

Provisional Transcript of the Emergency Press Conference at FPCJ on the Situation of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (March 14, 2011)

FPCJ

Very sorry to have kept you waiting.

Good evening. Today we have with us Mr. Noriyuki Shikata, Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations in the center. To his left is Tomiko Ichikawa, Director of Economic Integration Division and the former director of the non-proliferation and science and nuclear energy division of MOFA. And to Mr. Shikata's right, Mr. Takeshi Matsunaga, Assistant Press Secretary and Director of the International Press Division of MOFA.

Today's emergency press conference is on the situation of the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station. And before we listen to what they have to say, please turn your cell phone to silent mode. Thank you.

Noriyuki Shikata, Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations

Good evening. Thank you for waiting for long time. Actually we are still waiting for our colleagues from Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, NISA. And maybe until they arrive, I wish to discuss some of the issues which may not be directly or technically dealt with in terms of the Fukushima Power Plants. At the outset I wish to just explain to you the overall picture of what we have been trying to do at the Prime Minister's office and the leadership of Prime Minister Kan.

Immediately after the earthquakes took place the Prime Minister organized emergency headquarters consisting of all the ministers. And he has been putting his utmost efforts to rescue those people who are in the affected areas. And as you have seen already, especially by the tsunami's, we have been finding some local municipalities almost wiped out. And this has led to lots of difficulties in finding who are missing or who might be dead by now. So this kind of situation continues even now. So far we have been mobilizing under the instruction of Prime Minister Kan Self-Defense Forces over 50,000, and this number is expected to increase up to 100,000 within a week. This is the largest mobilization of the Self Defense Forces in the history of its creation after the war. Other mobilization includes: Japanese Coast Guard, 168 patrol boats; police agency, 3600; fire and disaster management agency, over 1100. Prime Minister Kan earlier today mentioned that more than 15,000 people were rescued thanks to the dedicated efforts of those people, in some cases risking their own lives.

And there may probably be some explanation from a colleague from the Foreign Ministry, but we have been getting very generous offer for assistance from the international community. And the number has exceeded over 90 countries offering their willingness to extend assistance. We are very grateful for this generous offer extended from over 90 countries. So far rescue teams from 13 countries, including South Korea, Singapore, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, China, Mexico, UK, Australia, New Zealand, France, Taiwan, and Russia started assistance activities. And as you are already aware, US forces in Japan have been mobilized. And the aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan has been mobilized to the vicinity of Tohoku. And US Marines in Okinawa are also on their way to the region. They have their particular strength in terms of coping with this kind of very difficult situation in times of amphibious situations.

Let me also touch upon the economic implications. We are aware of difficulties

facing the Japanese economy. Of course, there are practical issues of how to manage electricity supply in Tohoku and Kanto. We are calling for reducing of consumption of electricity among the public. And as you have been informed, there are trains that were canceled this morning in the suburbs of Tokyo, for example. So this is a very challenging situation, but at the same time this would result in the creation of new demands. Obviously there will be massive need for rebuilding and reconstruction, and this is something that we need to be united among the people living in this country, including Japanese and non-Japanese. Again, let me just thank the generous offers not only from the governments of over 90 foreign countries, but there is a lot of goodwill expressed from people all over the world, and NGOs as well.

So this is my initial comment. I will just ask my colleagues from the Foreign Ministry to see if they have any comments to make at the outset. Thank you.

Takeshi Matsunaga, Assistant Press Secretary/Director, International Press Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

I would just like to add a compliment to what was stated by Mr. Shikata. As Mr. Shikata mentioned, we are very, very grateful for the generous goodwill and expression of solidarity from all over the world. Indeed much sympathy has been expressed. And so far, for example, Prime Minister Kan talked by telephone with President Obama, and likewise Foreign Minister Matsumoto also had telephone talks with his counterpart, Secretary of State Mrs. Clinton. And also Prime Minister Kan talked by telephone with President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea and also with Prime Minister Gillard of Australia. And with respect to Foreign Minister Matsumoto, in addition to his telephone talk with Secretary Clinton, he also talked by telephone with Foreign Secretary Hague of the United Kingdom, Foreign Minister Rudd of Australia, as well as Foreign Minister McCully of New Zealand.

