

French group to help Japan dismantle nuclear reactors

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French nuclear giant Areva said Thursday it had linked up with Hitachi GE Nuclear Energy to help Japan dismantle boiling-water nuclear power stations.

Following a massive accident at the Fukushima reactor, hit by a tsunami

in 2011, Japan said it would shut down 11 nuclear reactors, although it has put two back on stream this year.

Areva was involved in the Fukushima clean-up, but that reactor is not covered by the new agreement, the French group said in a statement. It has been working with Hitachi to improve Japanese reactors' safety for the past two years.

Areva's role will now be to participate in preliminary studies for dismantling boiling-water reactors.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government has been pushing for a return to nuclear [power](#) to generate electricity after Japan's several dozen [reactors](#) went offline in the wake of the 2011 disaster.

The resource-poor nation's energy bill has soared since it was forced to turn to fossil-fuel imports to plug the gap.

But the Japanese public remains wary of atomic power, and Abe's push has prompted rare protests and damaged his popularity.

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