

China's New Diplomacy in Africa

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■ Abstract ■

This article examines Chinese foreign policy towards Africa since the mid-1990s, with focus on China's efforts in securing energy supplies and raw materials, its expanding trade and investment, and its growing political and cultural influence in the region. The article explores why and how China is so diplomatically active in Africa and discusses the impact of Chinese activities on the political economy of Africa. It argues that the current Chinese policies towards Africa are mainly driven by China's need for energy to satisfy robust domestic growth. While Chinese investment and debt-relief measures have

helped the continent to develop, Chinese policies and practices have also created problems in some African countries. In the long term, competition between China and other powers may intensify over Africa's economic and strategic values. To become a responsible global power, China needs to pay more attention to other issues of development such as governance, environment, human rights and labor safety in Africa.

Key words: Sino-African Relations, Trade and Investment, Soft Power, South-South Cooperation

I. Introduction

Contemporary Sino-African relations got on a good start in the 1950s shortly after the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established. In 1956 Egypt became the first African country to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC. As African nations were

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achieving independence in the 1950s and 1960s, China supported their liberation movement and gave aid to them to build stadiums, railroads, hospitals, and other infrastructure as a way to counter US and Soviet influence in the region. In return, African countries stood by China as the Beijing government attempted to seek international recognition and enter the United Nations.

China pursued a political agenda in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s in competition with the Soviet Union. In the 1970s, in a mark of solidarity with newly independent African states, Chinese laborers—many of them poorer than Africans—came and toiled at ideologically driven projects such as the 1,160 mile Tanzam Railway linking Tanzania and Zambia in eastern Africa.

Over the past half century, China and Africa have shared weal and woe, sympathized with and supported each other, and bilateral relations have grown steadily in every aspect. Chinese official aid to Africa has never stopped. China has supported nearly 900 projects in Africa related to economic and social development, sent 16,000 medical care personnel to Africa, offered government scholarship for 50 African countries, and sent more than 3,000 officers and soldiers to carry out the UN peace-keeping tasks in Africa.¹⁾ Since China deployed its first medical team in 1964 at the invitation of the Algerian government, Chinese doctors have treated approximately 180 million African patients.²⁾ Chinese doctors who are part of the medical teams, or yiliaodui, normally spend two years in-country, and many have served on these teams more than once.

Yet, Africa, a distant and poor land, remained a low priority for Chinese foreign policy for a long time. Only in recent years has

1) "China's Aid to Africa 'Sincere', 'Selfless', African Trade Union Leaders Say," *The People's Daily*, September 14, 2006, online at <http://english.people.com.cn> (date of access: 2006.9.14.).

2) Drew Thompson, "China's Soft Power in Africa: From the 'Beijing Consensus' to Health Diplomacy," *China Brief*, Vol. V, Issue 21 (October 13, 2005), p.3.

China re-discovered Africa's economic and diplomatic values. Despite profound changes in the world over the past 50 years, China-Africa relationship has progressed and is thriving with vitality. Bilateral relations turned a new page in the mid-1990s. The basis of Sino-African relations has evolved from ideology and politics in the 1960s and 1970s to trade and economics today. Now, Chinese officials travel to Africa with contracts in their hands, accompanied by bankers and businesspeople, promoting commerce that expands China-Africa ties to a new level.

Africa has become the world's third largest oil-producing region, next only to the Middle East and Latin America. Oil production in Africa is expected to double over the next 20 years while it stays flat or declines in much of the rest of the world.³⁾ Africa's abundant energy resources and its oil production potential provide new trade and investment opportunities for energy-hungry emerging economies such as China and India.

II. China's Relations with Africa since the Mid-1990s: a Paradigm Shift

With growing political and economic power, Chinese foreign policy is undergoing some significant transformation. As Wu Jianmin, a senior diplomat and president of the China Foreign Affairs University has observed, China is moving from "responsive diplomacy" (fanying shi waijiao) to "proactive diplomacy" (zhudong shi waijiao).⁴⁾ Africa, once considered too far for any significant economic and strategic investments, has become a newfound location to implement key

3) James Traub, "China's African Adventure," *The New York Times*, November 19, 2006.

4) *China Youth Daily* (Zhongguo Qingnian Bao), February 18, 2004, online at <http://www.cyol.net> (date of access: 2004.2.18.).

objectives of China's new multidimensional foreign policy.

China's "going out" diplomacy after the Cold War has much to do with the changed international environment. The fierce reactions of Western countries to the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident induced Beijing to seek closer ties to non-Western countries. China's new diplomacy was also part of its effort to counter the unipolar system and hegemony of the United States.⁵⁾ Driven by tremendous domestic growth demand and backed up by its huge foreign exchange reserve, China is hunting for oil, gas, timber, platinum, copper, and other energy and natural resources globally. Africa, with its bounty of rich raw materials, has become a major target of China's new, economy-centered diplomacy.

China is now Africa's third largest trading partner, behind the United States and France. Trade volume between China and Africa reached \$40 billion US dollars in 2005, 10 times that in 1995. In 2006 Sino-African trade more than quadrupled to over \$55 billion since 2002, and is expected to hit \$100 billion by 2010.⁶⁾ Chinese trade with a few African countries grows even faster. More than 800 Chinese enterprises—ranging from cement producers to textile makers to auto assemblers—have pumped nearly \$2 billion as direct investment into African operations in recent years. Chinatowns are springing up all over Africa to cater to some 80,000 Chinese nationals working and living on the continent now. China's voracious demand for oil has led it to seek oil supplies from countries such as Algeria, Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, and Sudan. One third of China's oil import comes from Africa now. China's leading energy companies—Sinopec, China National Petroleum Corp.,

5) Denis M. Tull, "China's Engagement in Africa: Scope, Significance and Consequences," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 44:3 (2006), pp.460-461.

6) "In Africa, China's Expansion Begins to Stir Resentment," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 2, 2007, p.A1+.

and CNOOC—have inked oil contracts from Equatorial Guinea to Gabon, and from Algeria to Angola.

