

This Global edition of the Executive Summary is intended solely as a convenience for the non-Japanese-reading global audience, and includes selected elements from the entire Japanese report.

Also we have added additional charts (map of Japan, etc.) to make it easier for the global audience to understand. If any questions arise related to the accuracy of the information contained in the translation, please refer to the Japanese-language version of the Commission Report, which is the official version of the document. If there are any discrepancies or differences between the Japanese-language version and this Global edition, the Japanese-language version shall prevail.

The National Diet of Japan

The official report of

The Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission

Executive summary

The National Diet of Japan Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission

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THE NATIONAL DIET OF JAPAN
FUKUSHIMA NUCLEAR ACCIDENT INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION
(NAIIC)

To:

MR. TAKAHIRO YOKOMICHI, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. KENJI HIRATA, PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS

THE NATIONAL DIET OF JAPAN

THE UNPRECEDENTED NUCLEAR ACCIDENT that began on March 11, 2011 is the subject of the following report, which we hereby present to the members of the National Diet of Japan for their review. We do this in accordance with the Act Regarding the Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission.

Our investigative task is adjourned today, some six months after the appointment of our Chairman and Members in December of 2011.

This report is meant to reinforce the administrative authority of the legislative body and strengthen oversight activities on issues related to nuclear power. As the first independent commission chartered by the Diet in the history of Japan's constitutional government, we would like to emphasize how important it is that this report be utilized, for the Japanese people and for the people of the world.

CHAIRMAN:

KIYOSHI KUROKAWA

MEMBERS:

KENZO OSHIMA

HISAKO SAKIYAMA

MASAFUMI SAKURAI

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Message from the Chairman

THE EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI of March 11, 2011 were natural disasters of a magnitude that shocked the entire world. Although triggered by these cataclysmic events, the subsequent accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant cannot be regarded as a natural disaster. **It was a profoundly manmade disaster – that could and should have been foreseen and prevented. And its effects could have been mitigated by a more effective human response.**

How could such an accident occur in Japan, a nation that takes such great pride in its global reputation for excellence in engineering and technology? This Commission believes the Japanese people – and the global community – deserve a full, honest and transparent answer to this question.

Our report catalogues a multitude of errors and willful negligence that left the Fukushima plant unprepared for the events of March 11. And it examines serious deficiencies in the response to the accident by TEPCO, regulators and the government.

For all the extensive detail it provides, what this report cannot fully convey – especially to a global audience – is the mindset that supported the negligence behind this disaster.

What must be admitted – very painfully – is that this was a disaster “Made in Japan.” Its fundamental causes are to be found in the ingrained conventions of Japanese culture: our reflexive obedience; our reluctance to question authority; our devotion to ‘sticking with the program’; our groupism; and our insularity.

Had other Japanese been in the shoes of those who bear responsibility for this accident, the result may well have been the same.

Following the 1970s “oil shocks,” Japan accelerated the development of nuclear power in an effort to achieve national energy security. As such, it was embraced as a policy goal by government and business alike, and pursued with the same single-minded determination that drove Japan’s postwar economic miracle.

With such a powerful mandate, nuclear power became an unstoppable force, immune to scrutiny by civil society. Its regulation was entrusted to the same government bureaucracy responsible for its promotion. At a time when Japan’s self-confidence was soaring, a tightly knit elite with enormous financial resources had diminishing regard for anything ‘not invented here.’

This conceit was reinforced by the collective mindset of Japanese bureaucracy, by which the first duty of any individual bureaucrat is to defend the interests of his organization. Carried to an extreme, this led bureaucrats to put organizational interests ahead of their paramount duty to protect public safety.

Only by grasping this mindset can one understand how Japan’s nuclear industry managed to avoid absorbing the critical lessons learned from Three Mile Island and Chernobyl; and how it became accepted practice to resist regulatory pressure and cover up small-scale accidents. It was this mindset that led to the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant.

This report singles out numerous individuals and organizations for harsh criticism, but the goal is not—and should not be—to lay blame. The goal must be to learn from this disaster, and reflect deeply on its fundamental causes, in order to ensure that it is never repeated.

Many of the lessons relate to policies and procedures, but the most important is one upon which each and every Japanese citizen should reflect very deeply.

The consequences of negligence at Fukushima stand out as catastrophic, but the mindset that supported it can be found across Japan. In recognizing that fact, each of us should reflect on our responsibility as individuals in a democratic society.

As the first investigative commission to be empowered by the legislature and independent of the bureaucracy, we hope this initiative can contribute to the development of Japan’s civil society.

Above all, we have endeavored to produce a report that meets the highest standard of transparency. The people of Fukushima, the people of Japan and the global community deserve nothing less.

CHAIRMAN:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kiyoshi Kurokawa'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

KIYOSHI KUROKAWA