

Origin of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)

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Abstract: The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), which was held for the first time in 1993, was conceived by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York no later than the first half of 1990. The mission devised the idea as a means of gaining the support of African countries as Japan sought to be elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and proposed the plan at a meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa in July 1990. Hisashi Owada, the then senior deputy minister for foreign affairs—the second-highest administrative position within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)—did not approve the idea of holding a conference to gain African votes. However, he considered TICAD as demonstrating Japan’s enthusiasm to engage in proactive diplomacy. The Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau of MOFA, which oversees Japan’s diplomacy with Africa, initially opposed TICAD; however, it later changed its stance on the grounds that such a forum could be useful as a measure to alleviate the backlash of African countries as Japan prepared to lift sanctions against South Africa, a move that took place in June 1991. Thus, the Japanese government decided to lift sanctions against South Africa and hold TICAD as a single package.

Keywords: TICAD, apartheid, sanctions, proactive diplomacy, United Nations

Introduction

The population of Africa is projected to reach a quarter of the world’s entire population by 2050. In recent years the international community has come to view Africa as an enormous market, with many countries and companies seeking to strengthen their relations with African nations.

One of the concrete measures taken by the world’s major countries to strengthen their relations with Africa is the hosting of international conferences to which African heads of state are invited. One example is the Chinese government which has been hosting the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) every three years since 2000 and, more recently, the United States, Russia, and Iran have also held large international conferences to invite African leaders and pledge aid and investment in Africa.

It was 28 years ago, in October 1993, that an international conference for African countries was held for the first time. Such an event, although commonplace

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now, was unprecedented at the time. The conference was planned by the Japanese government and held in Tokyo. It was entitled the “Tokyo International Conference on African Development” (TICAD).

TICAD was co-hosted by the Japanese government, the United Nations (UN), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank. Forty-eight African countries sent representatives to Tokyo, including the presidents of five countries: Botswana, Ghana, Uganda, Burkina Faso, and Benin. The conference opened with a keynote speech by then Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa on behalf of the Japanese government and closed on the second day with the adoption of the Tokyo Declaration on African Development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1993).

Regarding the 1993 TICAD, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), which oversaw the event, explained its significance this way: “The event was held at a time when the Cold War had ended and the international community’s interest in Africa was waning. It created an opportunity to revive interest in Africa” (MOFA 2016).

However, the Japanese government, whose historical relations with African nations had up until then been tenuous, has never explained the reason for hosting TICAD or the process leading up to it. Yoshifumi Okamura, who served as the director-general of MOFA’s African Affairs Department and as the ambassador in charge of TICAD VII, explained that the Japanese government decided to organize the first TICAD in order to support the development goals for Africa adopted by the United Nations in 1991 (Okamura 2019). This explanation, however, begs the question as to why the Japanese government decided to support the development goals for Africa in the first place.

After the first conference in 1993, TICAD was held every five years (1998, 2003, and 2008). Then, following TICAD V in 2013, this changed to every three years. Starting with TICAD V, the African Union Commission (AUC) joined as a co-host.

There are studies in the academic community that focus on the history of TICAD and analyze how it has changed in character. However, there are no detailed prior studies regarding the reasons and circumstances behind the Japanese government’s decision to host TICAD in 1993, except for a small account in a paper released by Sadaharu Kataoka in 2008.

Kataoka writes:

It was the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York that first came up with the idea of holding an international conference on African development ... As can be seen from the fact that the TICAD initiative came from the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in the late 1980s, this initiative had a hidden agenda, although the development of Africa was the ostensible theme. The agenda was to strengthen Japan’s relations with African countries so that the nation could gain the responsible UN position by taking the initiative in African development.

In particular, the initiative began as a tool that Japan used to be elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (Kataoka 2008).

Kataoka points out that it was the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York that first proposed the idea of holding TICAD, but he does not cite any verbal statement or written document to support this claim. Nor does he explain what kind of discussions were held and how the decision was made within the Japanese government, and how the idea proposed by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations became a reality.

