

Testimony of Former Prime Minister Kan

Translator's notes:

- I have tried to cross-reference the readings of the names that come up to be as accurate as possible. However, the same characters can be read in different ways, especially in names. The names still in question are in **Bold**.
- 総理官邸 or 官邸 for short is literally the Prime Minister's Official Residence and corresponds to the White House in the United States. Sometimes it is translated as Prime Minister's Office. I have chosen to keep it a transliteration: Kantei.
- Japanese is a notoriously vague language and spoken Japanese is even more so. In many situations, in order to translate what was said into English, I have had to "guess" at what Kan really meant to say. If there is the opportunity, it would be beneficial to have Mr. Kan himself read through the English and make any corrections. (This has been a problem even in Japan where the press has "misinterpreted" the meaning of someone's testimony.)

Handle with extreme caution

April 3, 2012
Hearings Report
TEPCO Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Accident Investigation and Verification
Committee
Kohei Mita, Committee Member

The testimony of the concerned party given on April 3, 2012 in regards to the investigation and verification of the TEPCO Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Accident is as follows.

No.1 Testifier, Time and Date of Testimony, Location of hearings, Listeners, etc.

1 Testifier

Member, House of Representatives Naoto Kan (Prime Minister at the time of the accident)

2 Time and Date of Testimony

1:00 pm to 5:30 pm, April 3, 2012
(Break between 3:00pm to 3:15pm)

3 Location of Hearings

Conference Room, 2nd Floor Mitsubishi Sogo Kenkyu Building

4 Listeners

Chairman Hatamura, Deputy Chairman Yanagida, Committee Member Takasu, Committee Member Takano, Bureau Chief Ogawa, Counselor Takashima, Deputy Counselor Kato, Deputy Counselor **Hanzaki**, Chief Examiner Mita, Chief Examiner **Jinbo**

5 Was this recorded via IC recorder?

X Yes
No

No. 2 Testimony Content

Overall measures taken in regards to the accident

No. 3 Particular Items

There was a strong request from the speaker not to disclose/release the underlined portions.

On May 18, 2012, the speaker requested that the following changes be made in the testimony.

(Changes have been reflected in the English translation.)

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Hearing with Naoto Kan

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Thank you all for your work.

From the time of the accident to this day, I have also been thinking about, and trying to verify details about the accident in many ways. The first enormous realization for me was that in this nuclear accident, the Fukushima nuclear accident, the majority of causes were already in play before March 11th when the accident occurred. I became aware of this through my experiences.

I won't go into great detail, however, one characteristic example would be the Fukushima nuclear plant's Daiichi (Number One) site. What was once high ground, a cliff that rose 35 meters from sea level, was cut away to be 10 meters from sea level. If you look at TEPCO's records from that time, it says that this will make it more convenient for pumping up water and even talks about what great foresight they had. However, historically, it is known that the area has had huge tsunamis once every 50 to 100 years and to think that none of this was given any consideration... These sorts of (miscalculations) were endemic.

Also in regards to the nuclear administration, while there have been changes over the years, for example, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency was within the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry which leans towards promoting nuclear power. IAEA pointed this out repeatedly but the situation remained as it was. Various media has reported on this and seeing that, I believe there were many instances where safety was compromised in many ways.

Furthermore, at the time of 3/11, various legal systems and preparations for a direct emergency response...for example, here is another characteristic point, but there is an offsite center that is supposed to take command -- this was probably part of the legal revisions that were carried out based on lessons from the criticality accident of Tokaimura – but in reality, when you had an earthquake and nuclear disaster simultaneously, the offsite center was completely dysfunctional in that nobody could even gather there. In that regards, legislation and organizations were not only unprepared and severely inadequate, but could not respond in this accident.

All of the problems, including this one, indicate that everything set up prior to 3/11 was inadequate. Stated simply, the biggest cause was that nobody presumed a complete loss of all power (electricity.) Everything was done in denial of such a thing ever occurring.

As to events after 3/11, I am sure there will be many questions today, but as the Chairman said, in what ways will this change the future of Japan's nuclear administration? There are many on-going discussions about the Nuclear Regulatory Agency and I would like to share my views on this later.

Furthermore, there is the fundamental issue of how our country will see nuclear power as an energy source and how will we handle it? Also, despite the Fukushima nuclear

accident, there has been a push towards building new nuclear plants internationally, including those in newly emerging nations. I think that there will need to be international rules, including the problem of export and import and am hopeful that there will be suggestions raised about these larger issues through this accident investigation.

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(continued)

There is also the problem of the victims of the radioactive release which the Chairman has mentioned. Not only is this very serious, it has many extremely difficult aspects. I think that regarding this matter, the Chief Cabinet Secretary and those around him were more directly involved in the response at the time, but I do believe that it is a long-lasting problem and one that must be properly inspected.

That is a summary of my views.

- Questioner

I think there will be further questions from the committee regarding that point. Right now, I would like to ask you about the situation on and after March 11, according to my list of questions. It will take some time, so please, take off your jacket and make yourself comfortable. Thank you.

First, about the initial organization, the initial response... Could you please tell us about the sequence of events following the earthquake. The earthquake occurred at 2:46pm on March 11th. After that, there was the move to declare a state of emergency. Regarding the initial action, what was it, or what kind of understanding did you have at the time?

I have heard that after the earthquake, Minister Kaieda reported a state of emergency due to the nuclear accident at around 5:42pm on the 11th. Could you explain what happened prior to that time?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

When the earthquake occurred at 2:46pm, I was in the speaker's chair at the Fiscal Committee of the House of Councilors. After the massive shaking settled, the chairperson announced a recess. I returned to the Kantei and I believe I went directly to the Crisis Management Center in the basement.

From what I remember, I first established the Emergency Disaster Relief Headquarters to tackle the earthquake and tsunami disaster at 3:14pm. We met for the first time at 3:37pm.

Regarding the nuclear plant, at first they told us that they were able to do an emergency shutdown. It was later that the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry was notified of all loss of AC power at the plant. Then, he was told that water could not be pumped to the emergency reactor core cooling system and that a situation known as "Article 15" was happening. I have heard that this report came to the Minister at 4:45pm.

Just prior to that, at 4:36pm, I was setting up a task force to deal with the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident at the Kantei. After that, I heard from the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency among others, but it was 5:42pm when I heard about the Article 15 problem from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. He came to report necessary information about the Nuclear Disaster Law's Article 15 phenomenon (at Fukushima Daiichi.) He presented to me a statement concerning a Declaration of Nuclear Emergency.

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During this period, although it was for a brief moment, I left for about 5 minutes, to attend a meeting of all party heads. I issued a Declaration of Nuclear Emergency at 7:03pm, set up the Nuclear Disaster Relief Headquarters, and we had our first meeting. This is how I understand the chain of events.

- Questioner

During this timeframe, I think you were notified of the loss of all AC power or that the cooling system had failed, at some time before Minister Kaieda came to you at 5:42pm. Do you remember how you heard of this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Around 5:00pm, I remember hearing about the situation from a person who works with the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency and TEPCO, so it must have been Fellow Takeguro.

Since I heard about Article 15 at 4:45, the content of his explanations did not touch on it. I believe that was not reported to me at this time.

- Questioner

Could it be that the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency called Director Terasaka and you heard the explanation from Director Terasaka?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

At first, I did not know their names so I asked for the persons in charge to come. There was the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, the Nuclear Safety Commission and TEPCO – 3 parties including the operator – and, basically, at all times, a representative who was in charge always came. I was often joined by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and, immediately after the accident, by the Chief Cabinet Secretary as well.

- Questioner

When you first called the NISA, what was your understanding about the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I mentioned, I think it was probably Director Terasaka of NISA who first came but I do not recall well how he explained things and what specific words he used. But to be quite honest, even after listening to Director Terasaka's explanations, I could not understand them. So, in that sense, these were not explanations that were made to people who understood the technical aspects of the situation. At least that was how I felt. I felt that I did not really understand what they were talking about.

- Questioner

As Prime Minister, what did you want explained? Were there specific points that you were interested in, wanted to know about?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I wanted to know the current situation. If it's about the reactor, (I wanted to know) that it had lost all power. That the cooling system had stopped. What this meant. Can it be recovered? Where or what is the cause? What do we need to do to repair or recover it? What is our outlook? Causes, the current situation, our outlook for the future... They are obviously experts... These are people from the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency. They are the ones who are most responsible for safety and security within the administration. I wanted to hear how these people in charge saw the situation, what their expectations were, things like that.

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(continued)

During normal times, in other departments of the administration, those who come to explain are the experts and know so much more than the Ministers or Prime Minister so even if we didn't ask specifics, there would be proper explanations. I expected things to be the same here, but the explanations were inadequate.

- Questioner

So you are saying that because they were inadequate, you called the persons in charge at or working with TEPCO?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

No. It wasn't like that. TEPCO is the operator, so, of course I also needed someone directly from TEPCO, the ones who are actually operating the reactor, to come and properly explain the situation.

The Nuclear Safety Commission also gives counsel on matters that have legal relevance and they are nuclear experts, too. Each party has a different role but I did not call someone because another person's explanations were inadequate. These 3 parties were always essential to me. Or rather, I called them because of my understanding that they were necessary organizationally in their differing roles of responsibility.

- Questioner

I see. I think that probably Fellow Takeguro and several other people in charge at TEPCO came to you. How were their explanations? What was your impression – you understood, it was hard to understand, or that it was difficult to get a clear explanation?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

We are talking about just my initial impression, for that moment, but later, many different things keep evolving. I later found out that he was the former vice president of TEPCO in charge of engineering but when he explained, at least about matters like the reactor, I was able to understand. Unfortunately, when it came to what the state of things were, what the situation was like at the moment, he did not necessarily have adequate information. It's a bit different from the Terasaka situation I just talked about.

- Questioner

Are you saying that he did not know the current, real time situation, what was happening on site?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I don't think he had that information. Which is why he was making many inquiries. In the case of Mr. Terasaka, even before that situation, stated simply, his understanding of the basics, such as the reactor, was insufficient. It was not that I felt this way from the start but that no matter how many times I asked I could not understand so I finally asked him, what are you talking about? The media has exposed this, but when asked if he was an expert, he said "no." I could not believe that the person in charge of operations at the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency did not have expert knowledge about nuclear power.

Of course, he was working under me at the time, so in terms of the state of the administration, I am also responsible in a broad sense, but frankly, I was shocked.

- Questioner

Was the order of events such that Minister Kaieda came to tell you that a declaration of emergency needed to be made, during this time when you were not able to obtain adequate explanations?

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- Former Prime Minister Kan

I don't know if you would call it order of events, but at 3:37pm, all AC power was lost, the announcement that there was an Article 15 situation was issued to the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry at 4:36pm. Those under that Ministry, in other words, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency under the METI received the notice as well. Since I, as the prime minister, was the head of the Emergency HQ, it is only natural that they would relay the message to me. So whether I actually received it or not, the order of events would have been as such.

- Questioner

I see. A situation arose for the need to make an Article 15 report, and there was a report from Minister Kaieda of the need to issue a declaration of emergency. What was it like then, what kind of explanation did you receive from Minister Kaieda?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I don't quite understand what you mean. It's the same thing. In other words, I don't recall the exact time he came to me -- I know in terms of around when, but not the exact minute. Following up on all of this later, I know that we started receiving some explanations from NISA around 5pm, but at that time, we were not informed about the Article 15 situation.

I received word about Article 15 from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry at 5:42pm and a written statement was submitted.

- Questioner

According to what Minister Kaieda had to say, he explained the necessity of a declaration of a state of emergency but that he did not obtain immediate consent and that you soon left for the meeting with all party heads. He stated that after you returned, you gave approval. Do you recall what circumstances made you decide not to give immediate consent?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

It is my understanding that when an Article 15 situation arises, it is essential to declare a state of emergency, or create headquarters (for the task force.) Thus, it was not indecision on my part but rather that depending on the explanations, it would make sense to go off to the meeting with all party heads -- as I did, to return 5 minutes later -- listen to further reports and then respond. There was no reason to delay a decision at all.

As I have already stated, a task force at the Kantei was already created at 4:36pm. Furthermore, a task force for the earthquake and tsunami was already in place. Thus, all Cabinet Ministers and government offices were already gathering at the crisis management center in the basement (of the Kantei) to deal with the earthquake and tsunami disasters. Naturally, the task force for the nuclear disaster was superimposed onto it. In that sense, my understanding is that there was nothing delayed here at all, nor was any work delayed because of the declaration and creation of the task force coming at 7:03pm.

- Questioner

If that is the case, when Minister Kaieda came, you would not have thought that you needed to grasp the situation in more detail to consent, or that you needed to understand the systems in more detail before you could make a declaration.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Not in the slightest.

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- Questioner
Please.

- Questioner
Regarding the meeting of all parties, what was the purpose of this meeting?

- Former Prime Minister Kan
When a huge problem occurs, we often have an emergency meeting of all parties. Or, rather, this is something that has to happen. Especially in this case, in which the problem is an accident, not political. There was a huge earthquake and tsunami, so not only do we have to relay circumstances to the opposition parties as well right away, but request their cooperation. Both governing and opposition parties make up the Parliament in our parliamentary system of government so that was what it was about.

- Questioner
What exactly did you relay as Prime Minister?

- Former Prime Minister Kan
As I stated earlier, I personally cannot recall every detail but I spoke about what I just told you. Basically, that an enormous earthquake happened, causing a huge tsunami. This is a catastrophe so please transcend party differences, cooperate and work together towards disaster relief. I definitely said something along those lines.

- Questioner
Did you mention that the nuclear reactor is in a severe situation where a state of emergency must be declared?

- Former Prime Minister Kan
I do not recall how much I spoke about the nuclear power plant. I had not yet received as much detailed information about the situation at that time, and I was only there for 5 minutes. As I answered in an earlier question, the meeting of party heads was already scheduled, and I had decided to go but return quickly, so I left with the assumption that my appearance would be brief. In my general talk, I believe I requested cooperation, but regarding the situation, I myself was not given a detailed explanation and knew little, plus it was not possible given the limited time I had.

- Questioner
I see.

- Questioner
A state of emergency is declared and at 7:03pm, the first meeting of the Nuclear Disaster Task Force is held. At this time, is it your understanding as Prime Minister that the power had been lost and both backup power and diesel generators were stopped?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I think that is what “loss of all AC power and other power” means. When normal power fails, a huge diesel generator is there and later, I heard that it was operating at one point.

It got covered with sea water because of the tsunami and stopped. That was when there was loss of all power. I recall that that was when the Article 10 report was issued. That report came at 3:42pm so I was informed that such a situation was occurring and knew that it meant that in addition to normal power, the backup power was also not working.

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- Questioner

Regarding the situation of the water, was it your understanding that an emergency system was pumping water? Did you have any knowledge of how long that would last or anything like that?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I have attended lectures on nuclear power in general, as part of lectures on science but have never taken classes in nuclear reactors. Later, there was talk of ICs and isolators and suppression chambers but all I had was a general knowledge of electric power. I knew that in an emergency, there was backup power and that would take care of things. If someone had explained to me that there were other things that work without so much power, it might have been different, but without that, there was no way I could have known. So when the backup power went out, it was, now what do we do? That takes us to the next phase.

That is, TEPCO asked us to send generator trucks immediately, and said that they would also be working on this. They said this was of utmost importance so we agreed to fully cooperate. Since I mentioned a bit about what happened later, I should say that I understood the situation a bit more then. Once the generator trucks arrived, although it would not be a regular giant diesel generator, at the very least, it would be able to operate the emergency cooling system for the reactor so TEPCO kept asking us to get them to the site as soon as possible and this continued to be of utmost importance.

It would take several hours, but we were told that would be fine, so I made that our top priority and directed my staff accordingly. Naturally, they would not be transported by land because of traffic congestion and we would need police cooperation. In order to deliver them quickly, we might have to use helicopters. I relayed this information, too. We asked the Self-Defense Forces as well as the U.S. Armed Forces. I have often been criticized for talking about measurements and so on, but it was not about dimensions, per se. TEPCO also said getting the generators as soon as possible was the biggest issue of the emergency, and as I heard the explanations, I believed it to be the case as well. And since this came up while I was on the phone discussing many things, I asked if we could deliver them that way and was told that we could not take them in helicopters.

We're getting ahead of the story, but in that regard, if we return to what we were talking about – that the large diesel generator had stopped -- yes, I knew generally that such a thing existed. But what happened afterwards, I learned from the many explanations from TEPCO and others and gave orders, accordingly.

