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## From “Reactive” to “Principled”: Japan's Foreign Policy Stance toward Africa\*

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### I. Introduction

The 2012 edition of the Diplomatic Bluebook notes that Africa (sub-Saharan Africa in this essay) is a region of mounting importance to Japanese diplomacy, and cites three points of reasons for that perspective. First, proactive efforts to find solutions to the assorted challenges facing Africa are naturally an obligation of responsible countries and something that will earn those countries heightened trust within the international community. Second, Japan has yearned for stronger economic ties with Africa, a huge market with vast natural resources, a growing population, and the potential for sustainable and powerful economic growth. And third, cooperation by the countries of Africa will be essential to progress in dealing with a range of issues of global scale, including UN Security Council reforms and climate change. The first categorical mention of “principles” of diplomacy toward Africa in a diplomatic bluebook that listed these three points (with the numbering of points two and three sometimes reversed, depending on the year of publication) can be traced to a section in Diplomatic Bluebook 2006 under the title, “Principles and Basic Policies of Diplomacy toward Africa: Why Africa?” As will be discussed in further detail later, in January 2001 Yoshiro Mori became the first sitting Japanese prime minister to make a state visit to African countries, and on that occasion delivered a policy speech in which he stressed the world would not achieve lasting stability and prosperity in the 21st century unless it solved the problems confronting Africa. The year 2005—as the second internationally recognized “Year of Africa”—set the stage for the implementation of Japanese policies toward Africa that reflected this perspective. As noted in Diplomatic Bluebook 2006, 2005 was a year that witnessed a series of major international gatherings devoted to issues concerning Africa. In April that year, Indonesia hosted the Asian-African Summit, which advocated Asian-African cooperation, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first Asian-African Conference it had hosted in 1955. In July, the G8 Gleneagles Summit in Scotland gathered to focus on efforts by the international community to address problems facing Africa. The following September occasioned a UN High-Level Plenary Meeting, which discussed the issue of global poverty with a focus on the challenges for Africa and attention to progress toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Finally, in December, the World Trade Organization held a Hong Kong Ministerial Conference that, as one of its key themes, discussed the response to developmental challenges for least-developed countries (LDCs), the vast majority of which are located in Africa.

In this essay, it will be my objective to explore the possibility that Japanese diplomacy had reached

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a stage marked by the formation of African policies in line with the above “principles” and, by extension, had thereafter begun to pursue a more clear-cut set of policies. In the following sections, I will lay out the findings of earlier research, present a chronological review of changes in the policies of postwar (post-World War II) Japan toward Africa, and demonstrate the absence of clear principles and the “reactive” nature of those policies. Working from this foundation, I will present evidence that suggests Japan’s policies toward Africa have entered a new phase supported by the pillars of official development assistance (ODA) and UN peacekeeping operations (PKO), albeit with a repetitive return to “reactive” responses along the way.

## II. The Development of Japanese Diplomacy toward Africa during the Cold War Era

To date, the chronology of postwar Japan’s ODA-driven diplomacy toward Africa has been discussed both in terms of five phases (Sato 2004, 245-256) and, more loosely, three phases (Ochiai 2001, 38-41). For reference purposes here, Table 1 lists the five phases presented by Sato (2004). The three-phase division is not at odds with the five-phase division in terms of timing; rather, it simply merges the second and third phases as well as the fourth and fifth phases of the latter, five-phase breakdown. Accordingly, both divisions appear to be essentially in agreement on the timing of key turning points in Japanese policy toward Africa: namely, the first Oil Crisis, the end of the Cold War, and the period during which Japan gained international prestige as the world’s top donor country. Numerous studies have concluded that Japanese policy toward Africa was either extremely complacent or virtually nonexistent during the first phase, which coincided with the period that led up to the first oil crisis (Oda 1994).

Table 1. Phases in the Evolution of Japanese Aid Policy toward Africa

	Period	Features of Aid Policy in General	Features of Aid Policy toward Africa
Phase 1	1954 (accession to Colombo Plan) to 1972	Short-term profit motivation and formation of basic character (request-based principle)	Aid concentrated in Asia; policy on Africa nonexistent
Phase 2	1973 (first Oil Crisis) to 1980	Expansion of aid as a measure in economic security	Focus on resource-rich continent, with rapid growth in aid Emphasis as potential supporting force in UN
Phase 3	1981 (medium-term target to double ODA in five years) to 1988	Expansion and globalization of aid for efforts in multilateral coordination and as measure to offset trade surplus	Increased weighting placed on aid to Africa with structural adjustment loans Measures in relief from hunger
Phase 4	1989 (world’s top ODA donor) to 2000	Status as world’s top donor country; breakaway from request-based approach	Status as leading aid donor to Africa Political involvement and deployment of Self-Defense Forces Hosting of Tokyo International Conference on African Development, with search for new initiatives in aid

Phase 5	2001 (US became world's top ODA donor) to present	ODA budget cuts with policy transition	Debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries Cooperation between aid and peacebuilding Progress in aid coordination NEPAD/AU support
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Source: Sato (2004), 245, Table 11-1.

