

**LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S
UPPER HOUSE VICTORY:
REVIVING POLITICAL DOMINANCE
AND ECONOMIC GROWTH?**

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Executive Summary

1. Japan Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's July 2013 Upper House election victory ended the "twisted" parliament (Lower and Upper Houses in the hands of different parties) situation which had paralyzed policymaking since 2007.
2. In his election campaign, the prime minister focused on Abenomics and an end to the "twisted" parliament phenomenon rather than revising the post-war pacifist constitution.
3. The opposition parties failed to mount a united front or to offer any alternative and plausible economic roadmaps to the electorate.
4. Undistracted by any Lower or Upper House election for the next three years, Abe will have the opportunity to implement his political agenda.
5. Abe is planning to remain as prime minister until 2018. If this comes to pass, his tenure will be a rarity in Japan because all prime ministers had lasted only around a year in office since 2006.
6. The unresolved historical and territorial disputes between Japan and China and South Korea, and a hawkish Abe firmly entrenched as prime minister for at least another half a decade would worry the Chinese and Koreans.
7. Prime Minister Abe may revive the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as a perennial party-in-power especially if Abenomics succeeds.
8. The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) was routed at the polls and is a deeply divided and dispirited party. The anticipated scenario of an emerging two-party system, with two major parties (LDP and DPJ) alternating in power, may not happen.

9. Despite the LDP's landslide Upper House victory in terms of seat count, its actual electoral support in the proportional representation segment was only 34.68 percent of votes cast—not necessarily a strong mandate for Abe to push through sweeping constitutional revisions that would change the pacifist character of the postwar Japanese state.
10. The political parties which support constitutional revision (LDP, Minna no To and Nippon Ishin no Kai) failed to secure a two-thirds majority in the Upper House, a prerequisite to amend the constitution.