Why did the Japanese government, whose relations with Africa had been tenuous, plan an international development conference for the region? Who came up with the idea of gathering representatives of African countries including heads of state in one place, a move that was unprecedented at the time? What process did Japan go through to make this happen? What did the Japanese government hope to achieve through TICAD, and what diplomatic benefits did it hope to gain after the end of the Cold War? The objective of this paper is to answer these questions by examining unpublished diplomatic documents and interviewing retired diplomats.

1. Proposal by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

(1) Meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa Held in 1990

Is there any basis for Kataoka's claim that the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York conceived TICAD? For this question, the author sought contact with a diplomat who worked at the UN mission around 1990. Yoshio Hatano, who served as the ambassador to the United Nations at the beginning of the 1990s, agreed to be interviewed.

Hatano was stationed in New York as the ambassador to the United Nations from February 1990 to April 1994. Prior to that, he was the ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva from January 1987 to December 1989. Hatano made the following remarks:

In the latter half of the 1980s, when I was in Geneva as an ambassador, the Japanese government wanted to have a Japanese national appointed as the head of an international organization. What is important in electing the head of an international organization is to solidify the votes of countries in Africa, South America, and the Caribbean. The support of Africa, which has a large number of countries, was important, and I knew from my experience in Geneva that it was effective to promise African countries economic cooperation and to have them feel indebted to Japan.

I was appointed as the ambassador to the United Nations in New York. One of my primary tasks was to gain the support of other countries so that Japan could win an election to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. When I attended the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa for the first time in my capacity as the ambassador to the United Nations, I proposed that a conference be held in Tokyo to invite African leaders and discuss development issues. I thought that such a forum would create a great opportunity for Japan to demonstrate its contribution to the world and that

African nations would thank Japan.¹

The meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa mentioned by Hatano is an internal meeting held by MOFA once a year. In principle, ambassadors stationed in African countries were sent back to Japan temporarily to exchange views among themselves. The meeting that Hatano attended for the first time in his capacity as the ambassador to the UN stationed in New York was held at MOFA in Tokyo from July 17 to 19, 1990.

In order to verify Hatano's remarks, the author requested the disclosure of relevant documents on September 27, 2019, based on the information disclosure system under Japan's Public Records and Archives Management Act. As a result, the summary of the discussions of the fiscal 1990 meeting of ambassadors to Africa was made available on November 26, 2019.

The document, created by MOFA's Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau in November 1990, states that 15 ambassadors and one consul general from Japanese embassies in 16 African countries attended the conference. In addition to senior MOFA officials such as the director-general of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, ambassadors and envoys to the United States (Washington, D.C.), the United Kingdom (London), France (Paris), and the United Nations (New York) attended the meeting. According to pages 19 to 20 of the 36-page document, Hatano proposed TICAD as follows:

One of the major challenges facing the world economy today is the need to provide support to Africa from economic development or humanitarian standpoint. There is an international consensus regarding this issue. Every country is aware that the international community must address this issue. However, the reality is that no country raises this issue because everyone is afraid of being asked to provide funding. However, Japan continues to be the world's largest aid donor to developing countries. If Japan takes the initiative, we will gain the respect of the world (without having to provide any fresh aid). In this respect, we believe that it would be a good idea to invite the heads of black African countries to Japan when the United Nations University is completed in two years and hold an international conference on African development in Japan. (We should limit the participants to either head of state or prime ministers as the aim is to achieve educational effects and PR effects on both foreign and domestic audiences. The participants could be limited to a dozen or so people.) We would like to ask for your positive consideration. Another idea would be to include landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in Asia to hold a LLDC development conference (MOFA 1990 pp.19-20).

As seen above, as far as the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations was concerned, TICAD was a means of gaining African votes as Japan sought to win an election to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

¹ The author's interview with Yoshio Hatano, June 18, 2019.

(2) Hisashi Owada's Proactive Diplomacy

How did senior MOFA officials at the time respond to Hatano's proposal at the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa? The summary of the discussion of the meeting does not make any reference to this point.

