

## FUKUSHIMA IS HERE

Two years after the terrible accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, we hear little about it. On the surface, this appears to be a good sign. After all, were there any major problems, surely our free press would be on the job, right?

Unfortunately, the resounding silence appears more to reflect the nuclear industry's concern for image rather than "no news is good news." In reality, the situation at Fukushima looks precarious at best. Three reactors have melted down and a "spent" fuel pool at Reactor No 4 sits atop a shattered building while the area is wracked with earthquakes. Tokyo Electric and Power Co. (TEPCO) seems mired in corruption and inefficiency, bogging down efforts to contain the damage. Meanwhile, radioactivity leaks into the atmosphere and the nearby ocean, whose currents carry it to our West Coast.

And what is our government's response? Within days of the accident, results of radioactivity monitoring in North America ceased to be published. The Japanese government has been pressured by Washington to reverse its decision to phase out nuclear power. The Defense Department has ceased registration of US service people who participated in aid efforts to Japan and are now experiencing health effects from radiation exposure as a result. Does the nuclear power industry exercise more power over elected officials than does any obligation to protect the health and safety of "we the people?" Draw your own conclusions.

Alarmed and disappointed by Washington's failures, Fukushima Response formed as an outgrowth of Occupy Petaluma with the stated mission of "mobilizing an international response to stabilize Fukushima." The non-profit has hosted several educational events, including a visit from Japan by Mr. Yastel Yamada, founder of the Skilled Veterans Corps for Fukushima, as well as presentations by Dan Sythe, president of International Medcom, which manufactures handheld Geiger counters. Fukushima Response Bay Area, based in Oakland, was formed shortly after FR NorCal, and is an active arm of the organization.

Though Fukushima Response is cautiously encouraged about the recent news that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is considering the formation of a multinational task force to decommission the wrecked reactors at Daiichi, we feel we must continue to make our voices heard. Currently, Fukushima Response is organizing a "human mural" event planned for October 19, 2013 to take place on Ocean Beach in San Francisco. For further information, please go to the website at [www.fukushimaishere.info](http://www.fukushimaishere.info) or visit us on Facebook.

*by Jackie B., published in Sonoma County Peace Press, April/May 2013*