

## Strategies of China and Japan's Rivalry in Africa

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### Abstract

Africa has been an arena for global power struggle during the past three hundred years. The struggle has passed three periods. The first period started with the Atlantic slave trade and only involved Western European powers who parcelled the continent up into spheres of influence /colonies after trading in African slaves for 400 years. The second period, which started after WW2 and involved non-Western European powers as well, was characterised by the Cold War struggle for spheres of influence on the continent. China and Japan were the only Asian powers involved in that struggle. The third/current period started after the Cold War ended and now includes new powers from Asia (for example, India and South Korea) and South America (for example, Brazil). The paper focuses on the third/current period, but only discusses two of the strategies China and Japan are using to project their influence on the continent, namely Africa +1 (which refers to the different fora through which certain powers today interact with African countries as a group) and peacebuilding. Belonging to rival ideological blocs during the Cold War, the two powers competed indirectly. However, since the end of the war they have competed directly in the so-called 'the Second Scramble for Africa'. The decision to look at their ongoing rivalry was instigated by the coincident visits to the continent, in January 2014, of Wang Yi (Chinese foreign minister) and Shinzo Abe (the then Japanese prime minister). The paper, whose objective is to draw more attention to the strategies these two Asian powers are using to project their influence on the continent, is sourced from the literature on Africa's relationship with Asia.

**Keywords:** Africa, China, Japan, Africa +1, peacebuilding, the Second Scramble for Africa.

### Introduction

It has been a tradition in Chinese foreign policy since 1990 that the foreign minister should start their overseas trips for the year with a trip to Africa, usually in January. It was in keeping with that tradition that Wang Yi, who assumed office a little more than a year earlier, was on the continent (from 5-6 January 2014), visiting Ethiopia. His trip that year attracted great attention because Shinzo Abe, the then Japanese prime minister, just happened to be on the continent at the same time (from January 10-14), visiting Ivory Coast, Mozambique and Ethiopia. Because none of his previous visits to the continent had coincided with the foreign minister's, the question then arose as to why that particular trip was timed to coincide with Wang Yi's. To Quest (2014), the trip was nothing but an effort by Japan to export and globalise a regional rivalry: "After rattling its saber in a territorial dispute over the Senkaku Islands the in East China Sea, Tokyo is taking its rivalry with China to Africa." It was those coincident trips by Wang and Abe that induced this look at two of the different strategies these two countries are using to engage the continent, namely Africa + 1 and peacebuilding. (China and Japan have a long history of antagonistic relationship. Japan is part of China's sphere of cultural influence. According to Wikipedia, China has influenced this particular neighbour with its language, writing, philosophy, culture, law, architecture and religion. (But while China has influenced it culturally, it has influenced China economically. It was a major jumper cable for China, providing some of

the capital and technology for the country's industrial take-off. After signing the Convention of Kanagawa in 1854 which committed it to abandon its 220-year-old policy of isolation and to open its ports to trade with the West in 1854, Japan, then a self-contained entity with a virulent suspicion of outsiders, "plunged itself through an active process of Westernization during the Meiji Restoration in 1868 adopting Western European cultural influences, and began viewing China as an antiquated civilization, unable to defend itself against Western forces in part due to the First and Second Opium Wars and Anglo-French Expeditions from the 1860s to the 1880s" (Wikipedia). The Meiji which replaced the Tokugawa shogunate made every effort to rid the country of both Chinese and Western influences. With regard to China, it sought vengeance by seizing Chinese territories and supporting rebellion against the Qing. It supported the rebels because "It was to [its] advantage that China should be crippled by internal dissension" (Peffer, 1958, p. 208). (Japanese intellectuals, for example Fukuzawa have argued that Chinese culture was the major cause of Japan's backwardness (Morrison, 2011, 14-18)). Its victory in the first Sino-Japanese war (25 July 1894-17 April 1895) had aggravated its urge to subdue China on its own soil. Under the Treaty of Shimonoseki which ended the war, the Korean Peninsula came under Japanese control and three Chinese territories, namely Taiwan, Penghu and Liaodong Peninsula were ceded to Japan. (Taiwan remained a Japanese colony until 1945).

The Chinese could not believe that so small a country (小日本) could humiliate so large a country (大中国). Those defeats occasioned the Qing an enormous loss of prestige, reenergizing the anti-monarchists and causing widespread disaffection among the masses. Led by Sun Yat-sen, the anti-monarchists harnessed the disaffection and overthrew the Qing in 1911, thereby ending centuries of monarchical rule in the country. (It is interesting to note that monarchical absoluteness had to be restored for Japan to industrialise, while the monarchy had to be completely destroyed for China to industrialise. Was Japan only impelled by vengeance or also by a desire to deny the Chinese the benefit of a vital element of their own industrialization, namely monarchy?). But Japan's desire for vengeance was not assuaged by the Qing's ouster, for in 1931, taking advantage of the civil war involving the Nationalists and Communists, it invaded the country occupying Manchuria until its defeat in 1945. That invasion marked the beginning of antagonism between it and China in modern times (Tisdall, 2014). The Emperor's refusal to apologise for the rape of Chinese women at Nanking by Japanese soldiers and their use of Chinese and Korean sex slaves (the so-called "comfort women") is one of the issues feeding China's animosity towards it today. The following were three of the factors that militated against the earliest efforts at rapprochement between the two countries after WW2: (1) the signing of the 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance between China and the USSR and the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the US; (2) the presence of a US's military base in Japan which was the principal base for US's operations in the Korean War (1950-53); (3) Japan's extension of diplomatic recognition to Taiwan in 1952. Earnest efforts at rapprochement only started after the USSR abruptly withdrew all its technical advisers from China on 16 July 1960, forcing China to seek loans and heavy industry expertise and machinery from Japan. Apart from permitting the countries to establish a trade office in each other's capital, the Liao-Takasaka Agreement of 1962 removed most of the restrictions on the exportation of industrial plants to China. The US-China rapprochement during the Nixon presidency played a part in the improvement that occurred in their political relationship during the 1970s, as evidenced by the fact that they established diplomatic relations in 1973, just a year after President Nixon visited China and signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1978, just a year before China and the US

established their own diplomatic relations. Japan is today a major source of FDI for China, with plants belonging to Japanese MNCs scattered all over the country. China is Japan's largest trading partner (Xinhua, 2020), while Japan is China's third-largest trading partner (Wikipedia). Close economic ties, however, have not assuaged their suspicion of each other. They are using different strategies in their struggle for preeminence in international affairs.

### **Contact with Africa**

Africa's contact with both China and Japan predates the Cold War. For China, historians have not yet established the precise date of its first contact with the continent (Wilensky, 2002, p. 1); but starting in the Tang dynasty, Arab traders brought a number of East African slaves to China (Wilensky, 2002, p. 1). Unlike the European voyages of discovery which eventuated in the colonisation of the continent, Zheng He's multiple visits to East Africa which took place during the early stage of those voyages did not result in China colonising any part of the continent. For Japan, contact started in 1650, during the Tokugawa shogunate, when Jan van Riebeeck "proposed selling hides of South African animals to Japan" (Wikipedia). But it was only after the Second World War, precisely during the 1950s, that these Asian neighbours began to show material interest in the continent. (The People's Republic of China was only established in 1949, while the occupation of Japan by the Allied Powers after its defeat in WW2 only ended in 1952). At the 1955 Bandung Conference, they had their first earnest opportunity to solicit the friendship of developing world. Their one common reason for attending the conference was to seek support for UN membership, for at the time both were still excluded from the organisation. Their other reasons differed, for while China sought to use the conference "to break through the isolation that America had tried to impose on her, to make new friends and to show them and the world that she was not the crimson monster; and, of course, in the process to get in a few hard blows at the United States" (Jansen, 1966, p. 191) and to seek solidarity against colonialism (see Premier Zhou Enlai's speech at the conference), Japan sought to use it to engender collaboration among Asian countries on economic and scientific development, to apologise for aggressions against neighbours and to declare its commitment to peace, democracy and economic progress and cultural exchanges in Asia (see Summary of the introductory speeches...p. 5). While Premier Zhou Enlai's speech focused on Afro-Asian solidarity, Minister of the State and Director-General of Economic Counsel Board Tatsunosuke Takasaki's focused on Asia. Japan was the only industrialized country that received a formal invitation to the Conference (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2010.); and, to her credit, she wangled an invitation despite her close ties with the colonial powers and support for Italy's abortive attempt to colonize Ethiopia. The countries engaged the continent differently during its struggle for independence. China supported the struggle, giving arms and military training to groups like the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). After the Bandung Conference it started providing material support to independent countries like Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco and Ghana and arms to the movements (Eisenman, 2018). But Japan, being a member of the capitalist bloc that was predominated by the colonial powers and itself an occupation power in Asia, could not have supported the struggle. Their membership of rival blocs, however, did not lead to open antagonism during the Cold War. Japan, whose key trading partners then were Liberia (then a pseudo-colony of the US, the leader of the capitalist bloc) and South Africa (then a pariah on the continent due to apartheid, but with which it maintained ties because of what Ochiai (2001, p. 39) described as *seikei burunri* "separating politics