In the interview, Hatano recalled that "almost no one at the ambassadors' meeting responded favorably to my proposal." He said that he had held a meeting with Takakazu Kuriyama, the then vice-minister for foreign affairs, and a meeting with Hisashi Owada, the then senior deputy minister for foreign affairs (in charge of political affairs), when he temporarily came back to Japan for the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa, and informally proposed the idea of holding TICAD.²

In order to confirm Hatano's remarks, it was necessary to interview Kuriyama and Owada. Kuriyama had passed away in 2015. However, Owada agreed to an interview and acknowledged that he had met with Hatano, who had temporarily returned to Japan for the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa. Owada described how Hatano proposed TICAD as follows:

First of all, I heard from Mr. Kuriyama that Mr. Hatano made such a proposal at the ambassadors' meeting. I remember telling Mr. Kuriyama that I could not support the idea of inviting heads of state and providing aid as a means of securing UN votes because that would be a cheap trick. I reiterated this stance when I had a meal with Mr. Hatano later. I opposed Mr. Hatano's proposal as a means of getting UN votes. However, I felt that it would be interesting if Japan could take the initiative regarding the development of Africa and make an appeal to the world. I conveyed this view to Mr. Hatano.³

In December 1989, seven months before Owada's meeting with Hatano, U.S. President George Bush (senior) and Mikhail Gorbachev, the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, met on the Mediterranean island of Malta and declared the end of the Cold War.

Owada, who held the number two administrative position within MOFA at the time, felt the need for a major change in Japan's diplomacy at a time when the international situation was drastically changing with the end of the Cold War. Owada explained that, as a country defeated in World War II, Japan had focused on "not causing trouble" to the international community. However, with the end of the Cold War, there was an awareness regarding how Japan should transform its passive diplomacy into proactive diplomacy in accordance with Japan's national strength.⁴ Owada regarded Hatano's proposal as an "interesting idea." He explained how he

² Ibid.

³ The author's interview with Hisashi Owada, January 13, 2020

⁴ Ibid.

came to view Hatano's idea in a positive light:

During the Cold War, whether or not aid would be beneficial to developing countries was a secondary issue. The donor countries used aid to shape the international order in their favor. However, the Soviet Union, on which developing countries depended, disappeared with the end of the Cold War. The United States also became less eager to help developing nations. As a result, many developing countries were left behind. African countries were forced into a particularly difficult situation.

As I observed the situation, I wondered if there was anything we could do for the development of Africa. I also wanted to make Japan's diplomacy more proactive. At that time, Mr. Hatano came to me with a proposal to hold a conference on African development. I thought that holding an African development conference would be an opportunity to approach Africa from the perspective of development theory, not aid theory, and allow Japan to achieve proactive diplomacy.⁵

Thus, while strongly opposing TICAD as a means of winning African votes at the United Nations, Owada regarded TICAD as a concrete measure to make Japan's diplomacy more proactive. At the same time, Owada thought that it would be an opportunity to revise the old approach, which had focused solely on providing Africa with huge amounts of aid, and to discuss the philosophy of development that Africa needed. TICAD became closer to reality because Owada expressed an interest in the matter.

2. Background of the Decision

(1) Confrontation Within MOFA

As mentioned earlier, no one at the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa reacted favorably to the idea of holding TICAD, according to Hatano.

If TICAD were to be held, the primary bureau responsible for the matter would be the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, and the bureau's First Africa Division and Second Africa Division would handle the actual operations. Takeshi Kamitani, who attended the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa in his capacity as the director of the Second Africa Division, said that everyone in the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau opposed Hatano's proposal.⁶ According to Kamitani, there were two main reasons why they rejected the proposal. First, inviting a large number of heads of state from African countries at one time would be unprecedented. It would require complex and enormous preparation prior to the conference, and a great amount of work on the day of the conference. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no previous experience hosting such a large-scale international conference. Second, even if Japan were to promise development

