



3. NUCLEAR CRISIS: Two plants at Fukushima are reconnected to power grid (*ClimateWire*, 03/21/2011)

Peter Behr, E&E reporter

Electric power was restored yesterday to one of the blast-damaged reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power complex through a temporary mile-long transmission line, but there was no word yet that normal cooling functions had been restarted at the No. 2 reactor.

External power was also connected to reactor No. 5, which was shut down before the March 11 earthquake and tsunami struck, and where no damage has been reported. Japanese authorities hoped to connect other reactors early this week in what authorities call the crucial attempt to restart cooling operations at four reactors and limit the radioactive releases still coming from the plant.

"We are getting closer to bringing the situation under control," Tetsuro Fukuyama, the deputy chief cabinet secretary of the Japanese government, said of the entire plant late Sunday, *The New York Times* reported.



NHK, Japan's national public broadcasting system, uses these models to show the crippled status of the Fukushima 1 nuclear reactors. Photo courtesy of [Flickr](#).

Energy Secretary Steven Chu echoed that optimism in an interview on "Fox News Sunday," saying that "with each passing hour, each passing day, things are more under control."

Huge amounts of water pumped onto the damaged reactors over the weekend have lowered radiation levels at the plant and improved temperatures at some reactors.

But a new cause for alarm suddenly appeared Monday afternoon, when gray smoke rose from the No. 3 reactor, the NHK World news service reported on its website.

NHK reported that the smoke appeared to come from the part of the reactor building containing its spent fuel storage, but that was not confirmed. Tokyo Electric Power Co. evacuated its workers from the area at 4 p.m. but said later that the amount of smoke appeared to be decreasing and that water levels and pressure readings from inside the reactors had not shown major changes.

Authorities reported more evidence of the spread of radioactivity contamination from the plant, located on Japan's northeast coast about 170 miles from Tokyo.

Shipments of milk and spinach have been banned from two prefectures in the plant's region, and elevated radiation levels were found in spinach, canola and chrysanthemum greens from other provinces, news reports said. Iodine 131 and cesium 137 are among the dangerous elements found in food products, *The New York Times* reported.

Meanwhile, TEPCO disclosed that prior to the disaster the company had failed to carry out some scheduled inspections at the reactor complex, Reuters reported. The equipment not inspected included some emergency backup equipment for the No. 1 reactor, Reuters said, citing a Feb. 28 report by the company to regulators that was posted on TEPCO's website. A connection between the missed inspections and the damage to the No. 1 reactor was not documented.

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