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Why the Entire Nuclear Industry is Insane, Then, Now and Forever

Will Parrish on Obama's boost for nukes *WHILE* Fukushima was in meltdown, and how US "Atoms for Peace" helped birth Japan's nuke program; while back in US homeland "let them eat plutonium" mindset has maimed and killed for 70 years and will go on doing so till it's stopped dead in its tracks

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Fukushima Fallout Hits the US

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Three of the six nuclear reactors at Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant have partially melted down and plutonium is seeping into the soil outside. Plutonium is less volatile than other radioactive elements like iodine or cesium, but it's also more deadly. According to Business Week, "When plutonium decays, it emits what is known as an alpha particle, a relatively big particle that carries a lot of energy. When an alpha particle hits body tissue, it can damage the DNA of a cell and lead to a cancer-causing mutation." If plutonium leaches into groundwater or pristine aquifers, the threat to public health and the environment will be extreme.

This is an excerpt from an article in the Guardian:

"The radioactive core in a reactor at the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant appears to have melted through the bottom of its containment vessel and on to a concrete floor, experts say, raising fears of a major release of radiation at the site. The warning follows an analysis by a leading US expert of radiation levels at the plant....

Karen Greenberg
[Enemy Creep](#)

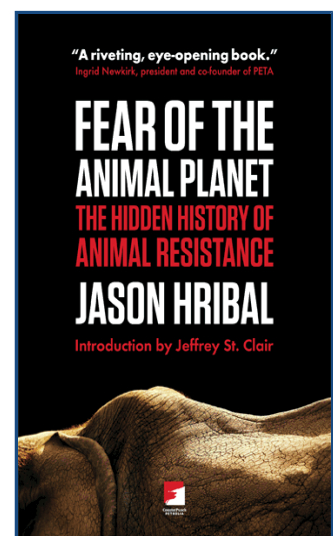
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"Richard Lahey, who was head of safety research for boiling-water reactors at General Electric when the company installed the units at Fukushima, told the Guardian workers at the site appeared to have "lost the race" to save the



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reactor..." ("Japan may have lost race to save nuclear reactor", The Guardian)

Samir Sonti
[The Next Phase in Wisconsin](#)

It also appears that underground tunnels at the facility have been flooded with radioactive water that contains high-concentrations of caesium-137. A considerable amount of the water has made its way to the sea where samples show the levels of contamination steadily rising. This is from the Wall Street Journal:

Ellen LaConte
[Garden as if Your Life Depends On It-- Because It Will](#)

"Levels of radiation in the ocean next to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant have surged to record highs, the government said Wednesday, as operators try to deal with large amounts of radioactive water—the unwanted byproduct of operations to cool the reactors.

Charles M. Young
[Who are the Liquidators?](#)

"The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency said water taken Tuesday afternoon from the monitoring location for the troubled reactors Nos. 1 to 4 had 3,355 times the permitted concentration of iodine-131. That is the highest yet recorded at the sampling location, which is 330 meters south of the reactors' discharge outlet." ("Seawater Radiation Level Soars Near Plant", Wall Street Journal)

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March 29, 2011

Glenn Alcala
[Living and Dying Downwind: Radiation, Japan and the Marshall Islands](#)

All fishing has been banned in the vicinity as the toxins pose a danger to human health.

Paul Craig Roberts
[Obama Raises American Hypocrisy to Higher Level](#)

The Japanese government's chief spokesman, Yukio Edano, issued a public statement admitting that the situation at Fukushima is progressively getting worse with no end in sight. "We are not yet in a situation where we can say when we will have this under control," said Edano. In other words, the emergency effort is failing.

Andrew Levine
[On Libya, Who Does Obama Think He is Fooling?](#)

The fact that Japan is experiencing what's shaping up to be one of the biggest environmental catastrophe in history explains why the media have been trying so hard to divert the public's attention to Obama's military adventure in Libya. But it hasn't worked; all eyes are locked on Fukushima where the crisis continues to get more precarious by the day. News anchors assure their viewers that they are only being exposed to "safe levels of radioactivity", but people aren't buying it. They've seen the comparisons to Chernobyl and made their own judgements. Here's an excerpt from [an article](#) in Counterpunch by Chris Busby that gives a thumbnail sketch of the human costs of the meltdown at Chernobyl:

Patrick Cockburn
[Syrian Regime May Hang On, But Future Looks Bleak for Qaddafi](#)

"The health effects of the Chernobyl accident are massive and demonstrable. They have been studied by many research groups in Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine, in the USA, Greece, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Japan. The scientific peer reviewed literature is enormous. Hundreds of papers report the effects, increases in cancer and a range of other diseases. My colleague Alexey Yablokov of the Russian Academy of Sciences, published a review of these studies in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences (2009). Earlier in 2006 he and I collected together reviews of the Russian literature by a group of eminent radiation scientists and published these in the book Chernobyl, 20 Years After. The result: more than a million people have died between 1986 and 2004 as a direct result of Chernobyl."

