



GR Japan Political Analysis Report

LDP Scores Landslide Election Victory, Boosting Prime Minister Takaichi's Authority

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Overview

On 8 February, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) achieved a historic landslide in the House of Representatives election, capturing 316 seats, well beyond the two-thirds "supermajority" threshold. Under Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's leadership, the scale of this victory consolidates her personal authority and restores a pattern of LDP dominance after several years of legislative volatility.

While the governing bloc, which includes coalition partner *Nippon Ishin no Kai* (Japan Innovation Party – JIP), still lacks a majority in the House of Councillors, its overwhelming strength in the Lower House provides the institutional capacity to override Upper House resistance. Following two consecutive national election defeats and the collapse of the LDP's 26-year partnership with *Komeito*, Japan's political system has effectively reverted to a "Kantei-led" model anchored by decisive single-party power.

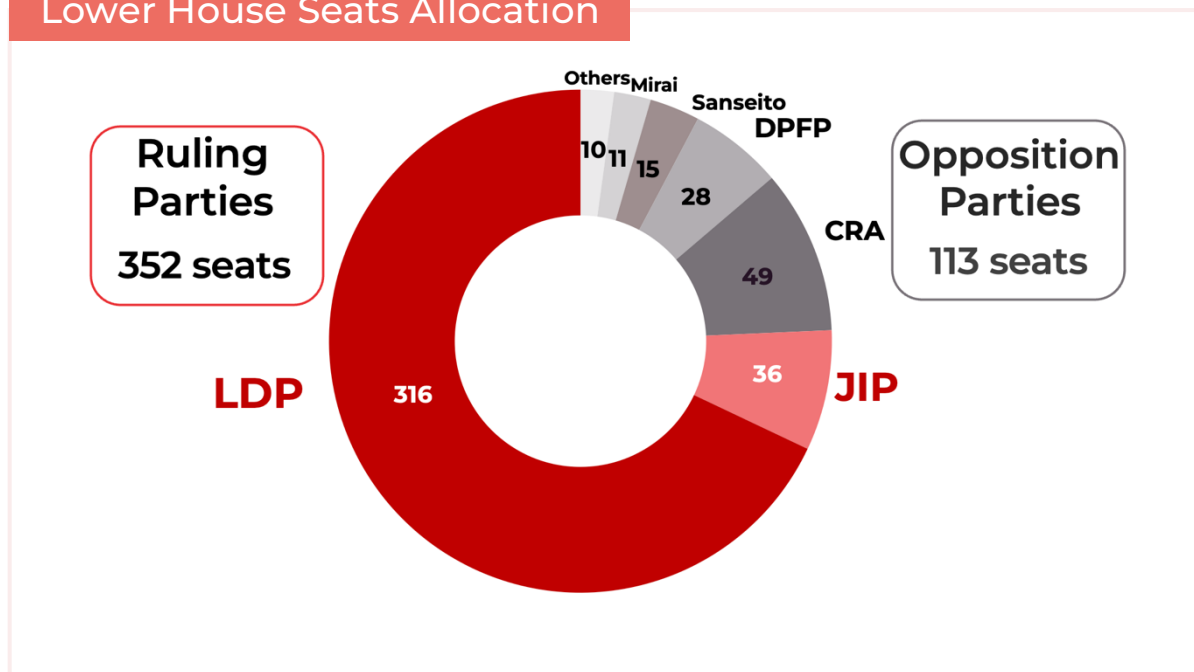
From Political Turbulence to Consolidation

Takaichi rose to power in October 2025 following the dissolution of the LDP-*Komeito* coalition and a contentious party leadership race. Her decision to form a new governing alliance with JIP marked a fundamental structural break from the LDP's postwar coalition strategy.

Despite a deterioration in relations with China, following Takaichi's remarks on a potential Taiwan contingency and subsequent Beijing-led export controls, cabinet approval ratings remained resilient. In December, the government passed the largest supplementary budget since the COVID-19 pandemic, signaling a firm commitment to proactive fiscal policy despite mounting concerns over inflation and currency depreciation.



Lower House Seats Allocation



A High-Risk Dissolution Strategy

In early January, barely two months after taking office, Takaichi triggered an unusually compressed election cycle. Holding a general election in February, the first such case in 36 years, carried significant procedural risks, most notably the potential to delay the mandatory budget passage beyond the start of the fiscal year.

