

電事連の「不退転の決意」は信用できるのでしょうか？

The Times
June 23 1993
一面広告

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JUNE 23 1993

Let's be clear about it. The ten Japanese utility companies want THORP.

Last week, an advertisement was placed in The Independent by a pressure group which calls itself "Japanese Citizens Concerned About Plutonium". They claim to represent the people of Japan. And they have made claims to the people of Great Britain which cannot go unchallenged.

As the ten leading electricity generating companies in Japan, we must refute them. And refute them before they do more damage. Or cause more delay.

The pressure group's advertisement claims the following:

That, despite our promises, Japan will not after all be a keen customer of The Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant at Sellafield.

That Japan does not need the recycled plutonium THORP will provide.

That Japan will effectively break its strict contracts with British Nuclear Fuels.

And that the UK will thus become the "ditchbin for Japan's nuclear waste".

THORP is not a ditchbin. It's a recycling (technically known as reprocessing) plant. At THORP, uranium and plutonium which can be used to fuel the nuclear reactors of the future are extracted from the spent fuel. All we have to dispose of is 3% fission products.

BNFL then treats that waste by, for example, immobilising it in glass, and will return it to us, along with the reprocessed uranium and plutonium. Like BNFL, we are confident that the handling and shipping of the waste will meet the highest safety standards.

That's why we do business with them.

We have, in fact, already sent them significant quantities of the fuel they will be reprocessing for us during the plant's first ten years of operation. It's sitting safely in deep ponds at THORP.

You may think we should just store our spent fuel without reprocessing it. But that is far from ideal, because storing also means you have to treat everything as high level waste - uranium, plutonium and waste products, because they are all jumbled together.

THORP separates uranium and fission products (the remaining 97% of spent fuel) which can be dealt with far more easily than spent fuel as it is.

That's why it's misleading simply to claim that reprocessing generates more waste. What it generates is lower level waste, because BNFL very rightly treats things like clothing and materials used by workers at THORP as waste.

But it's waste that's easily handled. When it comes to high-level waste, reprocessing produces far less than storage or direct disposal does.

There's another very important reason why we in Japan want to reprocess our nuclear fuel.

We actually want our plutonium and uranium back. We need the plutonium to fuel the new generation of fast nuclear reactors. And plutonium can also be used to manufacture a nuclear fuel called MOX (mixed oxide fuel) for use in conventional reactors.

It is Japan's stated policy to generate the power we need for the future by using reprocessed nuclear fuel.

Our previous Minister of State, Mr Nakajima, said as much when he spoke at a World Association of Nuclear

Operators conference in Tokyo in April this year:

"Japan has set out its basic policy to reprocess plutonium through the reprocessing of used nuclear fuel, and so use it again as recycled nuclear fuel for the purpose of economical usage of uranium resources, and for securing a stable energy supply."

Anyone who cares about the environment will understand that you can't look at an energy problem in isolation. You have to consider the global picture.

If we don't reprocess, eventually, more would than waste that valuable source of energy. More oil, the oil crises of the past have shown us how quickly the price of a natural resource can rise.

The Japanese Citizens Concerned About Plutonium say that reprocessing will lead to weapons proliferation.

Again, not so.

Reprocessing doesn't produce any more plutonium, it merely separates it out from nuclear waste.

We intend to use the plutonium and uranium we recover for purely civil purposes. The British Government has backed that with a statement to the effect that there will be no proliferation risk in returning plutonium to Japan.

Far from losing our enthusiasm, we regret the delays which have been caused by a few groups masquerading as majorities who are simply determined to end the use of nuclear power worldwide.

THORP is new, safe and ready to work.

We urge the UK Government to give it the go-ahead as soon as possible.

THE TEN JAPANESE ELECTRIC POWER COMPANIES

T. OKAYAMA Chugoku KOKUSAI EPCO	T. TOHOKU Chugoku TOYOKEI EPCO	C. HOKKAIDO Chugoku TOYOKEI EPCO	F. HONSHU Chugoku KOKUSAI EPCO	K. KANTO Chugoku TOYOKEI EPCO	I. KANSAI Chugoku KOKUSAI EPCO	K. KYUSHU Chugoku TOYOKEI EPCO	C. SAIGAI Chugoku KOKUSAI EPCO	T. SAITAMA Chugoku TOYOKEI EPCO	H. SHANAN Chugoku KOKUSAI EPCO
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電事連がイギリスのすべての大手新聞に掲載した広告

13年前に電事連が表明した
プルサーマル計画についての「不退転の決意」はどうなったのでしょうか？
未だプルトニウムは、1グラムも使われていません。

13年前の1993年、イギリスのTHORP再処理工場を稼働させるか否かの議論の際、日本の電事連は「明言します。日本の電力会社10社はTHORPが欲しいのです」という大見出しの広告をイギリスの全ての大手新聞に掲載しました。しかし、日本のためにTHORPで分離されたプルトニウムは、未だ1グラムも使われていません。