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One million dead, that's the bottom line. And, according to Busby, "we can already calculate that the contamination (at Fukushima) is actually worse than Chernobyl."

Harvey Wasserman
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That's certain, but don't expect to read it in the MSM. Or this, which is also from Busby:

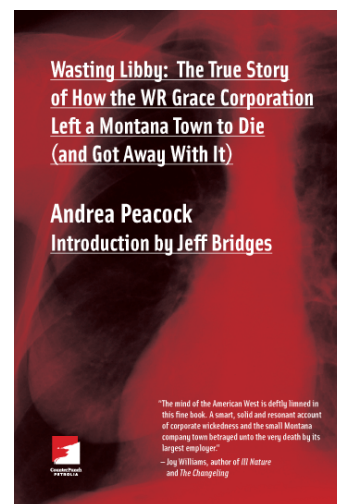
Adam Ramsey
[My Day in the Cells](#)

"Since the official International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) figures for the Fukushima contamination are from 200 to 900kBq.sq metre out to 78km from the site, we can expect between 22 per cent and 90 per cent increases in cancer in people living in these places in the next 10 years."

Pham Bihn
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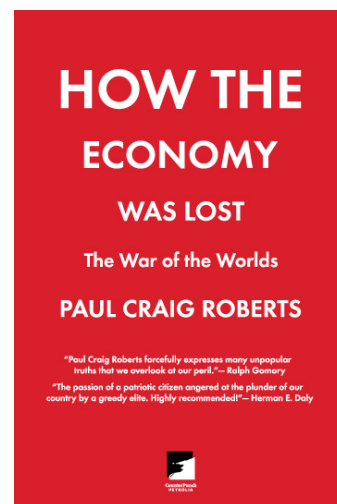
There's a large body of research on the effects of radiation on humans. In fact, scientists conducted a series of studies on the people living on the Marshall Islands following nuclear weapons tests at Bikini and Enewetak atolls. This is where the US exploded more than 60 atomic bombs between 1946-58. Here's an excerpt from Glenn Alcala's [article](#) in Counterpunch titled "Radiation, Japan and the Marshall Islands; Living and dying downwind":

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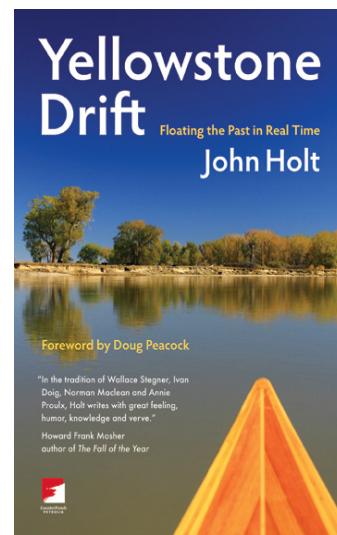


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"The legacy of latent radiogenic diseases from hydrogen bomb testing in the Marshall Islands provides some clues about what ill-health mysteries await the affected Japanese in the decades ahead.....Traces of I-131 have been discovered in Tokyo drinking water and in seawater offshore from the reactors. It took nine years for the first thyroid tumor to appear among the exposed Marshallese and hypothyroidism and cancer continued to appear decades later....."

"Plutonium-239 has a half life of 24,000 years, is considered one of the most toxic substances on Earth, and if absorbed is a potent alpha emitter that can induce cancer. This isotope too is found in the soils and groundwater of the downwind atolls from the Bikini and Enewetak H-bomb tests..."

"Radioactive Iodine-129 with a half-life of 15 million years and a well-documented capacity to bioaccumulate in the foodchain, will also remain as a persistent problem for the affected Japanese..."

"The sociocultural and psychological effects [e.g., PTSD] of the Fukushima nuclear disaster will be long-lasting, given the uncertainty surrounding the contamination of their prefecture and beyond." ("Radiation, Japan and the Marshall Islands; Living and dying downwind", Glenn Alcalay, Counterpunch)

It's all bad, which is why the nuclear industry needs stooges in the media to soft-peddle the news. Because, in truth, what they're selling is a noxious stew of irradiated poison that kills and maims people while causing incalculable damage to the environment. That's why industry bigwigs have turned to their friends at the EPA to loosen regulations so that the radioactive material that's presently showering-down on the US falls within EPA safety standards. Here's a clip from Washington's Blog that explains what's going on behind the public's back: "...the EPA is considering drastically raising the amount of allowable radiation in food, water and the environment"

As Michael Kane writes:

