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Exposed fuel rods in empty, cracked cooling pool may soon release 130 tons of uranium directly into the environment

by Ethan A. Huff, staff writer

(NaturalNews) While much of the mainstream media appears to be moving on from the impending Fukushima Daiichi nuclear meltdown, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recently released some startling and dire news about the now-empty spent fuel rod pool in the plant's Reactor 4. According to the NRC, a crack or hole in the empty pool is preventing efforts to refill it -- and since the pool does not have the same containment apparatuses that the actual reactors have, a fire or explosion could release the pool's 130 tons of uranium directly into the environment.

On Wednesday, NRC told the US House Energy and Commerce subcommittee that Unit 4 had run completely dry. And without any water in the pool, there is no way to cool the thousands of spent fuel rods and prevent them from catching fire, exploding, and releasing tons of toxic uranium directly into the atmosphere (http://www.naturalnews.com/031734_n...).

Temperatures at Unit 4 had been clocking in much higher than those in the other damaged reactors, that is until they stopped being reported that same day. No official reports have confirmed the status of Unit 4 since that date, leading to more questions than answers about the condition of the facility and the potential threat to both those living around the plant, and those in the US who stand to be affected by massive radiation plumes that get caught in the jet stream (http://www.naturalnews.com/031758_F...).

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, NRC suspects the Unit 4 pool is cracked based on information provided to them by American contractors who are said to have been in the Fukushima plant at the time of the earthquake. And Edwin Lyman, a physicist with the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) believes there may be no feasible solution.

"My intuition is that this is a terrible situation and it is only going to get worse," he said. "There may not be any way to deal with it."

Meanwhile, the initial low-radiation plumes from the earliest radiation blasts have begun to hit the western US, with more high-level plumes potentially on their way in the next few days as radiation from later fires and explosions travel across the Pacific Ocean. And despite a near media blackout on the situation as of March 19, the impending fallout is still a very serious threat.

Sources for this story include:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationw...>

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