

Global Journalist: Japan's New Trade Relations with Africa

Abstract: In this Oct. 2, 2003 program, guests discuss Japan effort to make new trade partners in Africa. How could this shift the world trading order and relations? The group also discusses Japan's billion-dollar aid pledge to Africa.

Host: [Stuart Loory](#)

Guests:

- [Eric Due](#)
- [Shaowen Lin](#)
- Tommy Ngidi (ph?)

Directors: [Pat Akers](#)

Producers: Sara Andrea Fajardo, Un Teck Han (ph?)

Web Master: Radha Ravi (ph?)

Mentioned: Japan, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, United States, China, Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, North Korea, South Korea, China, Second World War,

Runtime: 28:16

SPEAKERS:

Stuart Loory, Eric Due, [Shaowen Lin](#), Tommy Ngidi (ph?)

Stuart Loory 00:16

Welcome to Global Journalist on KBIA. This is the program that says mid Missouri is indeed many Americans are interested in international news. I'm Stuart Loory of the Missouri School of Journalism. Iraq and the war on terrorism dominate international news in the United States. As a result, other important international news gets short shrift. Japan is this country's most important ally in the Far East and despite its economic setback in recent years, it is still a leading world economic power. There was virtually nothing written about it in the United States, but this week, Japan conducted a third international trade summit meeting with African nations in the last 10 years, and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pledged a billion dollars in aid to Japan over the next five years. That may not be a lot of money these days, but it still shows a commitment to expand relations with a part of the world many countries pay little attention to. At the same time, Japan is working to repair relations with China still troubled over the war and colonization by Japan more than a half century ago. These are the subjects of today's programs and our guests are in Tokyo, Eric Due, copy desk chief of The Japan Times, an English language newspaper, in Beijing, Shaowen Lin, Director of English language news of China Radio International, in Durban, South Africa, Tommy Ngidi (ph?), managing editor of The

Mercury. Let's start with Eric Due in Japan. Eric, what do we make of this summit meeting with African nations? What was it all about? And how much progress did it make?

Eric Due 02:09

Well, it wasn't really a gauge of progress so much. I mean, the commitment and aid is, you know, something that will have to, you know, how that will flower in the future is, you know, will have to be assessed by future meetings. And I think the whole, the whole thing with this meeting this week was just sort of another sort of a show, if you will. It's a show of commitment to Africa and of Japan. It's a show of Japan, I think, more than anything else. I'm attempting to demonstrate that it has some leadership, that it exists international leadership, and it doesn't have to exert the type that perhaps the United States does with its military might.

Stuart Loory 02:56

Are you saying that Japan is attempting to challenge the United States in in World Leadership but in a more peaceful way?

Eric Due 03:05

Not at all, but where the United States and other countries seem to focus their energies in other parts of the world, Japan is sort of staked out Africa as its focus, I guess, and you know, providing the the aid is one measure of doing that. But then also it raises Japan's profile. I say, I should say it, it's an attempt to raise its profile in a diplomatic sense.

Stuart Loory 03:37

But at the same time, I'm sorry, Tommy, did I hear you?

Tommy Ngidi (ph?) 03:44

Tommy in Durban. I just wanted to chip in there with a, perhaps a historical context, which I think is important for our listeners, just to say that with regard to the sudden push it's apparently a sudden push but you remember that Prime Minister Yoshirō Mori was, for example, in South Africa in Africa, a couple of countries in Africa in in January of 2001.

Stuart Loory 04:17

That is the previous prime minister to the one in office now.

Tommy Ngidi (ph?) 04:21

Yes, the previous one and the assumption on the part of those watching that was, it was timed perfectly around the coming in of President Bush in America. And there was an assumption around the world that, unlike President Clinton, President Bush would be a lot more cynical and a lot more, a lot less interested in in issues like Africa and so on. In fact what has happened is the reverse. I think the timing was because there wasn't perception of a gap. And the Japanese, rightly so have used it to cement their relations with Africa. And a couple of initiatives such as the Tokyo International Conference and African Trade Development in 1993. And the second one in 1998. And those are what we're seeing today, the combination of that relationship as it were, you're going to see the end of it. But Japan, we

would understand that as Africans is a superpower, and has influenced to petrol as it were out on the world.

Stuart Loory 05:39

And what can Japan do for Africa that the United States or the Western European countries are not doing at the present time?

Eric Due 05:52

Is that directed to me again?

Stuart Loory 05:54

Well, go ahead, Eric and then Tommy, you chip in also.