Since 1990, China has participated in 12 UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. By the end of May 2006, China had sent 435 soldiers to Sudan as part of the UN peacekeeping efforts alone.⁷⁾ China has waived over 10 billion yuan of loans for African nations.⁸⁾ As of mid 2006, 190 different types of exports from 30 African countries have enjoyed tariff-free status, and 17 African countries have become destinations of Chinese group tourists.⁹⁾

Africa is also a market for China's growing weapons industry. Between 1996 and 2003, Chinese arms sales to Africa were second only to Russia's. In particular, China has developed close military ties with Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Ethiopia, three of Africa's most strategically important states. China was reported to have sold weapons to both Ethiopia and Eritrea even the two have engaged in border wars since 1998.¹⁰⁾ Most significantly, China was believed to be the largest supplier of arms to Sudan. Chinese-made tanks, fighter planes, bombers, helicopters, machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenades have been used in Sudan's civil war.¹¹⁾

China's approach to Africa, characterized by its "no strings attached" financial and technical aid and its policy of non-interference

7) "Zhongfei Guanxi Cheng Shang Xinshiji de Hangchuan (Sino-African Relations Taking Off in the New Century)," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 15, 2006. As of the end of 2006, China contributed peacekeepers to six of the seven current UN missions in Africa: Western Sahara, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Liberia, Sudan, and Cote d'Ivoire.

8) "China's Influence in Africa Is Increasing in All Areas," *The Voice of America* (Chinese), October 19, 2006.

9) "Di Er Ci Buzhang Ji Huiyi Houxu Xingdong (Subsequent Actions Following the 2nd Ministerial Meeting)," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 19, 2006.

10) Joshua Eisenman and Joshua Kurlantzick, "China's Africa Strategy," *Current History*, May 2006, p.222.

11) "China Invests Heavily in Sudan's Oil Industry," *Sudan Tribune*, December 23, 2004, online at <http://www.sudantribune.com> (date of access: 2005.11.3.)

in other countries' internal affairs, is a source of both respect by many African leaders and elites and criticism by Western nations and African critics concerned about governance and human rights issues in Africa.

III. Major Characteristics of China's New Diplomacy in Africa

1. Highest-level involvement

Visits by top Chinese leaders to Africa were few and far between – until now. Africa is high on China's foreign policy agenda today. Top Chinese leaders have frequently visited Africa in recent years. Most of these high-level visits have centered on economic and energy cooperation.

President Hu Jintao visited Africa three times between 2004 and 2007. He visited Egypt, Gabon, and Algeria in January and February 2004 within one year after he became president. It is very rare for both the President and the Prime Minister of a country to visit the same region in the same year. Yet President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao paid separate visits to Africa in April and June 2006, covering a total of 10 countries.¹²⁾ Then, barely eight months later, in his first overseas trip in 2007, President Hu Jintao visited eight countries in Africa between January 30 and February 10. At every stop, President Hu announced new aid and investment programs for his host country.

In April 2002, Hu's predecessor Jiang Zemin visited three oil-producing African countries: Nigeria, Libya, and Tunisia. In June 2004, Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong visited Tunisia, Togo, Benin,

12) President Hu's trip took him to Morocco, Nigeria, and Kenya. Prime Minister Wen's visit covered Egypt, Ghana, Congo, Angola, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

and South Africa. In October and November 2004, National People's Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo visited Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Nigeria. In 2006, Vice-President Zeng Qinghong and Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing also made trips to Africa. For the past 17 years the Chinese Foreign Minister has always started his annual overseas visits in Africa.¹³⁾

In November 2006 Beijing hosted a summit forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which was the largest get-together of African leaders in China and was participated by over 48 African heads of state or government. It is a milestone in Chinese-African relations. "Anyone wanting to find an African leader this coming week will need to book a ticket to Beijing," a Wall Street Journal report remarked before the summit.¹⁴⁾ The Beijing Summit further boosted China-Africa cooperation by establishing the new China-Africa strategic partnership.

The forum on China-Africa Cooperation, first launched in 2000, already held two ministerial conferences in Beijing and Addis Ababa. Top Chinese leaders then, including President Jiang Zemin, Vice-President Hu Jintao, and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, were all actively involved in the establishment of the forum. Over 500 delegates from Africa including nearly 80 ministers participated in the first ministerial meeting in Beijing in October 2000, which was also attended by President Jiang, Vice-president Hu, Prime Minister Zhu and several heads of state such as presidents of Zambia, Tanzania, and Algeria. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and leaders from 13 African countries attended the 2nd ministerial conference in Addis Ababa in December 2003.

13) "China's Expanding Interests in Africa," *World Politics Watch*, September 8, 2006, online at <http://worldpoliticswatch.com> (date of access: 2006.9.8.).

14) "China Strengthens Its Ties to Africa," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 28 2006, p.2.

2. Aggressive and Creative Approaches

As a late entrant to the international oil market, China has little choice but to strike deals with countries that the West is unwilling or unprepared to conduct business with. In the late 1990s, for example, when Ethiopia went to war with neighboring Eritrea, the United States evacuated its Peace Corps volunteers, scaled back military aid and issued a security warning to US citizens and companies. In contrast, China saw an opportunity to expand its influence. It dispatched even more diplomats, engineers, businesspeople and teachers to Ethiopia. Today, China's influence in Ethiopia is overwhelming. Most recently, China has begun exploring for oil and building at least one Ethiopian military installation.¹⁵⁾ Following the example of the Peace Corps program of the United States, China sent 12 "young volunteers" for the first time to Ethiopia in August 2005. After these members' successful 6-month service in Ethiopia, this new program continued and expanded to other African countries.

Chinese oil companies have been aggressive in Africa in their search for partners. According to Iheanyi Ohiaeri, head of the business development for Nigeria's National Petroleum Corp., the Chinese call and email him everyday, seeking oil deals.¹⁶⁾

One analyst noted that Chinese are adventurous in their business activities. Unlike American business people, who are generally risk-averse and spoiled in terms of the personal lifestyle they expect, the Chinese take economic risks for the prospect of gain, and Chinese workers will go and live anywhere. In contrast, American companies have always had difficulty finding people to work in Africa.¹⁷⁾

15) Karby Leggett, "China Flexes Economic Muscle Throughout Burgeoning Africa," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 29, 2005.

16) Vivienne Walt, "China's Appetite for African Oil Grows," *CNN Money*, February 8, 2006.

In addition to inviting African officials and professionals to visit and be trained in China, China is also sending professionals to Africa to train their counterparts. Today, more than 900 Chinese doctors are working in Africa, providing free equipment and drugs to help fight AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Several Chinese ministries, including Science and Technology, Agriculture, Commerce and Education, are working with African governments to train officials and develop human resources.¹⁸⁾

China's presence is greatest in the resource-rich countries like Nigeria, Angola and Sudan, but it is also manifest in less obvious spots. In Sierra Leone, Chinese companies have built and renovated hotels and restaurants. In Mozambique, Chinese companies are investing in soybean processing and prawn production. In Senegal whose economy was long dominated by peanut farming, Chinese construction companies are working on roads, bridges, waterworks and other projects. At the July 2006 African Union summit meeting in Banjul, Gambia, the Chinese delegation dwarfed the ones sent by France, Britain and the United States.¹⁹⁾

China has adopted an aid-for oil strategy that has resulted in increasing supplies of oil from African countries. In several oil-rich countries, China has helped with many infrastructure projects. In return, China has allowed these countries to pay the cost with oil. Africa offers a largely untapped and underserved market for Chinese companies as they take steps toward becoming global players.

