

Dr. Helen Caldicott Says Japan Crisis Can Dwarf Chernobyl Disaster

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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Alex Smith of Radio Ecoshock has just produced a definitive interview with Dr. Helen Caldicott, the world's foremost anti-nuclear activist and authority. Listen to it now at Ecoshock.net.

Here are some notes I took from the broadcast:

- Smoke has been reported rising from the Fukushima unit number 3. If it's from fuel-cooling pools that contain plutonium, that's a major (to put it mildly) disaster.
 - one millionth of a gram of plutonium ingested causes cancer.
 - Geiger counter radiation levels have been reassuring for the West Coast of North America. But the real question for public health is "internal emitters" (e.g. Strontium attached to bone) -- that cause cancer and gene mutations -- versus external radiation measurements that cannot discern isotopes.
 - Long lived isotopes versus quickly degrading ones: the big question for our gene pool.
 - Fuel-cooling pools pose a far worse threat than reactors. In the U.S. the fuel pools are not backed up with cooling systems!
 - A large part of Japan is damaged permanently.
 - Random genetic engineering is being done for the rest of humanity's future.
 - A peaceful Egypt-kind of revolution is needed against the nuclear psychosis.
 - Caldicott commissioned a "Nuclear-free, carbon-free" study. She says "Renewable energy can supply all the energy America needs by 2040."

The last point reveals a weakness in the anti-nuclear movement as well as in the climate protection movement. When today's energy appetite is justified by cleaner energy -- as in an obese person's switching the source of calories instead of cutting way back on them and getting significant exercise -- little good can come of it. The "clean energy" vision has a lot of baggage, such as a petroleum infrastructure that is giving out.

A basic lack of understanding of energy plagues many intelligent people who haven't examined petroleum's attributes and role. There is no overall substitute possible for cheap petroleum and its many uses. Even more dangerous, the Holy Grail of abundant "clean energy" someday for a huge consumer economy's "needs" causes tragic delay in slashing energy use now. We must question the need for today's energy consumption by establishing much lower energy use -- lifestyle change -- that needs to happen so that mass curtailment and restructuring can begin now.

To begin to gear up to meet the 2040 goal that Dr. Caldicott called for is folly in that it is off-target, and ignores the realities of overpopulation. But because she is so right on some vital levels, she is able to make an uninformed statement such as the last one in the above list. I have met this wonderful activist, and we're in agreement with her new statement that the Japan crisis may be positive for sinking the nuclear industry and then even getting on to the task of dealing with the weapons problem.

Alex Smith produced and offered an important show on March 21 on the nuclear crisis, not released on Culture Change. To make up for this lapse, we asked him for his next report. He has responded with an excellent must-listen show, referenced above. His website is ecoshock.org. Here is the note he sent Culture Change on March 23:

Hi Jan

Here is a hot one to send out to your list: this morning I interviewed Dr. Helen Caldicott about the Japanese nuclear crisis. This may be the first long interview she's given, or at least that I've seen or heard. And she is on fire!

The second part of this week's program is Kathy McMahon, the Peak Oil shrink, on digesting really bad news, plus the nuke problems in New England. She's one smart lady.

Plus a bit of news straight from NHK World today, as four reactors burn in Japan, with all workers evacuated. Hardly any bottled water left in Tokyo, and nurseries can't find what they need to feed babies, now that the tap water is radioactive.

Radiation found in fields 40 kilometers north of Fukushima runs 5 cm. deep, and an expert expects it will last at least 30 years. A big part of Japan is lost to agriculture, if not to human habitation. Certainly the tens of thousands of nuclear refugees from Fukushima itself and neighboring villages are not going home. Not in their lifetimes.

Caldicott says this is the big one.

[This] Lo-Fi version (14 MB)... to circulate around the Net:

Ecoshock.net.

More information from Dr. Helen Caldicott is on her website: nuclearfreeplanet.org
Facebook: Dr. Helen Caldicott

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