

# POLITICAL REFLECTION MAGAZINE

October • November • December • 2022

ISSN: 2042-888X

Vol. 8 • No. 4

**Securitization and Climate Change**  
*by Sitong Lin*

**Shinzo Abe's Politics in Japan:  
Characteristics and Implications**  
*by Yukio Sakurai*

**The Future of Asia**  
*by Poornima Vijaya*

## **Geopolitical Influence of Italy on the "21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road"**

*by Tianyi Liu & Giuseppe Bettoni*

International Think-tank [www.cesran.org](http://www.cesran.org)  
Consultancy  
Research Institute

CESRAN International is a member of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)

**CESRAN International** is a think-tank specialising on international relations in general, and global peace, conflict and development related issues and challenges.

The main business objective/function is that we provide expertise at an international level to a wide range of policy making actors such as national governments and international organisations. CESRAN with its provisions of academic and semi-academic publications, journals and a fully-functioning website has already become a focal point of expertise on strategic research and analysis with regards to global security and peace. The Centre is particularly unique in being able to bring together wide variety of expertise from different countries and academic disciplines.

The main activities that CESRAN undertakes are providing consultancy services and advice to public and private enterprises, organising international conferences and publishing academic material.

Some of CESRAN's current publications are:

- The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development (biannual, peer reviewed)  
[www.therestjournal.com](http://www.therestjournal.com)
- Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security (biannual, peer reviewed)
- Political Reflection Magazine (quarterly) [www.politicalreflectionmagazine.com](http://www.politicalreflectionmagazine.com)
- CESRAN Paper Series
- CESRAN Policy Brief
- Turkey Focus Policy Brief

CESRAN International also organises an annual international conference since 2014, called **International Conference on Eurasian Politics and Society (IEPAS)**  
[www.eurasianpoliticsandsociety.org](http://www.eurasianpoliticsandsociety.org)

- **Ranked among the top 150 International think tanks**





*Established in 2010*

**Chairman:** *Dr Ozgur Tufekci*

**Executive Editors:**

*Dr Rahman Dag*

*Dr Emrah Atar*

**South Asian Studies | Editor:** *Dr Sharifullah Dorani*

**American Foreign Policy | Editor:** *Dr Mark Meirowitz*

**Applied Economics | Editor:** *Dr Hakan Uslu*

**Middle Eastern Studies | Editor:** *Dr Rahman Dag*

**Interview Editor:** *Ebru Birinci*

**Assistant Editor:** *Ruhullah Afshar*

**Assistant Editor:** *Oguzhan Cakir*

**Assistant Editor:** *Rukiye Patan*

**Submissions:**

To submit articles or opinion, please email:

**Rahman.dag@cesran.org**

or

**editors@cesran.org**

**Note:**

The ideal **PR** article length is from **1000** to **2000** words.

©2022

By

the Centre for Strategic Research and Analysis.

All rights reserved. Political Reflection and its logo are trademarks of the Centre for Strategic Research and Analysis, which bears no responsibility for the editorial content; the views expressed in the articles are those of the authors. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher.

---

VOL. 8 - NO. 4

# POLITICAL REFLECTION

OCTOBER  
NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER  
2022

e-ISSN: 2042-888X

**“ADVANCING DIVERSITY”**

---

## Contents

- World News 05 - 10  
*by Ahmed Yesevi Taşçı*
- 13-18 Geopolitical Influence of Italy on  
the "21st Century Maritime Silk  
Road"  
*by Tianyi Liu & Giuseppe Bettoni*
- Securitization and Climate 21 - 24  
Change  
*by Sitong Lin*
- 27 - 32 Shinzo Abe's Politics in Japan:  
Characteristics and Implications  
*by Yukio Sakurai*
- The Future of Asia 35 - 39  
*by Poornima Vijaya*

# Shinzo Abe's Politics in Japan: Characteristics and Implications

**Yukio Sakurai**  
yukio1887@gmail.com

## Introduction

**O**n 8 July 2022, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (1954-2022) was shot-killed by a gunman while giving a speech in support of a candidate for the House of Councilors election in Nara prefecture, Japan. This incident was an exceptional event in terms of security in Japan and gave a big shock to the Japanese people. An article appeared that commented on this event on the same ground as the assassination cases in the United States, such as John F. Kennedy (JFK) case in 1963 (Lane, 2022). Certainly, there are many puzzling points in this assassination case but limited information on the event can be available at this stage and nobody identifies the whole story.

