

III. Emergency Responses Required and Taken by Governments and Other Bodies

1. Emergency Responses Mandated in the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act, the Basic Plan for Emergency Preparedness, etc.

See Chapter III 1 of the Interim Report.

2. Government Response after the Accident

(1) General description of the response of the national government¹

Right after the earthquake struck at 14:46 on March 11, 2011, METI established the Emergency Response Headquarters for the disaster and began gathering information on the state of the reactors at nuclear power stations in the stricken areas. At the Prime Minister's Office, at 14:50 the same day, Tetsuro Ito, the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary for Crisis Management ("Crisis Management Deputy Chief Ito"), established the Emergency Response Office in the Prime Minister's Office for the earthquake, and summoned members of the Emergency Operations Team, which was made up of the bureau chiefs of relevant ministries, to the Prime Minister's Office Crisis Management Center located below ground inside the Prime Minister's Office.

At around 15:42 the same day, Masao Yoshida, the site superintendent of the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station (hereinafter referred to as "Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS") (hereinafter referred to as "Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Site Superintendent Yoshida") of Tokyo Electric Power Company (hereinafter referred to as "TEPCO"), sent an Article 10 Notification via the TEPCO head office to the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency ("NISA") and other competent bodies, having judged that, because the facility's entire AC power supply had failed after the tsunami waves struck, this constituted a specific event requiring notification pursuant to Article 10 (1) of the Act on Special Measures Concerning Nuclear Emergency Preparedness ("Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act," Article 9 (1) (a) (vi) of the enforcement regulations of the same Act gives as an example of a specific event an interruption in the supply of electric power from all AC power sources during reactor operations, with the interruption lasting at least

¹ For a general description of the government response after the accident, see Chapter III 2 (1) of the Interim Report. For information on the situation on the fifth floor of the Prime Minister's Office, see Chapter III 2 (4). This section is based on the information provided there as well as the facts revealed over the course of investigation since the Interim Report was published.

5 consecutive minutes).

After receiving the Article 10 Notification, NISA communicated its content to the Prime Minister's Office and other competent bodies, and METI established the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Headquarters in its Emergency Response Center (ERC) and the Local Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Headquarters in the Emergency Response Center located in the town of Okuma ("Offsite Center") (see Chapter III 2 (2) of the Interim Report).

At the Prime Minister's Office, where the above-mentioned Article 10 Notification had been received from NISA, Crisis Management Deputy Chief Ito established an Emergency Response Office for the nuclear accident at 16:36 the same day. The Emergency Operations Team, which had already been called up for earthquake response, was expanded to also handle the nuclear emergency and continued dealing with the situation (see Chapter III 2 (3) of the Interim Report).

Meanwhile, at 15:59 the same day, the Nuclear Safety Commission ("NSC") of Japan received from NISA a message stating it had received the Article 10 Notification from TEPCO. At 16:00 the same day, the Commission held an extraordinary meeting and formed an Emergency Technical Advisory Body (see Chapter III 2 (5) of the Interim Report).

At around 17:00 the same day, Prime Minister Naoto Kan ("Prime Minister Kan") summoned Nobuaki Terasaka, director-general of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency ("NISA Director-General Terasaka"), who stayed in the Prime Minister's Office as a member of the Emergency Operations Team, to his office on the fifth floor inside the Prime Minister's Office and requested NISA Director-General Terasaka to explain the conditions of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. At that time, NISA Director-General Terasaka had been provided with only fragmentary information about the conditions of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS such as that the emergency diesel generators at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS had turned inoperable due to the tsunami. He did not have a firm grip on the details of the design and conditions at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, and it explains why he failed to immediately give a definite answer to the question posed by Prime Minister Kan about the location of the emergency diesel generators at the NPS.

In the middle of the discussion with NISA Director-General Terasaka, Prime Minister Kan requested that TEPCO dispatch its staff to explain the conditions. TEPCO responded by

dispatching four staff members to the Prime Minister's Office to explain the conditions to Prime Minister Kan: TEPCO Fellow Ichiro Takekuro ("TEPCO Fellow Takekuro"), one department head, one technical staff member, and one office staff member. However, TEPCO's senior staff members including Fellow Takekuro had not been provided with any detailed information on the conditions of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. They managed to give a general explanation as follows: (i) if the situation got worse, reactor water levels would drop and the fuels would get damaged in a relatively short period of time; (ii) the battery life needed to operate the isolation condensers (IC) and the reactor core isolation cooling system (RCIC), which constituted the core cooling systems for Reactor Units 1, 2 and 3, was about eight hours; and (iii) by the end of battery life, it would be necessary to ensure power supply required to inject water into the reactors without interruption. However, they could not afford to go far beyond providing a simple explanation of TEPCO's response activities for the moment such as an arrangement for truck-mounted generators².

Considering the possibility that it might have already become impossible to inject water into the Units 1 and 2 reactors at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS using the emergency core cooling systems, TEPCO, with priority on safety, concluded at around 16:36 on the same day that a specific event specified in Article 15 (1) of the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act had occurred (Article 21 (1) (ii) of the enforcement regulations of the same Act designate as a specific event the event that feed-water function is totally lost at an operating boiling water reactor, followed by a failure to inject water into the reactor using any of the emergency core cooling systems) and reported the decision to NISA at around 16:45 the same day to NISA.

After receiving this report, NISA conducted its own technical verifications and then decided that the incident came under an "Article 15 Situation" (a nuclear emergency situation enshrined in Article 15 (1) of the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act). At around 17:35 the same day, Eiji Hiraoka, vice director-general of NISA ("NISA Vice Director-General Hiraoka") and other officials obtained the approval from Banri Kaieda, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry ("METI Minister Kaieda"), for a declaration of a nuclear emergency situation, pursuant to Article 15 (2) of the same Act.

² The TEPCO officials left the Prime Minister's Office after the explanation, but were called back there again at around 19:00 the same day, so they assembled there again.

At this time, NISA Vice Director-General Hiraoka and other officials reported to METI Minister Kaieda that an Article 15 Situation had appeared to have occurred at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS and also explained legal procedures and related matters based on the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act such as: (i) when the METI Minister recognizes that a nuclear emergency situation has occurred, the METI Minister shall immediately report this to the Prime Minister; (ii) the Prime Minister, having received the report noted in the preceding (i), shall immediately issue a declaration of a nuclear emergency situation; and (iii) the Prime Minister, having issued a declaration of a nuclear emergency situation, shall establish the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters (“NERHQ”) based on the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act. METI Minister Kaieda immediately acknowledged that those procedures shall be followed.

Subsequently, METI Minister Kaieda went to the Prime Minister’s Office on the fifth floor, together with NISA Director-General Terasaka and other officials who had already been acting as members of the Emergency Operations Team in the Prime Minister’s Office, and reported to Prime Minister Kan the occurrence of the Article 15 Situation, and asked him approve a declaration of a nuclear emergency situation.

In reply, Prime Minister Kan posed questions on the accident situation at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, including the possibility of an explosion or core meltdown, the accident outlook for the future, and technical matters such as the power output of each unit at the NPS. Although NISA officials accompanying METI Minister Kaieda took the lead in answering those questions, NISA officials and the other officials failed to offer definite answers to many questions. Furthermore, Prime Minister Kan asked about the provisions of the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act as well as related laws and regulations. However, they were unable to immediately offer definite answers to Prime Minister Kan, because they brought no materials containing information on related laws and regulations with them to the meeting. The Prime Minister had a schedule to attend a meeting of the heads of the ruling and opposition parties at around 18:12 the same day, so the proceeding was suspended for a while in the middle of the discussion.

