

NEW YEAR'S REFLECTION

On January 1, 2012, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda released his "New Year's Reflection."

The prime minister stated, "The year beginning today is the first year in which we set out towards Japan's rebirth. Seeking to become 'Japan, a country of hope and pride,' we must make this a year in which we are able to feel in a tangible way that we have taken a definite step forward."

He also stated, "The recent extraordinary session of the Diet saw the passage of the third supplementary budget for fiscal 2011, which exceeds 12 trillion yen, and its related legislation, thereby consolidating the system for dynamically pressing forward with reconstruction from the earthquake disaster. At the end of 2011, a 'state of cold shutdown' was achieved in the reactors at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. From now, we will dramatically accelerate the reconstruction from the earthquake disaster and the rebirth of Fukushima, with the Reconstruction Agency,

which will be newly established, as the command center."

The Prime Minister said, "In the era in which the Asia-Pacific region becomes the world's growth center, it will be essential to make the greatest possible use of the benefits of globalization. Japan will stand at the fore internationally, pursuing various methods in order to realize the concept of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).

"Numerous frontiers extending across Japan are waiting for us to take them up as challenges. The issue of 'women,' whose strengths in society have yet to be sufficiently exerted. 'Agriculture,' 'renewable energies,' and 'medical care,' all holding the potential to become major growth industries of the 21st century. 'The sea,' a treasure-trove of marine resources. 'Space,' with its unlimited spatial expansion. By orchestrating the wisdom of industry, government and academia, and transforming these frontiers both at home and abroad from 'dreams' into 'reality,' I will make these a driving force for Japan's rebirth."

The Prime Minister also emphasized, "Rather than fear the 'risks involved in taking on a challenge,' we must fear the 'risks involved in not doing anything.' Taking on these mounting issues head on, one by one, we will achieve good results. This is also a historic mission to be carried out by the people of Japan, who live in the midst of adversity."



Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda speaks at a press conference on January 4, 2012.