One characterization of Japan that has been cited frequently in discourse on the evolving nature of Japanese diplomacy toward Africa is that of the “reactive state,” a perspective utilized by Kent Calder in critical reviews of written works on Japan’s economic and foreign policies. In that context, “reactive” refers first to the nature of a country that is unable to pursue its own foreign policy initiatives (particularly within the economic sphere) even though it has the power and incentive to do so; and secondly, to the act of altering policies in response to outside pressure even if the changes are flawed or lacking in consistency or systematic rigor (Calder 1988). However, one point to bear in mind is that whereas Calder envisioned the Japanese government in its trade negotiations with the US as “reacting” to the US government, US Congress, or public opinion as articulated by the US news media, in the context that concerns us here, Japan is portrayed as “reacting” to trends in African policy occasionally observed among other, non-African “third actors” including the Western countries, the “international community” as represented by the UN, or the international press (Sato 2007, 99). Utilizing this concept of a “reactive” state, Sato makes the following observation about Phase 1, the period during which Japan historically seemed to have no aid policy in place for Africa. Although Japan extended little if any aid to Africa during that period, the importance of Phase 1 to African diplomacy still could not be ignored because the fundamental underpinnings of Japanese foreign policy took shape during that period through the extension of aid to other countries in Asia, establishing a foundation that would heavily influence the orientation of Japanese diplomacy toward Africa in later years. In effect, even by that point in time, Japanese foreign policy on Africa had begun to take form within the context of a three-way relationship that linked Japan to Asia on the one hand and Africa on the other (Sato, *ibid.*, 3-4). Sato thus brings Asia into the equation with this “trilateral” relationship as a vantage point for observations about Japanese policy toward Africa. This point is important. In terms of Japanese policy toward Africa, it arguably correlated strongly with the prominent position assigned to the Asian-African Summit in 2005, the second “Year of Africa”, which marked the 50th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, and a persistent pattern of awareness about Asian-African cooperation (South-South cooperation).

Accordingly, the initial turning point for Japanese policy on Africa was the first Oil Crisis, which had been triggered by the Fourth Arab-Israeli War that took place in October 1973. This event placed heavy pressure on Japan to alter its resource policies. Japan thus sought to secure its access to crude oil through closer ties with the countries of the Middle East and also began looking for ways to find new resource-supplying countries (Sato, *ibid.*, 4). At the time, then-Japanese Foreign Minister Toshio Kimura’s tour to five African countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Zaire, Tanzania, and Egypt) from October 31 to November 9 in 1974 was a frequent topic of discussion. However, attention needs to be focused on the fact that prior to Kimura’s tour, a series of changes pointing to a shift in Japanese policy toward Africa had begun to appear from around mid-1974, particularly within the UN forum. Oda cites one episode that serves to highlight a certain measure of this change in Japanese policy. On August 1, 1974 Japan became the first country in the West at the time that recognized Guinea-Bissau as a sovereign state, which had gained political independence and put behind an era of colonial rule by Portugal. This was in contrast to the

behavior Japan displayed during the 28th Plenary Session of the UN a year earlier, when it chose to abstain in voting on a resolution that welcomed the independence of Guinea-Bissau and condemned its illegal occupation and invasion by Portugal (with 93 votes in favor, seven against, and 30 abstentions). Foreign Minister Kimura further demonstrated this shift to the international community in an address delivered (in Japanese) to the UN's 29th Plenary Session the following September.

“The challenges confronting the countries of Africa, and in particular, the assurance of self-determination and independence for the inhabitants of non-self-governed territories and the elimination of ethnic discrimination, are crucial tasks for the United Nations today, and their achievement will contribute significantly to world peace. In that respect, we welcome the move by the Portuguese government newly formed in April this year to recognize, in principle, the independence of the African countries within Portugal's colonial territories, are hopeful that these countries will attain their independence peacefully and at an early date, and look forward to their entry into the United Nations as peace-loving states. From this perspective, I extend my heartfelt congratulations both to Guinea-Bissau, which has already gained independence, and the provisional government of Mozambique, which with its inauguration on September 20 marked an important milestone toward full independence. Furthermore, Japan reaffirms its established position of fundamental opposition to South Africa's practice of apartheid and occupation of Namibia as well as minority white rule of Southern Rhodesia. We will continue to comply with UN economic sanctions and other resolutions against Southern Rhodesia and are committed to sustained efforts in cooperation that will enable Africa's citizens to more quickly realize their hopes and dreams.” [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1975, last volume]

These remarks demonstrated that Japan had adopted a more favorable stance on political independence in Africa and was prepared to build closer relations with the continent through efforts in coordination with the international community. As Sato points out, Kimura later noted that his visit to Africa had two objectives. First, Japan sought diplomatic ties with Africa as a resource-producing region that remained untapped from Japan's foreign policy perspective. Second, in view of the anti-Japanese rioting and protests against a Japanese business presence in Southeast Asia at that time, Japan was interested in preemptively building friendly ties with the countries of Africa (Sato 2007, 4).

