

CHINA-JAPAN TENSIONS PLAY OUT IN AFRICA

By George F. Ward, Jr.

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Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, center, sits between Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, right, and Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission Erastus Mwencha, left, during Abe's visit to the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, January 14, 2014. (AP Photo/Elias Asmare.)

Ambassador (ret.) George F. Ward, Jr. is editor of Africa Watch and a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses. He is a former U.S. ambassador to Namibia.

POLICE VETTING IN KENYA ILLUSTRATES BOTH PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES TO REFORM

By Alexander Noyes

On January 3, 2014, it was [announced](#) that three senior police officers in Kenya had failed a vetting process and were being involuntarily retired from the National Police Service. The ongoing vetting process, which began in December last year, is headed by the Kenya National Police Service Commission (NSPC) and is part of the country's police reform program that was launched in 2008—after police involvement in the country's 2007–2008 post-election violence—and later enshrined in the 2010 constitution. The vetting process has again sparked debate about Kenya's much-maligned police force, which has a long history of corruption and politicization and faces renewed [criticism](#) in the wake of its flawed response to the Westgate mall attack on September 21, 2013. While the sacking of high-ranking police officers by a new oversight body suggests that real progress is being made on police reform in Kenya, the vetting process also illustrates a number of enduring challenges to successful reforms. [more...](#)



President Uhuru Kenyatta, middle, with Inspector General of Police David Kimaiyo, in police uniform at center, Nairobi, Wednesday, August 7, 2013. (AP Photo)

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The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation operating in the public interest.

IDA's three federally-funded research and development centers provide objective analyses of national security issues and related national challenges, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise.

IDA's Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

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Prime Minister Abe's Trip

As IDA pointed out in an earlier edition of [Africa Watch](#), Japan is at a disadvantage to China in Africa in several respects. Japanese two-way trade with Africa averaged \$22 billion annually in the years 2009–2011, less than one-fifth the comparable Chinese figure of \$125 billion. Investment and economic assistance data present similar pictures. Press accounts at the beginning of Abe's trip highlighted the [expected announcement](#) of more than \$14 billion in trade and assistance agreements during the tour. The total value of agreements announced during the trip, however, amounted to much less than this figure. The reported \$14 billion probably was simply a repeat of the total aid component of an overall \$32.8 billion trade and aid package announced last year at the [Fifth Tokyo International Conference on Economic Development](#).

In Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, Abe's first African stop, he and the approximately 50 business executives traveling with him met with leaders of West African countries in a mini-summit of the sub-regional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Abe's focus was on the troubled Sahel region, and he promised an \$83.4 million [humanitarian assistance package](#) to help stabilize the region, spur economic growth, and promote investment. He also announced \$7.7 million in aid to Côte d'Ivoire to strengthen the civilian security sector. In return, Abe garnered an endorsement by Ivoirian President Ouattara for Japanese permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council, which is a primary Japanese foreign policy goal. [Ouattara said](#), "I hope Japan will be a permanent member in 2015, which is the 70th anniversary of the United Nations." Ouattara also called for increased African representation on the Council. [Mozambique](#) was Abe's second stop. There he promised Japanese cooperation in developing the country's newly discovered natural gas resources. Before moving on to Ethiopia, Abe also signed agreements in the areas of health care and infrastructure development.

In Addis Ababa, Prime Minister Abe [spoke](#) at the headquarters of the African Union (AU) on January 14. He announced a few specific commitments, including doubling to \$2 billion over five years a previous commitment of Yen-denominated loans and a grant of \$320 million to the AU for humanitarian and disaster assistance, focusing, among others, on the Central African Republic and South Sudan. A portion of his speech was devoted to an explanation of how the Japanese *kaizen* approach to organization and production, of which the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was an admirer, could—and should—be applied in Africa. Perhaps displaying a bit of insensitivity to the African context, Abe asserted, "*kaizen* is applicable to any country or culture as a type of managerial know-how."

China vs. Japan in Africa

Both in Africa and Asia, Prime Minister Abe's trip was seen as an episode in the increasingly sharp China-Japanese rivalry. It was widely noted that Abe's visit was preceded by a tour by the Chinese foreign minister the week before. The press reported that while Abe's visit was the first by a Japanese prime minister in eight years, China's president, Xi Jinping, had made Africa his [first destination](#) abroad.

