

Anniversary & Sarcophagus

Written by Alex Baer

Thursday, 26 April 2012 18:49 - Last Updated Thursday, 26 April 2012 18:49

Speaking of the continuing meltdown horrors at Fukushima...

Speaking of the fresh fuel rods jammed into damaged buildings so fragile they couldn't ride out a wiggle...

Speaking of hydrogen gas and steam explosions carrying radioactivity aloft...

Speaking of all the radioactive water dumped into the sea, over and over again, sometimes by accident, sometimes by helplessness and design...

Speaking of the recent discovery that Japan's Tsuruga nuclear plant was built atop an active fault -- surprise! -- after all...

Speaking of not knowing the types or the amounts of radiation vaulted into the air and sent all 'round the world, many times over...

Speaking of radioactive, recycled metal showing up in consumer goods on or shores...

Speaking of tsunami debris starting to wash up along the western shores of North America...

Speaking of mutated produce...

... you might remember 1986 and Chernobyl: Today is the 26th anniversary of one of the scariest horror stories to scare living hell out of the most hard-bitten nuclear-power enthusiast. More than 300,000 people were resettled in that one. Happy Anniversary, so to speak.

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Today, Ukraine announced it was starting work, building the world's largest sarcophagus to help smother radiation from pouring out of hot buildings. *(See the first link below for a very short animation of the monumental effort planned.)*

You might remember a concrete crypt already covers parts of that site, but seals were not well done, according to some. Plus, the concrete is losing its battle to radiation and age, with radiation streaming out from underneath.

So, a new piggyback sarcophagus is planned, to be built in place, then shifted over and onto hot structures there. This will take some time to build. Meanwhile, radiation dances out.

Chernobyl will not die. It has been only 26 years, a mere snap of atomic time. It is not a fire one can suffocate or extinguish; generations can merely try to wait the thing out, and hope for the best. What part of this seems like a bright, promising future now?

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An estimate to clean up Fukushima was made a while back, framed in terms of decades -- once new technology has been invented to handle the multiple challenges boiling away there.

Perhaps plans will be drawn up to encase that entire part of Japan in a concrete sarcophagus, too. Of course, the genie's already out of the bottle, where much radiation is concerned. Most experts are holding their breaths, fingers crossed, hoping damaged reactor buildings won't collapse and spew.

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Humans thrill, playing with fire, even though we've been getting badly burned, worse and worse

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through the years. We should know better by now, but do not. The U.S. has approved two new nuclear plants, the first two since we had our own blind date with Fate -- a little picnic called Three Mile Island.

If that tale doesn't make all your hair stand straight out from your body, like you were holding the wrong end of heavy-duty, electrical cables, check out documentaries on Windscale and Chernobyl. Hunt up stories on the first meltdown of a commercial generating plant, a sodium reactor rig in California. Don't forget problems at Vermont Yankee, or at the Hanford site, or anywhere else in this country -- anywhere in the whole wide world.

If the human species must be so painfully, deathly slow on the uptake, when other energy solutions exist, or could be easily pursued at top speed, we could restrict our tinkering to those few areas we could actually fix when things inevitably go wrong -- and always will, as long as fallible humans are involved.

We could, but, we won't. Like the death penalty, humans can't resist monkeying in areas we are helpless to reverse. Most children understand this simple rule: If you can't fix it when it breaks -- and it will *hurt you really, really bad* when it does -- it's best to leave it alone, not play with it in the first place. Only adults have problems understanding such things.

It's all been said endlessly before -- guilty as charged. Like climate change, though, by the time it's obvious to absolutely everyone, it's decades too late. Unfortunately, it's how we humans learn best.

Damned difficult, learning while dead.

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Hideous irony: *Sarcophagus* comes from the Greek -- a stone receptacle for a corpse. The word came to be applied to a type of limestone thought to decompose the flesh of the corpse. *Sarcophagus* means,

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flesh-eating.

About what you'd expect from radiation.

Just a few links of countless sources of information available:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17853134>

<http://www.wyden.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Ambassador-Fujisaki.pdf>

<http://theintelhub.com/2012/04/12/radioactive-wave-from-japan-headed-towards-united-states-full-of-extremely-high-levels-of-radiation/>

<http://theintelhub.com/2012/04/22/fukushima-is-falling-apart-are-you-ready/>

<http://theintelhub.com/2012/03/05/one-year-after-fukushima-defining-and-classifying-a-disaster/>

<http://www.activistpost.com/2012/04/radioactive-hell-on-earth.html>

<http://www.readersupportednews.org/news-section2/344-208/11006-russia-stunned-after-japan-ese-plan-to-evacuate-40-million-revealed>

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<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120426a1.html>

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/03/30-7>

<http://theintelhub.com/2012/04/24/3rd-plant-species-with-radiation-mutations-found-in-3rd-michigan-location/>

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-03-19/nuclear-risks-at-bed-bath-beyond-show-hidden-danger-of-scrap.html>

<http://nukeprofesional.blogspot.com/p/uranium-aerosolized-into-atmosphere.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chernobyl_Nuclear_Power_Plant_sarcophagus

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarcophagus>