

## Interview with Diet Member Teruhiko Mashiko: METI Minister in DPJ's "Shadow Cabinet"

On September 4, the Atomic Industrial Journal (AIJ), published by JAIF, interviewed Upper House Member Teruhiko Mashiko, who currently serves as the "Shadow Minister" of Economy, Trade and Industry for the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). On August 30, the DPJ had won a landsliding victory in the watershed 45<sup>th</sup> General Election of the House of Representatives, making it Japan's new ruling party. AIJ asked Mashiko about the DPJ's nuclear policy, measures to combat global warming.



*—Where does the DPJ position the issue of nuclear energy policy in terms of importance?*

**Mashiko:** The DPJ's stance toward nuclear power changed substantially two years ago: from

seeing it as "transitional energy" to viewing it as a major power source to be steadily promoted. It thus now clearly positions nuclear power as part of Japan's energy strategy. Ever since then, I have worked as shadow minister of economy, trade and industry in our party's "next cabinet," focusing on the areas of energy policy, environmental policy, and policies for small and medium-size businesses. In advance of the recent general election, I integrated those policies into the DPJ's Manifesto and Policies Index 2009.

*Click for more details about the DPJ's Manifesto for the 2009 election:*  
<http://www.theDPJ.or.jp/english/manifesto/manifesto2009.pdf>

*—What, then, are the DPJ's basic thoughts on nuclear energy?*

**Mashiko:** With scant energy resources and from the viewpoint of global warming, Japan needs to shift away from the use of fossil fuels, including oil, toward non-fossil ones. Nuclear power can be likened to baseball's fourth batter in the lineup: the "clean-energy" clean-up hitter. By putting top priority on ensuring safety, and

improving transparency and providing accountability, we hope that nuclear power will win the trust of the nation. Globally, the use of nuclear energy is expanding. The DPJ wants the Japanese nuclear industry to grow, and for it to become a successful export industry, for the good of Japan and for the world as a whole.

*—I understand that the DPJ believes that the government should have final responsibility for the final disposal of high-level radioactive waste (HLW). Could you clarify your Party's intention?*

**MASHIKO:** What we mean is that the government should get involved in the matter more actively. We also say that a legal framework should be developed for handling relations between siting areas and the government.

*—The DPJ calls for the new creation of a "Nuclear Safety Regulation Commission." Please elaborate.*

**MASHIKO:** We mean that nuclear promotion organizations should be separated from regulatory organizations. The DPJ thinks that many heads of the local governments in siting areas want any regulatory body to be highly independent, and we think that is what residents expect, too. It should also increase confidence among people nationwide. We want to discuss the matter more widely and openly. At present, nuclear R&D is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), while the nuclear industry itself is under the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). Some people think that it would be better to unite the two functions

under a single nuclear administration, which might eliminate the harmful influences of sectionalism and improve efficiency.

*—The DPJ has come out with a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25% from 1990 levels by the year 2020. That is substantially more than the 8% reduction target put forward by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Why be so much more aggressive?*

**MASHIKO:** The DPJ has already discussed the matter many times in its Global Warming Countermeasures Headquarters (headed by Katsuya Okada, DPJ Secretary General), interviewing relevant parties (including government officials, academicians and NPO representatives), and studying examples from overseas. Based on what was found, we have already introduced bills in the Diet. We will

establish a high reduction target first, then work and mobilize to achieve it using all possible measures. New industries should be created. It is important to do the utmost, to be determined, and not to deny the possibility from the beginning. We think that is the power of politics. Eventually, it will become an international commitment. We will have make efforts prudently, as well as actively.

*—The Fukushima Nuclear Power Station (NPS) is located in your constituency. Any thoughts on that?*

**MASHIKO:** The DPJ will meet relevant parties and listen to their opinions. I always say that while discussions within the central government are important when it comes to nuclear policy, gaining understanding from the residents is the most important.

Interviewer: Kiyoshi Kono (JAIF)