**Editorial: Japan must not pursue narrow national interests in ODA review**

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The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is poised to revise the country's outline for Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing nations by the end of the year, based on recommendations filed by an expert panel to Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida.

The panel's report stresses placing importance on national interests by supporting Japanese companies' forays into developing countries' markets, and recommends authorizing aid to foreign militaries for non-military purposes. The recommendations are not without problems.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Japan's ODA program. The budget amount for the program has halved since peaking in fiscal 1997, with 550.2 billion yen allocated for this fiscal year. Worldwide, Japan's 2013 ODA contributions ranked fourth behind the United States, Britain and Germany, and 18th in terms of the ODA to gross national income ratio. In order to increase assistance budgets, it is necessary for the government to review the ODA outline in line with the times and gain public understanding.

The panel's report calls for the eradication of poverty through "high-quality" economic growth, as well as for concurrent economic development among industrializing countries and robust growth in Japan, while underscoring that international and national interests are inseparable.

The report defines Japan's ODA goal as helping spur economic growth in developing countries rather than reducing poverty. The philosophy behind the report endorses the use of ODA and private-sector funds in concert to promote inroads by Japanese companies into the markets of developing countries, profiting from these nations' growth and thereby feeding growth at home in Japan.

Certainly, the significance of economic growth among needy countries can't be denied, but economic growth alone cannot eradicate poverty and could rather lead to widening income gaps.

The primary objective of ODA programs is to provide development assistance to poorer nations and to eliminate poverty and economic disparity in those places. It is desirable that the consequences of Japan's contributions to international interests in turn benefit Japan's broader national interests in the medium to long term. On the other hand, it is dangerous to define national interests in narrower terms and then set development assistance priorities based on them.

In a major turnaround, the report calls for consideration of lifting a blanket ban on assistance to foreign military forces as long as that help is for non-combat purposes such as civilian assistance and disaster relief. Such aid operations could also include providing patrol ships for maritime security, holding seminars on democratization for lawmakers under military juntas, and lending support for minesweeping operations. Some of these operations are closely linked to Japan's security interests vis-a-vis China.

It is difficult to draw a line between what is a military operation and what not. We must consider how to prevent our assistance from being diverted to expressly military uses from what had initially seemed non-militaristic operations. Furthermore, providing aid to foreign troops may appear to other countries to be no different from military assistance, while aid to troops for non-military purposes could lead to a military buildup in the long run. The government, therefore, should not lift the ban on aiding troops prematurely.

There were once proposals for enacting an ODA basic law and setting up a Diet monitoring system for the ODA program, but such calls have almost died out today. If the Abe administration is dead-set on paving the way for ODA assistance to foreign military forces, discussions should also focus on frameworks for monitoring and restraining such measures. We call upon the Diet for thorough deliberations and upon the government to give careful consideration to the issue.

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mainichi.jp/english/english/perspectives/news/20140712p2a00m0na001000c.html

# 社説:ＯＤＡ見直し　狭い国益主義に陥るな

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　安倍政権は、政府開発援助（ＯＤＡ）の基本原則を定めたＯＤＡ大綱を年末に向けて改定する。有識者懇談 会が先日、岸田文雄外相に提出した報告書は、日本企業の途上国進出を後押しする国益重視の姿勢を強調しているほか、非軍事目的ならば他国の軍隊への援助を 認めるよう提言しているが、問題もある。

　日本のＯＤＡは今年で６０周年を迎える。予算額は１９９７年度をピークに半減し、今年度は５５０２億円 にとどまる。世界と比べると、２０１３年の日本の拠出額は、米英独に次ぎ４位で、対国民総所得（ＧＮＩ）比では１８位だ。予算の増額のためにも、時代にあ わせて大綱を見直し、国民の理解を得ることは必要だ。

　報告書には、「質の高い成長とそれを通じた貧困撲滅」「途上国の経済発展と日本自身の力強い成長を同時に実現する」「国際益と国益とは不可分」といった言葉が並ぶ。

　日本のＯＤＡの目標として、途上国の貧困削減よりも成長に重点が置かれている。ＯＤＡと民間資金が連携して日本企業の進出を支援し、途上国の成長を取り込むことで日本の成長につなげる国益重視の考え方が盛り込まれている。

　もちろん途上国の経済成長の重要性は否定できない。だが成長だけでは貧困は解消できず、かえって格差拡大につながる可能性もある。

　ＯＤＡの第一義的な目的は、あくまで途上国の開発支援と貧困・格差の解消だ。国際益に貢献した結果が、中長期的に日本の広い意味での国益につながることは望ましいが、初めから国益を狭くとらえて、優先順位を置くような考え方は危うい。

　また報告書は、軍への援助を一切禁じてきたのを改め、民生目的や災害救助などの非軍事目的ならば認めるよう検討を求めている。

　災害救助、海上警備のための巡視船の供与、軍事政権の議員への民主化研修、地雷除去への支援などが考えられる。これらの中には、中国を意識した安全保障上の国益と密接に結びついているものも多い。

　軍事と非軍事の線引きは難しい。初めは非軍事目的でも、将来の軍事転用をどう防ぐか。他国から見れば軍事支援と変わらなかったり、非軍事目的であっても結局は軍の強化につながったりするという問題もある。拙速に解禁すべきではない。

　かつてはＯＤＡ基本法を制定し、ＯＤＡのあり方を国会が監視する仕組みを作るべきだとの議論があった が、最近はあまり聞かなくなった。安倍政権がどうしても軍への援助を検討したいというのなら、少なくとも監視や歯止めの仕組みもあわせて議論すべきだ。国 会での徹底した議論と政府の慎重な検討を求める。

mainichi.jp/opinion/news/20140712k0000m070139000c.html