and claimed that nuclear plants were exceptions to the freezing of construction plans. However, this reversal caused further trouble for the company because the governor was not only concerned with the nuclear program, but upset that the plans for the construction of a thermal plant in the prefecture's Hirono Town had been postponed. The governor was clearly frustrated by the central government and TEPCO, which he said promotes the MOX program "like a bulldozer," without any consideration of local situations.

The committee is more of a political tool than a serious attempt to conduct detailed investigation into energy issues. However, the governor has suggested that the committee might conclude that a "once-through cycle"^{*} is better for the prefecture and that he might submit a policy suggestion to the central government. No matter the outcome of the committee's review, the governor has succeeded in postponing the dangerous and uneconomical MOX program, and as a result has influenced "national policy."

By Gaia Hoerner

* Once-through cycle: A program in which spent nuclear fuel is directly disposed of, as opposed to the "closed" cycle in which spent fuel is reprocessed and partly re-used as fuel.

Anti-Nuke Who's Who

Daisuke Yoshida

Kariwa's young activist with a strong will

By Kazuyuki Takemoto

Daisuke Yoshida is 35. He is currently serving his first term as a member of the Kariwa Village Assembly. He is also second in charge at Zenshoji Temple. Located in Oaza Terao, Kariwa Village, Zenshoji is an old temple of the Shingon sect, a sect with a history going back over 1,200 years. Yoshida is married with two sons and a daughter (two in elementary school and one attending a day-care center) and also has a dog. He and his family live in the living quarters next to the main temple building.

He says his reason for standing for local council was his anger, arising from his religious philosophy, at the damage and degeneration caused by the nuclear subsidies granted to the region. Ever since the plan for nuclear facilities was first raised over 30 years ago, local elections have been conducted in an atmosphere in which securing status and prestige through bribery is considered to be completely normal.

Yoshida says that before he announced his candidacy, his father, who lives in the area, received beer and sake coupons from some of the other candidates. "Because we went to school together — or because we know each other — please vote for me." This was the message.

Petty bribery of this nature is mostly targeted at older people. Many of the younger people aren't interested in politics and those who have any sense have given it up, so Yoshida decided to try to remedy the stagnation in his village through his own candidacy for local government.

Yoshida went to the then only anti-nuclear Village Assembly member to ask for some advice before announcing his candidacy one month prior to the election. "I want to wake up the people of this village, but how can I run an election cam-



paign without spending money?".

The council to which he was elected represented a generational change. The power relations changed significantly from a situation where there was only one anti-nuclear assembly member, with all the rest being pro-nuclear "yes men", to a council with two people from the "Protect Kariwa Village Anti-Nuclear Committee", one Communist, four people from an anti-mainstream faction and ten mainstream conservatives. In the Village Assembly, Yoshida worked alongside the conservative anti-mainstream faction.

The motion for an ordinance for a referendum came about because one mainstream and one anti-mainstream conservative resigned in order to run for Mayor, and in the subsequent by-election an anti-nuclear assembly member and a liberal were elected in their place, so the power balance became even at 9 to 9. On 29 December 2000, the motion was passed 9 to 8 but it was vetoed by the

Mayor and then rejected by the Village Assembly when they reconsidered it because the second round required 2/3 of the votes to pass. After that a group was formed calling itself, "Let Our Voices Reach the Village Government". Backed by 1,540 signatures, representing 37% of eligible voters, they demanded an ordinance for a referendum. On 27 May 2001, a referendum was held and over half the votes cast were against the MOX fuel program.

It's 32 years since the nuclear development policy was announced and 16 years since the first nuclear reactor commenced operation. It was thought that in Kariwa, a company town, the pro-nuclear, MOX program supporters would be in the majority. But in the context of the exposure of the "Rapika" scandal* the anger of the villagers erupted and flowed into the campaign for a referendum, finally expressing itself in the major-

ity vote against the MOX fuel program. This campaign is the result of many people's work, but assembly member Yoshida was always there.

Now the task is to rebuild Kariwa Village, exhausted from its involvement in the nuclear industry. There are many voices in the village expressing the hope that Yoshida will have a central role in that process.

