WASHINGTON (Kyodo) The U.S. military may send to Japan a 450-member-strong unit trained in radiation management to help the country deal with its cascading nuclear crisis, Adm. Robert Willard, commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, said Thursday.

A nine-member advance team has already been dispatched to Japan to consult with the Japanese authorities over what measures to take, including whether reinforcement is necessary.

The special unit is capable of monitoring radioactive material and decontamination.

Willard said the military is also considering using new technology to enable work inside the troubled six-reactor Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant, where high-level radiation leaks have hampered efforts to cool reactors.

Japanese authorities and the plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., have been battling to bring the plant's reactors and spent-fuel storage pools under control since their cooling systems were knocked out in the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.