

Access, Assurance, and Acceptance:  
*Investigating the African Aspect of China's Emerging Foreign Policy Strategy*

by

Adam Perry MacDonald  
B.A., The Royal Military College of Canada, 2008.

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in the Department of Political Science

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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## Abstract

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China's renewed engagement in Africa is shaped by an ever more coherent and multi-faceted African strategy which is informed by and supportive of Beijing's emerging foreign policy strategy in general. Through an investigation into economic, political and military dimensions of this relationship, it is apparent that China's interests in Africa are not confined to the continent nor simply a patch work of ad hoc relations of economic opportunism, but rather Africa is seen as playing a vital role in furthering China's three foreign policy objectives of 1) *access* to economic and political resources both on the continent and internationally; 2) *assurance* of China's rise as peaceful and beneficial; 3) and *acceptance* of China's ascendance and growing influence internationally as legitimate. While economic interests, particularly resource extraction, remain paramount, Africa is becoming an important political ally in supporting Chinese efforts towards creating a more conducive international environment for its domestic development and rise to great power status. Military relations in Africa, though growing, remain limited and play an assisting role to China's greater economic and political interests. While this developing African strategy has so far been largely successful in securing economic resources and generating backing for Chinese interests internationally, concerns and criticisms stemming both from Western states and increasingly within the continent itself over issues such as development, economic exploitation, human rights and governance, and support for pariah regimes remain central challenges. China's African strategy, therefore, while informed by a number of strategic interests and practices, remains highly contingent as Beijing attempts to constantly balance interests and relationships on the continent with those internationally, including both of a short and long term nature.

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## Introduction

Characteristic of China's<sup>1</sup> continued emergence as a great power, Beijing for the past three decades has been establishing and developing extensive and intensive economic, political and, more limitedly, military linkages beyond its geographical periphery into other regions of the world. Within these processes, Africa is increasingly becoming an important area of interest and focus with the thickening of ties and the promulgation of an African Policy indicative of its growing role in China's foreign policy. Interaction with the continent, however, is not a new phenomenon as official connections between China and Africa stem from the early 1950s, while historical roots are argued to go back hundreds of years<sup>2</sup>. What are new in the contemporary context are the motivational underpinnings driving Beijing's renewed interest in the continent and the rapidly developing complex and multifaceted relationship that exists as a result. While relations between the two have never ceased, it is empirically accurate to classify China's current engagement in Africa as a 'return' due to the sheer size, magnitude and acceleration of its pursuits on the continent, marking a new era in relations distinct from previous epochs.

After a nearly ten year hiatus during the 1980s in which relations with Africa remained stagnate, largely consisting of rhetorical pronouncements of political solidarity and support<sup>3</sup>, China's growing attention and interaction with the continent over the last two decades is

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid ambiguity, for the purpose of this writing 'China' refers to the People's Republic of China (PRC); when referring to the Republic of China, its unofficial name-Taiwan- shall be employed. Furthermore, the terms 'The Communist regime', 'Chinese leadership' and 'Beijing' all represent the Chinese Communist Party which founded and has ruled the PRC since 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, Ian, *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*, pp. 19-20. See, also, Gao, Jinyuan, "China and Africa: The Development of Relations over Many Centuries", *African Affairs*, April 1984, pp. 241-250.

<sup>3</sup> Limited development of this relationship during this time is evident from the little growth in trade and foreign aid; by the latter half of the 1980s, furthermore, even state level visits to Africa had all but ceased. Taylor, Ian, "China's foreign policy towards Africa in the 1990s", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1998, pp. 443-445. See also Konings, Piet, "China in Africa: Building a Strategic Partnership", *Journal of Developing Societies*, 2007, p. 348, specifically Table 2: China's Trade with Africa, 1950-2005 (in millions of US dollars).

obvious. This occurrence has sparked a developing body of mostly Western scholarly research dedicated towards unpacking the characteristics and motivations behind this phenomenon, its future trajectory, and effects on the international system at large. While this burgeoning relationship, therefore, has not continued unobserved, many accounts usually fail to capture the extent, nature, and complexity of China's motivations and activities on the continent by conducting analyses either limited in scope and/or intentionality. In terms of scope, several narratives centre almost exclusively on the economic aspect of China's African relations, specifically boiling down Beijing's interests as entirely devoted towards resource acquisition of which oil is the most prominent<sup>4</sup>; other components of China's policies, therefore, are simply avenues towards securing access to these desired economic goods<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, interpretations of China's economic pursuits usually exaggerate the successfulness of these endeavours, portraying them as a force triumphantly criss-crossing the continent eliminating all forms of competition<sup>6</sup>.

Many broader accounts, encompassing political and military dimensions along with the traditional focus on economic pursuits, while providing a more holistic display of Chinese activities within Africa, however, are problematic for they are imbued with parsimonious interpretations of Beijing's intentions. Specifically, there is a popular portrayal of China's African interests as rigidly and explicitly anti-Western, detrimental to Africa, and abrasive to the

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<sup>4</sup> For example see Esther, Pan, "China, Africa and Oil", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2006.; Melville, Chris & Olly Owen, "China and Africa: a new era of 'south-south cooperation'", *Open Democracy*, 21 July 2005.

<sup>5</sup> For one of the more recent examples of this approach see "More than Humanitarianism: A Strategic US Approach Towards Africa", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2006, specifically "The New Playing Field: China's Rising Role", pp. 40-54. While political aspects are discussed, most notably China's relations with 'pariah regimes', they are seen as subordinate and encapsulating Beijing's main pursuits of economic extraction of natural resources.

<sup>6</sup> For example see, Brooks, Peter, "Into Africa: China's Grab for Influence and Oil", *The Heritage Foundation*, 9 February 2007. See, also, "More than Humanitarianism: A Strategic US Approach Towards Africa", p. 40.

norms and practices pillaring the current international system<sup>7</sup>. While it is evident that in China's foreign policy in general (including the African component) there is a level of discontent with and desire to alter certain aspects of the international system, the presentation of China as an aggressive player in a new 'scramble for Africa' over generalizes the intentions and success of China's African pursuits; such assertions, as well, incorrectly and prematurely classifies Beijing as an opposing force to Western interests on the continent and African development as a whole<sup>8</sup>.

As Chris Alden aptly argues, currently there are three competing categorizations of China's role in Africa in Western policy circles: that of a development partner; an economic competitor; or a new colonizer/imperialist<sup>9</sup>. All three classifications in themselves, however, do not fully encompass nor explain Beijing's interests and activities on the continent. Furthermore, attempts to fit China into one of them ultimately inhibits analysis by neglecting to observe the changing characteristics of their behaviour over time as processes and outcomes (many of them unexpected) impact the nature of their African endeavours. In understanding, therefore, China's engagement on the continent, absolute and mutually exclusive classificatory schemes must be discarded.

While noting that the above mentioned accounts carry a certain level of relevancy and legitimacy, this project, avoiding the classificatory debate outlined by Alden, portrays China's involvement on the continent as part of an ever more coherent and multi-faceted African strategy which is informed by and supportive of Beijing's emerging foreign policy strategy. Through an

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<sup>7</sup> For example see Brookes, Peter & Ji Hye Shin, "China in Africa: Implications for the United States", *The Heritage Foundation*, 22 February 2006; Malone, Andrew, "How China is taking over Africa and why the West should be VERY worried", *The Daily Mail*, 18 July 2008.

<sup>8</sup> See Skypek, Thomas M., "The Great Game in Africa: Washington's emerging containment strategy", *The Weekly Standard*, 10 September 2008 and Klare, Michael & Daniel Volman, "America, China & the Scramble for Africa's Oil", *Review of African Political Economy*, 2006, pp. 297-309. See, also, "Never to late to scramble- China in Africa", *The Economist*, 28 October 2006.

<sup>9</sup> See, Alden, Chris, *China in Africa*, pp. 5-6.

investigation into economic, political and military relations it is evident that China's interests in Africa are not confined to the continent or simply a patch work of ad hoc relations of economic opportunism. Instead, increasingly Africa is perceived as playing a vital role in furthering Beijing's three foreign policy objectives of 1) *access* to economic and political resources both on the continent and internationally; 2) *assurance* of China's rise as peaceful and beneficial; and 3) *acceptance* of China's ascendance and growing influence internationally as legitimate. While economic interests, particularly resource extraction, remain paramount, Africa is becoming an important political partner in supporting Chinese efforts towards creating a more conducive international environment for its domestic development and rise to great power status. Military relations, though growing, remain limited and largely play an assisting role to China's greater economic and political interests in Africa.

While this emerging African strategy has so far been largely successful in securing economic resources and generating backing for Chinese interests internationally, concerns and criticisms stemming both from Western states and increasingly within the continent itself over issues such as development, economic exploitation, human rights and governance, and support for out-casted regimes remain central challenges. China's African strategy, therefore, while informed by macro foreign policy interests and practices, remains highly contingent as Beijing attempts to constantly balance goals and relationships both within the continent and those internationally, including of a short and long term nature. As a result, Beijing's thinking with respect to state-specific African interactions increasingly is undertaken within a context of evaluating and judging their ramifications on its interests in the continent as a whole and the international realm at large; China, thus, is becoming quite conscious of the manner in which dealings in Africa affect its larger international objectives, whether desired or not.

This line of reasoning put forth above, however, of the connection between Sino-African relations and Beijing's larger foreign policy interests and objectives is not a new approach as the subject is increasingly gaining the attention of scholars, most prominently in the West, over the last half decade. What is lacking, however, is that while there exists a growing body of literature on this issue, little has been synthesized in an explicit and coherent attempt to connect China's African relationship with its larger foreign policy strategy into a conceptual framework<sup>10</sup>. Noting this absence within the present literature, this project aims to understand and outline the interests, motivations, characteristics, placement and role Africa plays in China's emerging foreign policy strategy, including the forces, expected/unexpected-desired/undesired, that have and shall most likely influence and shape the future trajectory of what is termed China's African strategy.

Specifically within the contemporary context (post- 1990), Africa, not simply state to state relations but indeed the continent as a whole, is increasingly becoming an important and unique aspect of China's emerging foreign policy strategy. This project, therefore, aims to demonstrate the connection between China's emerging foreign policy strategy, most importantly the main motivations currently defining their international pursuits, and their policies, portrayals and practices within Africa. This endeavour differs slightly from the two other macro accounts of present day Sino-African relations in that Chris Alden's *China in Africa* (2007) is a far more holistic account in terms of analyzing this issue from Chinese, Western and African perspectives

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<sup>10</sup> This is not to assume that such a task has never been pursued but there is a noticeable absence within the literature of a conceptual framework which places Africa within China's larger foreign policy. In particular, over the past year, a new wave of articles, commentaries and edited volumes on China's relationship with Africa have been published providing greater insight into a number of aspects on this subject. Still these lack an overall structure linking them together in a coherent manner. See Alden, Chris, Daniel Large, and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and Continent Embrace* and Rotberg, Robert I., ed., *China into Africa: Trade, Aid and Influence*. See, also, Cheng, Joseph Y.S. & Huangao Shi, "China's African Policy in the Post-Cold War Era", *Contemporary Asia*, 2009, pp. 87-115. Furthermore, Marcel Kitissou's edited volume regarding Africa's role in China's global strategy paints a very brief and incomplete picture of China's 'global strategy' and does not even attempt to neither conceptualize nor explain the facets of that term. Kitissou, Marcel, ed., *Africa in China's Global Strategy*.

while Ian Taylor's *China's New Role in Africa* (2009), though covering much of what is included in this project, is primarily focused on the impact of China's changing pursuits on the continent itself.

Specifically, this account constructs a model for identifying and linking China's three main foreign policy objectives-access, assurance and acceptance- with the various dimensions (economic, political and military) utilized to demonstrate the developing coherence and structure framing China's Africa strategy. This model, however, does not assume a unidirectional relationship in which Chinese activities on the continent are simply directed by a generic set of guidelines employed worldwide, but that specific conditions within Sino-African relations reverberate back and impact their foreign policy strategy in general. In particular, the developing discourse of South-South relations and a often asserted common history of Western colonialism and exploitation; large natural resource deposits; and a renewed interest from Western powers and the growing presence of Asian and other states considered part of the developing world in the continent has promoted Africa to an increasingly important and unique facet in China's foreign policy. Such realities, thus, call forth new academic pursuits to further understand this emerging and transforming phenomenon.

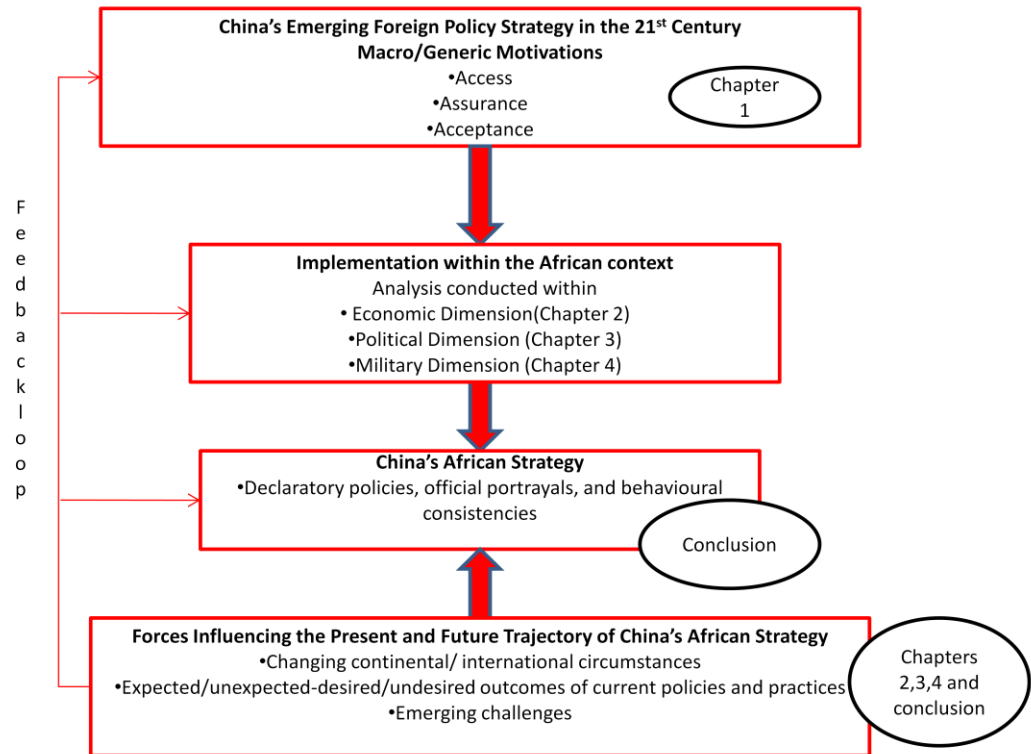
### **Methodology, thesis outline, and layout of analysis**

In undertaking this task of describing and understanding China's African strategy, it is important to begin by briefly outlining the content and sequence of the project to provide guidance and clarity for how this shall proceed (See figure 1). In particular, by accurately defining the methods employed, the area of research, and the purpose and extent of the conclusions that can be drawn regarding what is termed China's 'African strategy' misperceptions of intent and/or the limits of such an endeavour shall be mitigated to a large

extent. Methodologically, this account does not utilize nor favour explicitly any specific theory either of international relations or foreign policy; in this regard, the project would be best perceived as a theory informed rather than theory-driven endeavour. Specifically, this study is guided by a focus on identifying and unpacking the main aspects of Sino-African relations, observing and commenting on areas of continuity and change over the years. While the focus on economic, political and military dimensions can be argued to stem from a more realist perspective, these areas have been chosen for they dominate in the author's opinion the content of Sino-African relations, though other aspects, some of non-interest to realism such as social aspects, are commented upon as well. In understanding the characteristics of China's African strategy, therefore, there is an attempt to scan, observe and explain the forces which are and will most likely continue to define the future of Sino-African relations. In this manner, inferences are drawn from the available literature on Chinese behaviour, including policies, public portrayals of Sino-African relations and common practices, within the continent to note presently the most important aspects of this relationship; issues regarding the present state of Sino-African literature, including the theoretical orientations underlying these pursuits, are explored further below.

Figure 1

## China's African Strategy: Layout of Analysis



In terms of intentionality, however, theoretical favouring is more apparent but not a closed debate. With the premise that China's African strategy is largely informed by an emerging foreign policy strategy, it is inevitable that assertions and conclusions be made regarding the thought process of the contemporary Chinese leadership. In this respect, the author, as explained in Chapter One, perceives the Communist regime as one focused on issues of realpolitik, specifically stemming from the ongoing international debate about the idea of China as either a status-quo or revisionist power. In this respect, concerns including image and status, great power balancing, and multi-polarity reflect and are reproduced within the Communist regime and not

totally the result of structural forces of anarchy which is at the center piece of realism<sup>11</sup>. While not disregarding the influence external factors have on influencing the Chinese leadership, this socialization aspect cannot be omitted. In this manner, the Chinese leadership are constructed realists and heavily rationalist in terms of gaining material benefit and ensuring others perceive their augmenting power and influence as peaceful. This does not assume, however, that such intellectual paradigms are absolute within the Chinese regime nor that these mindsets may not alter over time in varying domestic and international contexts. While, therefore, perceiving the Chinese leadership as for the most part rationalist, this does not assume deeper levels of internalization of the values and norms they profess totally do not exist and are simply rhetoric employed in a realpolitik fashion<sup>12</sup>.

Having grounded this project in an empirical rather than theoretical driven pursuit (even while noting the obvious impact of theory laden perspectives in conducting this investigation) the area of research and level of analysis needs to be outlined and explained to further avoid ambiguity and misperception. First, Africa, for the purpose of this study, geographically is the continental land mass conjoined with the Middle East via the Sinai Peninsula and directly south of the European continent, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east. It is comprised of 53 states, including the island states of Cape Verde, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe and the Seychelles; while many accounts of Sino-African relations usually are fixated on the 48 states comprising Sub-Saharan Africa, omitting the five North African states of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, this study

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<sup>11</sup> For an overview of neo-realism, specifically the primary role given to the structural force of anarchy in guiding state behaviour in international relations see Waltz, Kenneth, *Theory of International Politics*.

<sup>12</sup> Concerning levels of internalization of beliefs and behaviour Alexander Wendt argues three stages exist. The first level where behaviour is conducted due to duress; the second where behaviour is rationalist, primarily concerned about material benefit, but usually masked behind other principles and values; and the third level where the actor truly has internalized and embraced the norms they promulgate for the merit in and of themselves. See, Wendt, Alexander, *Social Theory of International Politics*, specifically Chapter 6 'Three Cultures of Anarchy'.

does not make such a dissection and in the few areas where it does, for example trade relations, this is explicitly stated<sup>13</sup>.

Further on this matter, while it is readily apparent through a breakdown of affairs economically, politically and militarily that China's relations with the continent are highly uneven and heavily concentrated within a few, namely resource-rich states, the continental portrayal of Sino-African relations is a powerful discourse in their African strategy. China does not have policies for all 53 African states but rather has encapsulated diplomatically these relations under a broad banner of 'Africa' apparent within their African Policy. In this regard, while recognizing the distinctiveness within and between various African states, it is this portrayal of Africa as a singular unit, an international partner, which links Chinese policies and practices throughout the continent, including the North African states. The promotion of Africa as a singular unit, as well, is common amongst many other foreign states with deepening connections with continent; even within the continent a host of African states increasingly present themselves internationally usually as a monolithic actor<sup>14</sup>.

The depiction of Africa as an entity composing of various and diverse political, economical and social configurations is tied together due to similarities of circumstances stemming from geographical proximity, common experiences throughout the past (i.e. colonialism, identity of the third world) and indeed the active reproduction of these narratives by

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<sup>13</sup> Although within many of these accounts there is no explanation given as to why the North African states are excluded perhaps many scholars seen these states as having greater similarities and/or influence in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions than in Africa itself.

<sup>14</sup> Examples of international portrayals include the European Union's (EU) "African Strategy" and the US "African Growth and Opportunity Act", both of which, while recognizing the diversity which exists within the continent, treat Africa as a cohesion entity. African representations include the establishment of the African Union (AU). While there is increasing coordination amongst African states within the notion of a unified 'Africa' this has not lead to calls for a reconfiguration of political relations on the continent itself save for a few leaders such as Libyan President Colonel Gaddafi. Furthermore, the prospect of Africa actually becoming a more cohesive and integrated unit, like the EU, is currently quite marginal with many states wary of continental integration such as Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. See "Ambitious plan for a new Africa: Welcome to the U.S.A. (that's the United States of Africa)", *The Independent*, 30 June 2007.

African and foreign states. Due to such a reality, while at first glance it may seem odd to investigate Sino-African relations, the idea of ‘Africa’, promulgated by many actors involved, is an important agent within these processes that must be acknowledged. This does not, however, mean investigation is to be conducted entirely within such a continental plain for Chinese interest and activities on the continent are largely clustered in a small group of states, calling for research into the rationales behind these occurrences. This study shall not, though, be a country-by-country account of China’s relations with each African state but highlight and unpack broad noticeable trends with respect to Beijing’s dealings on the continent.

Noting that there exist differences and sometimes outright contradictions and conflict between China’s declaratory policy and its practices on the continent, a distinction is made between Beijing’s African Policy and what is termed their African strategy for within the current literature both are used as synonymous<sup>15</sup>. While China’s African Policy is the document in which Beijing has listed and arranged its interests and pursuits on the continent in a public manner, its African strategy encompasses investigation into the interests and behavioural consistencies beyond rhetorical pronouncements that are evident in their activities and are not necessarily stated in their policy positions. While it is important not to overemphasize an absolute coherence within their African strategy, analysis via the three power dimensions demonstrates that there are facets of this relationship which lie outside their declaratory policy that may not be entirely the result of unforeseen circumstances or consequences. Specifically, the unevenness of their economic, political and military relations calls forth an enhanced pursuit to understand these phenomena and how they interact with Beijing’s larger continental discourse of Sino-African

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<sup>15</sup> For example, while agreeing with much of his analysis, J. Peter Pham uses these terms interchangeably as if the entirety of China’s African endeavours stems from and is encapsulated within their declaratory policy. As well, his observations of Chinese rationale behind a number of practices on the continent lies outside Beijing’s African Policy though he continues to use the terms policy and strategy as the same. See, Pham, J. Peter, “China’s African Strategy and its Implication for US Interests”, *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 2006, pp. 239-253.

relations. To reiterate again, while such a portrayal may be inaccurate of the present realities, the importance afforded to such a narrative is power in itself, impacting relations to an increasing degree.

China as an actor, as well, needs to be properly identified and explained. This analysis in general focuses primarily on state-level, that is government to government interaction, between the People's Republic of China and Africa for while noting the presence other actors, particular the growing Chinese Diaspora communities across the continent and the slow emergence of Chinese multinational companies with diminishing links to the central government, the state is still the predominant driving force behind China's pursuits on the continent<sup>16</sup>. As Gill, Huang and Morrison assert 'China lacks well-developed, independent business and civil society sectors, which for now leaves the full responsibility for carrying forwards its vision in the hands of state leaders and official diplomats'<sup>17</sup>. The privileging of state-level relationships, as well, is an entrenched position within China's foreign policy in general, evident in their refusal to allow African and Chinese non-governmental organizations to attend the 2006 Forum on China and African Cooperation Summit in Beijing<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless, this situation is changing as Beijing increasingly finds it difficult to control the intentions and actions of these non-state entities on the continent; efforts to regulate their behaviour, as well highlights the cumbersome and at times conflicting milieu of governmental departments and agencies involved in China's African

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<sup>16</sup> For example, as of 2008 of the top 500 Chinese firm, many with international operations, only one was totally private. This list includes, as well, a number of companies such as China's three largest National Oil Companies which are heavily involved on the African continent. See Corkin, Lucy, "The Strategic Entry of China's Emerging Multinationals into Africa", *China Report*, 2007, p. 310.

<sup>17</sup> , Gill, Bates, Chin-hao Huang and J. Stephen Morrison, "Assessing China's Growing Influence in Africa", *China Security*, Summer 2007, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Alden, *China in Africa*, p. 2.

strategy<sup>19</sup>. Throughout this project, therefore, from time to time these non-state Chinese actors will be commented upon and analyzed according to the level of influence they have on China's dealings on the continent.

Having outlined the methodology and area of analysis, an organizational breakdown of the project is the last step before the investigation can begin and shall further bring clarity to the argument being made. Starting with the fundamental premise that China's activities on the continent are largely informed by the objectives underpinning its foreign policy strategy in general, it is imperative to first outline exactly what this entails. Chapter One, therefore, lays the groundwork for understanding China's emerging foreign policy strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This part should not be interpreted as a radically new endeavour or the main focus of the thesis, but instead the illustration of China's foreign policy strategy draws heavily on the works of other scholars, most notably Avery Goldstein, David Lampton and Yong Deng among others.

In particular, many insights are drawn from Avery Goldstein's arguments of an emerging Chinese grand strategy, specifically that since the mid-1990s an overarching consensus, a central logic, within the Communist regime has developed regarding the main interests, challenges and avenues which frame China's behaviour internationally<sup>20</sup>. Saying that, employment of the access, assurance and acceptance model adds a further layer of analysis focused on the reflexive nature of the pursuits Beijing undertakes to be accepted as a great power. Unlike other accounts centred on the fundamental interests underpinning China's international behaviour<sup>21</sup>, access, assurance and acceptance is designed to unpack the manner in which Beijing's power assets-economic,

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<sup>19</sup> See Gill, Bates & James Reilly, "The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. In Africa", *The Washington Quarterly*, 2007, pp. 37-52.

<sup>20</sup> See Goldstein, Avery, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security*.