from the economy”).), had little difficulty establishing diplomatic ties with African countries after their independence. It also had access to resources and market in the colonies and consolidated this advantage until the end of the Cold War when China started its current push into the continent. Its lion’s share of trade with the continent during the first three decades of independence was guaranteed by colonial legacy which programmed the countries for long-term dependence on their former colonizers. To its chagrin, that contrived advantage is what China is dismantling and restructuring. The 1973 oil crisis forced a radical review of its policy towards the continent. According to Ochiai (2001, p. 39),

The oil crisis, precipitated by the Arab-Israel War of 1973, marked a turning point in Japan’s policy towards Africa. The threat of oil embargo by the Arab countries panicked Japan, an island country with little indigenous supply of natural resources. At the time, Japan imported 99.8% of her oil, mainly from the Middle East. In the succeeding depression, Japan’s economic growth rate fell sharply from around 11% to minus 2% and inflation rate in Japan was higher for a while than any other major countries. The oil crisis made foreign policymakers in Tokyo feel that no country was more vulnerable to the expansion of Third World resource nationalism than Japan. Until the early 1970s, Tokyo has [?] a tacit understanding that Africa was the “backyard” of Europe. The oil crisis forced Japan to build better relations with Africa to secure a stable supply of natural resources.

The oil crisis ended in March 1974. Not long after that (between late October and early November, to be precise) foreign minister Toshio Kimura visited Ghana, Zaire, Tanzania and Egypt. His visit was the first by a high-level Japanese dignitary to the continent and proof of the country’s determination to strengthen economic and diplomatic relations with selected African countries (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2010, p. 176). The big fall in the West’s interest in the politico-economic organisation of the continent following the collapse of the Soviet Union created the opportunity for China to deepen its presence on the continent. But for Japan it made it to fight its own battles there (and elsewhere) by itself. Japan threw down the gauntlet in their post-Cold War rivalry when it launched the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993. China took up the gauntlet when it launched the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) seven years later, in 2000.

### **The strategies**

China and Japan are using different strategies to organise their relationship with Africa in the post-Cold War era. Two of the strategies, namely “Africa +1” and peacebuilding are discussed in this section.

#### *Africa + 1*

Pioneered by France in 1973 when then President Georges Pompidou hosted the first France-Africa Summit in Paris, Africa + 1 has been adopted by Japan, the EU, China, South Korea, India, Germany and Brazil. (The Summit is a strategy by France to extend its influence to non-Francophone countries on the continent). The major virtue of this strategy is that the forums create the opportunity for certain non-African countries (the conveners) to deal with the continent’s fifty-four countries as one bloc. However, the major drawback to it is that its programmes could be contradicted and undermined by bilateral frameworks between the conveners and individual member countries. The launch of these two forums within seven years of each other can only buttress the claim that China and Japan have been locked into a mortal battle for preeminence on the continent since the end of the Cold War.

According to MOFA (2016), TICAD, now a triennial but previously a quinquennial forum, is “a multilateral forum whose participants include not only African countries but also international organizations [such as the UN, the UNDP, the AU and the World Bank], partner countries, private companies and civil society organizations involved in [Africa’s] development.” Japan seeks to involve as many development actors as possible in the TICAD process, including donors and prominent individuals such as Jeffrey Sachs, Wangari, because TICAD was not conceived to be a unilateral project, even though it is using it to create strong bilateral ties with the continent (Donnelly, 2008, p. 3). At this juncture, it is worthwhile to search out the reason why TICAD was launched.

