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#Fukushima I Nuke Plant Worker's Perspective on the Debris Dropping Accident at Reactor 3 SFP: Normal Project Management System Doesn't Work on an Abnormal Situation

"Happy11311" has been [tweeting](#) from Fukushima I Nuclear Power Plant since the March 11, 2011 triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident. He tweeted his take on the fuel handling machine mast that dropped into the Reactor 3 Spent Fuel Pool [with a big splash](#) a few days ago.

He says the work was carried out even when it shouldn't have been, because the contractor(s) was under pressure to catch up.

He also says that the work is done by remote control, but **it needs workers in tungsten vests right on the platforms surrounding the Reactor 3 building**, as they have to visually monitor the work to make sure everything is going safely.

From his tweets on February 10, 2013 (my translation):

以前にもつぶやいたけど3号機オペフロ瓦礫撤去作業はとて難しいんだ。3号機オペフロは高線量のため4号機みたいに作業員が上がって撤去するわけにはいかない状況。撤去作業は被曝しない離れたある場所で遠隔操作でやってるけどカメラアングルだけじゃまかないきれない部分がある。

As I tweeted before, removing the debris on the Reactor 3 operating floor is extremely difficult. Since the Reactor 3 operating floor has high radiation levels, unlike on the Reactor 4 building, workers cannot go up there to remove the debris. The actual debris removal [for Reactor 3] is carried out from a location far enough to avoid radiation exposure by remote control, but there are cases where the camera images from different angles are not enough.

それを補うため、どうしても目視確認が必要なんだ。だから重いタングステンベストを着た作業員が交代で構台に上がり遠隔操作のオペレーターと連絡を取り合いながら作業する。構台に上がった作業員は相当な被曝するんだ。ちょっとあの日の事をオイラなりに振り返ってみたいと思う。

In order to compliment the remote work, visual inspection is necessary. So, **workers wearing heavy tungsten vests take turns to go up on the platform, and communicate with the remote control operators to carry out the work**. Workers who go up on the platform are exposed to significant amount of radiation. So now, I want to look back on that incident the other day.

あの日は雪もあり、作業としては非常にやりにくくて困難だったはずなんだ。現にオイラ達はあの日の作業はほとんど中止だった。あの状況だとカメラ映像も曇ったり、構台に上がった作業員のマスクや望遠鏡も曇ったり水滴ついたりして、見えづらかったんじゃないのかなあ...?

It was snowing, and the work must have been very awkward and hard to do. In fact, my group canceled almost all the work that day. In that condition, I'm thinking it must have been hard to see. Camera images may have been blurry, and the [face]masks and telescopes of the workers on the platforms may have fogged or covered with water drops.

そこで疑問に浮かんだのは、なぜあの悪天候で作業したんだろ？ って事なんだ。この前の鉄骨落下して以来、3号機オペフロ作業はこれでもかかってくらい慎重に作業してたのに...。オイラの勝手な憶測だけ色々考えてみた。あの日、他の建築グループもクレーン作業は確かにやってた。

So what I'm wondering is why they were doing the work in bad weather like that. Particularly when they have been doing the work extremely carefully on the Reactor 3 operating floor ever since they dropped a steel beam. So it's just my hypothesis. But that day, other construction groups were also doing the work using cranes.

オイラあの日、現場に着いた時「えっ!? 作業やってるよ!」ってちょっとビックリしたのを覚える。でもあとでゆっくり考えたら、あの悪状況の中でやってた作業は全て工程の遅れてる作業や急いでる作業ばかりだった。

I remember I was surprised to hear the work was being carried out that day, when I arrived at the plant. In retrospect, **the work that was being done in the bad weather was either behind schedule or urgent**.

アルプスのカバー取付作業しかり、正門前のJV機能移転施設工事しかり、そして3号機オペフロ作業。全て急いでる作業。それをちょっと考えると技術以外の別な問題点が少し見えてくる。大きく問題点は二つ挙げられる。一つは作業員雇用期間や被曝の問題。こちらは別の機会につぶやくとして...

Installing the cover over the ALPS [multi-nuclide removal system] was one. Construction of facilities in front of the plant's main gate to move the functions of J-Village [staging area for the plant work] was another. And debris removal on the operating floor of Reactor 3. They were all urgent jobs. When I think about them, I see that there are problems other than technical problems. There are two problems. One is the hiring period of the plant workers and radiation exposure.

もう一つはなんとしてでも工程の遅れを取り戻そうという体質。やって見なきゃわからない事ばかりの作業なのに、工程遵守させようとする点。オイラはよく急がば回れコツコツと確実に安全に!って言うけど、作業側がいくら思っても、東電や元請け企業が実践しなければ出来ないんだ。

The other is this determination to catch up on the work that is behind schedule. **Or [I should say] to make [the workers or subcontractors] stick to the schedule when each work is unique in a sense that you don't know what happens until you actually do the work**. I often say slow and steady wins the race, do the work diligently and safely. But no matter how the workers think, it won't happen unless TEPCO and primary contractors put that into practice.

