

Developments in Japanese policy towards the African continent for the period (1946 - 2003)

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ABSTRACT

The topic of Japanese policy towards the African continent is one of the topics that has not been adequately highlighted, so this study came to explain the developments of Japanese policy during the period of the study, showing through it Japan's policy interests in Africa and the tools for implementing them, as Japanese interests range between what is economic and what is The basis is the Japanese approach to obtain natural resources and wealth and open markets after the rapid growth achieved by Japanese industries, and what is political, which aims to restructure the Security Council in order to obtain a permanent seat and for Japan to take a greater role befitting its economic and political status in global issues. And what is security, which aims to combat piracy, achieve maritime security, and maintain peace to preserve its strategic interests on the continent.

1. Introduction

The African continent occupies great importance as it has become the focus of attention of the major powers due to its wealth and distinct geographical location, in addition to its political importance. Because of these advantages, it has become an area of international competition between the major powers, and among these powers is Japan. Japanese interest goes back to the beginnings of the Cold War, as its presence on the continent was linked to achieving economic, political, and security gains. Japanese policy in Africa went through two phases. The first during the Cold War was aimed at obtaining economic resources and preventing communist expansion in alliance with the United States of America in the region. As for the phase The second came after the end of the Cold War, as it represented the real breakthrough in Japanese policy towards Africa, as it came after the launch of the Tokyo International Conference for African Development in (1993), which became an established tradition in its policy towards Africa.

Developments in Japanese policy towards the African continent during the Cold War

Africa was not important in Japanese policy after World War II, especially since it depended on natural resources from other regions of the world. In addition, most of its energy needs flowed to it from the Middle East, but the Arab countries used the oil card as a weapon. Against the United States of America and its allies in the 1973 war, Japan was pushed to search for alternative sources of energy, and the African continent was one of these regions.

In order to establish the above, we will address the following topics during this stage, which are as follows:

First: The reconstruction phase (1945-1955)

The economic factor had a major impact on Japanese thinking towards the African continent, as the Japanese presence on the continent dates back to the year 1900, which witnessed the Nippon Mineka Company opening a branch in Alexandria in order to import Egyptian cotton.ⁱ(1923) also witnessed the opening of the Japan Cotton Trading Company a branch in Alexandria. This is with regard to the economic aspect. As for the diplomatic aspect, the year 1910 witnessed the introduction of the first Japanese consul to represent his country in South Africa. In order to strengthen its position and influence on the African continent, it relied on the policy of development aid, which had a prominent impact on the development of Japanese-African relations.ⁱⁱ On the basis of the above, Japan's policy towards the African continent in the period following World War II was not the result of the political system that emerged after the war, but rather it was an extension of that period, but in accordance

with the principles of the new political system, that is, away from militarism, after the cessation of diplomatic relations. The Japanese, because of the war, returned again after recovering from the devastating effects of the war, to use its means not as a military instrument, but rather as a policy of development aid, stemming from the economic power that Japan pursued towards the African continent.ⁱⁱⁱ

It is worth noting that during the first ten years following World War II, Japan had no desire to move towards Africa, for the following reasons. She is preoccupied with rebuilding what was destroyed by the war.

- 1- The development aid policy at this stage was to pay Asian countries as part of the compensation imposed on them as a result of the occupation of these countries.
- 2- Most of the countries of the African continent were subject to Western occupation.

Note that the aid policy at that stage came as a result of Japan's accession to the Colombo Plan, which required it to provide aid to developing countries.

The Bandung Conference in 1955 marked the beginning of the resumption of diplomatic and political relations with African countries, in addition to changing the image that was drawn about Japan during World War II. During that stage, it was an outcast within the societies of East and Southeast Asia because of its aggressive policy.

In the same year, the JETRO Foreign Trade Organization opened its first two offices in Egypt and Nigeria.^{iv}

Second: The stage of political openness to African countries (1955 - 1965)

This stage witnessed the openness of Japanese policy towards Africa, especially after many countries on the continent gained their independence. In 1958, Japan opened its first embassy in Ethiopia, and in 1959, it opened its embassy in Ghana, and it followed the same path with Congo and Nigeria, which opened two embassies there in 1960. In the same year, Senegal was recognized as an independent state.

It moved to open channels of diplomatic and economic communication with the United States of America to establish a joint cooperation mechanism in Africa, which expresses its desire to pay attention to the continent.

There were two motives behind the Japanese approach towards Africa at that stage:

- 1- Obtaining natural resources simultaneously with economic growth.
- 2- An alliance with the United States of America to limit communist influence, and for this purpose, in 1961, it established a special department in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerned with studying the conditions of the continent.

