

Current Issues & Policies



THE SEJONG INSTITUTE

October 2020 Edition
No. 2020-24 (October 5, 2020)

The Prospects for Korea-Japan Relationship under the New Suga Cabinet of Japan

Dr. LEE Myon Woo

(mwlee@sejong.org)

Vice President, the Sejong Institute

English Abstract

Japan's new Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide is a type of "self-made politician" among the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members. He could be elected as the president of the LDP and become the prime minister of Japan mainly due to the support of Abe, Japan's former prime minister, and the factional dynamics within the party. Suga's positive relationship with Abe, which has developed since Suga's time as the Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan and through the support to hold the former Secretary General Ishiba in check, and the factions' inability to field their own candidates worked in favor of Suga who was an independent candidate.

There are two main aspects regarding the Suga administration's policy agenda. It will generally follow Abe's policies, yet engender different results in terms of domestic and international affairs. Such draws attention as to whether the current conflict between Japan and South Korea will subside under the Suga administration. It is, however, difficult to be optimistic and expect changes as the new Prime Minister Suga will primarily focus on domestic affairs than on diplomacy.

In short, it will be difficult for the Suga administration to dramatically change the current Korea-Japan relations now, at least until the LDP's victory at the upcoming general election. Therefore, the South Korean government should remain patient, con-

tinue to meet with Japanese officials, build trust, and properly plan solutions than hastily covering up the problem. ♣

※ Translator's note: This is a summarized unofficial translation of the original paper which was written in Korean. All references should be made to the original paper.

※ This article is written based on the author's personal opinions and does not reflect the views of the Sejong Institute.