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## **DPJ Government and Climate Change Policy**

*In 2009 election manifesto Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) leaders voiced their decisive support for stronger engagement in international climate negotiations. The promises were realized by an ambitious climate mitigation proposal presented by Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio at COP 15 in Copenhagen. 25% CO<sub>2</sub> levels reduction commitment was heavily criticized by Japanese opposition, METI bureaucrats and business circles. Despite strong domestic opposition Prime Minister Hatoyama decided to place climate mitigation among priorities of his foreign policy. Next DPJ administration quickly backtracked from the position of climate leader. The head of the Japanese delegation at COP 16 in Mexico stated that Japan would not be a part of new Kyoto Protocol commitment period. The aim of the article is to identify changing factors in decision-making process that led to quick change in DPJ's approach to international climate mitigation efforts.*

**Keywords:** *climate negotiations, Japan's environmental politics, Post-Kyoto Protocol negotiations, Democratic Party of Japan, Japan's foreign policy, DPJ decision making process*

### **1. Introduction**

Japanese diplomacy has actively engaged in climate change negotiations since the late 1980s. In the last 25 years one can observe a diverse approach of Japanese administration towards the issue. Japan was one of the leading countries in terms of energy efficiency and green assistance towards other countries. A large part of Japanese Official Development Assistance is dedicated to fighting environmental and climate challenges. After the initial success of the Kyoto Protocol conference, Japan tried to act as a leader in climate negotiations within the United Nations (UN), G8 and

other regional organizations. Unfortunately, the Liberal Democratic Party administration did not manage to play a decisive part in global climate cooperation. Although many Japanese initiatives received international appreciation and support, its position during negotiations had also attracted a substantial amount of criticism coming from international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and European Union (EU) countries opting for more decisive actions. The government in Tokyo has consistently resisted committing to ambitious, obligatory Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction targets. Despite being a host country of the Kyoto Protocol Conference in 1997, Japan faced serious problems with establishing effective domestic GHG reduction policy. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) introduced various initiatives and legislations in order to meet its Kyoto target, but most of the actions were based on voluntary measures (Tiberghien & Shreurs 2010, p. 142). The lack of effective tools for GHG reduction like carbon tax, feed-in tariff mechanism or a working Cap and Trade system were the main sources of criticism towards LDP's climate policy coming from environmental NGOs and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction supporters.

According to many scholars (Pajon 2010, p. 88; Shreurs & Tiberghien 2010, p. 162) the situation was likely to change after the Democratic Party of Japan came to power in 2009. Advocates of introducing a more ambitious climate policy both on the Japanese and international political scene expected a major shift in energy and climate policymaking process (Fackler 2009). Their expectations seemed to come to fruition after Hatoyama Yukio's Government pledged 25% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> levels during the Copenhagen Climate Summit. The window of opportunity for change in international and domestic climate policy was very short. Soon after the failure of climate negotiations in 2009, the DPJ drastically changed its stance towards international climate cooperation and domestic climate policy. The aim of this article is to identify the most important reasons for this shift and to offer a deeper look into the credibility of environmental image that the DPJ created during its election campaign.

## **2. Climate Change policy in DPJ Election Campaign**

Before election, DPJ leaders voiced their decisive support for stronger engagement in international climate negotiations. Okada Katsuya, the party's secretary general, promised that the "embarrassing reduction targets" presented by the LDP since the beginning of Japanese participation

in the UN climate negotiations will be revised. Kan Naoto expressed his plans of separating climate and environmental policy from the bureaucratic influence of the Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry. Their ideas found a place in the DPJ election manifesto which included the following promises:

- reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 25% (from 1990 levels) by 2020 and by more than 60% by 2050;
- playing a leading role in international climate negotiations with the aim of ensuring participation of major emitter nations like the United States and China;
- establishing effective domestic emission trading market;
- looking into the possibility of introducing global warming taxes and their effects on the Japanese economy;
- introduction of a fixed-price purchase system for renewable energy generated from all power sources;
- subsidies for purchase of solar panels, “green vehicles” and energy saving appliances;
- increasing the ratio of renewable energy production to 10% of total energy supply;
- promoting R&D and commercialization of environment friendly technologies (DPJ Manifesto 2009, p. 23–25).

