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NRC Chairman Meets with U.S. Ambassador, Japanese Nuclear Regulators

TOKYO – U.S Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Allison Macfarlane briefed [Ambassador Caroline Kennedy](#) Thursday on the NRC’s Fukushima work, and met with the head of the [Japanese nuclear regulator](#) to discuss Japan’s efforts to address problems at the site in northeast Japan.

Macfarlane noted the extensive NRC and U.S. government assistance provided both to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo and to the Japanese government in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 accident. Macfarlane and Kennedy discussed a number of the challenges the Japanese government faces with efforts to decommission and decontaminate the Fukushima site, as well as the important role played by the Japanese Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA).

“We will continue to offer support to our Japanese colleagues,” said Macfarlane. “And we will continue to make note of our view that a strong, independent and well-funded regulator is important in making independent and authoritative decisions.”

During her brief stop in Tokyo, Macfarlane met with her counterpart, NRA Chairman Shunichi Tanaka, and several of his colleagues, as well as others in the Japanese government.

Her talks with Tanaka touched on the variety of challenges ahead at the Fukushima site centered around the clean-up effort. She also noted the recent approval by Japan’s government to merge the Japan Nuclear Energy Safety (JNES) organization into the NRA, providing the NRA with greater technical background.

During her brief visit Macfarlane also addressed a conference on nuclear fuel issues organized by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper and Princeton University. She told the conference she believes inadequate attention is paid to the back of the nuclear fuel cycle, and the ultimate disposal of spent fuel should be considered before the first shovel of dirt is turned for a nuclear facility.

Before departing, Macfarlane was scheduled to meet with journalists from Japanese and Western media outlets.