Japanese Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda later went on a similar state tour to five African countries (Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Tanzania, and Kenya) during the second Oil Crisis that had been triggered by the Iranian Revolution. This can be viewed as a repeat of Japan's response during the first Oil Crisis, and Sato offers a plausible assessment: namely, that within the setting of the 1970s, Japan pursued its policies on Africa within a trilateral framework that included Asia and the Middle East and strongly reflected an awareness of the “international community” led by the UN. In the process, the value of (bilateral) ODA to recipients in Sub-Saharan Africa steadily expanded both in absolute terms and as a share of total Japanese ODA spending. From 2.6 percent in 1973, that share rose to 6.9 percent in 1975, 9.7 percent in 1979, and approached 10 percent of the ODA total at the start of the 1980s (Oda 1994, 86).

The 1980s were considered to be a decade during which Japan expanded its levels of ODA to Africa (ibid, Sato, 2004, 2007). However, the drastic changes that took place compared to the 1970s need to be kept in mind as a background factor. Whereas changes in Japanese policy toward Africa during the 1970s were strongly shaped by the oil crises and consequent concerns over access to resources, in the 1980s, the context of policy coordination with other leading industrial countries became a major influence. The Plaza Accord of 1985 led to the implementation of foreign-exchange policies that were aimed at weakening the US dollar. Additionally, as argued by Robert Orr, Orr's argument, the Western countries and the US in particular began explicitly pressuring the Japanese government to expand its levels of aid to Africa

(Orr 1993). Ultimately, and in addition to efforts to expand domestic demand and promote imports, Japan also sought to increase its ODA spending as a measure to help offset its trade surplus. In particular, under the strong yen regime that followed the Plaza Accord, it achieved steadily expanding levels of aid spending on a dollar-denominated basis.

In the context of Japanese policy toward Africa during the 1980s, it seems reasonable to assume the above-mentioned “trilateral” relationship were sustained and that Japan sought to expand aid to Africa in view of its ties with other developed countries that pursued policy coordination. Another issue was to do with policy toward South Africa, which sustained a system of apartheid that had become one of the key challenges for Africa in the 1980s. Notably, worsening security conditions and unrest in the country had prompted the South African government to declare a state of emergency. Given this declaration, in July 1986, the US Congress enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, effectively overriding a veto by the President and compelling it to impose economic sanctions on South Africa, even though the sitting administration of Ronald Regan had pursued a policy of constructive engagement that recognized South Africa’s white government, sought to ease its system of apartheid through dialogue, and to bring about improvements in the standard of living for African citizens through measures in economic cooperation. Acting in advance of this development, Japan sought to curb trade with South Africa through an export embargo on selected products and appeals aimed at urging the private sector to exercise restraint. However, partly due to the impact of the strong yen following the Plaza Accord, in 1987—at a time when international efforts to impose economic sanctions on South Africa were building momentum—Japan displaced the US as the world’s top trading partner with South Africa in value terms, and accordingly drew stern criticism from abroad, including the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and the US Congress. Having cited inconsistencies in the response of the Japanese government to this situation, Motoki Takahashi tendered the following observations. As an example of those inconsistencies, in 1988, the aforementioned criticism prompted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to demonstrate a more in-depth response, including direct appeals to Keidanren to curb trade by the private sector and draft a manual of guidelines on trade restrictions. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI, later renamed) reacted to MOFA’s response as a coercive move that overstepped its jurisdiction. This confrontation between the two ministries and the lobbying by their political supporters eventually boiled over and developed into an unusual situation that even garnered coverage by the news media. MOFA had followed a “reactive” approach based on a trilateral relationship, which was the outcome of an absence of the political leadership and unifying power that would have enabled the government ministries and agencies to overcome their respective vested interests (Takahashi 2010, 17-18).

It seems plausible to conclude that this series of episodes effectively highlighted the exceptionally “reactive” nature of Japanese policy toward Africa during the Cold War era.

### **III. Japanese Aid Policy toward Africa following the Cold War**

Building on the trend of the 1980s with its efforts to expand ODA in value terms, at the end of the Cold War in 1989 Japan displaced the US to become the world’s top ODA donor country, and maintained its position as the top donor on a dollar-denominated basis through the decade from 1991 to 2000. In the process, Japan entered a phase that would see the value of ODA placed into serious question. Hence, on June 30, 1992 the Japanese government approved its ODA Charter (the old charter) by Cabinet resolution and stipulated that it be implemented in keeping with the principles of the UN Charter (specifically, concerning sovereignty, equality, and noninterference in internal affairs) as well as four additional

operational principles: (i) balance between development and the environmental conservation; (ii) avoidance of the utilization of ODA for military purposes or the furtherance of international disputes; (iii) attention to military expenditures in developing countries, the development and manufacture of missiles and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and trends in weapons exports and imports; and (iv) attention to efforts made toward democratization and the adoption of market economies as well as the status of guarantees of basic human rights and liberty.

