

KNOW YOUR VISITING JAPANESE DEFENSE MINISTER

Yuriko Koike

And the Conservative Nationalist Groups She Joins

August 2007

An Asia Policy Point Brief

Yuriko Koike

Member of the House of Representatives and **Defense Minister**

LDP, Tokyo 10th, 5 terms (plus 1 term in House of Councillors)

Website: <http://www.yuriko.or.jp/>

Memberships: Japan League (Deputy Secretary General), Constitution, Yasukuni, Multi-partisan Education

Known as the “migratory bird” of political parties, Koike has changed parties often. She was originally a member of a number of opposition parties. She was one of Koizumi's “assassin” candidates in the September 2005 House of Representatives election. She is also considered quite conservative and is a member of a number of conservative nationalist parliamentary leagues that work to change the Constitution, want a “moral education,” maintain traditional gender roles, and ask the PM to go to Yasukuni. She was sent to Washington earlier this year to argue against the House Comfort Women resolution. Koike has said that she would consider nuclear arms if international conditions warrant it. Recently, some say that she is a possible candidate for PM. It is reported that her office expense accounting and fundraising suggest questionable practices.

b. July 15, 1952

University of Cairo (1976)

1976 worked as Arabic interpreter

1977 – 1992 appeared in TV programs as assistant/main anchorperson

July 1992 elected Councilor (*Nippon Shin-to*, proportion) New Frontier Party

July 1993 elected Representative (*Nippon Shin-to*, Hyogo 2nd) New Frontier Party

Oct 1996 elected Representative (*Shinshin-to*, Hyogo 6th) Liberal Party

June 2000 elected Representative (*Hoshu-to*, Hyogo 6th) New Conservative Party

Dec 2002 joined LDP

Sept 2003 Minister of the Environment Party [LDP].

Nov 2003 elected as Representative (LDP, Kinki proportion), Minister of the Environment
Sept 2004 Minister of the Environment, Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern
Territories Affairs
Sept 2005 elected as Representative (LDP, Tokyo 10th)
Oct 2005 Minister of the Environment, Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern
Territories Affairs
Sept 2006 Special Adviser to the Prime Minister (security)
July 2007 Minister of Defense



The Conservative Nationalist Groups To Which She Belongs

Diet Members' Gathering for the Japan League [*Nippon Kaigi Kokkai Giin Kondankai*,
日本会議国会議員懇談会] Multi-partisan, “**Japan League**”

The Diet Members' Gathering for the Japan League (Diet Members' for the Japan League), was set up in 1997. It is the largest organization demanding the revision of the constitution. The Japan League, often called the “Japan Conference” in English, denies that World War II was a war of aggression; it downplays the Nanjing Massacre; wants education reform with a strong central control and an education curriculum based on patriotic values; and rejects a gender-blind society. Diet Members' for the Japan League was established to support and work with Japan League.

The Diet Members for the Japan League has three main political objectives: 1) history/education/family issues; 2) defense/diplomacy/territory issues (headed by current PM Shinzo Abe in 2002); and 3) Constitution/Imperial Family/Yasukuni Shrine. It has succeeded in producing a textbook on morality, *Notebook for Heart*.

Shoichi Nakagawa is the Acting Chair, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is the Deputy Chief Secretary, Hakubun Shimomura is the Secretary General, **Yuriko Koike is Deputy Secretary General**, and Foreign Minister Taro Aso is a Special Adviser (as of July 2006)
Membership: 235 Diet members (25 from the DPJ) (as of July 2005).

Website: <http://www.nipponkaigi.org/> (J),
[http://www.nipponkaigi.org/reidai02/newpage\(E\)1.htm](http://www.nipponkaigi.org/reidai02/newpage(E)1.htm) (E)

Diet Members' League to Promote Research on the Constitution [*Kenpo Chosa Suishin Giin Renmei*, 憲法調査推進議員連盟] Multi-partisan, “**Constitution**”

Established in 1997 to promote the revision of the Constitution. Advocates free discussion over the Constitution led the establishment of the Parliamentary “Research Commission on the Constitution.” Although the Constitution League’s official statements do not refer to revising the Constitution, the activities of the members show that their main focus is making the Self-Defense Forces the official military, with other focal points including promoting conventional gender roles and controls over free speech and freedom of assembly. The members include former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, former Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata and former Prime Minister Toshiaki Kaifu.

Former Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama, who is the Chair of the Constitution League, is simultaneously the head of the Parliamentary Commission on the Constitution—a seeming conflict of interest.

Website: <http://www1.sphere.ne.jp/KENPOU/>

Parliamentary League to Worship Together at the Yasukuni Shrine [*Minna de Yasukuni Jinja wo Sanpai-suru Kokkai Giin no Kai*, みんなで靖国神社を参拝する国会議員の会], Multi-partisan, “**Yasukuni**”

Established in April 1997 with the purpose of encouraging collective worship by Diet members at Yasukuni Shrine in order “to express respect and gratitude to the enshrined spirits of the fallen heroes who sacrificed their lives for the sake of national affairs,” particularly on the Shrine’s special days (namely, spring and autumn special ceremonies and August 15). Supports the formal/official worship by the Prime Minister.

Membership: 186 Representatives and 84 Councilors (as of June 8, 2005)

Recent actions: 101 members paid formal visits to Yasukuni Shrine on Oct 18, 2005, and 39 members on Apr 23, 2007.

Website: N/A

Group to Consider the History Textbook Issue [*Rekishi Kyokasyo Mondai wo Kangaeru Kai*, 歴史教科書問題を考える会] Multi-partisan, “**Multi-partisan education**”

Set up in 2001 to enable the LDP’s League to Consider Japan’s Future and History Education to cooperate with like-minded DPJ members. Shoichi Nakagawa was the Chair of this group. Pressed high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Education to include in textbooks assertions denying the Nanjing Massacre. Advocates the elimination of “taking into account the views of the neighboring Asian countries” as a criteria for the screening of textbooks. Pressured the Ministry of Education to eliminate the input of ordinary citizens in textbook screening, resulting in the Ministry’s 2002 order asking local education authorities to work closely with local police authorities in case citizens’ groups attempt to offer suggestions on textbooks.

Website: N/A



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Questions?

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