Japan, US eye Mongolia nuclear waste depot: report

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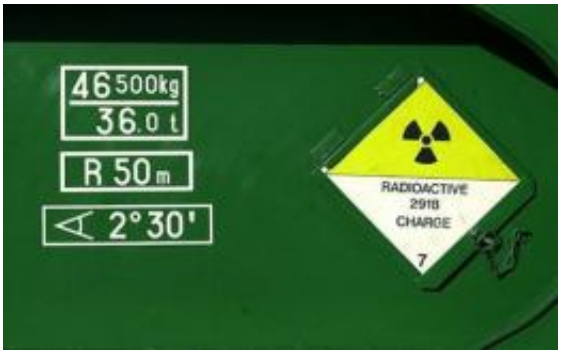

Japan and the United States are eyeing a plan to jointly construct an underground nuclear waste storage complex in Mongolia, a newspaper report said Monday. Under the deal being considered, the three countries would build a facility to stock and dispose of nuclear waste several hundred metres (hundred feet) deep, the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper said.

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In return, Mongolia would receive technological support of the nuclear power industries from the two countries, it said.

Japan and the US hope to promote nuclear power overseas, promising new contractors that Tokyo and Washington would be able to dispose of nuclear waste at the complex, according to the report.

Negotiations began under an initiative from Daniel Poneman, deputy US secretary of energy, last September, the newspaper said, quoting unnamed negotiators from the three nations.

The deal has been secretly negotiated by the three governments because there are concerns it would face opposition from the Mongolian people as well as its neighbours China and Russia, the Mainichi said.

The deal may also draw global criticism as Japan has been urged to review its nuclear power policies after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant was crippled by the country's March 11 quake and tsunami.

The report could not be immediately confirmed.