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Japan

Takaichi Administration's Two Months

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While LDP-JIP coalition government has been trying to promote right-wing policies, how should the left forces fight against them?

Approximately two months have passed since LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) President Takaichi became the prime minister with the support of the Japan Innovation Party (JIP) outside the cabinet, establishing the Takaichi administration. During this period, the government has pursued policies markedly divergent from the previous Ishiba administration, including accelerating the increase in military spending to 2% of GDP and formulating a large-scale supplementary budget that embodies Takaichi's long-held stance on "aggressive fiscal policy." This marks a return from a centrist-right administration to a conservative government inheriting the Abe administration's policies. On the diplomatic front, while making its debut through summits with Trump and Xi Jinping and participation in the G20 summit, it also demonstrated indifference to the climate crisis by skipping the COP30 summit. Then came the remarks on Taiwan emergency situations during the Diet session on November 7th. Here, we will organize these series of moves by the Takaichi administration, analyze the political character of the government and its position within the international framework, and clarify the challenges and tasks of the left forces confronting this administration.

What Takaichi's Remarks On "Taiwan emergency situations" Mean

First, let us examine Takaichi's remarks on "Taiwan emergency situations", which arguably most succinctly reveal both the political character of her administration and the position it finds itself in. During the House of Representatives Budget Committee session on November 7, when repeatedly questioned about a "Taiwan emergency situations" by Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) member Katsuya Okada, Prime Minister Takaichi stated, "Various scenarios are conceivable," adding, "If it involves the use of warships and the exercise of force, this would undoubtedly constitute a situation threatening Japan's existence." This statement by Takaichi significantly deviated from the "New Three Conditions for the Use of Force" approved by the Cabinet in July 2014 when the Abe administration shifted to permitting the exercise of collective self-defense rights. The first item of the "New Three Conditions states: Use of Force can be permitted "when an armed attack against Japan occurs or when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan's survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness," but Takaichi's remarks fundamentally changed the interpretation of collective self-defense itself. Consequently, this statement drew strong backlash from the Chinese government. On the 8th, Chinese Consul General in Osaka Xue Jian commented on X, citing news articles about Takaichi's Diet statement: "That filthy neck that dared to stick its head in will have to be chopped off without a moment's hesitation." The Japanese government protested this comment, but online, right-wing rhetoric surged, with calls like "Expel the Consul General!" escalating. Takayuki Kobayashi, Chairperson of the LDP Policy Research Council and a right-wing figure within the party, further inflamed right-wing sentiment by stating at a party meeting, "As a party, we demand the government to take a resolute stance, including declaring him Persona non grata."

Meanwhile, during the House of Representatives Budget Committee session on November 10, Prime Minister Takaichi stated she would not retract her November 7 remarks. However, she also clarified that this did not constitute a change in the government's previous stance. She then stated, "As a point for reflection, I believe it is prudent to refrain from explicitly mentioning specific cases in this forum," effectively revising her remarks in order to calm the situation. Furthermore, during the December 16th Budget Committee meeting of the House of Councillors, she stated, "I recognize as a point for reflection that my remarks were perceived as going beyond the government's previous position," but she did not withdraw her remarks.

However, the Chinese government stated, “If (the Japanese side) dares to intervene militarily in the Taiwan Strait situation, even at the risk of danger, it will be crushed before the iron wall of the Chinese military's defense and pay a bitter price.” (Chinese Ministry of National Defense Spokesperson Jiang Bin), and “Anyone who deludes themselves into challenging the Chinese people's last line of defense will inevitably face China's direct and severe counterattack, smashing their heads against the iron Great Wall built with the blood and flesh of 1.4 billion Chinese people, leaving them bloodied and broken.” (Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian) Such statements were made, and countermeasures were swiftly implemented, including requests for Chinese citizens to refrain from traveling to Japan and to “exercise caution regarding study abroad,” de facto suspension of seafood imports, and cancellations of cultural exchanges and events. The Chinese government continues to demand a “withdrawal of the remarks,” and some reports indicate rare earth export procedures have begun to stall.