After the meeting of party heads was closed at around 18:17 on the same day, Prime Minister Kan gave his approval for declaring a nuclear emergency situation by around 18:30 at the latest.

At around 19:03 on the same day, the Government issued the declaration and established the NERHQ and the Nuclear Emergency Response Local Headquarters (“Local NERHQ”). Later, at a press conference at around 19:45, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano (“Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano”) announced that a nuclear emergency situation had been declared and that the NERHQ had been established.

The first NERHQ meeting and, subsequently, an Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters meeting was held, after a nuclear emergency situation had been declared. Following these meetings, Prime Minister Kan discussed how to respond to the accident in his personal office on the fifth floor in the Prime Minister's Office with METI Minister Kaieda, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Tetsuro Fukuyama (“Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuyama”), Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Goshi Hosono (“Special Advisor Hosono”), Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Manabu Terata (“Special Advisor Terata”). At around 20:30 that same day, Prime Minister Kan went down to the Crisis Management Center located below ground in the Prime Minister’s Office, in order to take charge of government’s response to earthquake/tsunami disaster as well as the nuclear accident. At that time, government officials from relevant ministries and agencies headed by Crisis Management Deputy Chief Ito had been carrying out response measures for earthquake/tsunami and nuclear accident. Prime Minister Kan verbally instructed the personnel to: (i) ensure information exchange; and (ii) have good communication with each other. Later, Prime Minister came to a conclusion that it was not appropriate for him to deal with the accident in the noisy Crisis Management Center meeting room crowded with many officials from relevant ministries and agencies, and went down to a room on the Center’s mezzanine floor (“the mezzanine floor below ground in the Prime Minister's Office”)³.

From that time onward, Prime Minister Kan, Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano, METI Minister Kaieda, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuyama, and Special Advisor Hosono gathered on the mezzanine floor below ground in the Prime Minister's Office. The Chair of the Nuclear

³ In Chapter III 2 (1) and (4) of the Interim Report it is stated that after the press conference by Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano, Prime Minister Kan and others went to the Prime Minister’s personal office on the fifth floor of the Prime Minister's Office and discussed the response to the accident. However, further investigation since the Interim Report revealed that following the press conference, until sometime in the evening on March 12, they had discussions primarily on the mezzanine floor below ground, and only after that did they move to the fifth floor.

Safety Commission Haruki Madarame (“NSC Chair Madarame”), NISA Vice Director-General Hiraoka, TEPCO Fellow Takekuro, and other people concerned were also assembled there. Apart from a few people going in and out for a time, they discussed government’s response to the accident.

The members assembled on the mezzanine floor below ground in the Prime Minister's Office discussed a determination of evacuation/sheltering areas, concrete measures to be taken inside the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS (pressure venting, water injections into the reactors, etc.) and logistical support such as procurement of materials and machinery required for those measures, while consulting NSC Chair Madarame for advice. Their discussion was based on the information collected at the Crisis Management Center and the information gathered by TEPCO staff members present there, including TEPCO Fellow Takekuro, over the phone and by other means. However, the information available at the meeting was not sufficient, because TEPCO itself was unable to thoroughly grasp information related to the accident conditions, and also had limitations in the means of communication. From the middle of the night of the same day onward, Prime Minister Kan worked mostly in his personal office on the fifth floor in the Prime Minister's Office⁴. While many of the afore-mentioned people stayed in the office on the mezzanine floor below ground in the Prime Minister's Office. They visited the fifth floor of the Prime Minister’s Office to report to the Prime Minister and, if need be, had discussions in the Prime Minister’s personal office on government’s response to the accident⁵.

Afterwards, at around 2:00 on March 12, Prime Minister Kan considered that the Local NERHQ was not functioning as it should in terms of its response to the nuclear accident (see Chapter III 5 (1) of the Interim Report). As a result, it appeared the Prime Minister’s Office had to make decisions on various matters, even though it was not possible for the Prime Minister’s Office to thoroughly grasp the conditions at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. For this reason, he came to believe that he should confirm the conditions at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS by talking in person with the site superintendent of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS (“Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS

⁴ Prime Minister Kan had telephone talks with U.S. President Barack Obama for about 10 minutes from around 00:10 on March 12.

⁵ For example, after the explosion at the reactor building of Unit 1 of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS at 15:36 on March 12, the people assembled on the mezzanine floor below ground received a report that white smoke was rising from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, and they went to the Prime Minister’s personal office on the fifth floor, where they gathered information and conducted other activities.

Site Superintendent Yoshida”) and, in parallel, should check with eyes the damages caused by the earthquake and tsunami in the stricken areas. Prime Minister Kan instructed his Executive Secretary to prepare for his visit to Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS and other stricken areas. The final decision on this visit was made at around 6:00 that same day, immediately before the Prime Minister left the Prime Minister's Office. As Prime Minister Kan believed that he was more familiar with technical matters in nuclear energy field than other ministers and other people around him, he did not think to dispatch them, but thought he should go there to observe the area himself⁶.

Prime Minister Kan left the Prime Minister’s Office at around 6:15 of the same day together with Special Advisor Terata and NSC Chair Madarame, and met Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Site Superintendent Yoshida at around 7:11 that same day inside the Seismic Isolation Building of Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS (for details about Prime Minister Kan’s observation of Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, see Chapter IV 3 (4) of the Interim Report)⁷. In addition, Senior Vice Minister of METI Motohisa Ikeda (“METI Senior Vice-Minister Ikeda”), who had been acting to respond to the disaster as head of the Local NERHQ, TEPCO Vice-President Sakae Muto (“TEPCO Vice-President Muto”), and other parties concerned from the Offsite Center joined the Prime Minister at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS.

Meanwhile, mobile phones were not available inside the Crisis Management Center located below ground in the Prime Minister’s Office (see Chapter III 2 (3) of the Interim Report), and it took time to travel up to report to the Prime Minister on the fifth floor of the Prime Minister’s Office. For those reasons, from the evening of the same day, the people assembled in the mezzanine floor below ground in the Prime Minister's Office moved to an office directly connected to the Prime Minister’s personal office on the fifth floor in the Prime Minister’s Office (“the Prime Minister Reception Room”), and discussed issues such as changes in the extent of the evacuation area and measures to be taken at the NPS.

⁶ Concerning this visit, Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano pointed out to Prime Minister Kan that there was the possibility he would be subjected to political criticism. Prime Minister Kan responded that given the situation in which little information was reaching the Prime Minister's Office, there was a need for someone to go and observe the site.

⁷ While Prime Minister Kan observed the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, at 7:45 on March 12, he issued a declaration of nuclear emergency situation with regard to the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS and also established the NERHQ related to the nuclear accident (see Attachments Chapter IV 3 (1) b.).

