

Akio Matsumura and the Second Storm Gathering Over Fukushima

By Robert Perry

In the past few years, anthropogenic climate change has taken center stage as the greatest threat to humanity. However, on March 11, 2011, it was a seismic catastrophe unrelated to greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions that devastated the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant and placed a huge question mark on the claims of nuclear fission to be a “clean” and relatively benign source of energy.

At the time of the reactor meltdown, the world reacted with alarm. Unfortunately, over the years the Japanese government’s campaign of false assurances and equally false claims of progress quelled international concerns. Now we’re faced with the prospect that Olympic athletes being hosted in Japan for the Games this summer will be forced to live and compete at a number of facilities located well within the plant’s radioactive perimeter. And that’s not all !

The government must immediately make critical housing and venue changes at the Olympics scheduled to start in a few short months in order to avoid sparking an international incident through athletes’ exposure to excessive radiation. The lives of these young athletes *must not* be taken for granted as the early clean up crews were when Fukushima first “went off.”

In addition, revelations over the past year have brought alarming clarity to the fact that TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company), and by extension the Japanese government, must make incredible progress over a very short time period in two additional areas: (1) removal and secure storage of 1,500+ spent fuel rods and 880 massively radioactive tons of melted fissile material (by the most optimistic estimate this is a 5 decade or longer process), and (2) responsible disposal of 1.2 million tons of radioactive water currently stored in storage facilities with little

to no remaining storage, *while stopping the 300,000 gallons per day of new radioactive water that flows into the Pacific*. It's not looking good. The Japanese establishment is resorting to Jedi mind trickery to fool the world into believing that they have this situation under control, when in fact it is *wildly* out of control.

Few people outside of Japan are fully aware of these events. Even fewer see the coming confluence and realize the cumulative impacts that Fukushima has had, and continues to the present day, on the Japanese nation and the rest of the world. One of the very few visionaries who *does* understand the situation is [Akio Matsumura](#), whose unique background and impeccable international reputation allows his recommendations to carry weight with government, religious, and business leaders worldwide.

Japanese by birth, he lived in Japan at the time of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and thereafter lived at times in Tokyo, London, and New York. Akio spent four decades as a Special Envoy at the United Nations and in other international activities redefining what population, development, the environment mean at the international level.

Following the Fukushima disaster in 2011, Akio has fought relentlessly to hold the Japanese government and TEPCO accountable for their failure to timely respond in containing and ultimately eliminating global exposure to the radioactivity being emitted from Fukushima every day. When all the issues associated with Fukushima's *continuing fission meltdown* likely are taken into account, readers will quickly realize that this is a potential disaster requiring urgent, coordinated international action to "save" the entire Pacific ocean!

But first, let's recap the three fronts of disaster:

High Radioactivity at Olympic Sites

On October 26, 2019, a team of radiation experts from Greenpeace, which has been carrying out annual surveys across Fukushima since the 2011 nuclear accident, detected [abnormally high levels of radiation at several points around J-Village](#), a sports complex located about 12 miles from the nuclear plant. The J-Village site was considered as ideal because it was located at the edge of the mandatory evacuation perimeter — often referred to as the exclusion zone. The government is keen to use the “Recovery” Olympics to showcase Fukushima’s recovery from the 2011 tsunami and intends to use J-Village as the starting point for the Japan leg of the torch relay taking place next month. Olympic baseball and softball games are also to be held in Fukushima just 55 miles from the meltdown.

On December 4, an [article in the Sankei Shimbun](#) cited “multiple government sources” confirming Greenpeace’s survey findings, including the maximum figure of 71 microsieverts per hour. [The Greenpeace survey](#) was part of an annual study covering the main contaminated areas of Fukushima, which involves taking tens of thousands of measurements with high-precision sensors mounted on drones, vehicles and handheld devices.

According to [Greenpeace](#), the current allowable figure of 71 micro sieverts per hour is “1,775 times higher than the 0.04 micro sieverts per hour prior to the Fukushima Daiichi triple reactor meltdown”. After the accident, the Japanese government took the controversial decision to raise the maximum exposure threshold for civilians in Fukushima from 1 millisievert (=1,000 micro sieverts) per year, the figure recommended by the World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency, to 20 millisieverts per year. Even on this basis, the annualized equivalent of 71 micro sieverts per hour amounts to nearly 622 millisieverts, a figure 31 times higher than the “new” limit, which itself

is 20 time higher than the original limit before the disaster. This is a dangerous shell game and the Japanese government knows it.

A [first-person account](#) of these conditions were chronicled by Dave Zirin and Jules Boykoff of the Nation:

We traveled to Fukushima on a bus full of journalists, filmmakers, and activists from around the world. We were accompanied by professor Fujita Yasumoto who carried a dosimeter, a device that charts the levels of radiation. With two hours to drive before hitting Fukushima, his dosimeter read 0.04; anything above 0.23, he told us, was unsafe. The needle jumped further as we approached the nuclear plants and attendant cleanup operations. Outside the Decommissioning Archive Center, it moved into unsafe territory with a 0.46 reading before spiking to a truly alarming 3.77 as we approached Fukushima Daiichi Unit 1 reactor, one of three that melted down. The Olympic torch run is currently scheduled to pass through some of these high-contamination areas.

