

Weekly MDS (Movement for Democratic Socialism)

[Issue No. 1905 – Editorial / A General Election to Say No to Aggression and Military Expansion / Deliver a “No” Verdict on the Takaichi War Government]

◎ The Ultimate Self-Serving Dissolution of the Diet

On January 19, Prime Minister Takaichi announced that she would dissolve the House of Representatives at the very start of the ordinary Diet session opening on January 23. The general election for the House of Representatives will be officially announced on January 27, with voting and counting to take place on February 8.

Takaichi aims to hold a general election while her approval ratings remain high, hoping—if possible—to secure an outright majority for the Liberal Democratic Party alone. In the ordinary Diet session, she would not be able to evade scrutiny over her failed response to rising prices, tax hikes to fund military spending, and collusion with the former Unification Church. By rushing to an election beforehand, she seeks to ride out these issues by winning a large number of seats. The Japan Innovation Party is likewise attempting to hold gubernatorial and mayoral elections in Osaka simultaneously, plotting a renewed push for the “Osaka Metropolis Plan,” which has already been rejected by public opinion. This is a maneuver for political survival amid declining support and criticism over attempts to evade national health insurance obligations.

This is truly the ultimate privatization of elections by the LDP–Ishin ruling bloc: a dissolution carried out purely for their own convenience.

◎ Stop War and the Destruction of Livelihoods

The most important issue to be judged in this election is whether there is clear opposition to the Takaichi administration’s massive military expansion and war-oriented policies, and whether people’s livelihoods will be protected.

Already, through the fiscal year 2025 supplementary budget, the government has forcibly brought forward the achievement of military spending equivalent to 2 percent of GDP. Takaichi is now seeking to revise the three national security (military) documents and, though not stated explicitly, is even aiming for military spending equivalent to 3.5 percent of GDP. By fanning fears of a “Taiwan contingency,” she is advancing the deployment of long-range missiles and the strengthening of military bases. Joint military exercises with the United States, South Korea, the Philippines, NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), and others are also being expanded.

To fund this military buildup, social security expenditures are being restrained, and burdens such as insurance premiums are being raised. The abnormal increase in government bond issuance fuels inflation and a weaker yen. Falling bond prices lead to rising interest rates, increasing debt-servicing costs (interest and redemption). As a result,

spending for citizens' livelihoods is further cut. While opposition parties have called for consumption tax cuts or abolition, a limited tax cut only on food will not halt the destruction of people's lives.

Apart from the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party, most political parties did not oppose this military expansion even during the debate on the supplementary budget. This includes both the Constitutional Democratic Party and Komeito. These two parties have now formed a new party, the "Centrist Reform Alliance," and are contesting the election under a so-called "centrist" banner. In their basic policies, they promote constitutional revision debates—including the status of the Self-Defense Forces—do not oppose military expansion or the war laws, and even go so far as to state that "the exercise of the right of self-defense in a situation threatening national survival is constitutional." They also accept the restart of nuclear power plants.

This line cannot confront the far-right Takaichi government. In Europe as well, forces claiming the "center" have been defeated by the far right.

◎ The LDP–Ishin Government Must Exit the Stage

War forces, beginning with the Trump administration, continue the invasion of Venezuela, the occupation of Palestine, and the war in Ukraine. The Takaichi administration has also tacitly approved and participated in the invasion of Venezuela, supported the Israeli government, and had the Self-Defense Forces purchase weapons manufactured in Israel—all in order to push through its own military-first, war-oriented policies.

Let us confront this course, cut military spending, secure fiscal resources by strengthening taxation on large corporations and the wealthy, and realize improvements in people's lives. With the banner of stopping war and military expansion, and advancing toward democratic socialism, let us deliver a clear "No" verdict from the people against the Takaichi administration in this general election.

(January 19)