By around March 13, a number of participants joined the meetings on the fifth floor of the Prime Minister's Office such as: Deputy Chair of the Nuclear Safety Commission of Japan Yutaka Kukita ("NSC Deputy Chair Kukita"); NISA Deputy Director-General Hisanori Nei ("NISA Deputy Director-General Nei," in charge of NPS safety and fuel cycles); engineers representing relevant plant vendors, and staff members from Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES, an independent administrative corporation). In the afternoon of the same day, Masaya Yasui, who had been appointed in haste to NISA's senior official in addition to his post as the then Director-General, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Department of the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy (NISA's Yasui) participated in the meetings, replacing NISA's senior officials such as Vice Director-General Hiraoka and Deputy Director-General Nei⁸.

Prime Minister Kan did not often join the meetings held by above-mentioned people at the Prime Minister's Reception Room, however, on the occasion of major changes in plant conditions at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, he received reports from METI Minister Kaieda, NSC Chair Madarame and others with regard to the plant conditions and the results of their discussions.

Information on each unit of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS was gathered at the Crisis Management Center in the basement of the Prime Minister's Office, and was communicated to the mezzanine floor below ground and the fifth floor in the Prime Minister's Office. In addition, similar information was obtained not only from TEPCO Fellow Takekuro and its staff members, who telephoned to TEPCO's Head Office and Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Site Superintendent Yoshida, but also from Special Advisor Hosono, who telephoned to Yoshida. Prime Minister Kan and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano also telephoned to Yoshida to learn more about the plant conditions and ascertain his views.

The above-mentioned discussion on the mezzanine floor below ground and the fifth floor in the Prime Minister's Office covered those subjects such as possible scenarios of the unfolding

⁸ From around March 12, there had been talks inside METI about having Yasui work to respond to the accident, and the decision was made to do so when a request was sent from the Prime Minister's Executive Secretary to METI Vice-Minister Matsunaga to dispatch officials that could precisely explain the situation to Prime Minister Kan and others. Before dispatching NISA's Yasui, METI Minister Kaieda had made a similar request to METI through the Prime Minister's Executive Secretary.

plant conditions and measures to respond to those scenarios using the information collected, let alone a simple reporting or an explanation of gathered information on the plant conditions. Based on the discussion results, it sometimes happened that TEPCO Fellow Takekuro and the TEPCO department head gave advice by telephone to TEPCO's Head Office and Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Site Superintendent Yoshida such as: what was likely to be the best operation procedure (whether seawater should be used for injection into the reactor; which reactor unit should be given priority for water injection, etc.).

In most cases, Yoshida had already come to a conclusion, which was similar to the advice given by the Prime Minister's Office, and had already taken specific measures based on his decision, or was about to do so. Therefore, the advice had little influence on the decisions regarding specific measures taken at the accident site. On several occasions, however, there were conflicts between the specific measures, which TEPCO's Head Office and Yoshida thought necessary, and the advice from the Prime Minister's Office. In those cases, they attached importance to the advice from the Prime Minister's Office. Accordingly, the advice did influence decisions regarding specific measures taken at the accident site (see Chapter IV 4 (1) (c) of the Interim Report regarding the injection of seawater into the Unit 1 reactor, Chapter IV 5 (1) (d) of the Interim Report regarding reactor depressurization and water injection into the Unit 2 reactor, and Chapter IV 4 (2) (d) of the Interim Report regarding the injection of fresh water into the Unit 3 reactor).

To serve their purpose, the discussions on the mezzanine floor below ground and the fifth floor in the Prime Minister's Office demanded information on the plant conditions and the operation conditions at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. TEPCO Fellow Takekuro and other TEPCO executives participating in the meetings felt it was expected of them to obtain this type of information and be able to understand it well. When it came to reporting to the Government on TEPCO's response to the nuclear emergency, TEPCO had not expected that it would have to report directly to the Prime Minister's Office or dispatch liaison staff there, while TEPCO had assumed that it would have to report to NISA. Although TEPCO sent Takekuro and its staff members to the Prime Minister's Office at the request from there after the earthquake and the tsunami, TEPCO assumed at that moment that he would have to stay there only for a while to explain the conditions at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. TEPCO had not supposed that they would

have to stay there to serve as liaison staff to the Prime Minister's Office.

In other words, the arrangement for communicating information between the Prime Minister's Office and TEPCO's Head Office was not developed through genuine mutual understanding of the roles of the two parties, or rather the result of the course of events. This meant that TEPCO Fellow Takekuro and its senior staff members had no choice but to depend on the cell phones for the time being, in order to obtain essential information on the conditions of Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. The information that they were able to gain was limited. Likewise, during the initial stage of the accident, members participating in the deliberations on the mezzanine floor below ground and the fifth floor in the Prime Minister's Office felt they were not getting enough information on the conditions of Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. For example, the members first learned about the explosion at the reactor building of Unit 1 at 15:36 on March 12 from a television report, and after that as well they were unable to smoothly obtain information about the explosion. When TEPCO Fellow Takekuro returned to TEPCO's head office that night, he pointed out the need to improve ways to communicate information between TEPCO's Head Office and the Prime Minister's Office. In the next morning on March 13th, TEPCO's Head Office sent three staff members as liaison staff to the Prime Minister's Office and carried fax machines and personal computers into the Prime Minister's Office. After that, information transfer from TEPCO's head office to the Prime Minister's Office was improved.

Until the morning of March 14th, NISA officials and TEPCO staff members, who participated in deliberations on the fifth floor in the Prime Minister's Office had to wait for the meetings, which were held generally at intervals of every one or two hours in the Prime Minister's Reception Room, in a room adjacent to the office of the Executive Secretary to the Prime Minister on the same floor. Every time a meeting started, they went to the Prime Minister's Reception Room for discussion. In the morning of March 14th, another room was provided as a waiting room on the second floor, where telephones were installed and later fax machines prepared by TEPCO were installed. From then on, this room functioned as an information liaison point between TEPCO and the Prime Minister's Office.

