

Hiroko Takahashi, *Classified Hiroshima and Nagasaki: U.S. Nuclear Test and Civil Defense Program*

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The author is a member of the Hiroshima City University Hiroshima Peace Institute. She earned her doctorate in the history of literature from Doshisha University in September of 2003; after that, she wrote this book. She has mainly used official documents from the National Archives and Records Administration in the U.S. as her resource material.

The purpose of this book is to clarify the fact that the US government controlled information about the influence of radioactivity on the human body. The US government controlled information for Japanese and US citizens and underestimated the influence of radioactivity. On the other hand, the US government recognized that radioactivity had a serious influence on the human body and studied A-bomb survivors as guinea pigs. The originality of this study is that double standard of the US government regarding the influence of radioactivity on the human body is made clear.

This study has four important points. First, this study clarifies the actual situation of collection, investigation of the information, and research about the A-bomb by the US government. The US government recognized the dangers of radioactive materials from the first development of the A-bomb. Radioactive materials were recognized as “poisons” in the document from the Radioactive Poisons Subcommittee, which was initiated in May of 1943 by the request of General Leslie Groves, who commanded the Manhattan Project. Researchers from the Manhattan Project, such as James B. Conant (chemist) and Arthur H. Compton, director of the Metallurgy Laboratory at the University of Chicago, were included as members of this committee.

After the US Army dropped the A-bombs on Hiroshima (August 6, 1945) and Nagasaki (August 9), the Joint Commission, which was a combined research group of the Manhattan Engineer District, US Army, and US Navy, investigated the medical outcomes of the A-bomb. The investigation ended in December of 1945, and collected medical materials were transferred to the United States in January of

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1946, managed by the Surgeons General (USA, USN), and were kept by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. In March of 1947, the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) took over the A-bomb medical investigation from the Joint Commission and started in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. ABCC was put under the management of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council. But because the US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), which started in January of 1947, offered funds and ABCC offered information to the Surgeons General (USA, USN), its military nature is clear. In the research on the influence of the A-bomb on the human body, there was no intention of helping A-bomb survivors at all.

Second, this study makes it clear that the US government has controlled A-bomb information. Not only is the initial radiation, which occurs within 1 min after the A-bomb explosion, a problem for A-bomb survivors but the residual radiation, which occurs after 1 min from the explosion of the A-bomb, also has caused aftereffects (late radiation damage). But, Brigadier General Thomas F. Farrell, who was the Manhattan Project deputy manager, “denied categorically that it produced a dangerous lingering radioactivity in the ruins of the town or caused a form of poison gas at the moment of explosion” on September 6, 1945. Captain Stafford Leak Warren, who was the person in charge of the medical field of the Manhattan Project, stated that when the A-bomb was explosive at high altitude, radioactive materials were scattered over a wide range, so the danger of residual radioactivity disappeared. This idea was the official view of the US government. President Truman urged self-restriction of the A-bomb reports to the American press on September 14, 1945, and the Press Cord was announced to the Japanese media on the 19th. The influence of residual radioactivity was also underestimated in Operation Crossroads, conducted in the Marshall Islands' Bikini Atoll in July of 1946.

When it is a high-altitude explosion, the idea that residual radioactivity is victimless is a mistake, and the US government recognizes that and has traced A-bomb survivors thoroughly. Why has the US government announced the idea that damage from residual radioactivity is deniable? The Japanese government criticized the US government on August 10, 1945 because the A-bomb brought indiscriminate genocide, and that was a Hague Convention (convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land in 1907) violation. In opposition to that, the US government tried to avoid an international law violation by denying the influence of residual radioactivity. It was also necessary to state that “residual radioactivity was carefree” to reassure the American occupation forces stationed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Third, this study discusses the Civil Defense Program in the United States, which was the plan for the US citizens to protect themselves against nuking from the Soviet Union. But, the contents were about turning a body down and hiding it and ignoring the influence of radioactivity. The author points out that it was necessary to underestimate the influence of residual radioactivity in the implementation. Because of the A-test by the Soviets in August of 1949, the United States could not monopolize A-bomb information anymore, and the importance of private defense was talked about. The AEC, the Department of Defense, and Los Alamos National Laboratory issued *The Effects of Atomic Weapons* in October of 1950. According to this document, damage from an A-bomb could be avoided by taking counter-

measures. When the Civil Defense Act was concluded in December of 1950 and the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) started in January of the next year, the laws of civil defense and the organization were maintained.

The US government explained to the people that A-bomb damage could be reduced by taking countermeasures. The FCDA educated the people through the “Alert America Convoy Show” and newsletters such as “The Civil Defense Alert.” They showed only that destruction by A-bomb is efficient and slighted the influence of residual radioactivity. Substantially, the countermeasures were not different from aerial bombing measures in the Second World War. Therefore, the goal of the Civil Defense Program was a psychological influence on the people.

Fourth, this study makes it clear that the Civil Defense Program was corrected by the H-bomb test that US forces carried out at Bikini on March 1, 1954. The crew of the Japanese tuna boat *Lucky Dragon* was poisoned by residual radioactivity, and many other fishing boats captured the tuna polluted by this radioactivity. Therefore, the US government could not conceal the influence of residual radioactivity on the human body anymore. To make the problem end politically, before the entire damage became clear to the Japanese investigators, the US government paid consolation money of two million dollars to the Japanese government in January of 1955.

But, the danger of residual radioactivity was known to the whole world because the research ship *Shunkotsu-Maru*, which the Japanese government dispatched, reported widespread radioactivity pollution in the Pacific Ocean. As a result, though the US government had not admitted to damage of “radioactive fallout” formally up to that time, the AEC had no choice but to admit the influence of radioactive fallout, which spreads with the destruction of fragments of coral by the Bikini Experiment on February 15, 1955 (residual radioactivity was diffused as radioactive fallout). However, the view of the AEC was that radioactive pollution spread because the Bikini Experiment exploded near the surface of the earth, but when it is an explosion in the air, there is no worry of radioactive pollution. Therefore, the official view of the US government did not change, and the US people kept being told that damage can be reduced by following the directions of the FCDA. On the other hand, the US government made 28 Americans and 239 Marshallese residents the subject of the study called “Project 4.1”.

The significance of this study, first, was that it revealed that the US government has concealed A-bomb damage intentionally and politically. A-bomb survivors became plaintiffs in April of 2003 in Japan, and a “class action suit for certification of Atomic bomb sicknesses (late radiation damage)” has started. Influential denial of residual radioactivity leads to denial of the health damage for A-bomb survivors. The fact that the US government has concealed and underestimated damage of residual radioactivity intentionally was one of the factors which led to winning the case. It is pointed out numerous times in the former trial judgment that the influence of residual radioactivity was underestimated remarkably by DS86 (Dosimetry System 1986) and DS02 (Dosimetry System 2002), which are used as standards of recognition for radiation sicknesses established by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Second, the US government has tried to use nuclear weapons many times. It was inconvenient for the US government that residual radioactivity caused damage over a long time. The deception of the US government, which concealed

and underestimated the damage of residual radioactivity, has to be pointed out, and this study makes the facts clear.

A remaining research task is to reveal the research on radioactivity damage in the ABCC and the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (started in 1975 and took over the ABCC). The bilateral character of the US policy becomes clearer here. Second, the American policy intention to try to conceal the damage of residual radioactivity is not always consistent. While nuclear power generation is developed in earnest from the 1960s, what kind of influence the concealment policy of A-bomb damage had on the safety standards of radiation has to be revealed.