"In the wake of the continuing nuclear tragedy in Japan, the United States government is still moving quickly to increase the amounts of radiation the population can 'safely' absorb by raising the safe zone for exposure to levels designed to protect the government and nuclear industry more than human life. It's all about cutting costs now as the infinite-growth paradigm sputters and moves towards extinction. As has been demonstrated by government conduct in the Gulf of Mexico in the wake of Deepwater Horizon and in Japan, life has taken a back seat to cost-cutting and public relations posturing. The game plan now appears to be to protect government and the nuclear industry from "excessive costs"... at any cost." (Washington's Blog)

The radioactive toxins that are now oozing into the soil and water-table or flowing into Japan's coastal waters or lofting skyward into the jet-stream where they will spread across continents, will continue to wreak havoc long after this generation has passed its mortal coil. Easing EPA safety standards won't change a thing. Where goes radiation, there too goes cancer and death. The disaster in Japan merely buys a little time for us to rethink our own policies before a similar crisis strikes here. And, it will strike here; it's only a matter of time. Consider the comments of Dave Lochbaum, Director of UCS's Nuclear Safety Project, who testified on Wednesday before the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee. Here's what he said:

"Today, tens of thousands of tons of irradiated fuel sits in spent fuel pools across America. At many sites, there is nearly ten times as much irradiated fuel in the spent fuel pools as in the reactor cores. The spent fuel pools are not cooled by an array of highly reliable emergency cooling systems capable of being powered from the grid, diesel generators, or batteries. Instead, the pools are cooled by one regular system sometimes backed up by an alternate makeup system."

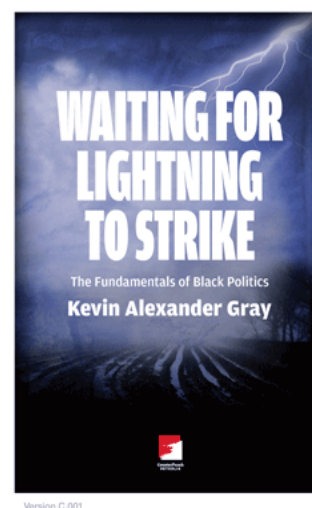
"The spent fuel pools are not housed within robust concrete containment structures designed to protect the public from the radioactivity released from damaged irradiated fuel."

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Instead, the pools are often housed in buildings with sheet metal siding like that in a Sears storage shed. I have nothing against the quality or utility of Sears' storage sheds, but they are not suitable for nuclear waste storage.

Ismael Hossein-Zadeh
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"The irrefutable bottom line is that we have utterly failed to properly manage the risk from irradiated fuel stored at our nation's nuclear power plants. We can and must do better." (The Union of Concerned Scientists.)

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Nuclear energy is a ticking-timebomb. There are safer ways to keep the lights on.

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Mike Whitney lives in Washington state. He can be reached at fergiwhitney@msn.com

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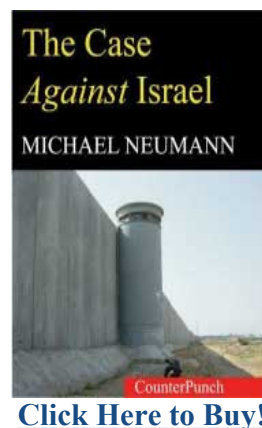
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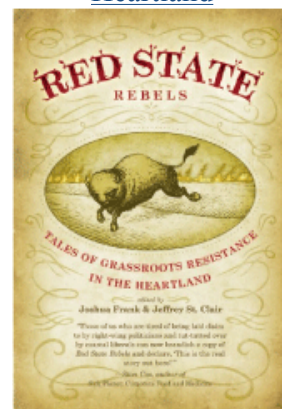
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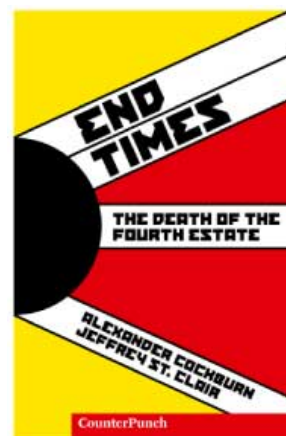
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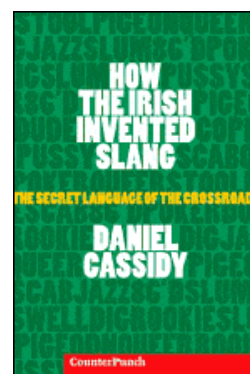
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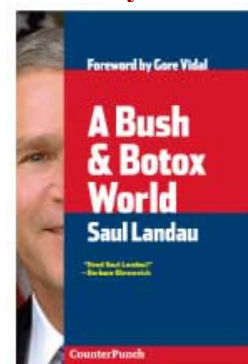


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