The latest information available in front of me with respect to the number of countries which generously extended preparedness to extend assistance is 91. And in addition a number of international organizations have already expressed their willingness to support the rescue and search operations. For example, I would like to mention ICRC, IOM, which is the International Organisation for Migration, ITU, OCHA, UNHCR, as well as UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, and World Bank. So we are very grateful.

I would also like to touch upon some details as to the activities of rescue teams which have already arrived in Japan. For example, with respect to the United States, yesterday afternoon as many as 144 personnel of the rescue team of the USAID, United States Agency for International Development, arrived in Misawa together with their rescue dogs. And they are scheduled to head to Ofunato in Iwate Prefecture this morning. That had been scheduled what is going to happen today. And, likewise, with respect to Korea, their rescue team arrived yesterday just after noon in Hanamaki. And in the afternoon on the same day they moved to Sendai to initiate their operation. I understand they have started their activities from this morning. And with respect to the Singaporean rescue team, they arrived on the day of the 12th. Their team consists of five members together with five rescue dogs. They arrived in Narita, and the day after they headed for Tajima City. And I understand they have arrived at their destination already. And with respect to the German rescue team, they arrived on the date of the 13th, yesterday in the early morning in Narita. They consist of 41 personnel, as well as

three rescue dogs. And we understand they have already arrived in Miyagi Prefecture to start their activities. As for the rescue team from Switzerland, the team consists of 27 personnel and also includes a number of rescue dogs. In addition, we understand that rescue teams from Mexico, China, Australia, UK, and New Zealand have already arrived. And we understand that additional rescue teams are scheduled to arrive today from, for example, New Zealand, France, and some others.

That is all at this particular time. Thank you.

Tomiko Ichikawa, Director of the Economic Integration Division (Former Director of the Non-Proliferation, Science and Nuclear Energy Division), MOFA

I will brief you on the latest developments on the nuclear power plants. Probably many of you are already aware that after the Unit 1 of the Fukushima Dai-ichi Power Plant, which had a hydrogen explosion on Saturday the 12th, there was an explosion earlier today at around 11:01 at Unit 3 of Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant. We understand that taking into the situation of today's explosion at Unit 3, that explosion today was probably similar to the one that occurred at Unit 1 on Saturday, that is to say, a hydrogen explosion. However, after this happened there was a report from the people on the ground that the containment vessel continues to be containing the activities inside. As a sign of such continuation the situation, particularly the result of monitoring any radioactive materials in the site or around the place has not shown any particular increase after this has happened. Also, the pressure level within the containment vessel has not shown any significant change after this has happened earlier today.

Also there was a report in the afternoon that the level of water in Unit 2 of the Fukushima Dai-ichi Power Plant began to decrease. And preparation is made to put more water into Unit 2, possibly including sea water.

As for the evacuation around the Fukushima Dai-ichi Power Plant, the 20-kilometer radius area evacuation has been declared. At the time the incident happened earlier today at Unit 3 there were still people within this 20 kilometer radius, and for those people temporarily they were requested to stay indoors instead of going outside of the 20 km radius. But that request to stay indoors has been lifted at 14:20. So now we are in the process again of moving people out of the 20 km radius evacuation zone.

As for Unit 2, we understand that the level of the water had not been decreasing compared to Unit 1 and Unit 3 up until today. However, there is now decreasing of the water in Unit 2 for which efforts have been made to increase the level of water in Unit 2. And as for the incident at Unit 2, there were people injured. The total we understand was 11 people, four them are related to the Self-Defense Forces and whose injury level is not so severe. And among the remaining seven people, who are related to the Tokyo Electric Power Company, one person was rather seriously injured but is conscious. And for the other six we do not have detailed information here.

As for the number 1 and number 3, as I said, particularly after today's incident at number 3, we have not recorded any significant increase in the figures that we are monitoring in order to measure any possible radioactive activity at the site. So we do not record any significant increase in that regard.

And again as for Unit 3, we have had the effort to put water into in to that unit. And after a hydrogen explosion today we heard that activity has been suspended. However, the effort is being made to restart the injection of water into Unit 3. We are still waiting for the updated information from the people from nuclear and industrial safety agency.

But that is probably what I have to say at the beginning of this briefing.

FPCJ

Now the Q&A session. We will receive questions from friends of the foreign press corps first. Would you please raise your hand, and when recognized please give us your name and affiliation before you ask a question.