The Japanese did not limit themselves to diplomatic communication with African countries, but rather worked to establish many cultural centers, with the aim of cultural communication with them. Among these centers, which still exists, is the Japanese Cultural Center in Egypt, which was opened in (1965), and which is now called (Media and Cultural Centre).

Third: The stage of strengthening economic interests in Africa (1965 - 1991)

One of the most important features that characterized this stage was Japan's reliance in its policy towards Africa on the economic instrument, especially its focus on the loan policy, which began in 1966 when it provided its first loans to Uganda, and in the same year it provided export credit* to Nigeria. and kenya, In addition to a loan provided to Tanzania, the aim behind providing the loans

was to promote its exports.^v In 1974, its Foreign Minister, Toshio Kimura, undertook a tour of the continent that included Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, and Zaire. The aim of this tour was to secure its needs for primary resources, as well as to secure markets for its goods.^{vi} This was confirmed by the Japanese Foreign Minister in his statement after the end of the tour, as he indicated that the main reason behind the visit was his country's need for primary resources. Japanese aid to sub-Saharan African countries doubled during the period (1977-1980) from (56) million dollars to (223) million dollars. The Japanese government pledged to provide aid to reduce the poverty and diseases that the continent suffers from, and this was stated by its Foreign Minister (Naoshi Sunda) during the tour he conducted, which included five African countries: Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, and Nigeria.

Japan has also established several vocational training centers, as part of the policy of aid provided to African countries. In 1984, it established a Center for Vocational and Technical Training (CFPT). This center aims to train automobile mechanics and the fields of electronic technologies, electrical engineering, and electromechanical engineering, as well as training institutes in... kenya And its support for many development projects, such as malaria control centers and the Kilimanjaro Centers for Agricultural and Industrial Development, in Tanzania. In addition, in 1984, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Shintaro Abe, visited Zambia and Zaire, during which he inspected the areas affected by the famine. His country played a major role in organizing an international campaign to confront the famine.^{vii} On the other hand, Japan worked to increase development aid, which reflected positively on the African continent's share of it, reaching \$1.3 billion in 1988, and thus Japan became the largest donor of aid at the international level. Japan also announced in 1988, through its Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita, a new strategy towards Africa based on aid, trade and cultural exchange, which indicates the importance of Africa in Japanese policy.^{viii}

In addition, Takashi Onda, Director of the Africa and Middle East Division at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated in 1989: "This will be the first year of Japanese diplomacy in Africa."

Japanese policy towards the African continent after the Cold War

The post-Cold War period witnessed a shift in the international system from bipolar to unipolar, as the United States of America was alone in leading the international system, and Africa at that stage occupied secondary importance in the calculations of the United States of America, which was preoccupied with supporting Eastern European countries, which made it possible The scope for Japan to implement its strategy in Africa.

First: The impact of the new international order in strengthening Japanese policy in Africa (1991 - 1998)

That stage witnessed a Japanese proposal during the United Nations General Assembly meeting in 1991 to hold an expanded international dialogue to discuss the political, economic and security problems of the African continent, and its role began to rise economically and politically.

In this regard, the Japanese Development Assistance Charter of 1992 stressed that Japan must occupy an international role commensurate with its political and economic status.^{ix} It should be noted that the percentage of Japanese aid to Africa at the same time amounted to about (13.5%) of its total international aid.

Table No. 1. The African continent's share of Japanese development aid from 1990 to 2001.

Amount in percentage	Amount in US dollars	the year
11.4%	792/million dollars	1990
11.8%	922/million dollars	1993
12.6%	1,333/billion dollars and three hundred	1995

	and thirty-three million dollars	
11.0%	950/million dollars	1998
11.4%	851/million dollars	2001

The following source was relied upon:

Bolade M. Eyinla,” Promoting Japan’s National Interest in Africa,” *Africa Development*, VOL 43, NO3, (Senegal: 2018), p114 On the other hand, it declared its condemnation of apartheid, stopping investment, and limiting trade and commerce with South Africa, which strengthened its position in Africa. In 1992, it doubled its aid to Madagascar, from one million dollars to \$40 million. In addition, it provided aid to Zambia amounting to \$26.9 million to support its democratic transition processn the same year, Japan sent its government delegation to Angola to monitor the elections, and then in 1994 it sent 400 soldiers to Rwanda, in addition to Japan’s interest in international seminars to maintain African peace, such as the 1995 conference held in Tokyo for the development of African peace. And keep peace on the continent,^xJapan has contributed to the African Peace Fund of the Organization of African Unity. In 1998, Japan contributed \$2.5 million, and the same amount to the Mine Action Fund.^{xi}

In addition, Japan moved to support regional organizations on the continent, especially the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West Africa (SADC), while at the same time setting a condition that its financial aid would not be used for military purposes.^{xii} The year (1993) witnessed the holding of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, known as (TICAD), and thus Japan is the first to use the policy of conferences to strengthen its position and influence on the continent, noting that the conference is held every five years and its meetings last for three days.