The Cold War was an ill wind that blew Africa no good. During the War the continent was destabilized by ideological rivalry; after the War the continent faced abandonment due to donor fatigue and a tectonic shift in geopolitical interests. It was in an effort to pre-empt the second scenario and rekindle confidence in the continent’s autogenic capacity for development that Japan launched TICAD:

[W]hen the focus of the developed countries had shifted to former republics of the Soviet Union, coupled with “donor fatigue,” when the international community was showing signs of losing interest in Africa and African development... The Tokyo Declaration on African Development, adopted at TICAD I, put aid and development in Africa back on the international agenda. At a time of growing Afro-pessimism, when many people were starting to suspect that African countries would never develop no matter how much assistance was provided, Japan’s initiative as one of the largest donor countries was a vital part in the efforts to keep the assistance flowing” (JICA, n.d.).

For reminding the international community that Africa’s development problems did not end with the cessation of the Cold War, Ampiah (2008) described Japan as “the unsung hero of post-cold-war efforts to find solutions to Africa’s economic malaise.” According to MOFA (2016), the development philosophy based on ownership and partnership which TICAD advocates as the fundamental principles in the continent’s development was the philosophical foundation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). Apart from helping to raise and maintain global awareness of Africa’s development challenges and opportunities, TICAD emphasizes issues such as human security and private sector-led growth which have been incorporated into African and international development agendas (MOFA, 2013). But, unsurprisingly, Japan is also using the forum for self-aggrandisement. For example, it is using it to subtly enlist Africa’s support for its bid to become a permanent member of the UNSC. As Donnelly (2008, pp. 12-13) noted, “It is no secret that Japan seeks a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Japan has benefitted from African support in the past, winning the Asian non-permanent seat in 1996 and the election of Shigeru Oda to the UN International Court of Justice.” The UN reform was on the agenda of TICAD V, which held in Yokohama in June 2013; and “gathering the support of the 54 African countries has been Japan’s first political priority in Africa for years” (Pajon, 2017, p. 11). It also regards the forum as critical in its rivalry with Chinese and Indian presence on the continent (Wikipedia). It has also embedded the TICAD process in its relationship with fellow industrialized countries. For example, it leverages its membership of the G8 to solicit the group’s support for its campaign for greater attention to Africa’s development. In fact, the forum is “the showpiece of its assistance to Africa, the multilateral policy dialogue of the continent’s development issues” (Cornelissen, 2016, p. 149). According to Tembo (2008, p. 4), “It was at the Japan G8 in Okinawa in 2000 that Africa leaders (South Africa,

Nigeria and Algeria) first attended, leading to the adoption of the G8 Africa Action Plan in 2002.” The campaign which has kept Africa on the G8 agenda has also led to G8 making some of its major decisions around debt relief and creating the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Tembo, 2008, p. 4). In fact, the TICAD process has been substantially integrated into the G8. As Cornelissen (2012, p. 461) put it, “There have been significant overlaps between Japan’s Africa diplomacy and its wider multilateral objectives and, since the end of the Cold War, the G8 has been an important forum where these aspects have converged.” Japan is also making an effort to transform the country-continent forum into a continent-continent (that is, an Africa-Asia) forum. A number of its dealings with the continent are now being framed as business between Asia and Africa, not between Japan and Africa, for example, the Asia- Africa Trade and Investment Conference, Asia Africa Forum, the Asia Africa Business Forum (AABF) and the Asia Africa Investment and Technology Promotion Project. According to Cornelissen (2016, p. 150), it is also trying to use Asia’s development models for the continent. (Lumumba-Kasongo (2010, p. xiii) opined that the continent is “searching for new paradigms for social progress because most of her old experiments have been useless and detrimental to [its] causes”). At the fiftieth Asian-African Summit (MOFA, 2005), former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi announced that, through public and private sectors, it would help with applying to the continent the knowledge garnered through [East] Asia’s movement towards higher productivity. Some of the projects that have been executed under this arrangement are: the Triangle of Hope, which was a South-South partnership programme that aimed to utilize Malaysia’s experiences and knowledge to “assist in the development of Zambia’s economy by improving the investment climate and inviting foreign direct investment (FDI)” (Shimoda, 2012, p. 129) and the One Village One Product (OVOP) scheme which “encourages the mobilization of local human, material, and cultural resources to create value-added products/services for domestic and external markets” (Kurokawa, Tembo, & Willem te Velde, 2020). (Its espousal of Asia-Africa partnership challenges China’s position as a leading advocate of South-South cooperation). It is also strengthening ties with African regional economic communities (RECs). For example, it held a roundtable meeting with the RECs on the sidelines/margins of the 2013 UNGA.