One can easily observe that apart from ambitious GHG reduction commitment (25% reduction by 2020) and declarations of increasing efforts in international climate negotiations, DPJ politicians planned to pursue new policies and measures to reach their climate goals, including serious changes in domestic energy policy.

One of the most important DPJ election promises was to adopt a comprehensive feed-in tariff mechanism for all renewable energy sources including wind and geothermal facilities. Feed-in tariffs are one of the most effective tools of increasing the use of renewable energy in which the government offers to buy the energy produced from renewable sources at a profitable rate. The new system was supposed to serve as an expansion of feed-in tariff introduced in November 2009. LDP legislation drafted mostly by METI provided limited financial incentives for companies producing energy using only solar power. The main difference in the DPJ promise was the idea of buying all renewable energy produced by the providers (not only surplus power) (Iida & DeWit 2011, p. 6). Another important declaration was the plan to increase domestic production of

renewable energy up to 10% of total energy supply by 2020. This proposition stood in sharp contrast with previous governmental policy in which renewable sources contributed only to 1.6% of Japan's energy production in 2014. According to Iida and DeWit (2011, p. 7), compared to other developed countries like Germany (45% by 2030), Scotland (80% by 2020) or even China (16% by 2020) Japanese goal of increasing power generation from renewables was one of the lowest. Ambitious international declarations and changes in domestic energy policy were aimed at increasing Japanese competitiveness on the global energy and climate technology market. Hatoyama Yukio as well as other DPJ politicians stressed that investment in renewable energy and climate friendly technology is one of the ways to deal with Japanese energy security problems and to boost economic growth and exports (Iida & DeWit 2011, p. 7).

The DPJ tried to present a consistent climate and environment friendly image standing in opposition to previous LDP actions. The new climate approach can be interpreted through a broader strategy of distancing politics from Keidanren and an attempt to limit the influence of Japanese bureaucracy on the decision-making process. Many DPJ politicians have strong connections with environmental groups (Tiberghien & Shreurs 2010, p. 143). Even more interesting is the fact that both Okada Katsuya (Minister) and Fukuyama Tetsurō (Vice Minister) who have strong ties with environmental NGOs, worked as the heads of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the election. Some of the DPJ declarations, like the 25% GHG reduction target, were perceived as unrealistic and impossible to introduce by the Japanese industry and entire power generation sector. One needs to take into account that many DPJ members were former LDP politicians who were familiar with the policymaking process and the effects they can have on the entire Japanese economy. The question that arises, is why they had not opposed those overly ambitious propositions before the DPJ manifesto was created.

### 3. The DPJ Position in Copenhagen

Soon after the elections one could observe that the newly elected government was seriously interested in taking a lead during the upcoming UN climate summit in Copenhagen. 2009 was supposed to bring a breakthrough in international climate talks. After years of intensive dialogue within the UN and G8, the world's biggest economies intended to sign

a new global climate agreement which would replace the Kyoto Protocol. Voices coming from the public as well as countries vitally interested in strengthening climate cooperation were full of hope and high expectations of the upcoming summit. Conditions for reaching an agreement became even more favorable after Barrack Obama was elected as the new president of the United States. During his election campaign he frequently underlined the negative consequences of Washington's weak participation in international climate and environmental regime (Obama 2008). Those declarations pointed at the possibility of bringing back the United States to close climate cooperation within the UN after President George W. Bush decided to abandon the Kyoto Protocol.

Talks in Copenhagen began in the atmosphere of global enthusiasm and high expectations of signing a new global climate deal. Nearly 10,500 delegates from 120 countries participated in the summit. With them came more than 3,000 representatives of global media (UNFCCC 2009b). Unfortunately, the high expectations of the international community were not met after the conclusion of Copenhagen summit. The negotiations were slower and more difficult than expected. Only after the United States and China exerted strong pressure, the participating countries agreed to sign a document called the Copenhagen Accord (UNFCCC 2009a). The new agreement was soon criticized by international NGOs and deemed as ineffective and insufficient for reaching long term reduction goals. The accord did not include binding CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets nor emission caps. Developed and developing economies did not reach a final agreement concerning the financial aid for climate mitigation processes (den Elzen, Andries, Mendoza, 2009, p. 29). The deal consisted of relatively ambitious declarations of developed countries concerning future actions towards reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by the year 2020. The United States pledged a 17% reduction compared to 2005 emission levels. The EU promised reduction ranging from 20 to 30% compared to 1990 levels. One of the biggest successes during the conference was ensuring declarations coming from developed BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries. Chinese delegates promised a 40% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per GDP unit by 2020 as well as increasing renewable energy production up to 15% of the country's total supply (UNFCCC 2009d). India agreed to a 25% reduction per GDP unit by 2020 (UNFCCC 2009e). Brazil pledged a 36–39% reduction and South Africa 34%, provided that they receive financial and technological support (den Elzen, Andries & Mendoza 2009,

