
Commission meeting reports

Location:
**The Fukushima View Hotel,
 Fukushima Pref.**
 Date:
December 19, 2011



1st Commission Meeting

1st Commission Meeting

The Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission held its first commission meeting at the Fukushima View Hotel in Fukushima city on December 19, 2011. The Commission approved the draft of the regulations governing its operations, appointed a project manager, decided on the structure of working groups and its office and officially started its activities. There was also a report from commission member Reiko Hachisuka, on the tough conditions the affected people are in today. Ms. Hachisuka, who moved from her home in Okuma, where the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is located, to live in the temporary residences provided in Aizu Wakamatsu, stated that evacuees now live without any sense of emotional security or stability, despite having been continually assured of the plant's safety for many years by TEPCO and the government.

In order to gain a first-hand grasp of the conditions at the plant and surrounding area, the Commission visited the plant itself on December 18. It also observed the decontamination operations run by Okuma Municipal Office. Upon the closure of the first Commission meeting on Monday, we visited the temporary housing in Kawamata which accommodates evacuees from Yamakiya district of the same town, where radiation levels are high. We heard directly from the town's mayor, Michio Furukawa, and the chair of the temporary residence community association, and saw the operations underway to decontaminate the farmland and forests of Yamakiya district.

Location:
Keisei Memorial Hall, Tokyo
 Date:
January 16, 2012

2nd Commission Meeting

Witnesses:

Yotaro Hatamura, Chairman, Cabinet Office Investigation Committee on the Accident at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Stations of TEPCO
Shinji Ogawa, Director General, Cabinet Office Investigation Committee on the Accident at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Stations of TEPCO
Masao Yamazaki, Executive Vice President, TEPCO
Masayuki Ishida, Chief Manager, Nuclear Power Quality Inspection Division, TEPCO
Masayuki Ono, Chief Manager, Nuclear Power Quality and Safety Division, TEPCO
Itaru Watanabe, Senior Deputy Director-General, Science and Technology Policy Division, MEXT
Yoshinari Akeno, Division Manager, Nuclear Safety Division, Science and Technology Policy Division, MEXT
Tadao Kanda, Chief Manager, Evaluation of Policy Division, Minister's Secretariat, MEXT

The Commission appointed its acting chairman and co-chairman of the working group. We received an explanation of the interim and initial reports on the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident from the government accident investigation-verification committee, TEPCO and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology (MEXT), respectively.

Location:
**Shimin Plaza Kazo,
 Saitama Pref.**
 Date:
January 30, 2012

3rd Commission Meeting

Witness: *Katsutaka Idogawa, Mayor of Futaba.*

Mayor Katsutaka Idogawa of Futaba explained the status before the plant accident and the conditions at the time of the accident and evacuation. He also exchanged opinions with the Commission. After the Commission meeting, we held a town meeting in order to hear fresh comments from the town residents on the accident and evacuation, as well as on details of life as evacuees.

Idogawa's comments:

- “Ever since I was appointed as the mayor, I kept expressing our concern about the nuclear power plant to TEPCO and NISA. They kept telling us there is no need to worry, that the plant is absolutely safe. But the accident actually happened. They cannot say the reasons for the accident are ‘factors beyond their assumptions.’”
- The off-site center was useless because it was too close to the power plant. It needs to be verified what kind of accident the emergency off-site center was designed to deal with.
- It is necessary to clarify the role played by the nuclear regulatory bodies and their relationship with the industry. In regard to TEPCO, we would like investigation into all factors that could have contributed to the accident. We need to know whether frontline concerns were ignored to put business efficiency first, whether appropriate personnel training was conducted and technical skills were properly passed on, and what kind of training was given to the large number of temp staff that got hired for regular inspections. We need to know whether the crisis management division was functioning appropriately.
- In regard to Fukushima Prefecture, investigation is necessary in such areas as whether it disseminated appropriate information to its people and whether the prefecture is now providing protection to the people according to their needs.
- With regard to the level of radiation exposure, there are different explanations and standards, which is very confusing. The maximum cumulative amount of exposure for the general public by law is 1 millisievert per year. The accident has caused us to be exposed to radiation other than natural background radiation. It is outrageous that TEPCO claims the radiation released from its power plant is *bona vacantia*, an ownerless object for which they cannot be held accountable.
- After we evacuated, there were no communications whatsoever from the government. Television was the only source of information.