TICAD meeting frequency and venue have been influenced by FOCAC in that in 2016, in addition to becoming triennial (it used to hold once every five years), the venue began rotating between Japan and Africa. TICAD-VI, which took place in Nairobi in that year, was the first-ever TICAD to take place in Africa. Its summit now precedes FOCAC summit. All Africa’s fifty-four countries have diplomatic relationship with Japan, so all are signatories to the forum. As a counterpoise, China in 2000 launched its own country-continent forum, called the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). According to the South African Institute for International Affairs (2015), this triennial forum is “a signal of the dynamic and expanding nature of China-Africa relations.” MOFA (2016) has asserted that it was TICAD that inspired the launch of other “Africa +1” forums, including FOCAC: “Nowadays, there are various fora through which many countries engage themselves with Africa, but TICAD launched by Japan was the forerunner of such fora for African development.” This assertion is true, considering that the France-Africa Summit which was launched twenty years before TICAD was predominated by French-speaking countries until after the Cold War in addition to being more concerned about France’s rivalry with Britain than the continent’s development challenges. FOCAC, which was launched four years after President Jiang Zemin announced his five principles of cooperation between China and Africa during a visit to the continent, pursues these two objectives: (1) to formalize, institutionalize and

strengthen China's ties with Africa (Centre for Chinese Studies, 2010); (2) to strengthen China's image of an emerging commercial and diplomatic power in Africa (Schneidman & Erikson, 2012). Unlike TICAD, its "institutional forerunner" which is co-hosted by Japan, the UN, UNDP, the World Bank, IMF and EU, it is only co-hosted by China and the African Union (AU). The UN Secretary-General, however, is always invited to its Summit as a special guest. Like TICAD, it is also being used to pursue China's interests. For example, it is being used to poach Taiwan's diplomatic allies and to pitch buy-in for Sino centric projects like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). African countries that had diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 2000 when the forum was launched, with the exception of Eswatini, have all ended their relations; and an increasing number of African countries have joined BRI. The forum is also where China, like Japan, now announces most of its foreign aid packages for the continent---loans, debt cancellations, scholarships, technical assistance, etc.

### *Peacebuilding*

Africa has been a playground for all manner of retrogressive elements for most of its post-independence decades, and, as a result, only a small number of its countries have experienced considerably long periods of political stability since they became independent. In countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo political stability has been rare like spells of warm weather in the winter. Many nationalists who became presidents or prime ministers after their countries gained independence felt they were entitled to long decades in power for their role in terminating colonial rule in their countries. They combined capitalist and socialist policies, tolerating market economy espoused by the West, but suppressing political pluralism espoused by the East. Many of them survived the Cold War by dividing up alliance between the two blocs. But the gust of the political wind that blew across the continent when the Cold War ended removed most of their buffer, plunging most of the continent into cataclysmic convulsions such as war, genocide and mindless repression of freedoms. Impelled by a mixture of humanitarian concern and self-interest, the international community has been assisting the efforts to pacify the continent. China and Japan have plunged themselves into those efforts.

Since their participation (as observers) in the first UNPKO on the continent, namely the UN Transition Assistance Group for Namibia (UNTAG), both China and Japan have sent troops to other UNPKOs, in addition to the financial and logistical support they have given to different regional and sub-regional peacebuilding efforts. Their support, however, differs remarkably, for while China has mostly supported with troops, Japan has mostly supported with finance and capacity-building assistance. (When it comes to supporting PKOs, China is parsimonious, while Japan inclines towards non-troop support because of risk aversion).