In any case, Abe, who served as the longest-serving prime minister in postwar Japan, has passed away. No Japanese prime minister is as divided in opinion as Abe. Because Abe's politics had diverse aspects that seemed to be positive and negative, and thus Japan's national opinion has been divided. Abe's negative aspect can be assumed to include political methods that had not been seen in Japan's politics (Yakushiji, 2020). This commentary summarizes some of Abe's political characteristics based on domestic and foreign materials on Abe and discusses the implications of his sudden death in Japan.

## Characteristics of Abe's politics

### (1) Hereditary politics and family business

In Japan, politicians are often a group of people who ascended office through hereditary succession, but some are ex-bureaucrats, representatives of trade unions or some industry groups, celebrities (in entertainment, sports, etc.), and ex. local parliament members (Scartozzi, 2017). Hereditary succession is a system that places the highest priority on blood ties and does not necessarily emphasize the abilities of politicians. In hereditary succession, politicians can inherit the support groups and supporters of the single-seat constituency system. In general, this method brings the interest of maintaining vested interests for both supporters and politicians, but it creates a weak point that prevents new entrants from politicians and prevents progress in reform.

*Yukio Sakurai, a retired businessperson, is an independent researcher with PhD in law (Yokohama National University, Japan) who researches adult support and protection legislation, including adult guardianship, supported decision-making and elder abuse safeguards, in addition to global governance studies as his lifework.*

Abe was a typical hereditary succession politician. The father of Abe was former Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe (1924-1991), his grandfather was former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi (1896-1987), and his great-uncle was former Prime Minister Eisaku Sato (1901-1975). It is said that Abe most respected his grandfather Nobusuke Kishi, who was a pro-U.S. politician in postwar Japan (Johnson 2000), through Abe's mother and Kishi's daughter Yoko's orientation (Abe 2022). Abe's profession was part of a family business, but he was capable. Abe was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1993. After serving as deputy chief cabinet secretary, secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and chief cabinet secretary, Abe served as prime minister from 2006 to 2007 and from 2012 to 2020 for eight years and eight months (a total of 3,188 days).

## (2) Power of Control

Abe had institutional power of control over the parties concerned in his politics.

### *Politicians*

Abe was so strong that he won six national elections as president of the LDP. Through his election victory, he secured a firm position in the LDP. Abe was called "Abe the strongest." Abe's politics were said to be characterized by his friends' cabinet. Because Abe appointed his friendly politicians to be ministers in his cabinet. In contrast, Abe tended to treat politicians he didn't like as cold as possible. Abe tended to shy away from people who disagreed with him and avoid discussions. Consequently, LDP politicians have come to agree with Abe's views and refrain from openly opposing him. This tendency to divide has taken the same attitude not only toward politicians but also to the people. This sounds like Donald Trump's political approach. In fact, Abe had a close personal relationship with Trump.

### *State institutions*

A distinctive feature of Abe's politics was the appointment of his supporters to heads of major state institutions, some of which required the consent of the National Diet. The state institutions are the Bank of Japan, Cabinet Legislation Bureau, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Japan Broadcasting Corporation, etc. (Kamikawa, 2018). The arbitrariness of his personnel appointment was often criticized by the opposition and mass media, but he took advantage of the power of the coalition-ruling parties, which held a majority in the National Diet, to force his way. Consequently, major state institutions might have lost neutrality.

### *National bureaucrats*

Abe was powerful to control national bureaucrats. This is due to a change in the personnel system for national bureaucrats. The cabinet of Japan has collectively administered executive personnel affairs of each ministry and

agency through the Cabinet Personnel Management Agency since the 2014 Abe administration. With this system, each ministry or public agency is under the control of the Cabinet and the Prime Minister can behave like a President (Toda, 2015; Kamikawa, 2018). Consequently, national bureaucrats began to read between the lines, interpreting laws in favour of Abe, and even falsifying official documents. Some issues were argued in the National Diet. Abe's politics was led by Prime Minister's Office, namely Abe and his close staff, and the LDP must follow his decisions. Therefore, Komeito, one of the leading coalition parties, has the power to influence Abe outside the LDP.

