

The predominance of ANS members reside in the U.S. As we interact with our family, neighbors and citizens in our communities many questions will come based on news coverage of the nuclear power plant situation in Japan. These talking points key on the theme 'could it happen in the U.S.?' *

ANS Member Talking Points

Implications to U.S. nuclear energy program from the Japanese earthquake

It is premature for the technical community to draw conclusions from the earthquake and tsunami tragedy in Japan with regard to the U.S. nuclear energy program. Many opposed to nuclear power will try to use this event to call for changes in the U.S. Japan is facing beyond a "worst case" disaster since we, the technical community, did not hypothesize an event of this magnitude. Thus far, even the most seriously damaged of Japan's 54 reactors have not released radiation at levels that would harm the public. That is testament to the way professionals in our profession operate: our philosophy of defense in-depth, excellent designs, high standards of construction, conduct of operations, and most important the effectiveness of employees in following emergency preparedness planning.

The Nuclear Science and Technology (NS&T) community takes very seriously our commitment to safe operation of any nuclear facility and will incorporate lessons learned based on this experience into our safety and operating procedures. The ANS will facilitate the sharing of technical information so that these lessons receive wide distribution and be archived for future stewards of this technology. Some points to remember from this week:

- Nuclear power plants have proven their value to society in Japan, the United States and elsewhere. They provide large amounts of base load electricity on an around-the-clock basis, and they do so cost-effectively with the lowest electricity production costs of any large energy source. Both Japan and the United States have benefited greatly from nuclear energy; it has been instrumental in the nations' economic success over the past half century and their high standard of living.
- Our hallmark as a NS&T organization is to incorporate operating experience and lessons learned. When we fully understand the facts surrounding the event in Japan, we will share, document and use those insights to make NS&T even safer.
- Nuclear energy has been and will continue to be a key element in meeting America's energy needs. The nuclear industry sets the highest standards for safety and, through our focus on continuous learning; we will incorporate lessons learned from the events in Japan. The dominant factors determining technology used for new generation will be demand for new generation, the competitiveness of nuclear energy in comparison with other sources of electricity generation, and the continued safe operation of U.S. nuclear power plants.

- There has not been a rush to judgment on the part of U.S. policymakers during the first few days of this situation. We believe that is due in part to the recognition on their part that nuclear energy must continue to play a key role in a diversified energy portfolio that strengthens U.S. energy security and fuels economic growth.

* The genesis of this document is the NEI "Talking Points - Implications to U.S. nuclear energy program of the Japanese earthquake" dated March 13, 2011