



**Weekly Wire**  
**News from East Asia and Pacific**  
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**Mr. Shunichi Yamaguchi, Japan's New S&T Minister**

The Abe Administration's reshuffle of the Cabinet members in September 2014 has resulted in the selection of Mr. Shunichi Yamaguchi as the new S&T Minister. The official title of the position is Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, Science and Technology Policy, and Space Policy. The position is also charged with backing the Information Technology Policy, "Challenge Again" Initiative, and "Cool Japan" Strategy.

Mr. Yamaguchi's mission is to oversee cross-ministerial issues for Okinawa and Northern Islands as well as S&T and Space Policy. The position does not require any scientific background. It is a position occupied by a Diet member (equivalent to a Congressman in the U.S.).



Since the Cabinet Office was established in 2001, the Japanese minister in charge of Science and Technology Policy has often (though not always) covered Okinawa and Northern Islands affairs. The decision to combine the missions was made by the Prime Minister. Okinawa houses a U.S. military base that is important for U.S. Government policy in Asia and the Northern Islands lie between Japan and Russia and boast a rich fishing industry. As Japan's Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministers cover the military and political issues in these areas, Mr. Yamaguchi is responsible for development of Okinawa Prefecture, in other words, the cross-ministerial issues about Okinawa and Northern Islands. When Japan's Space Basic Law was established in 2008, the Space Policy was separated from the overall S&T Policy, and was added to the Minister's portfolio.

Mr. Yamaguchi has been a Japanese diet member of the House of Representatives for 8 consecutive terms beginning in 1990. He began his career as a politician in 1975 as the youngest Tokushima Prefectural Council member. He has assumed a number of positions in his 24-year career in the House of Representatives, including Vice Minister for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and Vice Minister for the Ministry of Finance.