

Crisis: The Great Tōhoku Earthquake and Tsunami



BunnyMUN III

L.B. POLY - October 19, 2024

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CO-HEAD CHAIR LETTER

Hello Delegates!

My name is Alina Nhean, and I'm thrilled to serve as one of your Chairs for the Tohōku Earthquake and Tsunami crisis room this year. Everyone involved in the Tohōku room worked hard for this committee and we're all excited to see you all in action! I joined the Poly MUN program last year, and it's opened my eyes in so many ways. Learning about different foreign policies and public speaking has allowed me to get out of my comfort zone and apply it to my life.

Outside of MUN, you can probably find me listening to jazz, pop, and musical theater soundtracks. If you ever need a rant on why Six is the greatest musical of all time, I got you :). Moreover, I even directed a short play here at Poly! Aside from theatrical productions, I also serve as the treasurer of the Poly French Club, a postpartum volunteer at St. Mary's Medical Center, and a passionate web novel reader. I'm eager to see the teamwork, solutions, and ideas you bring to resolving one of Japan's darkest disasters, which still has a profound impact on society today. This room is more fast-paced and interactive than a General Assembly room, so I encourage you to contact me or anyone on the Dais Staff for any questions. See you all soon on October 19!

Sincerely,

Alina Nhean

Tohōku Earthquake and Tsunami | Co-Head Chair

alinanhean20@gmail.com | (562) 826-6971

CO-HEAD CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

My name is Elijah Wong, and I'm excited to serve as your other head chair for the Tohōku Earthquake and Tsunami Crisis room. This topic in particular should be extremely fun, as it implores delegates to come up with effective and creative ways to deal with a disaster and still come out on top.

I joined MUN at the beginning of last year, and through the various conferences and activities, it has taught me to be my best self. I hope that this room can act as a space to practice speaking confidently, articulating your ideas, and ultimately representing your best self.

A little more about me: Outside of MUN I enjoy playing tennis, and if I'm not out on the court, you can find me watching whatever pro tennis tournament is on at the time.

Like my co-chair Alina, I'm looking forward to the creative (And possibly hilarious) way you all decide to rewrite history.

Sincerely,

Elijah

Tohōku Earthquake and Tsunami | Co-Head Chair

(562)-481-7804

P.S. Feel free to contact one of the chairs through the provided contact info for questions.

VICE CHAIR LETTER

Hello delegates!

My name is Jackson Trunnelle and I'm going to be your Vice Chair for the Tohoku Crisis room in BunnyMUN III! I am currently a senior and Co-President for our Model UN program at Long Beach Poly. MUN is a very exciting place where I have been able to explore global policy, consider new ideas, and make great connections with wonderful people who I have had the pleasure of delegating with. Outside of MUN, I play club volleyball and varsity for my high school team, as well as playing pickleball and card games in my free time. At school, I am also involved in VITA Tax Club, Poly Global Fund, and Poly Pickleball Club. I love cookies too (especially from Insomnia) :)

I am very excited to hear all of the wonderful ideas and creative solutions that will be brought forth, and how through patience, cooperation, and civility, we can strive to make the world a better place.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at my email below!

Sincerely,

Jackson Trunnelle

Tohōku Earthquake and Tsunami | Vice Chair | jctrunnelle@gmail.com

HOW TO MUN

So, you're probably wondering: How do I prepare for debate? Well, here are some starting points to begin your character research!

1. Read through this background guide
 - a. Find your character in Character Biographies (pg. 17) and read the description
2. Look for information on your character online. You can use the "tool" button to research within a certain time frame
 - a. Here is a [video](#) if you need help. A good starting date is 3/11/2011, when the earthquake happened.
 - b. Wikipedia is a good place to *start* research but please try to find other sources
3. Look at the Questions to Consider (pg. 31) and try to answer them (do some research on the internet!)
4. Do more research on the internet for:
 - a. previous character actions
 - b. more background information
 - c. possible solutions

During the committee, all delegates will present an "opening statement." This is a short introductory speech and will only last about 30 seconds to 1 minute—nothing too bad! You can practice and time your speech using a timer.

These opening statements are written beforehand. They don't have to be memorized, either. You can print or write your speech, then read off the paper.