As these changes were taking place, certain developments supported the impression that Japan had adopted a stronger stance on political involvement in African affairs: one was its deployment of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to Mozambique for UN peacekeeping operations (ONUMOZ) in May 1993; and another was Tokyo's sponsorship of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in October the same year (Sato 2004, 250). It is possible to point again to the "reactive" dynamic under a new set of circumstances as the factor that put these actions into motion. Having examined the reasons for the deployment of SDF to Mozambique from an early stage, Sato raises the following two points. First, in the days leading up to the Tokyo Summit of July 1993, the Japanese government anticipated a confrontation with Western countries on Japan's trade surplus and measures in assistance to Russia, and felt compelled to somehow publicize Japan's "international contributions" more to the international community than to citizens at home. Second, in its bid to gain Japan a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, the Japanese government (namely, the cabinet administration at that time as well as MOFA) sensed a need to put emphasis on Japan's "international contributions." Implicit in that assessment was the view that the deployment of SDF troops to Mozambique—a country struggling to achieve peace in the aftermath of a civil war—would be effective in boosting Japan's recognition among a large voting bloc of African countries (Sato 1994, 155).

Further, it is well known that the end of the Cold War allowed Western donor countries to drastically curb their levels of economic assistance to Africa, and that signs of "aid fatigue" began to set in more widely as these countries increasingly perceived Africa as having limited strategic value. At the time, even scholarly circles generally entertained strong concerns that the African economy had been marginalized and left behind by trends in globalization, or that it was unlikely to reap many benefits from globalization in the first place (Harbeson and Rothchild, eds. 1991). Given the changes underway in the international climate affecting Africa and the policy environment for Japanese economic cooperation, it is especially intriguing that the drive for initiatives on Africa, and specifically to sponsor TICAD, had been proposed from the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York since 1989, rather than from the headquarter of Tokyo. According to Kataoka, the Mission, working through the offices of UN Headquarters and former World Bank President Robert McNamara, lobbied the Global Coalition for Africa (of which McNamara was a founder) and the UN missions of several African countries in New York and succeeded in forming a consensus on a framework for sponsorship of a joint international conference on African development. Thus, in May 1991 the Japanese mission laid out its strategy for a conference on African development to be held in 1993, and, at a meeting of the Special Committee on the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 during the UN Plenary Session in September that year, announced plans to hold the Conference on African Development in the autumn of 1993 (Kataoka 2009, 247). As a background dimension, this initiative also had the goal of strengthening friendly ties with African countries and gaining Japan a position of responsibility within the UN. Initially, TICAD was assigned value as a tool to help Japan win election to a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council (*ibid*, 248).

As these perspectives illustrate, the African diplomacy that Japan pursued in the early years

following the Cold War contextually had more to do with UN-oriented policy than actual diplomatic policy toward Africa: namely, facilitating Security Council reforms and gaining a nonpermanent seat there as a “responsible member of the UN.” Furthermore, this approach to “political involvement” was intertwined with the transformation in Japanese aid principles that had their inception with the considerations that Japan demonstrated toward the newly independent, developing countries of Asia: namely, the “request-based principle” (whereby each recipient country drew up its own development plans and appealed to Japan to furnish aid on that basis) and the “principle of self-reliance” (whereby the recipient assumed ownership as the primary agent of project management and development). Within the context of aid diplomacy, this approach could be viewed as highly consistent with the decision to implement the ODA Charter.

#### **IV. Japanese Aid Policy toward Africa in the 21st Century**

As indicated earlier in this essay, the start of the 21st century introduced a set of conditions that compelled the major industrial countries to acknowledge the problems confronting Africa as an important new challenge of their own. In addition to the changes affecting Africa, changes in the policy climate for Japan and other aid donor countries factored heavily behind this development. The first change was the recognition that Africa was a region in need of a response to new challenges of a security-related issue. This realization was brought home in August 1998 by the synchronized terror attacks on US embassy facilities in Kenya and Tanzania—years prior to 9/11.