Regarding Takaichi's “Taiwan emergency situations” remarks, Akira Koike, JCP Secretary-General, criticized the prime minister's remarks as “provocative rhetoric that escalates tensions, ... It's not too late now. We demand a retraction.” While this criticism is understandable, even the Sankei Shimbun, a dairy newspaper representing conservative opinion, noted: “There is no sign the government as a whole carefully prepared for this response, ... The reality is that in the back-and-forth of Diet debate, she let her true feelings slip,” and while “the content of the Prime Minister's response itself is not incorrect, ... it cannot be denied that there is a danger in Takaichi's remarks.”

Thus, after the “Taiwan emergency situations” remarks, the government was immediately forced to scramble to contain the damage (and insist it was “consistent with the government's previous stance”). This is likely because Japan's bourgeois majority, while approving military expansion policies, currently does not wish to see a deterioration in relations with China. Furthermore, U.S. President Trump also does not currently desire a worsening of Japan-China relations in order to secure a deal between the U.S. and China (there are also reports that Trump urged Takaichi to exercise restraint during a Japan-U.S. summit phone call). Amidst the Japanese bourgeois majority's paramount demand for “political stability,” the scope for adventurous policies is preemptively restricted. However, the government faces a dilemma: retracting the “Taiwan emergency situations” remarks would risk losing the support of conservative public opinion—arguably its sole foundation—and jeopardize its current high approval ratings, potentially leading to its collapse. Thus, retraction is realistically impossible.

Takaichi's remarks themselves are an extension of the Abe administration's series of military expansion policies, from permitting the exercise of collective self-defense and enacting security legislation, to revising the three security documents, deploying the Self-Defense Forces to the Southwest Islands and constructing missile bases, and expanding military spending. Moreover, they align with Takaichi's longstanding positions. In that sense, her remarks themselves were not surprising. However, it is also a fact that previous government leaders, even if they privately held similar views (former Prime Minister Abe made similar remarks after leaving office), never voiced them in official settings due to diplomatic considerations. This point has been criticized, as mentioned earlier, by the Sankei Shimbun.

One crucial point to highlight here is that both Takaichi's statement and China's reaction to it share a common flaw: they completely disregard and ignore the struggles and right to self-determination of the Taiwanese people. Looking back historically at the situation surrounding Taiwan, over the past 150 years since modern times, particularly since Japanese imperialist colonial rule, we see a history of colonial governance and resistance against it, followed by post-war arrangements after Japan's defeat, the US-Soviet Cold War era, and China's subsequent rise as a new hegemonic power after the Cold War's end. Concurrently, Taiwan experienced anti-authoritarian movements, democratization, and economic development. Through this process, Taiwan has formed an identity, institutions, and way of life distinct from mainland China under the CCP. It has become a political and economic entity possessing a degree of autonomy and independence within the international community, irrespective of its state recognition status. In other words, the Taiwanese people's right to self-determination has historical justification, and discussions of easing tensions or achieving peace in East Asia cannot proceed without acknowledging this fact.

Takaichi's "Taiwan emergency situations" remarks, which intensify tensions in East Asia and fuel further arms races among the involved nations, must be retracted. We must demand this retraction as a shared demand of the people of East Asia. Within Japan too, there is a need to build a movement that converges with this shared demand. In a sense, Takaichi's remarks amount to a "declaration of war," and the ones who will ultimately suffer the consequences are the people of East Asia, the residents of Okinawa and the Southwest Islands, and the young people who will be mobilized for war.

The Takaichi LDP-IJP Coalition Administration as The Transitional One

As pointed out in the article, "Takaichi Administration established by the LDP-JIP Coalition : How to interpret the current Japanese political situation"(IVP, November 7), the Takaichi administration came into being as a result of political realignment within the conservative-centrist forces. This occurred in a context where the left is decisively weak within Japanese politics, particularly in the parliamentary arena, and where social movements and mass movements also lack significant influence. Consequently, the left does not pose a perceived threat to the conservative-centrist forces. This occurred due to a combination of factors; increasing sense of crisis within the LDP over the fact that the former ruling coalition of LDP and Komeito lost its majority in the House of Councillors following the House of Representatives, that an far-right party positioned to the right of the LDP made significant gains, and that a portion of the LDP's conservative supporters shifted their allegiance to the far-right; the changing balance of power between the Democratic Party for the People and the Japan Innovation Party within the center-right bloc, combined with the Constitutional Democratic Party's inability to take political initiative as the largest opposition party, created the conditions for Sanae Takaichi to be elected LDP president and subsequently nominated as prime minister. However, as the article also points out, the Takaichi administration's foundation is not rock-solid, and its policy options are not entirely unrestricted.