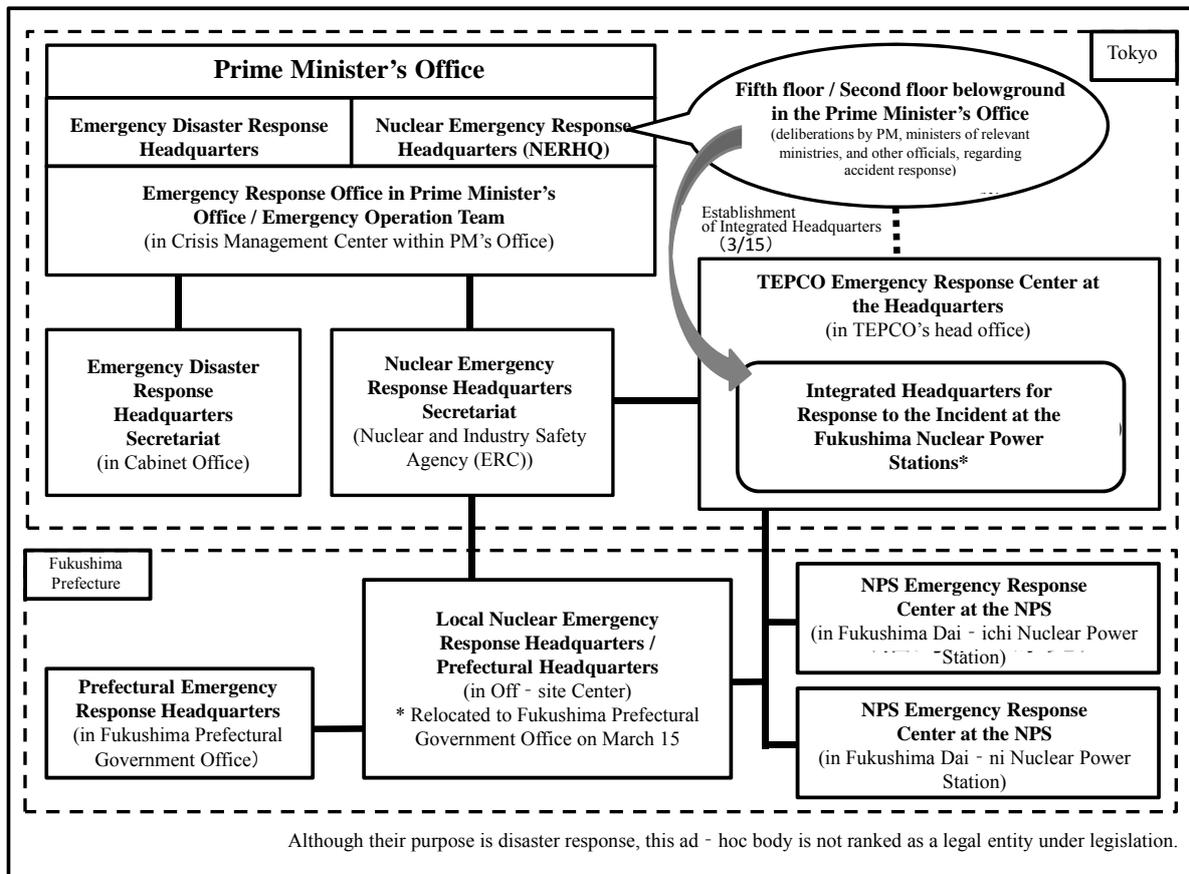


Fig. III-1 Organizational chain of command for accident response at Fukushima Dai-ichi and Dai-ni Nuclear Power Stations (until March 15, 2011)

(2) Response of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency

See Chapter III 2 (2) of the Interim Report.

(3) Response of the Emergency Operations Team at the Crisis Management Center in the Prime Minister's Office

See Chapter III 2 (3) of the Interim Report.

(4) Response of the NSC

a. General description of the response of the NSC

See Chapter III 2 (5) of the Interim Report.

b. Strengthening the arrangements of the NSC secretariat

As stated in Chapter III 2 (5) of the Interim Report, from the time of the earthquake on March 11, the NSC responded to the accident by: holding meetings of its Emergency Technical Advisory Board on a regular basis; providing a variety of advice to relevant organizations; dispatching NSC Chair Madarame, NSC Deputy Chair Kukita and others to the Prime Minister's Office⁹.

However, by around March 15, Prime Minister Kan and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano came to believe that there was a need to strengthen the NSC Secretariat, and a group led by the Executive Secretary, who accepted the request from Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano and some other leading people, began deliberations to strengthen the NSC Secretariat.

Later, by around March 20, the Executive Secretary to the Chief Cabinet Secretary sounded out Professor Kenkichi Hirose of the International Student Education Center of Tokai University, who possessed experience working as Director-General of NISA and the Secretary General of the NSC, about taking up a post as Cabinet Office Councilor (“Cabinet Office Councilor Hirose”)¹⁰. After some coordination with relevant agencies, the Executive Secretary to the Chief Cabinet Secretary obtained the approval for the appointment as Cabinet Office Councilor from Prime Minister Kan and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano about the appointment.

With the aim to further reinforce the NSC secretariat, on March 28, Cabinet Office Councilor Hirose was appointed to Cabinet Office Councilor (for information on his activities, see Chapter III 2 (6) of the Interim Report). In addition, around the time of his appointment, Deputy Director-General Shigeharu Kato was appointed concurrently as a senior staff of the NSC Secretariat, and four other people including Standing Director of the Radiation Effects Association Toshio Yoshida were appointed as technical advisors to the NSC Secretariat.

(5) Response of other government-affiliated bodies, etc.

a. General description of the activities of other government-affiliated bodies

⁹ Among the pieces of advice offered by NSC Chairman Madarame and others in the Prime Minister's Office, it was only after they offered advice pertaining to matters specified in Article 20 (6) of the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act that the advisors gained the approval of the NSC to do so (see Chapter III 2 (5) of the Interim Report).

¹⁰ Before this, from around March 13, Cabinet Office Councilor Hirose had been offering advice at METI on the response to the accident, having been asked to do so by METI Vice-Minister Matsunaga.

See Chapter III 2 (6) of the Interim Report. Since right after the accident had occurred, Prime Minister Kan felt that officials of relevant ministries and agencies had not provided information in a timely manner and had not made a convincing explanation regarding the response to the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS¹¹. In order for the Prime Minister to take advice on the response to the accident, he appointed five people including Professor Toshiso Kosako of the University of Tokyo to the Special Advisor to the Cabinet as stated in Chapter III 2 (6) of the Interim Report¹².

b. Organizing the chain of command related to water spraying and injection at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS

Just as noted in Chapter IV 6 (1), from March 17 onward, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, and the Tokyo Fire Department began spraying and injecting water into the spent fuel pool (SFP) at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. Following an order from the Chief of Joint Staff, the SDF established an Onsite Coordination Office at the Yotsukura Parking Area of the Joban Expressway¹³. The Commanding General of the Central Readiness Forces of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF) was appointed to the head of the Onsite Coordination Office with the duty to coordinate various divisions of the SDF from there. Later, some confusion surfaced between above-mentioned organizations carrying out spraying/injection operations, and that was attributed to a lack of clarity about orders and the chain of command. Thus, on March 20, Prime Minister Kan, as the head of the NERHQ, issued

¹¹ For example, in relation to the exchanges with NISA personnel and others involved in declaring a nuclear emergency situation in the Prime Minister's personal office in the evening of March 11 (see (1) above) and also in relation to the officials of the relevant ministries and agencies during the discussion on the injection of seawater into Unit 1 of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS in the Prime Minister's personal office in the evening of March 12 (see Attachments Chapter IV 3 (1) a.), the relevant cabinet members, including the Prime Minister, felt that the officials did not have sufficient technical knowledge or firmly understand the information and were silent without giving explanations, and that when they did explain, their explanations were ambiguous and difficult to understand, and thus the Cabinet members felt strong distrust.

¹² Those appointed to Special Advisor to the Cabinet were Vice-President of the Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology Yasushi Hibino and Director of the Center for National Security and Crisis Management Noboru Yamaguchi on March 20; Director and Professor of the Research Laboratory for Nuclear Reactors, Tokyo Institute of Technology Masanori Aritomi and Professor of the Research Laboratory for Nuclear Reactors, Tokyo Institute of Technology Masaki Saito on March 22; and Professor of the Graduate School of Tama University Hiroshi Tasaka on March 29.

¹³ Based on the decision of the Commanding General of the Central Readiness Forces, who was in charge of the Onsite Coordination Office, the Base was moved to J-Village on that same day.

instructions to the National Police Agency, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, the Ministry of Defense, Fukushima Prefecture and TEPCO that: (i) specific implementation guidelines for spraying/injection operations at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS should be finalized on SDF's initiative at the Onsite Coordination Office through coordination among the relevant administrative organizations and TEPCO; (ii) actual operations in line with the guidelines should be controlled in a unified manner at the Onsite Coordination Office by the SDF dispatched to the site.

c. Establishment of the Nuclear Sufferers Life Support Team

As noted in Chapter III 2 (6) of the Interim Report, the Government established the Nuclear Sufferers Life Support Team and placed it under the leadership of METI Minister Kaieda on March 29. This team was assigned a principal duty to coordinate work among relevant administrative agencies, local municipalities, TEPCO and related organizations to swiftly tackle issues in a comprehensive manner such as: securing havens for those affected by the accident ("nuclear sufferers") at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS and the Fukushima Dai-ni Nuclear Power Station ("Fukushima Dai-ni NPS"), and groups of people hosting them, including preparation for a structure and organization for decontamination operations; the transport and supply of materials to evacuation centers and areas around the region affected by the disaster; securing medical services and supplies related to radiation exposure on behalf of the nuclear sufferers; environmental monitoring; providing information; a number of other matters. The team was established under the NERHQ. Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuyama and Senior Vice-Minister of the Cabinet Office Tatsuo Hirano were appointed to stand-in team leaders respectively, and METI Senior Vice-Minister Tadahiro Matsushita was appointed to the head of the team's Secretariat¹⁴.

The Team's activities included the creation of a roadmap related to the support of nuclear sufferers and the management of its progress of activities, the undertaking of temporary re-entry operations into the Access Restricted Area, the implementation of evacuations in the Deliberate Evacuation Area, health care surveys in Fukushima Prefecture, and related matters.

¹⁴ The Vice Ministers of the relevant ministries were named second-in-command of the team.

d. Restructuring of the organizational system related to the response to the earthquake and the accident at the nuclear power stations

See Chapter III 2 (6) of the Interim Report. Organizational restructuring was implemented based on the instructions of Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano with the aim to: clarify the chain of command by realigning the authorities allocated to each organization in relation to the response to the earthquake and the accident at the nuclear power stations; clarify the location of responsibility by reducing the number of people involved in making decisions in each organization.

(6) Actions of nuclear safety inspectors responsible for inspections at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS

See Chapter III 2 (7) of the Interim Report.

3. Response Taken by Fukushima Prefectural Government after the Accident

See Chapter III 3 of the Interim Report.

4. TEPCO's Response after the Accident

(1) Initial response of TEPCO's head office and Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS¹⁵

¹⁵ At the time of the earthquake on March 11, the head of TEPCO's Emergency Response Center (see Chapter III 1 (5) of the Interim Report), that is, TEPCO President Masataka Shimizu (hereinafter referred to as "President Shimizu), was on a business trip to the Kinki region. TEPCO's "Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Disaster Management Operation Plan" states that in the absence of the president, the head of the Emergency Response Center should be chosen from among vice presidents and managing directors. As TEPCO Vice President Muto (the head of the Nuclear Power & Plant Siting Division) headed for the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS immediately after the accident (see Chapter III 1 (5) a. of the Interim Report), TEPCO Managing Director Akio Komori (the deputy head of the Nuclear Power & Plant Siting Division) led the response to the accident at TEPCO's Head Office, keeping in contact with TEPCO President Shimizu, until TEPCO President Shimizu returned TEPCO's Head Office.

With limited transportation options due to the effect of the earthquake, TEPCO President Shimizu kept in contact with TEPCO's Head Office and looked for a transportation to return to Tokyo. In the end, he arrived at TEPCO's Head Office at around 9:00 on March 12. In looking for a transportation, he had contacted the Prime Minister's Office and others via TEPCO's Head Office and attempted to return to Tokyo aboard a helicopter leaving at around 23:30 on March 11 from Japan Air Self-Defense Forces Komaki Base, which is adjacent to Nagoya Airport; however, Minister of Defense Toshimi Kitazawa felt that the helicopters of the SDF should be used to the extent possible for the response to the earthquake, and so TEPCO President Shimizu eventually had to look for other means of transportation.

In addition, TEPCO Chairman Katsumata was out of the country when the earthquake struck on March 11. Due to the earthquake, he was unable to return to Japan immediately, and arrived at TEPCO's Head Office at around 16:00 the following day, March 12.

See Chapter III 4 (1) of the Interim Report.

(2) Establishment of the Integrated Headquarters for response to the incidents at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Stations

a. Developments leading up to establishment of the Integrated Headquarters¹⁶

Since the reactor pressure vessel and the containment vessel had been so much damaged as to provoke anxiety that the safety of TEPCO employees and contractors' workers is threatened, Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Site Superintendent Yoshida, in the night of March 14, came to believe that, all the people, except for the people required for plant control of each unit at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, should be evacuated away from the NPS¹⁷. He consulted with the Emergency Response Center formed at TEPCO's Head Office and shared his idea on the matter.

In the same night on March 14, Masataka Shimizu, TEPCO President ("TEPCO President Shimizu"), was informed by TEPCO Vice-President Muto, that Yoshida was considering the possibility that all the people, except for the essential people left behind for plant control of each unit, would be evacuated, if the circumstances so warranted, as mentioned above. From that night to before dawn on March 15, Shimizu telephoned to NISA Director-General Terasaka, METI Minister Kaieda, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano, in that order, and reported that the plant conditions at Unit 2 was grave and that, if it became progressively worse, he would not rule out the possibility of evacuation. TEPCO President Shimizu sought their approval of what he reported to them. At that time, TEPCO President Shimizu did not clearly state that essential personnel for plant control would remain at the NPS.

Having received a phone call from TEPCO President Shimizu, Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano, METI Minister Kaieda and a few others grasped that TEPCO was considering to evacuate all personnel from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. They discussed how to deal with the matter and considered that, if the proposed evacuation of all personnel was accepted, it would

¹⁶ The developments leading up to establishment of the Integrated Headquarters are discussed in Chapter III 4 (2) a. of the Interim Report. This section is based on the information provided there as well as the facts revealed over the course of investigation since the Interim Report was published.

¹⁷ At the Investigation Committee hearing, Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Site Superintendent Yoshida stated that he had planned to evacuate office staff members, employees of partner companies and others, depending on the situation, while keeping members of the Recovery Team, the Operation Team and the in-house fire brigade on the site.

lead to a situation that would threaten the lives and property of people not only in the vicinity of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS but also in a far broader range of areas. Before dawn of the same day, they called in NSC Chair Madarame, Crisis Management Deputy Chief Ito and NISA's Yasui onto the fifth floor inside the Prime Minister's Office and also asked Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuyama and Special Advisor Hosono there to join them. There, it was explained that TEPCO President Shimizu had telephoned and said that he wished to abandon efforts to control the plants at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS and to evacuate all personnel there. The group discussed how to respond to this moving forward and reached a conclusion—there was still work that needed to be done at the NPS.