<sup>21</sup> For example see Wang, Fei-Ling, "Preservation, Prosperity and Power: what motivates China's foreign policy", *Contemporary China*, 2005, pp. 669-694.

political and military- are used to ensure consent in a non-confrontational manner, wishing to avoid any sort of violent power-transition as their presence and influence augments. In this respect, access, assurance and acceptance represents the objectives desired by Beijing that the international community give to them in furthering their rise within the global system. Previous Sino-African relations and the growing placement and importance of Africa in Chinese foreign policy will conclude with first chapter with an emphasis on noting the twin forces of Beijing's macro objectives and the specific situational context of Africa which have produced an emerging though evolving African strategy. After introducing a conceptual understanding of China's emerging foreign policy strategy and laying the foundation of investigating China's African strategy, the proceeding three chapters comprise the bulk of the research as analysis is directed towards explaining the linkages between Chinese objectives of access, assurance, and acceptance within their economic, political and military interactions with the continent. Behavioural consistencies and specific relations of great importance shall be explored as well as highlighting present and emerging challenges confronting Beijing in each dimension.

### **The dimensions**

The power dimensions are employed to unpack the extent and characteristics of Beijing's various policies and practices across the continent in order to recognize broad noticeable trends, as well as highlighting incremental and localized changes to their African pursuits. In particular, the growing divide between policy and practice on the part of Beijing calls forth investigation into the realities of their investment and activities on the continent. Beginning with declaratory interests underlying these three power dimensions stemming from their African Policy which is delineated into political, economic and peace/security fields<sup>22</sup>, differences between Beijing's

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<sup>22</sup> A fourth field, 'education, science, culture, health and social aspects' is specifically addressed in the conclusion.

policies and the realities of their current practices in Africa can be studied and attempts made to explain such a discord.

While noting that these three power dimensions are heavily interconnected and dependent on one another, artificial dissection is necessary to cover broadly their practices on the continent and understand how these power assets are used, to what extent, and by whom. In this respect, while an African strategy is emerging with the unfolding of a larger foreign policy strategy, these dimensions are not necessarily coherent or congruent within and between one another for a number of emerging actors and changing circumstances are developing, creating contradictions and outright conflicts within China's African pursuits. Here it is important to briefly outline the content and extent of relations analyzed within each dimension, bringing clarity to their distinctiveness but yet noting their highly interconnected and dependent relationship.

The Economic Dimension: Within China's economic pursuits on the continent the main interest surrounds the augmentation of Africa as an economic partner within a declaratory focus of relations as mutually beneficial and development oriented. Issues and policies covered in this dimension, furthermore, concern trade and capital flows (save for arms exports covered in the military chapter). In particular, the 'Angolan model' of trade presently popular in Beijing's economic interaction with the continent in general is dissected and discussed with a particular focus on resource extraction and import-export trade patterns in general. Within this undertaken, the political strategies encasing their economic pursuits shall be explored but only in so far as it relates to their economic pursuits. The nature of China's foreign aid, including political interests underpinning them, to the continent will also be analyzed.

The Political Dimension: Within the political dimension, analysis is focused on diplomatic relations both on the continent and within the wider international context. In particular, while all

of China's policies and pursuits economically and militarily can be said to stem from political roots, this dimension focuses on the nature of China's long held foreign policy principles of state sovereignty and non-interference as the critical foundations underpinning Sino-African relations. In particular these principles are analyzed with respect to China's development and human rights discourses as well as their close association with a number of autocratic regimes on the continent. Furthermore, the increasing importance of Africa as an international political partner of Beijing is investigated including joint cooperation in promoting commonly held positions such as the further democratization of the international system and acceptance of China as a responsible great power.

The Military Dimension: Constituting the smallest aspect of their strategy, Chinese military interests in Africa are largely subordinate and supportive of their larger economic and political pursuits. Nevertheless, the incremental growth in Sino-African military relations is also a function of a broader global military engagement on the part of Beijing in easing concerns of their growing international power. In this manner, Chinese military relations on the continent, including the emphasis on traditional military diplomacy and support and contribution to numerous UN peacekeeping missions, shall be explored and analyzed. The rational, extent and impact of China's ongoing arms sales with the continent will also be covered, including the growing contradictions between the multiple interests which underpin their existence that increasingly come to contradict with a number of Beijing's other interests.

In concluding, the final chapter shall briefly judge the effectiveness of China's current African strategy in achieving its foreign policy objectives and the most pressing emerging challenges which could derail Beijing's continued success in these endeavours in the future. Specifically, attention shall be given towards interpreting China's African strategy as a

developing and transformative phenomenon, in which the inclusion of new actors and circumstances will continue to affect the manner in which Beijing determines the prioritization of its interests on the continent. Finally, comments on the growing role and importance of Africa in China's foreign policy in general shall be speculated upon as well as areas of research needing further attention in understanding this developing relationship.

### **A note on the state of Sino-African literature**

Before beginning the analysis, it is important to briefly review the current field of literature on this subject to develop an appreciation of 1) the extent of research conducted presently into the issue and 2) investigate not only the research itself but indeed those conducting these studies and the assumptions, primarily unstated, which affect the nature of their academic/policy work. China's growing interest and presence has sparked a renewed commitment from mostly Western policy and academic communities to understand the characteristics, rationales and outcomes of this evolving phenomenon. In particular Chris Alden's 2007 release of *China in Africa* brought the subject back to light after nearly two decades of disinterest; in fact, throughout the 1990s the only scholar who consistently studied Sino-African relations was Ian Taylor who continues to be one of the main contributors to this accelerating field of research. This stop and go flow of the study of Sino-African relations, furthermore, is in many ways reflective of the sporadic nature of interactions between the two over the past 50 years<sup>23</sup>. In the contemporary context, while there is an emerging body of literature on this subject, little effort has been made to examine the sources of these information flows and the possible rationales underlying their existence. While it is not the main purpose of

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<sup>23</sup> For a concise overview of the history of academic study of Sino-African relations see Large, Daniel, "Beyond 'Dragon in the Bush': The Study of China-African Relations", *African Affairs*, 2008, pp. 45-61.

this paper to critically explore these issues a few words of caution should be noted regarding the present available research.

First, much of the information stems, like this work, from scholarly communities from those states considered the West (specifically the United States, Canada and the European Union). While part of this phenomenon is a reflection of the underdevelopment of this topic in Chinese and African academic circles (and thus much of the information and sourcing for this paper relies on Western accounts) it remains important to be critical of these sources. Specifically, while much of the research regarding the study of ‘China in Africa’ appears to be accurate, including the growing discord between Beijing’s development discourse and the realities of their activities across the continent, there is little reflection on the part of Western scholars on the practices of Western states in African affairs which contribute to these processes as well. On this point Sautman and Hairong, in one of the few attempts to critically evaluate Western interpretations of Sino-African relations, state ‘The main problem with the China-in-Africa discourse is not empirical inaccuracies about Chinese activities in Africa, but rather a de-contextualization of criticism for ideological reasons’<sup>24</sup>. While as of late there is a growing, more reflexive body of Western research regarding Chinese foreign policy in Africa with an equally critical stance regarding Western and other foreign states agendas and practices for the continent, popular media portrayals of China in Africa as an exploiter and imperialist continue to hamper attempts to accurately outline and understand their relationship<sup>25</sup>.

Attempts to pigeon hole China’s involvement in Africa into a selective role (such as an exploiter, colonizer etc) not only reflects perhaps more a desire by policy communities to bring

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<sup>24</sup> Sautman, Barry & Yan Hairong, “The Forest from the Trees: Trade, Investment and the China-In-Africa Discourse”, *Pacific Affairs*, Spring 2008, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> For example, see Mawdsley, Emma, “Fu Manchu vs Dr. Livingstone in the Dark Continent? Representing China, Africa and the West in British Broadsheet Newspapers”, *Political Geography*, 2008, pp. 509-529.

parsimony for evaluating their presence (in particular in comparison to the interests and agendas of Western states) but in so doing neglects to observe the evolving nature of this phenomenon, specifically recent and noticeable permutations in China's African strategy. Due to the transformative nature of Sino-African relations, attempts to categorize Beijing's interests and impact on the continent as rigid are inaccurate and prematurely pass sentence on the intentions underpinning China's involvement. While it is argued that an emerging African strategy is forming, largely informed by Beijing's wider foreign policy interests, the evolving nature of Sino-African relations, including changing geopolitical circumstances internationally and on the continent itself has influenced the nature and trajectory of China's African pursuits. In this respect, the present analysis into three power dimensions and how they are employed in the African context to achieve access, assurance and acceptance, is aimed at attempting to broadly outline the nature and rationale of their activities on the continent but as well note the evolving characteristic of this process.

Finally, this undertaking is primarily concerned with unpacking and explaining the characteristics of China's contemporary African strategy, including present and future influences that will most likely impact it. With such a primary motivation, therefore, this work is not directed towards studying African perspectives on Sino-African relations nor Western or other states foreign policies in Africa but these fields of research shall be utilized when they assist in explaining the nature of China's interaction with the continent. Furthermore, such endeavours reveal the serious shortcomings of the present day research, specifically the lack of networking, information sharing and in general regular contact between African, Chinese and Western

scholarly and policy communities which hampers attempts to combine their respective positions and research projects<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> A noticeable exception to this occurrence is Firoze Manji and Stephen Marks *African Perspectives on China in Africa*, which brings together African and Western scholars to investigate this understudied issue.

## **China's Emerging Foreign Policy Strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Re-engagement with Africa**

Since the near collapse of Party control due to domestic unrest and their temporary isolation internationally by the Western community following the Tiananmen Square incident, China's communist leaders have become well aware of the interconnectedness of the internal and external challenges to their authoritarian rule in the contemporary global environment. Furthermore, with the downfall of the Soviet Union Beijing confronted an international system largely defined by US superiority, particularly militarily, seen as a key obstacle to their continued internal development and external growth as a major power. Specifically, over the past two decades Western policy circles have increasingly fixed their gaze on understanding China's strategic intentions as its power and influence grows in order to decide in what manner the international community should respond to this process.

Such analyses are largely framed and contribute to a debate attempting to categorize China's rise as either revisionist or status-quo in nature (see below), with some scholars prescribing strategies of containment<sup>27</sup> while others believe China can become assimilated into the current international system, adopting the norms and practices underpinning it<sup>28</sup>. Uncertainty, as well, is evident in many aspects of American declaratory policies concerning China (an obvious issue for Beijing as their relationship with the US is the most important aspect

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<sup>27</sup> For example see Krauthammer, Charles, "Why We Must Contain China", *Time Magazine*, 31 July 1995; Gertz, Bill, *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America*; Mearsheimer, John J., *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, specifically pp. 396-402; Kaplan, Robert D., "How We Would Fight China", *The Atlantic*, June 2005. Within these accounts, however, differences exist in the loci of explaining China's revisionist behaviour. Neo-realist analyses see China's rise of relative power versus the US and others as inevitably producing conflict while other accounts attribute the nature of Beijing's authoritarian regime as the source of opposition to the liberal international system.

<sup>28</sup> For example, see Ikenberry, G. John, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?", *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2008.

of their foreign policy<sup>29</sup>) with a noticeable balancing attempt to neither cast them as an outright adversary nor as a friend or ally; instead, China is increasingly portrayed as a ‘strategic competitor’, implying that though they are not necessarily a threat they possess the greatest capabilities to challenge US supremacy<sup>30</sup>.

Facing such an international system, particularly the wariness held by the US and other Western powers of the intentions underpinning and ramifications of their growing power and clout, consensus was reached within the Party in the mid-1990s of the international challenges facing their rule and the broad avenues to be taken to ensure these did not inhibit their interests. In particular, Avery Goldstein argues that such agreement is framed by two overarching challenges pillaring what he terms *China’s Grand Strategy*: 1) maintaining international conditions that will make it feasible for Beijing to focus on domestic development; and 2) ensuring the US and other great powers do not use their current power asymmetry to stunt or inhibit China’s international aspirations<sup>31</sup>. The Chinese leadership has been and is quite conscious of the presence of ‘China-threat’ theories, engaging in a spirited diplomatic rebuttal of such claims by arguing their intentions are peaceful and explaining their subsequent rise as

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<sup>29</sup> See Shirk, Susan L., *China: Fragile Superpower*, Chapter 8: ‘The United States: External Troubles Can Become Internal Troubles’.

<sup>30</sup> On general concerns of China’s rise on the international system see “The National Security Strategy”, *Office of the White House*, March 2006, pp. 41-42; on military challenges see “National Defense Strategy 2008”, *US Department of Defense*, June 2008, p. 3 and “Quadrennial Defense Review Report”, *US Department of Defense*, 6 Feb 2006, pp. 29-30. For a detailed analysis of US strategic concerns regarding China’s military developments, see “Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People’s Republic of China 2009”, *United States Department of Defense*. On potential economic threats posed by China see “Is China a Threat to the US Economy?”, *CRS Report to Congress*, 23 January 2007. While noting that most likely many of these policies will be changed, it appears President Obama also views China as a strategic competitor, but perhaps one of a more conciliatory nature than the previous administration, see Webster, Graham, “Obama on China: ‘Neither Our Enemy Nor Our Friend’”, *Transpacifica*, 27 April 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Goldstein, Avery, “The Diplomatic Fact of China’s Grand Strategy: A Rising Power’s Emerging Choice”, *The China Quarterly*, December 2001, p. 836.

beneficial to the international community at large<sup>32</sup>. Furthermore, this current strategy reveals an approach very concerned about image and status<sup>33</sup> as well as demonstrating a high level of sophistication in the employment of various power resources to achieve interests both of a short and long term nature<sup>34</sup>.

China's contemporary foreign policy orientation is largely a function of a strategic culture in which issues of realpolitik are dominant and have been for a number of years within Chinese decision-making, specifically issues of balance of power<sup>35</sup>. Within such a framework, it is evident both through declaratory positions and behavioural consistencies that while there are varying levels of discomfort with respect to certain aspects of the international system, the use of violence has been disregarded as an effective avenue for enacting change. Furthermore, while levels of discontent with their position within the international system have remained throughout various Chinese communist regimes beginning with Mao, since Deng's rule and particularly evident in the rule of Presidents Jiang and Hu the declining desirability of military force and an enhanced concern regarding ensuring consent from the international community regarding China's growing role and influence have largely come to define Beijing's contemporary foreign policy focus<sup>36</sup>. The complexity of this foreign policy, encapsulating both instances of support and opposition to facets of the current international system in large part discounts attempts to

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<sup>32</sup> See Deng, Yong, "Reputation and the Security Dilemma: China Reacts to the China Threat Theory", in Alastair Johnston & Robert S. Ross, eds., *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*.

<sup>33</sup> See Deng, Yong, *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*.

<sup>34</sup> See Lampton, David, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money and Minds*.

<sup>35</sup> For more detailed analysis of China's strategic culture see Johnston, Alastair, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* and Christensen, Thomas J., "Chinese Realpolitik" in Guoli Liu, editor, *Chinese Foreign Policy in Transition*.

<sup>36</sup> See Feng, Huiyun, "Is China a Revisionist Power?", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, pp. 313-334.

classify China within a binary logic as either a status-quo or revisionist power<sup>37</sup>. Saying this, however, debate remains as to how to interpret China's augmenting power and influence internationally which inevitably has germinated dialogue as to defining the metrics of analysis itself: status-quo and revisionist power.

For neo-realist scholars, many of which see China as a revisionist power<sup>38</sup>, the status-quo/revisionist power binary is in relation to reconfigurations of power, most prominently expressed through an augmentation of military power. As a state, like China, enhances their power capabilities they inevitably come to clash with those actors which currently hold an asymmetrical, but relatively declining, advantage in terms of power. In this sense, China, which has expressed a desire to continue to increase its power and influence, is seen as a revisionist power wishing to alter the balance of power (most notably and worryingly to realist scholars, militarily<sup>39</sup>) thus conflict in some form is inevitable with the other established powers as it competes to gain further control over the international system, though the degree and intensity of such a pursuit is highly debated within neo-realism<sup>40</sup>.

While not wishing to assume a specific stand in this debate, if the desire to alter the balance of power is the only factor critical to the status-quo/revisionist power debate as neo-

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<sup>37</sup> For perhaps the best account on this point see Johnston, Alastair, "Is China a Status-Quo Power?", *International Security*, Spring 2003, pp. 5-56. Johnston scrutinizes attempts to classify China as either a status-quo or revisionist power by challenging these very notions and the object in which they are in relation to- the international system.

<sup>38</sup> See Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Waltz, Kenneth, "Structural Realism After the Cold War", *International Security*, Summer 2000, pp. 5-41.

<sup>39</sup> See, Menges, Constantine C., *China: The Gathering Threat*; Moshar, Steven W. *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*.

<sup>40</sup> In this regard, see Mearsheimer's differentiation between 'defensive' and 'offensive' realists in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 17-22. For Mearsheimer, all emerging powers are revisionist for he sees them as inevitably wishing to change the international system.

realism emphasizes that China would be interpreted as a revisionist power<sup>41</sup>. As shall be demonstrated below, the Communist regime has actively promoted the further multi-polarization of the international society specifically in order to check what is termed 'hegemonism and power politics', usually interpreted indirectly as the US. Saying this, however, while recognizing its augmenting military capacity, a point continually fixated upon by neo-realist and other China-threat scholars, the characteristics of power assets employed by Beijing largely escapes neo-realist analysis, specifically issues of image and status and the continual pursuits to generate assurance and acceptance.

Discontent with the present day international system, including asymmetries of power, is evident in Chinese foreign policy, thus it can be argued there is a dislike with the current content, including not only military power but indeed the norms and values actively sponsored by the current great power establishment of the US and Western Europe. With this in mind, though, Beijing portrays itself, and thus is actively involved in the ongoing status-quo/revisionist power debate, as a status-quo power determined to augment and support the international system. This does not, however, imply total satisfaction with all the facets underpinning what Beijing perceives to be the international system but with the current rejection of the use of violence, the Chinese leadership has attempted to ease sources of uncertainty that their 'rise' shall not be violent. Though disagreements exist between China and other great powers, most notable those considered part of the West, Beijing promotes itself as a responsible great power protecting norms and values they perceive as vital for ensuring peace within the international system such

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<sup>41</sup> Of the neo-realist scholars, Robert Gilpin offers the most detailed criteria for determining whether a state is status-quo or revisionist, moving beyond changes to the balance of power to include also an explicit wish to alter the 'rules of the game'; for Gilpin, however, like many neo-realist scholars he interprets all rising powers as inevitably revisionist as they wish to further alter the international system to accommodate and solidify their augmenting power and influence in a system defined by anarchy and mistrust and uncertainty between states. See Gilpin, Robert, *War and Change in World Politics*.

as respect for state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. In this manner, the Chinese leadership, unlike neo-realist analyses, perceives status-quo as not a satisfaction with the current distribution of power in the international system but more so in relation to the manner in which China wishes to enact changes to part of these processes, including the democratization of the international system to widen inclusion in international decision-making, particularly to those countries considered part of the third world.

Within these processes, furthermore, the Chinese leadership argues it promotes and supports norms and values that will further lead to peace and prosperity in the international system. Thus its portrayal as a status-quo power is not a reflection of total approval of the current global situation but a promotion of the content and means which will strengthen and protect the international system. While this account shall not provide a definition of status-quo/revisionist power it is important to note the active involvement of Chinese academic and policy communities to this discourse, which in itself reflects not only their promotion of China's rise as peaceful but indeed expresses the manner in which status-quo/revisionist binary should be interpreted according to Beijing.

Furthermore, the notion of soft power, defined by Joseph Nye as the power to co-opt rather than coerce using power assets to generate acceptance and emulation instead of duress<sup>42</sup>, dominates the declaratory foci of China's emerging foreign power strategy<sup>43</sup>. Aware of this ongoing China-threat debate, leaders in Beijing actively promote their behaviour as peaceful and

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<sup>42</sup> Nye, Joseph S., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, pp. 5-11.

<sup>43</sup> While many Chinese scholars have utilized Nye's concept of Soft Power, some are quite wary of the intentionality of the promotion of such a concept particularly after a 2005 article Nye wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* arguing China's rise in soft power, its ability to ensure consent and cooperation through the norms, values and policies it professes, challenges the soft power of the US particularly in Asia; some Chinese scholars, therefore, see Soft Power as a tool furthering America's hegemonic project by justifying an expansion of the China-threat discourse by focusing on Beijing's declaratory policies as not simply rhetorical but challenging US interests internationally. See Cho, Young Nam & Jong Ho Jeong, "China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources and Prospects", *Asian Survey*, 2008, pp. 456-451. For Nye's article see Nye, Joseph, "The Rise of China's Soft Power", *Wall Street Journal Asia*, 29 December 2005.

beneficial to decrease uncertainty in others, not only through declaratory statements but the employment of ‘hard power’ resources, specifically military power, towards functions seen as supportive of the international system such as UN peacekeeping operations<sup>44</sup>. With this in mind, though, determining the reasoning behind such advancement and employment of soft power, and in general concerns regarding image and status, are unknown and disputed<sup>45</sup>. Though this account leans towards a rationalist interpretation in which at least in part Beijing’s motives are to ensure its augmentation in power and influence are not stunted by wariness from the current great powers, deeper levels of internalization to the norms and values they profess cannot be either absolutely affirmed or rejected. Despite this ambiguity, issues of image, status, and the notion as a responsible great power are increasingly promoted within China’s foreign policy, reflecting their active involvement in the status-quo/revisionist power debate and the importance these processes, including shaping the perspectives of others of China as a peaceful rising great power, have assumed in Chinese foreign policy.

### **China’s emerging foreign policy strategy: interests, objectives, and principles**

In moving beyond such attempts to distinctly label China as either a status-quo or revisionist power, but noting the importance these idea have in their foreign policy calculus, therefore, a new conceptual model for understanding China’s foreign policy strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is presented, outlining the main interests, objectives and principles underpinning and informing Chinese decision-makers (see figure 2).

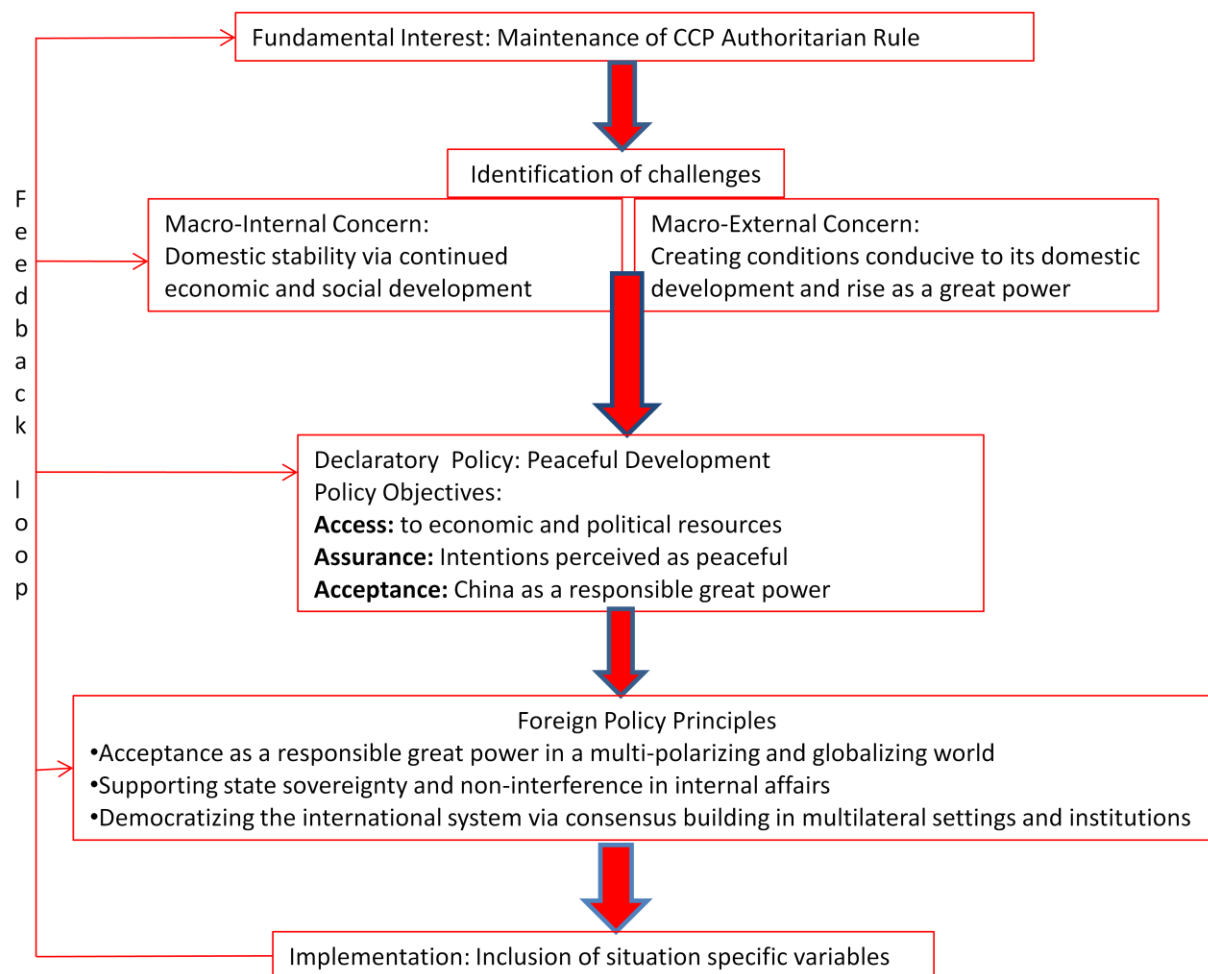
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<sup>44</sup> See Gill, Bates & Yanzhong Huang, “Sources and Limits of Chinese ‘Soft Power’”, *Survival*, Summer 2006, pp. 17-36.