Your opening statement should include:

1. Your character's name and title
 2. Your character's perspective on the crisis
 3. Possible solutions that align with your character's perspective
 - a. This is what you will discuss in the main part of the committee! Including this in your opening statement is a great way to let other delegates know where you stand.
-

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

At 2:46 PM, March 11, 2011, a magnitude-9.1 undersea earthquake struck the coast of northeastern Japan, near the Tōhoku region. The earthquake lasted only six minutes, but the intensity of the shaking caused a 40-meter (133 ft.) tsunami to barrel towards Tōhoku. The Japan Meteorological Agency issued its highest tsunami warning—a “major tsunami”—and prompted the large-scale evacuation of Miyagi Prefecture. At least 101 evacuation sites were hit by the wave, their inhabitants were swept away in the rushing water. 80 kilometers (50 miles) away, the initial quake rocked the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, activating the emergency cooling systems. The tsunami further destabilized the plant, its waves toppling the cooling systems and flooding the reactor rooms. Nearby areas are currently being evacuated due to the radiation and hazardous material escaping the plant.

In its wake, the earthquake and tsunami have left potentially thousands dead, injured, or missing. Thousands of homes have been destroyed, leaving many in inadequate temporary shelters. Additionally, the severity of Fukushima Daiichi has yet to be determined, but there is concern about radiation’s impact on human health. The Japanese government has set up an emergency rapid response center with Prime Minister Kan Naoto as its director, and search parties are being sent out to assess damages and locate missing people. Many of Japan’s ports have closed as precautionary measures, and businesses are closed. Millions are without food, water, and power due to infrastructure damage. Will the people of Japan be able to band together for the common good, or will they crumble under the chaos of this crisis? It’s all up to you, delegates, to determine the fate of this country in its time of need.

TOPIC SYNOPSIS

The date is March 11, 2011: A magnitude-9.1 earthquake rumbles the northeastern coast of Japan, the fourth largest earthquake in history. Following the earthquake, a tsunami of unprecedented heights swallows towns and cities in the Tōhoku Region, causing the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant to explode. Thousands of people are presumed dead, and hundreds of thousands are missing. Many citizens are displaced and homeless, destroying around 220 billion dollars worth of housing. All of Japan is in disarray, creating a newfound lack of trust in the Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company, the owners of Fukushima Daiichi. Tōhoku is in ruin, and the rest of Japan scrambling to support the region in its time of need. Will Japanese society be able to recover from this crisis, or will it fall into chaos? Delegates, it is up to you to determine the future of Japan in the wake of the darkest day in modern Japanese history.

BACKGROUND

Japanese History of Earthquakes and Tsunamis

Before Tōhoku, numerous earthquakes and tsunamis have hit Japan. The Japanese archipelago is located on top of 4 of the 15 tectonic plates in the world, making Japan a hotspot for earthquakes. Following the 1891 Mino-Owari earthquake, the Imperial Earthquake Investigation Committee was created to further research seismic activity and develop a nationwide network of seismic observations. These efforts were increased following the 1923 Japanese Kanto Earthquake. In 1925, After the 1960 global Valdivia Earthquake, which affected several of the Pacific Rim nations, Japan began to seriously implement disaster prevention and disaster relief measures.

In 1961, the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act was implemented, an overall framework for disaster prevention, response, and recovery in Japan. Most importantly, the law requires that councils and publicly owned corporations create and implement disaster prevention methods. Several disaster prevention projects were set in motion after that, such as the construction of coastal dikes and concrete seawalls meant to prevent coastal areas from flooding. However, these disaster-prevention measures were based on observations from past events. Consequently, when a disaster as cataclysmic as the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami hit, the existing measures stood no chance.

For example, the hazard maps distributed by local governments included potential zones at risk of flooding, lists of shelters, and the most vulnerable areas.

However, these hazard maps did not account for the unanticipated high magnitude and sheer scale of the Tohōku disaster, leading to delayed evacuations. Moreover, when the Tohōku tsunami hit, the seawalls stood at a maximum height of 10 meters (30 ft.), yet, the tsunami waves on average were 12–15 meters (36–45 ft.) tall, reaching up to 40 meters (133 ft.) in some areas.

Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is one of 16 nuclear sites in Japan, containing six of Japan's 54 nuclear reactors. It is one of the 15 largest nuclear sites in the world, and when combined with the nuclear energy from Japan's other power plants, makes up approximately 30% of Japan's energy sources. The Fukushima Daiichi plant was supposed to be constructed on a 35-meter (130 ft.) cliff overlooking the ocean. Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the plant owner and operator, decided to lower this to a 10-meter cliff, which reduced the cost of pumping seawater directly upwards to the plant to be used as a coolant. Unfortunately, this also made the plant vulnerable to large tsunamis, which are often a risk in an island country such as Japan.

During Fukushima Daiichi's siting and designing process in the 1960s, tsunami countermeasures that complied with current regulations were put into place. In 1993, following the events of the Hokkaido Nansei-oki earthquake and tsunami, new scientific knowledge came out about the possibility of a larger earthquake causing a major tsunami with *average* wave heights up to 15 meters (50 ft.) high. Even with this knowledge, both the plant operator, TEPCO, and the Nuclear & Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) failed to take any major preventative actions.

