

Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda delivers a speech at a press conference following the inauguration of his first Cabinet, September 2.

# Noda Replaces Kan at Helm of Government

## *New prime minister lays out plans to revitalize Japan.*

On August 30, 2011, members of the House of Representatives and House of Councillors voted to elect Yoshihiko Noda Japan's new prime minister. Prime Minister Noda, the finance minister under outgoing Prime Minister Naoto Kan, became Japan's 95<sup>th</sup> prime minister (the 62<sup>nd</sup> person to assume the post) since the first, Hirobumi Ito, took office in 1885.

On September 2, Prime Minister Noda formed his first Cabinet. After the Cabinet's formal inauguration, Prime Minister Noda held a press conference, in which he laid out his plans for the new administration.

"My single greatest mission is to further expedite recovery and reconstruction operations," he stated, placing the highest priority on "bringing the nuclear power station accident to a conclusion without delay. Two important challenges will be to ensure that the reactors at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station are

stabilized without fail and also to engage in decontamination of the radioactive materials in the vicinity of the nuclear power station... without the revival of Fukushima Prefecture there can be no revival for Japan as a whole. Given that this process of revival will restore vitality to Japan and also in the sense that it will help to restore the trust of the international community in our country, I will make every endeavor in this regard."

On the subject of economic policy, Prime Minister Noda said, "It is my intention to create countermeasures for all the crises we currently face and to ensure that the nation does not fall into a crisis of confidence. I want to implement countermeasures to avoid the hollowing out of industry in Japan, restore the economy to robust health even in the midst of energy constraints, and make a vigorous response to the financial crisis that predates the earthquake and tsunami disasters. Firstly, due to the historic apprecia-

tion of the yen, it is only natural to feel an unprecedented sense of crisis concerning the hollowing out of industry. During my tenure as minister of finance, I worked in cooperation with other countries, and always reserved the option of intervention in currency markets, should the need arise. In the future too, I will seek to make a response in close cooperation with other countries."

Regarding foreign policy, Prime Minister Noda stated, "With the rise of emerging nations, the world is becoming increasingly multi-polar. The security environment in the Asia-Pacific region is undergoing significant changes. In these circumstances, it is essential that we advance foreign and security policies that can robustly respond to the requirements of the times. I believe that the linchpin for such policies is none other than the Japan-U.S. Alliance. We must work to further advance and develop this alliance."

Prime Minister Noda stressed that another basic stance of the Government is "to develop the strategic relationship of mutual benefit with China. I will make every effort to build relations of goodwill not only between Japan and China, but also with other neighboring countries, including the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Russia. To date I have engaged in my own way in economic diplomacy in matters such as currency and international finance, and in the future it is my intention to also engage actively in multi-faceted economic diplomacy, including even greater levels of economic cooperation and also diplomacy relating to natural resources, among other issues. In particular, I believe that it is essential for Japan to draw on the inherent vitality in the Asia-Pacific region. From this perspective too, I will engage in active efforts to promote economic diplomacy."

Prime Minister Noda said, "I will convey and share the lessons of Japan's experiences of the recent nuclear disaster as well as the countermeasures Japan

is currently engaged in. I aim to work quickly to create personal relations of trust with the leaders of the major countries of the world and further deepen exchange with the people of these countries."

Prime Minister Noda concluded his press conference by saying, "I believe that once we have achieved stability in domestic affairs, restored public trust in politics and overcome each of the various challenges we face, a new source of diplomatic strength will eventually emerge. Faced with the frenzied pace of



The members of Prime Minister Noda's first Cabinet pose for a commemorative photograph, September 2.

international developments we must not fall into the trap of single country economic and financial policy. Bearing this point duly in mind, it is my intention to work diligently to create a basis for stability in domestic affairs, from which we can work quickly to build a structure that will enable a revitalized Japan to make an even greater international contribution than before."