Anthony Rowley, Business Times

This is obviously a very critical situation. What do you think will be the next steps? I mean, the situation seems to be only partly stabilized. What has to be done to stabilize it to the point where one can say that a calamity has been avoided? And as far as cooperation with other nationalities, experts on nuclear power are concerned, are they actually involved at the power station, or are they simply giving advice from a distance as it were?

Ichikawa

Sorry, could you repeat the second part of your question?

Anthony Rowley

There are various international experts here in Japan that have come from other countries. Are they actually involved on the site in Fukushima, or are they just giving advice from a distance? I am not quite clear about that.

Ichikawa

As for what has to be done, the very important thing is to cool the fuel rod assemblies. Actually, if I go back to the point where this earthquake happened, at the moment when this earthquake happened, which was actually a huge magnitude, which now is said 9.0, which means that it is the largest earthquake ever at least scientifically observed in this country, and I understand that this magnitude counts among probably the top five or so of the internationally recorded earthquakes. At the time of the earthquake the immediate action to stop the operation of the reactors was taken, that is, the immediate stop of the operating reactors at the first point. So the operation at that time has been immediately shut down. What we are now going through is the phase of cooling down the units which have been operating at the time. And during the cooling situation we are facing difficulties in some of the units as I described. So the most important thing is to try to put enough water into these units in order to cool these units as quickly as possible. And measures have been taken by our experts to do so as quickly as possible.

As for your second question, I think it is best to refer their question to our nuclear and industrial safety agency people when they arrive. But we understand that there are of course a constant flow of information going out from the experts to international experts, as you say. But I am not quite aware whether there are international experts on the site or not.

Anthony Rowley

Is there a contingency plan if the cooling fails for any reason? What happens next? I mean, is there a contingency plan for sealing the whole thing off in some way? What happens next?

Ichikawa

What I would like to stress is that the containment vessel continues to hold quite tightly. And as we progress with our activity of cooling all of the units we are making some progress towards putting enough water into some of the units. Of course, some of the units have been experiencing difficulties in it. However, what we are trying to do is to go through this situation in a controlled manner and to contain any further worsening of the situation. And I understand that in the face of this difficult situation the experts on the ground have been implementing all possible measures they can find trying to make progress toward a better situation. So to go back to your first point, what we have been doing is that we understand that we have been continuing with the situation in a contained manner. And we would like to stress that as for now the situation we are witnessing is certainly difficult, but all measures have been taken to cope with that situation.

Terril Y. Jones, Reuters

One quick question and then a bit of a longer one. The quick question is, do you have the details of the Chinese rescue personnel who have come? Where are they, and what specifically are they doing? And my broader question is, with the shutdown of the reactors in Fukushima what percentage of Japan's electricity capacity has been lost because of that? And, besides the temporary blackouts that Tokyo Denryoku is doing right now, what other power sources and to what extent are you turning, such as hydropower or thermal power? Thank you.

Matsunaga

Thank you very much for the question. I would like to respond to your question about Chinese assistance. My understanding is that the Chinese rescue team arrived at Haneda yesterday around 12:30, and it is also my understanding that the team consists of 15 personnel. And they were to arrive at Ofunato City of Iwate Prefecture late last evening. And I understand that they were to initiate their activity early this morning. I do not have precise information as to the specific area of their activity.

Ichikawa

As for your second question, the question is not only how much percentage is lost, rather the question is within the ET(?) area of the kind of responsibility of each electric power company how much power can be provided in terms of the daily need. That also goes back to a rather basic system in Japan in which we have a rather different type of electric frequencies in the eastern half of Japan and western half of Japan. So, for example, we understand that in the eastern area, for example, between Tokyo Electric Power Company, TEPCO, and Tohoku Electric Power Company it could be possible to divert electricity in one area to another. But beyond this east-west line there would be technical difficulties to provide a lot of electricity. We have means to convert that difference, but I understand the amount of electricity that can be provided beyond east-west is rather limited. And what happened today is that as of today the estimate by the Tokyo Electric Power Company is that it may be that up to 10 million kilowatts deficiency might, *might*, occur. As for today, it is said that they can provide up to 37 million kilowatts today. However, they estimated that today's demand might go up to 41

million kilowatts. Actually, I think what happened today the difference was not so big in the sense that we did not have in some of the regions which were expected to have controlled blackouts we did not have such measures taken. So it depends on the level of the possible electricity supply each day. And in terms of what can be provided that should be measured in terms of the demand on that particular day, because we cannot store the electricity so easily. So it fluctuates from day to day.

