

20 October 2025

## Takaichi secures premiership with Ishin pact, but questions linger

### Key takeaways

- The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Ishin no Kai concluded a policy cooperation agreement, ensuring that Takaichi Sanae will become prime minister, though the pact fell short of a formal coalition or confidence-and-supply agreement.
- The parties agreed to an ambitious agenda ranging from political reform to defense policy, but the partnership could be strained by inter- and intra-party friction that complicates Takaichi's ability to govern.

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**L**iberal Democratic Party (LDP) leader Takaichi Sanae and Ishin no Kai co-leaders Yoshimura Hirofumi and Fujita Fumitake met on Monday, 20 October to [finalize](#) a partnership that will stabilize the LDP's control of the Diet and ensure that Takaichi is elected as prime minister when the extraordinary session of the Diet opens on Tuesday, 21 October.

However, the pact is less than a full coalition. Ishin no Kai will not be joining the government and the two parties will not, for the time being, coordinate their election strategies. Instead, the two parties agreed to an extensive policy program that they will cooperate to implement in the near term without Ishin no Kai taking formal responsibility for decision-making. Moreover, although Ishin no Kai promised to support Takaichi in the premiership vote, the pact signed on Monday does not appear to be like a “confidence-and-supply” agreement as seen in minority governments in other democracies. Ishin no Kai's support may be conditional on the Takaichi government's ability to deliver on its promises to Ishin no Kai.

Indeed, it is possible that in rushing to conclude an agreement to ensure Takaichi's election, both parties have laid the groundwork for potential conflict in the coming months. The major policies of the coalition agreements could prove divisive within one or both ruling parties, between the government and opposition parties, with the public, or all of the above. For example, Ishin no Kai's demand that the government move immediately to pass legislation to reduce the number of Diet seats by ten percent – a substitute for abandoning its proposal to ban corporate political donations, a non-starter with the LDP – has been questioned by LDP lawmakers and opposition parties, and could be particularly unpopular with the small parties whose cooperation the LDP may still need to pass legislation.

Meanwhile, although the pact itself points to an outline for relief spending that should be broadly satisfactory to opposition parties – subsidies for utility bills, ending the provisional gasoline tax, introducing some kind of tax credit-with-benefits arrangement for low-income households – other proposals, including an agreement to “study” reducing the consumption tax on foodstuffs to zero for two years could attract more controversy, particularly within the LDP. That said, the LDP-Ishin no Kai partnership will not necessarily be committed to open-ended fiscal expansionism; indeed, the pact may be more reflective of Ishin no Kai's small government neo-liberalism than Takaichi's military Keynesianism. The pact includes a plank to create a Japanese-style “Department of Government Efficiency” to identify inefficient tax measures and subsidies and an extensive set of proposals for social security reform aimed at reducing healthcare spending that will, among other things, enable the government to lower social security premiums for working-age Japanese.

The LDP-Ishin no Kai relationship may be most significant in national security policy. The pact's terms make clear the extent to which the shift from an LDP-Kōmeitō coalition to an LDP-Ishin no Kai partial coalition opens the door to a more hawkish defense policy. The pact includes a proposal to accelerate the process of updating the three national security documents instead of waiting until 2027, which could enable the government to outline a path for raising defense spending beyond 2% of GDP sooner, as well as calls for legislation in the 2026 ordinary Diet session to further relax Japan's restrictions on arms exports (a change Kōmeitō had opposed), establish a Japanese national intelligence agency, and combat foreign intelligence activities by requiring registration of foreign agents and lobbyists, among other measures. That said, Ishin no Kai has been less in favor of raising taxes to pay for higher defense spending, suggesting that this partnership is not a blank check for larger defense budgets.

Ultimately, the LDP-Ishin no Kai pact secures the premiership for Takaichi and will lend the LDP government some stability. But it does not necessarily resolve some of the LDP's political challenges. The LDP and Ishin no Kai together do not have majorities in either house of the Diet, meaning that the LDP is still going to have to negotiate more with other parties than it did when the second Abe administration could rest on large majorities. The relationship with Ishin no Kai, meanwhile, binds Takaichi to an agenda that may not be universally embraced by her own party, which will force her to find ways to forge compromises between her own backbenchers and her coalition partner, a

coalition partner that will be navigating its own internal debates over the effectiveness of the coalition. Finally, the LDP may still have to grapple with the electoral consequences of the end of its coalition with Kōmeitō, as LDP candidates will have to grapple not only with the loss of Kōmeitō voters but also the possibility that those voters back candidates from the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) or other opposition parties instead. Ishin no Kai, with its limited support outside of greater Osaka, does little to help the LDP electorally, which perhaps explains why the pact did not include electoral cooperation. The upshot is that while Takaichi will get her chance to govern, she faces significant challenges to governing successfully.

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