- Questioner

So, on the night of the 11th, your top priority was obtaining generators and you did all you could to arrange this.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes, that was what TEPCO asked us to do. I think that since TEPCO was the one who most understood matters about electricity, their people knew of different places to ask, such as Niigata or Tohoku Electric Power Company, within their own company... Tohoku Electric Power Company that was near by, or perhaps the Self-Defense Force or U.S. military.

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What we did was ask around places that were difficult for TEPCO to contact. We also looked for modes of delivery. We did not decide on the importance/priority. As I said, we were told that there was loss of all power and they needed generators immediately. If they could connect them, they can maintain a certain level of cooling function so we cooperated fully.

- Questioner

Now, your understanding at the time... Did you have any awareness of what would happen if they could not procure the generators or get some kind of power – how much time you had, how many hours before there might be a reactor core meltdown and things like that?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I have stated before, I did not have any prior understanding about things such as IC or what was at No. 2 or No. 3 (reactors?) But the request came from TEPCO that they needed this immediately. It was in the afternoon, so I wanted to provide them with (the generators) by 9pm or 10pm. As it turned out, I think the first one arrived around 10 or 11pm. Later, I thought, the generator would operate the IC or maybe it wasn't the IC. No.2 and No.3 were happening simultaneously... they are of different types. So you can see that in this sense, I did not know how many hours something would take for anything to happen.

- Questioner

This would mean that you understood from TEPCO's explanations that generators were urgently needed, however, you would learn that the generators arrived but could not be connected, and thus power could not be restored?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

That's right.

To reiterate, in a general way, I knew that if the cooling function stops, a meltdown will occur. Also, in a general way, that the main power was gone. They told me, and this may be a strange way of putting it, that if we can get them some replacement power source, something could be done. That's why we sent power, at that time. For this problem.

We also had problems because of the tsunami and earthquake.

- Questioner

Those situations will probably change again, and we would like to know the sequence of events of such changes. I believe things will start shifting – the generators arrive but cannot be connected easily and power cannot be restored. I'd like to confirm the rough timing of these changes.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

The generators arrived. As for the time of arrival... later on, they were arriving from different places. Roughly 20 to 30 generators, from different places. I cannot recall the exact time.

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(Continued)

But at one point, I heard that they had arrived and remember that not only I but others who were there were rejoicing.

We thought this would solve the problem but after a while we heard that the plug didn't fit and the generators could not be connected. A power company was asked to bring generators and they did. Why the plug could not be connected... I thought why in the world would such a thing happen? In the end, however, that was the reason... or in addition to it... later we saw the switchboard (distribution panel) and it was immersed in sea water. In any case, in the end, the generators did not supply power as TEPCO had said they would and the cooling system could not be restored. I found this out later in a report.

- Questioner

I'm sorry to be asking for tiny details, but regarding the generator trucks, you said it was a request from TEPCO. Could you tell us how such an extremely practical business detail as the procurement of generator trucks came directly to you, the Prime Minister? We'd like to know the circumstances.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I probably heard directly from Fellow Takeguro. I say this because he was nearby.

- Questioner

We think that other main Cabinet ministers were also there, but rather than hearing about it from them, it came directly to you, the Prime Minister?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

The Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry was also probably there.

In other words, as I said before, I went into the Crisis Management Center in the basement of the Kantei once at 2:46pm but I was holding a press conference at 4:58pm and the meeting with the head of all parties, which we just discussed, from 6:12pm. So, I would have come from the Crisis Management Center, later.

In the early stages, we had to deal with the nuclear disaster alongside the earthquake and tsunami at the Crisis Management Center. **(censored)** It was difficult to have discussions there, but in the beginning everyone was involved in both problems. There is something like a mezzanine floor, seen from the large underground so-called operations room, and when we were looking for a separate room, there was a small room on this floor. All the nuclear people gathered there for quite some time because you could see to both problems (nuclear and earthquake/tsunami) from there. At that time, TEPCO, NISA, NSC, probably the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Chief Cabinet Secretary were all coming and going. There were also various heads of government offices. I believe I heard about the generator problem in this room. I heard about it with the others. It was not brought to me, in particular.

- Questioner

I did not know that. I thought it was odd that such a matter would go directly to the Prime Minister.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I said, the underground Crisis Management Center is quite large.

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It is difficult to have discussions solely about the nuclear matter there and we were in the small room for quite a long time.

- Questioner

I see.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I said many times, at that time, although the room was small, **(censored)** there was myself and the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, TEPCO, NSC and NISA... But if the NSC had heard about the problem sooner, they could have connected us to it.

However, it was my understanding that we all heard about it there. Regardless of whether I heard Mr. Takeguro tell me directly that there was this sort of request from TEPCO or from someone who heard that, the head of TEPCO was also there and we all heard about it at the same time.

- Questioner
I see.

- Questioner
Now, I am interested in how, specifically, the people of the Crisis Management Center or you, and/or the people around you, went about trying to procure the generator trucks. Was it actually 20 trucks? Does the fact that so many were able to be procured mean that you or the people around you were monitoring the activities of the people from the various ministries who were at the Crisis Management Center -- how many trucks were obtained, how it was coming along -- or did you leave it up to them? I am interested in the specifics of how the generator trucks were gathered.

- Former Prime Minister Kan
I do not know the full picture. It would probably be reasonable to assume that TEPCO began by trying on their own. For example, there is also the Daini (Number 2) Site. If they had any, they would have gotten generators from them. And they, of course, have their own ties with Tohoku Power Company so I think they went there first. So what we were doing was back up. In other words, we would get the police to treat it as an emergency vehicle when it came time to deliver them. That was our intention.

But, as it turned out, it was information about the delivery -- what time they departed, from where -- that went to the police and such. So please do not misunderstand. The main party for this issue is TEPCO itself. Normally, TEPCO should have been the ones to have had the generators on stand by. Later, we were told many things, like, that there might have been more, at the whatever it was next door. 5th unit, 6th unit, or the fire department... In any case, I would naturally have no idea where anything was. And the various government offices, generally, would not know much more either. What kind of generator truck it was, for example. Our stance was, if TEPCO wanted delivery of the generators, let's fully support them. This would mean mobilizing the police, or helicopters, Self-Defense Forces, or U.S. military. Needless to say, it would be extremely difficult for TEPCO to request help from the U.S. Armed Forces directly. That's what I mean.

As for the generators, what type of generator trucks they were is not common knowledge for me. All I wanted was for them to get delivered without a moment's delay. To put it a bit indelicately, I wanted to grab them from anywhere we could and deliver them immediately. In regards to the generators, the government was ready to do whatever it could and we responded in that manner.

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- Questioner

I heard that there was a white board in the ministerial secretary's office and the delivery of the generator trucks was being monitored.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Obviously, we wanted the trucks to arrive as quickly as possible. What was the fastest way? Where could we get them so that they could arrive the fastest? Is it by helicopter or what? Our understanding was that speed was the top priority and of course, the main party concerned, TEPCO, also said that. We shared that view, too, from a certain point in time.

For example, there was one that came from Niigata. We got information from the police, too, telling us that one got on a certain highway and was heading out there. Things like that. No more than following what we thought was the most crucial matter at the time. It's exactly the same as if we were saying, we have to get there quickly before the tsunami and if we don't people will get swept away by the tsunami, so how do we help, and someone has an idea about the quickest way to get there. Maybe to get the police, or the Self-Defense Force to do it. And at a time like that, if you are involved in solving the problem, your biggest concern would be *when* help would get there. In the same way, we knew we were on the edge of a catastrophe, of the nuclear accident turning into a meltdown, and we were on pins and needles -- how can we answer TEPCO's request for generators to arrive immediately. Frankly, the roads were badly congested and so they had a very hard time.

- Questioner

We heard that the request for generator trucks came not to the room downstairs but the upstairs office, but (**censored**.)

- Former Prime Minister Kan

It was after (?) got on (boarded.)

- Questioner

Since the number of generator trucks increased, (**censored**) when (?) was explaining there, like the people from TEPCO?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

No, it was before then.

- Questioner

It was upstairs, on the 5th floor.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes. Either way, the point of what I was saying does not change. We were not the ones who were trying to deliver generators. They wanted them delivered. They needed help and we were ready to help in any way possible.

- Questioner

Then, let me continue. We are coming to the part where the generators are arriving but the plug does not fit so they are useless and so, now what. Is this when talk switches over to the venting issue?

- Questioner

Is this a separate issue?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I do not know much, including if this is a separate issue or not. Later on, I would learn that the IC was operating then, or that there was water. Many things came up. My understanding about the venting issue was similar...

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(continued)

...that TEPCO said that this was necessary. They explained that the reason for this was because the pressure inside the containment vessel was rising.

Let me make it clear that we were not the ones who decided that venting was necessary.

- Questioner

To get the timeline straight -- talk about the generators came first, then TEPCO told you that they needed to do the venting?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I know that talk about the generators came at a very early stage. Relatively early in the afternoon. They were probably talking about venting amongst themselves, but the official explanation came to us at 1:30am on the 12th, with the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry sitting in. I remember TEPCO and the chairman of the NSC explaining that they needed to vent Reactor 1 and 2. I think that there was probably a lot of debate on the matter within TEPCO, about the pressure and so on, prior to that.

- Questioner

I don't know how specifically they explained venting procedures, such as that this was something they could do immediately. Or it was a process that required a lot of time and effort. How was it?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I have no recollection of hearing anything specific about the procedures for venting. But it's TEPCO telling us that venting was necessary. They did say that venting means radioactive release but explained that it would be a wet vent and so very little radiation would be released. However, no matter how small the amount, it was going to be released

and would affect those on the outside so it is only natural that the head of the task force be informed since the effects could lead to the need for evacuation.

However, we obviously did not know about the procedures, reactor operations and things like that.

- Questioner

Pressure inside the containment vessel was rising and it had to be vented to relieve pressure. What exactly needed to happen? I don't think just venting was going to solve the problem. The generators did not seem to be of any use, so they would start venting... and then pump water, or pour water, or a fire truck would supply water... You didn't get any explanations like that? Was there any kind of awareness of any of this? We'd like to know what the circumstances were like.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

When you say "awareness" are you speaking about me or the ones explaining?

- Questioner

You, as prime minister.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Unless these things are explained to me, I would not know. However, I was not given any explanations like that at the early stages. It was a problem. In other words, I did not understand the current situation, nor could I anticipate anything. Normally, there would be talk about "in this situation, this or that will be necessary," "in that situation, we will need to do that." But there was none of that. In terms of the vent, it was just "we need to vent." Because the pressure was rising. But because it was going to be a wet vent, there would not be too much radioactive release. We're at the limit, what should we do? We asked all the people involved.

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The NSC, NISA, and of course, the main party in question, TEPCO. If the containment vessel exploded, it would be an enormous catastrophe. Although there would be some radioactive release, venting was unavoidable. Everyone was unanimous in that view. Thus, we decided to go with that course of action.

- Questioner

There is something that puzzles me a lot here.

If the biggest problem at that time is the fact that the prime minister is not understanding things, we think that someone from NISA or whoever, a person of responsibility who is with a nuclear organization, should have explained matters to you. As outsiders, we think this would probably be the greatest importance. But hearing your testimony, it seems like

things progressed without any move for something like that to take place. You have continually impressed on us that you did not fully understand the situation and did not get any explanations. Does that mean that you were in a situation where despite wanting to understand things accurately, it was impossible to grasp and were asked to make decisions anyway?

- Former Prime Minister Kan
Roughly speaking, that was the case.

From some point onwards, because there were several people in charge -- the three parties I mentioned -- for example, in the case of NISA, it was their first director. Later, a person named Hiraoka arrived. Many specialists, not nuclear but electric, arrived. Later, a person named Yasui arrived and he was the so-called "real thing." He had credentials in nuclear science. That was probably on the 2nd or 3rd day. From that time on, talk became extremely clear... not just for me...

- Questioner
But for all the others?

- Former Prime Minister Kan
The others were there listening, too, and could tell that this person knew what he was talking about. I didn't care if the person was from a liberal arts background. If so, just come with someone who could properly explain things about the nuclear reactor. It took some time for this to happen, but finally, with NISA, Mr. Yasui came and we were able to get a bit more understanding from his explanations.

- Questioner
This might be a small detail, but if you could talk to us about your own feelings of an impending crisis, how did they develop along the timeline of events? This might sound like an insignificant point, but on the 12th, around 1:36am, it seems you left the underground room and went up to your desk. At that time, what were your general feelings about Fukushima Daiichi? How strong was your sense of crisis? Did you feel that after they were able to vent, things would settle down? Or did you have a stronger sense of crisis, thinking that this could progress into an even more enormous accident? If you could enlighten us about this...

- Former Prime Minister Kan
I knew that it was a huge accident from the beginning when they lost all power. Then, on top of it, the cooling system fails. To begin with, we've never had an Article 10 or Article 15 situation and to make things worse, it was a multiple situation. Thus, regarding the venting, yes, it would relieve pressure momentarily, but the venting does not solve anything. It's like an emergency measure. We didn't think it was going to solve everything.

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If I may return to the previous topic, and it ties into what takes place later, TEPCO who said that venting was necessary was not going about it immediately. I heard that it had not happened yet so I asked why but even then, there was no real explanation, which put me at a loss. I think it was Mr. Takeguro who was there, but he said he did not know. Everyone had decided together that it was necessary. Please go ahead and do it. But it doesn't take place right away. Why isn't it happening? No one knows. This directly ties into what happens later. The communication issue. For example, if the people on site tell us that something will take place because of such and such a reason, that would be alright. But the situation was that they would say, we want to do this and we say, go ahead, but then they can't or don't and we don't know why.

This ties into later events, but the problem was not just with NISA. With TEPCO, there was the head office between the people on site and those here (Kantei.) At that time, the 2 top people from TEPCO were not at the head office. I would learned of this later. What was being decided, how, in terms of TEPCO, was being relayed to me through Mr. Takeguro who was there at that time.

- Questioner

I'd like to confirm the time line. The following morning, that is the morning of the 12th, you go to inspect Fukushima Daiichi. When did you indicate that you will go inspect it, or when did you start saying that you wanted to go? There has been talk about you wanting to go inspect it from late at night on the 11th or early in the morning of the 12th. When did you start thinking about going?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I began making instructions for the inspection around 1 to 2 am on the 12th. I decided that it would be good for me to go and see. We saw a certain extent on tv, but of course I wanted to go see the site, and the situation with the earthquake and tsunami, with my own eyes, even if it was from above.

The other thing was back to what I was talking about just now. Communication regarding the Fukushima nuclear plant was not going smoothly so I decided it would be best to go to the site and speak directly with the person in charge.

- Questioner

You began feeling that communication was turning into a relay game and things were difficult to grasp -- you were not getting a full understanding of the situation and so you wanted to, had to go to the site.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes.

And this overlaps with what happens later, too, but I also felt that this was not a normal course of action. Normally, with the current organizations, it is something the off-site

center should do. The current organization is such that the people involved -- in the government, it would be the Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry -- and NISA with their experts, as well as the local government, TEPCO and the NSC -- would all be at the off-site center making these decisions.

The law has planned for the local task force to function in that way...

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...so if it were functioning properly, these plans would have come from them and finally come to me, as the head of the task force. There would have been proper discussion beforehand and agreement. That's the way it was supposed to function.

In reality, however, the off-site center was not operating at all at least on the 11th. Even on the 12th, it was not ready for those involved to gather. So, all of these people gathering at the Kantei was not intentional but rather, a result of the circumstances. And since the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, chairman of the NSC and director of NISA were all there, this became the place where all the decisions had to be made. If decisions were not being made, things would have gotten much worse. That was the situation.

In this sort of situation... Like I've already said, whether this is something a prime minister should do or not... aside from a general inspection, even today, I don't think it is normally part of a prime minister's job to say this or that about a nuclear reactor. If at that time, information was being exchanged properly and if there were people on the spot who could make the right decisions... for example, the director of NISA, or if the person in charge were at the site... Later I heard that there were people from NISA at the site and if the organization was functioning, I might not have made the decision to go.

Things were not functioning so the decision was to do nothing or to go, myself. And, weighing the options, I decided it was better if I went. I also wanted to grasp the situation with the earthquake and tsunami with my own eyes. Those were the 2 reasons for my going.

- Questioner

Regarding the disfunctionality of the off-site center you mentioned at the beginning, do you remember at what point or with whose report you made aware of this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

If the off-site center were functioning, we would have gotten some sort of word from them. There was no mention of any word coming to me from the off-site center.

