Al-Jazeera America on the Fukushima Triple Disaster, Three Years On アルジャジーラ・アメリカが報じる福島トリップル災害 三年目

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As the third anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear disaster approaches, a string of new projects analyzing its causes and impact are underway. Al-Jazeera America is among the first out of the blocks with a four-part documentary, broadcast on its "America Tonight" segment in early January 2014. Among the questions it explores in the video below: Does the lingering aftermath of the crisis pose any danger to people living on the West Coast of North America?

The documentary concludes that it does not. "The radiation will slowly sink, before harmlessly decaying over decades as Pacific currents turn most of the groundwater toward Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean," says Professor Aoyama Michio, a scientist at the Meteorological Institute of Japan. But, he adds, operator Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) must remove all the Strontium-90 from contaminated water or it will cause a "big problem" for the whole Pacific.

Compiled during two weeks of November 2013, the documentary's most damning report profiles the so-called nuclear gypsies, the largely unskilled, non-unionized and transient workforce that TEPCO has employed, through a network of subcontractors, to clean up from the disaster. In contrast to its regular employees, many are paid less than $100 a day. Conditions are poor and concern for their safety is lax. When the workers have reached their radiation limit, they are discarded, say the program's producers.

Most remarkably, perhaps, America Tonight concludes that the Fukushima disaster has had little if any impact on Japan Inc's plans to sell nuclear technology abroad. The business of nuclear power may well grow in the coming years, and Japan is attempting to position itself at the front of the business pack with bids to build plants in Vietnam and the Middle East, among others.