Deliberations on the matter continued from late in the night on March 14 until around 3:00 on March 15. From between 1:00 and 2:00 on that same day, although the conditions at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS was still dangerous, the reactor pressure was fluctuating at around 0.06MPa gage which allowed for water to be injected, and an attempt was being made to open the safety relief valves (SR valves) in order to depressurize the reactor to lower than 0.06MPa gage, which was supposed to allow more stable water injection. However, the members assembled on the fifth floor inside the Prime Minister's Office had discussions without a firm grasp of such conditions at Unit 2 and the efforts being made there.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano, recognizing the reactor conditions to still be extremely dangerous, thought that efforts still had to be made to deal with the accident, refusing the request of TEPCO President Shimizu would be a grave step tantamount to asking to jeopardize the lives of workers at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, and thus felt the need to raise the matter with Prime Minister Kan, who was in a position to make an ultimate decision. At around 3:00 that same day, he went to the Prime Minister's Reception Room and reported the issue to Prime Minister Kan. For his part, the Prime Minister immediately responded that the evacuation of all personnel was unacceptable, given the possibility that the evacuation of all personnel from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS would lead to uncontrollable states not just at that NPS but at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS as well and the subsequent release of a large amount of radioactive substances into the atmosphere.

Prime Minister Kan and the others assembled in the Prime Minister's personal office moved to the Prime Minister's Reception Room, and were joined by Minister of State for Disaster

Management Ryu Matsumoto and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirohisa Fujii. The group resumed discussion on the matter, and confirmed that a total evacuation was unacceptable. And then, Prime Minister Kan directed that TEPCO President Shimizu be summoned to the Prime Minister's Office to confirm TEPCO's real intention on the matter. In addition, at this time, provoked by the TEPCO's request to evacuate (withdraw), the Prime Minister harbored strong distrust about TEPCO's line of thinking in responding to the accident. He had an impression that, before this incident as well, TEPCO had not provided adequate information on the accident and failed to keep adequate communication with the Prime Minister's Office. The Prime Minister came to believe that in order to respond appropriately to the accident, an integrated headquarters should be established inside the TEPCO's head office (later established as Integrated Headquarters for Response to the Incidents at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Stations, "Integrated Headquarters") and that this headquarters should act as the focus for efforts to gather information as well as to keep direct communication with TEPCO. He raised this matter with all in attendance¹⁸.

After this, at around 4:00 the same day, in the presence of those noted above, Prime Minister Kan asked TEPCO President Shimizu whether he intended to evacuate the personnel from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. When Shimizu heard the word "evacuate," he interpreted the Prime Minister posed a question as to whether all the personnel would leave the NPS to the last man and abandon plant controls, and Shimizu definitely denied saying, "That's not what we're thinking." In addition, as stated above, the Prime Minister proposed that as one way to ensure the rapid sharing of information and good communication between the two parties, the Government and TEPCO should establish an integrated response headquarters inside the

¹⁸ Up until TEPCO President Shimizu arrived at the Prime Minister's Office, the Prime Minister and others discussed the legal basis to establish the Integrated Headquarters. It was agreed that based on Article 20 (3) of the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act ("when the director-general of the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters finds, for particular reasons, it necessary to implement emergency response measures properly and without delay,... can give necessary instructions to the nuclear operators) the Prime Minister, as the director-general of the NERHQ, can instruct TEPCO, as a nuclear operator, to establish the Integrated Headquarters in their headquarters.

Then again, when TEPCO President Shimizu arrived, he accepted the proposal from Prime Minister Kan to establish the Integrated Headquarters, rather than an establishment based on a legal regulation, it is recognized that the establishment of the Integrated Headquarters was completed through a mutual agreement between the government and TEPCO.

TEPCO's head office to promote comprehensive measures aiming at an end to the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS accident. Shimizu agreed with the Prime Minister's proposal.

At around 5:30 the same day, the Prime Minister and others concerned visited the TEPCO Emergency Response Center (TEPCO ERC) on the second floor of TEPCO's Head Office, and Prime Minister Kan announced to the people assembled there — TEPCO Chairman Tsunehisa Katsumata, TEPCO President Shimizu, TEPCO Vice President Muto, other TEPCO executives, and TEPCO employees — that the establishment of the Integrated Headquarters, with himself as director-general of the headquarters and METI Minister Kaieda and TEPCO President Shimizu as deputy director-general. The Prime Minister also said in strong terms that “when the very survival of Japan is at stake, evacuation is not an option. I urge you to deal with the accident by any means. If TEPCO evacuates, there is no doubt that TEPCO will most certainly collapse.”

[The Investigation Committee's Findings about the Issue of the Evacuation of All Personnel or the Partial Evacuation]

Since the so-called TEPCO evacuation issue is an important issue concerning the very existence of TEPCO as a nuclear operator, the Investigation Committee worked hard to clarify facts about the matter by analyzing in detail the TV conference videos of TEPCO and conducting extensive hearings from parties involved. As a result, as noted in the preceding paragraphs, the Investigation Committee has confirmed that what was being discussed and prepared for, between the night of March 14 and March 15 among the people dealing with the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS and the TEPCO's Head Office including Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Site Superintendent Yoshida, was to maintain only personnel needed to control each plant on site and evacuate the rest of personnel outside the premises of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS (also see Chapter IV 5 (1) d. of the Interim Report). Moreover, the Investigation Committee concludes that it cannot confirm that TEPCO at the time was considering the evacuation of all personnel, because all the people interviewed gave similar testimony at the hearings and also because, in the TV conferences held between the night of March 14 and around 3:00 of March 15, there were repeated statements that suggest continued efforts to deal with the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS on March 15 onward, including statements regarding the request to send electrical system experts and other experts to the Fukushima

Dai-ichi NPS, the request to the Prime Minister's Office for the arrangements of fire-fighting vehicles, and the prospects of starting work to connect cables for restoration of the offsite power supply on March 16 or later¹⁹.

Meanwhile, on the night of March 14, when TEPCO President Shimizu called NISA Director-General Terasaka, METI Minister Kaieda and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano to explain the possible withdrawal (evacuation) from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, METI Minister Kaieda and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano took his explanation as the meaning that all personnel were going to withdraw (evacuate). In the subsequent discussions at the Prime Minister's Office, it served a presumption of discussion that TEPCO was considering an evacuation of all personnel from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. Therefore, the Investigation Committee regarded it necessary to investigate further into: whether TEPCO President Shimizu and some other parties concerned at TEPCO might have been considering the total evacuation; how TEPCO President Shimizu explained it to METI Minister Kaieda and others; if there had been a different perception between TEPCO President Shimizu and people in the Prime Minister's Office, how that difference emerged, and other matters.

Thus, when the Investigation Committee checked the videos of the TV conferences, which was considered as objective evidence, the Investigation Committee confirmed the following statements concerning the evacuation or withdrawal from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS: (i) At around 19:28 on March 14, TEPCO Managing Director Akio Komori, who was at the Offsite Center at the time, said "We might face a critical situation unless we make a decision at some point on whether we can keep people in the Main Control Room (MCR). Please start discussing the criteria for withdrawal." In this statement, he referred to the establishment of criteria for withdrawal, assuming the possibility of withdrawing workers from MCR. (ii) At around 19:55 the same day, TEPCO Fellow Akio Takahashi (hereinafter referred to as "TEPCO Fellow

¹⁹ For example, these statements include "The engineering team is now making all-out efforts for the restoration of the offsite power supply. I was informed that the connections in the Yonomori Transmission Line and the Okuma Transmission Line on midway pylons are about to be completed soon... Anyway, I want you to hang in there until the power supply is restored. If we can do it tonight, that would make a big difference," at around 18:50 on March 14 (Vice President Muto); "Regarding fire-fighting vehicles, Mr. Yoshida, while talking to the Prime Minister's Office, made arrangements to borrow one fire-fighting vehicle from the U.S. Forces," at around 23:08 the same day (an employee at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS); "I think power can be supplied to the power station tomorrow onward. That could change the whole world..." at around 23:23 the same day (Vice President Muto); and "We can perhaps start pull-down work on the 600kV line on the night of March 15, and connect it to the load on March 16..." at around 3:00 on March 15 (an employee at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS).