- Questioner

To get back to the issue of your inspection, you gave instructions to that effect around 1 or 2 o'clock. Was the final decision made a while later?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

It was just before. Departure was around 6 o'clock. That was my original intention -- to be able to go at any time, at the last minute. Because we did not know what might happen before then, with the earthquake, tsunami and now, the nuclear plant.

I believe there was another earthquake, too. One that occurred in Nagano.

- Questioner

At 3:51.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

An earthquake occurred in Nagano at 3:59am on the 12th. So many things happened simultaneously. So, we would be prepared but we would have to iron out the final decision. That was our plan.

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- Questioner

I understand. There are many views and opinions about the inspection and we must look into this carefully. Did you ever consider the option of not going, yourself. That is, sending someone else. An assistant minister, or Minister Kaieda.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Overall, I think there were many options but in the end, it was my decision that it would be best if I went.

If you ask for the reasons, yes, there was a reason. It is difficult to explain but I had a little bit of a sense about the whole thing. I am no nuclear expert but have taken part in experiments using radioactive materials as a student, so I had some sense about these things. Furthermore, it's not a place where you want to send a young person. And rather than sending a politician with only a liberal arts background, it might be better for me to go since I had a bit more understanding about these things.

In a normal situation, one might think it better to send someone who is in a position related to this matter, but the biggest point was that we were in a crucial situation. The earthquake and tsunami were terrible situations but now we had another -- a nuclear accident that kept changing moment by moment. Needless to say, the prime minister has to deal with all of it. With the earthquake and tsunami -- and this might not be relevant to today's hearings -- I gave the first instructions to the Self-Defense Forces. I remembered how mobilization of the Self-Defense Forces was delayed during the Hanshin Awaji earthquake. I was there at the time. So I thought, let's hurry this up and I spoke with Mr. Kitazawa. They responded quickly and I went on with other business.

The Minister of Disaster Management at the time, Minister Matsumoto handled things over there. It was important, but as I said earlier, the nuclear accident was extremely... Different phenomena... I mean, there were things like the cooling function that go beyond what a normal politician would know. Between the Chief Cabinet Secretary and myself, we felt that he, and the Deputy Cabinet Secretary and others, should be on top of things. I have been criticized for lunging forward but I felt that I was constantly following the situation.

- Questioner

Simply stated, you felt that, radiation levels aside and although there was the risk of exposure, it would be better to vent. And you felt that you should go to the site?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

People were already there, actually trying to control the situation. I thought it was important for the proper person to go and hear what they had to say. No matter what was going on, I felt that the proper steps needed to be taken.

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- Questioner

I'd like to return to the issue of venting. Around what time did you hear that it had not yet happened...or that they could not do the venting?

Looking at the timeline, you went up to your desk at 1:36, and returned to the Crisis Management Center at 5:31 in the morning. Did you hear about it right after that? Or was there a point in time when you returned to the Center and learned of this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Venting had not taken place. Thus, there's no time when I last heard that it hadn't, but thinking back to that day, I believe I heard that it had not taken place yet when I went to the underground Center at 5:31am.

Actually, before and after that, there were instructions or directions from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry to go ahead with the venting, so although they were told to vent, it had not happened.

- Questioner

Did the fact that venting could not take place affect your decision to go inspect the site? Did it make you feel that you had to go?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

For me, as I have been saying, the most important part was to get to the site and speak to someone in charge. Without proper communications, decisions cannot be made. In that sense, that was my biggest objective. Regardless of what was happening with the vents,

the biggest objective for me was to, basically, come to some kind of mutual understanding with the person in charge at the site.

- Questioner

Regarding the inspection, Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano has stated that he warned you that there might be a political risk in it. Do you remember this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

How he stated it aside, I also understood that there was that sort of risk involved. There always is. I remember the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake very well even today -- at that time, the head of the Land and Infrastructure Agency was the office in charge, according to the legal system at the time. Coincidentally, the Liberal Democratic head of the Agency was someone from my own electoral district so I was observing the situation -- would he go there quickly or not? If he went, would he be in the way? But if he didn't, that would also be a problem... I knew there would be differing views.

I do not necessarily remember how strongly the Chief Cabinet Secretary opposed (my going on the inspection) but I felt that it is only natural, given all the circumstances, that there would be many opinions. I felt that the burden of the final decision was mine.

- Questioner

You thought those opinions could arise, whether he told you or not.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Very much so.

- Questioner

Thank you.

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We're moving to the next topic. Please tell us about evacuation instructions, according to the timeline.

- Questioner

You decided to go and investigate the site as prime minister and left that morning. Someone else told us that when you entered the seismically isolated building, many workers came. And you apparently said, to quote, "Why do you think I'm here." What did you mean by that? Was it an expression of your desire to come to a mutual understanding with the person in charge at the site? If you could enlighten us...

- Former Prime Minister Kan

To be honest, it was Vice Minister Ikeda who said that but he misunderstood my intention a bit. I disembarked from the helicopter and was taken to the seismically

isolated building by bus. The entrance is a double door. As soon as we entered, we were told to line up. Please line up. So I thought there was some sort of momentary procedure and got into line, too. Gradually, the people in front left and I was at the head of the line. They were concentrating on doing something like this... Basically, taking measurements. I was not there for something like this. I was there to see the head of the power plant. Instead, I am there with the ordinary workers. That was the scene at the time.

- Questioner

I understand now the context for the remark.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I have already read his report but before I went there, of course I had no idea that there were all these workers at that building. I thought it was a building with meeting rooms or something like that. As it turned out, there were meeting rooms there, but to be told to line up as soon as we entered... And when I got into line, they started going like this, at the back of the line, so I went, wait a minute. I'm not one of the workers who was out there and now back, who needs to have his radiation levels measured. That's what I meant. He heard this from a distance and started saying that I was yelling again and did such-and-such a thing, but my remark was really about the physical situation there.

- Questioner

So, you went into the room...the small room...

- Former Prime Minister Kan

That was on the 2nd floor. I was told to go upstairs. When I asked where I should go, I was told to go to the 2nd floor. The hallway leading to the 2nd floor was filled with people who seemed exhausted. I went up the stairs and into a room. A while later, I think it was Mr. Yoshida and Mr. Muto who entered.

- Questioner

Was was your impression there? That things were confused? You were at the site and I imagine it might have been very much like a battlefield.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

In one sense, that is to be expected. It reconfirmed my feelings that things were terrible. This was literally the front line and the actual people fighting the situation were here. It gave me a strong impression that they were working in a terrible situation.

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- Questioner

Since you just mentioned the site, I'd like to ask you about something you said in an interview in the August 19th edition of "Weekly Asahi" last year. You said there that it was of utmost importance whether directions would get to the people in charge properly or not so you wanted to confirm, directly. You spoke about how meeting and speaking

with Director Yoshida of (Fukushima) Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant turned out to be very helpful later on. How was it helpful? What did this mean?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I first met this Mr. Yoshida there. I do not have many ties with the people from TEPCO. I knew Chairman Katsumata through the Keidanren (Federation of Economic Organizations) but almost no one I knew by name. Director Yoshida was also someone I first met at the site. Later, I would find out that we were alumni of the same university but I knew nothing to that effect at the time.

From what I can remember, it was the Director and Vice President Muto who came. Director Yoshida explained the situation of the vent so I asked him to please carry this out and he said he would.

Through this conversation, I got the feeling that he was a person who could speak about things properly and a good communicator. It goes back to what I was saying earlier. I had heard that Mr. Takeguro also has a technical background but regardless of whether this was his responsibility or not, as I mentioned before, for example when he was speaking about the venting and we told him to go ahead but he says they can't... he could not explain or did not know why they could not vent. In other words, when I spoke directly (with Yoshida?) I at least understood what he was talking about so I felt that here was someone I could talk to. I don't know when or how often, but later on, I, and the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, in some cases the Deputy Cabinet Minister Hosono were in contact with Director Yoshida. I didn't actually dial and make the call but I have spoken to him a couple of times, directly, over the phone.

Rather than this being some special situation, it allowed us, at least it allowed me, to obtain rational, understandable information. In a broader sense... many different things kept happening, like the evacuation issue of the 15th... In that sort of situation... Frankly, TEPCO is an extremely perplexing organization. It was hard to know if any considerations were made that were not technical. Later, I heard that regarding pumping sea water, they deliberated over many things. I would know later how much of a bureaucracy this company was. In some ways, it was more bureaucratic than a government bureaucracy.

What I wanted was... If the person is a technician, then he should explain things to me in purely technical terms. The rest, I can get from a different person. How much something will cost or other matters can be discussed with others. In that sense, Director Yoshida was extremely rational, in my eyes, and I felt that he was someone who was easy to understand. I could take that information to 2 or 3 others, like other ministers or deputy ministers.

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Information could be relayed properly. This would prove to be useful later as many other things developed.

- Questioner

To clarify, you were at the Kantei but there were no heads from NISA or the NSC or TEPCO and you weren't getting anywhere with the explanations. But now, you had finally met someone who could give you a clear explanation.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

In regards to TEPCO, that was the case.

With NISA, it was as I told you earlier.

I think that Chairman Madarame is a real pro, in a certain sense. It's difficult to give a personal assessment, but he has strong convictions. He is not one to bend just because someone argues against him. He has his own convictions and will clearly state his thoughts. That is much better than someone who will not state what he is thinking. I was surrounded by people who wouldn't. Not Mr. Madarame. He turned out to be wrong in his assessment of the hydrogen explosion but at least he was able to explain his opinion that because there was nitrogen in the containment vessel, an explosion could not occur. The others said nothing. I don't know if they couldn't, but they just didn't. This is as different as night and day.

It's different from saying that everything is hopeless in the same way. With TEPCO... I don't know if Mr. Takeguro was right or wrong. There is the possibility that something prevented information from getting to him and I don't think he was in direct touch with Director Yoshida. He was probably in touch with someone from the main office who heard from someone else and things became garbled. I am just guessing.

At any rate, he was right in front of me and since I thought he was the person representing TEPCO, I would ask him many things. Here, it was not a technical issue but a problem of TEPCO's decision-making. NISA did not understand what he was saying. Or perhaps the managerial staff understood. Regarding Mr. Madarame... At that time, he was about the only person from the NSC. It was just after the accident so the support system was not necessarily all in place. I can imagine that each party had its own problems. As Mr. Yanagida just said, with TEPCO, after I met Mr. Yoshida, I finally felt that here was someone who can properly communicate, and speak, especially, about technical aspects.

- Questioner

How much information you had for your decision-making in this enormous problem is extremely important. But while you were able to understand Mr. Yoshida when you met him at the site, the fundamental problem of the flow of information from TEPCO was that whether it was Mr. Muto or Mr. Takeguro, you could not obtain a clear explanation. But Mr. Yoshida had a clear understanding. Why did that not get relayed to the task force at the Kantei? How do you feel about this point?

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- Former Prime Minister Kan

It is very paradoxical. When I went to the head office on the morning of the 15th, I went "oh." In a good sense. They had everything. A tv monitor that was connected to each site 24 hours a day. Everything that was being said there could be heard by all -- that was good. At least between Director Yoshida and TEPCO, there was probably a proper flow of information. When I went to the head office of TEPCO at the site... Hosono and others from outside were there and everyone was on the same wavelength. It was impossible not to be aware of everything. Each person is not on his own phone but on mic (speakerphone). One thing about TEPCO... I'm not 100% sure, but perhaps Mr. Takeguro who was at the site was not given adequate information?

Many things have been said about his personality and what not, but legally speaking, he was in a position of authority. I've said this often, but the way I saw it, if it were a ship, he would have been the captain; on a plane, the pilot. Legally, that was his position. In terms of the response towards the nuclear reactor crisis, he was ultimately the person in charge at the site. So, we can say that the person responsible for the reactors is the director. He also has that authority. In that sense, I was speaking with someone who had the authority and knowledge, the director, who based what he said on that authority and knowledge.

In terms of my understanding of various matters, I felt that I got the straightest answers from him. I think he gave me a straightforward explanation of the state of the reactors and their risks, at least as far as he knew, without any managerial or bureaucratic considerations. This made things much easier for me to understand.

- Questioner

You are talking about being able to or not being able to communicate. What was being discussed was very important and as you and Mr. Yoshida met and conversed several times, you must have felt a mutual understanding of certain issues at the back of your mind -- where values were placed, how you saw things -- and you got a sense of security or relief and a sense of trust. We have heard this from those on the sidelines but how was it?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

But that was the first time I met him and after that, I met him again about 6 months later so I did not meet him many times, as you suggest. I think I've only met him twice, so far. I was there, too, so it's hard for me to comment, but it seemed very normal for me. Answering a direct question directly. If you don't know, say why you don't know. Say you cannot make that judgement. Or, we don't have that information yet. The reason why Mr. Takeguro and I could not have those sorts of discussions is not a question of compatibility. Looking back today, and he said something to this effect, he was a bit at a loss as to what his position was.

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When I read that he said this recently, I thought that perhaps the head office of TEPCO did not have a system in place where they could send someone whose duty it was to relay information to me or the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and properly follow up on it. The problem was not just with individuals but that TEPCO, as an organization, did not have a system that was appropriate for this mission.

It's true that it was a terrible situation, at the very beginning. It was only 2 hours, 3 hours, then 4 or 5 hours since it all occurred. What's been mentioned many times is that even when the evacuation issue arises on the 15th, Mr. Takeguro did not know anything. He, personally. And, obviously, at the time, I had no idea that he did not know. I suppose that was it.

- Questioner

I believe, the way the whole legal system was structured, if such a phenomenon were to occur, TEPCO would report it to NISA, then NISA would report it to the Kantei.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

If it's NISA, then they would report to the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry.

- Questioner

Yes.

So when Mr. Takeguro was called, he wondered why. Because of the way things were supposed to happen, he had questions about why he was called to the Kantei. Were there adjustments made because of the crisis situation -- despite the way things were structured, it would be more beneficial to do it another way, directly?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

From my point of view, if adjustments needed to be made, normally it would be made by NISA, the party in charge. They would say, here's what is happening, how shall we proceed? Or the offsite center should be the ones to do this but if it is not functioning, what should we do in the meantime? If there were adjustments that needed to be made, they would have discussed it with the director of the NSC or the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry.

As for me, I was the head of the task force -- it was set that way, legally. As the head of the nuclear disaster task force, I would naturally want to learn about the situation. I would want to hear what is going on out there. If, at that time, the minister was the one to hear the details and report it to me, that would have been one way of going about things. Like I said, I did not think that this was a normal, presumed situation. But when these things are not happening, and since the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry was also there, it seemed natural for me have them explain the situation to me there.

- Questioner
Let's move on.

You came back from your inspection of Daiichi around 10:47am. After that, you were at your desk at the Kantei -- I think you were writing your report on the venting situation of Reactor 1. Later, in the afternoon, at 3:36pm, there is the explosion at Reactor 1.

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We were told that at the time of the explosion at Reactor 1, you were in a meeting with the head of the Komeito Party. When did you learn about the explosion? How did you find out?

- Questioner
Wasn't that the overall situation? Reactor 3.

- Former Prime Minister Kan
All the members of the opposition parties were there.

- Questioner
Excuse me.
Tell us about when you learned about Reactor 1's explosion.

- Former Prime Minister Kan
The party heads of all parties were gathered from 3pm. It happened during this meeting, so information did not come to me at that time, when I was in the meeting. Someone from an opposition party was saying I might have gotten a memo at one time, but that was a totally unrelated memo which had nothing to do with the explosion, so I did not get anything then.

Afterwards, there were tv reports. This seems to have come in several stages, but someone said that the national broadcast -- in this case it was NTV -- reported on it at 4:49pm. After the meeting, we get word that something has happened but the official report from TEPCO or NISA came much later.

- Questioner
After the tv broadcast.

- Former Prime Minister Kan
Was it after the broadcast? The tv report came much later, too.

- Bureau Chief Yamazaki
There was talk of white smoke rising, and it appeared on tv later.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

At any rate, I first saw it for myself when NTV reported on it. Before that, nothing definite came up -- whether there was white smoke, or the sound of an explosion. You could see that it was clearly an explosion on tv, and that was when I, too, found out for sure that it was an explosion.

- Questioner

Obviously, you wondered what in the world had happened and then, I think, people would begin talking about why this happened. When did you begin to learn that this was a hydrogen explosion? Around what time? This is another small detail but if you would even roughly give us a timeframe on when you learned about this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I was watching tv with Mr. Madarame. The way the explosion happened, of course if it was the nuclear generator itself, it would be an even bigger problem, but there was a high possibility of it being a hydrogen explosion. Early on, I was concerned about a hydrogen explosion, so I asked Mr. Madarame. At that time, he said, no, it couldn't happen. Later, he said that he was only thinking about the containment vessel then, which was why he said that -- that the containment vessel had nitrogen so a hydrogen explosion could not happen. I thought, alright, that's the way it is but as it turned out, a hydrogen explosion had occurred.