Eric Due 06:00

Well, you know, the get the get to that question just, let me make one little circuit here. He's right about, I guess the timing. But there was, I think the process this whole, this whole conference processes is it's a phased thing. And you're not really even assessing results there. They were even looking back to see how their commitments were doing in this conference, and I think for four people in a lot of journalists in Tokyo, I thought that they just sort of felt like we were awash in rhetoric and a lot of sort of propaganda stick type of themes that were being played and sounded there feel good things and, and it's, you know, the proof is in the pudding and there wasn't really any putting put out on the table that we could see, you know, the million dollar commitment with backs, you know, towards, you know, vaccinations and building and stuff like that.

Stuart Loory 07:00

That's a billion dollar...

Eric Due 07:03

Billion dollar commitment that is, but that's also those are projects that build schools, provide vaccinations, and, you know, various other humanitarian type efforts. But like when you mentioned, what can Japan do when you talk about trade? Well, one complaint that was aired during this conference and has been aired as well in you know, probably every week and every month for several years, and it's a legitimate one, is farm trade. And, you know, the failure at Cancun Mexico, you know, the WTO talks to, to get the big developed countries to stop subsidizing and open, you know, their farmers and opening their agricultural markets to, to countries that need, you know, to make money through agricultural trade. Well, that's not happening and that and that's to the dismay of of a lot of African, you know, agricultural sectors, those that are, you know, producing or can produce. And so, you know, there is the money, there's the checkbook, but you know, as far as the actually taking in products and taking in foods. That's, that's not that's not anywhere on the horizon.

Stuart Loory 08:22

What about health related issues? Obviously, AIDS and HIV and in other serious diseases are big problems in Africa. Is there anything that Japan can do to help deal with those problems, Eric?

Eric Due 08:42

Well, they have. They do. This isn't necessarily a strictly government pursuit. But, you know, just as France has this, you know, medicines without borders, Japan has similar affiliations and they do provide aid workers to these countries as well as, as mentioned with the with the billion dollar commitment. Part of that will be for vaccines and stuff like that. One focus of this recent conference, the TICAD conference in Tokyo was, and this is part of the rhetoric, I must repeat, but it's talking about African self help effort, efforts and self governance and better governance and the idea of ending conflicts and stuff like that, but the whole scene, the whole spin seems to be more on Africans trying to do that themselves, you know, getting nudged maybe by the developed world, but nonetheless, you know, probably in actual assistance, you're probably getting more help from you know, the actor, doctors from Hiroshima that are going there to, you know, institute vaccination programs, more than you are you know, this sort of this big ship loads of stuff coming in from Japan or anything of aid, you know, goods.

Stuart Loory 10:08

Okay. I would like to switch the discussion now to Japan's relations with its closer neighbors in the Pacific Rim area. But first, I should remind our listeners that you're listening to Global Journalist on KBIA. I'm Stuart Loory. You may listen to this program again, ask questions or make comments by going to www.globaljournalist.org or here in mid Missouri by calling us at 573-882-9641. Eric Due if I may ask you about Japan's relations with China and also with the Koreas, South Korea and North Korea. There have been stories recently, for example, about Japan's the chemical weapons that the the Imperial Army left behind when it waged war in Japan many many years ago. What is being done to settle that problem?

Eric Due 11:21

Well, this week had a what they are considering a landmark lower court ruling as it worth quarter first instance, awarding 13 Chinese plaintiffs 190 million yen for damage that had been done after the war from the millions or well how is actually according to China's 2 million if you listen to Japan, it's maybe it's maybe 700,000 chemical arms and biological agents and whatever stuff that they you know that they use mainly in north eastern China when they were fighting the Chinese and you know, of course, the Soviet had in the latter part of the war, but they left all that stuff when they when they surrendered, and it's still causing damage. And so they had this landmark ruling quite often, most, if not all wore redress suits, whether they be for damages from the war, whether they, including sexual slavery or whatnot, are usually rejected, sometimes on what would seem very tenuous grounds like statutes of limitations. But this particular one, although the government hasn't admitted that it's not going to appeal it, which it can and probably would. This particular one is landmark in that it, it's basically charged, Japan was having been inactive there during the warriors and that inaction is in effect action that was taken after the war so that it didn't use the old argument that all of the ward redress claims were settled by post war treaties immediately after the war. They were basically saying that Japan's in action was, since those treaties were signed with war related stuff that it left behind was continuing to cause damage. And that was in effect action.

