

Japanese prime minister visits Africa, targeting Russia and China

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Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is concluding a tour of Africa today, which included stops in Egypt, Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique. His trip was aimed at undercutting Chinese and Russian influence in the region while expanding Japan's presence, as well as rallying support for the US/NATO-led war against Russia in Ukraine.

Before arriving in Egypt for the first leg of his tour on Saturday, Kishida made his goal for the trip clear, stating, "I would like to hold talks on the Ukraine situation and international issues and affirm our collaboration [with countries in the region]." It is the first visit for a Japanese prime minister to any country in Africa in seven years and the first multi-nation trip on the continent in nine years.

Kishida met with Egyptian dictator President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on Sunday, with the Japanese prime minister stating afterwards, "Japan and Egypt are very important partners that cooperate in the region and in international society. Based on these circumstances, we agreed to upgrade the bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership." The two leaders also affirmed their commitment to the so-called "international order based on the rule of law."

Kishida repeated these remarks while meeting with other leaders and officials, hoping to win support for the US/NATO war effort and playing the role of attack dog for US imperialism. Tokyo is attempting to isolate Russia as several countries in Africa have abstained from denouncing Russia's invasion of Ukraine. These countries are reliant on Moscow for oil, grain, and other trade. This includes Mozambique, the last leg of Kishida's trip in the region.

Japan, the US, and their allies cynically use phrases like "rule of law" to denounce Russia and China for refusing to acquiesce to the order established by

Washington in the post-World War II period. Tokyo's emphasis on "rule of law," particularly in countries like Egypt, is entirely hypocritical. El-Sisi came to power in 2013 in a bloody military coup and rules through political repression.

Furthermore, the US military documents leaked in early April revealing US lies about the war in Ukraine also purported to show that in February Egypt was planning to secretly provide Russia with 40,000 rockets, though Cairo denied this. Under pressure from Washington, the el-Sisi regime, which has good relations with Moscow while also being a close ally of the US, did an about-face in March and pledged that it would supply arms to Ukraine. Kishida's visit is aimed at ensuring Cairo's further support for the US-led war.

In addition, Japan is also attempting to win access to resources across the entire region through investment and the involvement of its so-called aid agencies like the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Tokyo is concerned that Chinese investment in Africa is overshadowing its interests in the region. Chinese investment in Africa has risen dramatically over the past twenty years, from \$US75 million in 2003 to \$US5 billion in 2021. Much of this comes as part of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, investing heavily in infrastructure and other economic projects throughout the continent. China also does more trade with Africa, accounting for over 20 percent of the continent's exports and imports in 2019 while Japan was responsible for less than 3 percent.

While in Ghana, Kishida pledged \$500 million over the next three years to supposedly promote "peace and stability" in the Sahel region. Kishida claimed, "We will use this visit as an impetus to further strengthen cooperation across a wide range of fields, including the economy, development and the interactions of people."

Japan is heavily dependent on imports to meet its need for resources. Ghana has multiple mineral resources and is the second-largest producer of gold in Africa as well as having oil and natural gas reserves. Kenya is an important base for Japanese companies and is, according to the JICA website, a “gateway to the East African region.”

Mozambique is also one of the most resource-rich countries in Africa. China is one of the largest investors in the African country, including in extracting Mozambique’s natural gas reserves. Along with other countries, it has invested in the Coral South Floating Liquefied Natural Gas (FLNG) project, located in the northern part of Mozambique. It is the largest FLNG venture in Africa and second largest in the world. It began exporting liquified natural gas last November.

Economic aid and organizations like JICA play important roles in Japanese foreign policy and through Tokyo’s 2015 revision of its Official Development Assistance charter and the creation of the Development Cooperation Charter, they have been integrated more closely with the military, the Self-Defense Forces.

Tokyo uses its overseas “aid” as part of its efforts to remilitarize, including by deploying its armed forces overseas to support these so-called development programs. This was on display most clearly in Sudan recently, where Tokyo dispatched air and ground forces to evacuate Japanese nationals from the conflict-stricken country. Many of those flown out of Sudan were JICA employees.

More broadly, Tokyo’s focus on Africa is part of its strategy to win over the “Global South,” referring to developing countries near and below the equator, including in Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands. In March, the government released its annual White Paper on Development Cooperation, in which it emphasized its focus on this region, and the role this would play in geopolitics.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno stated at the time, “As this year’s chair of the Group of Seven major countries, Japan will lead the efforts to strengthen our engagement in the Global South by actively contributing to the solution of issues such as climate change, energy, food, health and development.” The G7 summit, slated to take place in Hiroshima Japan from May 19 to 21, will place heavy emphasis on the war against Russia and the stoking of a similar

conflict with China.

As part of this focus on the Global South, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi is currently on his own tour of Paraguay, Peru, Chile, and Barbados. Paraguay is one of only 13 countries that recognize Taipei as the legitimate government of China rather than Beijing. Hayashi also visited Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil and Argentina in January.

The focus on these Global South countries demonstrates that all nations around the globe are being forced into the rapidly accelerating US-led war plans, with the goal of expanding the attack on Russia and launching a war against China, both of which could explode into nuclear conflagrations.



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