So although I was told a hydrogen explosion could not happen, it did.

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That's how I felt watching the tv.

- Questioner

Next, it would be how to respond? Grasping the situation and causes, in addition to what to announce to the nation, publicly?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I feel I am repeating myself, but first, we did not get any information about the phenomenon that just occurred for quite some time. I thought they would naturally have a tv monitor at the site but I later heard from the site itself that there was only what Fukushima TV had shot. Although they heard the boom of the explosion at the site, they did not know what happened until someone returned from outside. I don't know if any information got to them beforehand, but even after television broadcasts the explosion an hour or hour and half later, we get no information about what happened. Because we don't know, we cannot even come up with a disaster plan. Simple put, we had nothing.

I, too, knew an explosion happened watching tv. Beyond hoping that it does not happen elsewhere and general thoughts like that, I had no thought on how to respond. I needed to find out exactly what happened first. We needed a plan, for what to do from now on. But

nobody had a suggestion for what to do next. The information about what happened was inadequate and we could not predict the outcome adequately.

It wasn't at this point, but rather early on, I had been phoning certain people, to personally seek a second opinion. They were people who did not know about the situation at the site so they were general conversations. This may come up later, but as general topics, I had heard about many different phenomena. Yet, the kind of information that came from the 3 organizations closest to me was what I have been telling you.

- Questioner

In this situation, later, there is discussion about what to do with Reactor 1 and I believe there is talk of pumping water. It seems to have come up in the afternoon. Do you remember how this talk came up? How did it develop?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I am slightly confused about when I first heard what, or thought what at the time but I think this is when I thought pumping water was of utmost importance. In retrospect, I believe that it was the fact that pumping had not started at Reactor 1 that made me think there was still water, or the IC was still operating.

Regarding pumping water, there was discussion of various phenomena associated with it at the time. Basically, several reports came at various stages. At one point, the water level is unknown. At another, when they were able to newly confirm water levels, it was above the fuel rods. I received several reports about it being above the fuel rods.

I don't think I heard in much detail about the IC at the time.

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I was updated on water levels several times, in real time. I think for the professionals, it was basic knowledge that if the cooling system was not working, there was no option but to keep pumping in water. It was common knowledge. However, in Units 1, 2 and 3, it was delayed. For Unit 1, it was because of the understanding that there was still water. I think it was working in Units 2 and 3 -- the cooling system was working. And when they were ready to pump in water, there was the explosion and they could not get to it right away.

Regarding the water issue, it was not something for me to comment on. The cooling system was not working so you had to pump in water. It was the obvious step as far as the nuclear specialists were concerned. As for when this topic came up... If I look back, at the site, there was talk of pumping water from an early stage. According to my recollections. But this was not a matter in which I needed to give consent. Thus, I do not clearly remember at what point what kind of discussion arose.

- Questioner

In that case, what might be relevant, is that Minister Kaieda gave instructions for pumping sea water at 5:45pm. I think this report starts a debate on pumping sea water. Is this the correct order of events?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

With the issue of pumping sea water... They were already pumping fresh water before then. Regarding pumping water, what I think I said much earlier was, I'm really glad they had some. Whether this was something I should have said then or not is besides the point, but according to the records, it says that 1000 liters of fresh water was pumped in at 12:52am. Fresh water was pumped several times before there was talk of pumping sea water.

We were unanimous in thinking that once fresh water was depleted, we would have to pump sea water. I also thought there was no choice -- that we had to keep pumping water. The Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry also gave written orders at 5:55pm to use sea water to meet requirements.

- Questioner

You did not necessarily have an awareness of the issues pertaining to pumping sea water -- that there might be problems with sea water, or that there were any risks involved?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I had the understanding that pumping water was of utmost importance. From some stage onwards, it was a very strong feeling. The cooling system is not functioning. When that happens, and water dissipates, you have to keep pumping in more water. In that sense, if we no longer have fresh water, we would have to use sea water. I thought that was natural.

At the same time, I did hear that something might happen with sea water. I might have heard this from the site...

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...or some other time, I don't know. Experts were warning that if you keep adding sea water, it will keep evaporating and as you know, 3% of sea water is salt which will solidify and will affect metal over time. Therefore, if you had fresh water, of course that's better, without salinity, but when you have no more fresh water, in an emergency, you would naturally have to use sea water.

People talk about the re-criticality, but that issue and the problem with sea water are completely separate issues. What I was asking about regarding re-criticality was when there is a meltdown, depending on the shape of the meltdown, it can make re-criticality more or less likely. If the meltdown creates one big lump, re-criticality is more likely. If

it creates a flat shape or is broken up, it's less likely. Whether sea water can make it happen or not is a separate issue, in my understanding. What I asked then, and I asked about re-criticality then, too, Mr. Madarame said it was not impossible. He said that he stated the same thing in the Diet. Recently, he is apparently saying something different, elsewhere, but I asked him several times, others were listening and we have it written in the minutes that he said as much at the Diet, too.

Regarding the sea water and re-criticality problems, no matter what water you pump in, you can stop the possibility of re-criticality by adding boric acid, so there may be indirect effects, but in my mind, it didn't matter whether we switched to sea water or not.

- Questioner

We have been holding these hearings with all the people involved and they all seem to have made the connection between the 2 issues. They say that you also asked whether sea water would make re-criticality possible, and wasn't it going to be dangerous?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Those who know even a little about the technical aspects would not make that kind of connection. I had no knowledge that water and sea water would increase the chance of re-criticality.

- Questioner

It was more the shape...

- Former Prime Minister Kan

It is the shape. Moreover, they had readied boric acid so that re-criticality would not happen. I said a bit about the shape after the meltdown, but if the control rods between the fuel rods broke or fell away for some reason, for example, re-criticality would occur again so it would be extremely crucial for the water to have boric acid since it absorbs the neutrons. I had not heard anything about there being a difference between water and sea water, in that sense. They are two separate issues. Later on, too, I believe they added boric acid to prevent another re-criticality. I believe they added boric acid a bit after they began pumping in sea water.

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- Questioner

Many people have said that the discussion was interrupted with talk about the possibility of re-criticality and your entrance was suspended for a while and then the meeting reconvened in about an hour. Do you have any recollection of this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I said many times, I think it was Mr. Takeguro who said that they needed time to prepare. I heard from various people that it would take an hour and half to two hours. They explained that for 1 or 2 hours water would not be pumped because they were not

finished with the preparations. Many discussions took place during this time. They were happening during this preparation time. Naturally, once preparations were finished, they would start pumping sea water, but in the meantime, should they add boric acid several times or should they pump in sea water first and then add boric acid or was there no need for it at all... I wanted them to make these decisions during this preparation time.

The interruption was really time before anything could start. Mr. Takeguro was not accurately relaying how the situation was on site. Later, I found out that the interruption was not 2 hours and had started before then.

- Questioner

According to Mr. Takeguro, there was still debate within the Kantei and they could not get approval for pumping in sea water, that you wanted them to wait a bit while you contacted Director Yoshida. Was Mr. Takeguro's understanding of the discussion at the Kantei inaccurate?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I really don't understand. I had heard that Mr. Takeguro is a professional in this field, so why would he confuse the issue of pumping water with re-criticality? He's a nuclear expert.

- Questioner

Excuse me for interrupting. I understand many parts of your explanation, but what words did you use or how did the discussion develop between you and Chairman Madarame regarding the sea water issue and possibility of re-criticality? It's a bit difficult to understand this part.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Our meeting was not only to discuss those things -- there were many issues, like the one about venting. So in my understanding, as I stated earlier, our assumption based on what Mr. Takeguro said was that we had an hour and half or two hours. I don't remember exactly how much we spoke about the salt problem. As I said earlier, over time, salt will solidify, that is, form deposits. I don't remember how much this problem was discussed but it did happen.

And it would not have been at all unusual for there to be a debate about adding boric acid or not. Boric acid is to prevent re-criticality. At the very least, Mr. Madarame and Mr. Takeguro are nuclear professional, far more than I am, so I should think that they were aware that these are separate issues.

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- Questioner

It appears that those around you were working under the presumption that pumping sea water and re-criticality were tied together.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

That's what I don't understand. They are far more expert about nuclear matters than I am. When you are pumping in water, simple stated, the issue of re-criticality is all about adding boric acid or not. They already have boric acid ready. I am not more knowledgeable. I asked because I did not know. I asked if they had to think about these things too.

- Questioner

Your question about the shape.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Now it's getting mixed up.

The issue of the shape is after the meltdown. Are we getting mixed up here?

- Questioner

Yes. That comes up later.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

After the meltdown.

- Questioner

We are still pumping sea water here. We are not at that stage yet.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

At least we do not know about it.

- Questioner

What did you know about meltdowns at the time?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I think we're mixing up the order of events.

- Questioner

When did you start thinking about it?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

We might be out of sequence. We're talking about the 12th here, just after it all began. Later, when there were different discussions about the meltdown, I listened to a lot of people.

- Questioner

I'm not sure if this relates to what we are talking about, but do you remember anything about a list from TEPCO on the things they needed and in it was a request for very pure water -- high quality water. Did this strike you as strange, given that there was not enough fresh water and pumping sea water was being discussed?

In other words, was there a request from TEPCO to postpone pumping sea water for as long as possible? Was there any point in time when you felt that? That TEPCO was also working on their own?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Based only on what you just told me about the list, I have no memory about such a thing. However, I believe there was talk of bringing water via a mega-float. But that was only talk. We were in a state of emergency. If there is not enough water, we would have to use sea water. That was the way it was in this case.

- Questioner

You didn't feel any hesitation?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I don't know how I felt at the time but I did not get any sense of resistance, at least not from those there, around me. And I did not feel any hesitation.

- Questioner

We'd like to move to the next question.

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(continued)

Let's end the topic of pumping sea water for now. The next day is the 13th.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I'd like to add one thing. Going back to what we were talking about, we were pumping in water. The point was that this water was going to change from fresh water to sea water. It changed to sea water, and as you all know in the sequence of events, it started around 7-something pm. Mr. Takeguro... It began at 7:04pm during TEPCO's conversations and Mr. Takeguro did not know it at the time. Naturally, we were not informed either. We were under the impression that this would be decided at the next meeting and thought that was the case until later. But, as we found out much later, it had already started at 7:04pm. Mr. Takeguro found out about this and it was his decision, and his alone, that the Kantei had not been informed prior to the fact and regardless of whether it was directly or indirectly, he told Director Yoshida to stop it. Right. Director Yoshida thought stopping it was a mistake but thinking that this was an order from me and the Kantei, he said, okay, we'll stop it. He didn't actually stop it -- he decided not to. I think it turned out for the better.

These sorts of miscommunications or misunderstandings or misjudgments within TEPCO led to, frankly speaking, my being severely criticized. This happened at the budget committee meeting. Even a bigwig politician said that I had stopped it, stopped pumping water and that was why there was a meltdown. I did not understand this at all. First, at no

time had I ever told anyone to stop (pumping water.) I thought they had mobilized much later. Afterwards, I found out the real reason but I had, of course, not told anyone to stop it. I entered at 7:07pm. The water had not stopped. Things turned out alright but the misunderstanding came from within TEPCO. It was something that we could not have done. If, for example, they said, we realized that sea water is already going in but is that alright? It is inconceivable that I would stop it. They are making their misjudgments appear as though they were my decisions. The media reports are still confused. I hope you understand this point.

- Questioner

Yes, we do, but do you think there were any presumptions on Mr. Takeguro's part to make those sorts of conjectures? In other words, it seems as though he was making those conjectures from connecting the pumping of sea water with the issue of re-criticality.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I told you, I don't know. Mr. Takeguro... If it were the president... This may be putting it badly, but Mr. Takeguro is a nuclear expert. It's impossible to be a nuclear expert and not know the importance of pumping in water. It seems obvious. But I am not a nuclear expert. That's why at first, I thought Mr. Shimizu had said it. But it seems to have been Mr. Takeguro. If even the technical staff of that company is making decisions not based on technology but other considerations... From my stance, the word "misjudgment" is... I've got a little bit of a science background and feel that technical staff need to make decisions based on technology, not bend the technology to suit other considerations.

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That's why I think Mr. Yoshida was not only correct legally but as a nuclear expert, he knew that it would be very hazardous if he did not continue pumping water, so he did. I think that is admirable. That someone would think "if I say this, the Kantei might say that, so I'll say this instead," that kind of thinking is the biggest problem. It's TEPCO's nature. People are fired all the time for all sorts of reasons.

- Questioner

We still have many questions but since 2 hours have passed, perhaps it's best to take a break. Let's recess for 10 minutes.

(Break)

- Questioner

We've heard your story up to the afternoon of March 12th. So now, we move to the following day, the 13th.

You called people from Toshiba on the 13th to consult with them on various matters. Further, on the 13th, the situation with Unit 3 worsens quite a bit. I think the situation has progressed to where water could not be pumped in. Could you tell us about this situation?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I believe I asked both Toshiba and Hitachi, a day apart. Simply put... I think Reactor 1 was probably manufactured by Hitachi, but in general, Hitachi and Toshiba are known as manufacturers of nuclear reactors and I was advised to confer with them -- their ability to offer support in this accident, or personnel, or technical support. So I asked them to meet me and their respective presidents came.

- Questioner

Specifically, regarding what did they advise you?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Basically, it was a request for cooperation. TEPCO might have also made the request but there were personnel issues too and I felt that I should, that is, as the nation, we should request cooperation from those who manufactured the nuclear reactors. I believe President Sasaki of Toshiba is from a nuclear background.

I can't remember exactly all the details of my conversation, but we spoke of many things. The possibility of a hydrogen explosion, for example. Someone remembers our talking about this and he is someone who knows about these things so we probably did.

- Questioner

Did you continue to receive advice from the manufacturers beyond the 13th and 14th?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

That was the only time I requested it.

But, generally speaking, I think they continued to send personnel and cooperate with us.

- Questioner

I see.

Next, we have the problem of Unit 3 exploding on the 14th. It was around 11am.

Regarding the possibility of an explosion, since Unit 1 had already exploded...

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... is it reasonable to assume that you were already considering the risks of Unit 3?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes, since Reactor 1 exploded, I was aware of the fact that hydrogen could be leaking in Units 2 and 3 and there was a possibility of an explosion there, too.

There was talk about the window being open or not. They placed a window there when something happened at Kashiwazaki in Niigata, but they said it was shut. I heard many things -- that it had stopped, that the window wasn't opening. If there is an opening high up, since hydrogen rises, it will escape through that opening. I think there was an opening at the top of Unit 2. As a result, there was no explosion up high there. Generally speaking, there was a possibility of a hydrogen explosion but if you have a window, you can prevent an explosion by simply opening it. Something was keeping the window at Unit 3 shut so there was talk about how they should create another opening but there was a fear that a spark from that work could set off an explosion... I don't remember the details of this debate -- when it was or who was there, but I do remember talking about preventing another hydrogen explosion.

At first, I was not worried about Unit 4. There was nothing inside its reactor. That's why I did not understand at all why Unit 4 exploded. Whether it was because of the pool or what. In that sense, I was very worried, overall.

- Questioner

I see.

Now the setup of the overall task force and talk of TEPCO's evacuation... this might be related to the Unit 4 issue, but we'd like to hear your version of events between the 14th and 15th of March. How did you hear about TEPCO getting ready to withdraw (from the site)?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

What came to me was very clear. Around 3am on the 15th, my secretary arrived. I was in work clothes (disaster relief attire) and was trying to get a nap, or rather, I was lying on the sofa at the back of my office. He woke me, saying that the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry needed to speak with me, so I went. I don't know if it was right away, but the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Chief Cabinet Secretary and others were there. The Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry said that TEPCO wants to withdraw, what should we do? The Chief Cabinet Secretary said he also got word about this. I thought, regardless of whether one heard of this or not, how much worse can this accident get? Plant One (Daiichi) alone had 6 reactors and 7 fuel pools. We thought all of them could become uncontrollable so it was an extremely severe situation. There was a huge sense of imminent danger. At the same time, from the beginning, I felt that no matter what, something had to be done. So, I, personally thought that something like withdrawal from the site would be impossible. Even among politicians, there was talk about how evacuation could not really happen -- they could not completely abandon everything. We spoke about this in a reception room which was also a conference room when other members gathered. In that way, we came to an agreement and so I asked them to call President Shimizu and met him.

