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March 7, 2022
Module 2: Brief - Mitigation Strategies

The Fukushima Daiichi accident was a devastating event that left thousands of people in the Fukushima prefecture in eastern Japan displaced and cost billions in damages and repairs. Beginning March 11, 2011, a major earthquake caused a 15-meter tsunami that disabled the power supply and cooling of three Fukushima Daiichi reactors, and all three cores melted in the first three days¹. Four years later, troops and workers are returning to clean up the area. There were more than \$10 billion exertion by the central Tokyo government to clean up the fallout of the event which not only allowed 80,000 displaced residents of Iitate and other communities around the plant to relocate².

Some evacuees are willing to return; however many have rejected the government's request to return as they believe they are being forced to return despite radiation levels still being above normal. Many residents in the immediately affected areas have joined a lawsuit to oppose the government's plan². There is speculation that this will help restart the nation's nuclear industry as well as assuring the world that Tokyo is safe to host the 2020 Summer Olympics. Following the event, Tokyo had drawn up plans to clean up an entire countryside polluted by invisible contaminants². Since then, the government has accelerated the timetable for cleaning with a concentration on "decontamination efforts" for the next two years². Many expressed skepticism about this plan. That being said, it is believed that this incident could have been prevented if the plant's owner, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), and Japan's regulator Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) followed international best practices and standards, they could have predicted the possibility of the plant being struck by a tsunami³. As horrifying as this event was, it is important to understand how plants work and how they can be managed to prevent future unpredictable disasters and fallouts.

References

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