<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, traditional focus on ‘hard power’ resources such as military power and increasing economic clout have largely dominated Western frameworks of analysis with respect to the notion of China’s ‘rise’, neglecting soft power assets and pursuits, including the promotion of Chinese culture and foreign policies as beneficial and peaceful in ensuring consent and cooperation internationally. A noticeable exception, however, is Joshua Kurlantzick’s *Charm Offensive: How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World*.

Figure 2

## China's Emerging Foreign Policy Strategy: A Conceptual Model



Over the past two decades, the Communist regime has been engaged in developing a well defined foreign policy strategy designed to tackle both internal and external challenges to their rule. International behaviour in addressing these concerns is channelled through Beijing's declaratory policy of peaceful development, broken down conceptually into a study of three foreign policy principles: acceptance internationally of China as a responsible great power in a multi-polarizing and globalizing world; supporting state sovereignty and non-interference in

internal affairs; and democratizing the international system via consensus building in multilateral settings and institutions. In tandem these policies are employed to achieve three broad and interrelated foreign policy objectives: *access* to economic and political resources; *assurance* of China's intentions as peaceful; and *acceptance* of China as an emerging responsible great power. While changing situational contexts and reprioritization of interests add a level of contingency to these processes, as China continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century a well-defined foreign policy strategy does appear to emerging, framing and reflecting to a growing extent Beijing's thinking on the evolving mutually-dependent relationship between the international system and their place within it.

To begin, it is important to note that the Communist regime since the early 1990s has not been defined by a paramount leader as in the past but by a developing institutionalized consensus-approach where no one leader or group is absolutely dominate. In the case of foreign policy this is quite noticeable, with multiple government and Party departments, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of Commerce (MoC), the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the Ministries of State Security and Public Security as well as a number of powerful provincial and municipal governments all vying for influence in these processes. While ultimate authority rests with the Party Politburo Standing Committee, specifically the President, bureaucratic politics and bargaining processes have become central facets within the Communist regime leading to a consensus-oriented approach<sup>46</sup>. The Chinese state, therefore, specifically when investigating the reasoning and nature of foreign policy should not be interpreted as a unified monolithic entity but one comprised of various and at times rivalling but not usually openly hostile departments and government bodies searching for power and influence; such

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<sup>46</sup> Shirk, pp. 35-48. See also Bhalla, Madhu, "Domestic Roots of China's Foreign and Security Policy", *International Studies*, 2005, pp. 208-209.

competition, though, is mediated by larger agreements of public Party solidarity (explained below) and an institutionalized process of closed door negotiations and elite brokerage to achieve consensus in an organized and non-abrasive manner to their rule<sup>47</sup>.

Despite this enlargement of actors, broad agreement has developed since the 1990s on projecting a unified image both domestically and internationally to maintain the authoritarian rule of the Party. The impetus for a need for such unity primarily stemmed from the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 with the near collapse of Party rule and their temporary relegation to pariah status internationally. Within this aftermath, consensus has gradually throughout the Party been achieved on agreeing on their main interests, macro-challenges to their authoritarian rule, and the avenues pursued to ensure these challenges do not become regime threatening.

Such a process has resulted in what Avery Goldstein terms a Chinese ‘Grand Strategy’ defined not by the summation of Beijing’s foreign policies but by a ‘...central logic that informs and links those policies, the regime’s vision about how it can most sensibly serve the nation’s interests (goals) in light of the country’s capabilities (means) and the international constraints it faces’<sup>48</sup>. The manifestation, however, of this Grand Strategy is not encoded within one encompassing declaratory document but has become clear over time with noticeable trends in Chinese public foreign policy positions and behavioural consistencies which in themselves inform and influence the decisions of successive Chinese leaders. Promulgation of declaratory aspects of China’s Grand strategy, furthermore, are designed to structure and arrange interests,

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<sup>47</sup> For one of the most recent accounts of the changing nature of the Communist regime and the subsequent alterations in the manner in which it wields power and control see Fewsmith, Joseph *China since Tiananmen*. See, also, Gilley, Bruce, “Legitimacy and Institutional Change: The Case of China”, *Comparative Political Studies*, March 2008, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 259-284.

<sup>48</sup> Goldstein, Avery, *Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security*, p. 19.

objectives and principles in such a manner to minimize the potential of contradictions amongst them as well aim to create certainty in others of their future intentions and behaviour.

*Managing internal and external challenges*

Internally, the macro-challenge facing the Communist leadership is to ensure the conditions for continued economic and social development, which has become along with a renewed sense of nationalism the key pillar of Party legitimacy following their implicit rejection of Communism/Maoism since the implementation of market reforms and the Open Door Policy<sup>49</sup>. Specifically, issues of social unrest stemming from a multitude of factors including uneven regional development, widening income distributions (particularly between rural and urban), environmental degradation, government corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency and ethnic minority resistance (most notably in Xinjiang and Tibet) have become daily concerns for leaders in Beijing<sup>50</sup>. While the development of large-scale social unrest is a constant concern, a Party split is seen as equally if not even a more threatening and probable scenario. Attempts to generate legitimacy, therefore, do not solely extend from the Party to the citizenry but indeed managing elite-relations within the Party is a continuous task. While potential Party divisions appear marginal, and with some accounts persuasively arguing the current regime's hold on power despite decentralization is more secure than ever<sup>51</sup>, under circumstances of large social

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<sup>49</sup> See Holbig, Heike, "Ideological Reform and Political Legitimacy in China: Challenges in the Post-Jiang era" *The German Institute of Global and Area Studies Working Papers*, March 2006.

<sup>50</sup> See Tanner, Murray Scot, "China Rethinks Unrest", *The Washington Quarterly*, pp. 137-156; on a further elaboration of the domestic threats to the Party's rule see Shirk, Chapter 3-'Domestic Threats'.

<sup>51</sup> See Nathan, Andrew J. "Authoritarian Resilience", *Journal of Democracy*, January 2003, pp. 6-17; Shambaugh, David, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaption*; Landry, Pierre, *Decentralized Authoritarianism in China: The Communist Party's Control of Local Elites in the Post-Mao Era*.

upheaval it is unclear how integrated and united they would remain, including their relationship with government organs and the PLA<sup>52</sup>.

The task of preserving and augmenting social stability, however, is not simply an internally-enclosed process for despite the noticeable shift in policy from ‘get rich fast’ to sustainable development, China’s economic demands are outstripping its resource base<sup>53</sup>. Specifically, while leaders in Beijing have slowly attempted to invest in renewable energy supplies, since becoming an oil importer in 1993 China has increasingly become reliant on foreign sources to fuel its growing economy<sup>54</sup>. International acquisition, however, goes beyond simply fossil fuels and ores to include as well access to capital, technology and markets for its export oriented economy, motivating further economic linkages internationally.

Externally, China’s macro-challenge is to create space to further its integration into the international system to craft conditions beneficial to its domestic development and rise as a great power<sup>55</sup>. Access to resources as listed above are of primary concern but as well ensuring non-interference in their internal affairs is a key priority; particularly seen as dangerous are strategies of ‘peaceful evolution’ by Western states pressuring, to varying degrees and levels of explicitly, democratic transition following the Tiananmen Square incident which has heightened Party

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<sup>52</sup> For example, see Pei, Minxin, “Will the Chinese Communist Party Survive the Crisis?”, *Foreign Affairs*, March 2009; Shirk, pp. 69-78.

<sup>53</sup> For more on Beijing’s sustainable development agenda see Cheng, Chu-Yuan, “China’s New Development Plan: Strategy, Agenda and Prospects” *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 2007, pp. 44-59; Fan, C. Cindy, “China’s Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2006-2010): From ‘Getting Rich First’ to ‘Common Prosperity’”, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 2006, pp. 708-723. For an overview of China’s growing resource demands see “A ravenous dragon: A special report on China’s Quest for Resources”, *The Economist*, 15 March 2008 and “China’s Commodity Hunger: Implications for Africa and Latin America”, Deutsche Bank Research, 13 June 2006.

<sup>54</sup> On China’s Energy Policy see “China’s Energy Conditions and Policies”, The Information Office of the State Council, December 2007. Despite the fact that as a percentage of fuel consumption oil over the next 20 years will decrease in China, quantitatively it is predicted to roughly triple with upwards of 70-80% of oil being imported. See “World Energy Outlook 2007-China and India Insights: Executive Summary”, International Energy Association.

<sup>55</sup> Goldstein, “The Diplomatic Fact of China’s Grand Strategy”, p. 836.

concern regarding the influence of outside forces on domestic politics<sup>56</sup>. The Communist regime's ample awareness, as well, of the fate of other rising powers has made them very prudent and calculating in their relationship with the US and the West, attempting to ensure they do not use their current power superiority to stunt China's development<sup>57</sup>. Furthermore, the essential dilemma facing leaders in Beijing is to achieve a strategy to continue their upward mobility within the international system without being perceived as revisionist and drawing the attention and concentration of the established great powers against them. As Goldstein asserts 'China...aims to increase the country's international clout without triggering a counterbalancing reaction'<sup>58</sup>.

### **Peaceful development and Beijing's foreign policy objectives**

The most encompassing document to date in attempting to systematically outline Beijing's foreign policy is 'China's Peaceful Development Road', released in 2005. Though most of the content is not new, the collection and synthesizing of them into one policy framework demonstrates a new commitment on the part of Beijing to bring clarity to their foreign policy goals and objectives to an international audience<sup>59</sup>. Such a project stems from a heightened interest in image and status, seeing acceptance internationally as crucial for managing

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<sup>56</sup> Garver, John W., "China's US Policies", in Yong Deng & Fei-Ling Wang *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*.

<sup>57</sup> Lampton, p. 26; Goldstein, "The Diplomatic Fact of China's Grand Strategy", p. 836.

<sup>58</sup> Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, p. 12. International acceptance of their rise to a great power as well is a further source of domestic legitimacy of the Party, feeding nationalist sentiments. For more see Zao, Suisheng, "China's Pragmatic Nationalism: Is it Manageable?", *The Washington Quarterly*, pp. 131-144.

<sup>59</sup> Jia, Qingguo, "Peaceful Development: China's policy of reassurance", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 2005, pp. 493-494.

Beijing's intertwined internal and external challenges<sup>60</sup>. Specifically, peaceful development, and the related notion of a harmonious world, has become the declaratory core of China's foreign policy, attempting to ease international concern of China's rise as not only peaceful but indeed beneficial to the international community as a whole. Built upon the mutually-constituted processes of peace and development, Beijing argues that the growth and prosperity of China and the world are interdependent processes; one cannot develop without the other<sup>61</sup>.

Pillaring China's declaratory policy of peaceful development are three interconnected though not necessarily explicit broad foreign policy objectives: access, assurance and acceptance. With economic and social development at the forefront of the minds of the Chinese leadership, access to economic resources including raw materials, capital, technology and markets has become a major motivation behind Beijing's foreign policy. While it is not an exaggeration to say that China's contemporary foreign policy is largely driven by resource-acquisition<sup>62</sup>, access in this sense also implies involvement within the economic, political and increasingly military structures and settings which are embedded in directing and protecting the international system. China's strive, furthermore, to becoming a great power is largely evaluated upon its ability to shape and influence the international system and not simply respond to it<sup>63</sup>. Enhancing economic wealth within current global conditions, therefore, does not adequately encompass the notion of access; there is a political aspect as well where Beijing wishes to

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<sup>60</sup> Even the decision to use the term 'peaceful development', chosen over the phrase 'peaceful rise', debated within the upper echelon in the Party from 2003-2005 in a pursuit of finding the best one to reflect their non-aggressive intentions is indicative of the sensitive and important nature that status and image have in Beijing's foreign policy. Lampton, pp. 32-34.

<sup>61</sup> See "China's Peaceful Development Road" *The Information Office of the State Council*, 22 December 2005, Part IV: 'Seeking Mutual Benefit and Common Development with Other Countries'.

<sup>62</sup> See Zweig, David and Bi Jianhai, "China's Global Hunt for Energy", *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2005; Kreft, Heinrich, "China's Quest for Energy", *Policy Review*, October-November 2006, pp. 61-70.

<sup>63</sup> Goldstein, "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy", p. 836.

influence these processes to further ensure a host of beneficial conditions exist, hedging against any attempts to stunt their continued developing extensive and intensive ties across the globe<sup>64</sup>.

Access, however, is seen as dependent on the related but not synonymous notions of assurance and acceptance. Assurance denotes Beijing's desire to create an image of itself as peaceful, asserting its developing power and influence will not threaten the current international order but rather augments and support it; arguments of creating conditions of mutual 'win-win' development are the best examples of such a line of reasoning. In particular, ensuring China's rapidly growing resource consumption is not interpreted as a new imperial exercise exploitative in nature<sup>65</sup>, and that it will not resort to unilateral force to achieve its objectives are central tasks in its relations with both developed and developing states. Finally, while stemming from assurance, acceptance implies a deeper level of agreement by the international community that China's rise is legitimate. Tolerating China's growth is not adequate, for as discussed above Beijing increasingly desires to become a main decision-maker within the international system. Such a growing acquisition of responsibilities is seen as conditioned upon acceptance from the established great powers and the international community at large that China does deserve and has a right to a larger role in these processes.

### **Beijing's foreign policy principles**

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<sup>64</sup> For discussion of China's energy-security strategy see Zha, Daojiong, "Energy Interdependence", *China Security*, Summer 2006, pp. 2-16; Xu, Yi-Chong, "China's energy security", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 2006, pp. 265-286.

<sup>65</sup> This position is expressed within China's 'Peaceful Development Road' document as it states "China will not shift its own problems and contradictions onto other countries, much less will it plunder other countries for its own development". "China's Peaceful Development Road", Part III: 'Developing by Relying on its Own Strengths, Reform and Innovation'.

While there exist a multitude of foreign policy positions expressed and increasingly promulgated over the past decade by Beijing, they can roughly be group into three broad and interconnected foreign policy principles: 1) Acceptance of China as a responsible great power in a multi-polarizing and globalizing world; 2) Supporting state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs; and 3) Democratizing the international system via consensus building in multilateral settings and institutions. Through such a delineation, the manner in which these principles relates to achieving Beijing's foreign policy objectives (access, assurance and acceptance), and the power resources employed can be observed. While these principles increasingly have become solidified into the framework of China's foreign policy calculus they are neither absolutes nor static positions, for within the plethora of situational contexts confronting Beijing they can and have come into conflict with one another. Contingency, therefore, remains a powerful element in Chinese foreign policy and while there have been many occasions where Beijing has chosen support of one principle over another, the underlying values and interests of their foreign policy in general do not appear to have altered in any recognizable sense. Nonetheless, as the situations and relationships between Chinese internal development and the international context evolve, reprioritization and perhaps changing levels of commitment to the norms, values and objectives expressed within their declaratory policy cannot be ruled out.

Acceptance of China as a responsible great power in a multi-polarizing and globalizing world:

China's declaratory policy of 'peaceful development' is an attempt to persuade uneasy sources of scepticism internationally that their rise as a major power will be not only be peaceful but beneficial to other states, creating conditions of 'win-win' relationships<sup>66</sup>. Arguments for supporting peace and cooperation are augmented by repeated rejections of any claim to

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<sup>66</sup> See "China's Peaceful Development Road", Part IV: 'Seeking Mutual Benefit and Common Development with Other Countries'.

hegemony<sup>67</sup> and promoting a military policy ‘strictly defensive’ in nature<sup>68</sup>. Major efforts are made to create certainty in others that Beijing is not a ‘destabilizing other’ but rather an integrated and committed member of the international system<sup>69</sup>. In demonstrating this commitment, China argues its willingness to work with other major powers in dealing with a number of issues including support for the war on terror, non-proliferation, and in general the maintenance of global trade and integration are ample proof of their willingness to be a ‘responsible power’<sup>70</sup>.

China’s efforts to establish itself as an accepted great power, bestowing a right to continue its developing power capabilities, are tied to its perceptions of the gradual rearrangement of the international system towards a multi-polar and globalized world. While still recognizing US superiority, their power relatively is decreasing as a number of new powers, most from the ‘South’, surface. Such power transitions, however, are seen by Beijing as long-term processes which will not inevitably lead to conflict but provide opportunities for co-operation and management amongst the established and emerging great powers to maintain and

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<sup>67</sup> For example see “China’s Peaceful Development Road”, Part I: ‘Peaceful Development Is the Inevitable Way for China’s Modernization’; “China Defense in 2008”, *The Information Office of the State Council*, ‘The Security Situation’; and “China’s Independent Foreign Policy of Peace”, *The Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China*, 2003.

<sup>68</sup> “China Defense in 2008”, ‘The Security Situation’. The increasingly regularity, about every 2 years, of releasing Defence White Papers is another manoeuvre to reduce levels of uncertainty regarding China’s military intentions.

<sup>69</sup> Deng, *China’s Struggle for status*, p. 27. Further on this point, there is admission on the part of the Communist regime of the presence of China-threat theories which they perceive as false and dangerous in generating unnecessary pessimism and hostility towards China’s rise; for example see “China’s Defense 2008”, ‘The Security Situation’.

<sup>70</sup> The notion of a responsible power was first mentioned by former Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick during the conclusion of the Second US-China Senior Dialogue, stating “As it becomes a major global power, we are now encouraging China to become a ‘responsible stakeholder’ that will work with the United States and others to sustain, adapt and advance the peaceful international system that has enabled its success”. The responsible stakeholder/power concept has become a key component in Chinese foreign policy demonstrated by its popularization in Beijing’s lexicon concerning foreign affairs. Zoellick, Robert B., “Statement on Conclusion of the Second US-China Senior Dialogue”, 8 December 2005.

reinforce conditions beneficial to international peace and security<sup>71</sup>. Though great power balancing is seen as a fundamental pillar of global stability, creating linkages of co-operation and agreement are also essential in maintaining prosperity in an increasingly interlinked and interdependent globalized world<sup>72</sup>.

Such positions are pillared upon Beijing's support for multilateralism, a process incorporating not only economic and political issues but increasingly security concerns. China's developing support and contribution to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions as well as their recent deployment of a naval task group to the Gulf of Yemen in support of the UN Security Council resolution 1816 combating piracy demonstrates a more sophisticated role of their military forces internationally, specifically assisting in efforts to calm international uneasiness of China's developing military might<sup>73</sup>. As noted above, China's evolving military strategy of deploying its armed forces, under UN mandates, abroad reflects an increasing desire to be part of the mechanisms which protect and shape the current international system and not simply operate within them. Access to these processes, therefore, is increasingly seen by leaders in Beijing as in part dependent on acceptance from the international community, specifically the established great powers, of the role China does and should play.

Acceptance, as well, of not only China's 'responsible role' but augmentation of multilateralism and co-operation amongst great powers strategically is a hedging strategy against

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<sup>71</sup> See Jisi, Wang, "China Search for Stability with America", *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2005. To this end, China's concept of a harmonious world is contingent upon promoting a 'new security concept' in which alliances are removed in favour of a security regime of mutual recognition and co-operation in tackling common security issues within multilateral settings. Hu, Jintao, "Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity", Speech Presented at the United Nations 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit, 15 September 2005.

<sup>72</sup> "China Defense 2008", 'The Security Situation'.

<sup>73</sup> Peacekeeping Operations are in fact seen as an important facet of China's defense strategy, see "China Defense 2008", 'Section XII: International Security Cooperation'; "Chinese naval fleet sails into Gulf of Aden", *China Daily*, 6 January 2009.

US power superiority, as veiled within China's repeated opposition to 'power politics and hegemonism'. Arguments for acceptance of China's rise do not only stem from the demonstration of the beneficial aspects they contribute to the world community, but its status as a developing nation and its often proclaimed tarnished recent history during the 'century of humiliation' are other arguments Beijing has promulgated as having the right to regain its great power status<sup>74</sup>. The cumulative effects of these varying justifications for China's rise are fundamentally pillared upon an attempt to demonstrate its transcendence of power politics and a true desire to utilize its developing power and influence towards supporting the international system and further peaceful practices to conflict resolution<sup>75</sup>.

Supporting state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs:

While for the most part in the contemporary context the Communist regime has rejected resorting to the unilateral use of force to pursue its foreign policy objectives, to say that Beijing fully supports the norms, values and procedures underpinning the global system is highly inaccurate; rather, very real differences between China and the other established great powers exist regarding a host of issues exist. While these areas of contestation should not be polarized to an unnecessary extent, discomfort with certain aspects of the international system is obvious in China's foreign policy. Despite support for the maintenance of a peaceful and harmonious international system, calls for establishing a new international and economic order have been part of Beijing's declaratory policy for the last two decades<sup>76</sup>. Furthermore, the issue perhaps

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<sup>74</sup> "China's Peaceful Development World", Part I: 'Peaceful Development Is the Inevitable Way for China's Modernization'; Yan, Xuetong, "The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes", *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2001, pp. 33-34.

<sup>75</sup> For example see Bijian, Zheng, "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status", *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2005.

<sup>76</sup> See "China's Position on Establishing a New International Political and Economic Order", *The Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China*, 18 August 2003.

most contested between China and the established Western powers are the norms of state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs.

China's declaratory emphasis on state sovereignty and the related concept of non-interference provide the basis of Beijing's foreign relations, largely influencing their decision-making on a number of situations. As guaranteed by the UN Charter, China is a strong supporter of state sovereignty, interpreting its maintenance as essential if the international system is to operate effectively within a framework of common recognition of equality amongst states, regardless of size or power<sup>77</sup>. Beijing's notion of sovereignty stems from a Westphalian version of the state where sovereignty is the basis of legitimacy internationally whereas developing ideas of sovereignty as responsibility, attached to standards of governance, are becoming more accepted and advocated in Western policy communities<sup>78</sup>. Furthermore, sovereignty for Beijing creates a noticeable demarcation line between issues of an internal and external nature. On this point, Beijing argues for respecting state's right to pursue different development paths, seeing attempts to impose conditions concerning 'internal matters' on relations, for example regime type, as a hegemonic project and overall detrimental to international peace and security<sup>79</sup>.

Perhaps more than any other aspect of China's foreign policy, the position on state sovereignty and non-interference has drawn the most criticism from the established Western Powers. In particular, concerns regarding such a declaratory stance concerning the implicit support for autocratic states, particularly resource-rich ones such as Iran and Sudan, counteracting international efforts to pressure these regimes to change their internal and external

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<sup>77</sup> This point is called the 'spirit of inclusiveness' and is a key pillar of Beijing's concept of a harmonious world. Hu, Jintao, "Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity".

<sup>78</sup> Chan, Lai-Ha, Pak K. Lee & Gerald Chan, "Rethinking global governance: a China model in the making?" *Contemporary Politics*, March 2008, pp. 4-7.

<sup>79</sup> "China's Peaceful Development Road", Part V: 'Building a Harmonious World of Sustained Peace and Common Prosperity'; "China's Position on Establishing a New International Political and Economic Order".

behaviour<sup>80</sup>. Beijing's commitment to non-interference, furthermore, is seen as highly detrimental for key Western objectives including the promotion of human rights, good governance and democracy.

Respecting the varying political, economic and social conditions of states is paramount in Chinese foreign policy for it shields American (and others) attempts to raise perceived 'internal issues' of states, such as human rights, onto the international level. To the Communist regime, there is a strict need to isolate internal matters away from international dealings to minimize the degree outside agents affect domestic development. China's support for non-interference, as well, is designed to hedge against American foreign policy objectives of spreading 'freedom and democracy' internationally, a philosophical orientation not receptive to Communist leaders. Despite such opposition, China is not openly hostile to democratic forms of government nor does it actively promote an authoritarian development model as argued by some<sup>81</sup>. Nevertheless, support for state sovereignty and non-interference has aligned Beijing closely with a number of internationally out casted regimes, being a reliable ally motivating them in part to become more opposing to international pressures<sup>82</sup>. Friction, therefore, between short-term interests from these relations, specifically resource acquisition, and international condemnation challenging their long term interests of seeking assurance and acceptance is a key dilemma facing leaders in Beijing.

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<sup>80</sup> For example, within the US 2006 National Security Strategy, Beijing's support for resource-rich authoritarian regimes is listed as one of the 'old ways of thinking' they must lose if they are to become a responsible great power, accepted by the international community at large. "The National Security Strategy", pp. 41-42.

<sup>81</sup> For example see Kagan, Robert, "League of Dictators? Why China and Russia Will Continue to Support Autocracies", *The Washington Post*, 30 April 2006; Brooks, Peter, "Into Africa: China's Grab for Influence and Oil".

<sup>82</sup> LaFranchi, Howard, "For pariah nations, 'rogue' status pays off", *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 January 2006.

China's support for state sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs, however, is not a dogmatic static position. While these principles do constitute an essential element of Beijing's foreign policy strategy, China has shown itself willing to work multilaterally, specifically within the UN, in supporting certain measures concerning the internal affairs of other states. A new development in this respect is their growing support and contribution to UN peacekeeping operations, most recently China's pressure on the Khartoum government into accepting a hybrid UN-African Union (AU) force in Darfur<sup>83</sup>. While ensuring host-state consent as necessary, Beijing's willingness to apply pressures on these regimes (though perhaps not of the quantity or speed desired by the West) demonstrates that contrary to popular opinion China's 'dictator policy' is far more complex, contingent and malleable than usually accepted<sup>84</sup>. Such policy adjustments, though, do not demonstrate a fundamental value shift but have normally resulted in instances where China has assumed a lead role such as their facilitation in six-party talks regarding North Korea's nuclear weapons program, opening a further channel of influence and legitimacy as a responsible great power<sup>85</sup>.