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So, to answer your question, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry came to speak to me about the matter.

- Questioner

And the content of his report was full withdrawal? You understood it to mean that there would be no one left at Fukushima Daiichi, that it was being abandoned?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes. At least it was the understanding of the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and other members who explained it to me. It was not someone from TEPCO who explained it to me but the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, other members and they explained it to me in such a way, so of course, I would naturally understand it in the same way.

- Questioner

Did you feel that this was a sudden proposal, that such a thing could not actually happen?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

"Sudden" is not the right word. Like I've been saying, it's difficult to grasp the situation. No one has an accurate prognosis. Aside from a business-oriented response, it is difficult to respond to the crisis. It has broadened dramatically. In a fire, there might be a situation where it gets completely out of control and you have to pull out and wait for it to burn down. At a large chemical plant, that might be the very last resort. But with a nuclear plant, it's completely different. Evacuation has a completely different meaning. And that was what I was thinking about. It wasn't a matter of coming suddenly or not. TEPCO may have been seeing this as a normal, albeit huge, fire accident: there is nothing more we can do, the radiation levels are rising and becoming extremely dangerous, so let's pull out. Their decision meant they saw it as a possibility.

I felt differently, but not because the request was sudden. I saw it as an extremely critical situation.

- Questioner

I see.

When you received word about the withdrawal, there was also talk of setting up an overall task force. Did you feel that you needed an overall task force because of the issue of withdrawal was brought up? Or did you feel the need for this sort of overall headquarters from earlier on?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

My thinking overlaps. I have said this multiple times, during this period it was difficult to come to a mutual understanding, including the topic we just discussed. This was another thing I found out about later, like how I found out about someone saying I had told them to stop pumping sea water even though I said nothing like that. Decisions and intentions were very hazy. At the same time, I felt I had to do something, even while in this situation.

And as soon as the information (about TEPCO's withdrawal) reached me at 3am on the 15th, I called President Shimizu. When I spoke to him, he did not argue that they had never said such a thing. I said, you need to take proper measures, he said he understood. He did not argue that he said no such thing. Not once. I was right there in front of him so it was impossible that he said something like that. I felt that he was thinking of evacuation, too.

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I have been feeling that we needed to come to a mutual understanding with TEPCO, and make mutual judgements on the situation. I was thinking about this before and during the time I called President Shimizu. It might be that talk of evacuation prompted the call but it was on my mind from earlier -- that we needed to straighten out our relationship.

- Questioner

As it turns out, TEPCO's head office had a task force, as well as a video conferencing system, and the exchange of information would become smoother. Were you aware that TEPCO had this sort of facility, this infrastructure?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I had no idea. I found out for the first time when I went there.

- Questioner

Did President Shimizu agree right away to the government setting up an overall task force? Or did he hesitate or have any resistance to the idea?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I don't know his true feelings. Did he say, that would be a problem or was there a debate necessary to convince him? Basically, we informed him that we wanted to create this task force, what do you think. I don't remember if there was momentary hesitation, but he said, alright.

- Questioner

We heard that you sent Deputy Minister Hosono as the advance guard...sent him in advance to TEPCO's head office and then later you and the others went.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

At that moment, it was still unknown whether we would create it or not. The problem was evacuation. And then the issue of creating the task force. There was a problem of where to locate it. They were listening up to that point but then I asked the ministers' secretaries if we could create it, legally. They said we could. However, since it was better to get consent, we all agreed and when that happened, we were thinking of its location, too. At that time, we thought even if we create this new task force, if we locate it in the Kantei, it

would appear different but intrinsically it would be the same (as what we already had.) I'm already the head of the nuclear disaster task force and had people in charge from TEPCO coming to me, so that would not change. And -- as I've been saying all along -- even though we have the Kantei, there is also the site as well as TEPCO. TEPCO was what I understood the least so I thought it might be best to locate the task force here (at TEPCO.) We said we want to set it up here, at the head office of TEPCO. We asked if that was alright and they said it was. Then, let's begin our first meeting. Please get ready for it. And when they were, we went. Because we were going to set up the task force there, I had the Deputy Minister go in advance and have them get ready.

- Questioner

After that, you went to TEPCO's head office, were cheered by the staff and got together to discuss plans?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

When I went, I saw a huge big screen -- like the one we had in the crisis management center at the Kantei. There were many people, wearing different arm bands, working.

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I thought that a meeting with more middle management types was being set up, but there was probably a crowd of 200 people in the conference room. It was different from a meeting with the chairman or president. It was not like speaking to a room of 5 to 10 people. There was a crowd, so I spoke to them, earnestly.

Although there is much being debated, I know this is a very difficult situation. An extremely difficult situation. I understand that you have all been through a lot. But no matter what, you need to stand firm and hold fast. I don't know if I said that Japan's future was in the balance -- my phrasing is written down somewhere. Since the issue was with Unit 2 at the time, I asked what would happen to Units 1, 3, 4 and 6, as well as the Daini site if they abandoned Unit 2. They said that if they are abandoned, in several months all of the nuclear reactors and nuclear waste will collapse, releasing radiation. Something close to twice or three times the size of Chernobyl will take place at 10 or 20 plants. Japan will no longer function as a nation. Even if you have to risk lives, you must control this situation -- you cannot just evacuate and silently watch what happens. If that happened, foreign countries would say they'll take charge. You are the people on the spot. You have to risk your life. Even if you try to run away, you cannot. Information is slow and inaccurate. And often, incorrect. Do not shrink away. Get us the necessary information. It's important to read the situation -- the current one, 5 hours later, 10 hours later, a day later, a week later -- and act accordingly. I don't care how much money it costs. TEPCO has to do it. When Japan's future is at stake, withdrawal is not an option. The chairman and president must act with determination. Those over 60 should go to the site. I am prepared for that. Withdrawal is not an option. If it happens, TEPCO will definitely go under.

Perhaps the last statement roused them. That was the gist of my speech. Someone was taking notes -- I do not remember every single word. After that, we stopped hearing talk of withdrawal.

- Questioner

Afterwards, Deputy Minister Hosono takes charge as bureau chief and is proceeding with various responses. Seeing the situation after this, how did you feel about the merits or demerits of creating an overall task force?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I think it turned out very well. Like I just said, at the very least, for Fukushima Daiichi and other sites, it put everyone on the same page.

With phone conversations, to oversimplify, whether you are speaking to the president or chairman or Director Yoshida or whomever, it's one on one. So these people understand, but those people may not, immediately. But in some situations, by raising your voice, everyone can hear. Probably, everything I said went out to all sites. Recently, they are saying they have picture or sound... I never stopped anything, but whether it's a picture or sound, if TEPCO can show it,

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...please do so, it does not matter to me. At least there, we were able to share everything. I felt that immediately. That once here, everything will be clear. What this meant was extremely important.

On top of this, we had an actual person who was completely in charge -- he was my Deputy Minister at the time -- and of course people from NISA, but I also had cabinet consultants and committee members sticking around, as well as people who had a certain level of understanding about nuclear power. Afterwards, this overall task force inside TEPCO also became the contact point for negotiations with the U.S. All information, including that from the site, was centralized. This was the case for decisions, too. Of course, the necessary decisions were usually made by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and Minister Hosono together, rather than me. They had the actual authority to make decisions as representatives of the government, discussing what was necessary with me. If I had anything to say, I would tell Bureau Chief Hosono that I have this or that opinion, what does he think. I never spoke directly to TEPCO from that point onwards. Hosono would talk to TEPCO or NISA or whoever and he may or may not have said who it came from, but he would tell them that there is this or that opinion. For example, the issue of reinforcing the fuel pool for Unit 4. Many people were talking about it but someone came to me as well. When I said, isn't the pool getting iffy, he said, let me look into it right away. Deputy Minister Hosono looked into it with TEPCO. Things started working like that. The result was centralized information and decision

making. And in cases, centralization of information relating to negotiations with other countries. In that sense, it was very effective.

- Questioner

There are many opinions, but you felt that centralization of information and decision making was extremely effective. There must have been other views -- that this would compromise the government's objectivity, or independence from a business. Were there problems like that?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

What do you mean by objectivity?

- Questioner

Being in a position where you can see things from a distance, away from the company. Or making decisions from a different perspective. Some wondered if there might be the fear that these things would wan. Did you worry about things like this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I don't really understand the meaning of objectivity in this matter. We're talking about my Deputy Minister. And the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry is the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. It's not like we were sending them to become TEPCO employees. If you want to talk about independence, it's quite the opposite. I thought of the reverse for a while, too. That is, the government is barging into a private corporation and telling them what to do. How much say can the government have? So I had them look into it. The gist of it was that we were within the bounds of what the current Nuclear Disaster Law allowed. Yet, we chose not to use words like "order" or "direct" but rather "agree/consent."

So, regarding independence... In that sense, each side was completely independent.

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Independence, and what was the other thing you said?

- Questioner

I said independence and objectivity, but basically, it was about making decisions from a position of distance from the business. Was there any concern that it would weaken the ability to make the right decisions, when you are making decisions as a single entity?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I was not particularly worried about the opposite. Rather, I wondered if there might be some rebellion because they felt the government had too tight a grip. I did not think the reverse would ever happen.

- Questioner

I see.

Is everyone satisfied with that?

- Questioner

I know we don't have much time... You said that you were happy with the results but if we could talk a bit about the other side. Basically, when information is gathered collectively, did anyone think the information could simply be brought to the crisis management center, or the government? When you spoke about the location for the task force, you were thinking of having it be at TEPCO but at the time, you said you did not know TEPCO had that sort of facility. Thus, another possibility would have been to create a joint task force at the crisis management center. No one suggested that?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

The order of things is not very clear in my mind, but I can say that from an early stage, TEPCO was sending people not only to me but to NISA. There was a press conference at the time the first NISA director was resigning, and as I was watching this, I had a sudden thought. He was saying that NISA should have sent people to the head office earlier on. Which means they hadn't sent anyone. In other words, there was a NISA inspector on site. He left without doing much. He didn't even go to the head office. There were people from TEPCO, and of course, from our side. I only went once.

In other words, whether it's at the Kantei or the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, they would have to come to us. But in the end, it all comes down to the actual site. If you could run away, that's another story. And putting aside issues of compensation, Fukushima's Daiichi site is responsible for the accident. If we can't share information... that was our real priority. If the government needs to make decisions -- and there were many instances like that -- in order to do so, it needs accurate information from the site. And if we can't set up the task force at the Fukushima site, then the best choice would be TEPCO's head office. If we had set it up elsewhere, the situation would not have changed as much.

- Questioner

In other words -- and this ties into the next question -- information was not being gathered at the Kantei and so to mitigate that problem, the overall task force was created and because of that, information was centralized. I understand that. On the other hand, regarding decisions... information gathering and decision making is now centralized.

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Maybe you cannot separate the two, but one way of thinking would have been to have the information gathering in one place and leave the decision making a function of the Kantei. This thought never came up? It goes back to the topic of independence. Information is gathered and based on it, certain decisions are made. The operator is the

one to do so responsibly, but at the same time, the government advises or supports them and those functions are now combined in this task force. Maybe this was functional in that sense, but when we think about future situations... In this case, it was TEPCO which had those functions in place as well as the location. But if a similar accident were to take place again, would the idea of creating one general task force at the operator's place be the best?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

We're going back to generalities here, but the offsite center was originally supposed to function in this way. Who knows how it might have been without the earthquake, or if transportation was functioning better. But, in actuality, it could not function. In a hypothetical situation like the one you are talking about, would it have functioned if it were in Tokyo somewhere, or the Kantei? One can make many suppositions. But in this specific situation, what we had in place did not function well. As I have said many times, there were many people from TEPCO, many around me. I believe they came to NISA as well. But on the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th, the systems were not functioning well. One problem was not getting accurate information, promptly. I don't know if this is normal or not, but at the time, I thought that if we had set it up at the Kantei, maybe another big wig would have come, in addition to Mr. Takeguro, but matters would not have changed.

Furthermore, this might tie into later events, but as an operator, there were problems you could not tackle solely as an operator. Obviously, the evacuation range is one of them. It is too large a problem for just the operator to think about. Another would be reinforcement, which came up earlier -- making a wall inside the earth to block water. I don't know if they are doing the construction or not yet but it costs about 100 billion yen. There are many issues, such as: can TEPCO really make a commitment to that kind of budget?

I think there are many problems outside of just the problem with the reactors in this sort of severe accident. There were and are issues that TEPCO cannot solve on its own. It might have been different if we had created an overall task force from the very onset -- a task force that had proper communication channels -- but within our situation, where we were trying to tackle the problems for several days and then trying to figure out how to set up a task force, I thought it was extremely effective. In terms of the future, there seems to be a bit of a hesitation in having a system like that in advance at a regulatory government agency, but at any rate, there is talk of having something in advance and I think we should continue discussing it.

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- Questioner

I'd like to follow up with a question about how the Nuclear Disaster Law structures roles. In normal times... or, rather, it seems that the concept is a structure that has nuclear operators as the task force on-site and the off-site center as the task force off-site. At what

stage did you become aware of this structure? Could you tell us? How was it supposed to be structured.

You could see, objectively, that the off-site center was not functioning, so we would assume that later you knew, but from what point in time were you aware of the structure itself?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

If you are asking if there was some sort of systematic explanation, no, I don't recall anyone from NISA giving me a prior explanation about how the system was supposed to operate.

- Questioner

After the accident, after it began.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

All I can say is that I asked about many different things. And in this instance, I believe you asked if we could give those sorts of orders. The Nuclear Disaster Law says in Article 20, Clause 3, the Prime Minister can give instruction to the nuclear operators and offsite task force about matters pertaining to the nuclear reactor.

I asked the things I needed to ask, one at a time. But I don't remember ever receiving any explanation about the system or structure of what was in place in advance.

- Questioner

For example, did you know what exactly an Article 15 or Article 10 report was?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

The Ministerial Secretaries knows about all of that.

- Questioner

And no one explained to you what it was, what kind of structure was in place?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Because there are laws pertaining to it, I got a certain amount of information about the nuclear disaster task force from the beginning. But regarding creating an overall task force, or someone coming to me saying the offsite center is not functioning, what should we do? There were no discussions like that -- we just hit the ground running.

- Questioner

This concludes the questions about the sequence of events.

We'd like to move on to the next topic: the various roles of the staff within the Kantei as well as the ministries and other government offices, and about the information gathering and analysis that went on at the Kantei.

To summarize, you told us about how Director Terasaka and Vice Director Hiraoka and Manager Yasui explained things, but if you could tell us how you felt about NISA in general, if it was functioning adequately, where its problems lay. Also, if you could tell us about the NSC -- its roles and functions.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

From my standpoint, NISA is the entity... the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and the director of NISA who is under him, as well as the people in charge at NISA are the ones who are supposed to report to me. This would be the case even in normal times. For example, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if I wanted to know something about Japan-U.S. relations, I would have the North American Bureau Chief come and talk to me.

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It's the same style. What the staff under them are doing is not something I would see, normally.

So, regarding your question about how NISA or the NSC are functioning, from my position, if we're to consider priorities, mine would be that they had a person who could come and explain matters properly and that they have the staff to support their actions, be able to make decisions and act on them. If these things are taking place, the agency is functioning. If not, then it is not functioning, as far as I am concerned.

In the case of NISA, as I have continued to tell you, there was no one who could explain things properly from the start. And even if it's hypothetical, if they were able to anticipate anything -- things might be like this; in this case, we should do that; in that case, this other way would be better and so on. But they could not anticipate anything. In this sense, NISA was not functioning at all, at least on my side, in the beginning. Seeing many media reports, it seems that there was a lot of debate going on in their circle. But if that was the case, then the person who is responsible should have accurately assessed the situation and come to me... It doesn't matter if I am the one who should make the decision or not. Later, the SPEEDI issue will come up, but if they were doing this they would have come to me or the Chief Cabinet Secretary but they didn't. So, from my point of view, at the beginning, things were not functioning. At my level. I don't know about what was going on below that.

I have already spoken about the NSC but I had Chairman Madarame come to me at an early stage and we spent much time together in various situations. I was able to hear many of his personal opinions. Much of it was very helpful. But how much of it was supported, by the organization... Rather than feeling I did not really understand, I felt that Mr. Madarame had a difficult time. Over there, too, they have several specialist or academic groups plus 100 to 200 staff members. I do not know much support they gave to the advice from the chairman, vice chairman or committee member, but the advice was

very helpful. For example, the issue of evacuation ranges. We based all of our decisions on advice from the NSC.