### *Mass media and public opinion*

The mass media and public opinion were divided between those who supported Abe and those who criticized him. Abe's supporters are conservative, but some of them have nationalistic ideas and are called "*net-uyoku*" (nationalist supporters in SNS). Abe's cabinet office controlled public opinion by using mass media and journalists who supported Abe.

### (3) Monetary, fiscal, and economic policy

Abe promoted so-called "Abenomics," which comprise the three arrows of "bold monetary policy," "flexible fiscal policy," and "economic growth strategy to stimulate private investment." In Abe's second office, the Bank of Japan changed its policy to quantitative easing with a 2% inflation target as a countermeasure against deflation, and this policy is still being maintained even in the current era of inflation. Apart from the real economy, stock prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange remained high, giving the impression that the Japanese economy was doing well. Abe's economic policy relied on neo-liberalism although he himself had a conservative moral and ethical mind.

The analysis based on the December 2014 national poll was as follows. (a) The individual evaluation that had the strongest correlation with the overall evaluation was the economic stimulus evaluation. (b) Gender was a social attribute variable for an overall evaluation, and males were a factor that enhances evaluation. (c) The recognition of the economic situation of the country stipulated the evaluation of the Abe administration rather than the recognition of the economic situation itself (Ida, 2020). Experts however criticized Abenomics for not having reached the goals after years.

### (4) Diplomacy and national security

Diplomacy and national security are two essential agendas for Abe's politics. Shinichi Kitaoka (2021) notes "three particularly significant achievements by the Abe administration in the fields of diplomacy and [national] security, which are: (i) the 2015 Legislation for Peace and Security (MOFA, 2015); (ii) Prime Minister Abe's statement marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2015); and (iii) his 2016 initiative for pursuing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific ("FOIP,"

MOFA, 2022).” Abe, known by world political leaders, could make dialogues with foreign leaders through his words. This was rare for Japanese politicians to do so. Abe respected universal values such as the rule of law, democracy, and human rights and frequently expressed these values in his speech. As for national security, Abe had a strong wish to amend the constitution for Japan to have military forces for effective defence, keeping strong ties with the U.S. For this purpose, he paved the way to take necessary steps such that Article 9 of the constitution has been reinterpreted to allow for collective self-defence but had not reached the goal.

### **Political Implications of Abe's Sudden Death**

As reviewed above, Abe was a powerful politician who tactfully took leadership in his prime minister's office and was influential with the LDP politicians and the people even after he left office. What political implications of Abe's sudden death can be expected?

First, Abe has no children, and Abe's spouse Akie announced no possibility to run for the national election at Yamaguchi prefecture. Abe's relative may succeed in the lawmaker position under Abe's mother Yoko's initiative.

Second, the LDP comprises several groups and Abe's group was conservative and the biggest in scale. It is unclear who will take over Abe's position in this group. Abe's followers are suffering from pressures caused by political issues. Namely, one is the issue related to the former Unification Church that supported many LDP politicians in elections while making anti-social activities, and the other is the bribery suspect case related to the Tokyo Olympics/Paralympics 2020. Both issues were discovered soon after Abe was gone.

Third, the vacuum of the presence of Abe may make Japan's political powerless powerful and change the balance of politics in Japan (Sneider, 2022). As social environments surrounding Japan become severer in the interior, diplomacy, and national security, it is apparent that Japan needs a capable political leader. Abe was sometimes criticized for his political methods, but he was capable to behave as the national leader, involving his team and advisors, and making dialogues with foreign leaders to determine the way. Therefore, it can be said that Japan will suffer from the vacuum of political leadership for the time being.

### **Conclusion**

This commentary reviewed former prime minister Shinzo Abe's characteristics of politics based on materials on Abe and discussed the implications of his sudden death in Japan. Abe was a typical hereditary succession politician but was capable of tactfully taking leadership in his prime minister's office in the interior, diplomacy, and national security. Particularly, Abe's three achievements in diplomacy and national security were worth remembering. However, the opposition, part of the mass media



and the people criticized him because he did not respect constitutionalism that much and behaved like a President. Two political issues are ongoing after he was gone, which will make the voice of criticism bigger to the LDP. The political implication of Abe's sudden death is political turbulence caused by uncertainty as to "who will take over Abe's political position." If this is not clarified, Japan will suffer from instability in politics. If a gunman (and his possible supporters, just in case) should have attempted such political turbulence, this can be assumed to be a terrorist attack to damage Japanese politics.