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The author's interview with Takeshi Kamitani, July 2, 2019

cooperation at TICAD, there was no guarantee that African countries would support Japan in its bid to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Thus, the costs and benefits seemed to be unbalanced.⁷ When Hatano proposed TICAD at the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa in July 1990, the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, the primary bureau responsible for such a matter, did not believe that TICAD would be an effective means for Japan to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

According to Kamitani, the main concern for officials in charge of Africa at the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau at the time was the situation in South Africa, which had begun to move toward democratization. Frederik Willem de Klerk, who became the president of South Africa in August 1989, released Nelson Mandela on February 11, 1990. Mandela, a leader of the black liberation movement, had been in prison for around 27 years since 1962. De Klerk, in releasing Mandela, was trying to push ahead with reform and abolish apartheid. In response to these changes in South Africa, Kamitani, who was the director of the Second Africa Division, believed that it was an urgent task for Japan to strengthen its relationship with South Africa and that the Japanese government should gradually ease economic sanctions against South Africa.⁸

The meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa was held five months after the release of Mandela. At the meeting, Makoto Watanabe, the then director-general of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau and Kamitani's supervisor, expressed the view that sanctions against South Africa could be lifted depending on the situation, saying: "It is necessary to deal with the situation while assessing the domestic developments in South Africa, international cooperation, and the reactions of African countries (MOFA 1990, 8)." Kazuo Chiba, the ambassador to the United Kingdom at the time, expressed his support for the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, saying that "I must agree that we should be cautious at this time in light of Japan's position. However, I do not think that we should remain in this position forever" (MOFA 1990, 13-14).

The United Nations Bureau (now the Foreign Policy Bureau) and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York were most vociferous in their opposition to the lifting of sanctions at the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa. Yasuji Ishigaki, the then deputy director-general of the United Nations Bureau, expressed a cautious stance regarding the lifting of sanctions by saying: "It may be acceptable to implement certain measures within the ministry if they do not cause any waves, but we should be careful about any measure that could be interpreted as an external signal" (MOFA 1990, 13).

Hatano, who proposed the TICAD initiative, was particularly vocal in his opposition to the lifting of sanctions. Hatano pointed out the importance of African votes in various UN elections saying, "Whether we can win the 51 African votes is key to winning two-thirds of the votes in the upcoming elections at the UN Economic and Social Council and the UN Security Council." Hatano objected to the lifting of the sanctions, saying, "The criterion for African countries to judge whether or not

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Japan is a friend is, ‘What efforts will Japan make for the abolishment of apartheid? (MOFA 1990, 10)’.

Even though Mandela had been released, as of July 1990, when the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa was held, South Africa was still under the control of the white government. Hatano, as the person in charge of Japanese diplomacy at the United Nations, was deeply concerned that the lifting of sanctions against South Africa would provoke a fierce backlash from many African countries, and that Japan would lose its support at the United Nations.

Thus, the July 1990 meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa, where Hatano proposed TICAD, highlighted the internal conflict within MOFA over specific measures regarding Japan’s African diplomacy. Officials in charge of UN diplomacy, led by Hatano, proposed TICAD to win African votes at the United Nations. However, the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, which oversees Japan’s Africa diplomacy, opposed it on the basis that there was no guarantee that the initiative would help Japan win African votes and that it would not be worth the time and effort that such an event would require.

At the same time, the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, which opposed TICAD, advocated the gradual lifting of sanctions against South Africa to strengthen Japan’s relationship with the nation as it began to move toward eliminating apartheid. However, the United Nations Bureau and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations opposed the lifting of sanctions against South Africa fearing that doing so would hurt Japan’s relations with other African nations.

