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# Japan Again under Abe – Fresh Start or More of the (not so Great) Same?

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After Japan's snap Lower House elections called on December 14 by old and new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the country is at a crossroads. The choice is between the adoption of badly needed structural reforms capable of leading the country back onto a path of sustainable economic growth and the continuation of familiar economic stimulus packages that have proven unsuccessful in the past.

In this issue Asia Policy Brief, Axel Berkofsky, Professor at the University of Pavia, Italy, and Senior Associate Research Fellow at the Milan-based Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI), analyzes the election results and examines the state of Japans reform agenda. He argues that Abe's strategy to call snap elections and take advantage of an incredibly weak political opposition paid off, even if the election victory is less stunning than the raw

numbers indicate. However, unless Abe changes gear and adopts more of the long-announced economic, structural and fiscal reforms, there could be (many) more very half-hearted reform policies in the months ahead.

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