* A public works project funded under the "Three Electrical Power Laws", the purpose of which is to compensate regions for the danger and inconvenience of nuclear facilities. Rapika is the name of a lifetime study facility consisting of a library, community center, and a gym that was completed in 1999. It was largely funded by subsidies in return for hosting nuclear power plants. However, it was later revealed that the completed facility differs in many ways from the blueprint and that construction materials cost much less than what was documented. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, which granted the subsidies, has launched an investigation into this matter.

Upcoming Events

SPENA (Sustainable and Peaceful Energy Network Asia) Workshop 2001:

"Equity and Sustainability through Energy Sector Restructuring"

29 September ~ 1 October, 2001 Jakarta, Indonesia (language: English)

Contact: Kumiko TANAKA, SPENA Secretariat at CNIC

E-mail: spena@network.email.ne.jp (see below for address, tel., fax info.)

SPENA-GENI Joint Renewable Energy Workshop

"Bring Renewable Energy Down to the Earth"

3~6 October, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (language: Indonesian)

Contact: Fabby TUMIWA, Yayasan Gemi Nastiti (GENI),

JI Cemara II/25, P.O.Box 166, Salatiga 50711, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia;

Tel. & Fax +62 298 22418 E-mail: fabby@lycos.com

SUBSCRIPTION

Nuke Info Tokyo is a bi-monthly newsletter that aims to provide foreign friends with up-to-date information on the Japanese nuclear industry as well as on the movements against it. Please write to us for a subscription (Regular subscriber - \$30 or ¥3,000/year; supporting subscriber \$50 or ¥5,000/year). When paying in Japan, the subscription fee should be remitted from a post office to our post office account No. 00160-0-185799, HANGENPATU-NEWS. Due to costly processing fees on personal checks, when sending the subscription fee from overseas, please send it by international postal money order. We would also appreciate receiving information and newsletters from groups abroad in exchange for this newsletter.

Citizens' Nuclear Information Center

3F Kotobuki Bldg., 1-58-15 Higashi-nakano, Nakano-ku, Tokyo 164-0003 JAPAN

Tel: 81-3-5330-9520; Fax: 81-3-5330-9530

Translators: Gaia Hoerner, Philip White, Junko Yamaka

Proof-reader: Antony Moore Editor: Gaia Hoerner

Corrections: (NIT No. 84 p.3 para. 4, line 4) 23 April 2001 (f) -> 23 April 2000 (t), (NIT No. 83 p.9 Table) construction cost of Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant 2.14 bil. yen (f) -> 2.14 tril. yen (t), (NIT No. 83 p.10 line 15 from bottom up) 2.14 bil. yen (f) -> 2.14 tril. yen (t)

NEWS WATCH

Decision Handed Down on the Tokai 2 Court Case

On 4 July 2001, the Tokyo High Court ruled on the Tokai 2 suit. A legal action filed by local residents demanding a cancellation of the government's permission to build the Japan Atomic Power Co., Ltd.'s (JAPCO) Tokai 2 in Tokai-mura, Ibaraki Prefecture, was again rejected. The suit was first filed back in October 1973. Twelve years later, in June 1985, Mito District Court turned down the residents' suit. In protest against the decision, the residents appealed to the High Court. Since then, for 16 years, the legal struggle has continued. A trial which has lasted more than a quarter of a century was ended in one minute with the judge reading only the main text of the decision.

It can be said that the court was able to rule in favor of the defendant, i.e., the government, by narrowing down the subjects and methods of the trial. First, the subject of the trial was limited to the basic blueprint of Tokai 2, and more specific designs and construction methods were excluded from deliberation. Other issues involving the nuclear fuel cycle, such as disposal of radioactive waste, were also excluded from deliberation. Secondly, deliberations were limited to whether there were definitely unreasonable points in the judgment of the government in permitting the construction of the reactor.

As a result, many of the problems presented by the plaintiffs were not considered, and even those discussed during the trial were discarded as "not going far enough to overturn the rationality (of the government's decision to give permission)." The philosophy of the decision is not unique to this case, but is commonly

found in the decisions of other suits demanding cancellation of construction permission for nuclear plants.

