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28 MAR 2011

24th March 2011

Charles Hendry MP
Minister of State
Department for Energy and Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2AW

Dear Charles

You might be interested in the attached briefing pack we have put together following the tragic events in Japan last week. This has been circulated to all MPs, as well as to other media and public affairs groups.

Whilst I was reassured by your and the Secretary of State's comments at the Nuclear Development Forum I would very much welcome a word, when you have the time available, about the potential impact on the UK nuclear programme. We are already beginning to receive enquiries about potential delays and it would be very helpful if we could liaise closely with the Department as thinking develops.

Yours sincerely

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17.03.11

NIA Statement on Nuclear Development Forum

Following today's meeting of the Nuclear Development Forum, chaired by Chris Huhne, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, the Nuclear Industry Association

- Fully shares the profound expressions of sympathy and support to all those in Japan suffering the devastating effects of the earthquake and tsunami. Our thoughts and concerns go also to our colleagues in the nuclear industry battling to restore the Fukushima plant to a safe condition.
- Supports the Government's decision to commission the Chief Nuclear Inspector, Dr Mike Weightman, to prepare an independent and comprehensive report of the facts of what has happened in Japan and the implications for the UK nuclear industry. The industry is committed to supporting Dr Weightman's investigation fully and to applying the lessons learned.
- Applauds the Government's committed leadership in this difficult time, and welcomes their continued support for the UK's existing nuclear fleet and plans for new nuclear build.

Huhne: Nuclear safety is number one priority

17.03.11

Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Chris Huhne today set out further detail on the UK Chief Nuclear Inspector's report into the implications of events at Japanese nuclear reactors on existing and new plants in the UK. This came as Ministers met with representatives from the nuclear industry in London.

The Energy Secretary has asked Dr Mike Weightman for an interim report by mid May 2011 and a final report within six months. Both reports will be made public.

Chris Huhne, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change said:

"The tragic events in Japan are still unfolding. We should not rush to judgment. It is important that we have the full facts at our disposal. I have asked the Chief Nuclear Inspector for a full report so that the implications for the UK are clear.

"Safety is and will continue to be the number one priority for existing nuclear sites and for any new power stations. I want to ensure that any lessons learned from Mike Weightman's report are applied to the UK's new build programme."

Mike Weightman, Chief Nuclear Inspector, who addressed the Nuclear Development Forum said:

"This is a difficult time for Japan and we are ready to provide support as necessary. We must establish the facts on these unprecedented events and determine if there are lessons to be learned for the UK, to add to our very robust safety standards and arrangements. My report will be public, independent, evidence based, comprehensive, wide in scope and based on the best technical advice, consulting nationally and internationally with colleagues and organisations who, like us, have the safety and security of people and society uppermost in our minds."

At the Nuclear Development Forum, the Secretary of State told industry that Government would consider the Nuclear National Policy Statement in light of the emerging nuclear crisis in Japan before proceeding with the ratification process.

NIA Statement on Japan

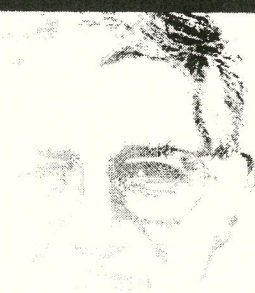
- The current situation in Japan is a major humanitarian disaster and our sympathies are very much with the Japanese people at this time of such distress.
- We recognise that the situation is also a major concern for the global nuclear industry. However, we still do not have the full facts surrounding the severe problems at Fukushima power plant and we are monitoring the situation closely.
- We welcome the comments made by Prime Minister David Cameron, and Secretary of State Chris Huhne, and support their views that government should take time to review and learn the lessons of the Japan crisis, while at the same time recognising that our current nuclear fleet has an excellent safety record and is a crucial part of our low-carbon power supply
- It is a sensible and prudent step that the Government's Chief Nuclear Inspector, Dr. Mike Weightman will report back on key safety findings and lessons learnt. The nuclear industry is benchmarked by others for its safety record and ability to constantly evaluate and act on safety issues
- It is too soon to make snap judgements - we simply do not have all of the facts at the moment. However, the UK nuclear industry is determined to learn

lessons from this event as safety is of paramount concern and an absolute priority for our industry. We cannot and will not be complacent.

