

management is a subtle business, but by quietly and unrelentingly pushing back the day of reckoning - slowly changing the terms of debate - the broadly distasteful prospect of storing Japan's most dangerous material in its most tragically maltreated region would become gradually less intolerable to Japanese sensibilities.

"...in and around the [Fukushima] exclusion zone represents an already-contaminated area with, since 2011, far fewer residents to protest against such plans. Such a rare opportunity for relatively unopposed intervention in a struggling area will surely prove irresistible to the nuclear lobby.

"Fukushima has been marginalised, disenfranchised, and outmanoeuvred for decades. After all, the electricity from Fukushima Daiichi went straight to the capital, not to Fukushima itself, which bore the risks. Since 2011, Fukushima has been saddled with the staggering burden of the meltdown's aftermath that, despite government PR, will encumber and stigmatise its citizens for at least several decades."

### FUKUSHIMA ANNIVERSARY EVENTS, LONDON

Just a quick report on the Anniversary events Kick Nuclear organised in London to mark the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with the support of Japanese Against Nuclear UK and CND, the 6<sup>th</sup> year running we have organised similar events.

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March we held an evening vigil opposite the Japanese Embassy, with speeches from Rik and others, music from Atsuko Kamura, Kaori Mikata-Pralat reading a message from Japan, and Ann Garrett and Fay Roberts reading their poetry, all in despite of very wet weather.

On Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup>, the actual anniversary, we held a march to Parliament, which was colourful with about 70 taking part, a bigger turnout than for the last couple of years. At the end we held a rally opposite Parliament, with Kate Hudson, Bruce Kent and Neil Crumpton speaking, Artsuko Kamura, Paul Steele and Simon Kobayashi singing, Fay reading her poetry and the Red & Green Choir rounding off proceedings at the end.

On Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> we held a meeting in parliament entitled, *The Fukushima Disaster, Seven Years On*, which was hosted and introduced by Catherine West MP. The speakers were Kate Hudson, Rika Hirose Haga, Dr. Ian Fairlie, Professors Andrew Stirling and Stephen Thomas and Amelia Womack.

The turn-out was rather disappointing, about 34, which was compounded by our having to book a large meeting room. Still, for all those *not* there I hope to summarise the main points made by the speakers in the May edition of this newsletter.

David Polden.

# KICK NUCLEAR & NUCLEAR TRAINS

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### REGULAR FRIDAY SOLIDARITY VIGILS

**Every Friday** (since August 2012): leafletting outside the Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly (Green Park tube) from 10am-12.30pm; and then outside Tokyo Electric Power Co. offices, 14-18 Holborn (Chancery Lane tube) from 1-1.30pm. Held in solidarity with the anti-nuclear movement in Japan. Organised by: *Kick Nuclear* and *Japanese Against Nuclear UK* (JAN UK)

### NEXT JOINT KN/NTAG PLANNING MEETINGS

**Monday April 9<sup>th</sup>**, 7pm, At CND Office. (Address at top.)

### FUKUSHIMA: THE WASTE REMAINS

**Seven years on** from the triple melt-down at Fukushima, no solution is in sight for dealing with the enormous volume of radioactive waste resulting from the disaster.

Peter Wynn Kirby, nuclear and environmental specialist at Oxford University, in an article entitled, "Is Fukushima doomed to become a dumping ground for toxic waste?" published in *the Guardian* on 16/3/18, suggests that the Japanese government is moving towards a situation where the Fukushima area becomes the storage site for high-level nuclear waste.

He writes, "This month, seven years after the 2011 [Fukushima](#) Daiichi reactor meltdowns and explosions that blanketed hundreds of square kilometres of north-eastern Japan with radioactive debris, government officials and politicians spoke in hopeful terms about Fukushima's prosperous future.

"Nevertheless, perhaps the single most important element of Fukushima's future remains unspoken: the exclusion zone seems destined to host a repository for Japan's most hazardous nuclear waste.

“No Japanese government official will admit this, at least not publicly. A secure repository for nuclear waste has remained a long-elusive goal on the archipelago. But, given that [Japan](#) possesses approximately 17,000 tonnes of spent fuel from nuclear power operations, such a development is vital. Most spent fuel rods are still stored precariously above ground, in pools, in a highly earthquake-prone nation.

“Japanese officialdom relentlessly emphasises positive messages regarding Fukushima’s short- and medium-term future, prioritising economic development and the gradual return of sceptical evacuees to their newly ‘remediated’ communities. Yet the return rate for the least hard-hit communities is only about 15%. Government proclamations regarding revitalisation of the area in and around the exclusion zone intone about jobs but seem geared ominously toward a future with relatively few humans.

“The Fukushima prefecture government is currently promoting a plan, dubbed *The Innovation Coast*, which would transform the unwelcoming region into a thriving sweep of high-tech innovation. Much of the development would be directed towards a “robot-related industrial cluster” and experimental zones like a robot test field.

“The test field would develop robots tailored for disaster response and for other purposes on a course simulating a wide range of hurdles and challenges already well represented in Fukushima itself. Large water tanks would contain an array of underwater hazards to navigate, mirroring the wreckage-strewn waters beneath the Fukushima Daiichi plant, where a number of meltdown-remediating underwater robots have met a premature demise in recent years.

“Elsewhere on the robot test field, dilapidated buildings and other ruins would serve as a proving ground for land-based disaster-response robots, which must navigate twisted steel rods, broken concrete and other rubble. Engineered runways and surrounding radiation-hit areas would serve as prime territory for testing parlous aerial drones for a range of purposes in various weather conditions - which would be difficult or impossible to achieve elsewhere in relatively densely populated Japan.

“The planned site for the test field would link with a secluded test area about 13km south along the coast to coordinate test flights over the exclusion zone’s more or less post-human terrain.

“Naturally, unlike Fukushima’s human residents, robots would be oblivious to the elevated radiation levels found outside the Fukushima Daiichi facility. In addition, prefectural officials have suggested that the exclusion zone environs could play host to a range of other services that don’t require much human

intervention, such as long-term archive facilities.

“Proud long-time residents of Fukushima, for their part, see all this development as a continued “colonisation” of their home prefecture by Tokyo - a well-worn pattern of outsiders using the zone for their own purposes, as were the utility representatives and officials who built the ill-fated plant in the first place.

“Years of colossal decontamination measures have scraped irradiated material from seemingly every forest, park, farm, roadside, and school ground. This 16 million cubic metres of radioactive soil is now stored in provisional sites in and around the exclusion zone, waiting to be moved to an interim storage facility that has hardly been started and for which nearly half of the land has not yet even been leased.



Nuclear waste storage area in Iitate in the Fukushima prefecture. Christian Åslund/Greenpeace

“The state has promised to remove all the contaminated soil from Fukushima [within] 30 years, and government officials have been scrupulous in insisting that this will be the case - for soil. Yet in a nation with about 17,000 tonnes of highly radioactive spent fuel rods and no willing candidates for secure repositories, it is only a matter of time before it becomes possible for politicians to publicly back the idea of transforming the area around Fukushima Daiichi into a secure repository.

“Government officials, including those tasked with nuclear waste storage, describe the quintessentially Japanese strategy of *saki-okuri*, or calculated postponement, in the context of nuclear waste storage. Such perception