Katsutaka Idogawa

Location:

The National Diet of Japan

Date:

February 15, 2012

4th Commission Meeting

*Witnesses:**Haruki Madarame, Chairman, Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC),**Nobuaki Terasaka, former Chair, Nuclear and Industry Safety Agency (NISA)*

1. *Outdated guidelines:* Haruki Madarame, Chairman, Nuclear Safety Commission, admitted that the safety guidelines were defective and expressed his apology. Also, the accident in Fukushima emitted far more radiation than the scenarios done in a “hypothetical accident” set in the guidelines, where the scenarios had assumed a significantly smaller scale than the severe accident scenarios used by many other countries. The Guideline for the Reactor Site Evaluation, which was established in 1964, is still in place regarding construction permits for nuclear power plants. It was called outdated during the hearing, and Madarame’s opinion was that the guideline needed to be amended.
2. *Lack of preparation by agencies:* Both the NSC and NISA had mandates to maintain the safety of nuclear power, yet lacked preparation for emergency situations. Moreover, both the NSC and NISA were found to lack an understanding of their fundamental tasks of protecting the surrounding residents and the nation.
3. *Insufficient knowledge:* The hearing revealed a lack of technical knowledge and nuclear engineering skills by the regulating agencies and the leaders of those agencies. The hearing also reminded everyone about the profound importance of independence and how important decisions and suggestions based on scientific facts and analyses are for those agencies to function properly. Obviously, Japan has a clear responsibility to establish safety standards and guidelines that are trustworthy at a global level.



Haruki Madarame



Nobuaki Terasaka

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
 Date:
February 27, 2012

5th Commission Meeting

Witness: *Richard A Meserve, former Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), President, Carnegie Institution for Science*



Dr. Richard A Meserve

1. *Proactive mindset:* Those responsible must make a continuous effort to raise existing safety standards. The construction and operation companies should not presume the quality of the standards of the regulatory agencies, and should not have a passive mind-set toward security and safety issues.
2. *Operator responsibilities and independency:* The nuclear plant operators have the most clearly defined responsibility to prevent accidents and stop any escalation in consequential damages. In an emergency situation, the operator is required to make decisions, and should avoid asking the government. For this reason, the operators must be competent to do so.
3. *Regulatory agencies responsibilities and independence:* The role of the regulatory agencies is to require sound decisions by the operator and to implement the decisions to prevent any escalation of damages. The agencies must maintain independence from the operators and the government. The agencies should also clarify the roles of the operator and the government, and the chain of command. These should be rehearsed repeatedly.
4. *Transparent decision-making:* It is important to maintain transparency in all the decision-making processes, except for those related to national security. It is important for participants to openly provide opinions to gain trust.
5. *The importance of human resources:* Japan should learn from the NRC model, where the majority of employees spend their entire careers on nuclear safety, and provide proper incentives to experts. In Japan, professionals trained in rotational positions within the bureaucratic entities often proved dysfunctional in emergency situations.
6. *Independent and transparent investigations:* The most important essential traits in the investigation of the nuclear accident are independence and transparency.