3. No political conditions attached

17) Dan Simpson, "China Woos Africa to Win Hearts and Markets," *The Toledo Blade*, November 8, 2006.

18) "China Wages Classroom Struggle to Win Friends in Africa," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2005.

19) "Chinese Take a Turn at Turning a Sub-Saharan Profit," *The New York Times*, August 18, 2006.

Other than an affirmation of the “one China” policy, Beijing attaches no political, environmental or social conditions to its financial aid to Africa. Chinese investment comes with no demands for making democratic reforms or promoting human rights. While Western countries have tried to impose a market economy and multiparty democracy on developing countries that are often not prepared, the Chinese are trying to separate politics from business. China is entering the market without political expectations or demands. China’s development model emphasizes political stability and economic growth first and foremost. The Chinese government is also against embargoes, which some Western countries frequently use against disobedient developing countries.

China has refused to back regular Western rebukes of African corruption and human rights abuses. China has invested heavily in Sudan’s oil industry. Thirteen of the 15 most important foreign companies in Sudan are Chinese, and more than 10,000 Chinese are working in Sudan’s oil business.²⁰⁾ In the five years since 2000, China developed several oil fields, built a 930-mile (1,512 kilometer) pipeline, a refinery and a port.²¹⁾ Chinese companies have been pumping crude oil from oilfields in Sudan, sending it through the Chinese-made pipeline to the Red Sea, where tankers wait to ferry it to China’s industrial centers.

Sudan’s contribution to China’s total energy needs is important but not strategic. Sudan accounts for only 5 to 7 percent of China’s total oil imports, and less than one percent of China’s total energy consumption.²²⁾ According to a Chinese official, China is committed to

20) “China’s Expanding Interests in Africa,” *World Politics Watch*, September 8, 2006.

21) “China’s Oil Ties to Sudan Force It to Oppose Sanctions,” *Sudan Tribune*, October 20, 2004, online at <http://www.sudantribune.com> (date of access: 2005.11.3.).

22) J. Stephen Morrison, “H.R. 180, Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act of 2007,” *Testimony before the Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy, Trade, and Technology*, Committee on Financial Services, United

playing a positive role in appropriately resolving the Darfur problem. China provided 40 million yuan of humanitarian aid to Darfur before the China-Africa summit in November 2006, and it supports UN peace keeping missions in Sudan, taking over from African Union.²³⁾

In Angola, where China is the second largest oil customer after the United States, a \$2 billion Chinese loan relieved the corrupt Luanda government of the need to improve transparency in the oil sector in order to secure funds from other donors.²⁴⁾ China is the largest foreign investor in Zimbabwe, where President Robert Mugabe's policies impoverished the country and left millions homeless. When President Mugabe cracked down on the opposition in early 2007, Western countries condemned the human rights violations but China remained silent. Zimbabwe doesn't have oil, but it is the world's second-largest exporter of platinum, a key import for China's auto industry. Mozambique is a firm supporter of China's independent foreign policy and regards China as one of its most important allies outside of Africa. Incidentally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building in Maputo was built with Chinese aid.²⁵⁾

The principle of non-interference does not mean that China rejects political and economic reforms in Africa. Indeed, China is careful to support African-led efforts to develop sound governance and sustainable development throughout the continent. For example, China supports the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a consensus reached by 19 African nations to promote sustainable development, good governance, poverty reduction, and to stop the

States House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., March 20, 2007.

23) "Waijiaobu Buzhang Zuli Tan Zhongfei Hezuo Luntan Beijing Fenghui (Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs on China-Africa Forum's Beijing Summit," *Xinhua News Agency*, October 27, 2006.

24) "The Ugly Face of China's Presence in Africa," *The Financial Times*, September 14, 2006, p.13.

25) Eisenman and Kurlantzick (2006).

marginalization of African economies in an increasingly globalized world.²⁶⁾

China has also publicly called on Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir to step up efforts to resolve the bitter conflict in the Darfur region. In a meeting with Mr. Bashir, President Hu Jintao said that the Darfur matter had “reached a critical stage,” and hoped the Sudanese government will maintain dialogue with all parties in the conflict, adjust its position, and improve the humanitarian situation in the region.²⁷⁾

4. Reaching out to win African hearts and minds

Unlike some Western countries that may treat Africa in a condescending way, China considers itself part of the developing world. The new strategic partnership with Africa is based on “political equality and mutual trust,” says President Hu Jintao, and economic cooperation between China and Africa is “win-win”.²⁸⁾

During his visit to South Africa in February 2007, President Hu reached out to the youth and gave a talk at the University of Pretoria. He said, “China did not, and does not, and will not impose its will or inequality on other countries, as well as do anything that would harm the African people.”²⁹⁾ President Hu also announced that in the next three years, the Chinese government will invite five hundred African youths, including university students, to visit China.

26) Thompson, “China’s Soft Power in Africa: From the ‘Beijing Consensus’ to Health Diplomacy”.

27) “China Defends Decision to Invite Sudan, Zimbabwe to Africa Summit,” *VOA*, November 3, 2006, online at www.voanews.com/english (date of access: 2006.11.3.).

28) “Win-Win Deals at China-Africa Summit,” *Inter Press Service* (Johannesburg), November 6, 2006, online at www.allafrica.com (date of access: 2006.11.6.).

29) “Chinese President Addresses at University of Pretoria,” *China Central TV (CCTV) International*, February 8, 2007.

As part of the efforts to win Africa's hearts and minds, China proclaimed 2006 "the year of Africa" and pledged long-term investment in infrastructure and in training African workers. In Angola's oil-centered Cabinda province, ethnic Chinese are the largest immigrant group. In 2005 China offered Angola a \$2 billion soft loan as part of a long-term aid package and won its bid for exploration of a large oil field in Angola.

