

Vietnam-Japanese Joint Communique Refers to Start of Dialog on Nuclear Energy Cooperation

Between October 18 and 22, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung made the first-ever official visit by a Vietnamese head of state to Japan. During his visit, on October 19, he, along with the new Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, released a joint communique, entitled "Toward a Strategic Partnership for Asian Peace and Prosperity."

Prime Minister Nguyen also formally invited Prime Minister Abe to make an official visit to Vietnam in November, and to attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Heads of State Conference from November 17 to 19. The Japanese premier accepted.

Japan has been the largest provider of official development assistance (ODA) to Vietnam, giving more than ¥100 billion (around \$850 million USD at current exchange rates), contributing greatly to that nation's economic growth, now booming at some 8% yearly.

Vietnam is currently pursuing a program to introduce nuclear power to the country for the first time. With both countries recognizing the importance of cooperating in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, the joint communique included a statement saying, "We have decided to pursue cooperation in the field, including the necessary efforts to develop the necessary infrastructure, including legal and administrative matters."

According to the document, both parties see such cooperation as a shared awareness "that it may lead to an exchange of opinions in the future regarding an agreement of cooperation in nuclear energy between Vietnam and Japan." In order to advance such cooperation, the communique said "We have decided to start a dialog between the two countries' governments."

In addition, Vietnam reaffirmed its support of Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, and Japan welcomed the ratification by Vietnam of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Editor: Noriyuki Ishii, JAIF