



## Fukushima Thread: March 18, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 18, 2011 - 10:31am

### [Agency: Japanese nuclear crisis on par with 3 Mile Island](#)

Tokyo (CNN) -- Japan's nuclear and industrial safety agency on Friday raised the level for the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant from a 4 to 5 -- putting it on par with the 1979 incident at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island.

According to the International Nuclear Events Scale, a level 5 equates to the likelihood of a release of radioactive material, several deaths from radiation and severe damage to a reactor core.

### [Radiation Fears and Distrust Push Thousands From Homes](#)

YAMAGATA, Japan — Neither last week's earthquake, nor the tsunami that followed, nor days without electricity, water or heat could drive 70-year-old Sadako Shiga from her home. What finally caused her to flee was something invisible, but to her mind far more sinister: radiation.

As explosions and fires crippled a nuclear plant 18 miles from her home in northeast Fukushima Prefecture, Ms. Shiga and her family loaded their car with blankets, water and food and headed to the mountains. "We were running for our lives," she said Thursday.

### [IAEA chief says Japan's crisis extremely serious](#)

The International Atomic Energy Agency chief says he views Japan's nuclear crisis as an extremely serious accident requiring international cooperation.

IAEA chief Yukiya Amano said Friday that he plans to meet with top Japanese officials and to visit the area struck by the devastating earthquake and tsunami a week ago that knocked out power for the cooling systems at a nuclear power plant, setting off Japan's crisis.

### [Radiation Spread Seen; Frantic Repairs Go On](#)

WASHINGTON — The first readings from American data-collection flights over the stricken Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in northeastern Japan show that the worst contamination has not spread beyond the 19-mile range of highest concern established by Japanese authorities.

But another day of frantic efforts to cool nuclear fuel in the troubled reactors and in the plant's spent-fuel pools resulted in little or no progress, according to United States government officials.

### [Scientists Project Path of Radiation Plume](#)

A United Nations forecast of the possible movement of the radioactive plume coming from crippled Japanese reactors shows it churning across the Pacific, and touching the Aleutian Islands on Thursday before hitting Southern California late Friday.

### [Japan official says scale of disasters overwhelmed government, slowed its response](#)

TOKYO — The Japanese government acknowledged Friday that it was overwhelmed by the scale of last week's twin natural disasters, slowing the response to the nuclear crisis that was triggered by the earthquake and tsunami that left at least 10,000 people dead.

### [Confusion in a Crisis: Just How High Is Japan's Radiation Risk?](#)

The ongoing struggle to snuff out the nuclear crisis occurred amid mounting confusion about key elements of risk now in play. At a hearing in Washington on Wednesday, the chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Gregory Jaczko, called the radiation levels at one of the plant's units "extremely high." He added that "for a comparable situation in the United States, we would recommend evacuation for a much larger radius than is currently being provided in Japan." And he said his information suggested that there was no water left in the pool containing the spent fuel rods in Reactor 4, an assertion which, if true, makes a significant release of radioactive gases from the burning fuel rods stored there much more likely.

### [Operator: may connect power to Fukushima No.4 reactor Saturday](#)

(Reuters) - Electricity could be restored on Saturday morning at the No.4 reactor at the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in northeast Japan, the plant's operator Tokyo Electric Power Co said on Friday.

### [Nissan scanning vehicles for radioactive material](#)

Tokyo (CNN) -- Nissan has started scanning vehicles made in Japan for traces of radioactive material, a company official said Friday.

## [Japan: the many aftershocks](#)

It is not difficult to make the calculations of population movement that will ensue if large amounts of radioactivity are released into the atmosphere, particularly by one reactor which uses a mixture of uranium and plutonium. About 70,000 people have already been evacuated from a 20km radius around the plant, but double that number, who live within 30km, have been told to stay indoors. This advice has been contradicted by the US and Canadian governments, which have instructed their citizens who live within 80km of the plant to leave. Germany's embassy moved its operations from Tokyo to Osaka. If the Japanese government issued the same instructions to residents within 80km of the plant, you would have a major evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people. Where would they all go?

## [With U.S. Nuclear Plants Under Scrutiny, Too, a Report Raises Safety Concerns](#)

With Japan's nuclear industry facing intense scrutiny after the devastating earthquake and tsunami, critics of nuclear power in the United States are increasingly shining a spotlight on American regulators and power companies.

## [U.S. Official Affirms Nuclear Loan Guarantees](#)

With many riveted on Japan's reactor crisis, the head of the Department of Energy's loan guarantee program has affirmed that it will continue to finance nuclear projects in the United States.

"Assuming there is a desire in the Capitol to move forward, nuclear remains an important part of the energy mix," Jonathan Silver, executive director of the Energy Department's loan programs office, said on Wednesday in a presentation at the Cleantech Forum conference in San Francisco.

## [Uranium Tumbles On Japan Crisis](#)

The most volatile market since the Japanese earthquake isn't Japanese or U.S. stocks. It is uranium, which until Friday was a little-noticed pocket of the commodities markets.

## [Losing sight of real risks in fog of fear](#)

CATASTROPHE. Apocalypse. Such words have been used by people in authority to describe the week's events in Japan. They were not referring to the earthquake and tsunami that have killed thousands, probably tens of thousands, of people, but to events at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. The crisis is real, but reaction has been hysterical. The series of disasters - the earthquake, the tsunami and the reactor cooling failures - has exposed public and political difficulties in making risk assessments based on fact, not fear.

### [Assumptions and accidents](#)

If we want to continue with nuclear energy, we should think the risks of nuclear power through to their logical conclusion.

### [Learning from disaster after Sendai](#)

Is it possible that the nuclear meltdown in Japan is linked to a Faustian bargain with the West?

### [What next for nuclear power?](#)

The disaster at Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant has forced countries around the world to reconsider their energy plans. But global electricity consumption is still rising fast, and the need to cut carbon emissions hasn't gone away. So what does the future hold for nuclear power?

### [A nuclear panacea no more](#)

Nuclear power was beginning to look like a panacea -- a way to lessen our dependence on oil, make our energy supply more self-sufficient and significantly mitigate global warming, all at the same time. Now it looks more like a bargain with the devil.

### [Go slow for nuclear power projects](#)

BEIJING - The nuclear crisis in Japan may slow down China's feverish pace of expansion in the nuclear power sector and is likely to encourage the government to lift standards for newly-built plants, said Ni Weidou, a senior academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, on Thursday.

"China's pace of nuclear power development is too fast. I reckon the unfolding nuclear crisis in the neighboring country will slow down our progress in the sector," said Ni, also an adviser of energy strategy for the central government, at a forum in Beijing.

### [Climate change could spell the end for nuclear power, not vice versa](#)

No matter how well they build them, nuclear power plants require lots of water. As such, the plants need to be either on the coast or near a large body of water at an inland site. The loss of off-site power commonly happens during storms, particularly at coastal locations. So a strong storm, probably stronger than the historical records used in the estimates for design, could cause flooding that leads to an accident similar to the one we are witnessing.

**USEFUL LINKS:**

[NHK Feed](#): Best source for the timely news

[Japan Radiation by Prefecture](#) (map)

[World Nuclear News](#)

[JAIF](#): Japan Atomic Industrial Forum

[A Drop of Rain](#): Archive of useful links

*(Any other suggestions for links that should be featured here?)*



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