Abe's trip was also bookended by Japanese and Chinese criticism of each other's approach to Africa. Responding to observations that Japanese investment lagged that of China, Abe's spokesperson, in a thinly veiled critique of the Chinese practice of building ostentatious facilities for African governments, [noted](#), "countries like Japan, Britain, and France cannot provide African leaders with beautiful houses or beautiful ministerial buildings." The Chinese foreign minister, referring to Japanese interest in a Security Council seat, characterized Japanese policy in Africa as based on purely political motives. A spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry [warned would-be competitors](#): "if there is any country out there that attempts to make use of Africa for rivalry, the country is making a wrong decision, which is doomed to fail."

The most scathing Chinese attack came in a press conference that the Chinese ambassador to the AU chose to hold the day after Abe wrapped up his visit. Displaying photographs of tortured and dead Chinese victims of Japanese aggression in World War II, the [ambassador accused](#) Prime Minister Abe of trying to undermine China's role in Africa. "Abe has become the biggest troublemaker in Asia," said the ambassador, "he has worked hard to portray China as a threat, aiming to sow discord... and so creating a convenient excuse for the resurrection of Japanese militarism."

Conclusions

What can we conclude on the basis of Prime Minister Abe's visit about the relative positions of Japan and China in Africa? First, it is clear that Japan needs more practice in engaging with the continent. Japanese rhetoric about industrial organization and management is probably not as appealing to Africans as the decades-long Chinese record of cultural and academic exchanges and business engagement. The presidential mansions, legislative chambers, and other monumental edifices built by the Chinese in cities around the continent are effective symbols of a deep relationship. Second, there is a clear resource mismatch. Abe spoke during his trip of millions of dollars in assistance and investment. Chinese visitors routinely sign deals with African governments that promise billions in infrastructure development. As a result of these deals, Chinese firms have achieved deep penetration into key sectors of African economies.

Prime Minister Abe's trip was not for naught. He succeeded in delivering the message that Japan does not intend to cede sub-Saharan Africa to China as a sphere of influence. He demonstrated a significant level of commitment to helping African countries meet their security and human development challenges. He achieved at least some support for a permanent Japanese seat on the United Nations Security Council. These are modest achievements. The question for the future is whether the Japanese government will increase its focus on Africa and thereby play a larger role on the continent.

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President Uhuru Kenyatta, middle, with Inspector General of Police David Kimaiyo, in police uniform at center, Nairobi, Wednesday, August 7, 2013. (AP Photo)

The NSPC vetting team, headed by NSPC Chairman Johnston Kavuludi, is charged with investigating the upper echelons of the police and ensuring that leading officers meet specified standards and qualifications, including adequate training and credentials, professional conduct, respect for human rights, and financial probity. On the goals of the vetting, Kavuludi recently [said](#), “The main objective of vetting is to reclaim public confidence in the Police Service to enable the officers who have been cleared during the vetting process [to return] with pride, confidence and renewed vigor.” Seven senior officers were vetted during the initial phase. Twenty-five lower ranked officials are being vetted during the second phase, which began on January 7, with another 200 facing questioning in the third round.

The three police officers who lost their jobs, Francis Okonya, Jonathan Koskei, and Peter Eregai, all Senior Deputy Commissioners, reportedly failed to satisfy the vetting requirements on a number of counts. Eregai and Okonya were [unable](#) to satisfactorily answer questions regarding their finances and land holdings, suggesting corruption, while Koskei faced accusations of abuse, such as the firing of subordinates without investigation. Other details of [widespread](#) corruption within the force have emerged during the second round of vetting, particularly within the Traffic Department. During questioning officers faced allegations of being bought off by cartels; further, although it is against the law, officers are believed to own informal public transport vehicles (“matatus”).

Some within the force have fiercely [pushed](#) back against the vetting, with a number of officers choosing early retirement to avoid scrutiny. Fortunately, Kavuludi and the new Inspector General of the police, David Kimaiyo, [warned](#) that officers will still be prosecuted if it turns out they opted for early retirement to hide past transgressions. But other police officers [warned](#) the vetting panel that officials may go so far as committing suicide if they are dropped from the force, given their long commitment to the police.

Although at times slow and incomplete, much progress has been made on reforming Kenya's police over the past six years, with a number of institutional reforms realized during the tenure of Kenya's coalition government, which completed its term in 2013. Despite these institutional advances, tangible shifts in police behavior have been more difficult to achieve, as highlighted by police conduct during the Westgate attack and recent [reports](#) of major human rights abuses. That said, the current vetting process should be viewed as another step in the right direction on the long road to achieving a reformed police force. At the same time, the vetting has revealed a number of enduring

challenges to reforms, namely deep-rooted police corruption and pushback from some within the force. Civil society and international actors involved in security sector reform in Kenya would be wise to [continue](#) applying pressure on Uhuru Kenyatta's new government to empower the fledgling police oversight bodies and make sure the vetting process does not fall victim to political manipulation.

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