

Kaunda eventually yielded to pressure for a national referendum on democratic pluralism, but after the MMD's coalition of trade unions, businesses, and civic groups was formed in July 1990, it decided that a referendum had become unnecessary. The outcome was foreordained. Huge crowds gathered in Zambia's major cities, chanting, "The hour has come!" In September 1990, Kaunda agreed to multiparty elections. He appointed a commission to draft a new constitution; in December, independent political parties were made legal again. At a July 1991 "summit meeting" with Chiluba, Kaunda agreed to incorporate certain opposition demands into the new constitution.

The opposition also wanted international observers to monitor the elections. Kaunda disparaged the idea, Joseph notes, but he "was once again made to reverse himself—and not only because of popular pressure." The government's strength was sapped by the increased reluctance of the International Monetary Fund and other foreign creditors to keep bailing out the economically troubled government.

"The message of the Zambian transition that has come through most loudly and clearly," Joseph writes, "is that Africa is ready for multiparty democracy." If Zambia's experiment in democracy is successful, many other African nations may be induced to follow its example.

### *Japan's Elusive National Interest*

"The Economic Sources of Japan's Foreign Policy" by Bill Emmott, in *Survival* (Summer 1992), International Inst. for Strategic Studies, 23 Tavistock St., London WC2E 7NQ.

Japan has been walking a little taller in international affairs in recent years. It has become, along with the United States, a top donor of overseas aid (\$9.3 billion in 1990). It has also stepped up its contributions to the International Monetary Fund and other international agencies and opened up its checkbook to help pay for the multinational military operation in the Gulf War. It is easy to see these moves as part of a foreign-policy juggernaut intended to advance Japan's economic strategy, observes Emmott, the *Economist's* business affairs editor, but that would be a mistake. The Japanese find it extremely difficult to reach a consensus about what the Japanese national interest is. Japan's foreign policy can hardly be to implement the national economic strategy, he adds, because Japan does not really have one.

Even the Japanese finance ministry is divided over economic strategy. Its budget bureau, the architect of the nation's fiscal policy, has since the early 1980s pushed to keep the government's budget in surplus, or at least balanced. But the ministry's vice minister, who acts as Japan's chief financial diplomat, favors budget deficits, which would stimulate the economy and increase imports, thus allowing him to appease foreign critics of the nation's huge trade imbalances, especially in the United States.

Outside the ministries, there are also divergent outlooks and interests. Big business generally seeks to expand its share of world markets. But business groups bitterly resist Tokyo's efforts to curry favor overseas by opening up particular domestic markets to foreign competition. Because of opposition to liberalized

trade from the powerful Japanese farm lobby and politicians in the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Japan has been unable to play a leading role in the current negotiations on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The GATT is now one of Tokyo's most useful tools in preserving relatively open world markets for Japanese industry.

Garnering domestic support for actions that may well be in the national interest is no easy matter in Japan, Emmott observes. Although a stronger role in the United Nations could ease the pressure on Japan to increase military spending or take decisive political actions, the notion that Japan should have a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council has been discussed far more outside Japan than inside.

"Japan's foreign policy needs... have very little weight domestically," Emmott says. "The 'national interest' is not a notion that arises clearly or straightforwardly from domestic political processes," which "are concerned exclusively with sectional interests." This failure to create a sense of the national interest is partly due to the absence of a truly pluralistic political system, he says. But more important has been the paucity of genuine threats to Japan's national interest since 1945. That is unlikely to change significantly as long as Japan can count on the United States to deal with any urgent security problems.

"Japan already exerts a powerful influence, economically and politically, around the world," Emmott concludes. "It will not, however, take on a strong leadership role for one simple reason: It does not have to do so."