- It must be remembered that nuclear is vital to secure the UK's long-term environmental and security of supply needs into the future.

Nuclear Industry Association viewpoint – Supply Chain

- The current situation in Japan is a major humanitarian disaster and our sympathies are very much with the Japanese people at this time of such distress.
- Fukushima is a major and very serious nuclear accident. It was caused by an earthquake and subsequent tsunami of unprecedented scale and ferocity. All affected nuclear stations in Japan shutdown automatically as designed, including Fukushima. In that case, however, the tsunami disabled the back-up cooling systems causing the fuel in the reactors and spent fuel storage ponds to overheat. Some radiation has been released to the atmosphere, with the highest doses in or close to the plant. Operators are still battling to restore the plants to a safe condition, and we do not yet have all the facts.
- The situation is a major concern for the nuclear industry worldwide, and we are closely monitoring developments.
- Some governments and operators have, in our view, prematurely rushed to judgment and taken immediate steps to restrict nuclear development as a result of these events.
- Clearly, the seismic conditions in Japan and northern Europe, including UK, are very different and the circumstances that caused this accident would not occur here..
- Nonetheless, operators of nuclear stations here (EdF Energy and Magnox) have already taken action in the light of events in Japan, to strengthen their procedures to maintain the safety of UK nuclear plant, and protect the public.
- For example, EdF Energy has already reviewed back-up cooling systems and emergency plans at its existing UK plants.
- The UK government's approach, exemplified in statements by PM and Chris Huhne, is to establish and assess the facts, learn the lessons, and apply them to the UK's situation and conditions.
- The Chief Nuclear Inspector, Dr Mike Weightman, will produce an interim report by May and a full report within 6 months to inform further actions in the UK.
- The UK industry is determined to learn lessons from this event as safety is an absolute priority for our industry. We cannot and will not be complacent.
- The government's approach is responsible and sensible. Both the government and the industry are clear that new nuclear build will go ahead in the UK to secure our long term environmental and security of supply needs into the future.
- We need therefore to continue urgently with our work to develop and expand the capability within the UK nuclear supply chain to build a fleet of nuclear power stations in the UK.



CRUEL FATE OF GENTLE FOLK

A visit to Japan with nuclear industry representatives turns into a close-up view of disaster for Lord O'Neill

On Friday March 11, at around 2.15pm, I sat down with three colleagues for lunch in a Tokyo café. Half an hour later we left the table and rushed into the street.

The stoic reaction of our Japanese fellow diners to the earth tremor changed as the vibrations increased and the quaking became more prolonged. After all, Japan experiences in excess of 200 earthquakes a year. Little did we know that this one, at 8.9 on the Richter scale, was the sixth-highest recorded. We were situated outside the Shujuku rail station, a commuting and metro centre which was in the heart of a major shopping precinct.

The thousands who spilled out of the shops and came up from the underground station stood watching the scenes of national disaster unrolling on the massive TV screens.

No longer were rail services and bland news and weather headlines being transmitted. Graphic listings of the size and scale of the quakes were depicted and then, almost as it happened, shots of the approaching tsunami were shown. Some were of such a character that had they not been live, then they would surely have been edited out. One harrowing scene recorded the efforts of a wretched car driver trying to race ahead of the horrendous wave but being consumed by the faster, omnivorous tsunami.

Mobile phone systems by this time were overloaded and I had to find a landline to reassure my wife that I was safe. It was only then, some two hours after the tremors, that I began to appreciate how this event was being watched across the globe. Gradually coverage was

extended to the ailing Daiichi nuclear power station at Fukushima.

I had been visiting Japan on a study tour with a group of colleagues from the UK Nuclear Industry Association to observe the latest techniques in nuclear station construction. Within our ranks were some of our most distinguished and experienced power engineers. They gave an informed commentary on what was happening all the time, confirming by e-mail with colleagues across the world the likely causes of the explosions and fires on the site.

We had been visiting facilities under construction which were vastly superior in design and safety to the 1961 Fukushima station, but we had been driving along the narrow roads which skirted the sea and which we noted could be vulnerable to high tides. Our concern had been the possibility of unpleasant

floods, but nothing like that caused by a tsunami.