Chinese companies have built or agreed to build hospitals and railways in Angola, roads and bridges in Sudan and Kenya, dams in Ethiopia and Liberia, and telecommunications networks in Ghana and Zimbabwe, hotels and restaurants in Sierra Leone, along with scores of other projects in Africa. A Chinese contractor is also renovating Kenya's Nairobi International Airport.³⁰⁾ China is offering poor African countries comprehensive trade deals combined with aid. China's aid-for-oil strategy has resulted in increasing supplies of oil from African countries.

In an effort to develop cultural links, China is also encouraging tourism in Africa. The government has approved 16 African countries as outbound destination for Chinese tourists, including Ethiopia, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. The number of Chinese tourists to Africa rose to 110, 000 in 2005, a 100 per cent increase over 2004.³¹⁾

China has actively promoted cultural exchanges with African nations. In 2004, an international arts festival with a focus on Africa was held in Beijing, attracting 9 African Arts Groups and 8 governmental delegations from Africa. In July 2004, China organized the "African Tour of Chinese Culture," which covered 16 countries.³²⁾

30) China Pouring Money into African Infrastructure Projects," *McClatchy Newspapers*, September 13, 2006, online at <http://www.mercurynews.com> (date of access: 2006.9.13.).

31) Eisenman and Kurlantzick (2006).

32) "Zhongfei Guanxi Cheng Shang Xinshiji de Hangchuan (Sino-African Relations Taking Off in the New Century)," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 15, 2006.

To facilitate growing trade and travel between China and Africa, China Southern Airlines launched the Beijing-Lagos route on January 1, 2007. With an intermediary stop in Dubai, this new air service is the first ever to Africa by a Chinese airline. This new air service will not only promote trade between China and Nigeria, but will make the China-Africa travel more convenient with Lagos International Airport's linkage to other parts of Africa and China Southern's coverage of major Chinese cities.

IV. Motivations behind China's New Diplomacy in Africa

1. Africa as a source of energy and natural resources and as an export market

The top priority of China's diplomatic activities in Africa is to acquire energy and raw materials to fuel China's galloping economy. As the world's second largest consumer and importer of oil products, China is relentlessly searching for new sources of oil globally. China's fast-rising involvement with Africa grows out of China's immense and growing need for natural resources, in particular for imported oil, of which one third is already from Africa, compared with about 15 percent for the United States.³³⁾

Since the mid-1990s, Chinese oil companies have committed billions of dollars to oil exploration and production from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Guinea. China often uses infrastructure projects to sweeten oil and mining deals. China has made deals with major oil producers,

33) China's absolute amount of oil imported from Africa is still much smaller than that of the United States. For example, China imported 38.34 million tons of oil from Africa in 2005, less than one third of "certain Western country". See "Waijiaobu Buzhang Zuli Tan Zhongfei Hezuo Luntan Beijing Fenghui (Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs on China-Africa Forum's Beijing Summit," *Xinhua News Agency*, October 27, 2006.

including Nigeria, Sudan, Angola, and Gabon. In 2006, Angola surpassed Saudi Arabia as China's largest supplier of crude oil.

In July 2005, China reached an \$800 million oil pact with Nigeria—Africa's leading oil producer, which agreed to provide 30,000 barrels of oil a day to China in the next five years.³⁴⁾ In early 2006, a state-owned Chinese company agreed to pump more than \$2 billion into a major refinery in northern Nigeria in exchange for drilling rights in four sought-after oil blocks.³⁵⁾

During President Hu's visit to Kenya in April 2006, China and Kenya signed an agreement for licenses allowing China's National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC) to explore for oil off the coast of Kenya. But in terms of African oil resources, China is not the only player. For example, Korea National Oil Corporation obtained 65 percent oil and gas production rights in two Nigerian offshore blocks, and India's Oil and National Gas Corporation (ONGC) Videsh Limited obtained a 25 percent stake. The big oil companies of developed countries are still playing a dominant role in the African oil market.³⁶⁾

China has actively encouraged its companies and citizens to invest and set up shop in Africa at a record pace. In Rwanda, Chinese companies have paved more than 80% of the main roads. In Nigeria, China is rebuilding the railroad network. In more than a dozen African countries, Chinese firms are searching for oil and gas and rebuilding electricity grids and telephone networks. Chinese companies own one of Zambia's largest copper mines and run a major timber operation in Equatorial Guinea. In Lesotho, Chinese businessmen own and operate nearly half of all the supermarkets and a handful of textile companies.³⁷⁾

34) "A List of Major Fruits of China-Africa Trade," *BBC Chinese*, January 28, 2007.

35) China Pouring Money into African Infrastructure Projects," *McClatchy Newspapers*, September 13, 2006.

36) Xuecheng Liu, "China's Energy Security and Its Grand Strategy," *The Stanley Foundation Policy Analysis Brief*, September 2006, p.11.

Other huge energy deals have been signed between China and African countries in recent years. Sinopec, China's state oil and gas firm, signed a preliminary deal with Liberia to explore for oil and gas in the western African state. Ghana's energy minister disclosed before the November 2006 China-Africa summit that his country was close to typing up a \$600 million deal with China's Sino Hydro Corporation to build a 400 megawatt hydroelectric dam in north Ghana. Gabon also signed a \$3 billion iron ore deal with China.³⁸⁾

Oil is not the only commodity China is hunting for in Africa. China has also made sizable purchases of copper, platinum, uranium and other minerals from Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, and other African countries.

2. Africa's diplomatic and strategic values

With 53 countries, Africa is the largest voting block at the UN and other international organizations. China's efforts in Africa are clearly aimed at safeguarding its interests in international institutions, such as the UN Human Rights Commission, which was replaced by the Human Rights Council in 2006 with countries such as Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Eritrea as its members. At every turn African countries have given China strong support in foiling anti-China motions introduced by some Western countries at the UN Human Rights Commission and helped China defeat many attempts by Taiwan to participate in the United Nations and to edge into the World Health Organization and other international bodies. African countries also supported China in its bid to host the 2008 Olympics and the 2010 World Expo.

37) Karby Leggett, "China Flexes Economic Muscle Throughout Burgeoning Africa," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 29, 2005.

38) "China Dangles Trade, Aid before Africa," *The Reuters*, November 3, 2006.

After China's accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, China courted African countries intensely for recognition as a market economy. This is a crucial status now for China as a WTO member, since it helps shield China from accusations of dumping.³⁹⁾

To further isolate Taiwan diplomatically remains a top Chinese foreign policy objective. China and Taiwan have competed fiercely for the loyalty of African nations since 1949. Africa used to be a stronghold of countries recognizing Taiwan. After gaining national independence, African nations established diplomatic ties with Beijing one after another. African countries offered valuable support to China in the latter's effort to return to the international community. In 1971 several African delegates danced at the UN general assembly floor to celebrate the PRC's admission into the UN, replacing Taiwan as the sole representative of China.