Indeed, in the House of Representatives, the addition of three lawmakers expelled from the Japan Innovation Party to the LDP caucus barely secured a majority. In the House of Councillors, efforts are underway to secure a majority through cooperation requests from the JIP to far-right parties. Nevertheless, the situation is far from the stable governance seen during the previous LDP-Komeito coalition. In any case, the Takaichi administration is fundamentally a transitional government. In this sense, we must recognize that political realignment within the conservative-centrist bloc will continue for a certain period, potentially even drawing in far-right parties to some extent. The problem is that the left is being completely left out of this political realignment process.

The global Remilitarization Trend Led by the Ruling Class and the Japanese Government's Military Expansion Policy

Japan's military buildup, initiated under the Abe administration and further advanced under the Kishida and Ishiba administrations, is part of the arms race in East Asia. It also fits within the global trend of remilitarization triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the return of the Trump administration. President Trump demanded that allied nations in Europe and East Asia increase their military spending to 5% of GDP, while reducing his own military presence in these regions and shifting toward a military strategy centered on the Western Hemisphere. European nations are already further advancing remilitarization through substantial increases in military spending and transitions to conscription. In East Asia, amid the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and China, the US military is being redeployed, and military buildup is occurring in South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan in response to China's military expansion. The "U.S. National Security Strategy" released on December 5 states, "We will build a military capable of denying aggression anywhere in the First Island Chain. But the American military cannot, and should not have to, do this alone. Our allies must step up and spend—and more importantly do—much more for collective defense." It further states, "America's diplomatic efforts should focus on pressing our First Island Chain allies and partners to allow the U.S. military greater access to their ports and other facilities, to spend more on their own defense, and most importantly to invest in capabilities aimed at deterring aggression." This effectively pressures the Takaichi administration to implement substantial increases in military spending, accelerate military expansion, and strengthen the deployment of Japan's Self-Defense Forces in Okinawa and the Southwest Islands.

Even within this international framework, the Takaichi administration's acceleration of military expansion far exceeds that of previous LDP-Komeito governments. For example, the LDP-JIP coalition agreement lists items such as; "In response to the most severe and complex changes in the strategic environment since the postwar period, the Three Strategic Documents will be revised ahead of schedule," "We will steadily advance the development and land-based deployment of long-range missiles with counterstrike capabilities, while simultaneously promoting policies to acquire next-generation VLS-equipped submarines powered by advanced propulsion systems. These submarines will carry long-range missiles and enable extended-duration, long-distance submerged operations.," and "From the perspective of strengthening the defense production and technological base, the 2026 ordinary session of the Diet will abolish the "five categories" of the "Guidelines for the Application of the Three Principles on Defense Equipment Transfer." Furthermore, it is reported that some members within IJP are also seeking to permit arms exports to countries involved in conflicts.

Although the Takaichi administration publicly denies it, discussions to review the "not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons" principle within the "Three Non-Nuclear Principles" have reportedly resurfaced within the LDP and may be debated during the revision of the "Three Strategic Documents." Takaichi did not explicitly affirm adherence to the "Three Non-Nuclear Principles" in her Diet response, which aligns with her longstanding position.

In addition, foundation for national unity supporting military expansion rests on an authoritarian repressive regime and xenophobic policies that create external enemies. Concrete expressions of this include the enactment of the "National Flag Desecration Law," the Anti-Espionage Law, and strengthened regulations on foreigners.