Even in such a decision, in regard to embrittlement of LWR pressure vessel steels, on which Prof. Hiromitsu Ino of Hosei University testified (see NIT No. 83 pp.3-7), the court could not but recognize that "it seems that there may exist points which challenge the rationale (of the government's decision)." The court, however, hesitantly ruled that the embrittlement issue "does not immediately challenge the rationale and therefore the legality (of the government's decision)."

As the decision itself states, what was tried in the suit was the rationality of the permission and not the danger of the nuclear reactor. Claims that the need for nuclear power generation no longer exists and that the world's trend is to phase-out nuclear energy were outside of the deliberation of the trial.

The plaintiffs appealed to the Supreme Court.

770,000 People Sign Petition to Scrap Monju

By May 2001, 770,000 signatures had been collected in a petition campaign launched in Sep. 2000, demanding that Monju (FBR prototype reactor, 280 MW) be decommissioned. On 5 June 2001, 50 representatives from the Fukui Prefectural Citizens Against Nuclear Power Plants, CNIC, and other organizations brought piles of signature sheets to the Prime Minister's official residence and handed them to Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda. Fukuda gave himself away, saying, "Frankly speaking, I myself don't much care for nuclear power." The petition campaign will continue.

Meanwhile, on 6 June, the Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute (JNC), which owns Monju, submitted an application to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) for a safety review of their plans on changes and remodeling of the equipment to be made in order to gain permission for resuming operation of Monju. In addition, on 29 June, the company applied to the METI for approval of design and construction methods for new thermometers in the steam generator. It was one of the old thermometers that caused the sodium leak and fire at the plant in 1995.

AEC Decides to Apply for ITER

On 5 June 2001, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) decided to apply for the building of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) in Japan. On 4 July, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) held its first meeting consisting of experts for the selection investigation for an appropriate site for ITER, initiating the selection of a site in Japan which will be concluded by the end of August. The municipalities which have voiced their interest in becoming a candidate site are three: Tomakomai City (Hokkaido), Rokkashomura (Aomori Prefecture) and Nakamachi (Ibaraki Prefecture).

Monazite “Washed Up” at the MEXT

The poorly supervised monazite (thorium ore) first reported in June 2000 (NIT No.78 p.4) has been “drifting” since then, but some of it has now “landed” on MEXT’s territory. Thirteen tons of monazite, which had been scattered in seven locations in Japan, were collected and placed in a storehouse in Enzan City, Yamanashi Prefecture in March this year, but due to strong protests from local people, it was decided that the material would be moved to a storehouse outside of Katsuura City, Chiba Prefecture. However, when it arrived at Katsuura on the night of 10 July 2001, the local governments and residents opposed this relocation and took

actions to prevent the delivery of the material.

Then, on the following day, the monazite was moved to a parking lot of the annex of MEXT as “an emergency measure.” The truck carrying the material is still there. The area where the truck is parked is cordoned off, but there is no sign indicating that the cargo is radioactive. MEXT has ordered the owner to find a place to store the material as soon as possible. However, no place seems to have been found where the truck’s contents can “rest in peace.”

JNF Uses Uncertified Casks for Transportation

On 30 July 2001, the Agency for Nuclear and Industrial Safety revealed that Japan Nuclear Fuel Co. (JNF) had used casks which would have violated domestic laws for the transportation of imported uranium oxide within Japan. Due to management failure, the company had mistakenly used casks which it no longer had permission to use for domestic transportation.

The uranium oxide had been shipped from France to Japan via the United States. The company was not required to submit the application for domestic transportation prior to the departure, and thus the material had already left France and was in the U.S. when it was found that some of the casks were uncertified.

The company became aware of the situation when, on 23 April 2001, it was informed by the Nuclear Safety Technology Center, which reviewed the company’s application for the casks for the transportation within Japan, that eight of them were uncertified. Subsequently, JNF’s internal investigation revealed that one other cask was uncertified. The company informed the Agency, which then issued certifications for all nine casks upon confirming that the casks met required technical standards by reviewing related documents.

The Agency ordered JNF to submit a report on the matter, and instructed it to hereafter apply for permission for the transport casks prior to the departure of a shipment.