Since the 1990s, China's diplomatic offensive in Africa has further narrowed Taiwan's international space. China has used its influence to convince African nations to switch their diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing. After Beijing succeeded in converting Chad in August 2006, only five countries in Africa (Burkina Faso, Gambia, Malawi, Swaziland, and Sao Tome and Principe) still maintain diplomatic ties with Taiwan.⁴⁰⁾

African leaders affirm their support for the "one China" principle at nearly every official meeting with their Chinese counterparts. Earlier in 2006, after Beijing passed the anti-secession law regarding Taiwan, Ethiopia's national parliament even adopted a resolution in support of Beijing's new law.

As an example of how Taiwan is an important factor in China's

39) Denis M. Tull, "China's Engagement in Africa: Scope, Significance and Consequences," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 44:3 (2006), p.467.

40) Additionally, Taiwan operates four quasi-official missions in Africa: one in Nigeria (in Abuja) and three in South Africa (in Pretoria, Cape Town, and Johannesburg).

diplomacy in Africa, the Chinese ambassador in Lusaka suggested before the September 2006 Zambian presidential election that if Michael Sata, an opposition candidate who has criticized China's business practices in Zambia and who has advocated recognizing Taiwan as an independent state, were elected, Beijing might cut diplomatic relations with Zambia.⁴¹⁾ To Beijing's delight, Sata lost to the incumbent president, Levy Mwanawasa, who has close ties with China.

Taipei and Beijing continue to woo African countries in their own ways. After Beijing hosted the first China-Africa Summit in November 2006, Taipei responded by hosting the first Taiwan-African Heads of State Summit with its five African allies in September 2007 and plans to hold the second such summit in Africa in 2009. At the end of the one-day summit, leaders from Taiwan's five diplomatic allies in Africa issued a declaration in support of Taiwan's controversial bid to secure a seat at the United States.⁴²⁾

3. China's desire to help African countries to develop

China emerged from colonial encroachment, internal chaos, and economic destitution to achieve spectacular economic growth and infrastructure development. Chinese leaders and strategists believe China's historical experience and development model resonate powerfully with African counterparts, thereby creating a comparative

41) It was reported that Sata and the Taiwan government, through its embassy in Malawi, had a deal: Sata would defame China during the campaign in exchange for Taiwan's financial support. In February 2007, as Chinese President Hu Jintao was visiting Zambia, Taiwan rewarded Sata by inviting him to Taipei for meetings with senior Taiwan officials and discussing future cooperation. See "Claiming He Loves Taiwan, Sata Extorts Money from Taiwan," *Lianhe Zaobao* (Singapore), November 4, 2007.

42) "Five African Allies Support Taiwan's UN Bid," *The China Post*, September 9, 2007.

advantage vis-a-vis the West.⁴³⁾ African countries “have the panaceas of the World Bank and the IMF, and the experience of China. They can compare and choose the best,” suggested Lu Shaye, China’s ambassador to Senegal.⁴⁴⁾

From the African perspective, China offers an alternative to the West, which has historically placed conditions on trade and aid. China gives fewer lectures and more practical help. In the 1990s, many African countries adopted the “Washington Consensus” of open markets, macroeconomic stability, trade liberalization, and more privatization, but these reforms have yet to improve the lives of most Africans, and many have grown disenchanted with the West. Chinese diplomacy in Africa has introduced competition to the region. “For Africans it is quite a welcome change from the approach they get from Western governments that manages to be both patronizing and demeaning at the same time,” remarked Duncan Green, head of research at Oxfam. China’s economic development model essentially refutes Western notions of political liberalization as indispensable for sustained development.

The Chinese government claims that China sincerely wants to help African countries to develop. At the November 2006 China-Africa summit, Beijing announced massive aid programs for Africa in the Action Plan, which include doubling aid to African countries from its 2006 level by 2009, providing US\$3 billion in preferential loans and US\$2 billion of export credits over the next three years, creating a US\$5 billion fund to encourage Chinese investment in Africa. In the next three years, China will train 15,000 African professionals, build 100 rural schools, 10 hospitals and 30 anti-malaria clinics, send 300

43) Bates Gill, Chin-hao Huang, and J. Stephen Morrison, “China’s Expanding Role in Africa: Implications for the United States,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, January 2007, p.5.

44) “China Makes Africa Its Business,” *International Herald Tribune*, August 21, 2006.

youth volunteers, and double the number of scholarships given to African students to 4,000.⁴⁵⁾ According to the Beijing Action Plan, China will also send 100 senior experts on agriculture to Africa and set up 10 agricultural demonstration sites in Africa. It will increase from 190 to over 440 the number of export items to China eligible for zero-tariff treatment from the least developed countries in Africa.

China has received tens of thousands African students in the past two decades. Many Chinese universities have established exchange programs with African institutions. In recent years, Chinese universities have also provided training to African government officials, business people, opinion leaders and medical professionals. For example, the China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing has offered all-expenses paid training programs for young African diplomats.⁴⁶⁾

In November 2005, the forum on China-Africa education was held in Beijing. China vowed to double the number of African students enjoying Chinese government's scholarships within five years. From 2006 to 2008, China will train 1,000 education officials and teachers for African countries every year. It also plans to enhance other educational exchanges with Africa with new measures such as offering Chinese language instruction in Africa.⁴⁷⁾

Debt relief is part of China's aid program to African nations. Effectively turning loans into grants, China has taken significant steps to cancel the debt of 33 African countries since 2000. In 2000 alone, China wrote off \$1.2 billion in African debt; in 2003, it forgave another \$750 million.⁴⁸⁾ China also provides medicine and medical

45) "China Doubles Aid to Africa," *BBC (Chinese)*, November 5, 2006.

46) "China Wages Classroom Struggle to Win Friends in Africa," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2005.

47) "Zhongfei Guanxi Cheng Shang Xinshiji de Hangchuan (Sino-African Relations Taking Off in the New Century)," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 15, 2006.

48) Eisenman and Kurlantzick (2006).

equipment free of charge to some African countries. It has active programs to jointly prevent and treat infectious diseases including malaria and AIDS. Ethiopia's prime minister, Meles Zenawi, described China as a key source of support as African nations try to reduce poverty. "China provides for Africa a source of successful development experience, technology transfer, trade and investment," said Zenawi in a speech.⁴⁹⁾

As evidence that Chinese activities in Africa are meant to help African countries, China has also invested in resource-deprived countries. For example, China is building a dam and a military hospital in Guinea-Bissau, a country with little industry, no oil, and few exports.

