

Fukushima & OSPAR – game changers for nuclear?

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Nuclear Free Local Authorities Secretary



What I'm going to look at:

- A brief overview of Fukushima
- It's implications on Europe / UK / Ireland
- OSPAR Radiation Substances Committee
- Sellafield discharges
- MOX plutonium consultation
- Next steps – Irish Governments dialogue?

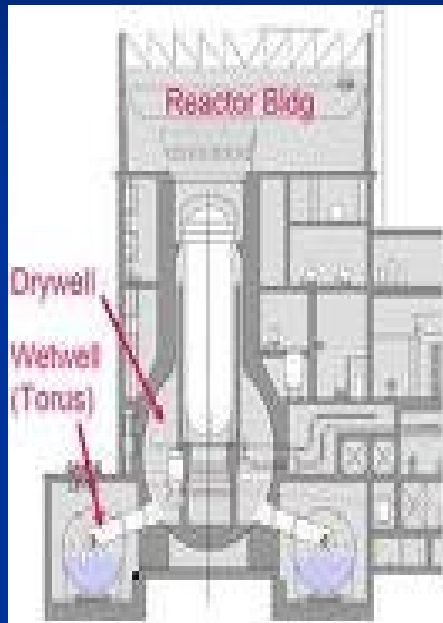


Japan and Fukushima

- 9.0 earthquake and 16m tsunami
- Fukushima 40 year old reactor
- Initial news was 'not serious'
- 4 of the 6 reactors have had reactor damage / meltdown
- 20 – 30 kms exclusion zone: 200,000 people evacuated
- Radiation levels four times the safe level detected at the plant
- Ocean contamination – iodine levels 1250 times the safe level and concern that discharges could happen
- Workers on site hospitalised
- Food and water contamination detected



S-t Implications of incident



- Category 5/6 incident – only Chernobyl higher
- Wider disaster – 27,000 dead, 280,000 homes destroyed
- Emergency plans failed
- Tepco discredited, shares slump, taxpayer to cover disaster costs
- Reputational integrity of nuclear power
- Emotional response – alarm / panic
- How far will the radiation travel?
- How will the incident be closed? Decontamination / clean-up issues



European / UK / Ireland effects

- Euro Commissioner announced full EU nuclear safety audit – “stress tests”
- Germany, Switzerland, Italy (& China) set moratoriums on nuclear
- UK initiated industry-wide safety review
- Interim report June, final report Sept
- Slow down nuclear new build in s-term
- Irish National Coordinating Group met 25th March to discuss health, food & people issues
- Minister Hogan met Minister Huhne to raise concerns about Sellafield and discharges (March 28th)



Wider implications of incident



- **Economic issues for new build**
 - insurance
 - investment
 - public subsidies (G.I.B / carbon price)
- **Safety issues (GDA)**
- **Radioactive waste repository?**
- **Boost for renewables?**
- **New build still on the agenda but now is the best time to challenge this in a generation**



What NFLA is doing

- Media work, monitoring and informing members
- Joint NFLA / NGO statement raised at DECC quarterly engagement meeting – see next slide
- Westminster seminars mid June and mid September
- Raised concerns with Minister and NII
- Held meeting with Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
- Contact non-members to consider joining NFLA



NFLA / NGO Joint Statement

- **8 demands made of UK Government and nuclear sector:**
 - **Safety review be public, open and transparent**
 - **GDA process and nuclear safety regime reviewed**
 - **NO public subsidies for new build – we oppose it**
 - **Health effects of low level radiation to be verified**
 - **Ministers should stop saying waste issues are resolved**
 - **Urgent security review required on waste storage arrangements**
 - **Over 100 scientific & technical issues of repository to overcome**
 - **Abandon plutonium / MOX reprocessing at Sellafield**



OSPAR RSC

- Intergovernmental body seeking to clean up North East Atlantic – 14 member states incl UK & Ireland
- NFLA has MoU with KIMO to attend meetings
- WNA also attends meetings
- RSC seek to reduce radioactive discharges into the Irish Sea ‘close to zero’ by 2020
- Improve radioactive monitoring of the seas
- Interact with other OSPAR groups on climate change mitigation
- Provide radiation advice and guidance to Ministers
- NFLA Secretary attended February meeting



Radioactive discharges & Sellafield

- After 4 years of decreases, in 2009 an increase in all OSPAR region marine radioactive discharges
- 12% increase in alpha discharges (22% increase at Sellafield, partially offset by reductions in France)
- 9.5% increase in beta discharges (24% increase in Sellafield, partially offset by French reductions)
- 94% increase in tritium discharges (all Sellafield)
- 30% increase in technetium discharges
- Though levels small compared to 1980s, admitted will rise till at least 2016 – putting 2020 target under threat



Why are discharges rising?

- **KIMO / NFLA joint paper notes discharges have increased for number of reasons:**
 - **Sellafield Thorp plant has re-opened after leaks and maintenance problems**
 - **Thorp reprocessing contracts will continue until 2016/2017**
 - **Sellafield Magnox reprocessing plant will also have to remain open till 2016 due to poor performance**
 - **With time lag of 5 years AFTER reprocessing before discharge levels drop, could be 2021 before progress**
 - **Govt also favours plutonium reprocessing**
 - **And then...new nuclear build reprocessing?**
- **So, how will the OSPAR commitment be met?**



Normal or exceptional?

- An issue raised by Ireland and Norway was how to represent 'normal' and 'exceptional' discharges
- UK and France wished to separate them out, rather than have one constant total figure
- No consensus found so a drafting group will be set up to come up with conclusions for 2012 RSC
- Exceptional – decommissioning discharges & treating legacy wastes
- The group will determine if there is a great concern over such discharges
- Will new build alter this debate?
- KIMO / NFLA will continue to monitor this



Floating and submerged NPPs

- Russia are developing small nuclear reactors that can be floated out to areas with limited power sources
- Operational by 2013/14
- French company DCNS also researching small submerged nuclear reactors on seafloor – “terrorist proof” operational by 2016
- NFLA / KIMO / GPI joint report deploring this devp’t
- Norway also concerned and speaking to Russia
- At RSC France said only a development idea
- HELCOM will seek further info from Russia
- Real risk of environmental catastrophe



Conclusions

- Fukushima IS a major blow for the ‘nuclear renaissance’
- New nuclear build slowed down BUT not ditched
- Renewables and energy efficiency – will they now be given their chance?
- Sellafield discharges will go up – how can they be justified? What is ‘close to zero’?
- Have other nuclear ideas been scotched?
- Is there a need for a more vocal Irish Government (north and south) on nuclear issues? NFLA says YES!



What you can do – join NFLA!

- Get access to a high quality nuclear consultancy local government service
- Publicise your concern for nuclear and support for alternatives (renewables / energy efficiency)
- Promote public safety and accountability
- Be aware of the wider risks of nuclear power / nuclear weapons proliferation (Mayors for Peace)
- Work with like-minded Councils in Britain
- AFFILIATION RATES:
- Upto 100k - £871 / 770 euros
- 100k – 250k – £1,386 / 1,236 euros
- 250k – 500k – £2,253 / £2,104 euros
- 500k – 1 million – £3,771 / 3,604 euros



**Thank you, I would be happy to
take any questions.**

