

56.3% of Koreans Support Korea-Japan Summit

Asan Institute Survey Shows Support for a Park-Abe Summit Regardless of Prime Minister Abe's Apology

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SEOUL, June 19, 2015 – From June 5-6 and June 9-10, 2015, the Asan Institute for Policy Studies conducted public opinion surveys on attitudes toward Korea-Japan relations. More than half surveyed agreed that a Korea-Japan summit should take place. There was general support for a summit even if Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's speech commemorating the end of World War II in August does not include a sincere apology on history issues. However, at the same time there was considerable concern over Japan's shift to the right, and many identified the resolution of history issues as a prerequisite to improved relations.

- 56.3% of Koreans agreed that a Korea-Japan summit should take place even if Prime Minister Abe does not deliver a message of apology in his August speech. 38.5% disapproved of a summit, while 5.2% answered that they didn't know or refused to answer. Given that the support rates for a summit in the past two years were 58.1% (September 2013) and 54.9% (February 2014), Koreans have maintained a consistent attitude towards this particular issue. 34.5% in 2013 and 38.8% in 2014 disapproved of a summit.
- At the same time, 72.8% voiced concern regarding Japan's shift to the right. Also, 58.7% agreed that Japan's role in regional security must be limited. Only 15.9% agreed that Japan should have an increased role in the region.
- The majority of Koreans (66.0%) blamed Japan for the disputes over history issues. 40.0% blamed Japan for distorting history, and another 26.0% blamed Japan for not apologizing. On the other hand, 11.7% and 7.4% of respondents, respectively, attributed disputes to Korea's lack of national power and unskilled diplomacy.
- If a Korea-Japan summit were to take place, dealing with history issues was deemed a priority. 37.5% and 26.7% of respondents, respectively, identified the history/comfort women issues and the territorial dispute over Dokdo as most important. Other issues included improving bilateral relations (9.5%), resolving North Korea's nuclear threat (8.2%) and improving Korea-Japan economic cooperation (8.0%).
- Resolving history issues was again identified as the necessary step to improving bilateral relations. Most importantly, 47.1% answered that Japan must apologize for its past actions. 15.3% pointed to accurate education on history for future generations, 14% to

improved relations between the two countries, and 13.3% to joint research that could lead to a mutual understanding of history. 6.3% also said Korea-Japan civilian exchanges must expand.

Dr. KIM Jiyeon, Director of Public Opinion Studies Program explained that there is a sentiment among Korean public that a Korea-Japan summit must not be delayed any longer. She advised that the Korean government first look to improve relations between the two countries and, in the long run, look to narrow the gap between the two countries' understanding of history.

The sample size of the survey was 1,000 people aged 19 and over. The margin of error was $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level. The survey employed RDD for landline and mobile telephones and was conducted by Research & Research.

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