4. Part of China's efforts to enhance its soft power globally

China has started to project its soft power in Africa. In January 2006, China released its first African Policy Paper, which put forward its proposals for all-round cooperation with Africa based on equality and mutual benefits in various fields in the coming years. For African countries, China is not just a new source of investment, it is also a useful counterweight to American and European influence in the region.

Cultural exchange is playing an important role in bilateral relations. China has conducted educational exchange and cooperation programs with 50 African countries. 20 Chinese universities have established exchange programs with dozens of universities from 29 African countries. As an indication of China's growing influence in the region, by the end of 2005, over 60 schools in about 10 African countries were offering Chinese language courses and over 6,000 African students were studying Chinese.⁵⁰⁾ In recent years, Chinese

49) Quoted in "China Pledges \$5 Billion to Africa," *CNN News*, November 6, 2006

universities have gone to Africa to directly recruit students there and offer scholarships for selected students. China has invested in other cultural projects in Africa. In June 2006, China donated \$35 million to build the largest theater in Senegal, the largest cultural project it has been involved in Africa.⁵¹⁾

China also seeks to establish Confucius Institutes in Africa—programs at leading local universities, funded by Beijing and devoted to China studies and Chinese language training. In December 2005, Africa's first Confucius Institute opened in Nairobi. Two more have been set in Rwanda and South Africa since then. A few more Confucius Institutes are expected to be launched in Egypt and elsewhere.

State-run China Radio International launched its first overseas radio station in Kenya in January 2006 to provide 2 million Kenyans with 19 hours of daily programming in English, Swahili, and Chinese on major news from China and around the world, including China's exchanges with African countries.⁵²⁾

V. Implications

1. For the international community

Close Sino-African ties are a successful example of “South-South” cooperation in promoting their mutual development. As the largest developing nation and the largest developing continent respectively, China and Africa do not have any historical grievances against each

50) “Reflections on the 50 Years of Diplomatic Relations between China and Africa,” *Xinhua News Agency*, November 6, 2006.

51) “A List of Major Fruits of China-Africa Trade,” *BBC Chinese*, January 28, 2007.

52) “China's First Overseas FM Radio Station in Kenya,” *Xinhua News Agency*, January 27, 2006.

other. Instead, they share a similar history of being colonized by Western powers. Both China and African nations have a strong desire to promote cooperation and take up new challenges of peace and development in the 21st century. Sino-African cooperation also provides a significant lesson for other developing regions as to how they can help each other, other than simply relying on Western powers to be lifted out of poverty.

The international, primarily American and European, concerns about China's growing involvement in Africa has probably less to do with the competition over energy and resources, but more with China's new international behavior. China's practice of separating politics and business worries many people. China's willingness to deal with authoritarian regimes such as Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Libya, to overlook corruption, and to ignore safety and human rights concerns may undermine democratic institutions and Western efforts to promote transparency and good governance in developing countries.

Though there is no evidence that China is engaged in a strategic competition with the United States in Africa, the two countries have different interests in the region. They were clearly at odds over Sudan. The United States accused Sudan of carrying out genocide in the Darfur region. China was reportedly to have sold weapons to the Sudanese government which used the weapons in the civil war. Chinese investment has helped Sudan become Africa's third largest oil producer. Of the \$2 billion in oil Sudan exports annually, over half goes to China. According to Chinese officials, China-Sudan bilateral trade reached \$3 billion in 2006 while total China-Africa trade reached \$55 billion in 2006 and is expected to top \$100 billion by 2010.⁵³⁾

Heavily embroiled in the Middle East, the United States has not

53) Morrison, Testimony before the Subcommittee.

paid enough attention to Africa in the past few years. America's absence in Africa is "as noticeable and prominent as the Chinese presence," commented Senator Barack Obama (D-Ill.).⁵⁴⁾ However, the African continent currently accounts for 5% of China's total trade.⁵⁵⁾ The United States remains Africa's largest trading partner. According to Chinese Commerce Minister Bo Xilai, in 2006, only 8.7% of Africa's oil exports went to China, while 36% went to Europe and 33% went to the United States.⁵⁶⁾ As both powers try to diversify their energy sources, political, diplomatic and economic competition between the two may intensify in the future.

Some argue that China's diplomacy in Africa serves less as a threat and more as an opportunity for the United States. One of the biggest concerns of the United States is the spread of terrorism in Africa. Failed states, poverty and instability serve as the breeding grounds for future terrorists. The United States and other Western countries can work with China to eliminate these problems, as all have an interest in a stable Africa. According to Michael Ranneberger, deputy assistant secretary in the US State Department's Bureau of African Affairs, "China's willingness to take on infrastructure projects can complement Western investment and assistance programs."⁵⁷⁾

Differences between China and Western democracies over human rights and sovereignty are obvious. In September 2004, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1564, which condemned the mass killing of civilians in the Darfur region, but stopped short of imposing

54) "China Pouring Money into African Infrastructure Projects," *McClatchy Newspapers*, September 13, 2006.

55) In 2003, for example, Africa accounted for 2.3% of China exports, and 2% of its imports. See Francois Lafargue, "China's Presence in Africa," *China Perspectives*, No. 61, September/October 2005, p.3.

56) "Bo Xilai Refutes Claim That China Is Colonizing Africa," *Lianhe Zaobao (Singapore)*, March 13, 2007.

57) "China's Expanding Interests in Africa," *World Politics Watch*, September 8, 2006.

oil sanctions if Khartoum did not act to stop the killing. China abstained from the vote and threatened to veto any further move to impose sanctions. After Chinese President Hu Jintao's February 2007 visit to Sudan, US envoy to Sudan Andrew Natsios criticized China for failing to put enough economic pressure on Sudan over Darfur.⁵⁸⁾

China has defended its Sudan policy and said that it was not justified to accuse Beijing of supporting the bloodshed. Liu Guijin, China's special envoy on Africa, said China made "huge efforts," often behind the scenes, to persuade the Sudanese government to accept the 26,000-strong African Union-U.N. peacekeeping force for Darfur that was approved by the UN Security Council on July 31, 2007 and would start deploying in early 2008. According to Liu, China is acting on many fronts to help Darfur, such as sending 300 engineers in October 2007 to lay the foundation for the joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force. It is also providing \$10.6 million in humanitarian assistance and Chinese companies are working on projects to provide drinking water in southern and northern Darfur.⁵⁹⁾

China's previous unwillingness to pressure the Sudanese government had generated appeals for a boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Several U.S. entertainment figures, including Mia Farrow and [Steven Spielberg](#), raised the idea of a boycott in early 2007. Joining the chorus, 108 members of the [U.S. House of Representatives](#) wrote a letter to the Chinese government in May 2007 warning that the Beijing Games could be spoiled unless China became more actively involved in stopping the violence in Sudan.⁶⁰⁾

58) "US Envoy to Sudan Critical of China," Reuters, February 9, 2007. Natsios, who visited China in January 2007, remarked then, "Our policy and the Chinese policy [on Darfur] are closer than I realized they were, and I think the Chinese are going to play an increasingly important role in helping us to resolve this." *Agence France-Press*, January 12, 2007.