東電は国に工程を提出してる手前がある、企業側も東電に対し工程を出してる。それが遅れるとマスコミや国民に叩かれるというプレッシャーがかかる。そのプレッシャーが直接作業員や少々の危険ポテンシャルがあっても1日のノルマ達成しなきゃならないという状況になって跳ね返ってくるんだ。

TEPCO has the schedule that it has submitted to the national government. Contractors have submitted their schedules to TEPCO. If the work is behind these schedules, the media and people in Japan will attack them, and that's the pressure. The pressure will then be on the workers, **creating the situation where a day's quota has to be met even if there is a risk potential.**

オイラは今回のプール内落下は単に技術だけの問題じゃないと思ってる。作業が安全確実に出来るかどうかの天候を含め、状況判断を誤った結果かもしれない。オイラ状況判断するのは作業員ではなく、東電や元請けがあらゆる状況を想定し責任を持つてすべきだと思ってる。

As to the debris falling into the [spent fuel] pool, I don't think it was just a matter of technique. **I suspect it was the result of the wrong assessment of the situation**, including the weather, to determine whether the work could be done safely and securely. In my opinion, workers shouldn't be the ones to decide, but it should be TEPCO and the primary contractors to responsibly decide, taking all possible situations into consideration.

作業員が「この状況じゃ難しいよ、出来ないよ」と感じたり心に思っても上の人や企業や東電担当者に対し、なかなか言葉に出す事は出来ないんだ。そういう時の作業員は不安だし、いつもの技量を発揮出来ないし、トラブルも多い。オイラも昔は、よくそんなトラブルあって後悔が沢山ある。

Even when workers think "It's difficult in this condition, we can't do it", it is difficult to articulate that to their supervisors, contractors, or TEPCO managers in charge. In such cases, workers are afraid, cannot perform to the best of their abilities and skills, and that often results in troubles. I have done that in the past, and I have many regrets.

作業は一か八かじゃなく作業員が安全確実にフルパフォーマンスを発揮できる状況を東電や元請け企業には判断して欲しい。東電は元請け企業に、元請け企業は下請け企業に、下請け企業は作業員に責任を転換しちやいけなと思うんだ。

The work should not be about taking the chances (gamble). I want TEPCO and primary contractors to make such decisions that would allow workers to safely and securely carry out the work to the best of their abilities and skills. I don't think TEPCO should shift the responsibility to the subcontractors, or the subcontractors shift the responsibility to the workers.

確かに工程遵守、コスト削減、品質管理、安全管理どれも大切。でも、これから何十年も続く作業で、やって見なきゃわからない特殊作業ばかりなのに一般的な普通の管理システムを1Fに当てはめちゃダメなんだ。目先の工程なんか、小さなトラブルでも吹っ飛んでしまうんだから。

For sure, adherence to the schedule, cost-cutting, quality control, safety management, they are all important. **But this work will last for decades, and the jobs are all special which you don't know how they turn out until you actually do them. A general, normal project management system shouldn't be applied to Fuku-I (1F). Even a small trouble will blow up the near-term schedule.**

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Motegi in the Abe administration will turn deaf ears to Happy11311's plea. He **unilaterally declared** that decommissioning of Fukushima I reactors should be done ahead of schedule. For reasons only known to himself. Probably to prove to the world that three melted-down reactors on the wrecked nuclear power plant mean nothing to the Japanese, and taking 3, 4 decades to decommission even the regular nuclear reactors is for wimps.

Motegi is most welcome to join in at Fukushima.

On second thoughts, workers like Happy11311 have no need for a McKinsey management consultant.

To go mind-numbingly normally through an unprecedented disaster is what Japan has proved itself to be very good at. Like the national government telling Toshiba and TEPCO they would need a [permit to transport batteries on the highway](#) (and they followed orders), or telling the US that a crane from Australia was [not licensed to travel on a Japanese road](#).

Remember also that they [completely forgot to turn on the teleconferencing system](#) at the Prime Minister's Official Residence, set up specifically for a nuclear disaster like this. And what were they doing instead? Telephone and fax, and person to person communication which mostly did not happen.

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POSTED BY AREVAMIRPAL::LAPRIMAVERA AT 10:12 PM 

LABELS: [DEBRIS REMOVAL](#), [REACTOR NO.3](#), [SFP](#)

1 COMMENTS:

Anonymous said...

hi admin

interesting post.. reblogged to nuclear-news.net

sorry not to have been covering stuff this last week but appear to be under cyber warfare.. currently using a usb linux system that seems effective, so far!!

and so back to work!! :)

ps

i hate drones too! :(

arflight

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