Japan has only contributed troops and/or administrative personnel to the United Nations PKOs in South Sudan (UNMISS), Mozambique, Sudan and South Sudan (Kenji, 2016); and, as Pajon (2017, p. 6) noted, the bulk of its security contribution "remains very low-key... and it is often channeled through, or in partnership with, multilateral institutions or via a third country, such as France." The following table shows the multilateral institutions/agencies through Japan has channelled the bulk of the low-key security contribution:

**Table 1**

| SN | Project   | Value (\$m) | Via     |
|----|---|-------------|---------|
| 1  | Community and Empowerment Development Project (in Sierra Leone)                               | 2.11        | UNDP    |
| 2  | Hospital Care Programme in Sudan  | 2           | ICRC    |
| 3  | Emergency Development Survey in Juba (in South Sudan)   | 4.5         |         |
| 4  | Reintegration of Demobilized Children from Fighting Forces and Community Support (in Liberia) | 6.78        | UNICEF  |
|    | Community-based Reintegration project of IDPs (in Liberia)                                    | 2.15        | UNHCR   |
|    | Infectious Disease Prevention for Children (in Liberia)                                       | 2.21        | UNICEF  |
| 5  | Mine Action (in Burundi)  | 0.55        | UNMAS   |
|    | Primary education (in Burundi)  | 7.27        | UNICEF  |
|    | Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Poverty Reduction Programme (in Burundi)                    | 0.98        | UNDP    |
| 6  | Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (in DRC)                      | 5.06        | UNDP    |
|    | Education and Child Protection for Peace-building (in DRC)                                    | 10.95       | UNICEF  |
|    | Infectious Disease Prevention for Children (in DRC)   | 6           | UNICEF  |
|    | Food Assistance (in DRC)  | 3.55        |         |
| 7  | Reintegration of Ex-Child Soldiers (in Great Lakes Region (DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda)      | 2           | UNDP/AU |
| 8  | Anti-terrorism (in Sahel region)  | 83          | ECOWAS  |

Sources: 1-7: MOFA (2006). Retrieved from <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/peace/annex1.pdf> ; 8. Quest (2014).

Like Japan, China has contributed troops and/or administrative personnel to the United Nations PKOs on the continent. In fact, it has contributed more troops than any other UNSC member (He, 2019). However, while it supports multilateralism in UNPKOs, it has, unlike Japan, channelled most of its non-troop contribution through the AU and its regional organisations rather than the UN agencies.

**Table 2**

| SN | Project                                   | Value (\$m) | Via    |
|----|---|-------------|--------|
| 1  | African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS)     | 1.8         | AU     |
| 2  | African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISON) | 300         | AU     |
| 3  | ECOWAS Peace Fund                         | 100         | ECOWAS |
| 4  | African Standby Force                     | 100         | AU     |
| 5  | UN peace initiatives                      | 43          |        |

Sources: 1. Christensen and Swan (2008); 2. Large (2008); 3. Panapress (2008); 4. Olander (2020); 5. Olander (2020)

At the height of the Darfur conflict, it appointed a special envoy on Africa in 2007; and its conflict diplomacy played a role in turning former President Omar El-Bashir of Sudan away from continued resistance to the deployment of any PKO in Darfur (Elochukwu, 2015, p. 21). As their acquisition of their first overseas military bases in Djibouti has shown, both countries are using their participation in peacebuilding on the continent to pursue their respective strategic interests there. Japan leased a 12 hectare (30 acre) next to Camp Lemonnier, the U.S. base at the country's international airport in 2011 (Farah, 2011). China followed suit in 2014 (Richard, 2014). China's base is three times the size of Japan's (50 hectares or 124 acres).



## Conclusion

It was the Cold War that created the opportunity which China and Japan are using now to project their influence in Africa. During the war these two Asian neighbours belonged to the opposite sides of the ideological war. The end of that war created the opportunity for them to project their influence on the continent more aggressively. China which was distracted from the continent during the twilight of the war by its economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping returned to the continent with renewed vigour and determination while Japan which was overshadowed by its more powerful allies in the capitalist bloc is using different strategies to assert itself in the continent's affairs. Soft power is predominant in their current rivalry; and all the indications are that China currently has the upper hand in the rivalry that is certain to have far-reaching implications (such as debt trap and military presence) for the continent. Interestingly, as yet this rivalry which is not recognizably different from their rivalry in Asia where they are using their wealth to create planetary systems for themselves has escaped the attention of many because, as Cornelissen (2012, p. 461) noted, Japan's role in Africa "tends to be understated in most analyses of Africa's ties with the large powers."

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