- Questioner

Some of the problems of NISA appeared in the intermediate report. We believe that this, along with comments and assessments about the various regulatory agencies in the final report will be valuable material for future discussions within the committees. We'd like to ask you if you had any thoughts on why NISA did not function adequately, or the environment which prevented discussion from happening. Also, you felt that the support for the organization of the NSC was inadequate -- do you have any views on how it should be?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

That is an extremely large problem. There are individual problems, personnel issues, in addition to much more basic problems.

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If we are to expand on this, I think many things influence it, such as the so-called Nuclear Village (Genshiryoku Mura). It doesn't make much sense to talk in generalities. I will give 2 or 3 specifics.

One is NISA's position. In either 1999 or 2000, when the Agency of Science and Technology merged with the Ministry of Education, the Nuclear Safety Bureau within the Agency of Science and Technology joined with the something-or-other Safety Bureau of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry to become NISA. While it was under the Agency of Science and Technology, it was also promoting nuclear power, but now, instead of 2 systems, it became one within the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. I cannot think of NISA doing something underhanded, nor could I ever condone it. Obviously it shouldn't happen anywhere, but that an organization that is supposed to supervise safety could do something to distort safety, cannot be condoned. The fact that a government agency for nuclear safety is within the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is behind this sort of thing. And that one of their roles was the promotion of nuclear power. There was a structural problem in the organization. While he may not be bad as a person, it was the Hashimoto Cabinet at that time that sold the idea of consolidating ministries and government agencies as "reform." The number of government offices was reduced around this time and in the end, the number of ministers, too, dropped from 20 to 17. We're still having a few difficulties today. You decrease the number of ministers and government offices, but the workload does not decrease. And now, with these massive ministries and agencies, roles and responsibilities become unclear. We are going to change NISA from its foundations when we create the Safety Regulatory Agency and in this sense, must plan very carefully.

Personnel is another issue that will overlap with what happens in the future. I assumed that there were quite a few nuclear specialists at a place like NISA. I do not have a fully accurate picture yet but having had many talks about this, I feel that perhaps they had too few real nuclear reactor professionals. I was asking about this the other day. There is a certification for Chief Nuclear Reactor Engineer. The director and those directly under him, working for TEPCO or another power company, would have this qualification. When I asked if there were people like that at NISA, I was told by someone that maybe there was one person with that kind of credential and that "I took the written exam but you need 6 months on-site time, so I don't have it." And this person was someone who was quite knowledgeable.

This came up several times already, but to compare it to the NRC in the U.S., it wasn't so much a difference in form but a problem with the collective ability in this field. NISA clearly did not have the depth. This is said often, but the power companies clearly have more depth. It's like having the other side make up the questions and then provide the answers. It's pointless to go on about this, but I think there was definitely this problem.

It's hard for me to make an assessment of the NSC. I heard that it originally branched from the Atomic Energy Commission. What position is best for it, henceforth? One section of the new bill is about the regulatory agency becoming independent of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and changing the name from the Nuclear Safety Commission to...

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... the Nuclear Research Committee, but it no longer has the role of advising the Prime Minister. I don't for a moment think that it is necessarily a good thing for all authority to be concentrated with the Prime Minister. A situation where authority is centered on the Prime Minister, like this one, is an exception. Whether the Prime Minister had the authority or not is besides the point. At the very least, you want sound competence and someone with authority for the time when push comes to shove. Later, if we have time, I'd like to talk more about this, but there is a difference between normalcy and emergency and in the way things were set up, unfortunately, not only NISA but the NSC was also inadequate.

- Questioner

Thank you.

Everybody alright?

We have another related question. We've written about it in the intermediate report. The crisis management for the nuclear plant was basically being handled on the 5th floor, with analyses and decisions being made, while the task force for the tsunami was basically being carried out by the emergency team in the basement. Mention has been made that there was a lack of communication and understanding, especially regarding

evacuation. What are your thoughts and impressions regarding cooperation or information sharing with the emergency team in the basement?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

If I may begin by talking about the principles... It was my understanding that in the emergency team, the director of crisis management was the head person in charge and the team was made up of top level personnel from the various ministries and agencies. If they are seeking a decision from the Prime Minister or Chief Cabinet Secretary, the proper person would go and report or discuss this with them.

Physically, we are talking about the 5th floor and basement, but in most cases in which I would go down to the basement, it was mainly to thank and encourage the staff who were all holed up there after the earthquake and tsunami, working without sleep. Minister Matsumoto was holding down the fort the entire time. In all practicality, it was not structured so that the Prime Minister would be a part of any debates the emergency team was having. When people talk about the "5th floor" or "underground" in this nuclear accident, in a sense it means that because the offsite center was not operating, those involved gathered on the 5th floor of the Kantei and essentially did what the offsite center was supposed to do. If necessary, the emergency team could report or discuss whatever they wanted, as often as they needed because we were in the same building. There were people from NISA among the main members of the team so to say after the fact that such and such was inadequate... you cannot say everything was wrong, indiscriminately, but the characteristics were completely different. The emergency team had its roles and functions. If they needed to bring a matter up to the Prime Minister or Chief Cabinet Secretary, all they needed to do was bring it up. If they couldn't it had nothing to do with the fact that they were in the basement level or far away or whatever.

- Questioner

So the problem was not in the separation.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

And, wouldn't it be strange if I were a part of the emergency team? Generally, politicians are not part of such a team.

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Our natures are different. Since we were on top of each other, physically speaking, in actuality, there were many issues. But if cooperation was inadequate, it was not because of its form. All they needed to do was just cooperate. If they needed information that we had, just come to us. Or ask whoever to go.

- Questioner

I see.

- Questioner

Just one more thing, if I may.

There is a small room on the mezzanine floor of the Crisis Management Center. Several important meetings took place there, too. What I'd like to hear is, not so much what he is like as a person, but about the crisis management director's role as leader of the emergency team. It is, in part, to gather all relevant information from the different government entities that are divided vertically and distribute it accordingly. Listening to various testimonies, I wonder if it was functioning adequately, if there could not have been a more organic kind of cooperation.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

One is a difference in natures, characteristics. We are trying to handle 2 different things. I.e., the nuclear accident is completely different in nature from the earthquake and tsunami. I don't know in detail who was dealing with what in the emergency team, but the people dealing with the earthquake and tsunami probably had some kind of experience with it. We've had many disasters, like the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake. And yes, there were many different problems, from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and beyond. Of course, the police, too. But the nuclear accident was a first. Also, the problem of radiation victims was going to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries but in the beginning, the target was TEPCO. So, in general, they are a bit different in nature. How the director of crisis management dealt with the different tasks, I do not know. However, in terms of the nuclear disaster, in many cases I had the director join us in meetings and share decisions with us.

- Questioner

Then, at the time, in your mind, you saw the emergency team as the one to deal mainly with the earthquake and tsunami?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Well, I was observing everyone down to the bureaucrats but as for the various organizations under them that handled practical details... Some people told me I made too many task forces, but since the natures of the disasters were different, I may have been differentiating the roles in my mind. However, I do not know in great detail what role the group known as the emergency team was fulfilling, nor to what extent they were handling what.

But I do think that its functions were somewhat more crucial to the earthquake and tsunami. Of course, they were important to the nuclear crisis, too, but in the beginning, that was more a problem concerning TEPCO's reactors rather than connections between the government agencies.

- Questioner

Does that answer your question?

Then, we are done with this topic. We'd like to discuss our next topic, appointment of consultants...

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When the plant employees were called to the Kantei-- we've already heard about the plant manufacturers -- you appointed several people to be consultants and asked them for advice. Since there are things we do not know about the roles assigned to each, if you could give us a rough explanation of the roles they served?

Specifically, we have heard that Mr. Kosako, Mr. Hibino, Mr. Noboru Yamaguchi, Mr. Aritomi of Tokyo Kogyo University, Mr. Masaki Saito and Mr. Hiroshi Tasaka of Tama University Graduate School were appointed to be advisors to the Cabinet Secretariat. We'd just like to ask what their roles were or what you had them do. A brief explanation is all we need.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Regarding the nuclear accident, I believe they were those you named.

There were also others, not appointed as consultants, who advised me from time to time.

Mainly, they were nuclear reactor experts among this group, like Mr. Aritomi and Mr. Saito. I think Mr. Kosako was an expert in radiation exposure. Each person was from a slightly different field. As far as I was concerned, in general, I would seek out the person who had the most knowledge about a certain issue I had questions about.

- Questioner

Was there anyone who was particularly of value, who was particularly helpful? Or someone who was not? If you thought there were, could you tell us about them?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Of course, I asked about about many facets, but basically, they were all very helpful.

When Mr. Kosako resigned in the midst of it all, it caused a stir at the press conference. Someone said, here's this really excellent person, so I asked him to be a consultant. I asked him to join the discussions because he had an outstanding career. Whether we came to good or bad conclusions... these discussions were very technical, for example, talking about 20mSv or 100mSv, so these discussions should be done between the experts and they should come to some kind of agreement. That is what I thought. But in the process of reaching a consensus, his suggestion was not taken so he was offended by the government and quit. I thought we had a place to properly discuss problems, but in any case, we did have that situation. Regarding the others, they mostly advised me directly and I found it very helpful in many different ways.

- Questioner

I think it's quite common to receive advice from the Prime Minister, especially personal advice. In Mr. Kosako's case, there seems to have been various opinions about suggestions or policies pertaining to the country and government agencies involved, so

there might have been some concern about confusing the chain of command, or the need to take care not to complicate matters.

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Did you make any considerations in this regard?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I said just now, it turned out that there were a few things, including those who resigned.

I think that this is more an issue with radiation exposure and it was not something about which I had direct say. I was more involved with the reactor. The issue of radiation is something that would have gone to the Chief Cabinet Secretary's department. There is a politician there who is the protege of Mr. Kosako and he came to tell me that his mentor would be perfect for the position. I said if that is so, then we should appoint him. So, yes, I am responsible for appointing him.

However, he was not there to advise me. He was a consultant, but not to advise me, personally.

- Questioner

I see.

Are you satisfied on that point?

Then, let's move to the next question.

It is about the situation regarding accident management, and the division of roles with the operator -- the big picture. Do any of the committee members have questions? About the division of roles with the operator? Alright.

Then, let's move to the 2 evacuation related matters. In numbers 1 to 6 here, we see the range keeps expanding and there are many instructions. If we could summarize...

The first evacuation instruction comes at 9:23pm on the 11th and it is for a 3km radius from Fukushima Daiichi. This relates to an earlier question, but the decision for evacuation instructions should have come from the offsite center. Instead, at this stage, the evacuation range is being debated at the Kantei. Should we take this to mean that the instructions were not coming up from the offsite center so the Kantei had no choice but to take leadership in this matter?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I have been saying, there were no explanations in the beginning about things like who does what. At 9:23pm... the vice minister arrived on site at around midnight so obviously he has not arrived yet and most members have not gathered yet at the time. If someone

said, here's the situation, so let's do it this way, I would have remembered. But there were no explanations like that. And yet, as the head of the task force, I was in a position of responsibility. When I asked how it's going, they told me the situation of the nuclear reactor -- that the cooling functions had stopped, pressure was rising, they need a certain amount of power.

If the offsite center had said that they were unable to do their job, if someone had come and explained it properly, we could have decided what to do. But they didn't and as the final responsibility...

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... lies with the head of the task force, I had to make the decision based on the opinions of the 3 parties involved, that is, TEPCO, NISA and NSC, and with the experts, determine the range of evacuation.

Regarding our relationship with the offsite center, as I mentioned earlier, at this time, we did not receive any explanations from them.

- Questioner

I see.

In number 2, we see that the range has expanded to a radius of 10km from Fukushima Daiichi. This takes place the following day, at 4:45am on the 12th and is before you go to inspect the site. This was when they could not vent Daiichi. Can we take it to mean that the inability to vent was creating an increasingly dangerous situation so you expanded the evacuation range?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes, for the most part.

What complicated matters a bit was that while some thought that the more you widen the range, the safer it will be, there was the problem of actually being able to evacuate. As you are aware, the first one comes at 9pm on the 11th and this is in the midst of the vent problem. However, while there is the vent problem, if we expanded the evacuation range to 10km at 12 midnight, do we have the means to evacuate everyone to a place more than 10km away. These things were being handled by the Chief Cabinet Secretary 's department and crisis management director with the police, excuse me, with people like the Chief Cabinet Secretary.

The NSC was relatively... they had seen cases overseas and could say what range was adequate. My understanding, based on their advice, was that the wider the range, the safer. However, as I just mentioned, can they be evacuated, is there a place for them to go... These matters were being handled by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and those around him.

- Questioner
I see.

So when the report came that things were in place, including locations for the evacuees, you decided on the 10km radius and this was accepted. Is this the order in which the decisions were made?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

But some have pointed out that from the resident's point of view, even this was inadequate. So were we well-informed about everything we were doing? Not everything was ideal -- we had to do our best within the situation.

If an explosion is imminent, we would be forced to tell everyone to get out, whether there was a way out or not. We had to consider things like immediacy. Not everything was properly arranged. One had to consider proper protocol while also thinking about the dangers from the effects of venting, and in the worst case, the dangers of the containment vessel collapsing. Simultaneously, we were thinking about evacuation. We were definitely thinking of both issues.

- Questioner
I see.

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In our time sequence, the next event is at 7:45am the following day. This takes place at Fukushima Daini. There are evacuation instructions for a radius of 3km from Daini but this is right during your inspection. Were you informed of these instructions while you were en route to Fukushima Daiichi?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes. This was probably...done by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry? With Daiichi and Daini... Daini never got to that point, but with what experience we got from Daiichi... the decisions were actually handled by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry or Chief Cabinet Secretary, then, approved by me. That was the process.

- Questioner

Later, that afternoon at 5:39pm, the range at Daini is expanded -- there is a 10km radius evacuation range. Should we take this to mean that after the hydrogen explosion at Reactor 1, you feared the same could happen at Daini and so expanded the range?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Basically, the sequence of events at Daini are relatively delayed, compared to Daiichi. So, yes, we thought that a similar danger could develop at Daini and expanded the range to match that of Daiichi.

- Questioner

The range at Daiichi will increase to 20km, about 40 minutes later, at 6:25pm. But what does not make sense to me is that the range for Daini was determined for a 10km radius while at Daiichi, it's 20km -- there's a bit of a difference. If the new range was based on the explosion at Daiichi, you could have discussed both sites at the same time, but there's a time lag. Do you remember why this was?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Daiichi was so extreme, I don't remember the discussions about Daini in much detail.

Before this, at 3:36pm, there's a hydrogen explosion at Reactor 1. This was extremely shocking. I mentioned this before, but while the notification of the explosion came late, we had this in mind. With the situation of the hydrogen explosion, we widened the range at Daiichi to 20km.

However, regarding Daiichi and Daini and why we weren't discussing them at the same time, my memory fails me.

- Questioner

We have heard that regarding the 20km zone at Daiichi, talk of re-criticality came up as well as pumping in sea water, as you also mentioned. Right after this discussion, there was mention of perhaps needing to expand the zone and that's when talk of expanding it to 20km came up.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

And who said that?

- Questioner

People who were at the meeting. We spoke with people like Deputy Minister Hosono and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuyama. There was debate about pumping sea water and re-criticality and when that discussion was ending, the issue of needing to expand the evacuation range at Daiichi came up and it was expanded. We heard this was the timing for the decision to increase the range to 20km. You said that the hydrogen explosion at Reactor 1 was extremely severe. If the people at the meeting had a strong sense of fear or danger, it would seem more natural to expand the Daiichi range and then...

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...also expand the Daini range. Instead, Daini is expanded to 10km and AFTER that, Daiichi is expanded to 20km. Something doesn't feel right.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Regarding the balance between Daiichi and Daini... I was not thinking consciously about any sense of balance. Instead, for example, the US and other countries start with an evacuation zone of 50 miles and obviously we had that kind of information at that point. And as I said earlier, we always had the idea that we wanted a range as wide as possible. The situation is worsening, after all. So while we could talk about some things in a cause-and-effect way -- this happened, so we did this; that happened, so we did that -- there were also many people who generally thought things were much more dangerous. Also, we were considering issues such as how to deal with the evacuation, how to deal with the local government.

So, I do not remember much about the concept of balance between the Daini site and Daiichi site. The Chief Cabinet Secretary and those dealing with shelters were making arrangements with the local government -- and maybe the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary too. I, on the other hand, was conscious of trying to maintain safety as far as possible.