p. 30). One has to note that all declarations were voluntary and not legally binding. Many of them included additional conditions and assumptions. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the real effect that they will have on global climate mitigation process (Morgan 2009).

One of the most ambitious declarations came from the new prime minister of Japan, Hatoyama Yukio, who promised a 25% reduction compared with 1990, providing that other major emitters would participate in global climate mitigation mechanisms (UNCCC 2009c). The pledge came as a surprise for the international community as well as domestic business groups and opposition parties. The previous administration led by Asō Tarō offered a 15% reduction based on 2005 levels. Since CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Japan had substantially grown from 1990 to 2005, changing the baseline meant that the reduction offered by the last LDP government was not very ambitious. Opinion polls conducted across Japan showed that nearly 70% of respondents favored the idea of a 4% reduction from 2005 levels, due to similar declarations coming from EU countries and the United States (Michaelowa 2010, p. 7). One of the most distinct opinions discovered in the questionnaires was the strong conviction that Japan should not support a stronger reduction target than the United States and EU, since it is not beneficial for the Japanese economy. During the G8 summit in Toyako in 2008, it became clear that the pledge of a 15% reduction from 2005 levels was not sufficient to play a leading part in the negotiations. The LDP's failure to exert stronger influence during the Toyako Summit convinced the newly elected DPJ government to propose a much more ambitious target in Copenhagen in order to gain the upper hand at the negotiating table. What is more, the polls conducted just after the 2009 election showed that nearly 75% of respondents supported the DPJ's plan of ambitious CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. One should ask the question why Japanese society opposed a stronger reduction mechanisms proposed by the LDP and just after few months was eager to support an even more ambitious plan presented by the DPJ. According to Kiyooki Aburaki, the great disparity between the poll results stems from the fact that the Hatoyama Administration did not provide information about the costs of their reduction plans. On the opposite, the LDP government included estimated costs that each Japanese household would have to pay for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction (Aburaki 2010, p. 7). In the end, favorable poll results as well as Hatoyama's aspirations to play a leading role at Copenhagen convinced the DPJ administration to push through the controversial 25% reduction

target. DPJ leaders had to live up to ambitious climate promises included in the election manifesto (Peng Er 2009, p. 70). One should also not forget about the important role of Okada Katsuya, the DPJ's secretary general, who acted as a strong advocate of ambitious climate policy. Together with other representatives of the environmentalist camp he was responsible for shaping the fundamentals of DPJ's climate policy (Aburaki 2010, p. 7).

Another important result of the Copenhagen conference was establishing a 30 billion USD fund for climate mitigation projects in developing countries. Japan pledged 11 billion USD, the EU 10.6 billion USD and the United States 3.6 billion (Michaelova 2010, p. 2). The accord contained one of the highest aid pledges in the history of negotiations. Nevertheless, it received a lot of criticism from some developing nations which claimed the amount was insufficient (Vidal 2010). Apart from serious developments and ambitious pledges, the accord was not perceived as a satisfactory tool for solving long term climate goals. The parties did not reach agreement on pursuing goals included in the 2007 Bali Action Plan, therefore the negotiations did not pave a way for the post-Kyoto cooperation period.