The second change was that Africa had begun to demonstrate economic growth led by its resource-producing countries. This was a development somewhat at odds with the continent’s traditional image. The main theme of the second TICAD in 1998 had to do with poverty reduction in Africa and the integration of African countries into the world economy. The image of Africa reflected by that theme was one widely shared by the international community at the close of the 20th century. In other words, the African economy had been marginalized and left behind by the trend in globalization, or stood little to gain from globalization in the first place. However, economic growth in Africa now urged that these traditional perspectives be revised. Nonetheless, some assessments noted with irony that the strongest levels of this economic growth had taken place in those African countries with the weakest benchmarks of governance. Supporting that observation (Hirano 2009, 245), Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, Chad, Angola, and Nigeria—all countries widely known for epidemic levels of corruption by their political elites—had posted pronounced economic growth fueled by the production of crude oil.

Finally, as something interlinked with the feasibility of achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the third change emerged as a trend toward strengthened involvement on the aid front. In July of 2005, a year that had been dubbed the “Year of Africa,” the Summit of the Group of Eight major industrial countries (the G8 Summit) addressed a proposal to forgive the outstanding debts of the least-developed countries (LDCs)—the majority of which are located in Africa. Later, in September that year, the joint Development Committee of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) decided to fully forgive the outstanding debts the LDCs owed to international financial institutions. This proactive level of involvement in Africa reflected the broadly shared realization that poverty reduction in Africa still constituted a significant challenge for the international community as a whole.

As a measure to address the problems facing Africa, Japan established a precedent to discuss issues of Africa in 2000 by inviting African leaders for the first time to its Kyushu-Okinawa Summit. Additionally, in January 2001, Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori made the first state visit by a standing Japanese prime minister to sub-Saharan Africa (South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria). In a policy speech on African

cooperation that he gave in South Africa, Mori stated that the world in the 21st century would not enjoy stability or prosperity without solving the issues facing Africa. On that understanding, he pledged that Japan would continue to actively provide assistance to Africa with a two-pronged focus on development and the prevention of conflicts with relief for refugees. In addition, he sent a message that Japan would pursue a new relationship with Africa based on broad, two-way exchange. The details of this speech were apparently later organized and presented on the theme, “Principles and Basic Policies for Diplomacy with Africa.”

However, in the interim, Japan would be confronted by budget cuts, heralding an era that could be described as an “ODA winter.” In 2001—the start of the 21st century—the budget for ODA underwent a drastic cut of 27 percent from its scale the year before, compelling Japan to surrender to the US the top-donor status it had retained for the preceding 10 years. Also, following establishment of the MDGs, the US, EU, and other major donors actually began intensifying their levels of aid in value terms whereas Japan by contrast saw its prestige as a donor country only continue to fade. Furthermore, in a new twist, cuts to the ODA budget were linked with reforms to MOFA and the ODA program itself. As will be seen below, this arrangement would integrate changes entailed by an important shift in the priority Japan assigned to ODA.

Since 2001, MOFA had been plagued by a series of increasingly pronounced internal issues ranging from cases of fraud and embezzlement to false accounting. Awareness of these issues reinforced public mistrust of the ODA project implementation process. Responding to those concerns, in July 2002 MOFA announced measures in five areas as components of its ODA reform policy: audits; evaluations; alliances with NGOs; human resources recruitment, training, and utilization; and information disclosure.

In August 2003, the Japanese Cabinet approved a revised ODA Charter. This action demonstrated that the Japanese government recognized it must shoulder its responsibilities in a manner reflecting the spirit of Japan’s constitution and commensurate with its national strength, and actively endeavor to address new issues if it intended to earn the trust of international society. To that end, the government acknowledged the importance of winning public acceptance for ODA, and noted that it must effectively implement ODA programs with adequate attention to the country’s fiscal circumstances and the views of the Japanese people. On that understanding, it stipulated that reforms be aimed at improving the strategic and functional effectiveness, transparency, and efficiency of ODA, encouraging broader public participation, and fostering deeper understanding of the ODA program both at home and abroad. As one objective of the reforms, ODA was to be implemented on a more-strategic basis. Heavier emphasis would be placed on the self-help efforts of developing countries (ownership), and efforts to address priority issues including poverty reduction, sustainable growth, global issues, and peacebuilding would be pursued with a perception of “human security” focusing on all individuals.

Several principles for the implementation of aid were laid out: strive for a balance between development and the environmental conservation; avoid the utilization of ODA for military purposes or the furtherance of international disputes; pay adequate attention to trends in the military expenditures, development and manufacture of missiles and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and weapons exports and imports of developing countries; and pay adequate attention to heed efforts made to promote democratization and adopt market economies as well as the status of guarantees of basic human rights and liberties. Furthermore, for the purpose of ensuring the government in its entirety implement ODA projects efficiently and effectively in a unified and coherent manner, it was stipulated that attention be given to coordination and cooperation with international society as stated in basic policy; that medium-range policies and country-specific aid plans be prepared; and that ODA policies be drafted and

implemented in compliance with these steps. This shift in policy on the implementation of ODA derived from changes that could be interpreted as a conclusive break from one of the traditional principles of Japanese aid: namely, the request-based principle (Sato 2004, 253).