These nuclear power plants operate when uranium atoms are split during the process of fission, which generates mass amounts of heat. Fission heats water to create steam that turns turbines to then generate electricity. The water, uranium, and nuclear byproducts of a reactor can sustain safe temperatures of around 300°C (572°F) when cooled. Without coolant though, temperatures in and around radioactive products in a reactor can spike to 1200°C (2192°F). This is one reason why utmost caution is taken when operating nuclear reactors. Another reason is the dangers of radiation, which can cause death within two months after exposure. Any loss of function to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant that would cause radioactive material to escape would put millions of lives at risk, minimum.

50 minutes after the Tohōku earthquake, tsunami waves peaking at 14 meters (52 ft.), crashed into the Fukushima Daiichi plant. Three of Fukushima's six reactors were immediately disabled by the earthquake that had occurred an hour before but were unable to be cooled due to the tsunami destroying the seawater coolant pumps. The other three were already in a state of low operation or deactivation before the earthquake. Almost every single building and backup power generator was flooded and destroyed. There is next to no power or coolant remaining, meaning containment of the radioactive material within the Fukushima Daiichi plant will soon become impossible unless immediate action is taken.

Immediate Aftermath: Humanitarian

Already, several hundred thousand Japanese citizens are stranded in shelters with limited access to food and water resources. Furthermore, shelters are struggling to gain access to the proper medication and first aid to treat survivors, many dying

during rescue or in shelters. Scientists believe that groundwater quality is of great concern because saltwater, ocean pollutants, and radioactive material may soon enter into the groundwater reserves. Many individuals will be forced to resort to drinking unsafe water due to the lack of other potable water sources

Tens of thousands remain stranded in places affected by the earthquake, waiting for rescue to find them. As of now, reports of casualties due to the tsunami are placed in the hundreds but are estimated to increase into the tens of thousands as search and rescue operations begin. Casualties are expected to be especially high in coastal areas, which were hit especially hard by the tsunami.

Immediate Aftermath: Economy and Infrastructure

The damage as a result of the earthquake and tsunami is expected to be financially devastating. The uprooting of whole communities and large infrastructure has already disrupted Japan's extensive supply network, leading to a dramatic decrease in industry production as companies recover. International economists are already theorizing that this will negatively impact the global economy as well because Japan is hugely significant as the third largest economy in the world. The downward plunge of both industrial production and exports, along with the shutdown of the nuclear reactors, may have serious consequences.

In addition to the 11 nuclear reactors shut down, many electrical generating facilities, oil refineries, and electrical grids are shut down (some on purpose, others due to damage). The immediate outage caused by the earthquake included 10.5 gigawatts (GW) of nuclear power capacity and 12.4 GW of thermal power capacity, representing roughly 8 percent of Japan's total electricity generation capacity.

Additionally, six Japanese oil refineries have closed, cutting about one-third of Japan's total refining capacity.

Power plants have currently been shut down by the earthquake/tsunami, and 5.27 million households lost power, mostly in disaster-stricken areas. The commercial sector is to limit the use of lighting and air conditioning, while large industrial firms are to increase in-house power generation and shift operating hours. In addition, scheduled rolling blackouts have been introduced to lessen the energy burden. The prefectures were divided into smaller groups, with each group undergoing a three-hour blackout on an "ad hoc yet recurring basis" (ad hoc meaning when necessary or needed).

The tsunami was particularly damaging to the coastal region of Tohoku. One of the largest ports in northern Japan, the Port of Sendai, is heavily damaged. Vessels and containers became debris transported inland as a result of the flood waters. Chemical plants caught fire, spreading contaminants during and after the tsunami. Despite this, reopening portions of the port within weeks will be necessary to receive supplies and resources.

Immediate Aftermath: Political

The earthquake immediately threw Japan into political chaos. Many of the physical seats of government, such as town halls, were destroyed. This disrupted the regular processes of disaster response, so the military and emergency services workers had to begin planning how they should best lead themselves to save as many people as possible. In the event of a devastating large natural disaster, foreign governments, large companies, and non-governmental organizations often attempt to

aid the country and its people. This should reduce Japan's burden, but it will take some time for those governments to coordinate their efforts. So far, Japan's government has done little to aid its citizens beyond its failed attempts at organization on the municipal level. It has only been a day since the earthquake, but if this pattern continues, the citizens of Japan will likely become extremely mistrustful of their leaders.

Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has begun to coordinate foreign aid. Support has come in the form of relief funding, rescue teams, and humanitarian aid from foreign governments and non-government organizations (NGOs). Japanese overseas missions also begin to take donations of relief money/assistance from sympathizers and private corporations.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

This committee will begin on **March 12, 2011**, the day *after* the disasters occurred. As delegates, you will receive various crisis updates throughout committee, where our dais or crisis staff will deliver new information pertinent to the events of committee. Time jumps may occur. **Since this committee begins on March 12, we understand that critical events within several character's lives may not yet have occurred, and some information has not yet been revealed to the public. Nonetheless, please abide by your character's original historical timeline. Also, this committee is set in an alternate timeline, and any character actions may diverge from the historical timeline.** We recommend making a basic timeline for your character that you can refer to during debate.

When it comes to directives, we allow group (also known as joint private), personal, and committee directives, as well as communiques and press releases. These directives will be written on one notepad, and then collected and responded to by crisis staff during updates. Crisis staff will give you another notepad until the next update, and delegates will continue to switch between those two notebooks for all of the committee.

In addition, on the day of the conference, you will be given a folder with a portfolio power. These portfolio powers are secret—only you will know what your portfolio power is—and include two major things: plots and powers. Plots are secret objectives a delegate is trying to accomplish or secret information that only one

delegate or a group of delegates would be privy to. For instance, an example of a plot is how in our past “Red Scare” room, multiple delegates were Communists and plotted with each other to overthrow the United States. Powers are special actions that delegates can take. These can range from the ability to “OBJECT!” to another delegate’s speech to a secret task force of spies and analysts that a delegate can command to gather intelligence on their adversaries to the ability to call a general strike and cripple key infrastructure.

Please be advised that at BunnyMUN III we have a policy of not killing your fellow delegates. Therefore, please do not submit directives attempting to assassinate one another. We also will not entertain directives that involve genocide or nuclear weapons. Thank you so much for signing up and we look forward to meeting you on the 19th!

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

Ryoichi Oriki, Head of Japan Self-Defense Forces

Ryoichi Oriki is the Head of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). The JSDF is the only kind of military that Japan is allowed to have under its post-World War II Constitution. Oriki graduated from the National Defense Academy and Ground Self-Defense Force Officer Candidate School in 1972. He has experience as the Director of Logistics, Vice Chief of Staff, Commanding General of the Middle Army, and Chief of Staff. Since 2009, he has served as the Chief of Joint Staff for the JSDF. In the aftermath of the Tōhoku disasters, Oriki is in charge of the largest relief team, whose commander is Prime Minister Kan Naoto. The joint task force Oriki oversees is the first of its kind regarding disaster relief in JSDF history– there are about 100,000 troops deployed to aid in search and rescue. In addition, Oriki is advising the United States’ response to the disaster, Operation Tomodachi, detailing what the JSDF needs to support Japan in its time of crisis. He follows orders well and is a methodical, diplomatic soldier.

Yuhei Sato, Governor of Fukushima

Yuhei Sato is the governor of Fukushima, the prefecture in which the Fukushima Daiichi plant resides and one of the most affected regions following the Tōhoku disasters. He was elected in 2006. The citizens of Fukushima have expressed their discomfort and anxiety about the power plant for years, and while Sato has allowed TEPCO leniency in the past, the public’s fears have “reached a boiling point.” Already, Sato has refused to accept TEPCO’s apologies, instead opting to go after the corporation to demand information and clear communication. Additionally, he has not yet received any direction from the national government, meaning he is responsible

for the entire evacuation. Thus far, he has ordered an evacuation of the citizens within a 2-kilometer (1.2-mile) radius around the power plant. Sato is tired of Tokyo Electric's political influence and the inefficiency of the central government; with the health and safety of Fukushima's people on the line, he will stop at nothing to get justice for his constituents.

Yoshihiro Murai, Governor of Miyagi Prefecture

Yoshihiro Murai served in the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) for 8 years and later attended Matsushita Institute to study engineering and science. He has been an active member of the Miyagi Prefecture's government since 1995, when he became an assemblymember. He was elected as governor of the prefecture in 2005 and is currently on his second term. Unfortunately, the Miyagi Prefecture and its capital, Sendai, were hit harder by the earthquake than other regions of Japan. As a former officer, he believes that the JSDF will be able to successfully help his prefecture recover from the earthquake and he wants to work with them to save as many of his people as possible. Murai is a disciplined and patriotic man, but he also believes that foreign aid can help Japan recover from this crisis. He already has some doubts about the efficacy of the central government's emergency management policies.

