

A Global Crisis: The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station



1. **On-going Threat** -- The earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 caused severe damage to the nuclear reactors in Fukushima, Japan. Three of the six reactors had total core meltdowns and are still too contaminated to inspect. A fourth reactor, Unit 4, was severely damaged, and the highly radioactive spent fuel rods in storage there are extremely vulnerable to further building collapse. According to seismologists, there is a 70% probability of a massive earthquake in the Fukushima area in the next 3 years.
2. **Unprecedented Radiation Release** -- More radiation has already been released from Fukushima than from Chernobyl, and there is no end in sight to the continuing radiation leakage into the air. In addition, reactor-cooling water continues to leak into the ground and seep into the ocean. We are already seeing contamination in fish and other food products, unusual mutations in butterflies and increased thyroid abnormalities in children living near Fukushima.
3. **Inadequate Clean up Effort** -- The Japanese government has been slow to respond. It has a decentralized approach to clean up and containment efforts, with no overall project manager to coordinate an effective response. Instead, nearly 400 small companies have been hired as subcontractors, their employees often working in life threatening circumstances. The cost, personnel, and expertise required to adequately address a threat of these proportions is beyond the ability of any one country, and yet Japan currently has sole responsibility for the clean up. An international task force must be permitted to address this critical situation immediately.
4. **Media Blackout** -- There has been a mainstream media blackout on the condition of the nuclear reactors, the health and safety issues, and the clean up effort in Japan and in the West. The Japanese and world public have been kept in the dark about radiation levels and contamination. The nuclear industry has sought to control the information and its implications in an effort to maintain their image as viable and safe energy source.

Impact in Japan

5. **Hundreds of Thousands Affected** -- The people who live in the area just outside of the immediate evacuation zone are living with heightened levels of radiation. The government simply raised the "official" radiation levels considered "safe" and has no plans to evacuate residents further. Over 38,000 children are estimated to be living within the immediate contaminated area. Higher levels of cancer, leukemia and heart disease are expected in the years to come.
6. **Huge Public Protests** -- Hundreds of thousands of Japanese have repeatedly protested in the streets against the the Japanese government's handling of Fukushima and its continued support of nuclear power. This outpouring of civic protest is unprecedented in Japanese society and signals an immense transition in the country's social and political structure.

Impact in the U.S. and around the World

7. **Possible Cataclysmic Danger** -- Should the spent fuel rods in Unit 4 catch fire, there will be an uncontrollable cataclysmic release of radiation that could quickly ignite the rest of the nuclear plant and lead to massive radiation releases. This radiation would reach the Western United States within days and would remain in the environment around the globe for hundreds if not thousands of years.
8. **We are all Downwind** -- The air and ocean currents flow from Japan to the West Coast of the United States. Radioactive fallout from Fukushima was detected in heavy concentrations in the Western United States and milk contamination was reported as far east as Vermont. 3 million gallons of radioactive waste from Fukushima surged into the ocean in March 2011, and more has continued to leak ever since. The air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat are all at risk for years to come.