

Long road to reform

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In Japanese politics today, forces seeking a small government and those who support a big one are intermingled in both the ruling and opposition parties.

The attempt by Prime Minister Koizumi to oust Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers who opposed privatization of postal services surfaced amid this warped situation, about which many people have long felt uncomfortable. At least for now, the people seem to support Koizumi's "heartless" decision because it provides a step to correct this distortion.

By contrast, although Minshuto also advocates a small government up to a point, it has avoided making its position clear because it does not want intraparty differences to surface. That is why its position remains ambiguous on various issues. Minshuto needs to correct this ambiguity. Under the past multiple-seat constituency system, candidates running from the same party were required to emphasize their differences.

However, now that elections are run under a single-seat constituency system, voters are looking for easy-to-understand candidates who embody the policy of the parties they represent. I cannot help but feel that we are still halfway through a very long path of reform.

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