Japanese environment minister Ozawa Sakihito made a positive comment after the accord had been signed as it was "noticed" by the greatest CO<sub>2</sub> emitters. He also urged other countries with substantial emissions to propose new reduction targets (Fujioka, Kubota & Norton, 2010). Mitarai Fujio, chairman of Nippon Keidanren, said that the conference managed to create a path that all other countries were likely to follow (Aburaki 2010, p. 14). Despite making one of the most ambitious reduction pledges, Tokyo delegation was not able to play decisive role during negotiations. Japan did not manage to convince other participants to accept its ideas towards future climate cooperation. The Japanese reduction plan did not change the position of the United States and China which offered much lower targets. The accord did not include long term reduction targets aimed at year 2050 which was one of Japan's propositions (Rogelj, Chen & Nabel 2010, p. 2). Negotiations in Copenhagen clearly showed that Japan, which was responsible for merely 4% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, remained in the shadow of major emitters like China and the United States. The 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties once again turned out to be a scene of conflict between developing and developed countries. For a very long time China and India were blocking negotiation progress. It was the influence of the United States, not Japan's, that led to finalizing the talks. Prime

Minister Hatoyama was criticized by Japanese media for his lack of political foresight. Minister of the Environment Ozawa Sakihito reached the conclusion that UN climate negotiations, where decisions were reached almost unanimously, were a difficult forum to promote stronger climate cooperation (Aburaki 2010, p. 16). Ozawa's view is similar to the opinion among many politicians involved in the climate and energy decision-making process in Japan. The negative experience of the Copenhagen summit as well as previous failures to play a leading role in international climate regime led to a deep disillusionment with the idea of establishing a global, binding GHG reduction agreement.

#### **4. Domestic Opposition to Hatoyama's Initiative**

Hatoyama's initiative received a huge amount of criticism from opposition parties, representatives of METI and Japanese business. Although the party's Secretary General Okada had informed Nippon Keidanren about the DPJ's ambitious CO<sub>2</sub> targets, information about the official 25% reduction pledge in Copenhagen caused a storm among business and industrial circles (Aburaki 2010, p. 12). It was also heavily criticized by part of the Japanese bureaucracy. According to Akira Sawa from METI, the new GHG reduction plan could not be implemented since it was not a subject to any kind of inter-ministerial or public consultations. He also claimed that Hatoyama's initiative was unrealistic since Japan had already faced serious problems with fulfilling the Kyoto Protocol target (Sawa 2009, p. 2). The only way to undermine the prime minister's declaration was by undermining the condition of equal participation of the international community. The DPJ's plan would only go into effect if other major emitters like China, the United States and India also participated in climate mitigation to a similar extent. Nippon Keidanren claimed that the government should conduct a thorough research on the influence that Hatoyama's initiative would have on the Japanese economy, before committing to any kind of reduction. Representatives of Japan's biggest corporations called for launching an open public debate on equal climate protection responsibilities among developed economies (Aburaki 2010, p. 12). Keidanren representatives openly voiced their concerns that Japan might end up paying the highest price for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, since the Copenhagen Accord did not guarantee equal shares of burden and responsibilities on a global scale. This position received support from the Japanese

Trade Union Confederation, which provided strong support for the DPJ in the 2009 election (Aburaki 2010, p. 13).

Despite strong opposition from business circles and Japanese bureaucracy, the Hatoyama Government launched a national debate on the best means to achieve a 25% GHG reduction. The first initiatives discussed were the Cap and Trade emission trading system and global warming tax. Both tools had attracted a lot of criticism. The Japan Iron and Steel Association pointed out that domestic steel industry had very limited possibilities of introducing further emission cuts since it already was one of the most energy efficient in the world. Introducing the Cap and Trade system would force the Japanese government to buy additional emission permits from other countries (Aburaki 2010, p. 14). According to Nippon Keidanren, a new climate tax could have a negative influence on the Japanese economy. During the debate, organization representatives tried to convince public opinion that Japan did not need to resort to additional reduction mechanisms, since it managed to achieve Kyoto Protocol targets thanks to voluntary methods (Aburaki 2010, p. 14).

After the election, DPJ leaders believed that it was possible to initiate effective changes in Japanese energy policy and to alter the entire decision-making process. Their first moves were aimed at reducing the authority of bureaucrats, especially from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and business circles. It did not take long for party leaders to realize that introducing effective changes without the support from Kasumigaseki would not be as easy as initially believed. What is more, the DPJ consisted of many representatives of Japanese Trade Unions, former LDP members and politicians representing strong connections with business circles and bureaucracy. Thanks to those connections interest groups were able to use institutional resources and policymaking limitations to prevent a major transformation of Japanese energy and climate policy (Iida & DeWit 2011, p. 8).