Location:
National Diet of Japan
 Date:
March 14, 2012

6th Commission Meeting

Witness: *Sakae Muto, Advisor of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) and Former Executive Vice President and General Manager of Nuclear Power & Plant Siting Division of TEPCO*



Sakae Muto

1. *Government-operator relations:* We heard unexpected testimony that the cabinet participated in discussions of technical matters regarding the nuclear reactors. Prime Minister Kan asked for the mobile phone number of the head of the plant at Fukushima, leaving the top management of TEPCO out of the loop.
2. *TEPCO competency:* Muto stated that the operator was primarily responsible for the accident, but questions remain about TEPCO's competence in taking on this responsibility.
3. *Lack of accident preparation:* There were ongoing discussions on the safety culture and preventive actions taken against earthquakes. Muto implied that the cause of the accident was due to the unexpected tsunami, but the possibility of a tsunami was estimated in 2002—so TEPCO must have recognized the risks. Muto, however, claimed to have been unaware of such studies. This obviously was a failure of the safety culture within TEPCO.

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
 Date:
March 19, 2012

7th Commission Meeting

Witnesses:
Volodymyr Holosha, Head of the State Agency of Ukraine for Exclusion Zone Management,

Ministry of Emergency Situations

Anatoliy Gora, Deputy Head of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant

Leonid Tabachnyi, Vice-Chairman, Geophysical Observation Center of Hydrometeorology Department, Ministry of Emergency Situations of Ukraine

1. The Chernobyl accident was different from Fukushima in the various types of radioactive materials released, the weather pattern, the geography and the condition of the reactor containment vessels. However, both received the same level 7 (severe accident) designation on the International Nuclear Event Scale (INES). Chernobyl resulted in a significant emission of radioactive material and affected the environment and the lives of many people. It was valuable to hear about the real experience directly from the people who fought against the spread of damages from the accident. The emitted radioactive material continues to significantly affect public health and the environment even 26 years after the accident.
2. Regarding exposures issues: Many people who worked in the contaminated areas were exposed to radiation in Ukraine. Many infants who were exposed to radiation contracted thyroid cancer. Radiation exposure not only causes thyroid cancer in infants, but affects the whole body. Evacuated people suffered from stress and radiation phobia. Contaminated food items are monitored and controlled separately by type, amount of consumption and so forth.
3. Regarding information disclosure issues: The necessity of disclosing information has been acknowledged by the Ukraine government after the lessons learned from the time of the USSR. Nonetheless, there are many technical measures, such as becquerels, sieverts, and curies, that are unfamiliar to many people. Information to the public can be disclosed in alternative ways regarding levels of contamination.



Volodymyr Holosha



Leonid Tabachnyi

8th Commission Meeting

Witnesses:

Ichiro Takekuro, TEPCO fellow and head of TEPCO's nuclear power business prior to the accident. He was at the Kantei during the accident

Kenkichi Hirose, Special Adviser to the Cabinet Office, in charge of the NSC, former Secretary General of the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC) and former Director General of the Nuclear and Industry Safety Agency (NISA)

1. *TEPCO competence:* Despite the fact that TEPCO has the primary obligation to prevent accidents and minimize damages, the company was found to be lacking the self-governance competence to set adequate measures for the prevention of accidents, and the culture to make concerted efforts to improve nuclear safety from the people's point of view. Moreover, TEPCO does not clearly recognize the nuclear safety tasks and obligations that are necessary for an operator of nuclear power. Regarding the defense-in-depth program, Takekuro stated that TEPCO had been focusing on the first three levels of defense-in-depth, implying that TEPCO was not responsible for implementing the fourth and the fifth levels. At the time of accident, TEPCO sent Takekuro to the Prime Minister's office to report in detail on the accident conditions to the Prime Minister. However, it was found that Takekuro was actually sending commands to the accident site on behalf of the Prime Minister. It is obvious that TEPCO's corporate culture has been lacking in efforts to prevent accidents and to improve nuclear safety as a part of their obligation as a nuclear power plant operator. This point is also evident given TEPCO's long history of concealing accidents.
2. *Regulatory agency responsibilities:* The hearing clarified that the nuclear power regulatory agencies such as NISA have not been meeting their first obligation: public safety. Their liability in ignoring the basics of creating a safety culture, such as leaving essential safety measures like backchecks to the operators, and disregarding the recommendations of IAEA, is overwhelming. It is also clear that the double-check feature

Location:

The National Diet of Japan

Date:

March 28, 2012



Ichiro Takekuro



Kenkichi Hirose

between NISA and NSC has not been functioning. The dysfunctional attitudes and irresponsible behavior found in the hearing are not only attributable to Hirose and other leaders. The government also is quite heavily liable, as it was responsible for creating NISA as an administrative organization under METI.