Terril Jones

_____ (inaudible)

Ichikawa

On that point I will probably refer to my colleagues who have just arrived. We are actually having not one but two experts who are joining us right now...Just to answer your question that we could not answer, up until now the international experts are not on site. And as for the percentage of the electricity lost in total Japanese production, they will go back to and check the exact figure and come back to you.

Anthony Rowley

It was said at a briefing at the US Embassy today that some European embassies had advised their nationals to leave Japan. My question there seems to be some confusion over what would happen if the situation gets worse at Fukushima for any reason. Is there a system for warnings in place that would be given, or would you widen the evacuation area? What would happen if the situation did not respond favorably to your attempts to cool?

Ichikawa

To your question I would first of all like to stress that what is now being done in terms of the distance from the Fukushima Dai-ichi Power Plant is that the decision has been made to evacuate people from the 20 kilometer radius zone and for the Fukushima Dai-ni Power Plant, from the 10 kilometer radius zone. And these measures have been taken in order to allow enough level of confidence in the safety of the people in the region. If there is any new development that may require any change to this situation, that will be announced by the government. However, we do not have at this time any reason to change the current situation. Of course, all of the effort is being made to monitor the situation very closely, and you may have noticed that the Chief Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Edano, has been making very frequent press briefings, sometimes especially on the nuclear issue. And we are and our colleagues have been trying to provide the information as quickly as possible and as accurately as possible. So please rest assured that if ever any change might become necessary, that will be announced immediately. However, I would like to stress again that we are at this moment not witnessing any reason to change the current measure.

Terril Jones

I just wanted to follow up again on the rebalancing of power requirements because I spoke with somebody from, what is it called, the Denryoku Jigyo-dan, Renmei, or Rengo something, I'm sorry, I do not have the exact name, who said that power is being transferred. Extra power is being taken from other sources, thermal and hydro. He did

not have details on that, and I just wondered if anybody who does have details can tell us how much power and so on. Also, I just did not quite understand what you are saying about the 37 million kilowatts and so on. You were saying that it could reach that amount, but I am not sure, what is the normal capacity of those plants by comparison with the figures you gave?

Ichikawa

Sorry. When I explained the capacity, I was talking about the capacity of electricity that TEPCO can provide today. According to their estimate, what TEPCO could provide today, so the maximum supply that TEPCO could provide today was estimated at 37 million kilowatts, against the possible maximum demand for today of 41 million kilowatts. And, well, if you look at these two figures, you would say that there is no difference of 10 million kilowatts, it is only 4 million. But it would depend on the current situation of the demand how they use the electricity hour by hour. So it was estimated that at the maximum 10 million kilowatts shortage might happen beginning today. So it is not only for today. And as for the measures to divert more electricity from other sources, I think it would be good if we checked that fact and come back to you later. If there is someone else who can answer that question right now...otherwise we will come back to you later with the total figure.

Shikata

I think the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency colleagues have arrived, and they are ready to explain to you maybe in brief matter the initial explanation.

Morikuni Makino, International Press Officer, Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency

Today we prepared some materials. One of them are already on our website NISA and now going to be on our homepage. And another one is some kind of a fact sheet concerning this Tokai Pacific earthquake and Fukushima nuclear power plant event. At first we would like to very briefly explain our press release documents.

Ken Morita, International Press Officer, NISA

I am very sorry for being late. Also We would like to show our appreciation for this opportunity to explain the situation.

I would like to explain briefly about the seismic damage information as of 0730 today. Sorry for this time which is a bit late, however we need to translate. So please allow me to show this data. This paper is just facts data. So if you want to know about the process or more detailed situation, you can see another paper. Receiving the big earthquake some of the nuclear power units are affected. There are three nuclear power stations around the area damaged by this big earthquake. The first one is Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station. The second one is Fukushima Dai-ni Nuclear Power Station. And the third one is Onagawa Nuclear Power Station. Also, there are 13 nuclear power units in the three stations. In the first nuclear power station, that is Fukushima Dai-ichi, there are six nuclear power units. As for these fixed units, three of them were under periodic inspection and outage. And the last three units have automatically shut down, these units 1, 2, 3. And that data, or readings, at monitoring points is you can see on the next page I want to show the highest level of monitoring point(inaudible), and

you can see 680 microsieverts per hour at monitoring point 2. And the time was 03:50 today, early this morning. The data was 680 mSv per hour. However, I need to explain that. After that there was an explosion at Unit 3. So we need to understand that this data is before the explosion today.

