

Fukushima Update Spring 2013

As we pass by the 2nd anniversary of the March, 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, here is our 2nd update, written in February 2013, from London's 'in front of the Japanese embassy every Friday' posse. (9am till 1pm.)

The three melted-down nuclear reactors on Japan's Pacific Ocean coast sit slumped down in and under their metal bottles, like 3 angry little dragon's eggs, dribbling and belching their poisonous slime and vapours. Occasionally, it seems, they stir restlessly, re-starting fission. (They keep detecting Xenon 135, which has a half life of 5 days so shouldn't be around 2 years later.) They continue to release 10 million becquerel per hour of Caesium 134/137, mostly as vapour/steam. We continue to absorb, Tepco and politicians continue to collect their salaries, saying sorry from time to time.

They caught a fish (murasoi, or rockfish) in the reactor's harbour with contamination of 254,000 bq/kg. The official safe limit is 100 bq/kg, so quarter of a million is not good. Their proposed solution is to put a net around the harbour and to kill all the fish inside the harbour to prevent them swimming out and being eaten by other fish, thus contaminating them too. Good luck to Tepco with that, and with preventing any fish escaping from their tender efforts to protect us better. Fish caught 200kms south (Choshi) were found to be over the limit. The soil from a river bed in Fukushima city, 80kms from the plant, was shown to have contamination of 430,000 bq/kg. They tried to again measure the fish (smelt) in an inland lake 200 kms away, Haruna, but couldn't find any to measure. They have all 'disappeared'. I wonder why?

They drilled into the torus of Unit 2, (the big donut around the reactor base. Part of the 'containment'.) They tried to insert a camera but found the way obstructed by pipes and grates installed after construction. Aren't there any updated blueprints? Yes, but they are inaccessible, stored in a part of the building now too radioactive to enter, as no one thought there could be an accident in the building one day.. They'll drill another hole and hope to be luckier.

The newly-elected conservative government in Japan tries to push ahead with the nuclear industry. They are pushing ahead with the nuclear waste reprocessing plant at Rokkasho, even though it is 15 years behind schedule and has cost \$29 billion so far. But if they admit that the plant doesn't work, they would have to return the 3 thousand tons of waste already sent there, and there is no room back at the plants that created the waste as their spent fuel pools are already mostly full. And many of the local areas containing these plants would refuse to accept the waste back. And Rokkasho local area government only accepted the waste on the condition that it would be reprocessed and then stored in a safe geological site, yet they have had to admit there is no safe geological site in an earthquake zone country like Japan. Best not to have built nuke stations there in the first place. Now they find that Rokkasho has an active fault under it that could produce an earthquake up to magnitude 8 at any moment. Hmm, what to do with the waste if they close the Rokkasho complex??? Maybe easier to just ignore the active fault? We'll see what they decide is best for us. Meanwhile, worldwide the stack of deadly waste fuel rises by 12,000 tons a year.

It is strange that a country with so much respect for its ancestors can show so little respect for its descendants, or future generations, by leaving thousands of tons of lethal waste that they must guard for thousands of years, so that this generation can line its corridors with vending machines, or run air conditioning instead of dressing cooler and less formally, or light up the sky with advertising.

After a year and a half of prodding, Tepco deigned to release video recordings from the first few days, but they also added 1665 bleeps, blacked the screen 29 times and hid 99.3% of it from the public; journalists could watch it once and write notes. This editing for the people cost 400,000 dollars US. Apparently to save the company face or something.. So they spend our money to edit out the truth in the little that they tell us...

And they dropped a 1 ½ ton mast into spent fuel pool number 3, and announced it had vanished from the before/after photos and 'may have fallen into the pool'. At the same time, you could watch a video of it on youtube, falling into the pool. 'May have'... That's the level Tepco are working on. Evasive half-truths. Cold shutdown indeed..

In our December 2012 update we spoke of the problems with on-site storage of the semi-filtered water from the reactor basements. The tanks contain 240,000 tons, increasing at 400 tons a day, and are nearly full. Solution? Tepco announced last month they would pour it into the ocean, after filtering it some more. 'Can't get the strontium out, or the tritium', they said.. So sorry. The plan is to dilute it before throwing it into the Pacific. Dilute it with water so its below the legal limit. Guess we'll soon hear what the local fisherfolk think of that. They had a 20 ton leak from the filter system last week. But they say its OK, as it didn't go into ocean, just into gravel, 'as there was no ditch leading to the ocean'. So that's all right. As long as it doesn't rain one day. If it does, Tepco could say it was unforeseen...

Meanwhile, the French were pretty quick to charge into Mali, weren't they? Turns out they get their uranium from mines next door, in Chad, and Mali has more reserves of uranium, which France needs for its 58 nuclear reactors. Makes you go 'hmmm'..

A good video summary of the whole meltdown process can be found here https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=JMaEjEWL6PU#t=325s. And an interview with a guy from Uni. Of Missouri <http://enews.com/scientist-discusses-fukushima-disaster-during-highly-informative-interview-audio>.

Yesterday Tepco said about the cleanup 'Many unexpected situations are expected. Flexible program management will be necessary.' Got that right.

For more info, try <http://enews.com/>, <http://www.simplyinfo.org/> or <http://enformable.com/>. In the UK, <http://southwestagainstnuclear.wordpress.com/>. And no new nukes in the UK, please. If they have a bad day they wreck your country.

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