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
Date:
April 18, 2012

9th Commission Meeting

Witness: *Hiroyuki Fukano, Director General, Nuclear and Industry Safety Agency (NISA).*



Hiroyuki Fukano

1. *Safety Guideline:* The Safety Guideline was revised by the government after the Fukushima accident based on the measures stated in the “Technological Findings” which is a provisional analysis. The accident conditions assumed explicitly in the revised Safety Guideline are narrowly defined as an accident with an event sequence identical to that of the Fukushima accident. There is no measure or definition set for a potential accident beyond the assumed accident scenario in the revised Safety Guideline, and there are few necessary safety measures as stated below.
 - The plan to build earthquake-resistant buildings, which turned out to play a critical emergency role in the Fukushima accident, is defined as a “medium-term task.”
 - The plan to implement filtered ventilation, which has been implemented in many European countries, is defined as a “medium-term task.”
 - The emergency evacuation plan, which is most important to the safety of residents, is set outside of the scope of discussion in the “Technical Findings” that have been used as the rationale in the revised Safety Guideline.

Location:
**Nihonmatsu, Shimia Kaikan,
Fukushima Pref.**
Date:
April 21, 2012

10th Commission Meeting + Namie town hall 11th Commission Meeting + Okuma town hall

Witnesses:

Mayor Baba of Namiemachi and six other witnesses at the 10th Commission Meeting in Nihonmatsu

Mayor Watanabe and four other witnesses at the 11th Commission Meeting in Aizu Wakamatsu. After each Commission meeting, Commission Members heard from the residents during town hall meetings.

Location:
**University of Aizu,
Fukushima Pref.**
Date:
April 22, 2012



Mayor Baba



Mayor Watanabe

1. *The anger of the evacuees:* We felt the raw anger of the residents as shown by the following comments: “We had to evacuate without any information from the government, the prefecture, or TEPCO about the accident itself, instructions on the evacuation, or in which direction we should evacuate.” “There should have been someone, such as a TEPCO employee, providing information at earlier stage.” We recognized once again the importance of easy-to-understand and timely information communication processes.
2. *Assuring the safety of residents:* A local government official commented that he is asking himself “whether the local government fulfilled its role to assure the safety of the residents.” Others said “Emergency evacuation drills turned out to be training for the sake of doing training. It was for the self-satisfaction of the organizer—shouldn’t the training have been done under more realistic assumptions?” The findings from our previous commission meetings suggest that the regulators completely lacked the mindset to safeguard the residents.
3. *Message from the towns hosting nuclear power plants:* We heard important opinions, especially from the people of Okuma. Notable comments included: “The people from the towns hosting nuclear power plants were so used to hearing ‘how safe the plants are.’ We had been brainwashed.” “I had never thought that a nuclear power plant could become a problem.” “There was no communication about potential issues which are

out of human control.” These comments can be very important to people in all towns that host nuclear power plants.

4. *Relationship with and confidence in the government:* We heard feedback regarding the government, specifically that it failed to provide the necessary information at the time of the accident: “I still cannot trust the government,” “I am not confident about the information provided by the government on the current condition of Unit 4 and the radiation dose level.”
5. *Evacuee life and the future:* We realized fully that the belated or indefinite evacuation instructions, as represented by the use of the phrase “just to be sure,” affected the residents severely. A participant called for the need “to install a system in which the government continues to monitor the health conditions of the people from generation to generation.” Moreover, many residents repeatedly expressed their shared earnest desire “to not let other municipalities hosting other nuclear power plants experience what we experienced.”



