

**Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa remarks for AAAS Award Ceremony
6:30pm Feb. 15, 2013, Boston**

Thank you, Drs Press and Leschner. Good evening everyone.

This is a great honor... and one that is very, very much deserved.

But I can't claim that I deserve it personally.

This award is richly deserved by my colleagues – more than 100 people, part-time and volunteer professionals – who worked on the Nuclear Accident Independent Inquiry Commission around the clock over 6 months to produce the report that was released – in Japanese and English – on July Fifth, last year.

So tonight I'm pleased to accept this award on their behalf.

Our Inquiry might not seem exceptional in USA and elsewhere... where Congressional panels regularly compel even the mightiest citizens to testify under oath.

But in Japan, what we did broke new ground.

Our mandate didn't come from the government, nor from ministry bureaucrats – it came directly from the legislature, from the National Diet which put us beyond the influence of vested interests. And our mandate came with the power to compel testimony.

This was an innovation in Japan where matters are too often decided in advance behind closed doors before the public is shown a kabuki theater performance.

This is not to say anything bad about kabuki which is a very refined Japanese art form. But when you're trying to find the truth, you don't want a lot of costumes and make-up.

At the height of the crisis, Japanese citizens felt misled by their government, by the nuclear industry and by the domestic media. So people very much wanted the truth, the truth told transparently.

That's why we took great trouble to make our process transparent – putting everything we could on the internet. And translating as much as we could into English so that Japanese – and the whole world – could regain trust in Japan.

Our work was guided by valuable benchmarks: prior reports on disasters like Three Mile Island, the space shuttle Challenger and 9/11. In every report you find the same words: terms like “mindset” and “regulatory capture.”

It was not in our mandate to determine whether or not nuclear power is safe but I can say that where you find a shared mindset of complacency and where you find regulators who are too cozy with those they regulate then the safety of nuclear power is compromised.

What is critical in any accident investigation is to find out what really happened – and why. You want to identify the root causes more than to assign blame.

What I told my fellow Japanese is that we're all guilty that the root cause of this accident is our “our reflexive obedience; our reluctance to question authority; our devotion to ‘sticking with the program’; our groupism; and our insularity.”

Because at the end of the day the best defense against negligence and stupidity is the strength of our civil society. It's committed regulators, it's whistle-blowers, investigative journalists, independent academics, NGOs, activist prosecutors, alert legislators and, above all, ordinary people who vote.

In conclusion, let me say this.

Since 1945 of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have all learned about the power of the atom. There is, however, an eternal and all-pervasive force much more powerful than the atom and that is human stupidity.

What is the antithesis of stupidity?

It is scientific analytical mind and discipline. It is the courage of individual scientists to take on the forces of stupidity wherever they arise.

To the American Association for the Advancement of Science I am deeply honored to receive this award on behalf of my colleagues of our team, my family, and above all more than 150,000 of all those who were forced to abandon suddenly their homes and daily life with families

Thank you.