

Emergency Management in Japan: Prospects for U.S.-Japan Cooperation
IIGR and Stimson Center Joint Seminar
January 16, 2018

SUMMARY

Panelists:

Masako Mori (Keynote Speaker)
W. Craig Fugate
Ellis M. Stanley
Maki Fukami (Moderator)

On January 16, 2018, the Stimson Center in partnership with the International Institute of Global Resilience (IIGR) hosted a panel discussion focusing on the U.S. and Japan's unique opportunities for cooperation and collaboration in future emergencies. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Maki Fukami from IIGR with panelists including Honorable Masako Mori from the House of Councillors of the National Diet, Ellis M. Stanley from the Global Board of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), and Honorable W. Craig Fugate from Craig Fugate Consulting and former Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Yuki Tatsumi, Director of the Stimson Center's Japan Program, opened the event by highlighting the 2018 Olympics in Pyeongchang and the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. The Olympics bring great excitement, but also bring tremendous concerns for national security with an influx of many athletes, coaches, their families, spectators, and tourists. Tatsumi said that the U.S. and Japan, as countries that have hosted large sporting events and that have a rich experience in handling a wide variety of disasters, should try to learn lessons from each other and have a conversation about how they can cooperate to be more prepared for emergencies.

In the keynote speech, Mori emphasized that the world needs to change its approach from dealing with crises as they occur to staying alert and prepared. As a senator from Fukushima Prefecture, which suffered the 3/11 tsunami, earthquake, and nuclear triple disaster, she shared her experience of cleaning up radioactive materials at a school ground in her district. She also worked on a number of related policy areas for the Liberal Democratic Party, including chairing a committee on anti-terrorism and security and leading the environmental committee. Showing a video on the progress of recovery and decommissioning of the damaged nuclear power station in Fukushima, Mori discussed her efforts to consult around the world with experts on nuclear accidents, as well as new recovery and preparedness projects under the "Innovation Coast" policy. These projects, supported by the government in partnership with private companies and NGOs, include a robot test field, disaster training facilities, the International Decommissioning Research Center, and a disaster mock-up center. Mori noted that 3/11 taught her community that disasters can suddenly upend the future, but they also learned to survive and overcome.

In the panel discussion, Fukami asked Fugate to share his thoughts regarding the theme of the event. Fugate elaborated on situations in the U.S. focusing on the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, a mutual aid agreement between states that facilitates resource coordination. He suggested that one of the challenges for both Japan and the U.S. is their humanitarian aid models in emergencies, while there is a greater need for mutual aid models in international sphere. Fugate observed that no one nation will have all the disaster resources it needs, and international resource deployment could be a part of the solution. Additionally, he

stressed that members of the public are usually the fastest responders and need training and guidance to improve the outcome of disasters.

Fukami asked Stanley about his thoughts on his three Olympics emergency management experiences. Stanley noted that an all-hazard system is reliable as a way of training first responders to perform in a variety of disasters. He recommended that Japan look at its disaster management legislation plans, which date to 2004, and make sure the plans are updated and exercised rigorously to reveal any gaps before the Olympics. Fukami asked Fugate whether he thinks an all-hazard approach or incident command system (ICS) will be helpful for managing a sports event that attracts reckless behavior. Fugate said that there needs to be a balance between providing security and safety and allowing for peaceful demonstrations. He asserted that it is critical to not cancel major events in the name of total security, but the challenge is adapting to a rapidly changing security environment and range of threats. Stanley added that public-private partnerships are especially important in this respect, as there are many ways private resources can augment security and preparedness for large events.

Mori discussed the emergency preparations for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, including several emergency centers in the government and processes to gather and use information on past Olympics safety measures. Since the 3/11 disaster, Japan has drafted new laws and begun projects to create a better emergency management system. The “Innovation Coast” concept, in which the coast of Fukushima will be used as a hub for emergency research, training, and management centers, is intended to facilitate these efforts.

Stanley ended the panel with comments on international collaboration and IAEM, noting that sharing lessons learned is important, and that the IAEM supports collaborative discussions. He criticized the lack of lessons and gaps recorded in American after-action reports. He encouraged Japan to start implementing ICS immediately so that emergency managers can be trained and better prepared.

Fukami opened the discussion to the audience for the Q&A session. Elizabeth Biermann de Lancie from the State Department asked about how the humanitarian aid system falls short in international disaster response. Fugate responded by saying that while there is a brief timeframe to request and get resources after a disaster, the current system takes too long. He recommended instead having pre-negotiated resources with other countries. Jessica London from Georgetown University asked about virtual reality during the Olympic planning. Stanley replied by saying that robotics and the virtual reality can be tremendous tools and that a virtual world allows us to test scenarios at relatively low cost. Patrick McLaughlin from RAND Corporation asked about the use of drones for delivering resources to people in disasters. Mori replied that Japan had used drones to investigate the reactors after 3/11 and could use them in emergency prevention. Fugate added that drones can replace people and equipment when it comes to small packages but they do not solve all the problems. Jiwon Yang from the Stimson Center asked about communication between the public and the government during emergencies. Fugate answered that transparency is important as the public begins to doubt when they think the government is not telling them everything. Stanley, using the example of the large earthquake in Chile in 2010, emphasized that empowering citizens to understand what their roles and responsibilities are in a disaster is critical. John Cobb from DHS asked about how to spread lessons learned from disasters. Fugate noted that lessons tend to be learned individually, but there needs to be a forcing mechanism for organizations to learn from past experiences and change. Stanley agreed that passing on lessons is important. Mori highlighted the IAEM conferences as a way to share experiences in local disasters with an international group.

Tatsumi thanked the audience and the panelists and closed the event.