Masataka Shimizu, President of TEPCO

Masataka Shimizu is the President of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO). He was placed in charge of general affairs for the Fukushima Daini Power Plant (the sister plant to Daiichi) in 1983 and eventually became president of TEPCO in June 2008. Shimizu was noted company-wide for his cost-cutting efforts, which increased the corporation's profit margins. In 2006, a warning was given by MISA (Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency) and the Ministry of Economy about the risk of electric

power loss if a tsunami hit Fukushima Daiichi. Shimizu ignored this warning, and the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami took place only 5 years later. He has received criticism from the general public and the government in recent years, and amidst the fallout of Fukushima Daiichi, has not yet made a statement. Shimizu is an experienced charismatic businessman with a passion for profit and corporate power.

Masao Yoshida, Fukushima Daiichi Plant Manager

Masao Yoshida was a nuclear engineer who served as the plant manager of TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant at the time of the Fukushima nuclear incident. Yoshida graduated from the Tokyo Institute of Technology in 1979 with a master's in nuclear engineering. He was offered a job by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry but turned it down to join Tokyo Electric Power Company. There he spent most of his career at the nuclear power plants in on-site roles. TEPCO created a Nuclear Asset Management Department to which Yoshida served as the general manager from 2001 to 2010. In 2010, He was appointed to manage the power plant just months prior to the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011.

Kan Naoto, Prime Minister of Japan

Kan Naoto is the current Prime Minister of Japan. Naoto graduated in 1970 from the Tokyo Institute of Technology and became a licensed attorney in 1971, later working at a patent office. He was also an avid member of grassroots movements and served on the campaign for a woman's rights activist. Before his position as Prime Minister, Naoto served as the leader of the Democratic Party of Japan. After a long political career, in which Naoto faced many scandals, Naoto founded the "Dankai Party", a new political party that aimed to offer places in office for Japanese 'baby boomers.' He is currently the lead of the post-Tōhoku disasters cleanup operation, charged with

commanding the Japanese Self-Defense Force's search and rescue efforts. Naoto has a strong belief that the Self Defense Forces should play a larger role on the international stage, and, after Fukushima Daiichi, has already begun to take an increasingly anti-nuclear stance.

Yukio Edano, Chief Cabinet Secretary of the Liberal Democratic Party

Yukio Edano graduated from Tōhoku University with a law degree. At the time of the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, Edano was serving in the Kan cabinet as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, and the Chief Cabinet Secretary. He became the government's spokesman, representing its interests and disaster updates in press releases to the public, reporting daily. It is his responsibility to be the spokesman between an angry, afraid public and a highly strained government. Edano is under great stress, already facing backlash from the public on behalf of the government, while concurrently receiving praise for how well he handles the pressure. He seeks to promptly report any government updates while also maintaining a positive public perception of the Kan Cabinet. Although his under-eye bags may increase, Edano will sacrifice his well-being for the good of the country and the safety of his citizens.

Asano Kenichi, Former Critic for Kyodo News and University Professor

Born in Japan, Asano Kenichi dreamed of becoming a journalist in the United States. He graduated from an American high school and soon became a bilingual correspondent for Kyodo News. Early in his career, he challenged the status quo-agreeing blindly with the police- believing a journalist's job is not to be the friend of the police, but their "watchdog." Asano then became the correspondent for Kyodo News in Jakarta, Indonesia, from where he was expelled for writing exposes on shady

deals between Jakarta businessmen and politicians. He currently teaches at Doshisha University after being- in his opinion- blacklisted from journalism. Asano greatly values journalistic integrity and the truth, founding the association 'JIMPOREN', which aims to support free press and journalism reform. He will not hesitate to call out abuse from private companies and the government, even if it means harm to him or his career.

Hiroko Tabuchi, Environmental Journalist

Hiroko Tabuchi has decades of experience in journalism. She grew up in Kobe, Japan, and obtained a degree in international relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She has worked out of Tokyo for the Associated Press and Wall Street Journal. Tabuchi is a business reporter for the New York Times' Japan bureau, covering major companies operating in Japan, which is the third largest economy in the world. She has just gained approval from the New York Times to cover the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster and uncover how TEPCO may have contributed to it. Tabuchi is committed to revealing the truth accurately and fairly while making a point to not be swayed by the power of large corporations.

Katsuhiko Ishibashi, Seismologist and Professor

Katsuhiko Ishibashi is a professor at Japan's Kobe University and a seismologist who specializes in Japanese seismology. In 1997, he coined the term "genpatsu-shinsai", a combination of the Japanese words for 'nuclear power plant' (genpatsu) and 'earthquake disaster' (shinsai) to describe nuclear incidents occurring as a result of earthquakes. Ishibashi warned, for years before the Fukushima Daiichi accident, that a genpatsu-shinsai incident could happen at multiple nuclear power plants across Japan, and that the severity of such an incident should be of global concern. In 2006, he

became a member of a governmental subcommittee tasked with revising the country's policies on the earthquake resistance of nuclear power plants, where his ideas for ideal safety preparedness were rejected. A man of science and outspoken critic of the government, Ishibashi is dedicated to creating a Japan of the future, whose safety is ensured by scientific, fact-driven policy, not by corporations.