(2) Linkage with the Lifting of Sanctions against South Africa

As mentioned earlier, Owada, one of the top administrative officials at MOFA, was interested in holding TICAD as a concrete measure to make Japan’s diplomacy more proactive. However, holding a conference would require elaborate preparations, such as establishing the basic concept of the conference, working out the details of the discussions, asking African nations to participate, and considering the logistics. MOFA’s Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau would oversee preparations. Thus, even if Owada was interested in TICAD, the initiative would not materialize if the bureau remained opposed to it. Kamitani said that he did not have any recollection that a full-fledged discussion was held within the ministry at least until several months after Hatano proposed the idea at the July 1990 meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa.⁹

However, on June 15, 1991, some 11 months after the meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa, an article appeared on the second page of the evening edition of *The Asahi Shimbun* (Tokyo edition) with a headline, “MOFA considering a development conference in 1993 to support Africa.” This was the first article in which a plan to hold an African development conference, which later became known as TICAD, was made public. Following this *Asahi Shimbun* article, *The Mainichi Shimbun*, and *The Yomiuri Shimbun* published similar stories on June 19 and June 21,

⁹ Ibid.

respectively, in their morning editions.¹⁰

The Japanese government officially announced the TICAD initiative in a speech by then Minister of Foreign Affairs Taro Nakayama at the UN General Assembly on September 24, 1991, three months after the newspaper reports. Thus, these newspaper reports in June were not based on any official announcement by MOFA. Since these articles were published around the same time, it could be inferred that reporters wrote the articles based on information they gathered regarding the ministry's decision by other means.

More interestingly, the June 15 evening edition of *The Asahi Shimbun*, which reported on the holding of TICAD, also carried an article regarding the Japanese government's decision to partially lift its sanctions against South Africa. On the second page of the evening edition on the same day, next to the article on TICAD, there was an article with a headline, "Government may soon lift sanctions against South Africa following the elimination of the population registration law."

The Japanese government decided to lift sanctions against South Africa in response to the country's accelerated move toward the elimination of apartheid. South African President de Klerk, in a speech to parliament on February 1, 1991, announced that he would abolish all apartheid-related laws. By June 17, the country's parliament had abolished all such laws. In response to this reform measure, the Japanese cabinet decided on June 21 to lift sanctions related to human exchange, including the suspension of visas for South African citizens and restrictions on educational and cultural exchange.

The article in *The Asahi Shimbun* on the lifting of sanctions against South Africa was published six days before the Cabinet decision. Newspaper reports published at the time gave the impression that the decision to hold TICAD and lift sanctions against South Africa were made simultaneously by MOFA as a single package. Are the newspaper reports that MOFA decided to hold TICAD accurate? If so, why was this decision made despite the opposition of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, the primary bureau responsible for the matter? Is it merely a coincidence that the decision to hold TICAD was made at the same time as the lifting of sanctions against South Africa?

The author directed these questions at Kamitani, who was the director of the Second Africa Division, and Owada, who was the senior deputy minister for foreign affairs. Kamitani said, "From around April to June 1991, I prepared a document regarding the policy of holding an African development conference, which was approved by Senior Deputy Minister Owada and Vice Minister Kuriyama." He explained the situation as follows:

De Klerk declared the total abolition of apartheid in February 1991. Therefore, I began to plan the timing and schedule for the lifting of sanctions against South Africa. The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (now the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry), and Keidanren wanted the sanctions to be lifted quickly. However, this was opposed by MOFA's United Nations Bureau. I remember that the director of the United

¹⁰ cf. *The Asahi Shimbun*, *The Mainichi Shimbun*, and *The Yomiuri Shimbun* for each date

Nations Bureau chided me, saying, “Please stop” when I said that I wanted to lift sanctions.

Vice Minister Kuriyama trusted Senior Deputy Minister Owada. Therefore, senior officials of the ministry gathered at Mr. Owada’s room and discussed policies. While considering various scenarios based on the discussions there, I realized that we would be hampered if we only considered the bilateral relations between Japan and South Africa. It was just a matter of time before South Africa would become a black African country along with democratization. For this reason, I came to believe that Japan needed to revamp its diplomacy toward Africa by placing the new South Africa within the overall African context.

However, it was difficult to determine exactly what to do to strengthen relations with Africa. That is why I took a second look at the African development conference initially proposed by Mr. Hatano. Mr. Owada was adamant in his stance that he would not allow any conference aimed at collecting African votes at the United Nations. I, too, opposed the holding of any conference as a tactic to win votes. Even so, I thought that if we could demonstrate that Japan was serious about the development of Africa by holding such a conference, African countries that were wary of Japan’s plan to lift economic sanctions against South Africa would become more supportive.

