

1 December 2025

## Takaichi defies gravity

### Key takeaways

- Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae has continued to consolidate her political position, increasing her chances of building a durable administration.
- She has benefited greatly from high approval ratings, a result of both her personal popularity and support for her policies.
- This in turn has enabled her to stabilize her government's control of the Diet, both by enticing independents into the coalition to secure a lower house majority and easing doubts about the ability of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Ishin no Kai to cooperate.

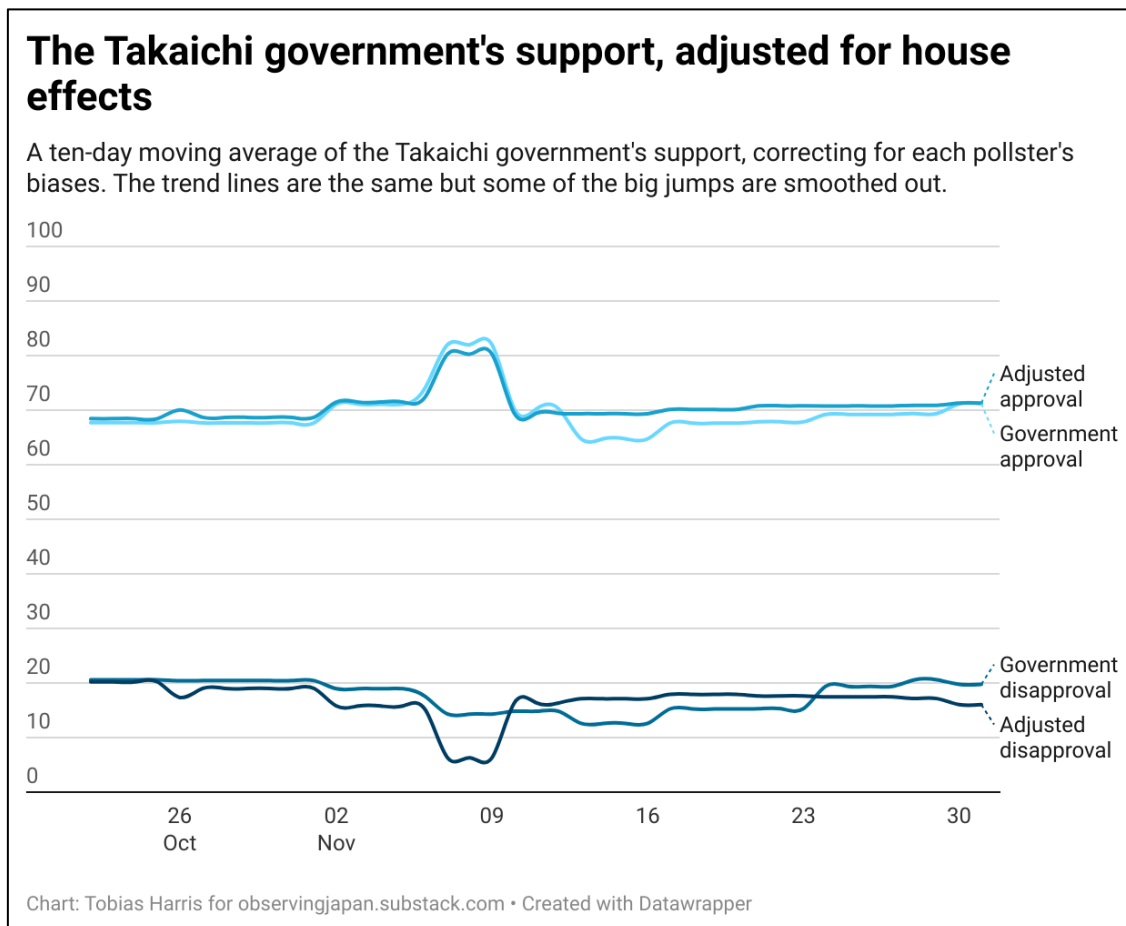
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**N**ow well into her second month as prime minister, Takaichi Sanae has continued to defy political gravity. After inheriting a shaky political situation – heading a minority government in a new partnership with Ishin no Kai after breaking a twenty-six-year-old coalition with Kōmeitō – the new prime minister has solidified her hold on power. She has benefited from three developments.

