# **Atlantic Council** THE HOWARD BAKER FORUM

GLOBAL ENERGY CENTER UNITED STATES JAPAN ROUNDTABLE

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**The Atlantic Council’s Nuclear Energy and** **National Security Coalition**

**Ambassador Thomas Graham, Jr. — Co-Chair, The Atlantic Council’s** **Nuclear Energy & National Security Coalition**

Good afternoon. Thank you to Scott for inviting both Admiral Mies and myself to say a few words about the Nuclear Energy & National Security Coalition, which is run under the aegis of the Atlantic Council and is an effort to continue the momentum generated by the Atlantic Council’s task force report earlier this year.

I personally have engaged with the Nuclear Energy & National Security Coalition because I believe that nuclear energy sits at the nexus of both US diplomacy and global climate security. Unlike for conventional power plants, nuclear power plant service and fuel supply arrangements are highly specialized for the type of reactor. There is also a major effort in the industry toward innovation, advanced reactors as well as fuel. These developments will lead to nuclear power projects that are safer, more efficient, and strongly secure against proliferation. The service and supply arrangements create a bond with the original supplier that is strengthened by human capital development programs, regulatory development and other exchanges — and not easily dislodged by an alternate supplier nation.

As a result, a nation developing nuclear energy for the first time typically forges with its supplier a relationship that endures for the 80- to 100-year life of the nuclear program. This relationship gives the supplier nation a profound and lasting influence on the partner’s nuclear policies and practices. Of course, the world’s longest-standing civil nuclear partnership is the one that the US and Japan have enjoyed since 1955, when Japan and the US signed the US-Japan Nuclear Research Agreement.

From the Atoms for Peace era, the global leadership of the US and its allies helps to ensure that nuclear technology is developed and operated safely, securely and exclusively for peaceful purposes. However, in recent decades, the US share of
international commercial nuclear energy markets have diminished, and so with it has the United States’ ability to influence global safety and nonproliferation standards.

At the same time, the global climate crisis has been thrown into increasingly sharp relief, with many nations on the frontlines of the fight against warming temperatures and extreme weather events. Japan is one of these nations. As an island, Japan’s coastal regions face a threat from rising sea levels, but the mainland is also at risk. Recently, Japan faced a downpour in July of 2018 that forced the evacuations of 2 million people; Typhoon Jebi in September 2018 caused 3 billion US dollars of damage. Japan’s average temperature is rising faster than the global average, which demonstrates the need for a global transition to low-carbon energy.

Since Japan is experiencing the effect of a warming planet firsthand, it has the opportunity to lead in the energy transition. I also believe that nuclear energy is our greatest asset in the fight against climate change. Indeed, in my view success in the struggle against climate change is simply not possible without a robust and immediate commitment to nuclear power. Otherwise we risk the warming of the earth becoming irreversible. And we are having this discussion in the wake of the latest complete failure of the world community to do anything. As the United Nations Secretary General put it at the international meeting, “The point of no return is no longer over the horizon. It is in sight and hurtling toward us.” It is therefore highly necessary that gatherings like this take place, so that we can determine a way forward for civil nuclear cooperation.

I am now delighted to introduce Admiral Richard Mies, who is the co-chair of the Nuclear Energy & National Security Coalition.