

# Nuclear Radiation: Washington Forces the Re-Start of Japan's Nuclear Reactors

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Global Research, October 03, 2012

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Region: [Asia](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Environment](#)

## *Americans Are Largely Responsible for Japan's Ongoing Nuclear Policy*

*Archaic nuclear reactor designs such as those used at Fukushima – built by American company [General Electric](#) – were chosen because they were [good for making nuclear bombs](#). The U.S. secretly [helped Japan develop its nuclear weapons program](#) starting in the the 1980s. Therefore, the U.S. played a large role in Japan's development of nuclear energy. (See [this](#)).*

*After the Fukushima disaster – in an effort to protect the American nuclear industry – the U.S. has joined Japan in [raising “acceptable” radiation levels](#). U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also signed a pact with her counterpart in Japan [agreeing that the U.S. will continue buying seafood from Japan](#), despite the fact that the FDA is [refusing to test seafood for radiation](#) in any meaningful fashion. So U.S. actions are helping to protect a pro-nuclear policy in Japan.*

Indeed, mainstream Japanese newspaper Nikkei reports that it was President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton who have pressured the Japanese to re-start that country's nuclear program after the Japanese government vowed to end all nuclear power in the wake of the Fukushima disaster.

Ex-SKF [reports](#):

Japanese media has been saying for some time that it was the US government who pressured the Noda administration to drop the “zero nuke by 2030” (which morphed into “zero nuke sometime in 2030s) from its new nuclear and environmental policy decision. Tokyo Shinbun reported it a while ago, and now Nikkei Shinbun just reported it with more details. There is no news reported in the US on the matter.

The difference of the Nikkei Shinbun's article is that it names names: President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

It's hard for me to believe that this president has time for trivial matters like actually governing the affairs inside and outside the US in the election year (he must be very busy right now preparing for the big “debate”), but that's what Nikkei Shinbun wants us to believe. The article also mentions Secretary of State Clinton pressuring the Noda administration officials by strongly indicating it was the wish of President Obama and the US Congress that Japan scrap that silly nuclear energy policy.

And then, one added twist: the Nikkei article has disappeared. [Washington's Blog has located a version of the article [cached by Google](#).]

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Here's Nikkei article:

The US request that Japan continue nuclear power plant is "the President's idea"

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It has been revealed that the United States government was strongly urging [the Japanese government] to reconsider its policy of "zero nukes in 2030s" which was part of the energy and environmental strategy of the Noda administration, as "President Obama wishes it". [The US objection] was based on the fear that the framework of Japan-US cooperation for non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy might collapse [under the new policy]. [The Noda administration] eventually shelved the cabinet decision, but this ambiguous resolution may cause further trouble in the future.

According to the multiple government sources, as the Noda administration was moving in August toward explicitly putting down "zero nuke" in the official document, the US strongly requested that Japan reconsider the "zero nuke" policy, saying the request was "the result of discussion at the highest level of the government", indicating it was the Obama administration's consensus, from the president on down.

On September 8, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda met with the US Secretary of State Clinton during the APEC meeting in Vladivostok in Russia. Here again, representing the US president, Secretary Clinton expressed concern. While avoiding the overt criticism of the Noda administration's policy, she further pressured Japan by stressing that it was President Obama and the US Congress who were concerned.

The Noda administration sent its officials, including Special Advisor to Prime Minister Akihisa Nagashima, to the US on an urgent mission to directly discuss matters with the high-ranking White House officials who were frustrated with the Japanese response. By treating the new strategy as only a reference material, the Noda administration averted the confrontation with the US with the "equivocal" resolution (according to the Japanese government source) which allowed the US to interpret the Japanese action as shelving the zero nuke policy.

(According to Former Deputy Energy Secretary Martin,) the US government thinks that "The US energy strategy would be more likely to suffer a direct damage" because of the Japan's policy change toward zero nuclear energy. It is because the Japanese nuclear policy is closely linked also to the nuclear non-proliferation and environmental policies aimed at preventing the global warming under the Obama administration.

In the Atomic Energy Agreement effective as of 1988, Japan and the US agreed to a blanket statement that as long as it is at the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant, reprocessing of the nuclear fuel is allowed without prior consent from the US. Japan's most important role [in the agreement] is to secure the peaceful use of plutonium without possessing nuclear weapons.

The current Japan-US agreement will expire in 2018, and the government will need to start preliminary, unofficial discussions [with the US] as early as next year. There is some time before the expiration of the agreement, but if Japan leaves its nuclear policy in vague terms the US may object to renewal of permission for nuclear fuel reprocessing. Some (in the Japanese government) say "We are not sure any more what will happen to the renewal of the agreement."

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