Namie town hall meeting



Okuma town hall meeting

12th Commission Meeting

Witness: Tsunehisa Katsumata, Chairman of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) and former Chairman of the Foundation of Electric Power Companies of Japan (FEPC). Katsumata was president of TEPCO from October 2002 and has been chairman since February 2008

1. *Accountability of a nuclear facility operator and the Prime Minister:* While he mentioned that “electric companies are unambiguously responsible for the safety of nuclear power plants,” he stated that “it was the Prime Minister who was the director-general of the emergency response headquarters, where judgment at the plant site needed to be prioritized.” Also the top three management members (president, chairman, and vice president) were unavailable when the accident broke out. Katsumata only found out that the President had been away after the accident happened. A lack of a sense of impending crisis was obvious from the fact that he made no contact with the president after the president’s return from abroad until his return to the head office.
2. *Critical facts about tsunami:* The causes of the accident, according to his statement, are “under investigation at TEPCO.” However his assertion that the unanticipated tsunami was the primary cause was disorienting. It revealed that the risk posed by unanticipated potential tsunami had not been communicated internally to the president. It turned out that Katsumata had determined that “such tsunami would not happen in reality.” It seems that the risk of tsunami had not been considered probabilistically.
3. *Regulatory environment:* He emphasized the simplification of regulations, but the measures which operators carry out independently, including earthquake-resistant backcheck and severe accident responses, had not been taken by TEPCO and other operators. Serious doubt remains about the implication between the call for simplified regulations and the delayed actions by TEPCO. The Commission also learned the little-known fact that the FEPC had been the forum for lobbying.
4. *General overview:* Katsumata admitted that he can look back and think of a number of measures that should have been implemented—such as anti-tsunami measures and severe accident responses, but he declined to specify further. The public should determine through today’s discussion if he was sufficiently competent to be the top manager of a giant power company that utilizes nuclear power.

Location:

The National Diet of Japan

Date:

May 14, 2012



Tsunehisa Katsumata

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
Date:
May 16, 2012

13th Commission Meeting

Witness: Kazuo Matsunaga, Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) at the time of the accident and Director General of the Nuclear and Industry Safety Agency (NISA) from June 2004 to September 2005.



Kazuo Matsunaga

1. *Decisions made as Director General of Nuclear and Industry Safety Agency (NISA)*: The witness stated that he could not spare time for the implementation of the new anti-quake guideline because he was too busy dealing with responses to the accident at the Mihama nuclear plant. He avoided explaining his own involvement in the stress tests and stated that any discussion on introducing B.5.b was not his business. As such, he was not directly a part of the important aspects of nuclear safety, and he avoided clearly defining his own accomplishment and responsibilities.
2. *Judgments regarding nuclear safety in re-operation of nuclear power plants*: The question still remains whether informed, appropriate decisions about energy policy and nuclear safety are being made by the top authorities. If METI is making judgments about the safety and re-operation of nuclear plants prior to the completion of the accident investigations by the government, they may not be in full possession of the facts. This point was also made by the METI minister, Banri Kaieda, on June 18, 2011.
3. *Responsibility for maintaining sufficient supply of electricity*: Matsunaga was asked if he knew whether TEPCO was releasing all the correct information about its power supply capabilities to the public. But he claimed to be unaware of any failure on TEPCO's part.
4. *About introduction of plutonium thermal use*: We found that the government may have rushed the regional government to make a decision on the implementation of plutonium thermal use in Unit 3 of Fukushima Daiichi by presenting the benefits of government subsidy, while there was not enough time to thoroughly perform a possible anti-quake backcheck.
5. *Competency in emergency response engagement*: METI was probably inadequately prepared, as was NISA. In light of the findings from this hearing, we need to profoundly consider whether the current organizational structure surrounding nuclear regulatory agencies, including METI, which plays the roles of both promotion of nuclear power and maintaining nuclear safety, can be improved to function more properly.

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
Date:
May 17, 2012

14th Commission Meeting

Witness: Banri Kaieda, a member of the House of Representatives and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) at the time of the accident.