- Questioner

I see.

Regarding the background for the expansion to 20km from Daiichi, some have explained that they thought it was because of the possibility of re-criticality. Did you have any knowledge of this? Did you know that the reactor situation was worsening because there was the hydrogen explosion? I just wanted to confirm this.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

You may be thinking that the word "re-criticality" might have provoked me, but generally speaking, re-criticality was extremely unlikely to occur. Of course, accidents, too. You couldn't have accidents like this all the time. So it wasn't that re-criticality was likely. Re-criticality is an extremely frightening situation. The question was not "Is it likely to happen?" but "How can we be prepared so that it doesn't happen." As I have repeatedly said, I am not an expert, but to prevent re-criticality is not that special a thing, normally. However, an explosion actually happened. Pressure is rising. If the containment vessel actually collapses, it will be a catastrophe, so this figured into the evacuation range. Re-criticality and range two completely different matters in my mind.

- Questioner

I see.

- Questioner

You said that you were thinking of keeping things as safe as possible. And on this day, you decide to make the evacuation range a radius of 20km from the Daiichi power plant. Did you quickly decide that 20km was appropriate, or did the decision come after much debate?

According to various records, Committee Member *Hisakida* (?) of the NSC said that it was not necessary to set the range wider than 20km...

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...and so, in the end, it was set at 20km. Since you stressed how you were thinking of safety first, was 20km really right?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I have repeated many times, it is true that I based my decisions on advice from the NSC. So, that was Mr. Hisakida. At all times, their advice was a factor in the final decision. Naturally, I listened to many experts, but there was a strong feeling that we needed to maintain safety, as far as possible. On the other hand, the simulations that the NSC had were for 8 and 10km ranges. They said there weren't any for this range even overseas, that the offsite center only has maps for a 10km range and there is no map for a 20km range. Our range far exceeded their assumptions. We had no simulations to see if we could actually handle this properly or not.

Rather than argue loudly over all of this, while we had to try to maintain as much safety as possible, the experts were saying this was adequate and then, there was the problem of how far could we carry out an evacuation, in an orderly manner. Also, I do not know many specifics, but the local government... If the range is expanded beyond a certain range, then the prefectural government has to be involved and that complicates matters further. In terms of confusion and chaos, when the range expands greatly... it would be one thing to escape in a desert, but... A lot of information came in and we took consideration of it and then I made the final decision. But I was not necessarily involved in every single detail of this process.

- Questioner

Item 6 in the section about evacuation says that at 11am on the 15th, the range for sheltering indoors was widened from a 20km to 30km radius from Daiichi. There was the explosion of Reactor 4 and problems with Reactor 2 on the 15th. Did these things factor into the decision-making? Can you tell us how it came about?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I have continued to tell you, the most knowledgeable person in this matter is probably the Chief Cabinet Secretary and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary. In general, the evacuation was handled between the two of them. It is my understanding that it was the worst situation around this time. Different things were exploding one after another, no one could predict what was going to happen, and probably the direction for sheltering indoors came from a strong sense of crisis. It depends on the time, but I believe their decision came from determining that it was better to shelter indoors, that at least it would be safer than being outside when radioactive matter was raining down. The Chief Cabinet Secretary and his department were mainly handling this and I was not so involved.

- Questioner

The decision was for sheltering indoors within a 30km radius, but someone suggested actual evacuation for the 30km radius? We also heard that TEPCO explained the results of a simulation for the dispersal of radioactive matter and how it would not exceed 20km but because it was such a terrible situation with multiple reactors, some thought this was not adequate?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

What was in a bad situation?

- Questioner

Multiple reactors. Some have told us that you wanted to rethink the whole thing because of that.

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- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I've already stated, my feeling was to keep things as safe as possible, so it is very possible that I said that -- that they should consider these problems as well.

But as I've repeated, overall, we wanted to have a range that was safe enough. Experts might say it was excessive, that such a wide range was not necessary. Or perhaps in the short term, it was safer to shelter indoors. From the local government and those onsite... frankly, the local government had a cautionary attitude towards expanding. However, since I was not too directly involved, I think it is better for your investigation to be asking those who were.

- Questioner

Thank you.

The last item on the evacuation list is the approval of the planned evacuation zone and emergency evacuation standby zone. This was being examined from around the end of March and after investigation, a general plan was made on the 22nd of April. On April 11th, the basic idea was announced by the Chief Cabinet Secretary. We think we understand the details of how it came about but if there is anything you could add from your standpoint. About how the decision was made or what the plan was, if you gave any orders or have any particular awarenesses about the issue at hand.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

This is the stage where we get into the SPEEDI results and such. Once again, I am repeating myself but it was all done centered around the Chief Cabinet Secretary's division. I received the report and gave final approval but I was also consulting with those onsite and involved in many things and, ultimately, I was also satisfied with the report and consented.

- Questioner

I see.

We only have 30 more minutes and must sum things up. Let's put aside the issue of raising radiation exposure rates and move to public relations.

What we'd like to ask you first is regarding NISA's press conference at 9am on March 12th that included the possibility of a reactor core meltdown. Mr. Nakamura of NISA held the press conference at around 9am or noon on the 12th and spoke about the possibility of a reactor core meltdown, or that a meltdown may be happening. Later, Secretary Sadamori said that he should not have said such a thing without having informed the Kantei first and instructed them to do so. Did you know about this then or did you hear about it later?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

All explanations to the public was nearly 100% done by the Chief Cabinet Secretary -- that is the way it should be in our system -- and I am not sure about Nakamura's statement. Was I aware of it then? I heard about it later when it became a problem but I do not have the details about how it all happened. I, and I believe the Chief Cabinet Secretary too, knew about the possibility of a meltdown from a relatively early stage, so it was not that there was a definitive difference but whether it was during that time or a different time...

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...but we say all sorts of things, and if it's even slightly wrong, the press will attack that furiously -- it is in their nature -- so although I tried to get us to do a joint press conference at one time, the possibility of creating more anxiety -- so many things were happening -- was a concern and that is probably why we tried to unify the announcements to a certain extent.

I don't think there was anything fundamentally wrong, at least not at this stage. About their admitting to or not admitting to a meltdown is a slightly different matter that happened quite a bit later, but at this stage, this is how I felt.

- Questioner

I don't think it is as much an individual issue as it is about how NISA handled the press at the time, or how it dealt with journalists and public relations. We are interested in your perspective. As Prime Minister, did you think it was good or was it inadequate. I am sure you have many opinions on this matter.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

As I just said, especially in regards to public relations, although they were obviously infrequent, I was involved in it as well. Basically, it was being originally handled by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and I personally felt that I needed to be concerned about the

content. The Prime Minister shouldn't be so... It's a bit difficult to say but when a Prime Minister says something, it's hard to revise statements later. I was watching those under the Chief Cabinet Secretary, in hopes that they would take care of it properly. It wasn't anything more than that.

- Questioner

Our next item is about how TEPCO provided information, or how they shared their information. On the 12th, when there was the explosion at Reactor One, although that information had not reached the Kantei yet, TEPCO released a photograph of Reactor One post-explosion that evening. It seems that the Chief Cabinet Secretary was very angry about this. Do you have any recollection of Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano telling you that there was a problem with TEPCO's information sharing structure? There were several members of TEPCO there and it seems that Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano reprimanded them in front of you. Do you remember any of this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

In general, there were many problems as I have said many times. Such as TEPCO's information sharing, or how there was no report from them for a very long time after the explosion. It is not at all unnatural that Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano would be aware of these problems too. I don't recall exactly how he and I spoke about it, but it was not at all strange to me that he should feel that way.

- Questioner

It seems that President Shimizu came to the Kantei around noon the next day. There has been mention of an apology from him at that time. Do you remember the circumstances during your talk with President Shimizu?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I didn't know why he was there, so I asked him. He had come to the Chief Cabinet Secretary about planned blackouts and had stopped by while he was there. The planned blackout issue was being handled by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary.

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The reason for his visit to my office was just to report on it.

However, I think I told him at that time to please be more diligent about information sharing. As I said earlier, I did feel that way.

- Questioner

I see.

Another item regarding public relations that is of great interest... You had Chairman Kondo come up with a worst case scenario, or should we say, a scenario for if and when the worst happened. This was not made public, but if you could tell us about the circumstances in which you asked him to create such a scenario.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I believe it was through Deputy Minister Hosono that I asked Chairman Kondo to consider this hypothesis... Actually, I asked several people how they felt about it too. It wasn't always written, but I questioned several people along the same lines. Among them, Chairman Kondo made a formal presentation.

People ask me all the time, but this was about the very worst case when all the worst cases overlap at once. From around the 17th of March, it seemed that we would be able to somehow avoid the very worst case -- we were getting water in and out of there -- so it was more a matter of my wanting to know the worst of the worst cases. I wanted to have that in my mind, which is why I asked him and it became one more resource for me.

- Questioner

When you made the request, were you aware of specific problems such as the fact that the spent fuel pool for Reactor Four had dried up and was damaged?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes, I was aware of that and the fact that we were dealing with multiple reactors with multiple fuel pools. So it was not limited to that. It was about what if all the worst cases overlapped.

- Questioner

I see.

So, this was presented by the Chairman and it was handled as something that would be undisclosed, externally. At that time, was there an issue with disclosure? Did you give approval?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I think it was presented to the media as reference material, at the discretion of NSC's Chairman. As far as I'm concerned, I did not release any part of this information.

- Questioner

You don't think you gave approval when Deputy Minister Hosono came to you with the report saying it would not be made public?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

From my standpoint, this was reference material -- that was how I saw it.

- Questioner

So there was no need to make it public, to disclose it.

- Former Prime Minister Kan
I never said we would.

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However, the position of Chairman of NSC is a semi-public role, so he probably released the materials from that public position. That is how I understand it.

- Questioner

Actually, from my standpoint, I feel that this is an incredibly important matter. To what degree does the person looking after the entire operation have the worst case in mind? I feel that this affects all decisions.

What I'd like to know is, when you heard about this and you could think of the worst case and how it could happen and progress, was it useful? Did it help you in your next decision? How did you feel about it?

Rather than just make one aware of the incredible things that could happen, was it useful in your next decision? It's probably the most important aspect for the next leader who has to encounter something like this. What do you think?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Personally, as I mentioned before when we were talking about withdrawal from the site on March 15th, and I also said something similar when I spoke to TEPCO, in my own words... Even if there was partial withdrawal, if everything were to fail it would be many times worse than Chernobyl. And there are dozens more reactors. So the catastrophe would be ten times, or it could be more than a hundred times worse. At that point when everything fails, and if it crossed over to the Daini site where there are four more reactors, it could very well result in what Doctor Kondo said could happen.

Around that time, an advisor who was not a nuclear expert said that I had said this and it was criticized by the media. Actually it was something that someone like him had said, not me, but during that discussion various things were said. I wondered if what Mr. Kondo said could actually happen or if it was too preposterous. I felt that there was the danger that it could.

However, I wanted an expert to look into it, too, and asked around. Because if there was a strong possibility that we were heading in that direction, there were various steps that needed to be taken. Fortunately, however, water was getting there by the 17th, it was being dropped from above, and around the 18th, 19th, 20th, it was being pumped in below, too. As more water got to the reactors, there was greater temperature control. They confirmed that the Number 4 pool also had water. It was confirmed by "*kirin*" (crane?) too. Fortunately, we were not heading towards the worst case so I did not

instruct anyone to make any definitive plans. If we were heading in that direction, of course, we would have had to make considerations for many things.

- Questioner

I think this is of utmost importance.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Yes. It's a bit hard to express in words but it would be impossible (to deal with) even under today's legislation. We often hear the figure of 30 million... Later, I re-read "Nihon Chinbotsu" ("Japan Sinks" – a popular scifi novel)...

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... and even if everything didn't sink, it could create a situation where just getting around would be difficult. And since all the central functions are in Tokyo, it's not just about getting around... I don't know if this is something I should say here, but can our current legislation keep things under control... It probably cannot.

- Questioner

Plus, no matter how hard the people work, just one shift in wind direction could create a situation where nothing can be done. Effort alone cannot promise results and you have a situation where you have to let everyone be flung about by circumstances... I feel the pain of this situation and think it is the most difficult aspect of being a leader.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

That's why, on the 15th, around the time of this report, I imagined that sort of situation and, this is only natural, but, I felt strongly that even if I had to literally risk my life I had to prevent something like that from happening with everything I had. For the citizens and for the nation, it was what had to be done. I certainly had this in mind at that point in time. And when I saw Doctor Kondo's simulation, it only reinforced how I felt.

- Questioner

Thank you very much.

- Questioner

This is the last question. It's #5, about Japan-US relations.

It's divided into 5 parts. How we understand it is: America was getting very annoyed at the lack of information, especially after March 13, and had Ambassador Roos call the Chief Cabinet Secretary, asking for a station at the Kantei in addition to various other actions. Various steps were carried out and at one point, there was a sort of communication...or rather there was a bit of a clash with the U.S.

We'd like to ask you about this situation, especially about the time when there was a change -- when you spoke with President Obama on the phone on March 17th. What did you talk about. We do not know much about that period but the US instructed or recommended a 50 mile radius evacuation -- was this relevant? Did this come up in your conversation or not?

Also, Ambassador Roos made a courtesy call to the Kantei on the afternoon of the 19th. What did you talk about at that time? If you could tell us, roughly, about the sequence of events around this time.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

First, I spoke to President Obama for the first time in the early morning of the 12th, and then on the 17th. Both were calls of condolence and offers of assistance -- he told us to let him know whatever we needed. I was very grateful and thanked him. (CENSORED)

Regarding the discussions between Ambassador Roos and the Chief Cabinet Secretary ...

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... I was not always there for the detailed conversations. I believe that in a sense, the Chief Cabinet Secretary carried out various steps based on his own decisions.

(CENSORED)

The overall feeling was that the top-level meetings were extremely amicable and Mr. Roos was not at all wrong but probably the US had its own information. Drones were flying right after (the earthquake/tsunami? accident?) and a naval carrier was dispatched offshore at once. They were measuring radiation and at an early stage. We obtained much information from the US Military, like radiation levels. Headquarters also received much data like that from the US Military in the beginning. Gradually, the Self-Defense Forces were able to do this on their own.

Thus, the US had its own data and it did not always match completely with what our country was announcing, so maybe they felt some kind of distrust. (CENSORED)

This came about later, but basically, after the General Headquarters was created on the 15th, several experts from the US came to the HQ and from that point, misunderstandings gradually got resolved and we were able to actually share information.

The relationship between the US Military and our Self-Defense Forces was already very close during normal times and it was my understanding that they were able to work closely together from a relatively early stage.

- Questioner

I have also heard that the Defense Ministry was going beyond defense/military circles and the person in charge of disaster relief often came for explanations so they were having rather wide ranging meetings. Later, this changes to the Japan-US conferences but did you know about these Defense Ministry meetings?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

The Defense Ministry, working under Minister Kitazawa, was working with the US from a very early stage -- he is a fairly outgoing minister and this helped me a lot. I did hear that they were having these meetings.

- Questioner

For now, that's all I have for the official questions.

I believe the committee chairman and members have further questions.

- Questioner

If I may start...

These talks today have been very helpful, very enlightening. And I got the impression that the picture I created in my mind from what I had heard till now and what I am hearing, directly from you, is quite different.

What I'd like to ask you today... There are many questions that have come up after thinking about this for many months.

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Perhaps I will have a chance at another time to ask all of these questions, but there is one in particular I'd like to ask. It is something that needs to be in the final report or no one will be satisfied.

There is only one Prime Minister who dealt with the accident and as this Prime Minister, what would you like to say to the nation and the people around the world? We said at the beginning that we want this (report) to be something of value 100 years from now. What would you like to say to the future generations?

There are probably things that only Prime Minister Kan can say. We'd very much like to hear it. After having experienced what you did, tell us what you think, what we need to do. Also, what kind of decision is necessary, what kind of preparation is necessary. I am sure there are many things. If you could elaborate...

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Not as Prime Minister, but personally... Of course, it includes what I experienced as Prime Minister and my roles at that time, but independent of that, I feel that it is better to

stop nuclear power. This is not just for Japan, but the world. This is what I want to say to the nation, the world, and future generations.

