

“Japan nuclear disaster tops scale”

By Matt Smith, CNN

April 12, 2011

1. Japan declared the Fukushima Daiichi crisis a Level 7 event on the international system for rating nuclear accidents Tuesday, putting it on par with the 1986 Chernobyl disaster in the former Soviet Union.
2. Scientists believe the amount of radiation released is only a tenth of what was released at Chernobyl...
3. But the levels for radioactive iodine and cesium that have been spewed into the air, water and soil around the plant are...15 times higher than the threshold for a top-scale event, according to figures released by the safety agency Tuesday morning.

“Little-Known Facts About Nuclear Power”

Wisconsin Institute of Nuclear Systems

University of Wisconsin-Madison

<<http://wins.enr.wisc.edu/VillainOrVictim/facts/main.html>>

1. 17% of the world's electricity came from 442 nuclear power plants in 1996. Nuclear energy accounted for 77% of France's electricity, 52% of Sweden's, and 22% of the United States'.
2. 36 nuclear power plants are currently under construction in 14 countries. Five plants began commercial operation last year, including one at the Tennessee Valley Authority.
3. The safety record of nuclear power is outstanding. Radiation from nuclear plants has not caused a single known death worldwide, except at the Chernobyl plant in the Ukraine. The known death toll from the Chernobyl accident is less than 50.
4. Chernobyl-type plants can not be built or operated in the United States.
5. Less radiation is given off by a nuclear power plant than a coal-burning plant.
6. Nuclear power plants emit no carbon dioxide (which contributes to global warming and the greenhouse effect) nor sulfur and nitrogen oxides (which cause acid rain).
7. Nuclear power plants save thousands of lives every year in the United States. This is because nuclear plants replace many coal plants, which emit tiny particulates into the atmosphere. These particulates are believed to kill thousands of Americans each year. Nuclear plants emit no particulates.
8. There is a good solution to disposing of our nuclear wastes -- to bury them deep underground where they will be harmless. In contrast, there is no solution to handling the billions of tons of carbon dioxide which coal and natural gas plants discharge yearly nor the particulates which coal plants emit -- except to discharge them into the atmosphere we breath.
9. A new, second-generation nuclear plant was recently constructed in Japan in less than 4.5 years and below budget. Some American plants took over twice that long to build. The Japanese plant was designed by a team of American and Japanese companies.
10. France exports electricity from nuclear power for profit.

“The Case For and Against Nuclear Power”

By Michael Totty

Wall Street Journal

June 30, 2008

1. As it is, the 104 nuclear power plants in the U.S. generate about a fifth of the nation's energy. Wind accounts for about 1%, and solar even less than that.
2. Part of the reason for the rising cost estimates is the small number of companies able to supply critical reactor parts, as well as a shortage of engineering and construction skills in the nuclear industry.
3. Governments are expected to assign a cost to greenhouse gases....which would set a limit on emissions...
4. It's estimated that a carbon "price" of between \$25 and \$50 a ton makes nuclear power economically competitive with coal.
5. Most experts agree that the best way to dispose of waste is deep underground, where radioactive materials can be prevented from entering the environment and where it can be guarded against theft or terrorist attack.
6. What's more, countries where nuclear power is likely to expand don't have a strong system for regulating nuclear safety.
7. An accident anywhere in the world would stoke another anti-nuclear backlash among the public and investors.