



SASAKAWA USA
Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

Press Release

February 19, 2016

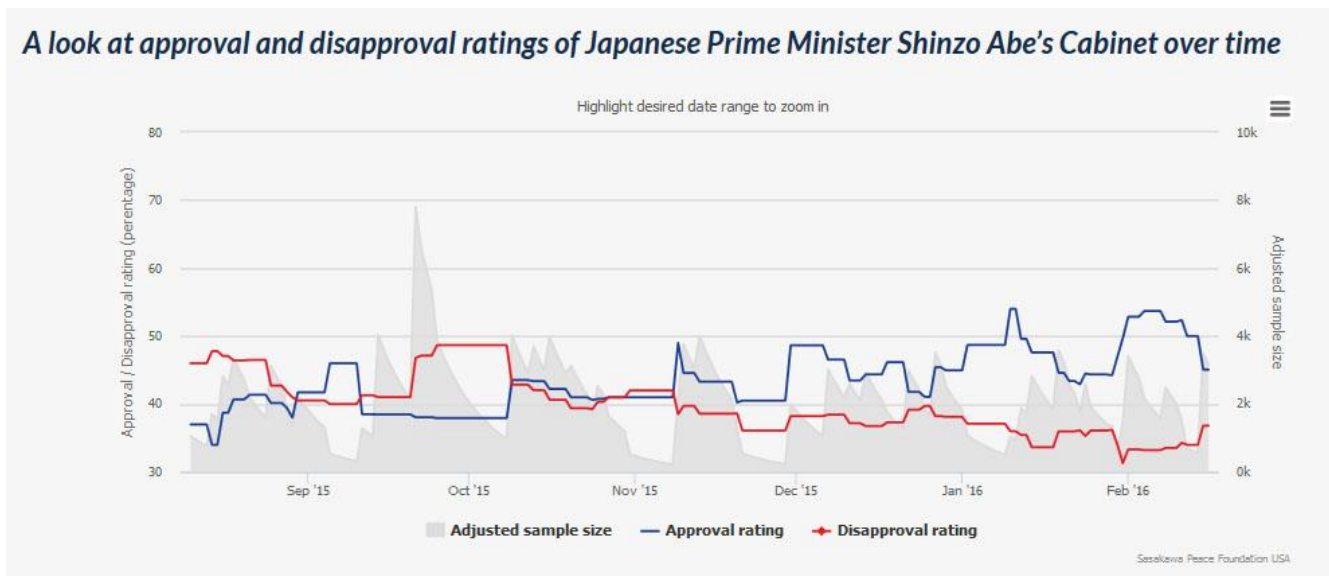
For more information please contact:
Christa Desrets
Digital Content Coordinator
cdesrets@spfusa.org
(202) 296-6694 ext. 118

Introducing Sasakawa USA's Japan Political Pulse

JPP aggregates major opinion polls by Japanese media to provide a more accurate picture of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his government's public approval ratings

WASHINGTON, D.C. — While Japan has a high volume of quality opinion polls measuring the public approval ratings of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his cabinet, these polls often have subtle but consistent biases. Now, a new tool developed by Sasakawa USA will provide a more accurate picture of support rates for the cabinet.

Analogous to U.S. opinion poll aggregators, Sasakawa USA's [Japan Political Pulse](#) aggregates major polls to minimize the impact of any individual poll's biases and arrive at a more balanced representation of public opinion. It is the first such aggregator to be developed—and maintained—over time.



“The opinion polls conducted by Japan’s media outlets have played an outsized role in shaping political outcomes compared to other democracies,” explained Sasakawa USA’s [Tobias Harris](#), who developed the tool. “High approval ratings can increase a prime minister’s ability to govern; while low and falling approval ratings can embolden parliamentary backbenchers, bureaucrats, interest groups, and the media to resist a prime minister’s agenda or even try to replace the premier. Polls, in short, are not simply a barometer of public sentiment but a weapon in the ongoing struggle over how Japan is governed.”

The poll's approval and disapproval ratings are compared against a backdrop of adjusted sample size data. JPP currently offers data for each day starting in August 2015, stretching through today, and it

will continue to be updated regularly. The graph also is interactive—viewers can zoom in on any date range for a closer look.

“Japan Political Pulse gives us an unprecedented look at public views of Prime Minister Abe and his cabinet over time,” said Sasakawa USA Chairman [Adm. Dennis Blair](#). “By aggregating multiple polls, we are able to see the larger picture of public sentiment in Japan, and we can draw conclusions as to how policy and events shape Japan’s public opinion about its government. Leadership in a democracy is an interplay between the government and its people, and this dynamic graph will provide unique insights.”

Sasakawa USA’s fellows will provide occasional commentary on noteworthy data points in recent surveys. In the most recent public opinion polls, for example, support for Prime Minister Abe’s cabinet cooled off slightly after enjoying a surprising bump following the January 28 resignation of Economic Revitalization Minister Amari Akira, a close ally of the prime minister and a leading architect of Abenomics.

“This latest round of polling reinforces the notion that the government’s approval ratings do not necessarily depend on support for its policies or for the prime minister himself but rather on public appreciation of the cabinet’s stability,” Harris concludes. “Opposition to the government’s policies, however, is overwhelmingly the main driver of the government’s disapproval ratings.”

View Japan Political Pulse and the latest related commentary [here](#). Read more details on the methodology behind JPP [here](#).