

The situation is continuing to deteriorate. The Washington Post's coverage seems to be exceptionally good. Here's their [summary](#) of the current situation:

Workers at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant haven't found a way to stabilize overheated reactors and feared the possibility of partial nuclear meltdown, which could potentially cause a further release of radioactive material, Japan's top government spokesman said Sunday. Engineers were having trouble, in particular, with two units at the nuclear facility — one of which lost its outer containment wall Saturday in an explosion.

Meanwhile, officials declared a state of emergency at a nuclear power plant in Onagawa, where excessive radiation levels were reported.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano said that a similar explosion could soon occur at Fukushima Daiichi's unit 3, the result of hydrogen levels that are increasing within the unit's reactor vessel amid last-ditch efforts to keep fuel rods submerged in water.

WaPo also has an excellent [series of graphics](#) showing the operation of the plant and how the damage has progressed at Fukushima Daiichi.

In terms of the possible impact on the U.S. industry, a quote from a former NRC Commissioner says it all: "There's no way this is a positive for a technology that's dependent entirely on political support." The events in Japan are a vivid reminder that there's no such thing as a completely failure-proof technology: dangerous technologies will always have risks, no matter how careful we are. It will take time, however, to think through the policy implications, since other energy technologies have their own problems. Right now, however, the important thing is to hope that the Japanese are able to get these reactors under control.

UPDATE: The N.Y. Times [reports](#) that a fourth nuclear plant may have been added to the list; this one is only 75 miles from Tokyo, which is very frightening.