59) "Chinese Envoy Offers to Mediate on Darfur," *The Associated Press*, September 11, 2007.

60) "In China, a Display of Resolve on Darfur," *The Washington Post*, September 16,

China deeply cares about its international image. Under international pressure, it has adjusted its Sudan policy. Since it appointed a special envoy on Sudan in May 2007, China has been pushing for peace in the war-torn country. UN Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guehenno praised on China's "important and constructive role" in helping ending the crisis on Darfur, and expressed his belief that China could use its influence and good relations with the government of Sudan to help push forward the efforts in finding a political solution and a negotiated agreement on Darfur.⁶¹⁾

2. For African countries

"I expect all of Africa will look at China's great transformation...and identify new means by which we can support each other," said Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the Liberian president upon her arrival in Beijing for the China-Africa summit in November 2006.⁶²⁾ Trade with China and Chinese investment have become important contributors to economic growth in many countries in Africa. Most countries in Africa seem to appreciate China's assistance. Poor African consumers like the cheap Chinese goods. China has also proved a pragmatic economic partner for governments at odds with the United States, from Sudan to Zimbabwe. "The growth of China is big blessing for us," said Francis Chigumta, a development expert at the University of Zambia. His words probably summarized the general feelings of many African countries.

Addressing the Shanghai National Accounting Institute on January

2007, p. A14.

61) "UN Official Praises China's Role on Darfur Issue," *Xinhua*, September 11, 2007.

62) "African Leaders' Summit Promises to be Triumph of Diplomacy for Beijing," *Financial Times*, November 3, 2006, p.2.

19, 2007, Harry G. Broadman, an economic adviser with the World Bank, remarked that China's trade with and investment in Africa presents a significant opportunity for growth and integration of sub-Saharan nations into the global economy. China was helping Africa's economy diversify and China's reduction on tariffs for African goods had been particularly beneficial for the continent.⁶³⁾ In South Africa, China's largest trading partner on the continent, the foreign ministry issued a statement prior to President Hu Jintao's visit in February 2007. "China's resource and energy needs have certainly contributed to Africa's economic growth by boosting prices and exports from Africa and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future," it stated.⁶⁴⁾

When many developing countries in Africa have grown disenchanted with the so-called Washington Consensus, they show intense interest in learning from China. There is talk of a rival "Beijing Consensus," which emphasizes innovation and growth through a social-market economy, while placing less emphasis on free markets and democracy.⁶⁵⁾ Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmental activist who was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace prize in 2004, suggested that cultural exchanges between China and Africa help Africans to have a better understanding of a fast-changing China, and China's development experience is significant for Africa.⁶⁶⁾

However, the growing Chinese presence in Africa has also been met with suspicion, and even resentment. There have been talks of

63) Quoted in "Hu's Africa Visit to Build on Summit," *China Daily*, January 24, 2007.

64) "China's Hu Arrives in South Africa," *The Sunday Times*, February 6, 2007.

65) "China Wages Classroom Struggle to Win Friends in Africa," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2005.

66) "Striving for the New Strategic Partnership with Africa," *China Financial Times* (zhongguo jingji shibao), November 6, 2006, online at <http://finance.sina.com.cn> (date of access: 2006.11.6.).

“Chinese invasion” and complaints that the Chinese are taking jobs and contracts away from the locals. The Chinese have not been transferring skills or technology to the locals either. Some shoddy projects constructed by Chinese companies have created tensions between China and several African countries.

Resentment is starting to brew over some Chinese business practices in Africa. With huge investment pouring into Africa, China has sent thousands of workers to work on infrastructure and energy sectors in Africa. Many locals are deprived of work opportunities, many others are employed by Chinese headmen to work in horrible conditions. Grass-roots resentment is perhaps strongest in Zambia, where disputes over wages and working conditions have roiled Chinese-run mines, resulting in riots and shootings. Trade unions have come out strongly against China’s control of Zambia’s economy. Anti-Chinese sentiment has mushroomed in Zambia since 2005, when an explosion at a Chinese-owned copper mine killed at least 46 workers and spawned complaints of unsafe working conditions and poor environmental practices.⁶⁷⁾

Chinese businesses have also squeezed out some local competitors. Nigerians, South Africans, and Angolans, among others, have been upset by the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs in the textile industry. There have been protests in South Africa and Zimbabwe against cheap clothing imported from China. South African trade unions have complained that Chinese textile imports are devastating South Africa’s domestic industry, forcing the two governments to sign a memorandum of understanding in 2006 aimed at restricting imports.⁶⁸⁾

In April 2006, days after China agreed a \$4 billion infrastructure

67) “China’s Influence in Africa Arouses Some Resistance,” *The New York Times*, February 10, 2007.

68) “Chinese President in South Africa to Sign Trade Protocols,” *CNN*, February 6, 2007.

investment deal with Nigeria, the world's eighth-largest oil exporter in return for preferential rights on four blocks in a coming oil acreage auction, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Mend), a Nigerian militant group, warned Chinese companies to "stay well clear" of the oil-producing Niger delta or risk facing attack. Mend also sent warnings to Royal Dutch Shell and Exxon, Nigeria's two largest oil producers, for not cheating the delta's people out of their oil riches.⁶⁹⁾

China was allegedly involved in Zambia's presidential election in September 2006. Chinese ambassador Li Baodong openly picked his government's favorite candidate and threatened to sever relations with Zambia if the opposition candidate Michael Sata wins. Sata, a critic of foreign investment, has said that "China's relationship (with Zambia) is very imperialistic and that the attitude of Western donors is also very imperialistic."⁷⁰⁾

African countries need China's trade and investment, but China is also creating some political and social challenges for some of these countries. China's trade policy of "no strings attached" may encourage bad governance in Africa. By shunning Western attempts to link aid and investment to human rights, environmental safeguards and the promotion of transparency in the oil business, China is condoning abuses and corruption across the continent. By supporting dictators like Robert Mugabe, China validates corrupt regimes, hurting the continent in the long term.