Takahashi”), who was at the TEPCO Head Office at the time, told TEPCO Vice President Muto, who was also in the head office, “Mr. Muto, do you think around what time all the people would be evacuated from the site?” and also at around 20:16 the same day, remarked to the people participating in a meeting, “now, everyone on the first floor is being evacuated to the visitor hall on the second floor;” and (iii) at around 20:20 the same day, shortly after the above-mentioned remarks by TEPCO Fellow Takahashi, TEPCO President Shimizu said “I would like you to confirm first of all that as of this moment, we have not yet decided on the final evacuation.” Of these statements, it is not possible to conclude whether (i) assumed the evacuation of all personnel or assumed the partial evacuation from the statement itself. However, statements (ii) and (iii) may be taken to have been made to mean the evacuation of all personnel from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS because (ii) referred to “the evacuation of all the people” and “everyone...will be evacuating” and (iii) mentioned the “final evacuation.” Thus, statements (ii) and (iii) may be interpreted as suggesting that TEPCO President Shimizu and some other officials of TEPCO had been considering the evacuation of all personnel.

On the contrary, NISA Director-General Terasaka said that he took TEPCO President Shimizu’s explanation as the meaning of withdrawal of part of the workers when he received TEPCO President Shimizu’s call on the night of March 14, and said that he talked about this matter based on such understanding in the subsequent discussions in the Prime Minister’s Office. Given this background, TEPCO President Shimizu’s explanation is interpreted as having explained to NISA Director-General Terasaka that he would like to withdraw some of the workers from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. If so, since there was no need for TEPCO President Shimizu to offer a different version of his explanation to METI Minister Kaieda and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano, the Investigation Committee has no other choice than to think that TEPCO President intended to explain to these two ministers to the effect that some of the workers might be withdrawn.

Furthermore, METI Minister Kaieda told at the Investigation Committee hearing that “TEPCO President Shimizu was saying that he wanted to withdraw workers from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. In this explanation, TEPCO President Shimizu used the term ‘withdrawal’ instead of ‘evacuation.’” Since this is consistent with the testimony by TEPCO President Shimizu, the Investigation Committee recognizes that he gave the explanation by

using the term “evacuation.” Since the term “withdrawal” is usually used to mean a temporary evacuation, the Investigation Committee has no choice but to think that if TEPCO President Shimizu had been considering the evacuation of all personnel and the abandonment of the plant, it would be a bit unnatural for him to use the term “withdrawal.”

In this way, some grounds exist to indicate that what TEPCO President Shimizu was considering was the withdrawal of some of the workers. Furthermore, in further examination of the aforementioned statements (ii) and (iii) that could provide some grounds to doubt that some people at TEPCO might have been considering the evacuation of all personnel, TEPCO Fellow Takahashi testified at the Investigation Committee hearing on the statement (ii) saying, “at the time, there were still quite a lot of things we could do, and Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS Site Superintendent Yoshida and others dealing with the plant had no thought of leaving the site. I referred as ‘all the people’ or ‘everyone’ to those who were planned to be withdrawn other than those who were dealing with the plant.” Given the situation where there were repeated statements assuming continued efforts to deal with the accident on the following days onward, the Investigation Committee finds it hard to conclude that TEPCO Fellow Takahashi’s explanation offered at the hearing was unnatural. Also, about the statement (iii), it is hard to say that the meaning of the term “final” is clear without any ambiguity, and TEPCO President Shimizu himself said at the hearing of the Investigation Committee that “I had no thought of the evacuation of all personnel at the time. I might have used the term ‘final’ without clarity, but of course I did not mean ‘all personnel,’ and I used that expression meaning that we had not reached any final decision.” The Investigation Committee believes it difficult to determine that TEPCO President was considering the evacuation of all personnel at the time by seizing on his utterance of the term “final evacuation.”

There may be views that, if TEPCO had not been considering the evacuation of all personnel, TEPCO President Shimizu himself did not need to bother to make the phone calls, and the fact that TEPCO President Shimizu did call METI Minister Kaieda and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano might indicate that what TEPCO was considering at the time was the evacuation of all personnel from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. In fact, multiple officials from the Prime Minister’s Office said at the Investigation Committee hearings that the withdrawal of some of the workers was not what was conceived, because if that was the case, TEPCO President

Shimizu must not have made the phone calls himself. This is a view that Investigation Committee has to pay attention to. However, as is explained in Chapter IV 8 (4) below, since TEPCO President Shimizu was reprimanded by Prime Minister Kan and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano between March 12 and March 13 about TEPCO's failure to promptly provide the Prime Minister's Office with information on the conditions of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, the Investigation Committee believes that it was not unnatural for TEPCO President Shimizu himself to talk about the matter on the phone to METI Minister Kaieda, who was the minister in charge of administrative affairs, and other key people, albeit only about the withdrawal of some of the personnel, taking into consideration the impression and impact TEPCO's decision would have on the society at large.

The Investigation Committee discussed from various viewpoints about the possibility in question that TEPCO President Shimizu and some other TEPCO officials might have actually considered evacuating all personnel from the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS. While there are some grounds to support the possibility, the Investigation Committee cannot affirm the possibility and has concluded that the Investigation Committee cannot rule out the possibility that TEPCO was considering the partial withdrawal. Therefore, the Investigation Committee believes that it is also not possible to rule out the possibility that TEPCO President Shimizu's way of explanation spawned a difference in perception between TEPCO President Shimizu and METI Minister Kaieda and Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano. However, the Investigation Committee was unable to fully clarify what specific explanations TEPCO President Shimizu offered to these two ministers and why the difference in perception between them had arisen.

b. Activities of the Integrated Headquarters for response to the incidents at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Stations

See Chapter III 4 (2) b. of the Interim Report.

5. Response of the Offsite Center after the Accident

(1) Situation at the Offsite Center after the accident

See Chapter III 5 (1) of the Interim Report.

(2) Offsite Center activities

See Chapter III 5 (2) of the Interim Report.

(3) Relocation of the Offsite Center (Local NERHQ) to Fukushima prefectural government office²⁰

Although part of the members of Emergency Operations Team at the Offsite Center were implementing accident response measures, an expansion of the evacuation area choked off the distribution of supplies. From around March 13, essentials such as food, water and fuel started running short at the Offsite Center situated in the evacuation area. In addition, as the situation at the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS was getting worse, radiation dose began increasing in the vicinity of the Offsite Center and inside it as well. Immediately after the explosion at the reactor building of Unit 1 at 15:36 on March 12, dose rate increased temporarily in the vicinity of the Offsite Center. Furthermore, after the explosion at the Unit 3 building at 11:01 on March 14, dose rates rose also inside the Offsite Center building, where air cleaning filters capable of removing radioactive substances had not been installed²¹.

With dose rates rising, the local NERHQ began to examine the matters related to relocation of the Offsite Center (the local NERHQ), while leading discussion with the NERHQ Secretariat located in the ERC²². In the evening of the same day, METI Senior Vice-Minister Ikeda

²⁰ The relocation of the Offsite Center (the Local NERHQ) to the Fukushima prefectural government office is described in Chapter III 5 (3) of the Interim Report. This section is based on the information provided there as well as facts revealed over the course of investigation since that report was published.