Imposing Sacrifices on Working People Through an "Active Fiscal Policy" Approach

Globally and historically, capitalism faces a new crisis where it has lost the ability to encompass society as a whole. Capitalism has no choice but to intensify its economic and social attacks on working people. This has led to a worldwide spread of distrust toward bourgeois governments. In the absence of a mass-visible alternative, the far right is rising. This situation has belatedly become a reality in Japan as well. In this context, Takaichi has proposed a "responsible active fiscal policy" alongside a strong state and nationalism and has explicitly incorporated the military-industrial complex into her economic growth strategy. This is precisely why she is seeking to abolish the "five categories [rescue, transport, surveillance, monitoring, mine clearance]" stipulated in the "Guidelines for the Application of the Three Principles on Defense Equipment Transfer," and fully lift the ban on arms exports.

Masaru Kaneko describes this as "Military Keynesianism," explaining it as "a concept where, instead of creating effective demand through public works as intended, military spending is used to generate immediate employment and economic stimulus." He points out, "The frightening aspect of Military Keynesianism is the loss of restraint. The U.S. military-industrial complex is already built into the American economy, making the U.S. the most war-prone nation in the postwar world."

Takaichi's economic policy, built on the twin pillars of "responsible active fiscal policy" and "Military Keynesianism," inherently contains contradictions. The massive issuance of government bonds needed to support "active fiscal policy" risks undermining confidence in the financial system, potentially triggering a triple dip of falling stocks, bonds, and the yen. Indeed, on November 18th, Tokyo's financial markets saw a "triple dip" as bonds, stocks, and the yen all sold off simultaneously. "The yield on the benchmark 10-year government bond rose to 1.755% at one point (bond prices fell), hitting its highest level in about 17 and a half years since June 2008. The yen also weakened to the low 155 yen per dollar range. The Nikkei Stock Average fell over 1,600 points, dropping below the 50,000 mark" (Jiji Press). As of December 9, long-term interest rates have reached 1.95%. The weak yen is fueling persistent inflation, driving up prices for food and other goods (the consumer price index for October 2025 rose a full 3.0%!). Attempts to counter this could trap us in a negative spiral of relying on more government bond issuance. The only beneficiaries of the weak yen are large export-oriented corporations. Meanwhile, inflation driven by the weak yen continues to erode

workers' real wages (the decline in real wages was 1.4% in September and 0.7% in October, marking ten consecutive months of decline), pushing pensioners and non-regular workers into increasingly difficult living conditions.

A massive supplementary budget reliant on government bond issuance, shifting focus to economic growth and increased military spending

At a press conference on November 21, Prime Minister Takaichi announced a supplementary budget proposal totaling 21 trillion yen (including tax reduction of 2.7 trillion yen). Takaichi stated, "What Japan must do now is not to weaken national strength through excessive fiscal austerity, but to strengthen it through active fiscal measures. As the IMF (International Monetary Fund) has pointed out, we must recognize that hasty fiscal consolidation that harms growth actually undermines fiscal sustainability. Fiscal sustainability cannot be maintained without growth." However, she showed no reflection whatsoever on the failure of her mentor, former Prime Minister Abe's "Abenomics," to generate any growth in the Japanese economy.

Nevertheless, to maintain his current high approval ratings, she had to propose some measures against rising prices. Thus, the primary pillar of the supplementary budget is "Living Security and Countermeasures against High Prices." Its contents include household price relief measures; "529.6 billion yen for electricity and gas bill support" (reducing household burdens by about 7,000 yen from January to March), "2 trillion yen for expanding the Special Tax Revenues Allocated to Local Government, including 400 billion yen allocated separately as a 'Special Supplement for Rising Food Prices' equivalent to 3,000 yen per person" (e.g., distributing "rice coupons"), and "367.7 billion yen for the Child-Rearing Support Allowance to Counter Rising Prices" (providing 20,000 yen per child up to high school age). However, regarding the "rice coupons" strongly advocated by Agriculture Minister Suzuki, many municipalities—starting with Katano City in Osaka—have declared they "will not distribute rice coupons" due to issues like the coupons only allowing purchases worth 440 yen for a 500-yen coupon and the enormous distribution costs involved. Furthermore, regarding the abolition of the provisional gasoline tax rate (¥25.1) as a tax reduction measure, the Mitsubishi Research Institute states that "the reduction in gasoline spending from abolishing the provisional tax rate will be outweighed by increased spending due to inflation if the yen weakens by another ¥5" (Mainichi Shimbun), suggesting the actual effect is unlikely to be significant.

