

## An Observation of the Recent Movements of Four Japanese Diet (Congress) Members <http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr2002/diet.pdf>

There are some interesting movements in Japanese politics in the National Diet (House of Representative), and some of them are still undergoing. A popular Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Diet member was forced to leave her Foreign Minister position, a popular Social Democratic Party (SDP) Diet member was forced to resign, and two powerful LDP Diet members were forced to leave their party and are under pressure to resign from the Diet. The reasons for their leaves are different but are clear and simple, but curious people may ask: Why these people? Why at this time? Are they mere a coincident, or is there any conspiracy behind them? Things are not so clear or simple if we follow a thread of these movements in the field of Japan's foreign policy.

Ms. Tanaka Makiko was rewarded to the Foreign Minister position for her alliance with Koizumi for Koizumi's victory toward his premiership, and she herself became a symbol of the "Koizumi Reform." Labeling her "pro-China" is the same to say her father Kakuei "pro-China," which makes no sense. Nonetheless under today's Japanese political structure, the PRC is happy to see her staying at the Foreign Minister (or even hopes her being up to the Prime Minister) position. While the PRC has lost its influence over the Japanese politics since Tiananmen Incident in 1989, the U.S. strengthened and actually now dominates influence/pressure to Japan from outside. Remembering her father's downfall from a vital U.S. Senate hearing, Ms. Tanaka is not fond of the overwhelming U.S. power over Japan. Washington is the biggest winner of her leaving Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

This also applies to the case of Kato Koichi. Make no mistake that Kato is "pro-China" within the LDP. Nonetheless, grown up with his anti-Ampo, anti-Vietnam War generation, Mr. Kato had the experience rebelling against his father and the experience working at MOFA's Hong Kong office, before eventually inheriting his father's Diet election base. Taking China affairs as his "life work," Kato as the LDP Secretary-general went to Beijing to "explain" that "90% Japanese consider the new defense guidelines are against North Korea, not China." It did not matter whether Kato intentionally deceived Beijing (the cabinet Secretary-general Kajiyama soon corrected Kato claiming the guidelines including Taiwan), it did matter that Kato played the diplomatic role to save Beijing's face. Although heavily wounded by his rebellion against the LDP establishment (then Premier Mori) last year, Kato remained a faction leader with the desire to the premiership. For Washington, the somewhat independent-minded Kato's leave is a welcome result, whether planned or not. With 87% of a newspaper poll (Mainichi, March 31, 2002) against him, Kato still resists resigning from the Diet, but his political life is over (The "Making Kato Japan's Premier" Organization in his election district has been dissolved). This is damage to Japan's China policy. No other leaders inside the LDP can replace Kato in this regard.

With 90% of a newspaper poll (Mainichi, March 31, 2002) against him, nobody regrets Suzuki Muneo's removal from the powerful Diet Management Committee Chair position. However, if you read a MOFA confidential document dated on June 13, 1995, there is no genuine Japanese politician (within all parties) understands Japan's national interest better than Mr. Suzuki on the so-called "Northern Territory Problem." (\*) Suzuki stated, "From the beginning, the Northern Territory Problem is only an issue of face saving of the country. Even the islands are handed over, Japan gains nothing from these islands. Thus, based on the fact that these islands have not been returned for fifty years, we should stop territory return request, to promote economic exchange with these four islands." Suzuki is also the politician who "shared" Okinawa's burden to accept some U.S. troops moving from Okinawa's base to his Hokkaido election district.

Russia is biggest loser for Suzuki's leaving, and this makes a resolution of these islands more remote.

Ms. Tsujimoto Kiyomi's quick resign from an expected suspicion makes sense for herself and the SDP. With her popularity beyond the SDP, the young, energetic Tsujimoto is regarded a successor to Doi Katakō. Is Tsujimoto's fall an indicator that the SDP has also deteriorated to the corrupted ruling system? Her resignation from the Diet is a heavy blow to the SDP, and SDP's decades-long ally (the PRC). The fade of the SDP leaves the Japanese people only one opposition choice: the narrow-minded nationalistic Communist Party (JCP).

This essay does not on behalf of Japan regret the damages to Japan's foreign policy caused by recent suspicions/scandals. Rather, it shows that the corrupted Japanese political system does not function well even for its narrow national interest.

[Note]

\*: Refer to Jing Zhao's analysis in detail on this issue at <http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr1998/beifanglingtu.html> (in Chinese B5).

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