Finally, state sovereignty and non-interference play a role in Beijing's attempt to be accepted as a great power by establishing a new criterion for such membership. Specifically, the concentration of great powers within the West is seen as troubling for Beijing sees itself (and perceives others seeing it) as rising in an outlier orbit. In response, China's support for

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<sup>83</sup> On the changing nature of Chinese perceptions of Peacekeeping Operations see Gill, Bates & James Reilley, "Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping: The View from Beijing", *Survival*, Autumn 2000, pp. 41-59 and Stähle, Stefan, "China's Shifting Attitude towards United Nations Peacekeeping Operations", *The China Quarterly*, 2008, pp. 631-655. On China's evolving diplomatic relationship with the Sudan see Holslag, Jonathan, "China's Diplomatic Manoeuvring on the Question of Darfur", *Journal of Contemporary China*, February 2008, pp. 71-84.

<sup>84</sup> See Kleine-Ahlbrandt, Stephanie & Andrew Small, "China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy", *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Economically, as well China's acceptance of reforming a variety of laws to conform to the World Trade Organization rules shows a level of conditionality of protecting sovereignty absolutely Chan, Lai Ha et al, p. 8.

independent development paths for states has been well received in other countries, specifically in the developing world, whose leaders are supportive of China's strategy of building a harmonious world of greater inclusiveness and consultation<sup>86</sup>. Promoting state sovereignty and non-interference further moves the focus on acceptance as a great power away from the nature of government or political system to that of the manner in which a state's external behaviour either supports or challenges international peace and security.

Democratizing the international system via consensus building in multilateral settings and institutions:

Calls for the democratization of the international system, particularly the inclusion of those states considered the developing world, have been repeated features of China's declaratory foreign policy<sup>87</sup>. Stemming from the position of supporting state sovereignty and, thus, international equality, Beijing argues its support of multilateralism is designed to curb the reoccurrence of power politics, inhibiting moves towards unilateralism. Indeed, China's embrace of multilateralism is evident by its membership in essentially ever large regional and global organization that it qualifies for<sup>88</sup>. Furthermore, while this process began over two decades ago with an emphasis on economic and political issues, recently moves towards promoting and supporting security-based organizations have become a new facet in China's foreign policy demonstrating a more conciliatory and multilateral approach to security and defence issues<sup>89</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> See Ding, Sheng, "To Build A 'Harmonious World': China's Soft Power Wielding in the Global South", *Journal of Political Science*, 2008, pp. 193-214.

<sup>87</sup> "China's Peaceful Development Road"-Part V: Building a Harmonious World of Sustained Peace and Common Prosperity.

<sup>88</sup> Johnston, "Is China as Status-Quo Power?", pp. 12-14.

<sup>89</sup> Agreements such as the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties on the South China Sea, in which China and the member-states of ASEAN agreed to peacefully resolve their territorial issues and the Six-Party talks regarding North Korea are cases in point. Such an orientation, however, is not present with respect to Taiwan as Beijing argues this is an internal issue and, thus, not part of its foreign policy.

China's lobbying for greater international inclusion has generated considerable support from developing states. Furthermore, such support within international institutions has been vital in blocking measures seen as detrimental to Chinese interests, such as the repeated defeat of human rights reviews in the UN. As well, cooperation and assistance between China and other states of the global South is seen as important towards legitimizing China's rise as a great power, specifically its role on the UN Security Council (UNSC), as a non-European, non-democratic, and developing state which differentiates them from the other great powers<sup>90</sup>. While consolidating linkages with the developing world is an obvious aspect of China's foreign policy, this should not be viewed as an attempt to generate an opposing block to the Western great powers for leaders in Beijing strive to be included and perceived as both a developing country and great power, seeing a need for acceptance from both communities.

Chinese support of multilateralism, however, is highly selective towards those institutions where they carry large amounts of power compared to other member states<sup>91</sup>. Furthermore, while Beijing supports greater inclusion into multilateral organizations its emphasis on the UNSC as the main body for resolving international issues pertaining to peace and security highlights its desire to not only be part of this process but have a strong hand in these dealings. Beijing's support for multilateral arrangements, furthermore, is most likely the result of a mix of perceived benefits towards protecting China's rise including: using multilateralism to balance against US hard power superiority; further economic and political integration and participation; using multilateralism as a further justification of China's peaceful development strategy of being a

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<sup>90</sup> On all three aspects, however, Russia's placement is hazy. Wu, Guoguang & Helen Lansdowne, "International multilateralism with Chinese characteristics: Attitude changes, policy imperatives, and regional impacts" in Wu & Lansdowne, eds, *China Turns to Multilateralism: Foreign policy and regional security*, p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> Chung, Chien-Peng, "China's Approach to the Institutionalization of Regional Multilateralism", *Journal of Contemporary China*, November 2008, p. 747.

responsible great power; and multilateralism as an effective venue for addressing security concerns. On this point, Wu and Lansdowne warn against perceiving China's embrace of multilateralism in an idealistic sense for considerations of realpolitik (particularly using multilateralism to curb power politics by being a tool of power politics itself) and strategic balancing are important considerations in Chinese thinking<sup>92</sup>. Finally, Beijing's growing acceptance of multilateralism has not resulted in a discarding of bilateral relations; perhaps the best example of this behaviour is while noting the creation of the multilateral Forum on China and Africa Cooperation, relations with Africa are still largely bilateral in nature where China has far more power and influence than its counterparts.

### **China's emerging foreign policy strategy: successes, challenges and future prospects**

Currently China's emerging foreign policy strategy has for the most part been successful in gaining access to economic and political resources needed to fuel its developing economy while also gaining influence internationally. China's rise as a great power, also, is largely accepted though concerns still remain as to its future strategic intentions and specific foreign policy positions. Furthermore, a recent international survey revealed high levels of uncertainty in Western populations towards China's developing economic and military power whereas broad levels of support were found in many African and Latin American populations<sup>93</sup>. China's foreign policy, within this context of uncertainty, reveals a highly conscious and calculative mindset aware of its strengths, weakness, and challenges it faces both domestically and internationally, including the ongoing status-quo/revisionist power debate regarding its rise.

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<sup>92</sup> Wu & Lansdowne, pp. 6-11.

<sup>93</sup> "Global Unease with Major World Powers: 47-Nation PEW Global Attitudes Survey", *The PEW Global Attitudes Project*, June 27 2007, pp. 39-47.

Though real foreign policy differences exist between China and the Western great powers, particularly over the notions of state sovereignty and non-interference, it is obvious that leaders in Beijing are increasingly employing soft power resources rather than hard coercive power to resolve them. In this sense, the Communist regime currently has rejected resorting to violence to enact change to the content, the norms and values, of the international system. As Deng asserts “China has sought to challenge the status-quo but in so doing attempts to avoid a path of violent power-transition”<sup>94</sup>. This does not, however, imply that the use of military power in a revisionist way has been totally eliminated from the repertoire of options available to the Communist regime, especially in the case of Taiwan, but in general there has been a relegation of the military option as a useful power source to achieve Beijing’s interests in the contemporary international context<sup>95</sup>; but indeed not a total discarding as Beijing’s attempts to develop military diplomatic relations with a number of states as well as their active involvement and contribution to various peacekeeping missions demonstrates the sophisticated manner in which military power is utilized to ensure consent and decrease uncertainty in others. The increasing interconnected linkages between great powers economically and politically and a reduction in the desirability of military force appears to be embraced by Beijing as a necessary condition for stable great power relations, though its continued military modernization programs and the secrecy surrounding them raise concerns internationally of their perception of the role of military power in the future.

While Beijing is not in agreement of the entire nature of the international system, particularly the preponderance of American military superiority, it remains highly unlikely that

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<sup>94</sup> Deng, *China’s Struggle For Status*, p. x in the Introduction.

<sup>95</sup> See, Kim, Samuel S., “China’s Path to Great Power Status in the Globalization Era”, *Asian Perspective*, 2003, pp. 35-75.

China's main focus will be directed more towards mitigating this reality than on attempting to maintain internal stability. The expansion and growing influence, as well, of sub-state actors on China's foreign policy such as privatized multinational corporations and a global Diaspora community which sometimes have interests and/or practices abrasive to national interests as defined by leaders in Beijing is a new and emerging challenge<sup>96</sup>. Attempts to control these entities and ensure their behaviour is congruent with the Communist regime's larger international pursuits will increasingly strain the ability of the state to lead China's foreign engagements and may in the future alter the absolute adherence to state-state relations which is the dominant paradigm currently framing their foreign policy strategy.

Finally, while changes in behaviour are quite noticeable, being able to observe patterns over time such as China's current focus on status and multilateralism, the underlying reasoning behind these moves is uncertain. Are such developments simply a non-adversarial approach to soft balancing against the US and the West or do leaders in Beijing believe these measures have merit in and of themselves beyond a balance of power logic? Even if the contemporary foreign policy of China is a reluctant accommodation due to their inferior power capabilities to challenge it, will the adoption of these practices socialize the Communist leadership over time towards deeper levels of commitments to them? While no concrete answers can be put forth, to foreclose debate on this issue and pass sentence is an undesirable position. As the Chinese leadership attempts to pursue its interests within this emerging foreign policy strategy, the changing makeup and relationship between domestic and international circumstances will undoubtedly alter to varying degrees the calculus of China's foreign engagements as they constantly attempt to balance internal and external challenges and goals both of a short term and long term nature.

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<sup>96</sup> See Kim, Samuel S., "China's Foreign Policy Faces Globalization Challenges", in Alastair Johnston & Robert S. Ross, eds., *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*.

While noting such contingency, however, the objectives of access, assurance, and acceptance presently largely shape, inform and reflect the Chinese leadership's perception and behaviour internationally, structuring broadly the interests, challenges and desirable avenues to be pursued as China continues to grow in power and influence but at the same time becomes increasingly interdependent and immersed within the international system.

### **China's contemporary African Strategy**

Having outlined the main characteristics of what is termed China's emerging foreign policy strategy, before analysis is conducted into the specific power dimensions in their African affairs it is necessary first to provide a brief background to Sino-African relations to orient analysis to the recent strengthening of relations and why indeed an African strategy has formed in the contemporary context. If there is one moment which best exemplifies the growing extent of China's interest, influence and impact in Africa over the past two decades it was the third Forum on China and Africa Cooperation Summit (FOCAC) of November 2006 in Beijing. Attended by 48 African state delegations, including 43 heads of state, the Summit was not only designed as a coordination mechanism between Chinese and African governments, but perhaps just equally as important to demonstrate to the international community Beijing's deepening linkages and significance attached to Africa within their foreign policy<sup>97</sup>. Furthermore, FOCAC, established in 2000, represents a growing body of infrastructure which supports and reflects the ever intensive and extensive connections between China and Africa, strengthening and demonstrating the developing permanence of regular contact.

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<sup>97</sup> Gill, Huang and Morrison, p. 3.

In contrast, despite the romanticized history of Sino-African relations as portrayed by Beijing, previous eras of interaction were largely defined by infrequent strengthening of bonds<sup>98</sup>. While past relations, therefore, were sporadic at best, the growing importance of Africa in Chinese foreign policy is indeed a new phenomenon, one calling forth investigation and analysis into unpacking the series of circumstances and events which have and are affecting this relationship. While the exact rationales nor the future of Sino-African relations are certain, it is obvious that beginning in the 1990s, and accelerating over the past decade, that in the contemporary context China's endeavours in the continent are more firmly rooted within Beijing's larger foreign policy strategy; in short Africa is increasingly becoming an important (though hardly the most important) and entrenched facet in China's foreign policy, a trajectory not likely to falter anytime soon.

Beijing's promulgation of its African Policy in 2006, during China's 'Africa Year', ahead of the Third FOCAC Summit crystallized their growing interest and interaction with the continent. Two points are worthy to note regarding the rationale and purpose of such a declaratory policy release. First, it is important to understand that while Chinese economic, political and military relations are highly uneven across the 53 African states, there is a representation of a continental discourse on the part of Beijing, a point that is revisited throughout this project. Second, China's African Policy not only is directed towards their African counter partners but for a wider international audience as well, attempting to shape and frame their understanding of Beijing's interests and presence in the continent. Such a pursuit is succinctly outlined in the Forward of the Policy where it states "By this African Policy Paper, the Chinese Government wishes to present to the world the objectives of China's policy towards

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<sup>98</sup> By the 1980s relations virtually stagnated in all aspects from little growth in trade to a reduction in state visits. See Taylor, "China's Foreign Policy Towards Africa in the 1990s".

Africa and the measures to achieve them, and its proposals for cooperation in various fields in the coming years...”<sup>99</sup>. In particular, reflective of their broader concern of reducing sources of unease and scepticism of their growing impact and involvement internationally, China wishes to depict their African strategy as one non-abrasive to the global community and ultimately beneficial to the continent as a whole.

While China’s contemporary engagement with Africa is pillared upon new centres of interests than previous eras, in many respects Beijing’s interest in the continent has reflected their foreign policy outlook at large throughout various Communist regimes over the past half century. For example, covering the first 20 years of their relationship Larkin argued Beijing’s interests and dealings were largely informed by the revolutionary emphasis of Mao’s rule, particularly during the Cultural Revolution<sup>100</sup>. Emma Mawdsley divides the history of Sino-African relations into three distinct eras: Maoist (1949-1978), Deng (1978-1989), and Post-Tiananmen (1989-present) with each one characterized by distinct permutations in interests in Africa largely stemming from more macro changes within Chinese foreign policy and the nature of the Communist regime itself<sup>101</sup>. The strengthening of relations, however, was severely questioned by the small, mainly Western group of scholars investigating Sino-African relations throughout 1950s-1980s, specifically noting the infrequent and sporadic emphasis of Africa in Chinese foreign policy. Many, furthermore, argued that the future of relations would have to be built upon new foundations, most notably trade if any set of permanence was to be achieved<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> ‘Forward’ in “China’s African Policy”, *Forum on China-Africa Co-operation*, January 2006,

<sup>100</sup>See Larkin, B., *China and Africa 1949-1970*.

<sup>101</sup> Mawdsley, Emma, “China and Africa: Emerging Challenges to the Geographies of Power”, *Geography Compass*, 2007, pp. 405-421.

<sup>102</sup> For example, see Snow, Phillip, *The Star Raft: China’s Encounter with Africa*.

Within changing geopolitical circumstances, including changes to the nature of the Communist regime itself regarding its rule and subsequent prioritization of interests internationally, contemporary Sino-African relations appear to be set down a trajectory of solidification. In particular, as outlined above, China's emerging foreign policy strategy largely informs and is reflected within Beijing's interactions with the continent, including specific state-state relations and their wider continental discourse in general. Furthermore, through an investigation into how economic, political and military relations are employed, it is evident that Africa is playing a growing role in China's access, assurance and acceptance objectives. Though there have been streams of similarities and consistencies throughout Sino-African relations over the years, including the promotion of South-South cooperation and the multi-polarization of the international system<sup>103</sup>, there are a number of new aims and pursuits held by Beijing which reflect their interests within the contemporary period and demonstrate the more crucial role and importance Africa in general has in their foreign policy compared to previous eras.

### **China in Africa: An emerging though evolving strategy**

While noting the contingency within their continental pursuits, including at times the favouring of certain foreign policy interests over others, the notion of an African strategy which is informed by and reflects Beijing's wider foreign policy interests is apparent through a breakdown of relations via the power dimensions. With the deepening of linkages between the two over the past two decades, Africa is becoming an embedded and important aspect of China's foreign policy in general. Within this in mind, however, it is important to note that while many of the motivations underpinning Beijing's interests in the continent stem from wider concerns, Africa as a distinct aspect of their foreign policy with specific characteristics and endowments

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<sup>103</sup> Taylor, *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*, see Chapter 2 'Historical Introduction to China in Africa'.

must be noted. Furthermore, situational contexts and facets specific to Sino-African relations influence the implementation of China's wider pursuits within the continent, calling forth a delicate analysis into these generic foreign policy interests on the one hand, and the unique set of characteristics which make Africa a distinct feature of their foreign policy on the other. Finally, while an emerging African strategy is occurring it is important to recognize the evolving nature of this process, noting the level of reflexivity and contingency in China's continental endeavours especially over the past half decade, which have over time resulted in the reprioritization of interests and practices, though localized and incremental in nature, and perhaps may motivate more fundamental value orientations as well within the unfolding of future events.

## The Economic Dimension

Africa as a strategic economic partner of China, most visibly demonstrated by the rapid growth in trade over the past decade (see figure 3), is the main rationale behind the deepening linkages and importance Beijing attaches to this developing relationship<sup>104</sup>. Specifically access to natural resources is the paramount, but not only, economic interest in the continent; while economic relations also consist of opening African markets for export industries as well as supplying limited amounts of foreign aid, these are subordinate to Beijing's global resource pursuits in which Africa is playing a crucial and growing role. Natural resource acquisition underpinning Sino-African trade relations, furthermore, is framed within a declaratory discourse of establishing and expanding 'win-win' mutually beneficial relations of common development<sup>105</sup>. Due to complimentary economic endowments between China and Africa, Beijing argues relations are directed towards mutual growth and prosperity, attempting to generate assurance of their peaceful intentions and acceptance of their growing presence on the continent as a development partner, ultimately furthering their access to Africa's natural resources.

Through a state-led process defined by economic and political incentives to African governments, financial assistance to Chinese companies, and a political 'no-strings attached' policy, Beijing has been successful in securing a number of resource exportation agreements across the continent. Contrary, however, to the pan-continental portrayal of their declaratory

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<sup>104</sup>While Africa still constitutes a small portion of China's overall trade (approximately 4%), per annum growth rates are the highest compared to other continents, averaging around 50% over the past 10 years. The accelerating rate of trade has even surprised Chinese officials, totalling over \$107 billion in 2008, 2 years ahead of Beijing's goal to break the \$100 billion mark by 2010, "China-Africa trade up 45% in 2008 to \$107 billion", *Xinhua News*, 2 February 2009.

<sup>105</sup> See 'The Economic Field' in "China's African Policy".

policy, Chinese trade and investment in Africa is highly uneven, concentrated within a few resource-rich states (most notably oil) demonstrating the primacy of their raw materials pursuits. While their growing presence and impact on the continent should not be underestimated, with China currently Africa's second largest trading partner<sup>106</sup>, a number of emerging challenges stemming internationally and increasingly within Africa itself are impacting the successfulness of their present economic strategies. Though there has not been, nor likely to be, a fundamental alteration in the nature of their economic pursuits and practices on the continent, China's economic policies are increasingly being calculated with a heightened sense of awareness of a number of real and potentially detrimental political ramifications towards their future economic interests resulting from their current behaviour.

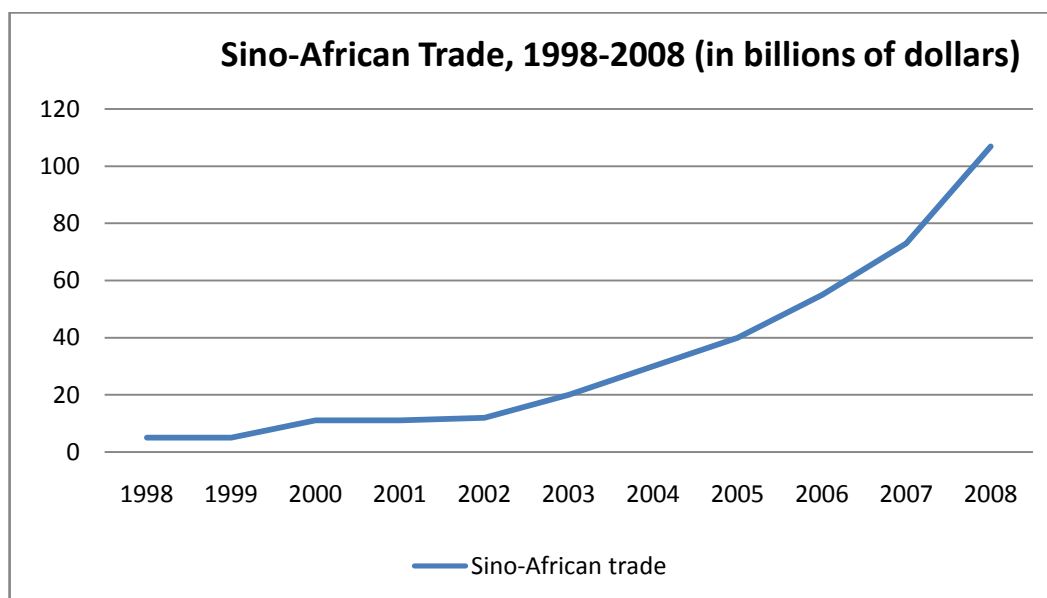
Despite China's declaratory 'apolitical' economic strategy and deep financial pockets that will continue to garner trade agreements particularly from cash-strapped and internationally out-casted states, Beijing is quickly learning that issues of assurance and acceptance with respect to their self-proclaimed role as a development partner are increasingly interconnected to their continued successfulness in accessing resources. In this regard, perhaps the most controversial and greatest challenge facing Chinese leaders in Africa is the political 'no-strings attached policy' and the pillaring foreign policy principles of respecting state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. Not only have close economic (and inevitably political and sometimes military) relations with specific regimes hurt China's image and status internationally, an occurrence Beijing is quite used to, pragmatically defacto support for unpopular elites, operations in unstable states, and the unreliability of doing business with corrupt governments pose growing threats to their current and future investments. Above all other concerns, however,

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<sup>106</sup> "China-Africa trade volume grew 31% in first 11 months", *Xinhua News*, 28 December 2007.

China increasingly strives to ensure they are not perceived as an exploiter, particularly by African governments amongst a growing number of contradictions between policy and practice which have come to define the economic dimension of their relationship.

**Figure 3**



Sources: Alden, *China in Africa*, p. 18; Wang, Jian-Ye & Abdoulaye Bio-Tchané, “Africa’s Burgeoning Ties with China”, *The International Monetary Fund*, March 2008; “China-Africa trade up 45% in 2008 to \$107 billion”, *Xinhua News*, 2 February 2009.

### **Africa as a strategic economic partner**

As a function of China’s mounting requirement to import a wide variety of natural resources, Africa is increasingly becoming an important strategic economic partner of Beijing. The notion of ‘strategic’ in this sense implies a growing reliance on African resources to fuel their economy, motivating the Chinese leadership to maintain and advance this relationship due the fundamental role it plays in furthering their economic development plans. While oil constitutes the majority of natural resource imports (covered specifically in the next section), China’s thirst for raw material includes a plethora of other resource types spread across the

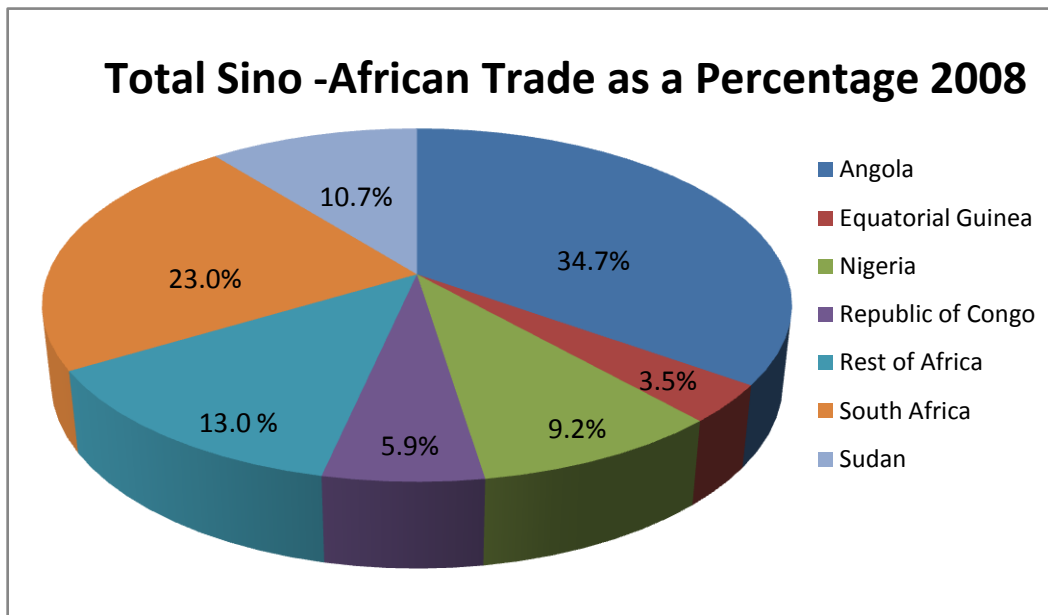
continent including: 37% of China's total manganese imports derive from South Africa, Gabon, and Ghana; 85% of total cobalt imports come from the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and South Africa; Burkina Faso, Benin and Mali represent 20% of cotton imports; and the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon comprise 14% of total timber imports<sup>107</sup>. The issue of food security, usually absent in many accounts of Sino-African relations, is also increasingly playing a prominent role in Beijing's interest in Africa amongst growing concerns regarding China's augmenting reliance on imported grain and foodstuffs due to the decreasing agricultural yields domestically. Specifically, the recent acquisition of vast amounts of agricultural lands in Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as the joint establishment of fish processing ventures in Cape Verde, Gabon and Namibia demonstrate such a heightened interest<sup>108</sup>. Resulting from the augmenting need for such resources, Sino-African trade is highly uneven across the continent with the bulk of economic relations stemming from a handful of resource-rich states. Over 85% of China's total trade on the continent is concentrated with just six countries, all, with the exception of South Africa, composed of oil-exporting economies (See figure 4)<sup>109</sup>.

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<sup>107</sup> "China's Commodity Hunger: Implications for Africa and Latin America", pp. 7-9; "More than Humanitarianism: A Strategic US Approach Towards Africa", p. 46.

<sup>108</sup> The decline in Chinese agricultural outputs has been attributed to the loss of agricultural land and labour to the processes of desertification, industrialization and urbanization as well as changes in diet within a society increasing defined by an emerging middle class. Pham, "China's African Strategy and its Implications for US Interests", pp. 243-244.

