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Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is stepping down



On August 14 of this year, Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida announced that he will not run for head of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party at the end of the three-year term provided for in the party's charter. This is a remarkable event in the current life of the country.

Our [recent forecast](#) regarding the inevitability of F. Kishida's early resignation as president of the ruling LDP in Japan and, consequently, resignation from the post of prime minister of the country turned out to be true. September will see both of these events unfold when the LDP's calendar congress will be held, during which a new party president will be elected for the next three years.

He will also become the new prime minister of the country, who will almost certainly alter the Cabinet of Ministers in some way or another. As F. Kishida himself did [three years ago](#), when he found himself at the head of both the LDS and the government. After that,

he repeatedly changed the composition of the Cabinet of Ministers, demonstrating to the population that he is working to solve various bothersome problems. However, this had almost no effect on the generally well-established negative attitude towards the government of F. Kishida, whose rating is stable at 20%.

Immediately following F. Kishida's statement on stepping down, leading Japanese publications **analysed** the entire three-year period of his premiership, noting his successes and failures. The former are mainly associated with foreign policy, the latter with domestic policy.

The general opinion boils down to the fact that a sharp aggravation of the international situation could not but negatively affect one of the main participants (Japan) in the current stage of the «Great Global Game», which was marked at the by the (very strange and iconic) «Skripal case» end of the last decade.

The leadership of the party and government of Japan face the age-old question:

What to do?

Considering the very fundamental nature of both this issue and related state problems, it seems that the 'case' will be limited to solving the issue of the political survival of the LDP itself. By the way, the society's obvious fatigue from its almost continuous stay in power throughout the entire post-war period of Japan was revealed in the second half of the 00s with the departure (in 2006) of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

An important factor in reviving the LDP at that time was the return of Shinzo Abe to active political activity at the end of 2012. He had previously (immediately after D. Koizumi) led the government for a year. But it seems that the 'oxygen cushion' created by S. Abe in the previous decade are close to exhaustion. Therefore, the question of the LDP's fate is repeatedly and unanimously raised by Japanese experts in the radical way outlined above.

The reaction of the LDP leadership to such a challenge should also be radical. The same Japanese experts predict the early (one year before the expiration of the calendar period) dissolution of the current parliament and the holding of early general elections to try to get another mandate from the population to continue leading the country. This is expected immediately after the LDP congress and the formation of a provisional government. F. Kishida himself came to power in similar conditions; there have been leaks over the past year about his intention to do this again.

The question of leadership

On August 14, F. Kishida played the role of a kamikaze, who still possessed the necessary personal qualities to continue an active political life. By taking full responsibility for the failures, he thereby gives the LDP leadership the opportunity to portray the party as a political force that has not lost its ability to radically transform itself over the 70-year period of leadership of the country. Or rather, to create this kind of impression among the electorate.

A necessary (but, of course, insufficient) condition for success will be the successful selection of a new LDP president, who should serve as a symbol of the very possibility of (another) «revival» of the party. At one time, S. Abe successfully coped with such a task. Today, among the possible candidates listed by the Japanese press from the current government, hardly anyone is suitable for such a role.

However, attention is drawn to the recent actions of Shigeru Ishiba, who is considered the extreme right wing of the LDP – even during the premiership of S. Abe, who fought for influence on this party. On the eve of F. Kishida’s dramatic statement, S. Ishiba found himself (not for the first time) in [Taiwan](#), where he was received by President William Lai. During the conversation, issues of bilateral cooperation in the field of defence and security were mainly discussed.

The importance of the gender (specifically, female) factor in choosing a party leader is also seen. It should be noted that both women in the current government (and especially the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yoko Kamikawa) are [experienced politicians and statesmen](#).

In connection with the statements about the need for a ‘radical rejuvenation’ of the party leadership, S. Koizumi’s son Shinjiro draws attention to himself. In 2019 (at the age of 37), he (for the first time) joined the last government headed by S. Abe, taking the post of Minister of the Environment, which he continues to hold today in the cabinet of F. Kishida.

In general, in the process of solving this key problem, the LDP leadership will inevitably find itself in a state of difficult reflections, since it will have to take into account a variety of factors.

The strange symbolism of F. Kishida’s stepping down

It seems that nature itself was pushing the current prime Minister to step away from all this political fuss. Japan, which is more or less constantly under the blows of various kinds of elements, primarily earthquakes and destructive typhoons, has, as they say, suffered especially much in the last few months. After the announcement of the high probability of

a mega-earthquake (which never happened), F. Kishida cancelled a long-planned trip to the countries of Central Asia and Mongolia, whose importance in Japanese foreign policy is continuously increasing.

Also, the date of F. Kishida's statement about his resignation from the post of president of the ruling party could not fail to attract attention. Let us recall that 79 years ago, on the night of August 14-15, the then-Emperor of Japan, Hirohito, in a radio speech expressed his willingness to accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, which had been formulated three weeks earlier by the Allies. Since then, the date of August 15 has been celebrated annually in Japan with a number of events in memory of the war that ended in disaster for Japan and over three million compatriots who died in it.

Of these, 2.3 million military personnel are mentioned in a [special Yasukuni shrine](#). This ritual is invariably accompanied by a protest from China because, firstly, among those commemorated there are 14 state and military figures of former Japan convicted by the Tokyo Tribunal under category A. Secondly, certain members of the current government invariably take direct part in it.

Since three members of the government of F. Kishida (including, by the way, S. Koizumi) were present at the ceremony at Yasukuni Shrine this time, and the Prime Minister himself sent an appropriate offering, China [protested](#) once again, despite the fact that a day earlier, i.e. immediately after the statement by F. Kishida discussed here, on behalf of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, a [wish](#) to develop bilateral relations was expressed.

And yet, there is reason to end this text on an optimistic note, that reason being the coming (already the third in a row) [competition](#) for eating watermelons among capybaras in Japanese zoos. The winner was again the female capybara Hechima, who ate a half-kilogram portion of watermelon in 1 minute and 48 seconds. However, this time she was a full 19 seconds behind her previous record.

This very event confirmed the ancient thesis that, despite all (including political) hardships, life goes on.

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