In the end, Mr. Owada instructed me to “prepare a document to explain the simultaneous lifting of sanctions and the holding of TICAD as a single package.” I remember that it was around April to May of 1991. In this way, the lifting of sanctions against South Africa and the hosting of TICAD were approved at the same time. The decision to lift the sanctions was adopted by the Cabinet in June. As for the hosting of TICAD, someone within the government told reporters about it, and it became a newspaper article.¹¹

Meanwhile, Owada, acknowledging that Kamitani’s remarks were correct, discussed the background against which the lifting of sanctions against South Africa and the holding TICAD were adopted together as a single package:

I thought it was necessary to think of an exit strategy when imposing sanctions. At that time, the South African government was moving toward democratization. Japan, responding to that effort, had to proactively involve itself in the South African situation and urge the South African government to further democratize the nation. I also thought that it was necessary to demonstrate that Japan was seriously addressing the development issues of Africa and taking diplomatic initiatives on its own, instead of focusing only on sanctions against South Africa. From this perspective, I decided to lift sanctions against South Africa and hold the African development conference at the same time.¹²

¹¹ The author’s interview with Kamitani

¹² The author’s second interview with Owada, June 17, 2020

As of June 1991, the Japanese government lifted sanctions related to human exchange but postponed the lifting of economic sanctions, which constituted the core of Japan's overall sanctions against South Africa. This is because MOFA's United Nations Bureau and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, which were concerned about Japan's relations with other African countries, remained cautious about the lifting of sanctions. They were concerned about a possible deterioration in Japan's relations with these African countries in light of the criticism that Japan had received from the international community regarding the nation's diplomacy toward South Africa. This was due to the following circumstances:

The Japanese government banned Japanese companies from investing in South Africa based on a Ministry of Finance notification in 1968. In October 1985, the government decided to (1) ban the export of computers that would contribute to the activities of the South African military and police and (2) refrain from importing Krugerrands and other South African gold coins. In September 1986, in a statement issued by the chief Cabinet secretary, the government (1) suspended the issuance of tourist visas to South African citizens, (2) denied South African airlines' access to Japan, and (3) suspended imports of South African pig iron and steel.

However, civil groups opposing apartheid criticized that Japan's sanctions were full of loopholes, in part because some Japanese companies had invested in South Africa through overseas subsidiaries. In addition, exports of Japanese-made vehicles were not subject to sanctions. For this reason, the total value of trade (exports + imports) between Japan and South Africa in 1987 (announced in January 1988) was the largest of all bilateral transactions in the world. The UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, as well as various African countries, criticized Japan for economically supporting the apartheid regime. In 1988, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution criticizing Japan by name. Thus, the Japanese government was forced to take measures to reduce trade with South Africa.

Moreover, black people in South Africa, who accounted for nearly 80 percent of the population, still had no suffrage when the government abolished apartheid-related laws in June 1991. No concrete path toward democratization had been decided. Mandela was respected as the leader of the anti-apartheid struggle, but some political forces in the black community were puppets of the white regime, and the liberation movement was by no means monolithic. There were also forces opposing democratization within the National Party which was headed by President de Klerk. Rightwing forces comprised of certain white people who were determined to maintain apartheid had infiltrated the military and police. Considering the militant nature of the white South African regime, which for many years had utterly suppressed dissident movements within the country and repeatedly carried out military attacks on neighboring countries, it was natural that many African countries remained wary of South Africa. If Japan had lifted sanctions against South Africa under these circumstances, other African countries would have reacted strongly. Thus, the concerns held by MOFA's UN diplomats, who were always sensitive to African votes, were not far off the mark.