<sup>109</sup> While Nigeria, a major oil exporter, is one of China's top African trading partners, currently this relation is dominated by Chinese textiles and manufactured imports (resulting in a rare trade surplus for Beijing with an African oil-exporting trade partner). With recent acquisitions by a number of Chinese oil companies of Nigeria oil fields and other petroleum deals, however, petroleum exports will most likely come to define this relationship over the next decade. Currently Nigeria supplies approximately 3-5% of Africa's oil imports to China. See Broadman, Harry G., *Africa's Silk Road: China and India's New Economic Frontier*, pp. 81-83.



Source: Author's Calculations based on "Total Import & Export Value by Country 2008", *Chinese Ministry of Commerce*. Statistics cover Jan-Oct 2008; North African States not included (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia; combined this region account for 28.7% African trade with China).

The importance of oil and raw materials, as well, is evident through a breakdown of import-export compositions with approximately 80% of African exports to China comprising of natural resources, 80% of this total specifically being oil and natural gas, with manufactured materials, textiles and equipment constituting small percentages. Reversely, Chinese exports to Africa reflect an almost perfect inverse to their imports, with textiles and manufactured materials composing roughly 85% of the total value<sup>110</sup>. Furthermore, foreign direct investment (FDI) flows are almost exclusively unidirectional with Chinese companies primarily investing in African natural resource industries<sup>111</sup>. With this in mind, however, the growing establishment of special

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p. 81; See also "Building Bridges: China's Growing Role as Infrastructure Financier for Sub-Saharan Africa", *The World Bank: Trends and Policy Options*, 2008, p. ix.

<sup>111</sup> Wang, Jian-Ye & Abdoulaye Bio-Tchané, "Africa's Burgeoning Ties with China". A notable exception to this unidirectional FDI relationship is South Africa, the only African state with noticeable investments in China, with approximately \$400 million invested in multiple industries from cement to breweries. For more see Shelton, Garth, "South Africa and China: A Strategic Partnership?", in Alden, Large and de Oliveira, *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*, pp. 265-266.

economic zones across the continent by Beijing to assist and motivate Chinese FDI in these regions increasingly is moving beyond extractive industries, particularly towards the manufacturing sector<sup>112</sup>. With recognizing such a phenomenon, currently the vast majority of FDI is concentrated in natural resource industries and appears it shall remain so for some time to come.

Such factor endowments are argued by Beijing to be complimentary, with Africa abundant in natural resources but lacking capital and infrastructure while China short on raw materials but with sufficient capital and expertise to assist in rectifying Africa's infrastructure deficient<sup>113</sup>.

Such a commitment is rooted within China's African Policy where it states-

‘It [the Chinese state] encourages and supports competent Chinese enterprises to cooperate with African nations in various ways on the basis of the principle of mutual benefit and common development, to develop and exploit rationally their resources, with a view to helping African countries to translate their advantages in resources to competitive strength, and realize sustainable development in their own countries and the continent as a whole.’<sup>114</sup>

Although the exact meaning of ‘competitive strength’ is unclear, it is evident from their declaratory policy that the Chinese leadership are actively attempting to depict Sino-African economic relations as one of a development partnership, generating assurances of not only their practices but intentions on the continent as rooted in a deep desire to assist in African development as well as their own economic growth. Furthermore, pillared upon narratives of

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<sup>112</sup> See Davies, Martyn J., “Special Economic Zones: China’s Development Model Comes to Africa”, in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *China in Africa: Trade, Aid and Influence*.

<sup>113</sup> Such a pledge is stated under *infrastructure* in ‘The Economic Field’, “China’s African Policy”; such arguments as well are made by a number of international institutions which see the infusion of Chinese capital into the continent, particularly into infrastructure projects, as having the potential to create and support conditions of economic development beyond resource-exportation. For example, see “Building Bridges: China’s Growing Role as Infrastructure Financier for Sub-Saharan Africa”, *The World Bank: Trends and Policy Options*, 2008. See, also, Friedman, Edward, “How Economic Superpower China Could Transform Africa, *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 2009, pp. 1-20.

<sup>114</sup> “China’s African Policy”, ‘The Economic Field’ under *resource cooperation*.

their common status as developing entities (with China the largest developing state and Africa the continent comprised of the most developing countries) and a common history of Western imperial exploitation and colonialism, Beijing portrays itself as a new economic partner in Africa not simply in actuality but as pursuing economic objectives from a standpoint of mutual respect and equality. Arguments to the contrary are fiercely rejected with many such criticisms seen as mostly unnecessary and inaccurate Western anxiety over China's growing influence on the continent, further contributing to the 'China-threat' discourse<sup>115</sup>.

While much attention is given to China's quest for resource acquisition, Africa is also becoming an emerging market for Chinese exports as well, most notably textiles and manufactured goods. Though still comprising a small and subordinate position to natural resource pursuits, this developing phenomenon (including the growth of Chinese small and medium businesses on the continent itself) is becoming a new economic reality, germinating a number of issues, mostly detrimental, for the Chinese leadership which shall be examined in the last section<sup>116</sup>. While recognizing this trend, therefore, China's economic interests and pursuits remain heavily fixated on natural resources, a trajectory not likely to fundamentally alter in any significant way in the foreseeable future<sup>117</sup>.

In securing access to raw materials, China has crafted an economic strategy ensuring agreements based on resource-exportation guarantees in exchange for Chinese investments and

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<sup>115</sup> For example see He, Wenping, "The Balancing Act of China's African Policy", *China Security*, Summer 2007, p. 29; He, Zeng, "Some responses to the 'China threat in Africa'", *China Daily*, 7 Nov 2007.

<sup>116</sup> For the latest account of this developing phenomenon see Taylor, Ian, *China's New Role in Africa*, Chapter 3: 'The Impact of Cheap Chinese Goods', pp. 63-88.

<sup>117</sup> Despite the recent decline in Chinese raw material imports from Africa in the beginning of 2009, especially oil, this is part of a wider phenomenon of shrinking Chinese natural resource demands worldwide and will most likely augment as Beijing climbs itself out of this current global economic downturn. "Crude oil import slump in Jan", *China Daily*, 12 February 2009.

loans directed towards infrastructure projects. Labelled the ‘Angolan Model’<sup>118</sup>, Beijing has been successful across the continent in securing such contracts primarily due to three fundamental components defining their economic strategy. First, the Chinese state is actively involved in these processes, coupling infrastructure deals with resource development (including advocating and conditioning agreements on guaranteeing Chinese companies in both sectors receive contracts) by using a number of economic instruments to entice host-state consent. Most prominent are low-interest loans provided by China’s Export-Import Bank (Exim), infusing cheap readily accessible credit into recipient countries.

The exemplar of such actions (hence where the term ‘Angolan model’ derives from) is the 2004 first of three \$ 2 billion loans (at 1.5% interest with a 17 year time-span) offered to Angola in exchange for receiving 10,000 barrels of oil per day, eventually increased to 40,000; loans conditions, as well, directed towards infrastructure programs mandated Chinese companies receive 70% of the contracts<sup>119</sup>. Another example is the 2007 announcement by the DRC of a \$12 billion infrastructure deal (this sum representing three times the annual budget of the Kinshasa government) in which Chinese state-owned firms will refurbish railways, roads and mines in exchange for the right to mine for cooper of an equivalent amount<sup>120</sup>. Similar types of agreements have been established across Africa, resulting in China’s Exim Bank overtaking the World Bank as Africa’s largest lender, responsible for roughly \$24 billion in loans on the continent by the end of 2007<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>118</sup> “Building Bridges: China’s Growing Role as Infrastructure Financier for Sub-Saharan Africa”, p. vi. Though in this report the term ‘Angolan mode’ is used, for the purpose of this paper ‘Angolan model’ shall be used for it better captures the generic characteristic it has assumed in China’s African economic pursuits. The meaning of the phrase, however, is fully retained despite the slight name alteration.

<sup>119</sup> Taylor, Ian, “China’s Oil Diplomacy”, *International Affairs*, 2006, p. 947.

<sup>120</sup> See “A ravenous dragon: A special report on China’s Quest for Resources”.

<sup>121</sup> Oya, Carlos, “Greater African-China Economic Cooperation: Will This Widen Policy Space”, *Centre for Development Policy and Research*, June 2008, p. 1.

The second component underpinning China's African economic strategy is the willingness of the state to offer direct financial assistance to Chinese companies operating on the continent. Such support was stated as the second quoted reason amongst Chinese businesses for their investment in Africa<sup>122</sup>. While many of these former state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have undergone a degree of privatization, many retain strong affiliations with the state and certain entities deemed of special strategic interest, such as China's three National Oil Companies (NOCs), are still directly under Beijing. These companies deemed of such particular importance to China's national interests (the 'first movers') have been a central facet of Beijing's 'going-out' strategy, which has encouraged and supported investment abroad in search of capital, technology, markets and resources<sup>123</sup>. The establishment of a number of Chinese business centres across the continent as well serve as coordination mechanisms assisting in collecting and distributing information to Chinese companies, creating a network between them in Africa and with the Chinese state<sup>124</sup>. The provision of state capital to these entities, furthermore, is primarily directed towards securing contracts to natural resources; the importance placed on access to them, most notably oil, has driven the Chinese leadership into a willingness to financially support these emerging profit-oriented companies to make offers seen as economically unsound (for they are usually seen as overvalued by industry analysts) from a business perspective but perceived as vital to national interests.

The final component of China's African economic strategy is the encasing of these pursuits within the political 'no-strings attached' policy, in which Beijing is willing to conduct

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<sup>122</sup> Pursuing markets was the primary rationale for Chinese investment in Africa listed. Gill & Reilly, "The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. In Africa", p. 39.

<sup>123</sup> Corkin, p. 310.

<sup>124</sup> Gill & Reilly, "The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. In Africa", p. 39.

trade relations regardless of internal state characteristics including regime type as well as not conditioning economic deals on political requirements, save for the recognition of the One-China Principle<sup>125</sup>. This orientation of separating economic and political affairs stems from Beijing's foreign policy principles of respecting state sovereignty and non-interference. Trade relations, therefore, between sovereign states should be focused on matters of an economic nature and not used as an indirect avenue to entice changes in the internal affairs of them, a pursuit Beijing adamantly opposes in its declaratory policy<sup>126</sup>. The notion of the 'no-strings attached' policy was perhaps best expressed in 2004 by former Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong, who amongst a growing chorus of international condemnation of China's economic relationship with the Sudan despite allegations of war crimes in Darfur, stated 'Business is business. We try to separate politics from business...'<sup>127</sup>.

In practice the 'no-strings attached' policy has been very receptive to many leaders in Africa, particularly those unwilling to abide by conditions of governance and human rights from Western states and international institutions in economic assistance or trade negotiations. China has shown itself willing and able, however, to operate within any state not simply those of an illiberal or autocratic nature. This point is usually omitted in many accounts of Chinese business activities on the continent, with a disproportionate focus on a select few, most notably oil, companies operating in a handful of states such as Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Sudan dominating frameworks of analysis<sup>128</sup>. Chinese companies, though, have been particularly

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<sup>125</sup> Adherence to the One-China principle is explicitly stated in China's African Policy as the political foundation for establishing relations with African states and regional organizations. See, Part III-'China's African Policy', "China's African Policy".

<sup>126</sup> See the general principles and objectives listed under Part III-'China's African Policy', "China's African Policy".

<sup>127</sup> French, Howard, "China in Africa: All Trade, With No Political Baggage", *The New York Times*, 8 August 2004.

<sup>128</sup> See, Alden, Chris & Martyn Davies, "A Profile of the Operations of Chinese Multinationals in Africa", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Summer/Autumn 2006, pp. 83-96.

successful in countries out casted internationally, most notably Sudan where a lack of competition due to sanctions has produced a vacuum which has been seized upon.

The effects of the Angolan model have resulted in an array of contracts and resource agreements across the continent. State-backed declaratory and financial support has drawn over 700 Chinese companies to continent with over 70,000 Chinese labourers working on a number of infrastructure projects as well as a growing Chinese Diaspora community within Africa itself with an accelerating number of small merchants settling in many states<sup>129</sup>. Chinese companies, furthermore, have developed strong links with many African governments establishing a niche in a number of markets specifically in the areas of construction, hydropower, mining, telecommunications and railroads<sup>130</sup>; indeed Africa is perceived as a sort of testing ground for many of China's newly emerging Multinational Corporations (MNCs), adapting to conditions of market mechanisms and profit motivations in less competitive arenas than the highly protected and established market places of the West<sup>131</sup>. Due to the coupling, however, of resource development contracts with infrastructure programs, over 70% of Chinese infrastructure deals in Africa reside in Angola, Sudan (China's top two African oil exporters), Nigeria (another oil exporter which Beijing is actively seeking to promote petroleum relations) and Ethiopia<sup>132</sup>. While it is impossible to review all these facets mentioned above, the following section shall investigate the nature of China's oil pursuits due to its composition as the largest and most controversial aspect of Sino-African economic relations.

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<sup>129</sup> Gill & Reilley, "The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. In Africa", p. 40.

<sup>130</sup> For a review of Chinese telecommunication and construction companies' activities in Africa see Corkin, pp. 314-318; see also "Building Bridges", Annex 4: 'Summary of Chinese Funded infrastructure Projects by Sector' and Annex 5: 'Summary of Chinese Funded Natural Resource Projects by Country'.

<sup>131</sup> Corkin, p. 318.

<sup>132</sup> "Building Bridges", p. 20.

### China's interests, practices and presence in Africa's oil industry

Since becoming an oil importer in 1993, Beijing has searched abroad to secure supplies to meet ever mounting domestic demands. Despite being the sixth largest producer in the world, China is the second largest consumer and importer of petroleum whose oil dependency hovers around 50% with projections for this trajectory to reach upwards of 80% by 2030<sup>133</sup>. Despite moves to increase domestic production, build strategic reserves and in general implement alternative energy source initiatives, for the foreseeable future China will increasingly become reliant on foreign oil as internal sources continue to dwindle<sup>134</sup>. Driving this process in large part are automobile sales, a rapidly growing industry with the emergence of an enlarging middle class, presently accounting for nearly 30% of China's total oil consumption and most likely reaching 50% by 2020<sup>135</sup>. While coal continues to be the main energy source representing roughly 70% of China's total primary energy consumption, the strategic role oil plays in the sectors of transportation and industry, vital aspects of their economic and social development projects, increasingly elevates oil dependency to a central facet in Beijing's foreign policy calculus<sup>136</sup>.

Within China's attempt to diversify its foreign oil suppliers, specifically designed to decrease reliance on Middle Eastern sources, over the past decade African oil imports have

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<sup>133</sup> Oil dependency is the percentage of total oil consumption that derives from imports. For consumption and import projections see "China: Country Analysis Briefs", *Energy Information Administration*, August 2006 and "World Energy Outlook 2007-China and India Insights: Executive Summary".

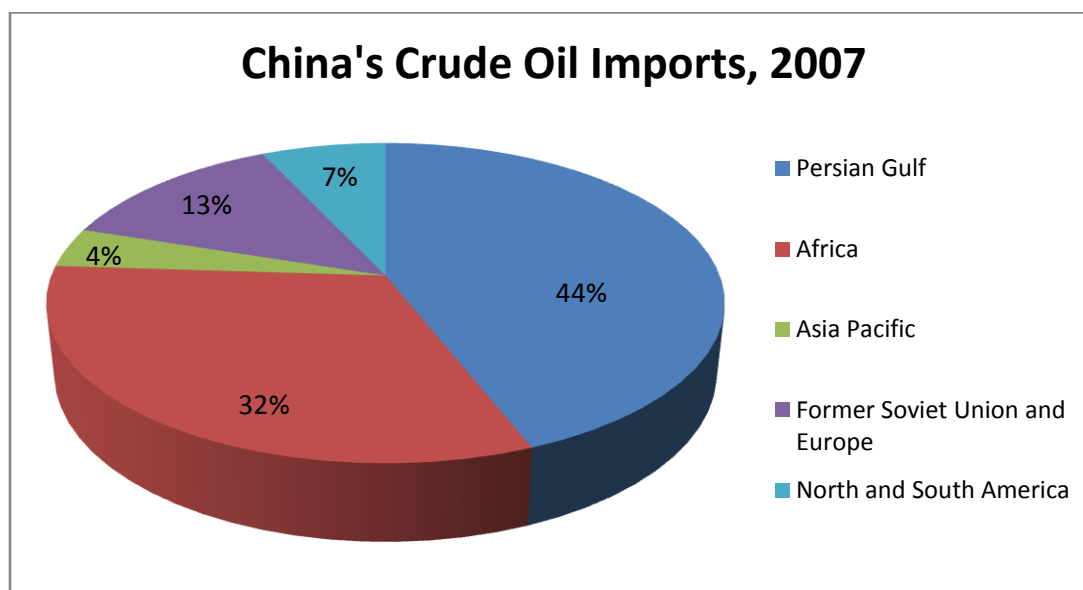
<sup>134</sup> For statistics on Chinese proven oil reserves see "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", *British Petroleum*, June 2008, p. 6.

<sup>135</sup> Lai, Hongyi Harry, "China's oil diplomacy: is it a global security threat?", *Third World Quarterly*, 2007, p. 522.

<sup>136</sup> Combined, the transportation and industry sectors consume over two-thirds of China's oil. Caruso, Guy, "International Energy Outlook to 2025: The Growing Role of China and India", *US Department of Energy*, 15 February 2007, slide 9; on the growing importance of energy matters in Chinese foreign policy see Zweig and Jianhai, "China's Global Hunt for Energy".

grown at an impressive rate, currently providing over 30% of China's petroleum imports (See Figure 5)<sup>137</sup>; in fact, Angola in 2006 became China's largest oil supplier, with the Sudan and Republic of Congo in the top ten suppliers list also<sup>138</sup>.

Figure 5



Source: Downs, Erica S., "Chinese Oil Investment in Africa: Why, Where, How and to the What Effect?", *World Bank China Panel Presentation*, 12 March 2008, slide 26.

Africa, as well, is a lucrative source of petroleum as its proven reserves have augmented almost 60% in the past decade. Furthermore, the general openness of its markets allow Chinese NOCs the opportunity to secure equity-rights, garnering greater control throughout the entire extraction to refining process, a prospect highly restricted in more established oil markets such as those of the Middle East<sup>139</sup>. The appeal of African petroleum, also, relates to the nature of the oil itself,

<sup>137</sup> While dependency on the Middle East has decreased somewhat over the past decade, the augmentation of African oil supplies appears to have made up for the rapid decrease of Asia-Pacific sources which accounted for almost 20% of China's oil imports 10 years ago; China's diversification strategy, therefore, has presently generated mixed results at best. Lai, p. 522.

<sup>138</sup> "Angola tops Saudi oil supplies to China", *Business Day*, 30 March 2006; "China: Country Analysis Briefs", *Energy Information Administration*, August 2006. Since 2006, however, Angola and Saudi Arabia have jockeyed back and forth as China's largest petroleum supplier, but the fact remains that Angola increasingly is becoming a major state of importance in Beijing's foreign oil pursuits.

<sup>139</sup> For figures on Africa's proven reserves see "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", June 2008, pp. 6-7.

generally comprised of a light crude composition which is more compatible with China's refineries and easier to produce gasoline from, of which demand is growing rapidly. While world reserves of light crude in general are decreasing, Nigeria, the Gulf of Guinea, and Angola are noticeable exceptions<sup>140</sup>.

China's quest for access to oil supplies has led to the establishment of exploration and drilling rights in 16 African states<sup>141</sup>, though approximately 85% of total African oil imports come from just four of them: Angola, Sudan, The Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea<sup>142</sup>. As mentioned previously, the Chinese state plays a lead role in facilitating conditions conducive to oil acquisition, with a particular emphasis on ensuring its NOCs are awarded extraction contracts. Established in the 1980s, Beijing's oil holdings in Africa are managed by China's three largest NOCs: China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec); and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). While processes of privatization are slowly transforming these companies into Western type MNCs characterized by profit-seeking behaviour, they remain under the effective ownership of Beijing, which though for the most part remains distant from their operations has nonetheless pressured and aided them in pursuing oil ventures deemed important to national interests<sup>143</sup>.

State-backed financial assistance through the China Development Bank and the Exim Bank, furthermore, has created conditions of soft budget constraints as China's NOCs are not entirely focused on profits due to such subsidization, usually generating offers many oil industry

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<sup>140</sup> Lee, Henry & Dan Shalmon, "Searching for Oil: China's Oil Strategies in Africa", in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *China into Africa: Trade, Aid and Influence*, p. 115.

<sup>141</sup> These states are: Angola, Chad, Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, and the Sudan. "Building Bridges", p. ix.

<sup>142</sup> Downs, "Chinese Oil Investment in Africa: Why, Where, How and to the What Effect?", slide 27.

<sup>143</sup> For an overview of the state lines of authority over these NOCs see Houser, Trevor, "The Roots of Chinese Oil Investment Abroad", *Asian Policy*, January 2008, pp. 141-166.

analysts see as overvalued<sup>144</sup>. Beijing, also, actively pursues ensuring oil access to its NOCs at the state level by offering economic incentive packages to recipient governments usually in the form of low-interest loans. The political no-strings attached policy, arms deals and ‘elite infrastructure projects’ have assisted in creating access via strengthening cordial relations among state leaders as well<sup>145</sup>.

With the active involvement of the state diplomatically and economically (particularly assurances of subsidization) as well as the absence of scrutiny from shareholders or public opinion domestically has given China’s NOCs an unfair competitive advantage argue many Western International Oil Companies (IOCs) who complain they cannot match their offers<sup>146</sup>. For example, the 2006 purchase of a 45% stake in the Nigerian offshore oilfield block 30 by CNOOC for \$2.7 billion was seen by many analysts as extremely overpriced, but aggressively backed by the Chinese leadership wishing to develop a foothold in the country<sup>147</sup>. Beijing argues state support is necessary as Chinese NOCs are relatively latecomers to the international oil market, competing with well established IOCs even in Africa. Financial assistance is vital in creating space for these companies in such market places in order to develop technological and

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<sup>144</sup> Evans, Peter C. & Erica S. Downs, “Untangling China’s Quest for Oil Through State Backed Financial Deals”, *The Brookings Institution*, May 2006, p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> Elite infrastructure projects include grants, loans and Chinese-led construction of monuments and buildings seen as primarily directed towards establishing and furthering relations specifically with a state’s elites such as the recent presidential palace completed in Khartoum. “Khartoum turned into a boom town by Beijing’s increasing thirst for oil”, *The Times*, 14 February 2008. Arms deals, and their relation to China’s economic and political interests will be further covered in the military chapter.

<sup>146</sup> Soares de Oliveira, Ricardo, “Making Sense of Chinese Oil Investment in Africa”, in Alden, Large and de Oliveira, *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*, pp. 105-107; Lee & Shalmon, p. 109.

<sup>147</sup> Goodman, Peter, “Cnooc Buys Oil Interest in Nigeria”, *The Washington Post*, 10 January 2006.

managerial competencies, as well as experience operating in these environments, to effectively compete with IOCs<sup>148</sup>.

The resultant relationship between the Chinese state fixated on securing direct lines of oil access and NOCs striving to transform into corporate entities operating and competing in international markets has created a complex and a times contradictory sets of characteristics and interests currently defining these organizations. There does not exist, as commonly presumed, a well defined top-down China Inc model regarding oil pursuits on the continent but rather a cumbersome and bureaucratic maze of government departments which encapsulate China's energy policies. Differences in the interests between the Chinese leadership and the corporate elites emerging within these NOCs add a further layer of complexity as well.<sup>149</sup> As Lee and Shalmon state 'China's oil companies are now an unusual agglomeration of modern entrepreneurial talent striving for earnings growth and ever-greater profitability, while at the same time remaining arms of a government increasingly focused on China's long term energy needs',<sup>150</sup>.

Despite Beijing's state-financed oil diplomacy, China's NOCs constitute a small portion of the market, approximately 3%, lagging far behind IOCs and the major African oil

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<sup>148</sup> Downs, Erica, "The Fact and Fiction of Sino-African Energy Relations", *China Security*, Summer 2007, p. 50.

<sup>149</sup> Further complicating attempts at defining state-NOC relations as top-down are cases of NOCs competing against one another for Africa oil contracts which while still a rare occurrence are not unheard of. Ibid, p. 50; On China's energy bureaucracy see Bo, Kong, "Institutional Insecurity", *China Security*, Summer 2006, pp. 64-88.

<sup>150</sup> Lee & Shalmon, p. 114. State interference may actually in the long term inhibit the development of these corporate entities for the burdensome yet somewhat appealing willingness of Beijing to financial support these NOCs may stifle efforts at managerial and technological innovation as they come to rely on monetary assistance to balance their budget sheets. An interesting area of focus over the next few decades in this respect will be the degree to which China's NOCs develop the expertise to manage oil deposits at ultra-deep depths in the Gulf of Guinea, an area increasingly becoming a major oil source in Africa and one currently dominated by IOCs. de Oliveira, p. 107.

companies<sup>151</sup>. Chinese holdings as well are concentrated primarily in Sudan, accounting for over 80% of Chinese oil production on the continent, mostly a function of the opportunistic arrival of China's NOCs to the debt ridden, internationally isolated state in the mid-1990s<sup>152</sup>. Seizing a vacuum created in the country following Western companies' pullout, China was graciously welcomed by Khartoum facing a desperate financial situational, paying \$4.5 million per day to finance its debt as well as an additional \$1 million daily to continue its war against the South. With no international competition to speak of, CNPC quickly became a major player in Sudan's rapidly developing oil industry, exemplified by its 40% stake in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company. Since 1997, China has invested over \$7 billion into Sudan's oil industry, including a 1,600 km pipeline linking oil fields in the middle of the country to Port Sudan<sup>153</sup>. CNPC is by far the largest foreign oil company operating in the Sudan with China consuming roughly 60% of Khartoum's oil exports presently<sup>154</sup>.