I would like to report other modification that is mentioned in 4. There was no fire report to NISA. However, after the occurrence of earthquake there were many chronologies and process, and those will be explained later in more detail.

Let me explain the situation of Fukushima Dai-ni Nuclear Power Station. That is the second area damaged by the earthquake. There are four nuclear power units in the station, and all of these four units have automatically shut down. Also, readings at monitoring point is 0.042 mSv at the highest monitoring point. With these you can see 0.042 and monitoring point 5. This is the highest value in the data. Then not so high level compared to those of Fukushima Dai-ichi. Also this is the report concerning other modifications. We cannot find fire, and that is reported to NISA.

And lastly I want to mention about Onagawa Nuclear Power Station. There are 3 units. All of these three units have automatically shut down. And the data monitoring point 2 was approximately 10,000 nano Gray per hour.

So these are the brief situation of these power stations. Also I want to mention about the explosion caused by hydrogen at Unit 3. Please look at this piece of paper. We prepared this paper to explain the situation with that. As you know, there was an explosion at 11:01 today. Now the plant status is as I will say now. After the hydrogen explosion at 11:01 pressure fluctuations in the containment vessel was observed. Afterward the pressure is becoming stable. It is considered the vessel maintains its function of confinement. Fuel cooling status is under confirmation. Also, as for the evacuation of local residents, the number of residents within 20 kilometer radius from Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station waiting for evacuation or evacuating is 483 in total at 14:20 today. This is also under confirmation. After the explosion that Unit 3 the residents were requested to take shelter inside. But afterward the evacuation to outside the 20 kilometer area was resumed.

Lastly, I want to mention about the status of the injured. According to the report from TEPCO, the number of persons injured in the explosion is 11 as of 16:00. Thank you.

Makino

So next please look at this material. This is some kind of fact sheet we have just prepared today. The first page, in the earthquake rating the Tohoku-Kanto area there are several nuclear power stations. And in this material four power stations are described. And 11 nuclear reactors, except for three reactors which were under periodic inspection, were automatically halted. So 11 nuclear reactors automatically halted. And the next page describes the outline of Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station. And maybe my colleague Ms. Tomiko Ichikawa explained to you all nuclear power units type are BWR, boiling water reactors. And some kind of _____ (inaudible) describes the lower figure that composed of concrete building housing and containment vessel and pressure vessels which contain nuclear fuel inside.

And the next page, some brief description concerning events that happened at Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant. Unit 1 an explosion caused by hydrogen buildup blew the upper part off the concrete building housing. What was occurring in the reactor was not a so-called meltdown. Its containment vessel was not damaged by

the explosion. And after the automatic halt of the reactor water supply function run by seawater pump failed by tsunami, and the temperature of the reactor went up. As you know, March 12 at 15:36 the water level dropped. Reactive metal and water-generated hydrogen and hydrogen which leaked outside of the containment vessel caused the explosion.

_____ (inaudible) and iodine were detected. It is believed that part of the nuclear fuel was damaged, and a small amount of nuclear material was leaked into the water. However, this was not a so-called meltdown, which means the whole reactor melts down. So it is confirmed that the containment vessel had not been damaged. There is no risk of hydrogen explosion because there is no oxygen in the containment vessel. So there is no risk of leaking large amounts of nuclear material.

Concerning Unit 2, the current situation is changing. So we would like to wait. The latest report our agency are doing in Japanese soon I think. Concerning Unit 3, an explosion caused by hydrogen build-up blew the concrete building housing up very _____ (inaudible) which is the same process as Unit 1. And also it's containment vessel was not damaged.

According to a fixed point observation, 34.2 mSv per hour at 13:12 on March 14, and the evacuation area is 20 km from Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant, and 11 injured. The evacuation area does not include the metropolitan area. Thank you. That is all.

Malcolm Foster, AP

Do any of the employees at the reactors or any residents show symptoms of radiation sickness? And can you elaborate also on the injury? We heard that one is rather seriously injured. What kind of injuries? And does that person show signs of radiation sickness?