Elena Buglova, Head of IES for the IAEA

Also known as Yelena Buglova, is the Head of the Center for Incidents and Emergencies (IES) for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). She specializes in disaster response with a focus on human health and has broken barriers for women in the field of nuclear safety. After graduating from university with a medical PhD, she worked at the Belarusian Institute of Radiation Medicine, which allowed her to study the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant exclusion zone and learn about the health impacts of nuclear radiation. In 2002, she became the first woman to lead the United Nations's IAEA IES, which responds to nuclear accidents on behalf of the UN. Buglova's responsibility is to investigate Fukushima Daiichi. She is committed to safety from nuclear incidents and wants to discover the truth behind what happened at Fukushima, seeking justice for those affected.

Keiko Ochiai, Media Personality and Anti-Nuclear Advocate

As a “shoshi”—the Japanese term for being born out of wedlock, Keiko Ochiai felt a calling to serve as a human rights advocate to ensure no one else suffered as she had. Ochiai's work as an advice-giving radio commentator and author of critically acclaimed self-help essays has propelled her influence in Japanese media. Inspired by her rough upbringing and traumatic childhood, she founded “Crayonhouse” in 1970—Japan's first-ever all-in-one children's & women's bookstore, toy store, and

organic market. Since then, Ochiai has been focused on promoting happiness and maintaining the welfare of Japan through Crayonhouse. After news of Fukushima broke out, Ochiai became committed to the anti-nuclear movement, becoming a prominent voice of the Sayonara Nukes Power Plants organization. Ochiai is a firm believer that nuclear power is one of the great reasons for human unhappiness, and is committed to eradicating nuclear energy to prevent the suffering she knows all too well.

John Roos, American Ambassador to Japan

John Roos' departure to Japan coincided with the historic power shift from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which had ruled for 50 years, to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). Thus, Roos played a key role in navigating Japan-US relations. His focus on intergovernmental cooperation has allowed Roos to build relationships with several government and business leaders across Japan. As the first sitting US Ambassador invited to the annual commemoration of the Hiroshima bombing, Roos is well respected by the Japanese public. As ambassador of the US, this only strengthens his own nation's agenda by establishing and improving relations with East Asian countries for economic, social, and militaristic partnerships. The unprecedented severity of the Tohōku tsunami and earthquake serves as a great opportunity for Roos to further strengthen US relations with and presence in Japan through his diplomatic prowess.

Wen Jiabao, Chinese Premier

As China's leader and head of the State Council, Wen Jiabao emphasized bolstering relations with other nations. Throughout his career, Jiabao has established the use of "peaceful rise"—creating peaceful foreign relations through international diplomacy. He has achieved this through becoming a member of Western and regional institutions

such as the World Trade Organization. However, Jiabao's foreign policy of "peaceful rise" has not been developed in Japan for numerous historical and territorial reasons, namely Japan's bloody occupation of China in the early 20th century. The sheer destruction of the Tohoku tsunami provides him with the possibility of "disaster diplomacy", alleviating Chinese-Japanese tensions. However, these tensions could worsen if Fukushima Daiichi releases its radioactive wastewater into the East Sea, affecting China's fisheries. Jiabao will navigate as a delegate to foster positive diplomatic ties and negotiate the future of China's relationship with Japan. He is one of the most powerful people in the world, but has a reputation to maintain as an approachable and humble man.

Kazuo Shii, Head of the Japanese Communist Party

In 1973, Shii joined the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) as a freshman at the University of Tokyo in protest of tuition fee increases. Since then, Shii has worked in the central committee of the JCP and became the party's chairman in 2000. As chairman, Shii has carried on JCP's principles of advancing socialist, anti-imperialist policies in Japan. This includes the termination of the Japan-US military alliance and the dismantling of American bases in Japan. Shii argues that the US military compromises Japan's ability to have full control over their own nation. Despite the US's sending over aid, Shii is still adamant about removing the American presence in Japan. Moreover, Shii is most notably critical of nuclear weapons and power and has been shown to support the transition to renewable energies. Shii is an outspoken critic of foreign overreach and sees the rebuilding of Japan as an opportunity to rebuild the country into the ideal Communist society.

