

RAISING FUKUSHIMA ACCIDENT SEVERITY 'NO SURPRISE'

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_PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT NSW NUCLEAR FLASHPOINTS PROJECT

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The raising of the Fukushima Nuclear accident's severity on the official event severity scale from a '5', equivalent to the 1979 Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania, to a '7', equivalent to Chernobyl is not surprise and is overdue, according to nuclear campaigner John Hallam.

According to Mr Hallam, who worked on reactor safety issues for 23 years from 1977-2000, and whose experience includes both Three Mile Island and Chernobyl,

"I've argued from the very beginning that the Fukushima accident has been downplayed and underrated. Now, Hopefully, the official acknowledgment of the accident as a level - 7 accident, equivalent to Chernobyl, will put right the game we have been seeing over the last few weeks, where the authorities say things are 'getting better'. Getting better. oops, they just got worse! - and this sequence has been repeated many times."

"It's clear that the Fukushima reactors, with safety problems that have been talked about for 40 years yet never fixed, with major problems with the integrity of one of the reactor pressure vessels also never fixed, and with warnings about the potential effects of a major tsunami ignored, were accidents waiting to happen."

"However its also equally clear that unacceptable risk is inherent to all reactors, whatever the design. We've now had major accidents in a pressurised water reactor (TMI) in a graphite-moderated channel-type reactor (Chernobyl) and now in a boiling water reactor.

It now seems that in BOTH the Chernobyl accident AND in the Fukushima accident, there have been major offsite releases of radiation - In Fukushima's case, according to Japans nuclear safety commission, the release of over 10,000 terabequerells of radiation per hour for some time after March 11. Significant releases seem to be ongoing.

It's clear enough from this too, that the use of nuclear reactors as a magical solution to the Global Warming problem must vanish from the agenda - in fact, the use of nuclear technology to 'solve' climate change was never ever a goer, as simple capital costs, and the Gargantuan scale of the conversion to nuclear power simply ruled it out.

Nuclear technology was never anything but a 'future technology whose time has passed'.

Let's acknowledge that and move on.

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