Morita

As for the injured, I explained there were 11. And the details of the 11 is four people in the Ministry of Defense, also seven people who are working in TEPCO. At least there were six workers in TEPCO in those 11. Also the report that one person is seriously injured, I think she has already explained. However, we have the same information, and it is reported that one person of TEPCO is seriously injured.

Shikata

I do not think we have any evidence of radiation exposure for those people. Of course, we are looking into the conditions of those people 11 injured. But as far as we understand, this is the result of the blast that took place early this morning. And we would continue to follow possible implications, but we have not found any evidence of radiation exposure as a result of the explosion that took place at Unit 3 this morning.

Wojciech Lorenz, Polish Daily Rzeczpospolite

I would like to move to the people who are in community centers, thousands of people and that lost their houses and some of them families. On what help can they count, and is there any special help offered them? Thank you.

Shikata

There are issues of helping them, of course, food and drinks, and for example toilets. And we are distributing those fundamentally necessary materials to those people who have been evacuated. As of now, we have been making utmost efforts, but we are aware of the need to do more.

As far as housing issues are concerned, when we are talking about residents who have been injured by tsunami's, for example. They would require fundamental reconstruction of their houses. And as we have seen in the case of the Hanshin Awaji earthquake around Kobe, we have seen cases where it took a few years at least to reconstruct housing facilities. So there would be the need for temporary shelter for those people who have their houses destroyed. And then the next stage would be what to do with their original residence, and there will be lots of requirements for those reconstructions.

Dohono Fitrianto, Kompas Daily, Indonesia

I would like to ask two questions. The first is, how big is the damage caused by the electrical power shortage to the Japan economy? And the second is, _____ (inaudible) was saying that a small amount of radioactive material was leaked into the core cooling water. Has that water spilled into the sea? And has it contaminated the sea also? And the fish maybe in the water, maybe fish products from around the power plants? Thank you.

Ichikawa

As for your first question, I understand it is the impact on the Japanese economy. In the short term, we are aware that, for example, if the continuation of this controlled blackout continues, it will inevitably affect certain parts of our daily life and our economic activities. At the same time, we do not know yet the total magnitude of the damage caused to some of the local communities in the Tohoku region because some of the local communities have difficulties in communicating the level of damage to the central authorities. And we cannot deny that in the short term it will affect the Japanese economy. At the same time, in the medium to longer term there would be other aspects in the process of recovery from the damage caused by this earthquake. I think it is too early to say for certain what kind of impact these earthquake and tsunami might have on the Japanese economy overall and in long term. What we can say is that for now we are still trying to assess first of all how many people can still be rescued. And we are still at that stage. The earthquake and tsunami occurred on Friday. We are still on Monday. The first priority for us right now is to concentrate on search and rescue, and also as Mr. Shikata said, to provide the basic necessities to the people affected. At the same time, the government has to look at a longer term reconstruction. And in that process we will know probably in the very long future the total assessment of this very tragic event. But we cannot say any calculation right now. I think if anyone says that we have this calculation, I think it is still too premature to say that.

Makino

The second question concerning sea water. The seawater which was poured into the containment vessel remains inside. So we keep that seawater inside the containment vessel. So we have not received any report which has had such kind of seawater which includes nuclear materials were spilled into the sea. We have not received.

Jones

Just one quick confirmation that I have a question. I just want to make sure, if you could just nod your head. It is Mr. Noriyuki Shikata, is your name, right? And is it Ichiko Tomihara?

Ichikawa

No, it is Tomiko Ichikawa.

Jones

And Takeshi Matsunaga? Is that right? Could these two gentlemen give us their names and titles? And then actually I do have a question. The question is, you talked about the hydrogen explosion that blew off you said a concrete structure around the vessel. This is the picture we have seen on TV, and you have a picture of it here with the wooden frame remaining. Can you describe what that is and what we are looking at because was a concrete that was blown away but the wooden frame remained? Or was it just panels that were covering the wooden frame that were blown away because I am wondering why the frame is there if it was a strong explosion. So if you could just describe what we are seeing.

