



By: TA | AP Insight

Takaichi looks to translate her election gains into a new conservative shift



Japanese Prime Minister **Sanae Takaichi's** gamble that her personal popularity would lead to big election gains for her struggling party paid off hugely.

On Monday, she began the process of translating that new power, made manifest in a two-thirds supermajority gained in **parliamentary elections** the day before, into what she hopes will be sweeping conservative legislation that will shift Japanese security, immigration, economic and social policies.

The first steps include reappointing her Cabinet and pushing forward on a delayed budget and the votes next week that will reelect her as prime minister.

Takaichi told reporters Monday that her efforts are aimed at making Japan safe, strong and prosperous. "We have no time to bask in the afterglow of the (election) victory."

"Through this election, the people showed their determination to join me in the challenge," she said. "I'm not afraid of making challenges and I will not sway. I will make a decision and accomplish it."

Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party, or LDP, alone secured 316 seats, comfortably surpassing a 261-seat absolute majority in the 465-member lower house, the more powerful of Japan's two-chamber parliament, officials said.

That is a record since the party's foundation in 1955. With the 36 seats won by its new ally, Japan Innovation Party, the ruling coalition won 352 seats.

A smiling Takaichi placed a big red ribbon above each winner's name on a signboard at LDP headquarters as accompanying party executives applauded.

Despite the lack of a majority in the upper house, the huge jump from the preelection share in the more powerful lower house allows Takaichi to make progress on policies seeking to boost Japan's economy and military as tensions grow with China and she tries to

nurture ties with the United States.

Takaichi said she would be "humble" and seek support from the opposition while firmly pushing forward with her policy goals.

Takaichi is popular, but the LDP, which has ruled Japan for most of the last seven decades, has been hit with funding and religious scandals.

She called Sunday's early election after only three months in office, hoping to turn that around while her popularity is high.

Popular leader

Takaichi, who took office as Japan's first female leader in October, pledged to "**work, work, work,**" and her style, which is seen as both playful and tough, has resonated with younger fans who say they weren't previously interested in politics.

The opposition, despite the formation of a new centrist alliance and a rising far-right, was too splintered to be a real challenger.

The new opposition alliance of LDP's former coalition partner, Buddhist-backed dovish Komeito and the liberal-leaning Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan fell to less than one-third of their combined preelection share of 167 seats.

Sanae's bold and wise decision to call for an Election paid off big time - Donald Trump

Takaichi was **betting** with this election that her LDP party, together with its new partner, the JIP, would secure a majority.

U.S. President Donald Trump in a post on his Truth Social platform Sunday congratulated Takaichi "on a LANDSLIDE Victory in today's very important Vote. She is a highly respected and very popular Leader. Sanae's bold and wise decision to call for an Election paid off big

time.”

Akihito Iwatake, a 53-year-old office worker, said he welcomed the big LDP win because he felt the party became too liberal in recent years. “With Takaichi shifting things more toward the conservative side, I think that brought this positive result,” he said.

Takaichi's policies

Japan has recently seen **far-right populists** gain ground, such as the anti-globalist and surging nationalist party Sanseito. Exit polls projected a big gain for Sanseito.



Takaichi has pledged to revise security and defense policies by December to bolster Japan's offensive military capabilities

The first major task for Takaichi when the lower house reconvenes in mid-February is to work on a budget bill, delayed by the election, to fund economic measures that address rising costs and sluggish wages.

Takaichi has pledged to revise **security and defense policies** by December to bolster Japan's offensive military capabilities, lifting a ban on weapons exports and moving further away from the country's postwar pacifist principles.

She has been pushing for tougher policies on foreigners, anti-espionage and other measures that resonate with a far-right audience, but ones that experts say could undermine civil rights.

Takaichi also wants to increase defense spending in response to Trump's pressure for Japan to **spend more**.

She now has time to work on these policies, without an election until 2028.

Divisive policies

Though Takaichi said she's seeking to win support for policies seen as divisive in Japan, she largely avoided discussing ways to fund soaring military spending, how to fix diplomatic tension with China and other issues.

In her campaign speeches, Takaichi enthusiastically talked about the need for government spending to fund “crisis management investment and growth,” such as measures to strengthen economic security, technology and other industries.

Most people are not familiar with her policies, but were attracted by her image - Masato Kamikubo

Takaichi also seeks to push tougher measures on immigration, including stricter requirements for foreign property owners and a cap on foreign residents.

Masato Kamikubo, a politics professor at Ritsumeikan University, said most people are not familiar with her policies, but were attracted by her image, “like her perceived tough stance on security and her remark that angered China, something rather vague.”