As reports of the worsening situation came on to the screen we realised that the discomfiture suffered by us in Tokyo was as nothing compared to the poor people who lived in the remote towns and villages we had driven through only two days before. Indeed, had we been on these roads on Friday afternoon, we would not be alive today.

The memory of these polite, gentle folk, with their good manners and willingness to help visitors, only enhances one's sadness and grief at their fate. What should have been a tourist meal break after a tiring but most productive visit became the last memory of a world which, for all too many, will never be the same again.

"The stoic reaction of our Japanese fellow diners to the earth tremor changed as the vibrations increased and the quaking became more prolonged"

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Labour peer

Client: Nuclear Industry Association
Source: The Daily Telegraph (Main)
Date: 17 March 2011
Page: 22
Reach: 628338
Size: 304cm2
Value: 9770.56

Precise

Britain should not be afraid of nuclear power



**JOHN
HUTTON**

Energy generation is never risk free, but the industry has a strong safety record

The earthquake and tsunami in Japan are tragedies of enormous proportions. Hundreds of thousands of people will need help in rebuilding their lives, and governments around the world will want to do all they can to help.

In the past few days, much of the reporting of this tragedy has focused on the plight of one power plant, Fukushima. The impact of these natural disasters on the nuclear industry will be profound. Here, too, governments in every corner of the globe will be looking closely at what the problems in Japan mean for the future of global nuclear energy. Many nations are committed to a new programme of investment in such

energy. The fundamental question that we all need to ask is: "Is it safe for us to go on building new nuclear plants?"

My answer is an emphatic "yes". Safety must, of course, always be at the heart of the case for nuclear energy, and regulators must make this their top priority. In 2008, when I had responsibility for energy policy, the safety case was fundamental to my decision to sanction a new generation of nuclear power stations for Britain. I have every confidence that this will be the same approach taken by ministers today. Modern nuclear technologies have multi-layered safety systems in place that offer a huge improvement on the older power plants.

In the UK, the industry is rightly subject to rigorous and independent regulation. All our plants are licensed by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, which will not allow them to operate if it has any concerns. The industry has a strong safety record and there is no reason to believe that this cannot be maintained into the future - a fact that must not be drowned out by those rushing to condemn nuclear energy. We need an appropriate response to Fukushima - not a knee-jerk one.

However, it is also true that events in Japan are changing the parameters of the debate. The industry cannot simply rely on its past safety record as the only response to what has happened in recent

days. Although we do not yet have a full picture of events at Fukushima, if we can make further improvements on the current high safety levels then we must do so. Business as usual will not be good enough: openness and transparency must become the industry's watchwords if people's concerns are to be met.

The public must be told the facts about nuclear, as well as other forms of energy. The most unpalatable truth is that no form of energy generation can be completely free of risk. And there is one chilling statistic that we should all have at the forefront of our minds when we consider the alternatives to nuclear - in China, 5,000 people die every year while mining coal for use in power stations. When it comes to energy policy, there are rarely any simple, easy choices.

Renewable sources must be part of a balanced policy, but they are intermittent and need to be engineered around a base load of dependable power generation if peaks of demand are to be met.

It is clear, therefore, that our needs cannot be met from renewable sources alone. Europe will, in any event, be extremely hard-pressed even to achieve its current renewable goals, let alone meet any increased level of output.

The most likely alternative global source of energy, if we abandoned our nuclear ambitions, would be coal or gas. However, burning more coal and gas will not help us reduce the amount of carbon

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being emitted into the atmosphere - in fact, quite the opposite. The human and environmental consequences of such a policy would be potentially catastrophic, which must be factored in to any call for an end to civil nuclear power.

If Britain were to turn its back on nuclear, a new "dash for gas" would be inevitable, given that it seems unlikely the Government would sanction any new coal-fired power stations in the foreseeable future. Not only would this be bad for our environment, it would increase our dependence on foreign energy supplies, making us less secure. This is a risk no sensible government should expose us to. A primary goal of energy policy must instead be to increase our energy independence. Nuclear passes this critical test.

The next few months will be difficult. Governments here and around the world will come under increasing pressure from protest movements to end any development of nuclear energy. The industry and politicians alike will need to show leadership and vision if we are to avoid the disaster of a wrong-headed response to Fukushima.

Lord Hutton of Furness was secretary of state for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2007-8

Comment on John Hutton's view at
telegraph.co.uk/personalview

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