China's extensive and intensive involvement in Sudan, however, is the exception rather than the norm of their presence in Africa's oil industry at large. While Beijing continues to make inroads in Angolan and increasingly Nigerian oil markets, Chinese NOCs, even with state support, have not been as dominant as many narratives would have one believe, suffering numerous setbacks in securing oil deals in both states. In Angola, continued disputes over Chinese commitments to refurbishing its dilapidated refinery infrastructure reveal fundamental differences between Luanda, wishing to diversify its oil markets without an exclusive focus on

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<sup>151</sup> Downs, "The Fact and Fiction of Sino-African Energy Relations", p. 44. For a review of some of China's recent African oil acquisitions see Naidu, Sanusha & Martyn Davies, "China Fuels its Future with Africa's Riches", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2006, pp. 76-77.

<sup>152</sup> Downs, "Chinese Oil Investments in Africa: Why, Where, How and to What Effect?", slide 14.

<sup>153</sup> Lee & Shalmon, p. 125.

<sup>154</sup> "Sudan- Whose Oil?: Sudan's Oil Industry, Facts and Analysis", *Fatal Transactions and European Coalition on Oil in Sudan*, April 2008, pp. 9-11.

Chinese needs, and Beijing determined to secure extraction rights but seeing the refining process better suited back home<sup>155</sup>. In Nigeria, as well, similar issues over rehabilitating the refining sector are a major obstacle to further Sino-Nigerian oil relations despite the recent and highly publicized 2006 CNOOC contract<sup>156</sup>.

Furthermore, attempts to ‘lock up’ oil supplies for their exclusive consumption have yielded few results with only a quarter of China’s total African petroleum imports produced by their NOCs, with the majority being purchased on the international market<sup>157</sup>. As China’s NOCs attempt to operate not only in more competitive African oil sectors like Nigeria but increasingly challenging deposits (such as deep offshore oil) most likely there will be a growing, though perhaps reluctant, willingness to work with other IOCs and African oil companies with greater experience and competencies in these environments. Evidence of this phenomenon is noticeable even in Sudan where Chinese NOCs are currently working with a number of Asian NOCs such as Malaysia’s Petronas and India’s National Oil and Gas Company<sup>158</sup>. While the intentionality behind this shifting behaviour is uncertain, most likely it is a mixture of 1) host countries wishes to diversify foreign oil producers and customers; 2) cooperative agreements increasingly seen as desirable to Chinese NOCs learning how to operate in these environments; and 3) Beijing’s acceptance that their state-backed dollar diplomacy has not fully secured their oil thirst.

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<sup>155</sup> “Angola calls off Sinopec Oil Investment”, *China Economic Review*, 7 March 2007; see also, Ferreira, Manuel Ennes, “China in Angola: Just a Passion for Oil?”, in Alden, Large and de Oliveira, *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*.

<sup>156</sup> Downs, “The Fact and Fiction of Sino-African Energy Relations”, p. 54. Furthermore, China’s NOCs currently play a small role in both countries petroleum industries; specifically in Nigeria, 95% of oil produced by just five companies: Shell, Exxon, Chevron, Total and Agip. Frynas, Jędrzej George and Manuel Paulo, “A New Scramble for African Oil? Historical, Political and Business Perspectives”, *African Affairs*, 2006, p. 17.

<sup>157</sup> In fact, Chinese oil activity on the continent may be beneficial to the market as a whole due to their willingness to undertake projects discarded by more profit-oriented companies, actually increasing the supply of oil. Downs, “The Fact and Fiction of Sino-African Energy Relations”, p. 47.

<sup>158</sup> Sudan- Whose Oil?: Sudan’s Oil Industry, Facts and Analysis”, p. 10.

The arrival of other Asian NOCs, though, characterized by similar home state financial support may present a challenge to the nature of the African oil industry itself<sup>159</sup>. There are concerns that political conditions shall increasingly be marginalized by Western IOCs as they attempt to compete not simply with Chinese NOCs but indeed a new model of state-backed, no political strings attached oil diplomacy<sup>160</sup>. The recent embrace of the oil-rich autocratic Obiang regime of Equatorial Guinea as a ‘good friend’ by the US in an effort to establish strong political relations is perhaps indicative of this move<sup>161</sup>. Despite these occurrences, over the past decade besides declaratory denouncements of Chinese oil practices in Africa internationally, real abrasive action taken by a number of African governments, such as Gabon’s 2006 decision to cancel a Sinopec exploration permit due to violations of environmental regulations, has revealed the limits of a selective focus on purely economic issues to the Chinese leadership<sup>162</sup>.

In particular, Beijing has become far more concerned about issues of image and status which have begun to slowly dominate the rhetoric of China’s African oil diplomacy, particularly the promotion of their actions as developmentally oriented. China’s NOCs, as well, appear to be flirting increasingly with notions of corporate social responsibility, specifically pertaining to issues of social and environmental sustainability in an attempt to quiet continental and international concerns regarding their operating practices. For example, CNPC has recently created a ‘local development’ section in its outlining of activities and holdings in Sudan,

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<sup>159</sup> For an overview of Asian NOC activity on the continent see de Oliveira, p. 94.

<sup>160</sup> While these characteristics may be new in comparison to contemporary IOC policies which are attached to political conditions outlined by Western governments, current policies and practices of these state-backed Asian NOCs closely resemble those of European and American companies during the 1950s and 1960s amongst the discovery and rapid development of African oil. de Oliveira, p. 107.

<sup>161</sup> Behar, Richard, “China’s New Oil Supplier”, 9 May 2008, p. 6.

<sup>162</sup> Gill & Reilley, “The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. In Africa”, p. 46.

covering issues such as local employment, building schools, and upgrading local transportation infrastructure in an apparent move to block narratives of its presence as simply exploitative<sup>163</sup>.

While China should not be completely categorized as the newest foreign power fixated on African oil (and other resources) for its focus on infrastructure programs is a marked difference from previous and current international players, the political no-strings attached policy and pillaring notion of non-interference are becoming conceptual and empirical fallacies. The most obvious and challenging example is Beijing's association with the Bashir regime in Sudan, specifically numerous reports outlining the role of Chinese oil money in Khartoum's war against South Sudan and currently in Darfur<sup>164</sup>. While Beijing argues for a strict delineation between economic and political matters, in reality such a dissection is simply false and the infusion of Chinese investment into a number of states, particularly Sudan not only is a life line for these regimes but also raises the interest of Beijing in protecting their assets, coupling economic relations with defacto political support.

Though Chinese companies are not the only ones supporting the entrenchment of autocratic elites in a variety of oil rich states across the continent (a point usually unacknowledged in Western accounts), Beijing's declaratory discourse of being a development partner is fundamentally challenged by the stagnation in economic and social development in a number of these countries. For example, the top 7 African countries with the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth per annum rates are all oil exporting regimes and major trading partners of Beijing. Despite these growth rates, however, economic and social indicators remain stagnate, showing a developing discord between an small enriching elites class while the vast majority of these populations are largely isolated from the benefits of their states' growing oil

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<sup>163</sup> See 'CNPC in Sudan', <http://www.cnpc.com.cn/eng/cnpcworldwide/africa/Sudan/> (accessed: 15 Nov 2008).

<sup>164</sup> See "China's Involvement in the Sudan: Arms and Oil (2003)", *Human Rights Watch*.

wealth<sup>165</sup>. The most glaring , and oddly least known, example of this is the state of Equatorial Guinea with a per annum GDP growth rate hovering around 20%, the fastest growing economy in the world; despite the massive influx in revenues, over half the population lives on less than a dollar a day<sup>166</sup>. While it is not necessarily China's intention to support the continued rule of a number of illiberal African regimes (particularly unpopular ones), the result of their oil pursuits have largely been detrimental to the majority of Africans according to Beijing's own development discourse regarding the role of the state in promoting economic and social (but not necessarily political) enhancement<sup>167</sup>.

The focus of infrastructure deals related to extractive industries, particularly oil, has assisted these regimes into becoming major oil exporters, and thus increasingly desirable economic partners for foreign petroleum seeking powers. For example, with the assistance of Chinese and other oil companies, the production capacity of Angola has doubled over the past decade, while Equatorial Guinea and Sudan's have grown six and forty-five fold respectively<sup>168</sup>. The augmentation of their oil production as well as ever increasing international demand have produced booming revenues for ruling elites, creating conditions of greater selection and flexibility at choosing their trading partners. This has resulted in many of these regimes becoming less dependent solely on Chinese capital and investment particularly as other Asian NOCs intensify activities on the continent to meet rising domestic demands<sup>169</sup>. The loyalty and further access to their oil markets, therefore, is not necessarily guaranteed, most likely leading

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<sup>165</sup> Broadman, p. 7.

<sup>166</sup> "The Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies 2008", *Freedom House*, p. 39.

<sup>167</sup> de Oliveira, p. 101.

<sup>168</sup> "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", June 2008, p. 8.

<sup>169</sup> For example, while many have criticized China's preferential loans to Angola, specifically a \$2 billion loan in 2004, essentially providing a new source of capital than Western lending institutions, during these negotiations there were a number of other foreign loan offers particularly from India and Brazil with similar no political strings attached conditions. Lee & Shalmon, p. 124.

Beijing to further their relations with these states ruling elites, solidifying their hold on power and potentially alienating to a greater extent African and international opinion of China's economic practices.

While the success of these endeavours is usually inflated, Beijing has been able to secure access to oil supplies in a number of states, most notably Sudan, with state-backed financial and diplomatic assistance. Particularly the political no-strings attached policy is a highly valuable aspect of China's oil diplomacy to African leaders unwilling to abide by political conditions as outlined by Western based international institutions. Despite contemporary strong support for China from these regimes, clashes amongst competing interests of how their oil markets should develop; their growing financial independence beyond China (and therefore the ambiguity as to the amount of leverage Beijing has over them); along with continental and international criticisms of China's oil practices as exploitative and inhibiting development continue to pose major challenges to their future petroleum interests on the continent.

### **The issue of foreign aid**

While Chinese economic interests are dominated by accessing resources via bilateral trade, foreign aid plays a small constituent (and usually supporting) role to these pursuits, as openly acknowledged by Beijing and evident from the few sources of information on this topic. For example in 2006 Premier Wen Jiabo stated that since 1957 China's foreign aid to Africa has totalled \$5.7 billion, a figure paling in comparison to the \$107 billion worth in trade recorded between the two last year<sup>170</sup>. Determining, though, what Chinese investment is classified as aid is a complex undertaken given not only differences of policies and practices between Beijing and traditional donor Western states, but the general lack of transparency regarding official

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<sup>170</sup> Brautigam, Deborah, "China's Foreign Aid in Africa: What Do We Know?", in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *China into Africa: Trade, Aid and Influence*, p. 198.

documentation as well. Presently Beijing publishes no information regarding its aid programs save for a few declaratory statements exemplified by Premier Wen's comments as noted above; the reluctance on the part of Beijing to disclose such information may perhaps be due to its status of continuing to receive foreign assistance and/or fears of a public backlash over these expenses abroad despite the numerous social-economic issues needing urgent financial attention domestically<sup>171</sup>.

Besides the inaccessibility to such information, even with available data defining whether investment and capital is aid is conceptually challenging as well. Taking the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) definition, Official Development Assistance (ODA) is 'grants or loans that are intended primarily to foster development in the recipient country, and that have a 25% grant element... Lending by export credit agencies—with the pure purpose of export promotion—is excluded'<sup>172</sup>. While Chinese investment comes in the forms of loans (and sometimes grants) the vast majority of this would not be considered aid from the OECD perspective due to its focus on developing extractive industries as part of a larger export for infrastructure strategy. Such intentionality is highlighted by the fact that China does not have a development agency but rather the vast majority of financing goes through the Exim Bank with the explicit mandate to promote trade<sup>173</sup>. As a result, Chinese 'aid' is highly concentrated in states and sectors which are major aspects of Sino-African trade with Angola, the DRC and

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<sup>171</sup> Lum, Thomas, Hannah Fischer, Julissa Gomez-Granger and Anne Leland, "China's Foreign Aid Activities in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia", *Congressional Research Service*, 25 February 2009, p. 1.

<sup>172</sup> "Official Development Assistance (ODA)", *The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development*, Glossary of Statistical Terms created on 28 August 2003.

<sup>173</sup> "Building Bridges: China's Growing Role as Infrastructure Financier for Sub-Saharan Africa", p. 56.

Sudan having the largest reported Chinese aid and investment projects over the past half decade<sup>174</sup>.

ODA, defined above, does not therefore play a prominent role in China's economic pursuits on the continent. Such a fact is readily acknowledged by Beijing due to a different discourse of relations with Africa than that held by traditional Western aid suppliers. Officially China prefers to build relationships of mutual benefit and common development via complimentary trade relations, which in practice translates into focusing investment in African extractive industries and tying infrastructure deals with Chinese contracts<sup>175</sup>. Such a position is aptly stated by Chinese scholar He Winping asserting 'China aid to Africa will be based on the principles of sustainability and mutual benefit rather than charity'<sup>176</sup>. Notions of aid donor and recipient, common in Western narratives, are noticeably absent from Chinese policies as well; save for a short blurb of humanitarian aid, the terms foreign aid or financial assistance are nowhere to be found in Beijing's African Policy.

While Chinese investment is dominantly oriented towards trade, foreign aid is not totally absent. Indeed, a number of highly publicized announcements by Beijing to cancel African debts, \$ 1.3 billion between 2000-2002, and a 2006 pledge to eliminate a further \$ 10 billion in debt of Africa's 33 heavily indebted poor countries are directed towards presenting an image of China as assisting in lifting financial burdens to promote development<sup>177</sup>. Indeed while aid defined as ODA is quite small, China has aid projects in all 48 sub-Saharan African countries, creating a visible presence across the continent. Official pledges to not curtail foreign aid during the current

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<sup>174</sup> See Lum et al, 'Table Six : Selected African Countries with Large Reported Aid and Investment Projects, 2002-2007', p. 12.

<sup>175</sup> Lum et al, pp. 2-3.

<sup>176</sup> He, p. 34.

<sup>177</sup> Wang and Abdoulaye, "Africa's Burgeoning Ties with China".

economic downturn are also set to reassure Africa of its willingness and desire to assist in their development<sup>178</sup>. Foreign aid, as well, has been employed in efforts to obtain political conversion of the few remaining African states recognizing Taiwan as demonstrated by Beijing's pledges to invest upwards of \$6 billion in Malawi in 2007, the latest state to sever ties with Taipei in 2008<sup>179</sup>.

Despite the opaqueness surrounding Chinese foreign aid, in terms of scope it is evident Beijing's efforts are primarily directed towards the furthering of trade relations enclosed within a mutual-development discourse. Most attempts to understand Chinese foreign aid, therefore, are misplaced as there are real ideational and practical differences between Beijing and traditional Western aid suppliers to Africa. In this sense, Chinese African investment and loans should not be interpreted as aid but rather state-backed finance with the intent on furthering trade<sup>180</sup>. This is not to assert that Chinese foreign aid will stagnate or decline in the future, with some accounts even arguing recent debt relief announcements and educational assistance programs reflective of Beijing slowly adopting the behaviour and role of more traditional aid donors<sup>181</sup>, in terms of their economic relations trade will continue to be the dominant foci within this relationship. Furthermore, despite the recent public push by Beijing to demonstrate its desire to develop states and sectors not directly related to primary resources, evident by the countries visited in President

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<sup>178</sup> "President to visit Africa to consolidate friendship", *China Daily*, 4 February 2009.

<sup>179</sup> Lum et al, p. 9.

<sup>180</sup> Brautigam, p. 213.

<sup>181</sup> For example see King, Kenneth, "The Beijing China-Africa Summit of 2006: The New Pledges of Aid to Education in Africa", *China Report*, 2007, pp. 337-347.

Hu Jintao's most recent trip to the continent, economic relations still appear to be almost exclusively focused on trade, specifically export-oriented industries<sup>182</sup>.

### **Challenges confronting China's current African economic strategy**

Even while noting the uneven interest and concentration of investment into a few select resource-rich states, China's economic presence and influence is increasingly being felt across the continent<sup>183</sup>. With primary resource extraction remaining their central focus, Beijing's no political strings-attached economic pursuits combined with its exports for infrastructure loans agreements have won many contracts across Africa. Despite such successes, numerous unforeseen consequences stemming from their current policies and practices have contributed to conditions which are gradually threatening the future trajectory of Beijing's economic pursuits on the continent. The growing number of these challenges can roughly be delineated into three broad though highly interconnected groups: those internal to the state-led strategy adopted by Beijing; growing discontent within the continent itself; and international suspicion and fear of China's role and impact. While support for China remains strong in Africa, particularly amongst political and business elites, and noting the unlikelihood of a real transformation either in Beijing's economic interests or strategies on the continent, this growing and interconnected matrix of issues have increasingly been noted by the Chinese leadership. This is particularly evident as they cautiously attempt to maintain avenues achieving economic access without creating a reactionary opposition both within the continent and globally. Such manoeuvring has led to a more fluid and reflexive economic approach on the part of Beijing with the gradual

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<sup>182</sup> Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Mauritius were the four African states on President Hu's itinerary for his February 2009 African tour. "China seeks broader African role", *BBC News*, 12 February 2009.

<sup>183</sup> Evidence of this is the growing number of African states which have over \$1 billion worth of trade with Beijing, augmenting from 14 in 2007 to 20 in 2008. "China-Africa trade up 45% in 2008 to \$107 billion".

inclusion, even if reluctant and perhaps only at face value, of political and social issues into these dealings.

Internally, the major challenge confronting the Chinese leadership is the ability to maintain control, cohesion and coherence over their state-led approach with the rise of a number of Chinese sub-state actors which are increasingly impacting the nature of Sino-African relations. Specifically concerning economic affairs, the emergence of a growing body of private companies and the germination of small scale businesses residing within an ever developing Chinese Diaspora community in Africa challenge the capability of the Communist regime to dictate and control economic relations by decree from Beijing. Instead, these agents (and largely associated by Africans as representative of the Chinese government), sometimes with practices and interests contrary and opposing those of Beijing, raise a number of concerns of how to ensure their activities on the continent are advancing the state's national interests. This dichotomy is termed the 'principal-agent dilemma' by Bates Gill and James Reilley whom argue that the proliferation of these sub-state actors will increase the set of tensions and contradictions between the interests and aims of government principles with those of these entities operating on the ground in Africa<sup>184</sup>. While not looking to sabotage Beijing's interests per se, these sub-state actors more limited, immediate, and localized interests and practices have produced new challenges for Beijing by revealing their inability to effectively supervise these entities, usually responding in a reactionary manner after incidents have arisen.

Perhaps the best example demonstrating this issue is the 2005 Chinese-owned Chambishi cooper mine incident where an explosion at a subsidiary plant killed 51 Zambian workers, sparking domestic and continental outrage and raising a host of issues including low pay for

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<sup>184</sup> Gill & Reilley, "The Tenuous Hold of China Inc in Africa", pp. 38-40.

African labour and weak social and environmental protocols<sup>185</sup>. The pursuing backlash towards these Chinese business practices seems to have caught Beijing off-guard as government officials scrambled to ease growing criticism of China's either apparent support or apathy towards them as well as issuing directives from the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) calling on Chinese companies to act responsibly to 'protect China's national interests'<sup>186</sup>. The growth of Chinese merchants as well from their expanding Diaspora community on the continent, with estimates of their numbers varying wildly from 400,000-a few million<sup>187</sup>, and the resultant competition with their local African counterparts have further added tensions due to the marginalization of domestic businesses in a host of economic sectors. While for Beijing such arguments are largely seen as nuisances for these entities are operating in open markets, the growing opposition to these Chinese merchants arrival in a number of African states, particularly with large textile industries such as South Africa and Nigeria<sup>188</sup>, and the resultant souring of relations to a certain extent create daunting challenges for how to actually control this population. While wishing its diplomats and state-run companies to be the vanguard of China's economic pursuits, increasingly these sub-state actors operating on the continent with minimal links to the central government directly challenge Beijing's preference for the maintenance of state-level economic relations in Africa.

Issues of control and coherence exist even within the regime itself with a number of departments and levels of governments whose interests on the continent are of a conflicting

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<sup>185</sup> Similar concerns regarding workplace safety and pay exist also in Chinese owned factories and mines in the DRC, Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar, and Tanzania. Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, p. 47; see also Haglund, Dan, "Regulating FDI in weak African states: a case study of Chinese copper mining in Zambia", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2008, pp. 547-575.

<sup>187</sup> Alden, *China in Africa*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>188</sup> For example, Nigerian figures peg the number of textile jobs lost over the past decade at 250,000 with over 80% of factories being closed. Ibid, p. 49.

nature, adding a further layer of complexity to an apparently unified state-led economic strategy. For example, business activities of China's NOCs, such as Gabon's retraction of a Sinopec exploration contract previously mentioned, have put the MoC, indirectly responsible for these companies, and the MFA into conflict as the former's focus on oil extraction rights jive against the latter's need to deal with the political fallout from these practices to ensure ties remain strong<sup>189</sup>. Furthermore, a new phenomenon in Sino-African economic relations is the emergence of municipal and provincially owned companies onto the continent, establishing political relations with various levels of government across Africa most noticeably in Angola, the DRC, and Nigeria. Their rising stature in Sino-African relations (a function of the furthering decentralized nature of Communist control in general), with the active support of Beijing to seek foreign trade relations abroad may in fact come back to haunt leaders in the central government as real possibilities for friction between national and local interests, a regular occurrence in Chinese politics domestically, may spill over into Africa<sup>190</sup>. With the emergence of these new Chinese players on the continent, the retention of Beijing's state-state bilateral relations as the basis of negotiation with Africa may soon change as these agents further gain influence in these processes.

Within Africa, as well, China's economic strategy increasingly is demonstrating the limits of its appeal, with a growing chorus of scepticism from African governments and their populations over a number of Beijing's policies and practices. This should not, however, be interpreted as a paradigmatic shift in overall African perception of China's presence and dealings on the continent yet but a number of issues are continually presenting new and unexpected challenges to leaders in Beijing; such issues hinder attempts to ensure access to resources and

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<sup>189</sup> Gill & Reilley, "The Tenuous Hold of China Inc in Africa", p. 46.

<sup>190</sup> Alden, *China in Africa*, pp. 28-30.

markets remains open, ultimately relying on the approval of African leaders (and to a limited extent their populations) that their presence as a development partner is genuine and beneficial. Resource exploitation (not simply in terms of a focus on raw materials but as well Chinese dealings in a number of illegal markets such as logging in a host of African states)<sup>191</sup> and notions of mutual benefit and development, is the most contested issue with a growing discord amongst certain segments in Africa including elites. The most vocal and public example of such uncertainty was stated by former South African President Mbeki's comments in 2007 of China having to ensure it did not follow the paths of its predecessors towards a new colonizer role solely focused on natural resource acquisition while condemning the continent to perpetual underdevelopment<sup>192</sup>.

Indeed, while China's fixation on primary resource development on the continent is not unlike other major foreign powers<sup>193</sup>, whether its strategy shall lift Africa out of resource dependency is yet to be seen. Most telling of this is the fact that Africa remains the only region of the world where the share of its non-oil exports has not increased over the past two decades<sup>194</sup>. Furthermore, the high concentration of infrastructure contracts residing in a select few resource-rich regimes have sparked arguments that China's economic pursuits on the continent result in nothing more than a declaratory trumped up form of enclave capitalism focused on development which assists in resource extraction industries such as roads, railroads and ports but does little for

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<sup>191</sup> In particular, the majority of timber imports from Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo are thought to be from illegal logging conducted by various African and Chinese companies. Furthermore, an astounding 100% of timber exports from Liberia are illegal as the country has banned its exportation. For more information see "China's rise: Hope or doom for Africa", *Illegal-logging.info*, 16 June 2007.

<sup>192</sup> Taylor, Ian, "Sino-African Relations and the Problems of Human Rights", *African Affairs*, 2007, p. 74.

<sup>193</sup> See Wang, Jian-Ye & Abdoulaye Bio-Tchané, "Africa's Burgeoning Ties with China".

<sup>194</sup> Broadman, pp. 7-8.

the lives of the vast majority of these populations<sup>195</sup>. Beijing adamantly rejects such notions, particularly comparisons between their present behaviour to those of the European colonizers in the past. To make a distinction between the two, Commerce Minister at the time Bo Xilai in 2007 asserted: ‘Africa in the past let its natural resources be taken away at low prices but now its not the same. China and Africa, according to reasonable market prices, conduct normal and reasonable buying and selling’<sup>196</sup>.

Despite the factual correctness of such an argument, China’s mutual development discourse is fundamentally challenged by the nature of many of the resource-rich regimes with which it operates with. While encapsulated in a political no-strings policy, China’s economic relations have simply solidified illiberal regimes hold on power by distancing a small cadre of elites from the vast majority of the population, as indicative of the near stagnation in social and economic development indicators in many of Beijing’s top trading partners. With a declaratory development strategy focused on economic and social growth, Beijing’s respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs is coming into direct contradiction with this agenda.

Pragmatically, as well, China’s ‘apolitical’ economic strategy has in a number of cases actually hurt their investments for the lack of accountability in a number of African regimes has resulted in loan monies being misspent. For example, the appropriation of part of the \$ 2 billion 2004 loan to Angola on President dos Santos re-election campaign sparked outraged in the Chinese leadership, resulting in Luanda establishing the Office of National Reconstruction to oversee distribution of the loan as well as a number of government firings and a diplomatic mission sent to Beijing to reassure its disgruntled lenders<sup>197</sup>. In terms of unreliability of payment

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<sup>195</sup> Taylor, “China’s Oil Diplomacy”, p. 957.

