

Lesson 13 Newspapers

Government Strategy for Reforming ODA

[Japan's Role] as 'Foreign Aid Giant' at the crossroads

Difficulties in holding on to [the ODA] card as an instrument of foreign policy

The government's strategy for reforming ODA that was announced by the Foreign Ministry on the 9th is a desperate measure in response to the question of how to increase efficiency and keep playing the Aid card as an instrument of foreign policy in the midst of a gradual reduction in financial resources. Even supposing this reform can be pushed through, there still remains the problem that various government agencies are working on overlapping projects. As ever, it still remains unclear as to whether Japan can maintain its position as 'Foreign Aid Giant'.

- Gradual reduction of financial resources

'Europe and America have been lagging behind for the last 10 years. Just because they suddenly decide to move, there's no need for Japan to follow suit.' Summit Meeting, 27 June. The Foreign Ministry presented this embarrassing excuse when Japan was unable to promise a new level of aid while at the same time the US and EU were announcing an increase in aid for Africa. Clearly, behind this lies the difficult economic situation.

The ODA budget, spanning a total of thirteen ministries and offices including the Foreign Ministry, was reduced in fiscal 2001 for the second year running. Japan's position as World No. 1 in terms of real contributions to ODA, a position that it has managed to maintain for the last ten years, was grabbed by the US (see graph). This downward trend continues into 2002.

In the basic policy for economic and fiscal management that underlies the Budget for 2003 that was agreed by the government immediately prior to the summit, the scale of ODA expenditure was described in the draft as being 'tightened', but this was later changed to read 'reviewed'. But this was really only 'with the Summit in mind' (Foreign Ministry). Although we have designated the period from now until the African Development Conference in the autumn of next year as 'Support for Africa Year', the prevailing view is 'once the Conference is over (the amount of aid going to Africa) may well decrease' markedly.

- From quantity to quality

For a Japan that lacks the means of 'coercive diplomacy' such as the use or threat of military action, ODA is 'one of the most important instruments of foreign policy' (ODA White Paper 2001). And

given the inevitable decline in financial resources, in its Final Report in March the Second ODA Revision Workshop, a committee that advises the Foreign Minister, stated that 'Japan's ODA is now at a turning point. The main concern is how to obtain the real participation of the Japanese people', and it proposed the establishment of a ODA General Strategy Committee.

The interim report of the 'Society for Change' published in May also called for this General Strategy Committee to discuss the setting of priorities and a medium-term strategy. Both bring up the problem of 'securing transparency' and 'improving efficiency'. The key lies in shifting from quantity to quality.

- The search begins

The Foreign Ministry established the ODA General Strategy Committee with the Foreign Minister as Chair in the latter half of June. 'Participation of the Japanese people' is the main aim. Members [include] people of learning and experience, specialists in the field of development, those with experience of working in international organizations and NGOs. Bureaucrats were excluded. The first meeting was held on 27th June, but how far it will bear fruits in terms of reform is an unknown quantity. The Strategy for Reform of ODA agreed on the 9th contained 15 items, including the strengthening of external auditing, but there are still many unsolved questions such as how to avoid turf wars between numerous government agencies trying to do similar work

[Graph]

Movement of real ODA contributions from the largest donors (based on expenditure)

Figures in \$ millions

Excluding aid to Eastern Europe and other more developed countries. The figure for 2001 is provisional. The figure for the US in 1992 excludes relief from military debts.

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北朝鮮は手持ちの少ない「カード」を切った形で、韓国政府は膠着状態にある米朝、日朝関係の追い風になると期待する。

In that North Korea has played one of its very few diplomatic cards, South Korea has hopes that US-North Korean and Japanese-North Korean relations, both of which have been in deadlock, may now receive a fair wind.

7

アメリカの反テロ政策のすべてを支持することはない。

There's no need to support all US anti-terrorist policies.

一度だめだったからといってあきらめることはない。
Just because it went wrong once there's no need to give up.

8
日本はユーラシア大陸の東に位置している。
Japan is situated to the east of the Eurasian continent.
アフリカの貧困からの脱出は地球レベルの問題として位置づけられている。
Africa's escape from poverty is now regarded as a global issue.

警察はその事件を最近の一連のテロ行為と関係づけて考えている。
The police are regarding that event as being related to the recent spate of terrorist incidents.
彼の説は直感に頼っていてまだ理論づけが十分ではない。
His ideas rely on intuition and do not yet have enough theoretical backing.

9
医療は国家の責任だとする考え方
The view that sees health care to be the responsibility of the state
海外援助を増やす必要はないとする意見がかなり出された。
A fair number of people expressed the view that they saw no need to increase foreign aid.
政府は教育が最優先されるべき課題だとしている。
The government has decided that education is something that must be given absolute priority.

Lesson 14 Atomic bomb

The atomic bomb was dropped at 8:15 AM on the 6th August, but we were eventually informed about it at noon the following day, the 7th. My very first reaction to the dropping of an atomic bomb on Hiroshima was very much that of a scientist. Sitting down to lunch, looking at the rice there in front of me – and rice was a true feast for us in wartime Japan – I suddenly lost my appetite. To my fellow officers who were sitting facing me at the same table, I said:

It looks as though we might as well stop our research here and now. If it really is the case that the Americans have the ability to make an atomic bomb, it means Japan is well behind them in every other area too. We can never catch them up.

The senior officer exploded in anger.

I had some limited knowledge of the potential of atomic weapons. But I had estimated that it would take at least twenty years before an atomic bomb could actually be developed. It therefore came as a tremendous shock to discover that America had already succeeded in developing one. There was absolutely no possibility that Japan would be able to invent anything remotely comparable. No