

**KOIKE YURIKO'S POTENTIAL AS JAPAN'S
PRIME MINISTER: SMASHING THE
“IRON CEILING”?**

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EAI Background Brief No. 1247

Executive Summary

1. As the most popular politician in Japan today, Tokyo Governor Koike Yoriko may be picked to helm the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the post-Abe Shinzo era if she were to maintain her mass popularity.
2. Koike's popularity could be attributed to first, her refusal to relocate the biggest and most famous fish market in the world from Tsukiji to an alternative Toyosu site in Tokyo contaminated by toxic chemicals.
3. Second, her promise to maintain a clean and transparent metropolitan government in Tokyo especially after her two predecessors quit over financial scandals.
4. Koike is also adamant about avoiding the substantial cost overrun of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.
5. Though formally a LDP member, Koike launched her own local political party, Tomin First no Kai (Tokyoites First Party) in January 2017. Her party is expected to win a political landslide at the forthcoming July 2017 Tokyo metropolitan election.
6. Koike has also started her political school, Kibo no Juku (School of Hope), to train Tomin First no Kai candidates for the coming local election.
7. For the LDP, Koike's role in securing female votes is significant. A popular Koike can also help perpetuate LDP's one-party dominance after Abe steps down as prime minister.
8. Thus far, Koike has demonstrated her telegenic skills in media, political drama and electoral victories but has yet to establish a track record of good governance. For an ambitious woman who wants to smash the "iron ceiling", she has yet to present a grand vision of Japan in the world and practical ideas to solve its problems of slow economic growth and demographic decline.