

Event Report: THE REVENGE OF ENERGY SECURITY

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1. Introduction



The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) hosted its annual Energy on the Hill event on November 8, 2023, to launch its 19th Energy Security Report on “The Revenge of Energy Security: Reconciling Economy Security with Climate Ambitions.” This event was held under NBR’s Energy Security Program led by Mikkal Herberg, the program’s Research Director and a member of NBR’s Board of Advisors, and organized by NBR’s Energy and Environmental Affairs team (Gillian Zwicker, Tom Lutken, and Chihiro Aita). NBR President Roy Kamphausen also provided introductory remarks at the event and moderated a Q&A session with Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK).

The focus was on the Indo-Pacific region's efforts to navigate the twin challenges of immediate energy security needs and long-term climate goals. This juxtaposition of urgent energy demands with environmental commitments has become particularly acute following events like Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which dramatically altered global energy dynamics and supply chains.

The Introduction outlined the event's intent to delve into how key countries in the Indo-Pacific, including

China, Japan, South Korea, and nations in Southeast Asia, are addressing these dual challenges. It emphasized the collaborative research efforts of NBR and its partners to examine and identify gaps in policies aimed at achieving both energy and climate security. The event promised insights into various topics, such as US-Japan cooperation in energy sectors like Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), hydrogen, and nuclear power, and the broader context of energy transition viewed through the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) lens.

The session was set to explore the complex interplay between climate commitments and energy security, considering the regional geopolitical dynamics and the pressing global need for sustainable energy solutions. The introduction set the stage for a comprehensive discussion, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of how these countries balance their immediate energy security concerns with their long-term goals of clean energy transition and climate mitigation.



2. KEYNOTE REMARKS 1: **Dan Sullivan**, United States Senate (R-AK)

Senator Dan Sullivan, serving on several vital Senate Committees for Alaska, spoke at the event, underscoring the importance of energy security in the current global scenario. He highlighted the impact of significant events like Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, framing these as part of a new era of authoritarian aggression.

Senator Sullivan stressed that the U.S. and its allies must face these challenges with determination, leveraging their global network of allies, military prowess, dynamic economy, abundant energy resources, and commitment to democratic values. He emphasized that America, particularly Alaska, holds high environmental standards in energy production and leads in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Criticizing the Biden administration's energy policies for undermining U.S. energy sector and security, Sullivan highlighted Alaska's contribution to LNG exports, especially to Japan, and discussed a significant LNG project aimed at strengthening energy security for U.S. allies in Asia, particularly Korea and Japan. This project is expected to be beneficial for energy security, environmental sustainability, and Asian alliances.

In conclusion, Senator Sullivan's address at "The Revenge of Energy Security" event presented a comprehensive view of the U.S.'s strategic advantages in energy resources and the need for a robust response to the challenges posed by global energy dynamics and authoritarian regimes.

3. KEYNOTE REMARKS 2: **Kim Schrier**, United States House of Representatives (D-WA)

Congresswoman Kim Schrier, representing Washington State's eighth congressional district, expressed her honor in participating in this year's energy event, "Energy on the Hill," alongside Senator Dan Sullivan. The event, hosted by NBR, provided a platform for her, as the Vice Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, to discuss, question, and legislate on critical energy issues.

Schrier highlighted the importance of modernizing the U.S. energy grid to make it cleaner, more reliable, and affordable. She emphasized the urgency of transitioning to clean energy and achieving net-zero climate goals, pointing out the over-reliance of the United States on fossil fuels, which affects not only climate goals but also the security and reliability of the energy grid.

Reflecting on the global energy scenario, especially after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, she discussed the impact on global natural gas prices and Europe's dependency on Russian natural gas. The congresswoman applauded Europe's efforts to diversify its energy sources, including turning to the United States, which underscores the need for the U.S. to enhance its energy resilience by reducing fossil fuel dependency and diversifying its energy portfolio.

Schrier also touched upon the necessity of securing critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and graphite, which are vital for clean energy technology. She underscored the strategic steps needed today to secure these resources domestically and from non-hostile nations to bolster the U.S. clean energy manufacturing.

She proudly mentioned her support for legislation promoting domestic clean energy production and her role in passing the bipartisan infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act. These laws, she noted, represent a significant investment in

bringing the U.S. closer to full energy independence but acknowledged that more work lies ahead.

Congresswoman Schrier concluded by expressing gratitude to NBR for hosting the event and emphasizing the importance of innovation for a more secure and sustainable energy future.

4. PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel discussion at the event featured Mikal Herberg from The National Bureau of Asian Research and the University of California San Diego as the moderator. He led the dialogue among esteemed panelists, each bringing unique expertise and perspectives on the subject of energy security and geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region. The panelists included Se Hyun Ahn from the University of Seoul, who brought insights from South Korea, a key player in the regional energy landscape. Erica Downs, representing the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, contributed her expertise on China's energy policies and international relations. Finally, Michael Kugelman from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars provided a broader international context, with a focus on energy dynamics and geopolitical issues.



The key themes and insights presented by the panelists include:

4.1 Energy Security and Transition in Asia

The discussion highlighted the challenge Asian countries face in balancing immediate energy security needs with long-term climate and clean energy goals. The recent geopolitical events, particularly Russia's invasion of Ukraine, have significantly impacted global

energy dynamics, causing Asian governments to scramble for energy supplies and reconsider their energy security strategies.

4.2 Focus on China, South Korea, and India

The panel included experts discussing the energy strategies and challenges of key Asian countries, including China, South Korea, and India.

- **South Korea's Perspective:** South Korea's focus on developing hydrogen energy and increasing nuclear power was emphasized. The country sees these energy sources as crucial for achieving both energy security and environmental goals. The discussion also touched upon South Korea's energy alliances and cooperative projects with the United States and other countries.
- **China's Energy Dynamics:** China's energy relationship with Russia was a significant focus, especially in the context of the Ukraine war. China's role as a major energy consumer and the implications of its energy strategies on global markets were discussed. The panelists also explored China's balancing act between its growing energy demands, coal dependence, and renewable energy ambitions.
- **India's Energy Scenario:** The conversation highlighted India's energy consumption patterns, its heavy reliance on coal, and efforts towards energy transition. India's struggle to balance its immediate energy needs with long-term sustainability goals was a key topic. The country's approach to reducing its dependence on fossil fuel imports and its initiatives in renewable energy and electric vehicles were discussed.

4.3 Geopolitical Implications and Global Energy Markets

The panel discussed how geopolitical relationships, particularly the Russia-China partnership, impact energy security and policies in Asia. The growing dependence of some countries on specific energy sources and the implications for global energy markets were also highlighted.

4.4 Natural Gas and LNG in Asia

The role of natural gas and LNG in the energy transition of Asian countries was examined. The challenges and prospects of LNG as a transition fuel, its affordability, and the need for infrastructure development were discussed.

4.5 Critical Minerals and Energy Transition

The importance of securing critical minerals for the energy transition, especially in countries like China, South Korea, Indonesia, and Vietnam, was emphasized. The panelists also talked about China's investment in mining projects, including in countries like Afghanistan, and the strategic importance of these minerals for energy security.

5. Conclusion

"The Event Report: THE REVENGE OF ENERGY SECURITY" brings into sharp relief the complex and evolving landscape of global energy security, especially within the Indo-Pacific region, amid recent geopolitical upheavals and the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.

The significant impact of events such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine on global energy dynamics and supply chains was emphasized. This highlights the urgent need for countries, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, to reassess and strengthen their energy security strategies in light of evolving geopolitical relationships.

Also discussed was the critical balance between addressing immediate energy security needs and achieving long-term climate goals. The efforts of the Indo-Pacific region to navigate this dual challenge were notably emphasized, underscoring the delicate interplay between maintaining energy supplies and committing to environmental sustainability.

Insights into how countries like China, Japan, South Korea, and India are tackling these challenges were pivotal. Focus was on diverse strategies that range from developing hydrogen energy and increasing nuclear power, to reducing dependence on fossil fuels and accelerating renewable energy initiatives.

Moreover, the role of natural gas, particularly LNG, as a transition fuel in Asia, and the importance of securing critical minerals for the energy transition were thoroughly examined. This highlighted the need for infrastructure development, affordability considerations, and strategic investments in mining projects.

Keynote addresses from U.S. representatives showcased America's perspective, emphasizing the need for robust responses to global energy dynamics, enhancing energy resilience, and leading in the clean energy transition and environmental sustainability.

In conclusion, this report presents a comprehensive view of the current energy security scenario, highlighting the need for strategic, collaborative, and innovative approaches to ensure a secure, sustainable, and equitable energy future. The discussions and insights from the event provide a roadmap for countries to navigate the complex interplay of energy security, geopolitical challenges, and environmental commitments in an increasingly interconnected world.

About NBR

NBR is an independent research institution based in Seattle and Washington, D.C. It brings world-class scholarship to bear on the evolving strategic environment in Asia through original, policy-relevant research, and it invests in its future by training the next generation of Asia specialists. Established in 1989, NBR is a legacy organization of Senator Henry M. Jackson, who foresaw the national need for an institution to study and inform public policy on Asia in both the public and private sectors. Building on Senator Jackson's bipartisan approach, NBR engages policymakers looking for reliable Asia expertise through sustained interaction in high-trust, nonpartisan settings.