²¹ In terms of dose rate around and inside the Offsite Center, it was described in the first paragraph of footnote 33 in Chapter III 5 (3) of the Interim Report that, "In specific terms, at hearings some of those involved provided the following statements: after the Unit 3 building explosion at 11:01 on March 14, the outdoor dose rate rose to 800 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$, while the indoor rate rose to between several dozen and 100 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$. The next day, March 15, at around 9:00 the outdoor dose rate had risen to 2,000 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ and above, and the indoor rate to between 100 and 200 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$." However, investigations since then showed that the dose rate, objectively, began to rise from around the night of March 14, reached around 775 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ outdoors and around 13 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ indoors past 22:00 that same day, and around 1,870 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ outdoors and around 15 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ indoors past 10:00 on March 15.

See the latter part of footnote 33 in Chapter III 5 (3) of the Interim Report for the reasons why the filter to remove radioactive materials had not been installed at the Offsite Center.

²² The Fukushima Prefecture-Minamisoma Complex was designated as a replacement facility for the Offsite Center in Fukushima Prefecture, pursuant to Article 16 (12) of the enforcement regulations of the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act. However, the complex was already being used to respond to the disaster caused by the earthquake and tsunami, and was therefore deemed to be unable to provide enough space for the Offsite Center activities. Some local NERHQ members were of the opinion that, despite such difficulties, the Offsite Center should be relocated to the complex, but because dose levels were rising in Minamisoma too, in the end they abandoned the idea of moving to the complex.

instructed the Offsite Center personnel to prepare for the relocation, and at around 22:00 that same day, he sent an advance group to the Fukushima prefectural government office to prepare for relocation there.

Around then, METI Senior Vice-Minister Ikeda and others in the NERHQ Secretariat sought the approval of METI Minister Kaieda for the relocation to the Offsite Center²³ METI Minister Kaieda was of the opinion that the relocation of the Offsite Center should not be accepted unless the evacuation of civilians from within the Access Restricted Area was completed, and did not immediately give his approval.

However, having learned about the explosive sound emit at around 6:00 on the next day in the direction of Unit 4 of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS and other related matters, on that same morning, METI Minister Kaieda approved the relocation of the local NERHQ and communicated his approval to METI Senior Vice-Minister Ikeda via Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kazuo Matsunaga. Furthermore, on that same day at around 9:00, METI Minister Kaieda made a phone call to METI Senior Vice-Minister Ikeda and communicated his approval for the relocation.

On the other hand, even after having gained the approval from METI Minister Kaieda for the relocation, several members from the Local NERHQ Medical Squad had been staying in Futaba Hospital in Okuma Town, where the Offsite Center was located, to look after the patients remained in the hospital. However, the Local NERHQ started its relocation to the Fukushima prefectural government office at around 11:00 that same day. Then, the members of the Medical Squad as well left the hospital at around 11:30, prior to the completion of the transport of patients by the SDF (see Attachments Chapter IV 3 (2) b. (d)). Thus, the relocation of the Local NERHQ was completed that day.

(4) Delegation of some authority from NERHQ director-general to local NERHQ director-general²⁴

²³ For example, METI Vice-Minister Matsunaga and NISA Director-General Terasaka accepted the intention of the Local NERHQ and from late in the night on March 14 until the early morning on March 15 they sought the permission from METI Minister Kaieda, who was at the Prime Minister's Office, to relocate the Local NERHQ.

²⁴ The Delegation of some authority from NERHQ director-general to local NERHQ director-general is described in Chapter III 5 (4) of the Interim Report. This section is based on information provided there as well as facts revealed over the course of investigation since that report was published.

Article 20 (8) of the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act stipulates that the director-general of the NERHQ is allowed to delegate part of his/her authority to the director-general of a local NERHQ. This provision is in place for cases when the delegation of authority is found necessary for implementing emergency response measures properly and without delay. For its part, the government's Nuclear Emergency Response Manual ("Nuclear Emergency Response Manual") states that ministries and agencies responsible for the regulation of nuclear safety (NISA, in the case of an accident at a commercial NPS such as the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS) obtain a decision regarding delegation of the NERHQ director-general's authority, and that they issue a notice that the authority has been delegated. In addition, the scenario of the integrated nuclear emergency response drill, which is organized by the Government each year, includes the delegation of part of the NERHQ director-general's authority to the local NERHQ director-general. Unless the authority is delegated, according to the Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Act (Article 17 (12)), what the local NERHQ director-general is authorized to do is limited to taking charge of the general affairs of the local NERHQ. In particular, under the said Act, he/she is not allowed to issue instructions or the like to local public bodies or other entities.

On March 11, after the occurrence of an Article 15 nuclear emergency situation at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS, NISA prepared a draft public notice declaring a nuclear emergency situation, and in parallel, made a draft announcement regarding the delegation of part of the authority of the NERHQ director-general to the local NERHQ director-general. As noted in Chapter III 2 (1), at around 17:42 on that same day, METI Minister Kaieda went to the Prime Minister's personal office on the fifth floor of the Prime Minister's Office and reported to Prime Minister Kan that an Article 15 situation had occurred. At the same time, he sought the Prime Minister's approval for issuing a declaration of a nuclear emergency situation. Although NISA officials, who went there with METI Minister Kaieda had the above-mentioned draft announcement regarding the delegation of part of NERHQ director-general's authority to the Local NERHQ, they did not ask Prime Minister Kan to approve the announcement at that time.

On the other hand, NISA emailed the draft announcement to the information compilation center at the Prime Minister's Office, with comments asking the Cabinet Secretariat and the Cabinet Office to share the draft announcement.

Later, at the first NERHQ meeting held after 19:00 on that same day, no one mentioned the procedures of delegating the authority, and no announcement regarding the delegation of authority was issued, after all.

The range of measures that the local NERHQ at the Offsite Center is allowed to implement for local public bodies, depended on whether the local NERHQ had been delegated the authority to implement the measures in question or not. Accordingly, the local NERHQ repeatedly asked NISA officials at the ERC about the progress of the procedures for the delegation of authority within the Government, but was unable to receive a definite answer. Consequently, after conferring on this matter with the NERHQ Secretariat at the ERC, the local NERHQ assumed that the formalities for the delegation of authority had been completed, so that the local NERHQ could implement all necessary measures without omission and delay. And then, the local NERHQ made various decisions, including decisions regarding the implementation of evacuation measures, and put them into action.

As noted above, with regard to the delegation of the NERHQ director-general's authority, the Nuclear Emergency Response Manual states that ministries or agencies in charge of safety regulations (NISA, in the case of an accident at a commercial NPS) shall announce that the authority has been delegated after having received the decision of the director-general (the Prime Minister). As stated above, although NISA had repeatedly received inquiries from March 12 onward from the local NERHQ on the progress of the procedures to delegate authority, and was expected to know that such procedures had not been completed, NISA did not try to complete the procedures on its own initiative. In addition, the officials at the Cabinet Secretariat and the Cabinet Office who received the previously mentioned e-mail did not instruct NISA officials to move forward with the procedures in line with the regulations of the Nuclear Emergency Response Manual.

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