

Japan Lower House Election - Japan Future Party pledges 2022 atomic phaseout, tax freeze — Ex-DPJ don Ozawa's influence emerges in hastily drafted platform

Tuesday 4 December 2012, by [ITO Masami](#) (Date first published: 3 December 2012).

Shiga Gov. Yukiko Kada on Sunday unveiled her new party's hastily compiled policy platform for the Dec. 16 general election, calling for the elimination of nuclear power by 2022 and freezing the government's plan to raise the sales tax.

Nippon Mirai no To (Japan Future Party) was formed just last week, but its campaign pledges already reveal the hand of Ichiro Ozawa, the former head of the Democratic Party of Japan and Kokumin no Seikatsu ga Daiichi (People's Life First). This includes a vow to distribute annual child benefits of ¥312,000 per child.

The kingpin and his followers merged with Nippon Mirai together with other small parties and former DPJ lawmakers.

Highlights of Nippon Mirai platform
Kyodo

Nippon Mirai no To (Japan Future Party) will:

- Phase out nuclear energy within 10 years.
- Scrap the Monju fast-breeder reactor in Fukui Prefecture and the spent-fuel reprocessing plant in Rokkasho, Aomori Prefecture.
- Provide annual allowances of ¥312,000 per child.
- Freeze the law for doubling the 5 percent sales tax rate.
- Oppose Japan's participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade pact negotiations.

At a news conference Sunday afternoon, Kada said Japan must fundamentally change its nuclear policy in light of the Fukushima disaster, which robbed many residents of their homes and livelihoods and even their lives.

"March 11 became a major turning point for postwar politics. We want to stand up against the old political system, which has no self-awareness of the need to change and create new politics to ensure a safe future," Kada said.

But, like Nippon Ishin no Kai (Japan Restoration Party), Kada was also called out for a comment that suggested she had pulled a reversal on the key policy.

Kada, who said on a TV news program Saturday that nuclear reactors could be reactivated if the Nuclear Regulation Authority guarantees their safety, set off a wave of criticism and confusion over her party's position. She later retracted the statement and said that she was just giving a general explanation of the procedures and apologized for causing "a misunderstanding."

And in a separate outline explaining how the party will get rid of all 50 reactors in a decade, Nippon Mirai on Sunday stated that it will not restart any of the idled units and will halt the two reactivated reactors at the Oi plant in Fukui Prefecture. It will also prohibit the establishment of new plants, including those already under construction.

Nippon Mirai plans to spend the first three years reforming the nation's electricity generation system, including by separating the generation and transmission operations, and issuing government bonds to suppress the hike in electricity prices. The following seven years of the phaseout will be spent establishing a "fair" electricity and energy market by developing reusable energy sources and promoting natural gas, the outline said.

"This is the general framework and we plan to hold discussions with bureaucrats, experts with true knowledge, and the public to make sure this plan becomes solid. I am confident that this is a responsible road map of the general framework," Tetsunari Iida, Nippon Mirai's deputy chief, said.

Iida is one of the 109 Nippon Mirai candidates running in the election. About half are former lawmakers, including Ozawa, former farm minister Masahiko Yamada, former DPJ lawmaker Shozo Azuma and former Social Democratic Party member Tomoko Abe. Kada said that she doesn't intend to run and isn't eyeing next July's Upper House election, either.

At Sunday's news conference, Kada insisted her party is not a "single issue" party and stressed that Nippon Mirai will establish a minimum-guarantee pension system, reform the civil servants' system to control bureaucrats, implement "political leadership, and hand out up to ¥312,000 in child allowances until graduation from junior high school.

Sound familiar? These were almost the exact same policies put forth by the DPJ in its 2009 platform. Most were never put into practice.

And, like the DPJ, it is not clear just how Nippon Mirai intends to fund its key policies. Kada said her party will execute leadership by identifying and cutting wasteful spending.

MASAMI ITO, *Japan Times* staff writer, December 3, 2012

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20121203a2.html>
