

The World as Ante: Quite a Pot!

Written by Alex Baer

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In poker, when bluffing is not an option, and you're holding a very weak hand, folding is the most graceful and expedient way to bow out. Keep hoping our global luck holds out with nuclear power plants, lest they get so maniacally sideways they force our entire species to fold.

Some countries are on a good path: Germany has announced plans to abandon nuclear power in ten years. Japan's faster, shutting down its last plant next month after people there declared they'd had enough radioactive fun to last them a few lifetimes. The Japanese have taken the high road: The only people atom-bombed in war, they are now trying hard to not return the sick favor, not spray radiation back on us all.

Energy needs create highly-charged, energetic notions for debate, and nuke's the answer -- provided you are willing to wager an entire planet to keep your lights on, gamble a world away just to play "Angry Birds" or scrawl on someone's Facebook wall. Here is one clear thought from outside the energy box: ***Mortals have no business mucking around in areas in which all life is threatened, and in which mortals are completely incapable of recovery.***

Interestingly, that one notion plants death sentences and nuclear power plants right alongside one another, and in a reasonably clear thought, all its irradiated ducks in a row. Given the half-life of some radioactive elements, a life sentence -- in or out of prison -- would be far more merciful by comparison, representing a wiser choice than going *nuclear-gone-wrong*.

To the world's horror, Fukushima keeps running a hot cycle in breaking news, one more recent leak of strontium-infused wastewater washing into the sea -- the leak, once *finally* discovered, from an area *previously* leaking, took *only* one hour to stop. It was the third such announced leak, at the least. *So much for perfect engineering by human beings and protection via redundant systems.*

Fueling more concerns here is an announcement there is 85 times more Cesium-137 located at the crippled TEPCO site than was released at Chernobyl. With building structures weakened and susceptible to aftershocks, Japan's former ambassador to Switzerland and Senegal, Mitsuhei Murata, lays it out plainly and boldly: **"It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of**

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Japan and the whole world depends on Number 4 reactor."

Game over, all over. *We've seen his cards.* □ *He's not bluffing.* Quite sobering, as species-extinction-level thoughts go.

And, there is more: Robert Alvarez, a former senior policy advisor at the U.S. Department of Energy, says the total spent reactor fuel inventory at the Fukushima site contains nearly half the amount of Cesium-137 released by **all** atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons.

Alvarez adds, "**It is important for the public to understand that reactors that have been operating for decades, such as those at the Fukushima-Dai-Ichi site, have generated some of the largest concentrations of radioactivity on the planet.**"

How to construct the simple math? Fallible humans, plus, *humans handling wide-scale, life-ending materials*, plus, known failures of best-laid, endlessly-schemed back-up plans, equals the end of everything -- given enough time. Maybe we should take a worldwide vote: Do we feel lucky today, right now, right this second. Really? How about

now

?

How about

now

?

In any one second, any one "no" vote should do it -- although it should be unanimous, as none of us would be willing to trust our lives to anyone else's vote: And yet, that is precisely what we do, blindly, day after day, fingers crossed, looking the other way, walking against the light.

We, and the whole world, could take an excellent cue from the Japanese and Germans, unplug nuclear power, pour our resources into renewable energies, get a whole new energy show out on a fresh, brand new road -- but, we won't, of course: The fix is in, the money has talked, and now we will all walk, squawking, down Nuclear Road.

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The U.S. has already granted blessings to build more nuclear plants, the first since alarms sounded at Three Mile Island. Other countries are much quicker and brighter, their investors suddenly unwilling, since Fukushima's woes have been mounting, to mount any real enthusiasm for their own plans of new nuke plants -- *wouldn't touch 'em now with three-mile-long poles.*

Given all the gambles casino-capitalism delights in -- knowing how well those speculations always turn out for the House, from mortgages and now, gasoline -- one losing nuclear hand is all it takes in this gamble and game the rest of us call Life: only one losing nuclear hand in this country, any one nuclear country, any one nuclear place, anywhere on our one world.

One bad nuclear hand would not be so much of a busted full house as it would be a royal straight flush -- flushing the House and all of us, straight down the drain.

News on Fukushima:

<http://akiomatsumura.com/2012/04/682.html>

http://www3.nhk.or.jp/daily/english/20120405_09.html

New uses for old nuke plants:

<http://inhabitat.com/dismantled-german-nuclear-plant-transformed-into-incredible-wunderland-kalkar-amusement-park/>

<http://www.treehugger.com/urban-design/wunderland-kalkar-unused-nuclear-power-plant-trans>

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[formed-amusement-park.html](#)