## References

- Abe, Y (2022) *Destiny: Talking about Shinzo Abe, Shintaro Abe and Nobusuke Kishi*. [in Japanese] (Tokyo: Bungeishunju Ltd., 2022).
- Johnson, C, NA Schlei, & M Schaller (2000) The CIA and Japanese politics. *Asian Perspective* 24(4):79-103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42705308>.
- Kamikawa, R (2018) An institutional analysis of "Abe strong, many weak." (1) & (2) *Osaka Law Review* 67(5):17-45. & 67(6):63-92. [in Japanese] info: Doi/10.18910/87043 & info: Doi/10.18910/87058.
- Kitaoka, S (2021) The legacy of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo: diplomacy and security. *Asia-Pacific Review* 28(1):7-21. DOI: 10.1080/13439006.2021.1921355.
- Lane, C (2022) The Abe assassination reminds us that individuals make history. (The Washington Post, 13 July 2022) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/07/13/shinzo-abe-assassination-shapes-history/>.
- Ida, M (2020) Analysis of the second Abe administration evaluation. *The Review of Economics & Political science* 88(5-6):1-20. [in Japanese] <http://m-repo.lib.meiji.ac.jp/dspace/handle/10291/21042>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan (2015) Japan's legislation for peace and security. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page1we\\_000084.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page1we_000084.html).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan (2022) Free and open Indo-Pacific. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page25e\\_000278.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page25e_000278.html).
- Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet (2015) Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe 14 August 2015. [https://japan.kantei.go.jp/97\\_abe/statement/201508/0814statement.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201508/0814statement.html).
- Scartozzi, CK (2017) Hereditary politics in Japan: a family business. (The Diplomat, 9 February 2017)

<https://thediplomat.com/2017/02/hereditary-politics-in-japan-a-family-business/>.

Sneider, D (2022) Cause to fear what comes after Abe's death. (Asia Times, 11 July 2022) <https://asiatimes.com/2022/07/cause-to-fear-what-comes-after-abes-death/>.

Toda, K (2015) A study of cabinet personnel management agency. The Economic Review of Japan University of Economics 45(1):53–68. [in Japanese]  
[https://jue.repo.nii.ac.jp/?action=pages\\_view\\_main&active\\_action=repository\\_view\\_main\\_item\\_detail&item\\_id=1503&item\\_no=1&page\\_id=4&block\\_id=80](https://jue.repo.nii.ac.jp/?action=pages_view_main&active_action=repository_view_main_item_detail&item_id=1503&item_no=1&page_id=4&block_id=80).

Yakushiji, K (2020) Abe's "anything goes" administration destroys democracy: an independent administrative agency bowing down to "Abe the strongest." [in Japanese] <https://toyokeizai.net/articles/-/333304>.

**cesran**  
international

centre for  
strategic research *and* analysis



*advancing diversity*

**think-tank  
consultancy  
research-institute**



**cesran**  
international

a registered CIC in the UK | No: 9893156  
a member of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)

**cesran**  
international

centre for  
strategic research *and* analysis

- ranked 75<sup>th</sup> among the World's  
"Top Environment Policy Think Tanks"
- ranked 82<sup>nd</sup> among the World's  
"Best Independent Think Tanks"
- ranked 141<sup>st</sup> among the World's  
"Top Think Tanks in Western Europe"
- ranked 153<sup>rd</sup> among the World's  
"Top Foreign Policy and International Affairs Think Tanks"

# *Leadership*

***Honorary President***  
Ken Booth



***Director-General***  
Ozgur Tufekci



***Deputy Director-General***  
Rahman Dag



**cesran** international   
CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS - CESRAN

think-tank ■ consultancy ■ research-institute

[www.cesran.org](http://www.cesran.org)





[www.cesran.org](http://www.cesran.org)

Tower Court, Oakdale Road, York YO30 4XL, UK

**PR**