ESENA Project Workshop Summary Dec. 1997

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-- Ken Wilkening

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The Energy, Security and Environment in Northeast Asia (ESENA) project's workshop on energy-related marine impacts in the Sea of Japan drew together a wide variety of interdisciplinary experts, and resulted in expanded understanding of the interwoven set of environmental, energy and security issues facing policymakers in Northeast Asia and the United States.

The workshop began with an overview of the status of marine pollution in the Sea of Japan offered by Hideaki Nakata of the University of Tokyo. His paper stressed that the main pollutants affecting the Sea of Japan were eutrophication-inducing nutrients, heavy metals, organic contaminants, plastic wastes, and oil. The workshop focused on the later pollutant, oil. Tomohiro Shishime of the Environment Agency of Japan described domestic and international marine monitoring programs in the seas around Japan. It was clear from this presentation that efforts have only just begun on establishing a marine monitoring network in the Sea of Japan. The next speaker, Susan Ware of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), expanded the context set by the first two presenters. She discussed the role of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other organizations in promoting sustainability of the marine environment in Asia and the Pacific. She emphasized that high on the list of priorities for promoting sustainability are establishment of monitoring networks, and standardization of port infrastructure and port management schemes.

From overview, the workshop plunged into computer modeling the dynamics of the Sea of Japan marine environment. David Von Hippel of the Nautilus Institute discussed his modeling of hydrocarbon emissions to the Sea of Japan. With no implementation of reduction measures between 1995 and 2020 he estimated that oil emissions to the Sea of Japan would double over the next twenty-five years. He also discovered that routine ship operations and urban runoff constituted almost 90 percent of total emissions. From emissions modeling, Tomohide Kobayashi of the Science University of Tokyo led the workshop into an exploration of three-dimension simulation of oil dispersion

along coastal areas. He detailed the physical, chemical and biological processes which act upon oil spills and govern their dispersal. From Kobayashi's micro-level analysis, Terri Paluszkiewicz of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory moved to macro-level analysis in her discussion of a project sponsored by the Center for Environmental Security of the Department of Energy which is analyzing the impact of environmental factors on regional political stability in the Sea of Japan and East China Sea regions. Her presentation focused primarily on the marine circulation model developed for the project.

Discussion of computer modeling gave way to discussion of sea-lane traffic issues in the Sea of Japan. Shintaro Goto of the Kanazawa Institute of Technology described the spontaneous creation of an information collection and assessment network following the large Nakhodka oil spill of January 1997. This NGO-based network used a dynamic combination of satellite remote sensing data, email, and the World Wide Web to create a novel, unified, and publicly-accessible informational response to the disaster. Tetsuro Doshita of the Security Affairs Office of the Office of the Prime Minister of Japan then presented the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force's conception of maritime preventive diplomacy in the Sea of Japan region. This was followed by a focused analysis of sea-lane traffic management issues in the Korea/Tsushima Straits by Linda Paul of the Ocean Law & Policy Institute in Honolulu.

The final marine-related presentation of the workshop was achieved by means of the Nautilus Institute's first trans-Pacific video teleconference. Participants shifted venues from the Berkeley Marina Marriott hotel to the Institute's nearby offices and were treated to an engaging discussion of integrated coastal zone management practices in Japan by Masahiko Isobe of the University of Tokyo. This ended a day of ESENA project presentations. They were capped by a magnificent meal at Skates Restaurant on the East Bay waterfront. From our tables in the restaurant we had a spectacular nighttime view of the Bay, the San Francisco skyline, and the Golden Gate Bridge.

From the rich collection of expert knowledge offered at the ESENA project workshop, one common policy-oriented theme to emerge was the need for more coordinated and region-wide energy/security/environment "monitoring" in the Sea of Japan region. Monitoring means not only use of scientific instrumentation to gather pollutant data, but also monitoring of sea-lane traffic, monitoring of coastal zone management practices of littoral states, monitoring of trade in energy products in the region, and monitoring of the interaction between the shipping and fishing interests in the region. Such monitoring in the region can serve to promote regional cooperation, encourage technology transfer to the less developed countries, strengthen institutional capacity building, and enhance information sharing which will in turn build confidence and increase transparency. The expanded definition of monitoring will be used as the basis for examination of possible joint U.S.-Japanese policy initiatives on energy-related marine issues in the Sea of Japan region at the next ESENA project workshop to be held in Tokyo in April 1998.

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Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development
2342 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704USA
http://www.nautilus.org
nautilus@nautilus.org

nautilus@nautilus.org