Shinzo Abe, Diet Member for the LDP

Born into a political dynasty, Shinzo Abe followed through by becoming Japan's youngest Prime Minister in 2006. Abe was committed to re-establishing Japan as a forceful presence in international affairs. To do so, Abe met with several world leaders and gave voice to Japanese national sentiment groups. With China emerging as a dominant power in the East Asian region, he sought to revise Japan's post-WWII pacifist constitution. Abe envisions a greater Japan by erasing the "limitations" the US set on Japan's constitution after the bombings. However, Abe's ulcerative colitis took a toll on his health, leading to his resignation a year into his term as prime minister. Abe continued to serve as a member of Japan's Diet (Japanese national legislature). The political chaos of the Kantei (Prime Minister's Office) and Fukushima has plummeted the reputation of several politicians. This gives Abe the opportunity to reroute his way to power and achieve the goals he couldn't in his first term. A self-assured and confident leader, Abe will tell it like it is, unafraid of upsetting others in the Diet with his controversial opinions.

Eric Ouannes, Head of "Doctors Without Borders Japan"

Eric Ouannes is the head of the Japanese branch of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), or Doctors Without Borders. Ouannes has an extensive background in humanitarian work, including with NGO Action Against Hunger and with MSF across the world. Regarding the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami, there are currently two MSF teams in Sendai. Ouannes is in charge of MSF's operations in temporary shelters, specifically focusing on the large elderly population of survivors, who have more intensive needs than the younger generations. These needs include medicine, water, and heat, all of which are scarce,

and lead to greater rates of disease among the elderly. At this point, the aftermath of Tōhoku's disasters is not considered a humanitarian crisis because many hospitals are still operating, but Ouannes is monitoring the situation for changes and will respond accordingly. He is disinterested in any plays for political power or excuses for responsibility, focusing instead on how to, objectively, best support the Japanese people in their time of need.

Banri Kaieda, Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry

Banri Kaieda became the Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy, Science and Technology Policy, and Space Policy in 2010. In early 2011, before the Tohoku Earthquake, Prime Minister Naoto Kan appointed Kaieda to head the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry. Kaieda has had a long history of working within the government, originally being elected to the House of Representatives in 1993. Kaieda has also had years of experience within the DPJ, being a Member of the Executive Board for Administration in 1996 and Chair of the DPJ Policy Research Committee in 2002. As one of the primary targets of criticism by both the LDP and the press following the Fukushima power plant disaster, he is under pressure to shake off the public's ire. He rose to fame through his comedic television roles and is known for being an amicable man and eloquent speaker. He will be looking to improve the situation while welcoming any positive press that comes with his actions.

Yoshihiko Noda, Minister of Finance

Yoshihiko Noda graduated from the prestigious Matsushita Institute, which specializes in creating civic leaders, with a master's degree in political science. He was first elected to the Japanese Diet in 1993 and later joined the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). In 2010, he was appointed Minister of Finance under Prime Minister Kan Naoto,

a position in which he was in charge of the Ministry of Finance and the Japanese Treasury. Notable events in his term include the investigation of a financially corrupt politician and his efforts to halt the yen's (Japanese currency) falling value. As Minister of Finance, Noda is responsible for supporting the economy post-Tōhoku disasters, such as the reopening of ports and quick recovery of businesses. He strongly believes that what Japan needs are not groveling, passive politicians, but decisive leaders who take quick action, and he thinks he is just that.

Makoto Yagi, President and Chairman of KEPCO

Makoto Yagi is the president of Kansai Electric Power Company, a Japanese nuclear power company, and TEPCO's largest rival. After TEPCO's crisis at Fukushima Daiichi, the public's view on nuclear energy has plummeted, and anti-nuclear groups are seeing a rise in membership. KEPCO's nuclear reactors are one of the biggest sources of profit for the company, and shutting them down would result in great profit loss. While Yagi believes that Japan should transition to renewable energy, he also requires that the country rely on nuclear power for the survival of the company. Yagi is a businessman through and through- disciplined, resourceful, and will stop at nothing to ensure that his company remains successful.

Makoto Iokibe, President of the Hyogo Earthquake Memorial 21st Century Research Institute

Makoto Iokibe is a renowned diplomatic historian, political scientist, and university professor. Much of his professional background focuses on international relations between Japan and foreign countries after World War II, specifically US-Japan relations and how Japan became a major economic power in the latter half of the 20th century. He has been the head of the Defense Academy since 2006. Iokibe has lived through

many major earthquakes, including the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake, after which he became involved in rebuilding efforts and post-disaster policymaking. He served as chairman of the Hyogo Earthquake Memorial 21st Century Research Institute, whose mission is disaster reduction. Iokibe has advised many politicians regarding foreign policy and will navigate diplomacy with other countries on how to best help Japan.