1. *Witness' understanding of facts at the time of accident*:
 - a) Kaieda stated that he feels responsible for the delay in declaring a Nuclear Emergency Situation and that it was because convincing the Prime Minister to do so took time.
 - b) He did not know the reasons for then Prime Minister Kan's visit to Fukushima Daiichi nor its purpose.
 - c) Kaieda received a phone call about evacuation directly from Shimizu, TEPCO president at the time of the accident. The witness recalls, "Daiichi Power Plant," "Daini Power Plant," and "evacuation," but not "full withdrawal." Furthermore, Kaieda understood the direct phone call from Shimizu to have significant meaning.
 - d) Kaieda stated that he felt TEPCO was hesitant to make a decision to ventilate, as well as to decommission Units 5 and 6. Also stated was the reason for issuing an order to ventilate in accordance with the Nuclear Reactor Regulation Law—to prod TEPCO into doing the venting. This revealed ambiguity in the definition of the responsibilities of the government and operators.
 - e) Kaieda mentioned that from immediately after the breakout of the accident, communicating and sharing information among the accident site, the Kantei, and TEPCO

headquarters was like the telephone game “whispering down the lane”. He went on to state that “the government has to think this issue over.”

f) The preparedness by the government was “not enough,” the witness said. In addition, he stated that “the trainings should have included use of SPEEDI.”

g) The witness made a critical statement about the hydrogen explosions—“nobody had ever thought of a possible hydrogen explosion at that time.” Also he expressed his regrets that he was unable to prevent the hydrogen explosion. He felt the lessons from Three Mile Island were not utilized.

2. *Regarding the Stress Tests:* In consideration of use of the stress tests as a requirement to restart nuclear plants, Kaieda stated that he did not even consider mandating back-checks as a possible alternative to speed up the process of the operators.
3. *Ideal regulatory organization and emergency response organization:*
 - a)** Kaieda said that the emergency response organization should be lean with all members understanding their own roles clearly. He thought NISA did not meet the expectations of the people in performing its role.
 - b)** He encouraged the regulatory agencies to be independent and to be safety-oriented. The regulatory organization should include experts on radioactive materials with the proper knowledge and equipments to respond in emergency situations.



Banri Kaieda

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
 Date:
May 27, 2012

15th Commission Meeting

Witnesses: Yukio Edano, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. He was the Chief Cabinet Secretary at the time of the accident.

1. *Edano and Shimizu on full-withdrawal:* Edano does not recall the exact words used with respect to the plans for withdrawal. However, he remembers that he conveyed his view that if a full withdrawal of staff from the plant were to take place, deterioration of the state of the plant could not be stopped. In response to Edano, Shimizu (President, TEPCO) could not find the words to respond, and said nothing. Based on this reaction, Edano further stated that “it was clear that the intent of the proposal (by Shimizu) was not for a partial withdrawal.” During a phone call, Yoshida, the General Manager of Fukushima Daiichi, replied to Edano’s question about withdrawal, saying, that “there are still actions to be taken here. We’ll do our best.”
2. *Notification of public disclosure of information:* Edano directed TEPCO to notify the Prime Minister’s office of any information disclosed to the public at the time of the disclosure, but the direction was not intended to require TEPCO to obtain approval from the Prime Minister’s office prior to the disclosure.
3. *Accepting international support:* The Prime Minister’s office had been directing ministries to accept any international support offered, even if they might be required to overcome legal issues to do so.



Yukio Edano

Edano then added the following statements in light of his experience:

1. *Insufficient information distribution:* Based on the discussions today he recognized that information had not been communicated sufficiently from the viewpoint of the public and residents of the area. At the time he thought it sufficient. He recognized that communication concerning personal risk needed to be improved.
2. *Problems in information handling:* He pointed out problems in gathering, predicting and anticipating information. As an example, he stated that the term “precautions” used in public releases was not founded on clear grounds.
3. *Need to separate roles of Chief Cabinet Secretary and Spokesperson:* Edano noted that in the absence of a stand-alone government spokesperson, the Chief Cabinet Secretary acts as a secondary or dual role. He thinks that particularly in times of an emergency, these two important roles should be separated. A spokesperson should be specially trained.