First, and perhaps most importantly, **she has enjoyed not just historically strong approval ratings but steady approval ratings**. Her popularity has shown no signs of flagging, with her approval in virtually every poll conducted since the start of government at 70%±5. The public has continued to respond to Takaichi herself as a leader – whether because people want Japan's first female prime minister to succeed and are willing to give her a chance or because they like her energetic, firm leadership style – allowing her popularity to continue past the point when many of her predecessors have seen their public support begin to recede.

To be sure, her strong approval ratings may not only reflect public support for Takaichi herself, but also for some of her positions. For example, a recent poll by the *Yomiuri*

*Shimbun* found that her “responsible fiscal expansion” approach was backed by 74% of respondents, her stance towards China by 56%, and her approach to “foreign national” issues by 62%. Her summit with US President Donald Trump also earned strong marks in multiple polls. While events may eventually erode her support, there are reasons to think that her floor may be higher than her immediate predecessors, which will not only give her more freedom of maneuver but also enable her to exercise more control over her Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), as well as the partnership with Ishin no Kai. The longer her popularity endures, the greater her chances of enjoying a political virtuous cycle.



Indeed, her popularity may have been a factor in the second shift that has strengthened her position. **The Takaichi government, having taken office with the LDP and Ishin no Kai several seats short of a majority in the House of Representatives, now controls 233 seats in the lower house**, a one-seat majority, after a three-person Ishin no Kai splinter announced that it would caucus with the LDP. This is not necessarily a dramatic change. Most notably, it deprives the opposition of the votes needed to pass a no-confidence motion – though it has been difficult to foresee all of the opposition parties uniting to pass a no-confidence motion – and enables the government to pass budgets and treaties if the upper house fails to approve. Nevertheless, the government will still work with opposition parties since it is short of a majority in the upper house and

clearly prefers to secure broader support for its initiatives. But symbolically, it is a sign of Takaichi's strength and may also ease some of the pressure to call a snap election until the timing is most suitable not only for the LDP but also for Ishin no Kai. It could also lead the Democratic Party for the People (DPFP), which has maintained its distance from Takaichi since its leader Tamaki Yūichirō's failed bid for the premiership, to reconsider its relationship with the government as it looks for ways to revive its sagging fortunes.

**The third source of strength for Takaichi has been the development of the LDP-Ishin partnership.** When they [signed](#) a partnership agreement, it was unclear how they would work together and how they would manage disagreements, particularly when it came to some of Ishin no Kai's "non-negotiable" demands. However, Takaichi and the LDP leadership – if not all of the LDP's backbenchers – have been working closely with Ishin no Kai leaders to deliver on these proposals included in their agreement. Despite early signs that they might struggle to overcome disagreements over a core promise – Ishin no Kai's demand for a reduction in the number of lower house seats – the two parties negotiated steadily and announced a compromise on Monday, 1 December, satisfying the LDP's desire for a longer, more deliberative process and Ishin no Kai's demand for an automatic reduction to kick in if talks between ruling and opposition parties fail to reach an agreement. Their ability to work through these disagreements suggests that the partnership could be more stable than it initially appeared and could become more so as consultations become more institutionalized. Of course, the partnership will continue to be tested – there may be disagreements over other issues in their pact, and the lack of an electoral cooperation agreement could also be a source of friction – but their ability to work together has bolstered the political foundation of Takaichi's government.

The upshot is that while the Takaichi government is still young – and faces significant challenges in its conduct of foreign policy and in the reaction of financial markets to its policies – she has begun laying the groundwork for a more durable administration that could remain strong even as political gravity begins to assert itself.

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## **Tobias Harris**

Founder and Principal

Japan Foresight LLC

[tobias@japanforesight.com](mailto:tobias@japanforesight.com)

+1.847.738.4048

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