Hajime Mikami, Mayor of Kosai City

Hajime Mikami is the mayor of Kosai City, a town in western Shizuoka Prefecture. Mikami began to raise concerns about nuclear power in 2001 when he was a management consultant at Funai Research Institute. He believed that nuclear power plants were not only dangerous, but potential targets for terrorist attacks, putting thousands, if not millions, of lives at risk. Kosai was not badly affected by the Tōhoku earthquake or subsequent tsunami but has a personal stake in the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident- any potential radioactive fallout from the plant may reach Kosai, harming its citizens. Additionally, Kosai City is near the Hamaoka Nuclear Power Plant, which is notable for its weaknesses due to earthquakes. There have already been earthquake aftershocks near Hamaoka, and there is public concern about an aftershock destabilizing the Hamaoka Plant, as well. Despite the recent trend of pro-nuclear politicians in Japan, Mikami is staunchly anti-nuclear, and in April of 2011, began to put together an anti-nuclear mayors' coalition. He is known for being a comedic and charismatic leader, always smiling and delivering uplifting and humorous speeches.

Sadakazu Tanigaki, Liberal Democratic Party Leader

As the president of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan, Sadakazu Tanigaki has been working in the government since 1983. He was elected to the House of

Representatives and then elected president of the LDP in 2009 when the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) came to power. He values listening to the opinions of the “silent majority” and enshrining minority protections. Tanigaki believes that the DPJ has, thus far, responded extremely poorly to the Tohoku Earthquake and that the party’s inefficiency will lead to further harm to society. He is a very outspoken critic of most LDP policies and has delivered many scathing press reports. As the opposition leader in a government run by political opponents, Tanagaki seeks to restore the LDP’s former power by demonstrating its effectiveness, quick thinking, and trustworthiness amidst the DPJ’s poor leadership.

Sakae Muto, Vice President of TEPCO and Chief Executive of TEPCO’s Nuclear Division

Sakae Muto is one of the top executives at TEPCO, who advanced quickly to his position because of his knowledge of nuclear energy management. He earned a degree in engineering at the University of Tokyo and then immediately joined TEPCO in 1979. Muto is responsible for overseeing TEPCO’s crisis management and recovery efforts after a natural disaster because he is also experienced in emergency preparedness. He is responsible for ensuring TEPCO’s nuclear energy division works safely and smoothly. However, in the immediate aftermath of such a large nuclear disaster, he needs to restore confidence in TEPCO and convince others that he had prepared as much as possible so he doesn’t lose his job—or worse.

Jin Sato, Mayor of Minamisanriku

Jin Sato is the mayor of Minamisanriku, a small fishing village in Miyagi Prefecture. On the day of the tsunami, over 80% of Minamisanriku’s buildings were destroyed, and Sato was one of only 10 people in the disaster response building to survive. With 300

dead and more than half of the town's population living out of temporary shelters, Sato's main concern is the welfare of his citizens. Lacking water, food, heat, and electricity, the town's large elderly population is suffering the most, but of concern as well are the surviving schoolchildren. Many are arguing that the extent of the damage is too great and that the town may not be able to recover, but Sato is determined to prove that Minamisanriku, which has faced similar challenges in the past, can and will bounce back. Sato seeks to both rebuild Minamisanriku and create an updated disaster prevention plan to ensure a tragedy of this scale cannot occur again.

Tokio Kano, House of Councillors member

Tokio Kano graduated from the University of Tokyo and Keio University, later rising to leadership positions at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO). At TEPCO, he served as Vice President in the 1990s, stepping down from the company to become a representative in the House of Councillors in 1998. While in office, Kano led a parliamentary campaign to rewrite Japan's energy structure with a focus on nuclear energy, opposing the deregulation of the power industry. In 1999, he complained to Parliament that nuclear power was represented unfairly in public school textbooks, and was part of the team who rewrote those same textbooks to show nuclear energy in a more positive light. Members of parliament, including in his own party, grew suspicious of his support for power companies. Kano is a strong political agent for energy companies- he is a smooth talker, able to convince unruly dissidents about what is truly good for the future of Japan through refined debate and a charming persona.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is the most effective way to evacuate and provide aid for the people affected by these natural disasters?
2. What existing governmental policies (ie, disaster preparedness policies, nuclear safety policies, etc.) will need to be reconsidered when responding to the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami?
3. How will this affect Japan's current political climate?
4. What further earthquake or tsunami complications may arise in the future? How can Japan prepare for these issues?
5. What will Japan's sources of energy look like in the future? How reliant should it be on nuclear energy?
6. How will Japan cooperate with foreign entities to best support its people?
7. Who, if anyone, is at fault for the incident at Fukushima Daiichi? What consequences should the perpetrator face?

REFERENCES

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[Government Structure](#)

Earthquake/Tsunami History, Policy/Precedent Before 2011:

[Japan's Earthquake Systems](#)

[Measuring Japan's Earthquake](#)

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[Tectonic Plates](#)

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