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
 Date:
May 28, 2012

16th Commission Meeting

Witness: Naoto Kan, a member of the House of Representatives; Prime Minister of Japan at the time of the accident



Former prime minister
 Naoto Kan

Pre-accident conditions

1. The accident occurred at a nuclear power plant which had been built and operated as part of national nuclear policy, and thus the government bears the greatest share of the responsibility for the accident. Kan, who was the leader of the government at the time of the accident, apologized once again for being unable to stop the accident from evolving.
2. With regard to the nuclear accident response, neither the authority of the Prime Minister nor that of the director general of the emergency response headquarters had ever been explained to Kan in detail prior to the accident.
3. The authority of the director general of the emergency response headquarters had not necessarily been fully recognized by Kan when the comprehensive emergency response drill was conducted.

During the accident

1. Visiting the plant managers on site was considered helpful for Kan to understand the situation, as he could not obtain any meaningful information from the members of NISA, the NSC, or the technical advisor from TEPCO regarding what needed to be done at Fukushima Daiichi.
2. There was no awareness that the plant would reach its re-criticality as a result of injecting seawater instead of freshwater, although Madarame (Chairperson, NSC) had indicated that such a possibility was not zero. Kan also stated that although it has been reported that decisions (to suspend seawater injection) came from the Kantei, it could have been a statement made by the TEPCO personnel who were then at the Kantei.
3. There were two calls from Yoshida (the General Manager, Fukushima Daiichi) to Hosono (Special Advisor to Prime Minister, Cabinet Office) on matters relating to the full withdrawal. In the first call Yoshida said that the situation was “extremely intense,” and in the second call that “water injection has begun, and that it looked okay.” Kan recalls that he called back once but does not remember the details of that conversation. Then, early on March 15, the minister of METI woke Kan and it was then that Kan first heard about TEPCO’s proposal to withdraw, which he thought was absurd.

Responses by the government and the Kantei (Prime Minister’s Office):

1. With the largest ever double disasters—earthquake and tsunami—and a nuclear accident at the same time, it was difficult for the off-site crisis control center located in the Kantei to function sufficiently as a control room.
2. The Act on Special Measures Concerning Nuclear Emergency Preparedness (Nuclear Emergency Response Act) was ineffective, and the Kantei had to act as commander in chief.
3. Calling the accident site was an extraordinary action, which Kan believes could have been possibly avoided if information had been appropriately provided to him by TEPCO and/or NISA in a timely manner.
4. It was Edano (Chief Cabinet Secretary at the time of the accident) who declined the offer to station non-Japanese experts at the Prime Minister’s office. Kan was not informed about this decision.
5. Kan was not aware that overseas assistance was declined by NSC. It is a big problem if it is true.
6. Kan took diverse advice, even from beyond official channels.
7. Kan requested support from several specific Diet members, but the request was not intended to make them act as an advisory team.

Future tasks: Kan recognizes that the March 11 disaster has brought attention to some fundamental problems of Japan. He believes that the first step to reforming the nuclear pol-

icy is to dissolve the organizational structure of the nuclear community in Japan, controlled mainly by TEPCO and the Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan (FEPC). Furthermore, inviting experts from abroad may become a catalyst to restructuring the nuclear community in Japan. He expressed his position that Japan should aim at becoming free of nuclear power plants. Kan expressed his respect and appreciation to the people who worked hard on-site to address the nuclear power plant accident.

17th Commission Meeting

Witness: Yuhei Sato, Governor of Fukushima Prefecture at the time of the accident.

