

Japan's plutonium stockpile tops 43 tons

September 8 2005

The Japanese government says its stockpile of plutonium had grown to 43.1 tons as of the end of 2004, up 2.4 tons from 2003.

The report was presented to Japan's Atomic Energy Commission by the Education, Science and Technology Ministry together with Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported Thursday. The increase reflected suspension of a project to burn plutonium at conventional nuclear power plants, the newspaper said.

The report noted Japan also has unprocessed, spent nuclear fuel believed to contain more than 110 tons of plutonium.

Of the 43.1 tons of plutonium, 29.3 tons are believed to be fissionable. Experts told the newspaper it takes only several kilograms of fissionable plutonium to make a nuclear bomb.

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