In the midst of this transition, TICAD III of 2003, and more specifically, its preliminary ministerial level meeting (in December 2001), interpreted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD, valued as a core program of the African Union [AU], which was launched in July 2002) as a manifestation of the "self-help efforts," or "ownership" that earlier TICADs had long called for, and accordingly selected the concentration of aid and expanded partnerships among members of international society as its core theme. Proposed by South African President Thabo Mbeki and other African leaders, NEPAD was an African-led program adopted by the July 2001 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit and aimed at fostering Africa's revitalization and development under the partnership with developed countries. African statesmen with a leading role in NEPAD were also invited to attend the June 2002 G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada, highlighting the position of the advanced industrial countries as donors of aid. As these events were unfolding, NEPAD was assigned importance as a key theme on the TICAD agenda. MOFA has summarized the TICAD as a body with a consensus of support in Africa and the international community at large, and as the world's largest policy forum on African development issues.

Among the changes in the priorities of policy toward Africa, we can reconfirm that Japanese aid policy conclusively abandoned the request-based principle while maintaining and placing even higher priority on the principle of ownership.

## **V. A New Phase for Aid Policy toward Africa**

### **1. ODA and Peacebuilding**

As Sato points out, one important feature of Japanese aid policy toward Africa at the threshold to the 21st century was the tight linkage it had begun to establish between ODA and efforts in peacebuilding (challenges spanning a broad spectrum of issues at each stage of a conflict, including prevention, emergency humanitarian aid, and economic development) (Sato 2004, 253-254). Having materialized as a pillar of Japanese diplomacy, the notion of "human security" clearly exemplifies this point. At the UN Millennium Summit, the Japanese government proposed the creation of a Commission on Human Security. In 2003, that committee (co-chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen) submitted a final report that cited inadequate guarantees of freedom from fear and freedom from want as a threat to "human security" in conflict-torn situations at underdeveloped countries principally in Africa, and called for a policy approach aimed at addressing the issues of both conflict and development. However, if Japanese ODA were to assist in establishing links between conflict settlement, peacebuilding, and development, it would involve the task of making extremely political judgments, something entirely different from the traditional, politically neutral focus of aid to the economic and social sectors (ibid, 254). In that sense, change arguably could be perceived as an opportunity to introduce new elements into Japanese policy on aid to Africa. Accordingly, in this section, I want to draw from selected case studies and examine developments within the arena of policy on Africa in recent years that can be viewed as examples of continuity and fresh change.

Relative to the "reactive" nature of traditional Japanese aid policy on Africa, there can be no doubt that the penetration of China into Africa, as a new donor of aid can in one sense be perceived as having had an extremely powerful influence through the phase leading into the 21st century. Following the example of "Francafrique," a term that expressed Africa's value as a continent in which French political circles had a huge vested interest, the term "Chinafrique" also has been coined, effectively highlighting

the variety of responses to China's penetration into Africa. At times relying on summit diplomacy, China has engaged in a diplomatic style that is clearly aimed at gaining access to natural resources. As demonstrated by a policy paper on Africa (released in January 2006), it has pursued a unique foreign policy track that includes the provision of aid with no conditions attached. Held every three years since 2000, the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) that gathered in Beijing in 2006 adopted a Beijing Summit Declaration and Beijing Action Plan (2007-2009) that together demonstrated China's resolve to be deeply involved in Africa, with commitments to implement debt relief and assistance projects spanning a broad array of fields, from agriculture and resources to energy, finance, and infrastructure as well as create a fund (totaling \$5 billion) aimed at fostering Chinese corporate investment in Africa. The fourth FOCAC was held in Cairo in November 2009 and the fifth, in Beijing in July 2012. These events signaled steady progress in ties between China and the states of Africa, and included a Chinese pledge to extend \$1.6 trillion in development loans.

These Chinese inroads into Africa ultimately had a significant influence on Japanese policy toward Africa—an influence that conceivably extended to the refinement of the political “principles” underpinning Japanese policy. First and foremost, this was also an issue that had to do with competition for the resources that African countries produce—specifically, access to the so-called “rare-earth” scarce minerals essential to the manufacture of products that harness cutting-edge technologies. In November 2007, a Japanese business mission led by then-Economy Minister Akira Amari visited South Africa and Botswana with the motive of reaching an agreement with both countries on the joint development of “rare-earth” minerals. Secondly, Japan to that point had established comparatively friendly relations with several African countries on matters relating to UN Security Council reforms and the election of the Security Council's nonpermanent members, but as Africa's ties with China intensified, Japan had become concerned about a change in the ties it had established through this UN diplomacy.