Pre-accident conditions:

1. The central government and TEPCO stated that risks relating to nuclear disasters were appropriately mitigated and that the area was protected under the defense-in-depth philosophy.
2. Evacuation from the 2-kilometer zone was a decision made by the prefectural government on its own, because the central government had not acted swiftly enough. However, the evacuation order was not properly disseminated due to disruption of communications systems. Later, the evacuation orders issued by the central government were shared through the media, and the prefectural government received no concrete directives from the central government. As a result, residents were forced to experience an extremely difficult and disruptive evacuation.

Implementation of plutonium-thermal at the plant

1. One of the three conditions the prefectural government presented to the central government on making a decision on plutonium-thermal use in Unit 3 of Fukushima Daiichi was that it must achieve the same level of earthquake-proof safety as the interim report of backchecks performed for Unit 5. However, Sato claims that when plutonium-thermal was implemented in Unit 3, he did not know that the backcheck did not include anti-tsunami measures like those for Unit 5.
2. Sato further claims that he did not know about the special subsidy that was part of the plutonium-thermal project even though he implemented it,

Future tasks:

1. Sato pointed out that having divided administrative functions is detrimental to securing nuclear safety, and stated his opinion that unifying multiple functions is strongly desired.
2. There was conflicting information, including information about SPEEDI. Also information sharing and communication at the emergency response center was not sufficient, and the prefectural government had organizational issues. Sato said that he wants to reconsider crisis management. He commented that it is crucial that communication of insights, organization, and reliable individuals all act in close concert to prevent future accidents.
3. National support has been broadly extended to Fukushima and its people since the disaster. To reciprocate, Sato said that he wants to contribute by building a community with the promise not to let a similar disaster ever happen again.

Location:
**Fukushima Terrsa,
Fukushima Pref.**
Date:
May 29, 2012



Yuhei Sato

18th Commission Meeting

Witnesses: Masataka Shimizu, president of TEPCO at the time of the accident.

Miscommunication:

1. President Shimizu was “not aware that the Kantei did not trust TEPCO’s response

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
Date:
June 8, 2012

regarding venting” when he returned from his business trip. Also he “found out” that the Prime Minister had interpreted the proposal regarding withdrawal as “full withdrawal” only after the Prime Minister said so. It seems that Shimizu lacked an understanding of the gap between how the Kantei perceived the situation and how TEPCO perceived it. The Kantei and TEPCO misunderstood each other and there was mutual mistrust, resulting in discrepancy over the interpretation of the word “evacuation.”

2. In addition to his testimony, the Commission’s investigation has confirmed the fact that the staff was on the ground striving hard to resolve problems with the reactors, and had not thought about withdrawing from the site. No evidence has been found either that TEPCO had made a decision to “fully withdraw.”
3. Based on what the Commission has found, nuclear reactors in serious states were ultimately kept under control because of the people on the ground, who had a good grasp of the reactor conditions, as well as a sense of responsibility to remain on-site throughout the crisis.
4. To this end, TEPCO should not have turned to the Kantei for instructions. Instead, people on the ground or someone qualified to make technical judgments about the situation should have made decisions, as exemplified by the decision to inject seawater.
5. This raises an important argument over the position of the operator and the legitimacy of the intervention by the Kantei, which lacked the nuclear expertise.
6. Shimizu highlighted the significance of having earthquake-resistant buildings by mentioning that “it is frightening to think what would have happened if TEPCO did not have it.” Various preparations assuming an even worse case are needed. The importance of protecting the safety of workers at nuclear power plants in order to protect the lives of the public is now clear.

Location:
The National Diet of Japan
Date:
June 9, 2012

19th Commission Meeting

Summary of survey results: The survey results showed that the government’s delay in transmission and communication of information concerning the accident led to the subsequent confusion. From the perspectives of the evacuees, ad-hoc instructions caused many people to evacuate multiple times, in some cases to areas with high radiation doses, and/or with only barest necessities. The voices and thoughts of evacuated residents who do not have other places to turn to were very clear. The issues are not resolved yet. Proper measures should be considered as soon as possible. We will communicate this message to the Diet.