

# no raises new island far south of Japan

urtenbach, Associated Press, 11-21-13

— A volcanic eruption has raised an island in the seas to the far south of Tokyo, the Japanese coast guard and earthquake experts said.

The coast guard and the Japan Meteorological Agency said the islet is about 200 meters in diameter. It is just off the coast of Nishinoshima, a small, uninhabited island in the Ogasawara archipelago, also known as the Bonin Islands.

Approximately 30 islands are 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) south of Tokyo, and along with the rest of the islands, they are part of the seismically active Pacific "Ring of Fire."

The coast guard issued an advisory Wednesday warning of heavy black smoke from the eruption. Television news coverage seen Thursday showed heavy smoke, ash and rocks exploding from the crater, as steam billowed from the volcano.

A geologist with the coast guard, Hiroshi Ito, told the FNN news network that it was possible the new island might be eroded away.

"It also could remain permanently," he said.

The last time the volcanoes in the area are known to have erupted was in the mid-1970s. Much of the volcanic activity occurs under the sea, which extends thousands of meters deep along the Izu-Ogasawara Trench.

The chief government spokesman welcomed the news of yet another bit, however tiny, of new territory.

"This happened before and in some cases the islands disappeared," Yoshihide Suga said when asked if the government was planning on naming the new island.

"If it becomes a full-fledged island, we would be happy to have more territory."

The Japanese archipelago has thousands of islands. In some cases, they help anchor claims to wide expanses of territory underlying potentially lucrative energy and mineral resources.

The government plans to build port facilities and transplant fast-growing coral fragments onto Okinotorishima, the southernmost of the islands, and other outcroppings even further south of Tokyo, to boost its claim in a territorial dispute with China.