In this manner, while introducing stopgap measures that lack real effectiveness to address livelihood anxieties, the budget allocates 6.433 trillion yen to the second pillar, "Realizing a Strong Economy through Crisis Management Investment and Growth Investment." Furthermore, it allocates 1.656 trillion yen to the third pillar, "Strengthening Defense and Diplomatic Capabilities." This aims to achieve the 2% GDP target for defense spending ahead of schedule, including ¥502.1 billion for defense capability development plan expenditures.

To fund these expenditures, government bond issuance will exceed last year's supplementary budget of 6.6 trillion yen, reaching 11.7 trillion. Combined with the initial budget, the total bond issuance after adjustments will amount to 40.3 trillion yen. In a sense, this is an economic policy that relies on sustained inflation to increase tax revenues and reduce the government debt balance. On the other hand, measures abound that seek to cover the collapse of social systems by extracting from the working people; continued cuts to welfare benefits, increases in nursing care insurance premiums and user fees, hikes in health insurance premiums, higher out-of-pocket medical expenses for the elderly, and rising medical costs. Furthermore, to fund increased military spending, the government is preparing to implement tax hikes, including increases in income tax.

Labor Time Deregulation Policies Driving Workers to Death by Overwork

Another pillar of the Takaichi administration's policies is a structural shift in labor policy. On October 20th, Prime Minister Takaichi instructed the Minister of Health, Labor, and Welfare to deregulate labor hours, positioning this as a

cornerstone of the growth strategy. This aims to further relax the working hour regulations (which, though insufficient, were achieved due to worker demands but still allow levels leading to death from overwork—the overtime cap is generally 45 hours per month and 360 hours annually, but under special circumstances, up to 100 hours per month and an average of 80 hours over 2-6 months is permitted), forcing workers into even longer hours. Takaichi's statement, "We will work and work and work and work and work," was selected for the New Words and Buzzwords Awards, heightening the sense of crisis among families of overwork suicide victims, who have gone so far as to hold protest press conferences. We absolutely must not allow this new relaxation of working hour regulations.

Against the Takaichi Administration's Destruction of Livelihoods and Military Expansion, Let Us Build a Mass Movement of Working People and Achieve the Revival of the Left

As the capitalist system has lost its ability to control and unify society as a whole, bourgeois governments are increasingly turning authoritarian and intensifying their attacks on the working people. This has heightened distrust in the existing ruling order and fueled the rise of the far right. Yet, simultaneously, a counteroffensive by the working people, especially centered on the younger generation, is surging globally. In recent years, this has erupted most typically across Asian nations; overthrowing governments in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal; expanding mass protest movements in Indonesia and the Philippines; and in South Korea, thwarting a coup attempt and leading to a change of government. In Myanmar, the struggle against the military dictatorship continues. While there remains a weakness in the absence of initiatives to steer these struggles toward a break with the capitalist system, the counterattack has indeed begun.

In Japan, compared to these countries, it cannot be said that large-scale mass actions, strikes, or street protests centered on the younger generation have emerged. However, the signs are definitely beginning to appear. In various places, objections and counterattacks against the bourgeois government's policies are gradually starting. Moreover, we should not underestimate the fact that the younger generation expressed support for the Democratic Party for the People and the Sanseito (Party of Do it Yourself) instead of traditional parties, influencing election results, which was surely a sign of change. The temporary support these parties are gathering reflects precisely the marginalization of the left and its failure to propose a clear alternative. Moreover, such alternatives will be meaningless unless they are visualized as slogans and claims that resonate with the working people. Concrete slogans for struggle are forged through the collective effort of the movements, drawing on its experiences. This is precisely the challenge the left must confront.

To achieve this, it is crucial to mobilize dissatisfaction, objections, and demands against the Takaichi administration's destruction of livelihoods and military expansion into a movement, forging them into a united, powerful current. Concurrently, building the subjects necessary for this mobilization—such as restoring the power of labor unions and constructing broad-based movement networks—must be pursued. Exerting strength in this endeavor will become one pathway leading to the left's rebirth.

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