<sup>196</sup> “China defends oil trade with Africa”, *Reuters*, 12 March 2007.

<sup>197</sup> Ferreira, Manuel Ennes, “China in Angola: Just a Passion for Oil?”, pp. 212-213.

(even with such generous interest rates and timelines), the inability of Zimbabwe in 2006 to repay a Chinese loan resulted in a chilling of relations exemplified by its absence in President Hu's itinerary during his tour of southern Africa in 2007<sup>198</sup>.

Continental criticisms of China's economic pursuits also include issues concerning the rise of China's textile imports seen as resulting in the unemployment of thousands of workers in a number of states<sup>199</sup>. Specifically, South Africa has been a vocal critic which has seen its textile and manufacturing industries in rapid descent over the past decade<sup>200</sup>. While ample evidence indicates that these African industries have been in decline well before the arrival of the Chinese<sup>201</sup>, these cheap imports nonetheless aggravate this process and have become a major point of opposition for many African states to China's economic dealings<sup>202</sup>. While Africa is increasingly perceived as an emerging market for Chinese imports, Beijing has been quick to respond to these concerns by introducing a self-imposed textile export quota in 2006 to ease tensions. Furthermore, the unilateral elimination of a number of tariffs, 440 by 2007, towards exports of Africa's 25 least developed states is a further step to demonstrate China's efforts to build and sustain a mutually beneficial economic partnership<sup>203</sup>. Mounting criticism of Chinese business practices on the continent, particularly the favouring of Chinese over African labour,

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<sup>198</sup> See Kleine-Ahlbrandt & Small, "China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy".

<sup>199</sup> For the most recent number of textile layoffs in African states see Taylor, Ian, *China's New Role in Africa*, Chapter 3: 'The Impact of Cheap Chinese Goods', pp. 63-88.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, pp. 74-77.

<sup>201</sup> Sautman & Hairong, p. 25; Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa*, pp. 66-72.

<sup>202</sup> The seriousness of African opposition over this issue has not been underestimated by Beijing as over a third of the countries on the continent signed the Istanbul Declaration in 2005 requesting the retention of textile quotas on Chinese goods by the WTO. Alden, *China in Africa*, pp. 76-77. The growth of China's textile industry via increasing exports to Africa, however, may benefit certain cotton producing African states, such as Mali, demonstrating the complex and conflicting nature of Chinese economic relations with specific states within a broader African continental narrative of mutual development.

<sup>203</sup> Broadman, p. 19.

low pay and benefits for African workers and an apathy for social and environment regulations have further complicated China's diplomatic efforts to receive assurance and acceptance of their development discourse on the continent as well.

Despite the warranted scepticism of China's sincerity underpinning its development declaratory policy, Beijing's actions on the continent have not created conditions of underdevelopment but have more accurately assisted in their reification. African underdevelopment is a function of internal factors as well the policies and practices of outside powers. In particular the lack of cohesion and agreement for how the continent should mobilize itself in its relation with China has allowed Beijing a free-hand to dominate trade relations based on a bilateral basis. Furthermore, moves towards labelling China the source of underdevelopment neglects the responsibility of African states to move up value-added economic chains to ensure trade relations are indeed mutually beneficial and development oriented<sup>204</sup>. While current Chinese practices no doubt have in many instances retarded such efforts, weak state capacities and regulatory regimes in a number of African states are as much to blame for the malpractices of Chinese (and other foreign) businesses on the continent as the intentions of these entities themselves<sup>205</sup>.

Similar arguments of Chinese activities being detrimental to African development are made by a number of foreign powers as well, of which the US is the most vocal and concerning to the Chinese leadership due to the preponderance of American influence and investment on the continent. While not officially chastising Beijing as a force for underdevelopment and

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<sup>204</sup> Naidu & Davies, p. 81.

<sup>205</sup> The contemporary orientation of China's leadership increasingly concerned about issues of assurance and acceptance, however, presents a unique opportunity for African states to reform business regulations and practices without causing an uproar from Beijing as they have shown themselves quite capable, though not without difficulties, to operate in environments with well entrenched regulatory regimes with South African being the best example on the continent. Haglund, pp. 567-568.

authoritarian rule, the US perceives China as a convenient alternative source of finance to a number of illiberal regimes, essentially undermining American efforts to tie economic relations with political conditions including human rights, democracy and good governance under the African Growth and Opportunity Act<sup>206</sup>. Furthermore, the US doubts the sincerity of China's development policies, seeing contemporary practices as inhibiting African attempts to development other aspects of their economies<sup>207</sup>. Fears exist as well that the generous loan agreements to various African states shall amount to a new era of massive African debt, motivating the US Treasury in 2006 to label China a 'rogue creditor' for such dealings seen as producing an unsustainable debt burden<sup>208</sup>. Even with this apprehension, however, China's Exim Bank and the World Bank signed a 2007 memorandum of understanding to seek collaboration on road and energy projects in a number of African states. Such a move perhaps demonstrates a growing willingness on the part of Beijing to at least have some links to the international donor and creditor system as well as acceptance by the West of China's growing role and presence on the continent<sup>209</sup>.

Despite international criticism of the ramifications of China's economic pursuits on African development, the most worrisome issue facing Beijing internationally is with regards to calls from some in the West that their growing economic presence on the continent constitutes a

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<sup>206</sup> For more on the political conditions underpinning American trade relations with Africa see "Country eligibility for Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (2000)"; "More than Humanitarianism", p. 50; Xu, "China's energy security", p. 30.

<sup>207</sup> For example see, "Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence", *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, 12 February 2009, pp. 34-35.

<sup>208</sup> Gill, Huang and Morrison, pp. 11-12. Within such criticisms, however, the fact that Africa currently is burdened by over \$300 billion in Western debt is noticeably absent. See Sautman & Hairong, p. 14.

<sup>209</sup> Gill, Huang, and Morrison, p. 12.

direct challenge to Western trade, specifically access to strategic resources such as oil<sup>210</sup>. Africa is quickly becoming a growing source of oil for a number of international actors, specifically the US whose oil imports from the continent increased by over a third between 2000-2005<sup>211</sup>. The arrival on the continent of other Asian states whose oil dependency is growing just as quickly does present the possibility of a deepening economic competition. Despite China's entrance and growing clout in African economic affairs, however, the notions of a scramble for oil or any other resources inaccurately reflects the realities on the ground. While there are growing levels of competition, a number of cooperative ventures and agreements exist presently between Chinese and other international companies, and there appears no real area of direct dispute between Chinese and American economic interests<sup>212</sup>.

Though there is a growing willingness by international companies and states, specifically Asian, to offer economic incentives and no-political strings attached policies similar to Beijing's in an attempt to win contracts, these decisions are those of these companies and governments and not China. For example, despite harsh rhetoric against Beijing's support for resource-rich Sudan, American political endeavours to shore up relations with Equatorial Guinea as well as the revelations via the Riggs Inquiry a few years ago of the secret dealings between the Obiang regime, a number of US Banks, and bribes offered by IOCs reveal the realm of clandestine strategies being pursued to win favour from this autocratic regime.<sup>213</sup> Despite very public condemnations of Chinese economic relations and policies with autocratic regimes, therefore,

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<sup>210</sup> Perhaps the most vocal of these concerns is the Heritage Foundation. For example see, Brookes, Peter & Ji Hye Shin, "China in Africa: Implications for the United States" & Brooks, Peter, "Into Africa: China's Grab for Influence and Oil".

<sup>211</sup> Xu, "China's energy security", p. 23.

<sup>212</sup> See Xu, Yi-chong, "China and the United States in Africa: Coming conflict or commercial coexistence?", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 2008, pp. 16-37.

<sup>213</sup> Behar, pp. 4-5.

perhaps the self-proclaimed differences made by Western states is more a matter of discreteness of similar behaviour with Beijing being simply more open about its dealings to curry privilege with these elites.

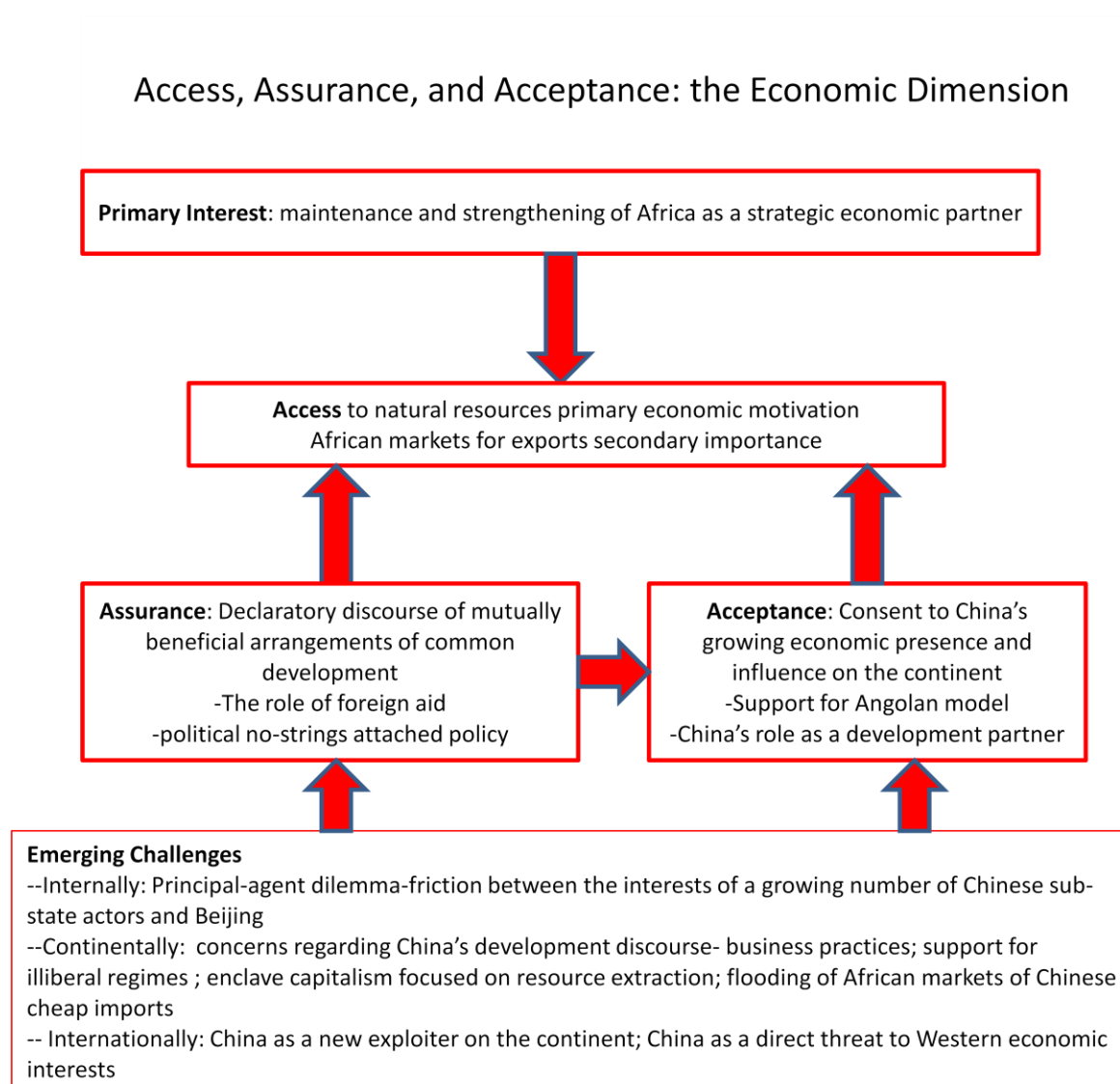
### **Conclusion: the future of China's economic pursuits in Africa**

The economic dimension of China's African strategy is dominated by interests to secure access to natural resources, specifically and most controversially oil. In these endeavours, over the years the Angolan model has become the main economic strategy of Beijing, using economic and political resources to secure exportation agreements. Particularly, Beijing's political no-strings attached policy has been well received by various African states, illiberal or not, perceiving China as a new and fundamentally different economic partner than previous foreign powers. Encasing these pursuits is a declaratory discourse of mutually beneficial relations of common development aimed at ensuring their growing presence on the continent is interpreted by Africans as peaceful and beneficial. While China's deepening economic linkages across the continent are to be noted (though usually overblown), this rapidly developing relationship is not without its difficulties, as a number of issues have germinated over the past decade challenging Beijing's declaratory development partnership agenda.

Particularly, concerns of Chinese intentions and practices as counter to African development and the West's 'progressive agenda' for the continent; apparent economic threats to international specifically American interests; and the growing condemnation both within the continent and beyond of Beijing's defacto support of a number of illiberal and autocratic regimes are the main challenges confronting China's current economic pursuits. While for the foreseeable future China's fixation on natural resource extraction within state-led economic dealings will not most likely change, the no-political strings attached policy has generated not simply continental

and international backlash hurting China's rhetorical discourse of a development partner, but reveal real pragmatic issues with maintaining access to such resources in specific states. Furthermore, it is the political foundations which encapsulate and support economic dealings where real change may occur due to the growing challenges facing achieving assurance and acceptance of China's presence on the continent both in the eyes of the international community at large but more importantly African governments and publics (see figure 6).

**Figure 6**



## The Political Dimension

Contemporary Sino-African diplomatic relations are pillared upon Beijing's deeply held principles of respect for state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. Furthermore, these principles encase China's economic pursuits on the continent via the no-strings attached policy (as outlined in the economic chapter), an attractive position to many of Africa's political and business elites. Specifically, in positioning themselves contra narratives of their common historical experiences of Western colonialism and exploitation, Beijing's discourse of non-interference is part of a wider declaratory policy promoting themselves as a fundamentally new foreign partner focused on mutual respect and common ('win-win') development<sup>214</sup>. The political dimension of China's African strategy, however, is not simply supportive of gaining access to economic resources on the continent but directed towards achieving a number Beijing's international objectives as well, including their ongoing recognition battle with Taiwan and joint cooperation towards the democratization of the international system<sup>215</sup>.

While Beijing's 'hands-off' approach to internal matters has been well received amongst many of Africa's ruling elites, Western policy circles regard the decoupling of political conditions (such as human rights and governance perceived as vital for development) with economic matters as challenging the successfulness and indeed the genuineness of China's development agenda<sup>216</sup>. Some narratives go further and assert such a delinking is an active

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<sup>214</sup> See "China's African Policy", 'Part II: China's Relations with Africa'.

<sup>215</sup> See "China's African Policy", 'The Political Field' under *Cooperation in International Affairs*.

<sup>216</sup> The connections between the advancement of democracy and social-economic development are evident in the requirements listed under the American African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) structuring US trade relations with African states. In the European Union (EU) African Strategy such a mutual-dependent relationship is explicitly stated: 'There is a strong linkage between the promotion of development and the promotion of democracy'. "EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development", *Commission of the European Communities*, 12 November 2005, p. 24. Within both policy documents, particularly

endorsement in the advancement and protection of autocratic regimes on the part of Beijing<sup>217</sup>. Though it would be an exaggeration to pronounce China openly advocates authoritarian development models or has no human rights discourse, in practice their current political orientation has aligned them with some of the most oppressive and internationally out-casted African regimes, damaging their assurance and acceptance objectives not just internationally but within the continent too. Pragmatically, also, the deepening of relations with unpopular governments may threaten their diplomatic clout and economic holdings in these states if they undergo future political change. On a growing continental scale, as well, the mixed results from their economic pursuits are generating growing levels of political fallout regarding Beijing's actual commitment to African development.

This compounding milieu of complications and contradictions has motivated China to re-evaluate its non-interference agenda, evident by the gradual relaxation of its adherence (but by no means abandonment) in various instances. In particular, while no fundamental value alteration has occurred underpinning the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference there is a growing (though perhaps reluctant) willingness on the part of Beijing to bend these principles in specific, localized circumstances where they constitute a fundamental challenge to interests deemed of greater importance. These policy adjustments are a function of a developing appreciation by Chinese leaders of 1) the need for a renewed campaign to demonstrate their presence on the continent as a progressive and not reactionary force for development (including

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the EU African strategy, however, caution is stated against external attempts to impose such conditions in part stemming from sensitivity of these issues due to the history of colonialism and exploitation on the continent.

<sup>217</sup> See Brookes & Shin, "China in Africa: Implications for the United States"; Kagan, "League of Dictators? Why China and Russia Will Continue to Support Autocracies". While taking a less accusing stance with respect to allegations of such direct promotion, the 2006 US National Security Strategy nevertheless states one of China's 'old ways of thinking' needing rectifying before they are to be considered a responsible power is their support of authoritarian resource-rich regimes 'without regard to the misrule at home or misbehaviour abroad'. "The National Security Strategy", pp. 41-42.

determining what this notion entails); and 2) the increasing impact their conduct on the continent, whether desired or not, have on larger, more removed foreign policy interests. In this respect, strict adherence to non-interference and state sovereignty have proven at times to conflict with their development discourse, damaging China's status and reputation internationally. More importantly, however, it is ultimately African governments which Beijing must convince that their presence is beneficial as they are the ultimate deciders of the extent of access given to China economically and international cooperation politically from the continent.

### **The political foundation: State sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs**

During then President Jiang Zemin's 1996 African tour he outlined a five point proposal to serve as the basis for their developing relationship for the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

- ‘1. to foster a sincere friendship between the two sides and become each other's reliable "all-weather friends";
2. to treat each other as equals and respect each other's sovereignty and refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs;
3. to seek common development on the basis of mutual benefit;
4. to enhance consultation and cooperation in international affairs;
- and
5. to look into the future and create a more splendid world’<sup>218</sup>

While many of these principles, particularly the notion of non-interference, have been critical declaratory components of Sino-African relations for decades, this announcement demonstrated the renewed linkages between the two following over a decade of limited interest and contact on the part of Beijing<sup>219</sup>; with the 2006 release of China's African policy, furthermore, these five

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<sup>218</sup> “President Jiang Zemin's Visit to Six African Countries”, *PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 17 November 2000.

<sup>219</sup> The advancement of non-interference as a key pillar of Sino-African relations was first promoted by Premier Zhou Enlai during his visits to the continent between 1963-64, marking the acceleration of Beijing's interest in Africa at this time. Luo, Jianbo & Zhang, Xiaomin, “China's African Policy and its Soft Power”, *AntePodium*, 2009, pp. 2-3.

points became entrenched pillars underlying all aspects of contemporary Sino-African relations<sup>220</sup>.

In the aftermath of their temporary international out-casting following the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, a renewed emphasis for de-linking and isolating perceived internal matters from external interactions and endeavours has guided Beijing's foreign policy focus. Within the new realities of the post-Cold War era, furthermore, the Chinese leadership perceives such delineation as essential to ensure both the maintenance of their authoritarian rule and growing international clout. Thus, while adherence to state sovereignty and non-interference is not a policy orientation specific to their African relations (though one with a long history nonetheless) it is of vital importance in their African strategy directed towards displaying themselves as fundamentally different from previous foreign powers to ensure acceptance both of their presence on the continent and their upward mobility within the international system. China's declaratory opposition and pledges to never pursue hegemony are employed as well to ease concern that they harbour imperial ambitions in Africa<sup>221</sup>. For the most part, Beijing's 'hands-off' policy respecting various development paths has been well received by many African governments and peoples whose history is full of foreign powers imposing their will and vision on the continent politically, economically, and militarily.

Stemming from respecting state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, with the assertion that Taiwan is an internal matter has led to Beijing's coupling of relations with

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<sup>220</sup> See "China's African Policy", 'Chapter III: China's African Policy'.

<sup>221</sup> An often repeated story in Beijing's peaceful declaratory policy is the voyages of Zheng He, the famous navigator from the Ming Dynasty with the establishment of trade relations in over 30 regions in Asia and Africa in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The capability, though unwillingness, of Zheng to establish colonies or impose China's authority over these areas (contrasted to that of the European forays into the world years later) is used as an example of the 'longing for peace and the pursuit of harmony' which have informed China's international endeavours throughout the past and continuing to contemporary times. "China's Peaceful Development Road", 'I. Peaceful development is the Inevitable Way for China's Modernization'.

support of the One-China principle directed towards the continued marginalization of Taipei internationally<sup>222</sup>. In this endeavour, China's diplomatic manoeuvring has converted all but 4 African states: Burkina Faso, The Gambia, São Tomé and Príncipe and Swaziland, countries whose political and economic influence is extremely limited even in African affairs. Over the past two decades Beijing has been particularly successful at winning recognition reversals from a number of African states including Lesotho (1994), Niger (1996), The Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and South Africa (1998), Liberia (2003), Senegal (2005), Chad (2006), and most recently Malawi in 2008<sup>223</sup>. These diplomatic turnarounds have been the function of a concentrated Chinese effort to use economic and political inducements to achieve consent though Beijing adamantly denies utilizing 'chequebook diplomacy' to buy African states' support<sup>224</sup>. While Taipei engages in similar enticement strategies, particularly the provision of aid and development money without political conditions<sup>225</sup>, the depth of Chinese coffers, the potential access to a domestic market of 1.3 billion consumers, and their growing clout internationally cannot be matched<sup>226</sup>.

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<sup>222</sup> See "China's Africa Policy", 'Part III: China's African Policy'.

<sup>223</sup> Brookes & Shin, "China in Africa: Implications for the United States".

<sup>224</sup> "China denies chequebook diplomacy in Africa", *Reuters*, 9 January 2007.

<sup>225</sup> This is best exemplified by Taiwan's economic support to the rule of Yahya Jammeh in the Gambia whose oppressive regime largely relies on Taipei's monetary assistance to remain in power. For Taiwan, while closer association with the Jammeh government has alienated many Gambians (thus threatening relations if this unpopular government is removed) this appears to be of no concern presently as they vigorously attempt to retain their last few diplomatic contacts on the continent. Hawa, Adam, "How Taiwan Is Losing The Diplomatic Battle in Africa", *The Gambia Echo*, 11 September 2007.

<sup>226</sup> Such realities are increasingly being accepted by Taiwan as new pursuits to retain existing diplomatic relations have become a new and accelerated focus in Taiwanese diplomatic and policy circles. Many scholars argue Taiwan cannot rely on economic incentives anymore and must move towards developing more extensive relationships with their African counterparts; furthermore, it appears Taipei will have to be content with having diplomatic relations with a small number of mostly impoverished states as China's growing influence and acceptance shall virtually eliminate any chance of achieving recognition from most of the international community. See Yen Chen-shen J., "Taiwan's Foreign Relations with Africa: Time for New Thinking", *Institute for National Policy Research*, 1 April 2008 and Taylor, Ian, "Taiwan's Foreign Policy in Africa: The limitations of dollar diplomacy", *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2002, pp. 125-140.

The interplay of these incentives is most revealing in the case of South Africa, whose decision to switch recognition to Beijing caught many, including senior South African diplomats, by surprise. Specifically, economic access to the Chinese market; the willingness and political power of Beijing to push for the creation of a permanent African representative on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC); and the lethargic supply of development assistance as promised by Taipei were all leading motivations behind Pretoria's decision<sup>227</sup>. Of the most recent recognition reversals, oil for loans contracts were important in achieving consent from Chad<sup>228</sup> while foreign aid pledges played a large role in Malawi's switch<sup>229</sup>. While Beijing remains fixated on discrediting Taiwan's international acceptance in all parts of the world, their interest in establishing diplomatic ties with the 4 remaining African states (though still important) is not a main concern in their African relations compared to other economic and political endeavours. Saying this, however, the inviting of Burkina Faso and The Gambia to the 2008 China-West African Summit (both refused) demonstrates Beijing's continued attempts to convert these remaining holdouts<sup>230</sup>.

### **Africa's increasing role as an international partner**

Beijing's political interests in Africa do not simply concern encasing strategies for economic access to natural resources, but since their rapprochement in the 1990s the continent is becoming an important international partner as well. In the aftermath of Western condemnation

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<sup>227</sup> See Huys, Gelden D., "The Politics of South Africa's Switch", *Issues and Studies*, July 1997, pp. 93-131.

<sup>228</sup> French, Howard and Polgreen, Lydia, "China, Filling a Void, Drills for Riches in Chad", *The New York Times*, 13 August 2007. Chad's recognition decision also relates to their desire to build cordial relations with China in order to pressure Sudan over its support of numerous Chadian rebel groups which have attempted to overthrow the Idriss Deby regime numerous times. As demonstrated by the Chadian case, as well, while many African states have severed diplomatic relations with Taipei, economic ones have remained such as the growing cooperation between Taiwanese and Chinese petroleum companies in a number of Chad's oil deposits. Alden, *China in Africa*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>229</sup> Lum et al., p. 9.

<sup>230</sup> "China invites two Taiwan allies to China-West African summit", *Asia-Pacific News*, 29 February 2008.

of the violent suppression of protestors in 1989, a number of African countries publicly stated their support of the Communist regime's crackdown<sup>231</sup>. Stemming from these events, Beijing's determination to strengthen its position against the West translated into a diplomatic strategy to rebuild ties with the developing world. Africa in these pursuits was and continues to be a key area of focus exemplified by Chinese state-level visits to 14 African states between 1990-1993 (a significant acceleration compared to the entire previous decade), laying the foundation for a reinvigorated relationship with the continent<sup>232</sup>. In this regard, the motivational underpinnings initially for Beijing's reengagement with the continent were primarily of a political rather than an economic nature, though as relations developed natural resources and trade in general became the dominant foci.