Stuart Loory 13:20

If I can bring in Shaowen Lin into this discussion show, when did the court ruling get much attention in China?

Shaowen Lin 13:30

Yes, indeed. And just a few clarification first, for Eric's remarks, and from my standpoint of view is that the war chemical warfare is not just leftover in China northeast in Heilongjiang province, which borders Russia. They have also, people have also find leftover chemical weapons and germ warfare is in other parts of the country. A number of places like Zhejiang province near Shanghai, and the northern province of Hebei near Beijing and also in central China's Hunan province. So, these have caused a certainly a damage to human health to a number of people at recently Qiqihar the city in Heilongjiang province in northeast. More than 40 people were found affected, and one of them died. After this clarification, I would like to say that the Japan's district, Tokyo District Court's ruling does received wide coverage in China, people will see that the landmark decision by Japanese court and we certainly hope that this first thing in the right direction and hope the Japanese government was faced directly to its responsibility of solving the problems left over by with war action, not just decided to appear against the first ruling so that the two countries can really sit down and talk about how to solve those remaining problems and really improved relations.

Stuart Loory 15:08

Eric if I can just ask Shaowen first, what are other problems affecting Chinese-Japanese relations?

Shaowen Lin 15:19

Like those that the so called conflict winning those winning prostitutes and forced to be clever prostitutes in military camps during World War Two, and also those, those weapons are left in other places. That was the Chinese certainly hope that even if the government has declared in 1972 to give up it's right for compensation, but the population certainly do have the unjustified roe response right to ask for compensation for damage done to their forefathers and to themselves into their relatives.

Stuart Loory 16:02

So, in other words, the problems between the two countries are problems that are left over from the era before World War Two when Japan invaded China and then during World War Two itself.

Shaowen Lin 16:19

Right, and this is certainly a very much humanitarian issue and also, you know, the rape of Nanjing, the city of Nanjing, which was the capital of the then Chinese Republic. And I hear that some people, many people in Japan still do not have knowledge about that, or, or some denied the existence of that that case. And we certainly hope the Japanese government in the population we have better knowledge and true knowledge about this and so we can face up to this problem.

Tommy Ngidi (ph?) 16:51

Tommy from Durban I'm looking at a note to says Japan estimates that about 700,000 chemical weapons were left in China by the Japanese army and says the weapons weapons have killed at least 2000 Chinese systems in 1945. That's quite a bit and I must say it's not a story that I'm familiar with.

But let me just looking at the my question would be, in my mind, what is the extent of, you know, to what extent does it affect the relations between the two countries?

Stuart Loory 17:27

What we've heard Shaowen on that, but let's, let's ask Eric that question and see what the situation is in Japan?

Eric Due 17:35

Well, it's just part of a bitter legacy. In general, I mean, Japan, like, Shaowen said, there wasn't just the Manchurian area that that the weapons were left I mean, Japan carried out a lot of warfare, non conventional warfare in various parts of China, on the civilians, and the military and whatnot. And legacy is continuing. But a lot of the I think, the relationship with between Japan and China, on the one hand has a fairly a fairly sound footing if, you can call it that, economically speaking. On the other, there's this there's always this war legacy and the chemical weapons being one particular problem that they've had Japanese have actually sent teams, government teams that are that are working on it and looking at it and they're facing a 2007 deadline to actually try to have all those weapons removed under a certain treaty that bans those weapons. Whether or not they get that accomplished. It's it's an open question. But the war though, in the way politicians, current politicians in Japan and China but in Japan especially do with it, the Nanjing issue in particular is one that I mean, the ruling party in Japan is still dominated by a fairly, I would guess you could call it right wing element that is a legacy of a wartime leadership mindset. And just this week, one of you know, before the court ruling, there was an interesting event in a large five star hotel near Hong Kong where some 380 Japanese businessmen from a construction company went and reportedly had this massive orgy that you know, dragged into the rooms into the lobby into the elevators in the corridors with some 600 Chinese prostitutes that were allegedly arranged from the madam at the hotel.

Shaowen Lin 19:51

Eric I am going to cut in to and that didn't happen in Hong Kong, it happened in the city of Shamian, a city facing across the Taiwan straits. 380 Chinese prostitutes.