The first obstacles that prevented the Hatoyama Administration from initiating reforms in energy policy were a lack of experienced staff and inadequate personnel in advisory committees and other governmental institutions. In order to avoid conflict between the ministries, the DPJ created a committee of cabinet members responsible for new climate policy. In October 2009 a new body formed a special task force responsible for identifying the best mechanisms for reaching a 25% reduction target (Iida & DeWit 2011, p. 8). Many experts in this task force had strong

connections with METI bureaucrats. The task force experts decided to base their discussion on the same projections and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction cost estimation data compiled by METI for the previous LDP administration. According to Iida and DeWit, using the same data was unrealistic, since it did not take into account changes in the Japanese economy and global climate technology market that took place in the decade of the 2000s. What is more, the LDP compiled this data using statistical models that emphasized the large costs of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction (2011, p. 8). Among personnel appointed to the new task force was a group of bureaucrats with strong connections to METI working in the Cabinet Secretariat in the Office of the Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary. This office, which was supposed to provide assistance to cabinet members, had not been dismantled after the election. Most of the officials in this body were part of the bureaucratic camp that for a very long time opposed the Kyoto Protocol and any kind of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction policies (Iida & DeWit 2011, p. 8).

According to Aburaki, one of the main difficulties in developing an efficient and coherent climate protection policy by the Hatoyama Administration was lack of consensus among key politicians and groups of interest. Signs of a strong internal conflict between the DPJ administration on one side and bureaucracy and business groups on the other, became clear after Hatoyama tried to pass the Global Warming Bill in 2010. New legislation was supposed to regulate essential instruments in Hatoyama's climate policy like an emission trading system, climate tax and measures to introduce a 25% GHG reduction. Since the special task force responsible for compiling a roadmap for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction turned out to be ineffective, the task was given to the central environmental council run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Iida & DeWit 2011, p. 9). In order to prevent Ministry of the Environment from introducing major changes in energy policy and protect vested interests, METI bureaucrats started to work on their own project of the bill. Both documents were presented to the cabinet in June 2010. Among all the tools of GHG reduction the Cap and Trade system received the biggest amount of criticism coming from METI and business groups. Out of 64 companies asked about their opinion on the mechanism, 61 opposed it and claimed it could be harmful for their competitiveness (Iida & DeWit 2011, p. 10). Another important promise before the election was the introduction of a feed-in tariff mechanism. In this case METI-related bureaucrats also managed to gain support in the working committee for feed-in tariff revision.

Strong opposition from the Japanese industry supported by METI became a major obstacle in the works related to the global warming bill. In the end, DPJ politicians associated with METI managed to substantially change the draft of the bill to postpone the introduction of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction mechanisms.

The bill was heavily criticized by the LDP as it did not provide any details on how those new instruments were supposed to work, what effect they should have on the Japanese economy and when would they be introduced. According to Prime Minister Hatoyama, the bill served as a confirmation of international pledges his government made in Copenhagen. The LDP was joined in its criticism by representatives of industrial circles and trade unions who accused the government of acting against Japanese economic interests without giving any tangible reasons to do so. Lower reduction targets in China and the United States may bring great losses for Japan's economy (Aburaki 2010, p. 18). At the beginning of June 2010, Hatoyama Yukio resigned and was replaced by Prime Minister Kan Naoto. In order to sum up Hatoyama's climate effects one has to notice that apart from making ambitious declarations in Copenhagen, his cabinet failed to introduce a single effective mechanism that could lead to real GHG reduction in the long term.

## **5. Kan Naoto and Change in Climate Policy Direction**

After diplomatic failure in Copenhagen one can observe the change in attitude of DPJ leaders towards climate negotiations. Despite making one of the most ambitious reduction commitments, Japanese representatives were not able to influence other parties. If one can agree that in spite of bold intentions the Hatoyama government failed to implement the ambitious measures, the next prime minister, Kan Naoto, tried to distance himself and his cabinet from the discussion on international and domestic climate policy. This shift became evident soon after the next climate summit in Cancún, Mexico in December 2010 where Japanese delegation refused to support the project of extending the Kyoto Protocol (Feldman 2010). Arima Jun from METI, who acted as the head of the Japanese delegation, stated that "our country would not inscribe its greenhouse gas emissions target under the Kyoto Protocol on any conditions or under

any circumstances" (Environmental News Service 2010). His statement was immediately picked up by representatives of the global media who understood it was abandoning not only the Kyoto Protocol but also other climate promises. One should note that Kan's government did not refuse to fulfill its obligation from the first phase of Kyoto Protocol nor did it reject Hatoyama's pledge of a 25% reduction. Nevertheless, Arima's statement came as a shock to other representatives participating in the conference in Cancún. Delegates from 20 countries led by Mexico, host of the conference, tried to convince Prime Minister Kan to change his position. His refusal to extend the agreement stood in a sharp contrast with the policy of his predecessors that for a very long time centered around the Kyoto Protocol, one of the first important climate agreements and a symbol of Japanese ambitions to lead global climate negotiations (Tiberghien & Shreurs 2007, p. 71).

