



The Weekly Observer

August 10-14

YOUR WEEKLY RECAP OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN!

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

Japan Scrambles to Respond to Putin's Northern Territories Visit

On Thursday, Russian state media TASS reported that **President Vladimir Putin visited Etorofu Island of the Northern Territories for the first time**. This is the first visit by a Russian leader since 2010.

Putin observed a military exercise by the Russian Navy's Pacific Fleet in Sakhalin Oblast in the Far East. In his speech, he stated that the **sovereignty over the Northern Territories**, already under effective control, is **"stipulated in international documents as a reality resulting from World War II,"** and asserted that the islands are confirmed to be Russian territory.

The same day, **Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae** issued a strong protest, reiterating that the **Northern Territories are an "inherent part of Japan's territory, both historically and under international law."** She said that **"this offends the sentiments of the Japanese people and is absolutely unacceptable."**

Takaichi's Speech at Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead

On Saturday, Takaichi delivered a speech at the **Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead**, the day marking the end of World War II in Japan. She stated, **"We will never allow the horrors of war to be repeated. We will pass down this resolute pledge across generations and remain steadfast in upholding it."**

In line with the late **Abe Shinzo**, she **removed language included in last year's speech by then-Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru** referring to **"reflection"** and a **"pledge against war."** She added to her speech: **"We can become a nation that is relied upon as a shining beacon in the Indo-Pacific."**

Takaichi decided not to visit Yasukuni Shrine out of diplomatic considerations. Instead, she chose to **"remote worship"** from the parking lot of the Nippon Budokan, located about two hundred meters away. **Four ministers** made the trip, as well as **eighty-nine cross-party lawmakers**.

Cabinet Approval



53% (-5 pts.)

33% (+6 pts.)

[NHK](#) (August 10)

State of the Economy

Current Account Balance (2026 H1):

¥17.43 trillion surplus (+22.5% increase in surplus from 2025 H1)

Primary Income Balance: ¥20.49 trillion surplus (highest amount in half-year)

Trade Balance: ¥742.1 billion surplus (first surplus in half-year since 2021)

Economy Watchers Survey (July):

45.7 (+1.7 pts.)

3rd consecutive month on the rise

Maintained assessment that economy "shows signs of picking up"

National Debt (end of June 2026):

¥1,346.68 trillion (record high)