Before 3.11, I felt that while atomic energy and nuclear power plants had various problems, the problems were being overcome adequately, that we could make it alright and use that energy. And because Japan has cutting edge technology, in some cases, we could actively push for nuclear power plant construction overseas. We were already starting to promote it. But the number one issue is the size of the risk. Putting aside the fact whether it depends on the individual country or not, in our nation's case, it is not just the size of the land. When you consider that there is the risk that a third of the nation, including the metropolitan area, becomes uninhabitable for a certain period of time, no matter what kind of safety measure you have, it cannot fully cover the risks. It is impossible. That is my conclusion. Thus, when you consider those risks, I feel that our choice must be to overcome our dependence on nuclear power, nuclear power plants. And, I believe that is possible.

Furthermore, when you look at the world, you see that China and India -- countries that are developing now -- have many many plans for nuclear power plants, despite this nuclear accident. If this stays the course, in 20 years or so, there will be 100 or 200 more new reactors. Our accident was directly caused by the earthquake and tsunami, but those are not the only factors to create a total loss of power. There is also terrorism. We often say that if there were nuclear plants in Libya, Colonel Gaddafi would have ultimately holed up in one. If I were him, I would have. When you think about these things, about civil war and other wars, and when you include man-made problems, total loss of power is not something that is 100% preventable. Another huge problem is that of nuclear waste.

The problems with Reactor 4 are representative of this. The pool for Reactor 4 not only holds spent fuel but also the "hot" fuel assemblies in use that are there for regular inspection, which is why the danger is even greater, but even if there was no "hot" fuel, if the water disappears, the spent fuel could also melt down. There is nowhere to take the waste.

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This is a worldwide problem and one for future generations. I also saw that movie, "Safe for 100,000 years" -- it was a Finnish movie -- but when you think of these things, not being dependent on nuclear power is the best choice for Japan, for the world and for future generations. That is how it should be.

I also gave this message at the Davos Convention, a while back. I'm on a tangent here, but there was talk of Bill Gates investing in the development of small modular nuclear reactors, of him getting involved in this field. I had the chance to speak with him and so I told him that he should switch to renewables. He did not say yes right away but... Since

the Chairman is asking me, I will say that I understand how nuclear power is an incredible technology and the principles behind it are amazing, but we need to break away from it.

- Questioner

I understand your viewpoint. On the other hand, though, as you also mentioned, China and India will have many more nuclear power plants in operation. You said that our legislation was not prepared for the worst case. As the Prime Minister who was desperately trying to deal with this crisis, do you have any kind of message for the leaders of these other countries, what they need to do as leaders?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

This may not answer the question, but... I was not very knowledgeable about how the Soviets dealt with Chernobyl, but I do know that many people were exposed to radiation while they were building the sarcophagus and died. They were probably aware of these dangers when they went, or sent their men there. Although the situation was not completely safe, many people were sacrificed in order to build the sarcophagus, which I hear is starting to show cracks. In Japan, for better or worse, too many were asked to die for their country during the last war. There there was much soul-searching after the war and, basically, we won't ask our people of such a thing, our position has been that the country should not ask for this.

My own feelings were always quite close to this, basically, but when this sort of accident happens, when it happens at a nuclear power plant that the Japanese people are using, in Japan, for its citizens, and possibly as our responsibility to the world, there can be a situation where one must sacrifice ones life. That is how I feel.

Probably other countries have been in more wars than today's Japan. I think they've been in more wars...and I am by no means endorsing wars, but especially in a situation like a nuclear accident, you cannot run away and leave it to someone else for later, or expect someone else to deal with it. Conversely, if you are not prepared to risk life, or even if you are to a certain extent, in order not to be in that situation, it comes back around to the fact that it is better not to be dependent on nuclear power.

- Questioner

To re-phrase what you said, if you build nuclear power plants, the operator must risk lives to protect it.

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Once there is a crisis, you must give up your life for the country, and so that the accident won't progress to the worst situation. If you are not prepared to do so, don't build nuclear power plants -- are your feelings this serious?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

That might be a bit extreme, but looking at it from a different side, when you consider the horrors of nuclear power -- and I know there are other things that are as dangerous -- like I said earlier, the magnitude of the risks of nuclear power, the depth of its problems that transcend generations... I am being paradoxical but when you consider these things, I don't think there is a way to take full responsibility.

In other words, the plutonium in the highly radioactive waste will not become harmless unless there is another nuclear reaction and we have no technology to render it harmless. Even cesium takes 30 years to reach a half-life. No matter how much decontamination efforts are made, it is only about removal (of the radioactive matter.) What we are dealing with is not chemical but nuclear. I have come to believe that there is no way for human beings to control its inherent risks. Ultimately. That's the problem with the waste, and the magnitude of the risks.

It's alright to be blunt, but the way Doctor Yanagida phrased it might bring some misunderstanding. Nuclear power is that awesome. In a sense, an amazing, high density source of energy. Because of this, it is also highly dangerous. I think renewable energy is a much lower density source but simultaneously, it is also low-risk.

- Questioner

You mentioned 3 points at the very beginning. How the regulatory agencies should be, and the future of nuclear energy. At the same time, many countries, including Korea, China, India and Vietnam, will be increasing the number of nuclear plants. In this situation, it will not be possible to completely give up nuclear power so were you thinking about strengthening safety rules for nuclear power at an international level? Please tell us about any specific thoughts you might have. Essentially, it is better not to have nuclear power plants but the reality is that they are increasing, globally. In this situation, Japan, as the country where this huge accident happened, has a responsibility to relay its message. There are moves to make stricter safety regulations, internationally, but the countries that are trying to build new plants are against it because of factors like increased cost. What are your thoughts on this?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

At one point, I spoke to Mr. Amano of the IAEA. The IAEA today has a, if I may borrow his description, "neutral" position on nuclear power plants. In other words, they are not promoting it but are not putting brakes on either. On the other hand, regarding the problem of nuclear waste, the IAEA's position is that it is, for the moment, each country's responsibility. But there are some who believe that it cannot be left to the individual countries, that that is not enough. Another way of looking at this is that while this will lead to international cooperation, it also means that even if each country decided to dig a hole and bury it, no one knows what kind of country it will be in 100,000 years.

What I am saying is that right now, Japan is trying to export nuclear power to places like Vietnam and Turkey...

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...and they are saying that even if Japan does not export nuclear power, **(CENSORED)**, so it is better for Japan to be the exporter, with Japan's safety standards. These arguments are also coming from those not too far from me.

When considering these points, while it may be impossible to stop all nuclear power plants worldwide at once, there should at the very least be some kind of guideline that can say "in this situation, we cannot build a nuclear power plant" or "in this situation, we can approve it." I often use the nuclear non-proliferation treaty as an example. When it comes to nuclear weapons, while it may not be followed 100%, there is a treaty saying let's not proliferate nuclear weapons. The treaty was made with the aim of getting rid of all nuclear arms and actions that go against it are inspected internationally and sanctions can be put into effect. Right now, there are problems with North Korea and Iran, but basically, we have those international rules.

On the other hand, although we are dealing with the same nuclear technology, there are no rules like that for nuclear power plants. Of course, there is a difference between that which is a weapon and that which is not, but in essence, they share similarities. So although they say nuclear power plants are a peaceful use of the technology, when you consider safety issues and, ultimately, the problem of nuclear waste, we need to create international rules. And in these international rules, I believe that the ideal situation would be for the people of the world to decide against nuclear power. I don't know if you have already heard about this idea of making international rules but I have been speaking about it, and "Foreign Affairs" has published a piece I wrote about this -- that we need to create these international rules.

- Questioner

I have a question about a completely different matter. Looking back, I am sure there are many things that could have been done before the accident, but regarding actions taken after 3-11, is there anything you think the Kan Administration or TEPCO could have done differently?

- Former Prime Minister Kan

Do you mean right after the accident?

- Questioner

Yes. As Prime Minister, you were involved in many things after 3-11. Now, looking back...

- Former Prime Minister Kan

It's mostly hindsight, but from a purely technical angle, I feel that we were late in pumping in water. We should made more of an effort to get water in there from an earlier stage, no matter what. You will have to be the ones to make judgements on problems that

have to do with organizations and such. There were many things that could have been done this way or that way, and in no way am I trying to infer that the results were 100% positive, but the decisions that needed to be made at each point in time... I felt that my decisions were made based on the choices I had or didn't have.

Since it was the ultimate question from the Chairman, I did not talk about the process prior to it. However, I am not thinking that the nuclear administration that Japan is trying to get into place now, including the nuclear regulatory agency, needs to directly correspond with my personal ultimate ideal.

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Rather, that at the very least, there are many things that need more rigorous debate or discussion.

I've been asking the nuclear regulatory agency 2 or 3 times already. On one hand, on site and off site issues cross over and on the other hand, normal and emergency issues cross. And, of course, you must consider the case of a severe accident like the one we had. However, you cannot stand around for 10 years holding a fire hydrant so you need to be able to respond immediately when there is a problem and when there isn't, you have to think of what is the very minimum you need to maintain. What kind of measures must be taken during normal times. I don't think these matters are being discussed adequately.

I might have mentioned this already, but one point is personnel. I am still doing my homework on this, but it seems that the NRC in America has a group of very capable, top level people around it who they can call on directly. It may have to do with the fact that their navy has nuclear vessels. Also there is a sort of officer vs civilian kind of structure. The fire department is the same way. So, the nature of their personnel policies are a bit different from ours.

Taking all of this into consideration and thinking about the nuclear regulatory agency, I know I'm not supposed to be saying something different from the current administration, but I think the discussions carried out now are not really going anywhere. Whether it is Article 3 or not is a question of independence and not necessarily a matter of capability. So while it is obvious that they should be independent of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, what personnel will they have access to as an independent agency, during a normal administration and for emergency measures. And that personnel... there's the very large nuclear research organization as well as other organizations, dealing with general research as well as matters pertaining to safety. Also, there are many related groups that were part of the former Science and Technology Agency which is now part of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. To what extent will we have them cooperate with the regulatory agency?

These aspects included, I do not have a full picture yet, but Japan is generally bad at creating systems for crisis management. The fact that the top people at NISA are overall those shifting around in the career system is representative of this. While you can have personnel who are shuffled in the career system, you also need to have a minimum of experts and a system to back them up. I think the nuclear regulatory agency needs to, first, come up with a picture for this.

- Questioner

You were saying something very similar at the international conference the other day. That Japan needed to think about this.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

This seems rather difficult to discuss. Discussions about systems need to be weighed legally, too, but regarding personnel, I asked for more information but only got names. For example, the new Director of the nuclear regulatory agency -- is he a professional (expert) in that sense? Whether you necessarily have to have a professional (expert) or not is a separate question. The crisis management director will also be the director during the state of emergency.

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I don't want to keep dwelling on this, but at one point I heard that, for example, in the US, there is a field of professional engineering. I am not sure if it is a credential known as "professional engineer" or not but they have this concept. In Japan, while we have "technical officials" but we only hear about them assisting in civil engineering and construction. We need a specialized position within the "technical official" field, a proper system for professional engineers, and get capable staff with proper pay and treatment -- create something worthwhile. I believe this is very necessary. I was talking about the Chief Nuclear Reactor Engineer but in today's organization... Or the system for people like that from various generations to work with and develop through exchanges with the private sector, such as they are trying to do in the new regulatory agency... these things were completely lacking. I haven't quite digested everything yet but it is something that is very much on my mind.

- Questioner

In a separate but related question, the other day when we had an international conference on the accident investigation, the representatives from the US and France both made clear that with nuclear energy, you cannot try to balance safety with profitability. Safety must be maintained independently. It cannot be weighed on the same scale as profitability -- you cannot argue that the cost of safety does not match the profitability.

But with Japan's administration and operators, there is always the question of economics when something is built, as well as safety and risk probability. Risk probability and profitability are the 2 decisive points. But the risks of nuclear energy are different from

pharmaceuticals or railways. Failure could mean the end of Japan as a nation. And this may sound exaggerated, but it could mean a disaster for the entire world. This kind of risk is different from a train flipping over and killing 500 people. Yes, that is a big disaster but not something that could destroy a nation.

When you think of this, are not the risks of nuclear power plants and the nuclear industry of a different nature? Even if the probability is 100 million to 1, if what could happen in the event of a failure is that great, you have to disregard probability and go with safety first. This is what you are saying. Can this kind of thinking about risks take root in Japan's administration and operators? Whether it can be accepted is one problem.

The other is what you said in the beginning about the Hashimoto Administrative Reforms, that the promoters and regulators are put in the same box. Even if they are not in the same box, NISA is fundamentally the same as before. On the one hand, we have a government that has accepted the demands of the industry to absolutely promote it and an organization within the governmental framework will always be bound to it. Even if we had something like the former Science and Technology Agency, I don't think the way they would handle safety issues would be fundamentally changed.

Furthermore, while I am sure they were aware of the risks when they first designed the plants, as the administrations change...

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...I don't think this was passed on in a visible way. So while there may have been many risk assessments at the time of design, as time passes and people in charge change, they are forgotten with this idiosyncratic structure. How do you feel about these 2 general points? One is the issue of risk and how the organization should be. And how the risks are passed on within the administration or government of Japan.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

This is probably a society, or rather, an area where the concept of probability cannot be accepted. Then, what can be accepted? You might think I am excessively trying to bring it back around to this point, but I think in the end, the people must decide. They are the ones who have the most at stake, not the operators, so the people have to be the ones to make the decision.

It's a small country, but a good example would be Denmark. After the oil shock, at one point the government proposed nuclear power but there were many arguments against it so they debated the issue fully. It led to a decision not to make nuclear plants and ever since then, they have been using and developing wind power and other alternatives.

I've also heard about Germany. Its case is very similar to Japan's and quite interesting. During the administration of the Socialist Party, the Green Party came in and they moved

quite a bit towards ending nuclear power but it actually reversed a bit after Merkel came into power. So, it was going back, but only one week after the Fukushima nuclear accident, they stop about 5 of their old reactors. Then, they come out with a policy to stop the remaining 17 reactors by 2022. Why did they do this so suddenly? I met with their Chief Cabinet Secretary or equivalent and asked about it. Apparently, there was an election in some state or province and the Green Party said how could we let it go on for so long, this is too risky and started the move.

Putting aside judgement on this sort of move, right now people have lost faith in politics, but in the end, it is the people who must decide. Whether you think it will be alright and worth the risk, or you think it is too dangerous and want to do away with the risk. Of course, you obviously need debate among the experts, too, and I may be over-generalizing, but in terms of domestic issues, in the end the ones who have the most at stake -- people, the electorate -- must decide on it all, including the risks (they are willing to take.) I'm sorry this is a politician-type conclusion which is really not a conclusion.

The other thing that did not change much, or downplayed the risks, despite it not being under the same organization, is the so-called nuclear plant village, a very Japanese factor in the background. In reflecting on my own performance, I also see how insidious TEPCO can be -- some say they were very shrewd. Dr. Umehara who we first appointed at the reconstruction conference had gone so far as to use a farce to oppose the reclamation of Isahaya Bay but at the first meeting, said he wished he had been more opposed to nuclear energy. You see, the electric power utilities sponsor many, many things from sports to cultural endeavors.

They do not to directly force an opposing view on you but look after things in a gentle, comfortable manner. People are weak, and politicians are that way, too, so after a while you start feeling that maybe you don't need to be so concerned and oppose them, that they will look after everything properly. And then, when you realize what's going on -- there have been many ways people have expressed this recently, but -- something has turned around completely. We become less concerned about safety not because they have been diligent about safety issues...

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...but because they just don't talk about the dangers. If they did, everyone would worry so they say let's just say it's safe. I have personally heard about a female member of the metropolitan assembly who, while on a tour of a nuclear plant, wanted to ask how they would evacuate if some kind of accident were to happen. They asked her to refrain from asking those sorts of questions and basically suppressed it.

I have no intention of saying that everything in the US is good, or everything somewhere else is, but I do think that Japan made certain considerations, cleverly manipulated things

to create this atmosphere over 20 years. It was not limited to the nuclear villages but spread to the entire country. This is something that I feel I need to reflect on, too.

So, rather than forgetting about risks -- or rather, I'm not sure if it will lead to that or not, but we need to have a proper debate and then decide to either take those risks or not. It is not a decision that you can have someone make for you. You must make that decision.

- Questioner

Are we alright? Thank you for giving us so much of your time.

One final point. We explained about recording the hearings at the beginning, but we would also like to make today's hearing public at a press conference. Our next meeting will be April 23rd when the Chairman will announce that we held a hearing with Prime Minister Kan during the press conference. We hope you will allow us to do so.

- Former Prime Minister Kan

I, myself, do not feel the need to promote the fact that we had this hearing but I am sure it will come up anyway during various issues, so I have no problem with your stating that fact on the 23rd.

- Questioner

Thank you very much.

And thank you for today.