According to Iida and DeWit, Arima's statement should be perceived as going back on election promises in which the DPJ underlined the importance of environmental policy as a foundation for Japan's sustainable growth. In their article titled "The 'Power Elite' and Environmental-Energy Policy in Japan" they claim that refusal to participate in the next phase of the Kyoto Protocol was a turning point in the entire climate policy promoted by Prime Minister Hatoyama (2011, p. 1). Scholars believe that Kan's decision to back out of UN climate negotiations was not surprising when one takes into account the overall objective of interest groups involved in Japanese energy policy. Kan Naoto was backtracking from almost all the climate and environmental promises that the DPJ made after it gained power (2011, p. 1). Soon after he assumed office his cabinet stopped working on the emission trading system, postponed the project of increasing the rate of renewable energy and refused to provide any details on the perspective of introducing a complex feed-in tariff mechanism. The authors claim that this 180-degree shift in international climate negotiations as well as freezing the progress of domestic reforms was not a result of objective cost and benefit analysis, but merely an attempt to protect particular, vested interests in Japanese energy sector (2011, p. 2). One can look at Kan's sudden lack of interest in climate policy as an attempt to partially reconcile with Japanese bureaucracy and other interest groups in order to gain their support for other policies.

## 6. Conclusion

One of the most influential groups of interest trying to prevent major changes in Japanese climate and energy policy are big energy companies, which try to protect their domination on the energy market and prevent smaller energy providers from entering it. The other group consists of the biggest Japanese companies working in the metal and cement industry and other branches of the economy. Those companies refuse to accept any kind of regulation that may increase their production costs. The last but probably the most influential group are Japanese bureaucrats, mostly from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry which plays a role of a watchdog and protects the interests of Japanese business (Iida & DeWit 2011, p. 2).

Iida, DeWit and Aburaki agree that one of the main reasons for the DPJ's inability and later unwillingness to introduce coherent and effective climate policy was the strong opposition from Japanese bureaucrats and other interest groups. Soon after assuming power, DPJ leaders including Hatoyama Yukio and Kan Naoto had to realize that it was extremely difficult to introduce permanent changes in energy policy without the full support of the ministries and key business players. Although Hatoyama tried to cut off bureaucrats from the decision-making process they still managed to paralyze the DPJ's reform attempts. Especially in the case of energy and climate policy a large part of the personnel, structure and working system of advisory committees, as well as research and analysis methods were left unchanged. It is difficult to build a new policy using the same tools and methods.

Another reason for the DPJ's failure at introducing changes in the old system of vested interests was the lack of unity within the party. The DPJ was formed from the cooperation of smaller opposition parties and a large group of LDP politicians led by Ozawa Ichirō. Many of those politicians retained their connections with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japanese Trade Unions and business representatives. In difficult situations some of them became the agents of vested interests that tried to control the direction of DPJ policies. Differences in party organization and a lack of a firm and organized decision-making process within the party was one of the reasons that ambitious climate declarations were inserted into the DPJ election manifesto in the first place. Groups of interest and Japanese bureaucracy did not have much control over the Manifesto

formulation process. The manifesto did not undergo the process of inter-party debate but was rather a list of ideas of the most important DPJ leaders which was supposed to put as much distance between the Democrats and their LDP rivals. Only later it became apparent that it was not easy to introduce ideas that stand in complete opposition to the political system which had been dominated by the vested interests for a very long time. The part of the Manifesto devoted to climate and energy policy was formulated mostly by Okada Katsuya and his closest associates who actually believed in the necessity of changing the petrified system dominated by large companies and bureaucrats. Unfortunately, the window of opportunity for transformation was very short. The next such window was probably opened only after Fukushima crisis turned the entire national energy strategy upside down.

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