Consequently, within this new context, TICAD IV convened in May 2008 with certain elements that set it apart from the previous three TICAD meetings. It was noteworthy in particular for the negotiations that then-Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda held in a “marathon session” with some 40 African leaders that had come to Japan. That meeting was aimed at winning support for UN reforms. Another difference was TICAD IV's use of the slogan, “Towards a Vibrant Africa.” This was cast within the contextual backdrop of a vibrant African economy and constituted an effort to change the traditional narrative about Africa. Ultimately, TICAD IV concluded with the adoption of the Yokohama Declaration, which demonstrated a political commitment to undertakings in African development, and the announcement of the Yokohama Action Plan as a concrete development roadmap. Furthermore, a document known as the “TICAD Follow-up Mechanism” was released in the interest of verifying the progress shown by TICAD not as an event, but as a process. The Yokohama Action Plan laid out action guidelines and numerical targets for achievement over the five-year span to 2012, in five thematic areas: the acceleration of growth, achievement of MDGs, consolidation of peace with good governance, measures to cope with environmental issues and climate change, and expanded partnerships. The “follow-up mechanism” was created to facilitate monitoring of implementation progress, measurements of the extent to which defined targets had been attained, information-sharing by all relevant parties, and the promotion of needed discussion and debate. As such, it could be credited as a step to link aid with a new trend that placed more weight on aid effectiveness.

As a component of the follow-up process announced by Prime Minister Fukuda during TICAD IV, from late August to late September 2008, a series of missions on the promotion of trade and investment and comprising participants from private companies and relevant government agencies (e.g., MOFA, the

Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)) were sent on tours of countries in southern Africa (Botswana, Mozambique, Madagascar, and South Africa), eastern Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania), and western Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Cameroon). Afterward, a joint public-private mission on southern African trade and investment was sent in September 2010, with another—on African trade and investment—visiting Sudan, South Sudan, and Kenya in October 2011. These missions were policy-backed undertakings aimed at strengthening economic ties with Africa at the private level. At the same time, they were conceivably a tangible demonstration of efforts in line with one of the principles of Japanese policy toward Africa: namely, strengthening economic ties with Africa as a region with a wealth of natural resources, an expanding population, and a potentially huge market capable of sustainable and strong economic growth.

## **2. Peacebuilding and SDF Deployments**

Although the policies toward Africa that the Japanese government has pursued in recent years respectively display “reactive” qualities, compared to the “reactive” nature of earlier policies, they appear to be adorned with the features of a diplomatic strategy shaped more by certain politically influenced decisions, in that they do not rely on the ODA framework and involve the deployment of SDF for PKO. As examples of this change, here I want to examine the enactment of Japan's Anti-Piracy Measures Act and the consequent establishment of an SDF base in Djibouti as well as the deployment of SDF to South Sudan for PKO.

First, I will examine the response to a problem that began to attract international attention around 2008: namely, acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. Although I will not go into detail on the subject of Somalia as a “collapsed state” that set the stage for the heightened incidence of piracy, the fact that Somalia has failed to have an effective central government since 1991, together with the nature of international involvement in Somalia, are factors behind the problem of piracy. MOFA cites the China-registered tuna fishing boat, Tian Yu 8 (captained by a Japanese national) that had been hijacked by pirates off the coast of Kenya in November 2008 as the first case of piracy that involved Japan (MOFA 2012).

Several additional incidents of this kind occurred later on. One involved the Guanabara, a Bahamas-registered crude oil tanker operated by Mitsui O.S.K. Lines that was hijacked in March 2011. In that case, four suspected “pirates” were taken into custody, prosecuted in Japan, and all found guilty in the initial trial. In 2008 alone, the UN Security Council issued a total of four resolutions (1816, 1838, 1846, and 1851) on the issue of piracy, thus highlighting the urgency of efforts to address this problem. In response to calls for the creation of a mechanism for international cooperation on the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia, under the above-cited resolution 1851 (adopted in December 2008), a contact group was set up in 2009 as a mechanism for international cooperation against piracy. Cued into action by these developments at the international level, in March 2009 Japan deployed two naval vessels to serve as escorts for ships traveling through the Gulf of Aden. Additionally, in June that year, it deployed two P-3C patrol planes to the region and stepped up its patrol and monitoring activities from its SDF base in Djibouti. Furthermore, in June 2009 Japan enacted its Anti-Piracy Measures Act. Under the provisions of this new law, and in keeping with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, it began implementing anti-piracy operations that included punishing acts of piracy regardless of the nationality of the perpetrators and establishing an appropriate and effective framework to fight piracy. The new law enables

Japan to protect all vessels regardless of their nationality from acts of piracy. Coast guard officers are stationed with patrolling escort vessels to handle arrests, investigations, and other judicial and police actions in the event an act of piracy is committed. In June 2011, Japan established the first-ever overseas base of SDF in Djibouti for deployed air units, and has continued working to develop a framework for continuous measures against piracy. Additionally, albeit prior to its countermeasures against piracy, Japan since 2007 has provided approximately \$184 million in ODA for efforts in infrastructure development, humanitarian aid, and improved security in Somalia—a country that it had not considered for virtually any aid since 1991. That aid total comprised \$38 million for improvements in security and \$146 million for humanitarian assistance and infrastructure development (MOFA 2011a, 93).