3. For China

The fact that many African leaders welcome China does not mean

69) "Stay away from Delta, Nigerian Rebels Tell China," *The Financial Times*, May 1, 2006, p.3.

70) "China's African Embrace Evokes Memories of the Old Imperialism," *Financial Times*, September 28, 2006, p.17.

that average Africans all benefit from China's investment. China's aid and trade have undoubtedly helped many African countries to develop. But Chinese practices have also complicated democratic consolidation and good governance. For some, China's Africa policy, although advertised as neutral and business-friendly, is becoming as immoral as those of Western colonial powers.

Some have criticized China and its banks for ignoring human rights and environmental standards when lending to developing countries in Africa. They claim that big Chinese banks have ignored the so-called "Equator Principles," a voluntary code of conduct pledging that projects financed by private bank lending met certain social and environmental standards.⁷¹⁾ China must not make the same mistakes as the United States and France did with Mobutu's Zaire. Joseph Mobutu Sese-Seiko became leader of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) in a coup in 1960 with US backing and bankrupted the country after borrowing heavily from western banks and institutions, including the World Bank.

Anger at China's presence has already been translated into violence in some parts of Africa. In January 2007, five Chinese telecommunications workers were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen in Nigeria's southern Rivers State. Though they were eventually released unharmed after nearly two weeks, the incident rang a safety alarm bell for thousands of Chinese workers and business people living in Africa.

China's economic and diplomatic approach toward Africa has been state-centric, which relies solely on government-to-government relations. To protect China's national interests as well as individual safety, China needs to cultivate better relations with important local communities such as influential non-governmental organizations and

71) "World Bank Chief Hits at China Lenders," *The Financial Times*, October 24, 2006, p. 6.

workers' unions. Chinese residents in Africa must also avoid controversial practices related to bribery and counterfeiting.

China's main interest in Africa so far has been energy and raw materials. It is unclear what China's long term interests are. Chinese presence and business practices in Africa provide an alternative development path for many African nations. But whether such a model is in the long-term interests of those nations and China itself is a question rarely asked in China. China's "no political strings attached" approach may have perpetuated corruption and human rights abuse in several countries. To become a responsible and well-respected reemerging power in world politics, China has to move beyond commercial interests and help improve governance in Africa. It must do a better job in projecting its soft power in Africa to ward off charges of replicating a colonial relationship of the kind that existed under white rule.

Chinese commercial-driven policy towards Africa may undermine China's own efforts to be seen as a benign global power. Obviously, if China cares about its international image, it needs to do more to become a more responsible actor in Africa and elsewhere.

It is encouraging that during his two-day visit to Sudan in February 2007, President Hu did pressure the Sudanese government to work harder to bring more Darfur rebels into the peace process and give the UN a bigger role in solving the Darfur crisis.⁷²⁾ In Khartoum, President Hu said it was "imperative" to halt the deaths in Darfur. Partially due to China's lobbying efforts, Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol announced during President Hu's visit that Sudan was willing to see the mixed UN and African Union force deployed in Darfur as soon as funding and troops were secured.⁷³⁾ By mid-2007,

72) "Chinese President Chides Sudan Leader," *Guardian Unlimited*, February 2, 2007.

73) "Hu to Sudan: Allow U.N. Bigger Darfur Role," *CNN International*, February 3, 2007.

Sudan had decided to allow UN peace-keeping forces into the Darfur region.

VI. Conclusion

Since China reopened its door to the West, it has gradually transformed itself from a passive, reactive, and isolated traditional regional power to a more active, interactive, interconnected, and modernizing global power. In Africa, Chinese foreign policy has been driven by economic and diplomatic needs, rather than a concern to promote good governance or human rights. Managed well, China can significantly contribute to Africa's development; managed poorly, it may encourage bad governance and human rights violations.

To a great extent, the economic cooperation and trade between China and Africa are mutually beneficial. China's active diplomacy in Africa and its massive investment in Africa's infrastructure have played a positive role for African countries' economic growth. Africa's rich resources, huge potential market, and strategic value contribute to China's rise as an economic power. Thriving Chinese-African relations are a potent example of South-South cooperation in international political economy. For many developing countries around the world, such kind of South-South cooperation is a helpful alternative to heavy dependence on the West. As Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank, commented, China, which helped over 300 million people escape poverty in the last quarter century, offers a valuable lesson for the 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa who still struggle to find the path out of poverty.⁷⁴⁾

China gives fewer lectures and more practical help to African countries. But China's "no-strings attached" approach to Africa has

74) Paul Wolfowitz, "China Has Valuable Lessons for Sub-Saharan Africa," *The Financial Times*, October 30, 2006, p.10.

created complicated political and social challenges to some African countries and the international community. To avoid potential backlashes from its controversial practices, China must reconcile its national interests with global interests and do more to help improve good governance and human rights in Africa. China must also actively engage local business, non-governmental and civil society sectors in order to enhance mutual understanding and improve its image among ordinary Africans.

China has integrated itself into the international political economy. In general, China's active participation in international political economy is good for China, and good for many developing countries. China's political influence in the world will continue to grow corresponding to its expanding economic power.

China's thirst for energy poses a common development problem for the international community. Even without China, energy demands from India and other emerging markets are expected to jump up drastically in the next few decades. So for the international community, how to reduce the cost of modernization and improve development efficiency has become a serious challenge. Alternative energy sources such as ethanol, biomass, solar and wind power, and nuclear energy have to be used. In addition, the international community needs to pay more attention to energy conservation and the efficient use of energy. Western countries can also help China conserve energy and become more energy-efficient.

The United States and China can work together in Africa from reducing poverty to ending civil conflicts, and from safeguarding energy security to combating infectious diseases. No evidence suggests that China is engaged in a zero-sum competition with the United States in Africa. The United States and China endorsed in principle in 2005 a US-China subregional Africa dialogue, as part of the larger US-China strategic dialogue. The two sides must proceed

to turn that commitment into practice. What the United States can do now is to actively engage China and work together with other powers to ensure the rise of a peaceful and responsible China. On the other hand, China, in its trade with developing countries, must pay more attention to issues such as increasing transparency, enhancing governance, protecting the environment, and improving human rights in those countries. These are also in the long term interests of China.

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