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"Unforgivable" – TEPCO's Plan to Add Reactors in Fukushima
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「許せない」――東京電力の福島原子炉増設計画

In the midst of one of the most serious nuclear crises in history and with 30,000 dead or missing and close to half a million people rendered homeless in the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) has submitted plans to build more reactors in Fukushima.

On March 31, in the third week of the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, owner TEPCO submitted a plan to add a seventh and eighth reactor at the stricken site to Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. TEPCO is required to submit yearly reports, which include future development plans.

The company claims that due to the confusion brought about by earthquake and tsunami, they did not have an opportunity to revise the plan and, faced with a strict deadline, simply chose to submit it. The plan to build two new reactors at the site had been included in annual reports since 1995, and TEPCO now claims that it always intended to revise the report after this year's submission. The submission as is, however, seems emblematic of TEPCO's inability to communicate with the people of Fukushima or adequately express contrition. The Fukushima bureaucrat in charge of new projects, Nozaki Yoichi, is quoted as saying, "If you consider the feelings of the people of Fukushima, this is simply unforgivable."

This public relations disaster comes after revelations that TEPCO's "apology commercial" was not broadcast in Fukushima Prefecture itself. While TEPCO representatives have apologized on a number of occasions, Sato Yuhei, the governor of Fukushima, refused to accept a personal apology from TEPCO president Shimizu Masataka. Fukushima evacuees have also refused to meet with TEPCO representatives.

On April 3, Sato also expressed anger toward the central government for the slow rate of release of radiation figures. He said, "I wonder if our sense of urgency is being conveyed to the government…It is irritating."