

“Disaster and Politics: Japan after March 11”

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

10:30am-12:10pm

The Dupont Hotel

This session evaluated the Japanese government’s response to the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan in March 2011. Additionally, discussion focused on the long-term impact of the disaster on Japanese domestic politics and foreign relations.

Mr. Kazuhide Ishikawa, Opening Remarks

(Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan)

Mr. Ishikawa opened the session by outlining the effects of the natural disaster in Japan. While survivors’ struggles continue, more than 13,000 people have found dead, and over 15,000 are still missing. He said the nuclear power accident still poses challenges that must be addressed.



At the same time, Mr. Ishikawa said that step by step, the disaster relief and recovery efforts are in progress, and expressed deep gratitude toward the support offered by the international community. More than 130 countries and regions as well as nearly 40 international organizations have stepped up to offer relief assistance. He acknowledged the vast assistance provided by the U.S., and noted that its support comes from every facet of the nation: various government bodies including military, nuclear energy experts, private corporations, Japanese-American organizations, schools, churches, universities, and individual citizens. Mr. Ishikawa recounted a touching personal experience of seeing a young mother and small girl sitting on a picnic table on the street in Washington, DC selling homemade cookies to raise money for relief efforts.

Mr. Ishikawa concluded by expressing his hope that this seminar will continue to deepen the U.S.-Japan friendship that has been so apparent in these difficult times.