Morita

Those which were blown away were steel and concrete materials, materials made by steel and concrete, rather than wood. Not wood. Panel made by steel and concrete. Those panels were expected to keep anything contaminated inside the building. But as you know in the nuclear power stations there are multilayered safety functions. And the panel is one of the multilayered functions of this. In the center of the reactor there is a core reactor, and that is covered by a pressure vessel and also covered by containment vessel, and also this is covered by building. And this panel of the building was blown out, however the containment vessel is still solid and stable.

I am Ken Morita, International Press Officer of Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, NISA METI.

Makino

My name is Morikuni Makino, of the same title, International Press Officer of NISA.

Michael Penn, Shingetsu News Agency Press TV

First of all, I would like to thank the Foreign Press Center and for the officials who came here to brief us at this very critical moment. I think the foreign press benefits a great deal from your efforts. So thank you. But I do have one small complaint. And that is as Ms. Ichikawa mentioned, Chief Cabinet Secretary Mr. Edano has been very active and in front of the Japanese media for many hours, and he has been out in public. We have seen him on television. But to my knowledge the foreign press is not allowed to participate in those press conferences. So I hope that we will be able to get even more timely information, especially those of us who know Japanese, by being able to participate in some of those directly in those press conferences in the future.

Shikata

Let me just make a comment. Actually what has been happening is that Mr. Edano was

giving press conferences at like 5 a.m. or after midnight. And whenever we receive some information that requires attention of the public, we always try to come up with a press conference and give the press conferences by the Chief Cabinet Secretary. And during the weekend we are working all through the weekend, and we do not know when is the time to have a press conference. And I wish that we could alert you, but in many cases five minutes later we would hold a press conference. And then those people who are stationed inside the Prime Minister's office are physically possible to come. But today, as you know very well, there are regular first conferences conducted at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., and you are most welcome to come and ask questions in Japanese.

Michael Penn

Thank you very much. That is new information to me.

Shikata

You have the Foreign Ministry's press pass already? Good, thank you.

Foster

Just a follow-up to what I asked earlier. You responded that there was no evidence of radiation exposure. You mean dangerous levels of radiation? Because we are all exposed to radiation. I believe Edano san, too, said that radiation levels had briefly risen above legal limits.

Shikata

We are talking about the proof that there was a harmful radiation exposure. Of course, because of the venting there has been a release of small amount of radiation.

Foster

And there is no sign of any residents with dangerous levels?

Shikata

We have not heard of any cases of such.

Ichikawa

You may have heard that there were some exposure, but we understand that so far what has been reported as all having had some small amount of materials going on to their clothes and so on. But so far we have received no reports of dangerous levels of any contamination.

Foster

I am not an expert on nuclear radiation. So for a layman what is a dangerous level? What is the key kind of number?

Morita

Thank you for the question. Please give us a little bit of time to confirm it. So we hope to answer it in detail in the near future.

Ichikawa

What I would say as a kind of non-expert level of understanding is that what Mr. Edano said in his yesterday's press brief of what is. At that time of yesterday when the level of radiation detected was rather higher in the process, still even if in that level which was probably almost the highest amount recorded on the site I understand, even if people stayed on the spot for about one hour, it would have amounted to three times of an x-ray examination, for example. That was one example mentioned by Mr. Edano. And that level of monitoring figure was according again to his yesterday's press briefing which was rather temporary in the sense that by the time he made his press briefing yesterday that level had lowered to the level of, for example, flying from Tokyo to New York in an airplane. That was one of the examples that Mr. Edano explained yesterday.

_____ (inaudible)

Ichikawa

It is from his yesterday's press briefing, not today's. But what he said was that the maximum figure at that time what he mentioned was 1557 mSv per hour, and he compared that figure with an x-ray examination of the stomach, which is about 600 mSv. So even if people stayed at that place for even one hour, it was about three times the x-ray radiation. In the figure that Mr. Edano compared later is that 184.1mSv per hour at that time. And he compared that to the level of flying from Tokyo to New York by airplane which is according to yesterday's press briefing by Mr. Edano, about 200 mSv. After that, I have to leave the experts explain.

Morita

Also please have a look at the sentences in this sheet. You can see here the explanation on page 4 of this material. Current situation, and second hyphen, according to fixed point observation. That is really what she has explained now. Current situation, page 4. Sorry, we did not have time to _____ (inaudible).

Ichikawa

When Mr. Edano explained this as a comparison, it was on the thirteenth. It was yesterday. Today's figure is lower than that.

_____ (inaudible)

Thank you very much. Thank you for coming.