Eric Due 20:11

Yeah, something I do not know, mean the figures whatever you know whichever story you read the figures might be different but in any case, it apparently was this mass grope and on the other hand it happened to rile, not only did it ruffle, you know, upset China and set off a firestorm of emails of complaint emails, but also it seemed to coincide on an anniversary date of when Japan basically began part of its conquest of China back in the 30s. And that also, you know, rub people the wrong way as do the Prime Minister and Cabinet members visits to the Tokyo war shrine that also enshrines Class A war criminals. So, you know, there's times when you could almost say and predict when certain events are going to aggravate and are almost arguably time to ag aggravate. And whether, you know, I personally don't think it's very good policy from Japan's point to rile its neighbors but it doesn't seem to lose out on a chance to do so it at periodic times, almost predictable times.

Stuart Loory 21:28

What we're talking about here are what would be called today, weapons of mass destruction. There are other weapons of mass destruction that are now nuclear weapons. And of course, North Korea has indicated that it is going ahead with a nuclear weapons construction program. How do Japan and China see that danger and are they working together in any way to try to prevent North Korea from doing this? Shaowen do you want to go in there?

Shaowen Lin 22:09

Yeah. Actually China and the Japan and as well as other countries does do have some common ground of agreeing on a nuclear free Peninsula in on the Korean peninsula. And on this issue, China would the last thing China wants to see is a tension or escalation of tension on Korean peninsula. China would agree to, to some, some degree to some degree of pressure over North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions. But the last thing China would see is a military action to force the North Korea to give up its nuclear programs. So doing in that process that that's why China is sending employees to the other five capitals including Pyongyang, including Tokyo and Washington. For, for me boys on the deputy ministerial level to North Korea within a matter of several weeks. And the successful at the middle of the convening of the six party multilateral talks in Beijing held in September was certainly gave some sort of some sort of hope of these countries agreeing to sit down. But we would hope that in the in the eyes of the Chinese would hope that the North Koreans to read recent rhetoric of completing the processing of nuclear of those 8000 rods can be, could be rhetoric, of offsetting of blaming the United States for not for failing to give some sort of security guarantee so far there has been no justified verification, no convincing verification that North Korea has really reprocesses new routes.

Stuart Loory 23:58

Right, Eric, is that the feeling in Japan as well?

Eric Due 24:01

Well, Japan takes this situation very seriously. And of course, you know, you familiar with the abductions of Japanese and to North Korea and just a few have been let freed and and the rest day North Korea has declared they're dead and there's more than Japan things have been taken away and South Korea had that many of exponentially more who disappeared. But on the nuclear on the nuclear issue Japan is going ahead with a missile shield with Washington. Basically because of these concern, it's launched by satellites over North Korea because of these concerns. North Korea has done some devious things in targeting Japan and Japan and China. Although they want to work together on this there's there's a lot of other issues that block the block the the progress I mean, for example, North Koreans in mass tried to flee into China, and then from there to a third country, usually South Korea or wherever they can go where they can eat, or make a living or just live. And when China and it's just it's dispiriting to people in Japan and other parts of the world when it appears that Chinese authorities will round them up and send them back to North Korea for whatever kind of fate that awaits them there. And sometimes when the issue becomes very internationally visible than China kind of backs off and lets people get out. But then there's not a couple of weeks past that you don't hear about China having secretly set the whole bunch of back after they came over by a boat or something and so there's, that going on, you know, that's sort of snagging the whole process of trying to disarm North Korea, if that's even possible. That's almost probably as tall a dream is trying to, you know, make Africa You know, wealthy in 10 years.

Stuart Loory 26:04

Well, a part of this is that North Koreans are apparently getting over the border into China and also into South Korea, who from where they are being sent to China to be held in detention camps there, is too much weight being put on China? Shaowen if you could do it quickly?

Shaowen Lin 26:31

China has been careful in dealing with those hostage takers and all seekers and been doing quite carefully to sending those people where they want to go for exploring, for example, Spain and China has been maintained the stressing that these two are separate entirely separate issues and doesn't want that one effect to have to affect view, the way to solve the measure to solve the other issue. For example, in the nuclear issue that China does really want to do this to six parties to focus on the nuclear issue yourself and don't be affected by other issues like hostage taking, like the the refugees also apparently refugees so that the six parties can concentrate on one issue at a time.

Stuart Loory 27:19

Okay, Shaowen I'm sorry we do have to cut you off we are out of time. Our guests today have been Tommy Ngidi (ph?) in Durban, South Africa, Shaowen Lin in Beijing and Eric Due in Tokyo, our director is Pat Akers and our producers Sara Andrea Fajardo and Un Tec Han (ph?) and our webmaster is Radha Ravi (ph?). For all, I'm Stuart Loory, Global Journalist will be back next week.