More than (1,000) political, economic and social figures participated in it, (13) donor countries, (10) international organizations, (45) non-governmental organizations, and with the participation of (48) African countries.

The conference emphasized the following points:

- 1- Technical and economic cooperation.
- 2- Carrying out political reforms for African countries.
- 3- Emphasis on democratic transformation and human rights.

At that stage, Japan also implemented the Zaya Kaya system, which means expanding aid and investment in the African continent.

The results of these measures followed by Japan were. Japan obtained a non-permanent seat in the Security Council, after most African countries voted in its favour.

- 1- African support for the election of Japanese judge Shigeru Oda as a judge of the International Court of Justice.
- 2- African confirmation of the election of Sadako Ogata, President of the United Nations Supreme Court for Refugees.

Japan supported the initiative adopted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1996, which includes debt relief for poor countries, especially the countries of the African continent.

Second: The role of the Second Tokyo International Conference (TICAD) in achieving African development (1998-2002)

Japan proposed holding its second conference (TICAD) in 1998. The conference was held in the presence of (51) African countries, (40) regional and international institutions, (22) African non-governmental organizations, and (18) donor countries. The conference stressed the necessity of social development by reducing poverty, and at the same time Japanese President Kizo Obuchi announced

the provision of aid amounting to (90) billion yen. In order to build schools and health centres, as well as establishing service and investment centres. Japan began implementing the agenda of its second conference, as it established a Japanese training center in Kenya, which is known as the “African Institute for Capacity Development” at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Technology and Agriculture, in Kenya. It also worked on organizing the Africa-Asian Business Forum, which aims to encourage trade and investment between African and Asian countries.

Since 1991, Japan has been ranked first in aid provided to the African continent, as it amounted to about (15.3) billion dollars in 1999, and the volume of trade with (35) African countries reached about (2) billion dollars in (1998), at the time in which it has invested (210) Clear yen. On the other hand, Japanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Keizo Takemi stated at the University of Pretoria during the activities of the Asian-African Forum in 1999 in South Africa, where he stated, “The Tokyo International Conference on African Development is a process for realizing Japan’s new and positive policy in Africa.” This he referred to. Since the beginning of the activities of the First TICAD Conference, his country’s policy has new goals in its horizons. This was confirmed by Rabotaro Hashimoto, the former Japanese Prime Minister, in 1999 during his visit to South Africa and Kenya.

Japan also worked to support African countries in their international participation. It was one of the first countries to support the plan of the Hanawa Summit for Africa, which was held in Italy for the eight countries in 2001.^{xiii} On the other hand, it worked to support its organizations to work in many African countries. In 2001, there were (120) Japanese non-governmental organizations in Africa that devoted their work to relief, poverty reduction, and water provision.^{xiv} In the same year, Japan provided Malawi, Sudan, Nigeria, Tunisia, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, and Morocco with assistance distributed between loans, technical assistance, and grants of about 19 billion dollars.^{xv} It is worth noting that the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori in 2001 to South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria constituted a new development in Japanese policy towards the African continent, as Mori is the first Japanese Prime Minister to visit the continent, where he praised Africa’s role in global order and peace. He announced during the visit that (there will be no stability and prosperity in the world in the 21st century unless Africa’s problems are solved). The year (2002) witnessed the visit of the Japanese Foreign Minister, Yuriko Kato, to Angola, where she pledged to aid her country, after the ceasefire process in Angola. She also pledged to provide assistance in clearing mines, in addition to providing financial assistance estimated at (33) million dollars.

2. Conclusion and future scope

It can be said that the main motivation for the Japanese approach towards the African continent at the stage discussed in the study is because of the economic, political and security importance that the African continent occupies in Japanese policy, as this importance increased for the Japanese decision-maker during the war of 1973 between Egypt and Israel, in which the Arabs rebelled. Oil as a pressure card on the United States and its allies. In addition, Japan was able, through its tools, to strengthen its economic, political and security influence, as it strengthened its economic position through aid and loan diplomacy, which placed it at the top of the list of major powers as the largest donor to the continent, and its official visits were a powerful factor in strengthening its political position, in addition to holding conferences, which were held during that period. Two conferences served as a working strategy to strengthen its relations with African countries. It also did not neglect the security aspect, despite the constitutional restrictions on it. It was able to enact a law allowing it to participate with the United Nations peacekeeping forces, in addition to the necessity of achieving security in order to preserve its economic interests on the continent.

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