

Fukushima Radiation, What Prospects for Humanity

A Conversation with Helen Caldicott. Global Research News Hour Episode 173

By [Michael Welch](#) and [Dr. Helen Caldicott](#)

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"Do not go to Japan. Do not under any circumstances take your children to Japan, because you don't know what you're eating and where the food is sourced..."

*And the Japanese are trying now to export their radioactive food to London and elsewhere. Taiwan has refused to receive it. But, it's dangerous and it's going to continue to be dangerous for the rest of time. It's sad." **Dr. Helen Caldicott** (from this week's interview.)*

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Arnie Gundersen, a nuclear educator and former nuclear industry senior vice president, has referred to it as "the biggest industrial catastrophe in the history of mankind." [1]

Six years ago this week, a tsunami, triggered by a category 9.0 earthquake, slammed into the site of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear facility on the north east coast of the Japanese island of Honshu. The natural disaster resulted in the failure of systems keeping the reactor cores and spent fuel rods cool, leading to core meltdowns in three of the plant's reactors, as well as damage from consequent hydrogen explosions. [2]

Enormous quantities of radioactive particles were released into the atmosphere and the water table leading to the Pacific Ocean. Approximately [170,000 people in the vicinity of the plant were immediately evacuated](#).

The World Health Organization downplayed the health risks from the catastrophe, concluding in their 2013 Health Risk Assessment from the nuclear accident that the risks of contracting certain cancers in certain sex and age groups were only "somewhat elevated." The report also concluded "no discernable increase in health risks from the Fukushima event is expected outside Japan." [3]

Nevertheless, a health management survey examining 38,000 children in Fukushima found three children diagnosed with thyroid cancer. The natural incidence is one in one million. [4]

Further, a December 2011 peer-reviewed report in the International Journal of Health

Sciences found that in the 14 weeks immediately following the event, there were 14,000 excess deaths in the United States connected with radio-active fall-out from the Fukushima meltdowns. [5]

The Japanese government has been so successful in its efforts to assuage the concerns of the wider public that Prime Minister Abe was able to secure Tokyo as the site for the 2020 Olympic Summer Games! As of this month, the Abe government ends its housing subsidies to people evacuated from the area proximate to the nuclear facility, forcing those fearful of the lingering radiation to fend for themselves abroad. [6][7]

The nuclear accident may have profound consequences for all humanity, and possibly all life on Earth, yet the severity of the situation doesn't seem to merit major headlines.

On this, the sixth anniversary of the start of the Fukushima crisis, we spend the hour with world renowned nuclear watchdog, Dr. Helen Caldicott.

In this interview, conducted and recorded on International Women's Day, Dr. Caldicott talks about the high radiation reading recently recorded at Unit 2, efforts to contain the radioactive water spilling out of the facility, projected health risks from the cesium, tritium, strontium and other isotopes spewing from the site and much, much more. Caldicott also extends the discussion to talk about Canada's role in nuclear proliferation and the threats posed by the new Trump Administration and Cold War atmosphere in which it is situated.

Dr. Helen Caldicott is a physician and co-founder of [Physicians for Social Responsibility](#). She is a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, the recipient of the 2003 Lannan Prize for Cultural Freedom, and author or editor of several books including [Nuclear Madness: What You Can Do \(1979\)](#), [If You Love This Planet: A Plan to Heal The Earth \(1992\)](#), [The New Nuclear Danger: George W. Bush's Military-Industrial Complex\(2001\)](#), and [Crisis Without End -The Medical and Ecological Consequences of the Fukushima Nuclear Catastrophe \(2014\)](#). She is currently the president of the Helen Caldicott Foundation ([NuclearFreePlanet.org](#)). Her latest book, [Sleepwalking to Armageddon: The Threat of Nuclear Annihilation](#) will be available in bookstores in July, 2017.

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Notes:

1) <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/34565-radioactive-water-from-fukushima-is-leaking-into-the-pacific>

2) *ibid*

3) "Health Risk Assessment from the nuclear accident after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami" (World Health Organization 2013) p.

9; http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/78218/1/9789241505130_eng.pdf

4) Hisako Sakiyama (2013) from the Symposium at the New York Academy of Medicine March 11-12, 2013; quoted in *Crisis Without End: The Medical and Ecological Consequences of the Fukushima Nuclear Catastrophe*, p.40, edited by Helen Caldicott

5) Joseph Mangano and Janette Sherman, "14,000 U.S. Deaths Tied to Fukushima Reactor Disaster Fallout," *International Journal of Health Services*, December 19, 2011,

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/medical-journal-article-14000-us-deaths-tied-to-fukushima-a-reactor-disaster-fallout-135859288.html>

6) "Abe claims Fukushima radioactive water woes are 'under control' " *The Japan Times*, October 16, 2013;

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/10/16/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-claims-fukushima-radioactive-water-woes-are-under-control/#.WMN7VNQrLs1>

7) Satoshi Iizuka (March 7, 2017), "Financial crunch time looms for Fukushima's 'voluntary

evacuees'", The Japan Times;

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/03/07/national/social-issues/financial-crunch-time-looms-fukushima-voluntary-evacuees/#.WMN9ZtQrLs1>

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