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14. Set-up shot of Jochen Legewie, Managing Director CNC (Communications and Network Consulting) Japan

15. SOUNDBITE (English) Jochen Legewie, Managing Director CNC (Communications and Network Consulting) Japan:

"What I think as a result, it will bring not so much new as I expect the Abe coalition government to stay in place, which means Abenomics will stay in place. It will mean that Japan's politics within the domestic area as well as foreign overseas will stay similar. But, we have for the first time, a real strong challenger with Ms Koike and although she will not be the new prime minister after this election at least I am sure, and she has excluded it herself, she will likely bring fresh wind and will continue to be a very strong opposition force. And this might change, in the first and in the short run, the way how Abe has to implement his policies and, in the long run, she remains a contender for this very job, the job of the prime minister."

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition looks set for a comfortable victory in Sunday's general election according to media polls, possibly even retaining its two-thirds majority in the more powerful lower house of parliament.

Japanese voters may not love Abe, but they appear to want to stick with what they know, rather than hand the reins to an opposition with little or no track record.

Uncertainty over North Korea and its growing missile and nuclear arsenal may be heightening that underlying conservatism.

Abe dissolved the lower house a little more than three weeks ago on the day it convened for a special session, forcing the snap election.

The timing seemed ripe for his ruling Liberal-Democratic Party, or at least better than waiting to hold the election at a later date.

And it appears the potentially risky decision has paid off.

Support for Abe's Cabinet, the standard measure of a government's popularity in Japan, has recovered from summertime lows.

The main opposition force, the Democratic Party, is in more disarray than usual after its leader resigned.

Holding off from an election would have given potential rival, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, more time to organise a challenge.

Instead, her hand forced by Abe's decision, Koike has had to hastily launch a new party to contest the election.

Her Party of Hope briefly stole the limelight from Abe, attracting a slew of defectors from the Democrats.

Its populist platform includes phasing out nuclear power by 2030, and putting on hold an increase in the consumption tax due in 2019.

However the initial excitement for the Party of Hope has waned.

Koike has decided not to run for the 465-seat lower house and won't even be in Japan on election day.

She is heading to Paris for a global conference of mayors that will discuss issues such as climate change.

The Democratic Party meanwhile has imploded.

Its more liberal members have launched yet another grouping, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, which is now outpolling the Party of Hope.

For the rest of the world, an Abe victory would likely mean a continuation of the policies he has pursued in the nearly five years since he took office in December 2012.

That includes a hard line on North Korea.

Abe says it's not the time for dialogue and has pushed for tougher sanctions to try to pressure leader Kim Jong Un to abandon the country's weapons development.

On domestic matters, he has backed a loose monetary policy that has boosted the stock market and breathed temporary life into a long-stagnant Japanese economy, though many of the gains haven't filtered down to working people, raising doubts about the sustainability of the recovery.

A strong election showing would also boost Abe's chances of being reappointed to another three-year term as leader of the Liberal-Democratic Party next September, extending his premiership.

That could make Abe the longest-serving Japanese prime minister in the post-World War II era.

A long-time resident in Japan and an expert on Japan issues, Jochen Legewie notes however the emergence of opposition power such as Koike's party in recent times and says such power could stir the political situation in a long run.

Legewie does not rule out the possibility that although Koike may not do well in this election, she is could well be a contender for Japanese prime minister in the future.