880,000 Tons: Amount of Molten Radioactive Material to be Sequestered

On December 2, 2019, The Japanese government said the process of removing melted fuel from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, considered the most difficult part of cleaning up the crisis-hit facility, will start in 2021. The plan calls for completing the removal of the 4,741 fuel rods left inside the cooling pools of the Nos. 1 to 6 reactors by 2031, giving a specific time frame for the first time.

According to a person with knowledge of the matter, TEPCO plans to initially insert a robot arm into a hole in the containment vessel and

extract *small amounts of nuclear debris -- around 1 gram --* at a time, and gradually move up to removing several kilograms a day.

Together, the Unit 1 and Unit 3 house 880 tons, or 880 million grams, of radioactive debris. Even if TEPCO were able to extract 10 kilograms/day starting on Day 1, at a constant rate it would take *88 million days (24,110 years)* to remove all 880 tons. To make their 30 to 40-year completion target, the annual extraction rate would have to increase 60% to 90% year-over-year on a constant basis.

Japan has yet to even develop a plan to dispose of the highly radioactive waste that will come out of the reactors. Under the proposed road map, the government and TEPCO will compile a plan sometime after the first decade of debris removal ending in 2031. Managing the waste will also require new technologies to compact it and reduce its toxicity. TEPCO and the government say they plan to build a temporary storage site for the waste and debris that are removed from the reactors, but finding a site and getting public consent to store the waste would be almost impossible, raising serious doubts that the cleanup can be finished within 40 years.

Securing a workforce for the decades-long project is an additional challenge, especially in a country with a rapidly aging and declining population. *TEPCO has announced plans to hire foreign workers* for the decommissioning under Japan's new policy allowing more unskilled foreign labor, but it put it on hold following government instructions on careful planning to address concerns about language and safety. Universities are also struggling to attract students in nuclear science, a formerly elite major that has become unpopular since the Fukushima accident.

Release of 1.2 million Tons of Contaminated Water

On [December 23, 2019](#), Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry [proposed gradually releasing the water into the ocean](#) or allowing it to evaporate, saying a controlled discharge into the sea would “stably dilute and disperse” it. The ministry ruled out alternatives like continuing to store it in tanks or injecting it deep into the ground. Mr. Abe's cabinet will make the final decision.

For years, the power company, known as Tepco, said that treatment of the water — which involves sending it through a powerful filtration system to remove most radioactive material — was making it safe to release. But it is actually more radioactive than the authorities have previously publicized. Last November, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry [briefed](#) reporters and diplomats about the water stored in Fukushima. More than three-quarters of it, the ministry said, still contains radioactive material other than tritium — and at higher levels than the government considers safe for human health.

It appears that the government is still set to go ahead with the discharge anyway. Why? The reason may also be the simplest one - economics. According to the [Nikkei Asian Review](#), “discharging the water into the Pacific is generally seen by experts as the most logical option as releasing water into the sea would cost less and, by ministry estimates, cut radiation exposure by more than half compared with evaporation.” Of course, this is the same ministry which for months lied about the full extent of the fallout caused by the Fukushima disaster.

A hard deadline looms as the government is running out of time to make a decision. The roughly 1,000 tanks on the Fukushima Daiichi site held 1.18 million tons of water as of December 12, not far from the total capacity of 1.37 million. TEPCO expects to run out of space around 2022.

This Dire Situation Requires an International Response

Over the past nine years, both TEPCO and the Japanese government have displayed an appalling lack of transparency, honesty and vigor in trying to remediate Fukushima's festering wound that now threatens to deeply impact Japan's coastal waters and [spread nuclear pollution](#) to the east coast of China and the [west coast of America](#) via the Kurushio and North Pacific currents. Watch out California!

During this time, Akio Matsumura has regularly consulted with his Japanese colleagues and other international resources and issued [updates](#) concerning the appalling lack of progress in containing Fukushima's massive radioactive stockpile. He has been particularly vigorous in urging governments to actively intervene on behalf of the planet to bring all resources to bear on the problem. [His latest paper](#) issued last April, "When will Californians wake up to the risk to children from nuclear radiation?," Akio lists these concerns and concludes,

As it is understandable that scientists have not yet calculated the cumulative impact of radiation on the West Coast 40 years from now, we therefore need the International Assessment Team to analyze the current situation and to dedicate the best expertise and resources to plan both short- and long-term strategies. It must also be noted that prevailing winds carrying airborne radiation from Fukushima do not stop at the western U.S. coastline. Indeed, this is both a national and global issue.

TEPCO and the Japanese government clearly do not have the resources or commitment to effectively solve what is now, and has been since its inception, an international catastrophe requiring a multilateral effort. In order to build an international coalition to intervene in this crisis, a person with the knowledge, vision and international reputation such as

Akio Matsumura will be needed to persuade global leaders that Fukushima requires the attention of all affected countries.

In 2005, the World Business Academy created a Chair for the renowned diplomat Akio Matsumura, who has dedicated his life to building bridges between government, business, and spiritual leaders in the cause of world peace. The intent was to apply the talents and contacts developed by Akio in 30 years of successful international diplomacy towards the resolution of a major problems confronting world governments and multinational corporations.

Given the urgency and devastatingly negative consequences that would result from global inaction, the Academy is raising funds to sponsor Akio in meeting with global leaders to make the case for a coordinated global response. If you are as appalled as we are with this dire situation, please contact our office at 805-892-4600 regarding how you can help support this critical mission.

As we often say at the Academy “If not us, who; if not now when”?