Another key development worthy of attention here was the November 15, 2011 Cabinet decision to deploy SDF to South Sudan. Specifically, this was the deployment of SDF to the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), the PKO assigned the tasks of establishing regional peace and security and supporting the creation of an environment conducive to the advancement of South Sudan after its independence, pursuant to Resolution 1996, which had been adopted by the UN Security Council on July 8, 2011, one day before the Republic of South Sudan was to gain independence as a sovereign state. The Republic of South Sudan has been troubled by the problem of redrawing its borders, particularly in the northern band of oil fields (the Abyei Area) on the border with Sudan. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement—North (SPLM-N) is a splinter group from the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement that has displayed antigovernment tendencies. Looting in Western Equatoria State by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Ugandan rebel group, has also been reported. Obviously, many areas of South Sudan cannot be readily described as enjoying stable conditions of law and order.

However, as demonstrated by the backdrop that led to its independence in the first place, South Sudan possesses oil fields that accounted for close to 80 percent of all oil produced by Sudan prior to independence. As such, in terms of Japan's future resource strategy, South Sudan was without question considered to be an extremely important country. From January through November 2011, Japan imported an average of 48,847 barrels of Sudan crude oil per day, ranking along with China as one of Sudan's major oil-importing countries.

Although it only accounts for approximately 2 percent of Japan's oil imports, Sudan retains a certain measure of importance as the second-largest producer of sweet crude (high-quality crude oil with sulfur content of less than 0.5 percent) after Indonesia. However, prior to independence, South Sudan faced extreme difficulty in accumulating enough revenue from crude oil because the pipeline networks and oil refining technologies were controlled entirely by Sudan. To improve its bargaining position with South Sudan in negotiations over the distribution of oil profits, Sudan even halted the supply of petroleum products and implemented a set of policies aimed at creating a serious fuel shortage in South Sudan. Furthermore, in early 2012 Sudan began demanding huge payments as a pipeline utilization fee, thus sparking a dispute with South Sudan over the allocation of their oil rights and interests. South Sudan halted crude oil production, causing an international backlog in the supply of crude oil hitherto considered to be sourced from Sudan, and thrusting the two countries into a state of war. In April 2012, the South Sudanese army invaded and occupied the Heglig oil fields in Sudan's Southern Kordofan province. Sudan's military countered by bombing cities in South Sudan. These developments created a situation that the international community had feared.

Accordingly, Japan, effectively responding to the appeal made by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to then-Prime Minister Naoto Kan in August 2011, sensed a necessity to pursue its role as a responsible member of international society and exercise a certain measure of influence through diplomacy

with South Sudan in light of South Sudan's oil resources and the risk that it might delay oil output again in the future, depending on the course of its relations with Sudan. To that end, MOFA's view that Japan would need to accept a certain level of risk carried more weight than the Ministry of Defense's concerns about the lack of security in the region, and proved to be the conclusive factor behind the government's decision to deploy SDF for PKO.

On September 21, 2011, in talks between then-Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and UN Secretary-General Ban, as well as during general debate by the UN Plenary Session on the 23rd, Japan announced to the international community that it was moving forward with preparations to deploy command center personnel to UNMISS and would reach a decision on deployments of engineering units following the outcome of on-site surveys (MOFA 2011b). By that stage, it is likely the government had already finalized its deployment plans.

In connection with these two examples, future attention is likely to be focused on the ability of the liaison offices set up early on in Djibouti and South Sudan to lay the groundwork for embassy facilities. The Japanese government already has an embassy in Djibouti (as of January 1, 2012). In South Sudan, it opened a liaison office in Juba on September 1, 2012 and is expected to establish an embassy there in 2013. As this example illustrates, the construction of diplomatic facilities as strategic centers linked to efforts in peacebuilding arguably counts as a new feature of Japanese diplomacy toward Africa.

## VI. Concluding Remarks

In this essay, I explored the process whereby the principles and realities of core policy underpinning Japanese diplomacy toward Africa came into focus following a gradual progression from a repetitive cycle of reactive responses to trends among a variety of "third actors" other than Africa during and after the Cold War. In that sense, one could arguably have doubts as to whether Japanese diplomacy toward Africa to date has been guided by a consistent set of principles or core policies in the first place. However, in an era of change that has affected the ODA environment as well as Africa itself, it is difficult to treat Africa as a "distant entity." At the very least, it is certain that we have reached a phase in history that questions the necessity of developing more-proactive policies toward Africa. In that respect, it seems safe to conclude we are now entering a new phase in policy toward Africa, one that succeeds the five phases I cited at the beginning of this essay. It is precisely that transition that we can expect to usher in the dawn of a new age for Japanese policy toward Africa.

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