Takaichi framed the dissolution as a necessary move to convert fragile approval ratings into a stable governing mandate. The timing caught both ruling and opposition parties off guard, leaving the fragmented opposition with almost no time to organize a unified front. The 16-day campaign was the shortest in Japan's postwar history. It relied heavily on Takaichi's personal brand rather than granular policy differentiation, drawing inevitable comparisons to the leadership-driven campaigns of Junichiro Koizumi. However, unlike Koizumi's "Post Office" election, this contest lacked a single defining thematic focus.

Campaign Dynamics and Voter Behavior

Major parties converged around proposals for consumption tax cuts, which reduced ideological contrast and reinforced the character of the election as



a personality contest. Persistent economic anxiety, driven by rising prices and stagnant real wages, remained the primary driver of voter sentiment.

Takaichi's appeal as Japan's first female prime minister, combined with a firm right-leaning stance on national security, resonated strongly with conservative voters. Social media played a central role in amplifying Takaichi's personal narrative, allowing the LDP to broaden its electoral base beyond its traditional reliance on organized regional and industry "vote-gathering" machines. This shift toward a digitally mediated campaign model represents a structural change in LDP strategy, though it introduces a new vulnerability: a sustained decline in personal popularity could now more rapidly erode the Prime Minister's authority within the party.

Opposition Fragmentation and Coalition Asymmetry

The compressed timetable left the opposition particularly exposed. While the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP) and *Komeito* had been quietly exploring cooperation, their response was largely improvised, resulting in the "Centrist Reform Alliance" formed less than ten days before the vote.

The outcome was a decisive defeat. The coalition lost roughly 70 percent of its pre-election seats. While the CDP absorbed some former *Komeito* support, it did so at the expense of its traditional base. All 28 former *Komeito* candidates who withdrew from single-member districts were elected, while former CDP candidates secured only 21 seats. In proportional representation, *Komeito*-affiliated candidates dominated party lists, preventing many narrowly defeated CDP candidates from returning to the Diet. Senior figures including Jun Azumi, Yukio Edano, and Ichiro Ozawa lost their seats, leaving the opposition leadership hollowed out.

Coalition Partner Performance and Minor Parties

JIP increased its seat count by two, despite competing directly against the LDP in several single-member districts. While it maintained its stronghold in Osaka, its continued inability to expand beyond the Kansai region underscores the limits of its national ambitions. This complicates its long-term positioning within the coalition, as the LDP no longer requires JIP's seats for a Lower House majority.



The LDP's recovery was also aided by the partial reintegration of conservative voters who had previously shifted toward Sanseito. Although Sanseito won 15 seats, its overall vote share declined compared to the previous Upper House election. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party for the People added only one seat; the Takaichi administration's adoption of key elements of their agenda—including gasoline tax cuts—narrowed the space for the DPP to differentiate itself. "Team Mirai" emerged as the outlier, securing 11 proportional seats by explicitly opposing consumption tax cuts and positioning itself against the emerging political consensus.

Governance and Policy Implications

With Takaichi's leadership reinforced, the government is expected to pursue an assertive and centralized agenda. The LDP's seat count now meets the constitutional threshold required to initiate revision proposals. Although the ruling bloc lacks an Upper House majority, its commanding Lower House position is likely to intensify the debate on constitutional revision, particularly regarding Article 9.

Governance is expected to centralize further within the Prime Minister's Office (the *Kantei*). The media strategy surrounding the dissolution recalls the Abe administration's style, including the return of growth-oriented advisers who are less constrained by Ministry of Finance orthodoxy. This strengthened parliamentary position may also restore policy capacity; the return of experienced lawmakers could support deeper development in specialized areas like health and labor policy, which had been weakened by previous electoral setbacks.

Outlook

The LDP's independent majority means momentum behind JIP-led institutional reforms may weaken, though JIP retains leverage in the Upper House. On economic policy, Takaichi has raised the prospect of a time-limited reduction in the consumption tax on food. While politically popular, critics warn these challenges undermining social security financing and complicating inflation management.



The administration faces three primary challenges:

- **Public Volatility:** The reliance on personal popularity rather than party loyalty makes Takaichi vulnerable to sudden shifts in sentiment.
- **Market Confidence:** Concerns persist regarding yen depreciation and the absence of a clearly articulated economic framework comparable to the "Abenomics" era.
- **Health Concerns:** Visible health-related incidents during the campaign have raised questions regarding the Prime Minister's medium-term continuity.

Looking ahead, budget deliberations are scheduled for March, followed by a high-stakes visit to the United States and a summit with President Donald Trump. This meeting will test how the Takaichi administration intends to position Japan within a shifting international order.

###Ends###