

# Is the IAEA Safeguards Glossary's MOX fuel conversion concept unrealistic?

30 November 2006

Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei  
Director General  
International Atomic Energy Agency

Dear Director General ElBaradei:

We in the Japanese movement against nuclear weapons appreciate your tireless efforts against nuclear proliferation. We welcome you to Japan!

We are writing you to call your attention to a statement made by the president of JNFL (Japan Nuclear Fuel Limited) about the "unrealistic" IAEA MOX fuel conversion concept and urge you to clarify the IAEA's position on this issue.

JNFL president Isami Kojima stated at the JNFL press conference in Aomori on the 24th of November that it is practically impossible to separate plutonium again from MOX fuel.\*<sup>1</sup> (This was in reference to the Rokkasho reprocessing plant.)

Mr. Kojima's statement was in response to a question concerning the conversion times in TABLE 1. ESTIMATED MATERIAL CONVERSION TIMES FOR FINISHED Pu OR U METAL COMPONENTS in 3.13 Conversion time of the IAEA SAFEGUARDS GLOSSARY, 2001 Edition.

Mr. Kojima stated at the press conference:

"It might be possible in theory to peel apart the MOX fuel product again physically, but, practically speaking, it is impossible. It would involve all the facilities and end up redoing the reprocessing. However, when one looks at the facilities and the process, practically speaking it is impossible to separate out [plutonium] again from MOX fuel."\*<sup>2</sup>

**We would appreciate greatly if you could clarify the position of the IAEA on this issue:**

- **Is TABLE 1 of the IAEA Safeguards Glossary unrealistic?**
- **Should we NOT worry about possible diversion or theft of MOX fuel since, according to the president of JNFL, it is "in reality impossible" to separate plutonium from MOX?**

Yours sincerely,

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cc IAEA Board of Governors

\*1: Tooh Nippo newspaper of Aomori Prefecture, 25 November 2006.

\*2: Record obtained from reporters who attended the press conference.)