Kamitani, who initially opposed TICAD but later approved it, recalled the

situation by saying: “I had been thinking for a long time that we needed something that would serve as a damage-control mechanism if African countries reacted against the lifting of sanctions.”¹³ UN diplomats from MOFA initially proposed TICAD as a means of securing African votes in UN elections. Ultimately, however, by combining the lifting of sanctions against South Africa and the holding of TICAD, MOFA expected that TICAD would serve as a damage-control mechanism to ease the backlash of African nations against Japan’s lifting of sanctions against South Africa.

Conclusion

As examined thus far, TICAD, which was held for the first time in 1993, was conceived by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York no later than the first half of 1990. The plan was initially created as a means of gaining the support of African nations so that Japan could be elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The idea was proposed by Hatano, who served as the ambassador to the United Nations, at a meeting of Japanese ambassadors to Africa held within MOFA in July 1990.

However, the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, the primary bureau responsible for the matter, was reluctant to support Hatano’s proposal. This is because it was unclear whether Japan could gain the support of African countries at the United Nations even if it spent an enormous amount of time and effort to hold such a conference by inviting heads of state from these nations. In addition, Owada, who held the second-highest administrative position at the time and who was seen as the next vice minister, did not support TICAD as a means of securing African votes.

On the other hand, Owada felt the need to revamp Japan’s diplomacy following the end of the Cold War and wanted to make its passive diplomacy more proactive. Owada also wanted to create an opportunity for donor countries to reconsider their strategies toward Africa, which had been distorted by the Cold War, and make them reconsider their stance toward the development of Africa. For this reason, Owada became interested in Hatano’s proposal regarding TICAD, believing that such a forum would create an opportunity for Japan, a world leader in the development of Africa, to take concrete measures to achieve proactive diplomacy.

Meanwhile, MOFA’s Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau planned to lift sanctions against South Africa early after the nation accelerated its move to abolish apartheid following the release of Mandela in February 1990. However, MOFA’s United Nations Bureau and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations rejected the early lifting of sanctions, fearing that African nations that were opposed to the lifting of sanctions would refuse to support Japan in UN elections.

Even as MOFA was divided over the issue of sanctions against South Africa, the abolition of apartheid became definite in February 1991. The Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, which was initially reluctant to accept TICAD,

¹³ The author’s interview with Kamitani.

changed its stance and allowed it as a damage-control strategy to ease the backlash of African countries that opposed Japan's lifting of sanctions. Eventually, Owada, who was searching for a means to achieve proactive diplomacy after the Cold War, reached the conclusion that TICAD would be beneficial as a concrete measure for Japan to demonstrate its efforts to lead the world in the development of Africa. Thus, in June 1991 the Japanese government decided to host TICAD while at the same time lifting sanctions against South Africa. The Japanese government proceeded with the preparation for the hosting of TICAD under the leadership of Owada, who was promoted to vice-minister for foreign affairs in October of the same year.

Until the 1980s, Japan's diplomacy focused on issues related to the nation's direct interests, such as the international financial order and Japan-U.S. economic friction. Japan's involvement in the international order was also largely limited to the economic field. However, since the end of the Cold War, Japan had been seeking a new role that goes beyond being a mere "economic superpower." Japan gradually shifted the focus of its diplomacy to the system of "values" (Shiratori 2018).

An argument could be made that TICAD was an extension of the old diplomatic approach that emphasized Japan's interests insofar as the forum was expected to serve as a damage-control mechanism in dealing with African countries as Japan lifted its sanctions against South Africa. However, TICAD was Japan's pioneering effort following the Cold War as the country emphasized a system of "values" within the context in which it sought to lead the world in development issues involving Africa. At the same time, the realization of TICAD was greatly influenced by the diplomatic philosophy and strong leadership of Owada, who led Japan's diplomacy after the Cold War. TICAD may not have been realized without the leadership of Owada, who seized the end of the Cold War as an opportunity to revamp Japan's diplomacy.

As the author engaged in this study to clarify the origin of TICAD, what came to light was the process in which Japan's passive postwar diplomacy—which was developed within the framework created by the United States—became more proactive as Japan began to take the lead in shaping the order and norms of the international community after the Cold War.

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