

Chapter V

JAPAN'S DIPLOMATIC ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

A. REFORM OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

(a) Overview

It is imperative that diplomacy be implemented with the understanding and support of the public. To restore as soon as possible the public's confidence in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), which plummeted in the wake of a series of scandals involving the ministry, MOFA devoted itself to a comprehensive program of reform in 2001. Those reform efforts were reinforced still further in 2002, and all ministry staff will continue to give top priority to the reforms as they strive to implement them.

(b) Promotion of MOFA Reforms in Response to MOFA Scandals

Public confidence in MOFA tumbled in response to a series of scandals involving MOFA staff, including the mishandling of public funds by former director of the ministry's Overseas Visit Support Division, General Affairs Division, Minister's Secretariat, Katsutoshi Matsuo, which emerged in 2001. Nothing can excuse the unlawful handling of valuable taxpayers' money by MOFA staff, who are the servants of the public. In November,

the results of the investigation into the pooled fund incident were announced, highlighting the loose attitude of MOFA staff in regard to the use and management of public funds. In light of the scandals, MOFA worked throughout 2001 in a spirit of deep repentance to restore public confidence in Japan's diplomacy and in the ministry itself.

More specifically, on April 24, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Reform Council—headed by Akira Saito, chief executive officer and president of The Mainichi Newspapers, and comprising seven eminent private citizens—submitted a proposal; based on that, the Outline of Reform Programs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was created on June 6 and reform work started. First, under the comprehensive guidance and supervision of Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka, the Committee for the Promotion of the Outline of Reform Programs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was launched, headed by Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Seiken Sugiura, and a project team to enforce discipline was created as well. Their purpose was to review the remuneration system, integrate logistical support, and institute other budget and accounting procedures improvements in response to Article 2 (“Implementation of effective and efficient diplomatic logistics”) and Article 4 (“Eradication of irregularities and suspicion”) of the outline. A new in-house monitoring system was established, while the existing auditing system was strengthened with the participation of certified public accountants and other outside experts. Three project teams focused on the expansion of information services, personnel management reforms, and the reform of consular services respectively were established by the Committee for the Promotion of the Outline of Reform Programs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the leadership of Parliamentary Secretaries for Foreign Affairs Kaori Maruya, Taimei Yamaguchi, and Toshio Kojima. Those project teams worked on issues regarding “Diplomacy for the people and diplomacy with the people” (Article 1 of the outline) and “Programs for personnel management reforms for the most effective diplomacy” (Article 3). In regard to the personnel system, an open appointment system, including deputy director-general and other executive posts, was introduced for the first time in a central government ministry.

On February 1, 2002, Yoriko Kawaguchi took up the post of foreign minister. At a press conference that same day, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi highlighted ministry reform as an issue of maximum priority and announced that the reform process would be accelerated to win back public confidence in MOFA as soon as possible under the banners of “transparency,” “speed,” and “effectiveness.” Foreign Minister Kawaguchi also gave a policy speech to the 154th Diet session on February 4, immediately after her appointment, in which she made it clear that she intended to implement reforms forcefully and listen humbly to opinions on foreign policy from various perspectives in promoting reforms, rejecting anything that is inappropriate and ensuring that Japanese diplomacy is not swayed by pressure from any particular source. Based on that approach, on February 12, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi announced the “Ten Reform Principles to Ensure an Open Ministry of Foreign Affairs” as a guideline for further reforms; and on February 26, the establishment of the Reform

Advisory Board was announced as a means of realizing the reforms. The Board comprises eminent figures from a range of circles, headed by Orix Corporation Chairman and CEO Yoshihiko Miyauchi. Members are as follows, listed in alphabetical order:

Naoyuki Agawa (Professor, Keio University)
 Mikiko Fujiwara (Managing Director, Societe General Securities Tokyo)
 Yoichi Funabashi (Senior Staff Writer, Asahi Shimbun Co.)
 Masako Hoshino (President, Japan NPO Center)
 Masaharu Ikuta (Chairman and CEO, Mitsui OSK Lines, Ltd.)
 Hideki Kanda (Professor, University of Tokyo)
 Yukio Imagawa (Professor, Kanto Gakuin University)
 Yukio Okamoto (Foreign policy analyst)
 Akira Shimazu (Secretary-General, National Governor's Association)
 Akihiko Tanaka (Professor, University of Tokyo)
 Jun Watanabe (Lawyer) (Acting chair)
 Yoshihiko Miyauchi (Chairman and CEO, Orix Corporation)
 (Chairman)
 Michiko Yoshinaga (Non-fiction writer)

On March 6, the Reform Advisory Board held its first meeting with the participation of Foreign Minister Kawaguchi, launching its work program. The Board is expected to continue discussion aimed at producing an interim report by mid-May and a final report by summer at the latest, submitting these to the foreign minister as recommendations on measures that should be taken for MOFA reform, including those listed in the above-mentioned "Ten Reform Principles to Ensure an Open Ministry of Foreign Affairs." The reports will contain deadlines for the implementation of measures, as well as concrete goals wherever possible. Meanwhile, in order to maintain the momentum of MOFA reform, the ministry is resolved to implement immediately those measures that can be addressed prior to the Reform Advisory Board's recommendations, correcting those areas that need to be corrected and reflecting upon those points requiring reflection. Ministry staff will be made aware once again that they are the servants of the Japanese public, while a solid structure will be built to expedite robust diplomacy that protects national interests and backed by the understanding and support of the public.

The "Ten Reform Principles to Ensure an Open Foreign Ministry" identify specific tasks MOFA needs to undertake with the utmost energy. In particular, the relationship between MOFA and House of Representatives member Muneo Suzuki that came to light in a series of investigations by MOFA relating to assistance for residents of the Northern Territories and the charge d'affaires of the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) is an unacceptable and abnormal one, judging from social convention. MOFA profoundly regrets the suspicion that has been aroused in the public regarding administrative fairness and transparency and extends its deepest apology to the public.