

GREEN ACTION

グリーン・アクション

22 March 2013

Letters sent to countries potentially on the route of the MOX fuel shipment

This is a follow-up letter to the letter we sent you on 5 March concerning an imminent plutonium shipment (MOX fuel) from France to Japan that may pass by your country.

The Japanese electric utility Kansai Electric announced in a press release yesterday, 21 March, that it plans to ship MOX fuel from France to Japan. They did not disclose the date. This Kansai Electric press release and the French company AREVA's announcement on 20 March confirm that the shipment is indeed imminent.

Our information continues to be that the British flagged transport vessels Pacific Heron and Pacific Egret will arrive from the UK to Cherbourg the first part of April and that the MOX fuel will leave Cherbourg for Japan in April.

We checked with all the other 8 Japanese electric utilities that have nuclear power plants whether they will be shipping MOX fuel at this time. All clearly stated "no". This therefore means the shipment will be only Kansai Electric MOX fuel.

Here is the Kyodo-source article (dated 21 March) in English concerning the Kansai Electric announcement.

"MOX fuel to be shipped to Kansai Electric's Takahama nuclear plant"

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130321p2g00m0bu082000c.html>

Note the last paragraph of the article says:

"Kansai Electric said the delivery will take place at the request of France, which has sought to end its prolonged storage of the fuel, and that it is still uncertain when the utility will use the fuel at the plant in Fukui Prefecture."

Note the Japanese Kyodo article (dated 21 March) says:

"Kansai Electric states it is not yet determined whether or not the fuel will be loaded into the reactor."

(Informal translation from Japanese into English by Green Action.)

URL of article:

<http://www.47news.jp/CN/201303/CN2013032101001103.html>

It is important to note that this means this shipment of MOX fuel containing over 900kg of plutonium is being undertaken without evidence that this material will ever be used in Japan. Countries on the route of the shipment are being put at risk only because France wants the material to leave France and Kansai Electric agrees to this.

Note that France already has 60-70 tons of plutonium in storage.

This is the URL of the Kansai Electric's press release issued yesterday, 21 March.

<http://www.kepco.co.jp/pressre/2013/0321-1j.html>

The following is an informal translation by Green Action of the pertinent information contained in this press release.

Translation (excerpt of press release):

Information release concerning MOX fuel transport for Takahama Unit 3 MOX Fuel (2nd fabrication lot)

1. The name of the departure port and the names of the ships will be released several days before the shipment's departure. ("Departure" means when the shipment leaves French territorial waters.)
2. The departure date from France, the route of the shipment, and the approximate date of arrival in Japan will be announced after departure from France. ("arrival in Japan" means when it arrives in Japanese territorial waters.)
3. The record of the shipment will be announced after the transport has been completed.

The Japanese Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NRA) has stated that an electric utility's application to restart operation at a nuclear power plant can only be submitted to the NRA after construction of the sea wall (the breakwater dike to protect against tsunamis) has been completed. Kansai Electric's sea wall for the Takahama Unit 3 plant is scheduled to be completed in March 2015.

The above means that Kansai Electric cannot even apply for approval to restart Takahama Unit 3 based upon the new safety regulations to be issued in July 2013, until March 2015, and even then, there is no guarantee that Takahama Unit 3 will pass the new safety standards.

Green Action based in Kyoto and Mihama-no-Kai based in Osaka issued a joint protest statement yesterday, 21 March, concerning this shipment. (In Japanese.)

<http://www.greenaction-japan.org/modules/wordpress/index.php?p=641>

AREVA's announcement about the shipment made before Kansai Electric issued its press release was reported by AFT on 20 March.

PARIS, 20 mars 2013 (AFP) - Areva a annoncé mercredi le prochain transport de combustible nucléaire MOX (mélange d'uranium et de plutonium) de France vers le Japon, ce qui constituera la première livraison de ce type depuis l'accident de la centrale de Fukushima en mars 2011, sans toutefois dévoiler les dates précises.

We will continue to keep you posted with information concerning this plutonium shipment.

We will be very grateful if you could forward us any statements your government issues concerning this shipment and/or comments made by your government officials. (Green Action fax: 81-75-702-1952. Green Action email: info@greenaction-japan.org)

Yours sincerely,



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Executive Director,
Green Action

**PS If you would like this letter sent via email, please contact us at:
info@greenaction-japan.org**