



Fukushima Fallout: A Nuclear Japan is Sooooo Last Century

Posted by [JoulesBurn](#) on May 10, 2011 - 1:10pm

The aftermath of the tsunami-induced accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant has mostly fallen off the radar screen of most of the world. There continues to be some curious developments at the scene of the accident, but [even more curious developments](#) in the Japanese government.

The prime minister said Japan's energy policy has relied on nuclear power and fossil fuels, but that he would shift focus to natural energy, such as solar and wind power and biomass fuels. He also pledged efforts to create a more energy-efficient society.

Back to nature.

Things at Fukushima are still somewhat unclear. At reactor No. 3, there is some [speculation from Tepco](#) that nuclear contamination sourced from the fuel rods in the reactor core was somehow [deposited into the spent fuel pond](#). At reactor No. 1, air filtration has enabled workers to enter the building to begin repairs on the cooling systems, but [excessive radiation levels](#) are still not making things easy. Away from the reactors, the monitoring of radiation fallout [continues](#). And Tepco has released a [Roadmap to Recovery](#) for bring things under control in 6-9 months.

The real fallout in Japan, however, is the waning support for nuclear power. Under pressure, the Chubu Electric Power Company has agreed to [temporarily shut down](#) the Hamaoka nuclear plant.

Chubu Electric Power Company has agreed to comply with a request from Japan's prime minister that it shuts down its Hamaoka nuclear power plant until its tsunami defences are strengthened. However, the company says that the plant is already adequately protected against tsunamis.

While this is not permanent, other policy changes will have longer impact. A plan to build 14 new reactors in Japan [has been scrapped](#). To pick up the slack, the government is [pushing renewables](#), including wind and solar.

The Environment Ministry estimates that the maximum amount of electricity possible from wind power generation in northeastern Japan would exceed the energy now being generated by domestic nuclear plants.

This will be an interesting experiment. While the governments of most other countries with

strong prior nuclear support have expressed the desire to double up on safety yet persevere with current plans, Japan is taking a different road.

(Open Thread: Any Comments?)



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