Sino-African international cooperation, furthermore, has become enshrined in Beijing's African Policy, promoting the advancement of mutual interests including growing access to international levers of power for those states considered part of the developing world<sup>233</sup>. Beijing's declaratory position of being a great power and a developing country, pillared upon the assertion that China will remain part of the developing world even as it grows in power and influence, is designed to further solidify identification and cooperation with these regions including Africa<sup>234</sup>. China's advancement for the democratization of the international system with the continued inclusion of Africa into global decision-making organs, such as advocating a

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<sup>231</sup> Taylor, "China's foreign policy towards Africa in the 1990s", pp. 446-449.

<sup>232</sup> Tull, Denis M., "China's engagement in Africa: scope, significance and consequences", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2006, p. 462.

<sup>233</sup> See "China's African Strategy", 'Part III: China's African Strategy' under *international cooperation*.

<sup>234</sup> This position was initially stated by Deng Xiaoping in 1986 proclaiming "China will belong to the Third World forever and will stand side by side the countries of the third world forever". Deng, Xiaoping, "China still belongs to the Third World even when it becomes developed in the future", *People Daily*, 22 June 1986.

permanent African seat in the UNSC, is one of the most appealing aspects of China's foreign policy to the continent as a whole<sup>235</sup>.

While the enhancement of ties to the developing world are oriented towards supporting acceptance of China's desire to increasingly influence and shape the international system, such relations are not engineered as a rival alliance against the West per se. Instead, Beijing draws on its association with the developing world as a counter-balancing coalition against specific actions and policies of the Western great powers seen as detrimental to Chinese interests. In these endeavours, Beijing attempts to be accepted as a status-quo power in the international system but in doing so promotes a policy of adaption to the system itself. Some of these pursuits, specifically Beijing's insistence on ensuring 'internal matters' are not raised into the international realm such as regime type, conflict with those of the Western great powers. In remedying these frictions, China's advancement of multilateral institutions is designed to house the area of contestation over these issues in these realms where Beijing can rely on the support of Africa and the developing world in general to check Western power.

Within such multilateral forums, specifically the UN, Africa's large voting bloc has been crucial in advancing a number of Chinese interests over the years. For example, African support was essential to the claiming of China's UNSC seat by the PRC in 1971, providing 26 of the 76 votes<sup>236</sup>. Africa, as well, has consistently shielded Beijing within UN Human Rights Reviews, blocking 11 such attempts since 1990 to issue declarations of Chinese human rights abuses<sup>237</sup>. Even within the newly created Human Rights Council (replacing the UN Commission on Human

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<sup>235</sup> This position was advocated as one of the four points of China's conception of the harmonious international society in President Hu Jintao's speech during the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the UN. Hu, Jintao, "Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity".

<sup>236</sup> Taylor, *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*, p. 12.

<sup>237</sup> Luo & Zhang, pp. 4-5.

Rights), Beijing breezed past its 2008 review. In particular, a number of African states including Nigeria, Sudan and Egypt praised China for their continued development programs while rejecting allegations of suppressing dissent, restricting free speech and repressing minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang<sup>238</sup>.

Being an appealing position to many African states, the promotion of multilateralism and the inclusion of Africa into these institutional mechanisms assists China in ensuring the West does not use its current hard power asymmetries to stunt their rise<sup>239</sup>. As China's power and influence grows, however, their adherence to such supposedly tight South-South relations remains uncertain. Beijing's preference for multilateral settings where they wield greater amounts of power than other members questions, despite their present support of the continued democratization of the international system, the extent to which they wish all states to be equal in international affairs<sup>240</sup>; their favouring of UNSC and their veto powers is the most obvious example. As China continues to seek acceptance and integration into the international system, therefore, their dual great power-developing country identity discourse may become strained, revealing the degree to which Beijing really advocates equality for all states or is more determined to join a small, exclusive great power club with disproportionate power and influence.

### **The Chinese model of development, human rights and support for pariah regimes**

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<sup>238</sup> Goodenough, Patrick, "China Ease Through UN Human Rights 'Review'", *CNS News*, 10 February 2009. In China's 2004 review at the UN Commission on Human Rights, as well, African states provided 15 of the 28 votes for no action; furthermore all but 2 of these votes came from states considered part of the developing world. Taylor, *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*, p. 200.

<sup>239</sup> For more on the role of multilateralism in limiting the power of the other great states while increasing Beijing's role in shaping international decision making see Saunders, Phillip C., "China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers and Tools", *Institute for National Strategic Studies*, October 2006, pp. 13-16.

<sup>240</sup> See Chung, Chien-Peng, "China's Approach to the Institutionalization of Regional Multilateralism".

To many Western commentators, China's decoupling of political conditions to economic cooperation results in nothing more than declaratory cover masking human rights abuses, corruption, autocracy and in general the maintenance of underdevelopment as Beijing courts African elites for access to natural resources. Some, furthermore, assert Beijing's political strategy is more deeply rooted in a pariah policy<sup>241</sup>, and not simply an indifference to these occurrences. For example, Brookes and Shin argue China 'actively advocates a Chinese-style economic development model... constrained by the overarching priority of maintaining a single party, authoritarian government'<sup>242</sup>. Though such accusations overemphasize the intentionality behind China's political and economic endeavours on the continent, pragmatically Beijing's strict adherence to state sovereignty and non-interference has often translated into support of a number of regimes and practices many in the West oppose and condemn.

While Beijing asserts its neutrality in the promotion of development models, China's rapidly growing market-based economic organization regulated by an authoritarian political sector is quite appealing to many African autocracies searching for ways to develop their states while not threatening their hold on power<sup>243</sup>. Despite declaratory respect for pursuing different development paths, the principle of respecting state sovereignty is a central component of Beijing's development discourse with the state playing the leading role in such endeavours, reflecting the past and current situation of state building and economic development in China<sup>244</sup>.

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<sup>241</sup> While the usage of 'pariah' state has become popularly applied in both Western narratives and the media, there exists no commonly agreed definition. Broadly speaking from a Western policy perspective, however, a pariah state is one whose internal behaviour is the source of international opprobrium mainly related to issues of human rights, civil liberties, economic and social freedoms, the nature of government and more recently support for terrorism. For one of the few, though dated, attempts to define pariah states see *Harkavy, Robert E, "Pariah States and Nuclear Proliferation", International Organization, 1981, pp. 135–164.*

<sup>242</sup> Brookes & Shin, "China in Africa: Implications for the United States".

<sup>243</sup> Taylor, Ian, "Governance in Africa and Sino-Africa Relations: Contradictions or Confluence?", *Politics*, 2007, p. 141.

This preference is evident by Beijing's determination to place their African relations on a state-level only, currently refusing to allow sub-state actors such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) into the political framework<sup>245</sup>. The legitimacy of government, therefore, stems from the respect for state sovereignty, with the characteristics of and the manner in which these regimes rule having little impact on Beijing's willingness to deal with them; a real policy contrast to issues of responsible governance which increasingly have become popular in Western policy communities<sup>246</sup>. Such a political orientation has been receptive to many of African elites, including a multitude of regime types from outright dictatorships such as Sudan to established democracies in South Africa<sup>247</sup>.

China's human rights discourse, as well, is within the exclusive purview of the state as the guarantor of their protection and advancement. Contrary, however, to emerging notions of good governance fixated on political liberties in the West, China's focus on human rights is dominantly orientated towards social and economic issues<sup>248</sup>. In these matters, the state as the vehicle of their implementation ties together China's discourse on development with human rights through the central and exclusive role of the sovereign. Coupled with respect for multiple development paths within its non-interference agenda, therefore, Beijing argues the attachment of political conditions on economic relations in practice relate little to development concerns but is a convenient avenue for internal interference by foreign powers in a colonial and hegemonic

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<sup>244</sup> Chan, Lee, and Chan, p. 7.

<sup>245</sup> Alden, *China in Africa*, p. 2.

<sup>246</sup> See, Chan, Lee and Chan, "Rethinking Global Governance: a China model in the making?"

<sup>247</sup> In the case of South Africa, similar positions on the issues of Darfur, Zimbabwe and Burma largely reflect agreement on the notions of state sovereignty shared by Pretoria and Beijing. Alden, Chris, "South Africa and China: Forging Africa's Strategic Partnerships".

<sup>248</sup> While human rights issues, specifically pertaining to individual civil liberties, are increasingly becoming a new focus for the Chinese leadership, the prioritization and level of commitment to them both in Beijing's domestic and international policies remains uncertain. Bradsher, Keith, "China Releases Human Rights Plan", *New York Times*, 13 April 2009.

manner. Beijing's respect for state sovereignty as a result must be seen through the lens of the narrative of China and Africa's exploitation at the hands of European colonialism, a powerful discourse in Sino-African relations<sup>249</sup>. Western criticism of China's growing role and influence in Africa should be analyzed with a deep understanding that Beijing's entrance into the continent has not been handicapped like US and European relations by the history of the slave trade, colonialism/occupation, and association with Structural Adjust Programs<sup>250</sup>.

While Beijing's development and human rights agenda have garnered much support amongst African states, absolute respect for state sovereignty has translated into the defacto aligning with a number of autocratic regimes, drawing international condemnation of either China's apparent consent or apathy of their practices. Regardless of their motivation underpinnings, the strengthening of political and economic relations as well as the shielding of these governments from international criticism has sparked increasing concern of the role China plays in allowing these matters to continue. Such pressures, initially ignored by the Chinese leadership, have reached levels that threaten a number of Beijing's interests of a continental and wider international nature. As a function of these stresses, over the past few years there has been a noticeable but gradual and localized loosening of Beijing's adherence to the political foundations of state sovereignty and non-interference. For example, while just four years ago China was unwaveringly arguing Darfur to be a strictly internal matter, changing geopolitical circumstances and a reprioritization of Chinese interests have altered these perceptions<sup>251</sup>. Such

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<sup>249</sup> Taylor, "Governance in Africa and Sino-Africa relations: Contradictions or Confluence?", p.144.

<sup>250</sup> Campbell, Horace, "China in Africa: challenging US global hegemony", *Third World Quarterly*, 2008, p. 100.

<sup>251</sup> This position was best exemplified by former Chinese deputy Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong 2004 remarks 'Business is business. We try to separate politics from business. Secondly, I think the Darfur situation in the Sudan is an internal affair, and we are not in a position to impose upon them'. French, "China in Africa: All Trade with No Political Baggage". These remarks are a beacon around which international outrage over China's close relations with Khartoum (and their general approach to continental relations) have formed. The business-politics binary, as well, has become a popular component of the lexicon in Western academic and policy characterizations of Sino-African

policy movements, as well, demonstrate a growing awareness of the attempts to absolutely divide political and economic affairs to be unmanageable in certain circumstances as well as the increasing manner in which Beijing's actions on the continent impact their larger foreign policy interests and pursuits, whether desired or not.

In this regard, Sudan and the ongoing Darfur conflict has by far been the largest lightning rod of criticism against Beijing. As international and even continental concern increased due to ongoing human rights abuses; allegations of genocide committed by the Bashir regime and state-sponsored militias; and the spreading of the conflict into neighbouring Chad and the Central African Republic, support has grown for immediate international action. Within these circumstances combined with China's strong relations and heavy oil investments in Sudan, Beijing has slowly begun to demonstrate a more constructive engagement approach to the issue of Darfur, with President Hu informing Khartoum during his 2007 visit that it was 'imperative' that the killings in Darfur stop<sup>252</sup>. Such comments marked an unprecedented move by China in its relations with Sudan, making a very public display of commenting on 'internal matters'; as former Chinese UN ambassador Wang Guangya stated 'Usually China doesn't send messages, but this time they did'<sup>253</sup>.

Beijing's increasingly active involvement in the Darfur situation is pillared upon a number of interests, both specific to Sudan and their wider foreign policy in general. In particular, the deterioration of their international status as a responsible power (including calls

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relations. For example see, Meidan, Michal, "China's Africa Policy: Business Now, Politics Later", *Asian Perspective*, 2006, pp. 69-93.

<sup>252</sup> Wines, Michael, "China's Influence in Africa Arouses Some Resistance", *The New York Times*, 10 February 2007.

<sup>253</sup> Large, Daniel, "From Non-Interference to Constructive Engagement?: China's Evolving Relations with Sudan", in Alden, Large and de Oliveira, *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*, p. 275.

for boycotting the 2008 ‘Genocide Olympics’ in Beijing); concerns of the spreading of the conflict to Chad, one of the most recent African states to switch recognition to Beijing with the signing of a number of oil exploration agreements; and fears of unilateral actions against Khartoum threatening Chinese investments are all primary motivations<sup>254</sup>. Furthermore, using their leverage with Sudan due to their close relations elevated Beijing into a central role in these processes, drawing considerable weight and praise internationally for their ability to receive Khartoum’s consent for the UN-AU mission<sup>255</sup>. The deployment of Chinese peacekeepers to the mission has assisted in Beijing’s responsible power discourse as well (discussed more in the military chapter).

Reports of Beijing’s behind the scenes influence in resolving the 2008 post-election violence in Zimbabwe is also indicative of their gradual yet calculative involvement in the ‘internal affairs’ of other states when it is deemed necessary to protect other interests. In this instance, the decision by President Mugabe to enter into talks with the opposition regarding a coalition government appears to have been informed in large part by Beijing’s advocacy. While many associate such a break through due to former South African President Mbeki’s arbitration, China’s informing Zimbabwean foreign affairs officials that Mugabe must ‘behave’ appears to have been more of a determining factor. Such diplomatic pressure most likely was motivated by Beijing’s concern such internal violence, and their close association with Harare, would overshadow their hosting of the 2008 Summer Olympics<sup>256</sup>. Facing growing international

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<sup>254</sup> Holslag, p. 75; Large, pp. 289-290.

<sup>255</sup> “US praises Chinese actions in Darfur but asks for more”, *The Sudan Tribute*, 5 June 2008; “UN official praises China’s role on Darfur issue”, *Xinhua News*, 11 September 2007.

<sup>256</sup> Evans, Ian, “Robert Mugabe forced into talks with opposition after China told him to ‘behave’”, *The Telegraph*, 26 July 2008.

isolation and bankruptcy, the weight and leverage wielded by China as one their few and largest economic partner was no doubt critical in ensuring Harare's cooperation<sup>257</sup>.

While the above examples demonstrate the willingness of Beijing, under specific conditions, to drift away from their declaratory promotion of absolute respect for state sovereignty and non-interference, these exceptions (while becoming more common) are a function of achieving larger, usually multifaceted interests and not a fundamental value alteration. Concerning Beijing's recent engagement in the Darfur situation, Jonathan Holslag expresses this view: 'all in all, China's skilful fusing of realpolitik and constructive behaviour remains tailored to benefit China's peaceful development in the first place instead of developing peace in the Sudan'<sup>258</sup>. Furthermore, while Beijing's pressure on Sudan may not be of the intensity or scale desired by Western policy communities, their close relations with such regimes have given them considerable leverage in negotiations, assisting in China's responsible power discourse while carefully preserving their economic interests in these countries.

In this regard, though it is inaccurate to talk of Beijing possessing a dictator or pariah policy based on absolute support, the incremental and localized movement from a position of non-interference to constructive engagement is motivated by a re-prioritization of interests in these circumstances<sup>259</sup>. While for the most part Beijing maintains a declaratory disinclination to interfere in states internal affairs, which policy wise reflects an unwillingness to attach political conditions to economic co-operation, in many cases they have armed (and aligned themselves with) a number of African autocratic elites with a development and human rights discourse

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<sup>257</sup> For more on Zimbabwe's increasing reliance on Chinese economic and political support see Younde, Jeremy, "Why Look East? Zimbabwe foreign policy and China", *Africa Today*, 22 March 2007, pp. 3-19.

<sup>258</sup> Holslag, p. 84.

<sup>259</sup> See Kleine-Ahlbrandt & Small, "China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy".

which legitimizes their rule and shields them from Western pressure and criticism under the banner of sovereignty<sup>260</sup>. Such a reality has not simply hurt China's responsible power discourse internationally, but relations with these regimes pose challenges in their continental affairs, threatening not only reputational concerns but more concrete and immediate economic and political interests.

### **Challenges to China's adherence to state sovereignty and non-interference in Africa**

The deepening of ties with a number of African states which are little more than kleptocracies, enriching a small cadre of elites while alienating large portions of their populations, strains China's development discourse due to tension between its respect for state sovereignty and human rights position. As articulated in the economic chapter, the stagnation of social and economic development indicators in a number of China's closest political and economic partners in Africa conflicts with their narrative as a development partner as well. In these instances, Ian Taylor succinctly states the growing contradiction within Chinese policy '...if sovereignty is the guarantor of human rights, as per the Chinese position, and sovereignty is being used to effectively undermine developmentalism, then there is a profound contradiction at the heart of China's discourse on human rights'<sup>261</sup>. Such policy conflicts have in many instances generated into real threats against Chinese nationals and economic holdings in a number of African countries caused by their close linkages with specific regimes. Abductions and killings of Chinese citizens (usually oil workers) in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Nigeria attest not only to the

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<sup>260</sup> Taylor, "Sino-African Relations and the Problem of Human Rights", p. 71.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid, p. 85.

threats they are exposed to but the general instability of the countries in which they operate in, typically characterized by numerous contestations of power over the state or part of it<sup>262</sup>.

Issues of regime stability, as well, have further linked Beijing to these governments via arms sales (covered in the military chapter) with apparent little regard or interest in gauging the ramifications to Chinese support from amongst their populations; scenarios concerning the potential demise of these regimes appear to not be a main priority of Beijing. Will China's economic lure ensure relations remain strong regardless of who is in power or shall Beijing's close association and support of unpopular, specifically violent, regimes severely injure relations if they are removed is uncertain. Movement away from strict state-state and regime-regime relations was apparent in President Hu's 2007 visit to Sudan in which he met with Salvir Kiir, presently Vice-President in the central government and President of South Sudan. With the most likely secession of South Sudan following the scheduled 2011 referendum, Beijing has become more active in establishing relations with the Kiir government due to a number of their oil holdings lying in their territory<sup>263</sup>. With the maintenance of strong links with Khartoum, including the supplying of arms, however, the splitting of the country shall put Chinese loyalties and interests in the crosshairs, especially if such moves lead to a resumption of war<sup>264</sup>. The deteriorating situation in South Sudan itself, as well, including various tribal hostilities from the

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<sup>262</sup> In Ethiopia the 2007 killing of 9 Chinese oil workers (and 65 Ethiopians) in the Somali State during a massive attack against an oil installation was conducted by a Somali rebel group fighting for the independence of the Ogaden area bordering Somalia. "9 Chinese workers in Ethiopia", *The China Daily*, 24 April 2007. Repeated kidnappings and executions of Chinese nationals in Sudan and Nigeria by rebel groups, as well, largely stem from their opposition to Beijing's support and financing of these regimes through oil revenues and arms exports.

<sup>263</sup> Large, p. 292.

<sup>264</sup> The large number of border disputes, specifically in the Abyei district (where there are significant Chinese oil investments) reflect and fuel deep distrusts between Khartoum and South Sudan. Combined with information that both sides are in the process of augmenting their military forces and recent attacks and clashes reported make the chance of a peaceful secession currently unlikely. See, Johnston, Douglas H., "Why Abyei Matters: The Breaking Point of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement?", *African Affairs*, 2008, pp. 1-19.

civil war present another unstable regime in which China will have significant interests in propping up to ensure economic access<sup>265</sup>.

As detailed in the economic chapter, also, heavy investment in a number of corrupt African regimes pose real immediate challenges to the transparency of Chinese funding, revealing the financial risk to business ventures with these unreliable governments. With poor oversight and regulatory mechanisms in many of these states such as Angola and Zimbabwe, Chinese capital and loans have been siphoned off into the pockets of elites instead of loan repayments or directed towards infrastructure projects<sup>266</sup>. In this regard, China needs good governance as much as any other foreign state to protect their investments by keeping capital transfers transparent, which means a focus on reducing government corruption. Furthermore, while no large scale measures have been constructed into their African economic pursuits regarding this matter, specific agreements and arrangement have been made with certain governments to ensure the transfer and spending of Chinese capital is directed towards the projects they are allotted to<sup>267</sup>.

On a more continental scale, Beijing's non-interference agenda in the future may lead to friction with a number of African regional organizations, most probably the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and their Democracy and Political Governance Initiative. Specifically, as outlined in their organizational agenda, NEPAD members would undergo peer reviews on a number of governance criteria, stemming from the position that development is

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<sup>265</sup> On the growing instability in South Sudan see "South Sudan: Fear of Fragmentation", *The Economist*, 8 April 2009.

<sup>266</sup> For example, in the case of Zimbabwe, their inability to repay Chinese loans was largely seen as the rationale for the diplomatic snub by President Hu in his 2007 African visit of a number of their neighbours but not Harare. "Zimbabwe: Look East or Look Chinese", *Financial Gazette (Harare)*, 25 October 2007.

<sup>267</sup> This is most evident in the case of Angola whose misspending of Chinese loans resulted in the creation of a government advisory body to monitor and dispense these loans following a brief but fierce diplomatic uproar by Beijing. Servant, Jean-Christophe, "China's trade safari in Africa", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 11 May 2005.

‘impossible’ without democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance<sup>268</sup>. While Beijing is not directly opposed to democratic development models<sup>269</sup>, their declaratory stance of non-interference and their resultant close relationships with some of Africa’s most autocratic and corrupt regimes may stifle such endeavours. It is important, however, to understand that this emerging agenda is hardly accepted by a majority of African states, but demonstrates a growing continental debate regarding the future of African peace and development as a whole. Within these processes, Beijing, specifically if the importance attached to NEPAD’s democracy agenda augments in continental politics, may have to adjust its development agenda away from a strict adherence to state sovereignty and non-interference in order to ensure their presence is accepted as a development partner and not a reactionary force blocking such moves<sup>270</sup>.

China, furthermore, is increasingly facing an Africa uncertain of the impact of Beijing’s renewed interest and investment within the continent. Specifically, issues of resource exploitation, enclave development, environmental degradation and poor social and worker regulations have generated political fallout which has forced Beijing increasingly on the defensive to demonstrate the mutual benefits relations have produced. Evidence of growing African hostility, while still localized and limited, was evident during President Hu’s 2007 visit to the continent where protests in Namibia, South Africa and Zambia reflected growing unease

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<sup>268</sup> “The New Partnership For Africa’s Development (NEPAD)”, October 2001,, ‘A1: The Peace, Security, Democracy and Political Governance Initiatives’, pp. 16-18.

<sup>269</sup> While maintaining an official neutral stance in the promotion of political systems, in the past Beijing has been critical of the feasibility and usefulness of democracy in Africa such as throughout the 1990s with the failure of the ‘third wave’ to take hold in much of the continent. See Taylor, *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*, pp. 65-67. Since then, however, China has remained for the most part quiet on these issues though in the aftermath of the 2008 post-election violence in Kenya Beijing reiterated its belief that Western style democracy was incompatible in Africa. “China says Kenya violence proof Western democracy unsuitable”, *The Globe and Mail*, 14 January 2008.

<sup>270</sup> Taylor, “Sino-African Relations and the Problem of Human Rights”, pp. 72-74.

of the impact of China's presence and practices, including those of Chinese companies and their growing Diaspora community<sup>271</sup>.

Specifically concerning Zambia, furthermore, the near victory of Michael Sata in the 2006 presidential election, who publicly blasted Chinese investment and company practices as detrimental to the country as a whole throughout the campaign, demonstrated the increasing contentiousness of China's growing presence. Facing such open criticism, Beijing's threat to pull out all support programs and projects if Sata won challenged their policy of 'hands off' in internal affairs as well, though China's official rationale for such a move was based on Sata's pledge to switch recognition to Taipei if elected<sup>272</sup>. Nevertheless, contemporary Sino-Zambian relations may serve as an example of the growing political realities in a number of African states where China's increasing role and impact has produced mixed feelings from various social-economic groups, leaving the possibility to some of using China as a rallying point to mobilize disgruntled sections of the population for political purposes. Friction, therefore, between China's opposition to interfering in internal affairs and the desire to ensure African state leaders maintain and advance relations with them may come to further challenge Beijing's state sovereignty and non-interference agenda.

### **The future orientation of Beijing's political pursuits**

While the political dimension of China's Africa strategy remains pillared upon the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference, their entrenchment has been somewhat uprooted by a growing matrix of increasingly interconnected international and continental

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<sup>271</sup> In the case of Zambia, the presidential visit to the Chambishi province, the location of the famous 2005 disaster at the Chinese-owned mine killing over 40 Zambian miners, was cancelled due to fears of the number and size of protests. Wines, "China's Influence in Africa Arouses Some Resistance", *The New York Times*, 10 February 2007.

<sup>272</sup> Vines, Alex, "China in Africa: A Mixed Blessing?", *Current History*, May 2007, p. 219.

circumstances. Though these principles remain critical pillars of China's foreign policy, and ones deeply held by a number of African countries of various political make-ups, Beijing's movement away from their strict adherence is evident. In this manner, it is important to understand that unlike the West, China does not have a restructuring agenda for the continent<sup>273</sup>. While mutual support of common development form the declaratory basis of their relations, Beijing has entered Africa looking to operate within and inevitably support the political status-quo, whether that entails working with democrats or despots. This inclination to operate economically without concerns for political issues, while still appealing to much of the conduct of Sino-African relations, is strained by Beijing's attachment to specific internationally out-casted regimes and in general the growing discord between their declaratory development policy and the realities of Chinese investment in a number of African countries. The recent shifting from absolute respect for state sovereignty and non-interference has been in part predicated upon international interests, specifically in an attempt to demonstrate China's responsible power discourse, but as well to remedy real, immediate and pragmatic issues such as African government corruption and internal contradictions in their own development philosophy (see figure 7). The continuing meshing of continental and international affairs (accelerated by the influx of other foreign power interest and influence in Africa) shall increasingly motivate Beijing to view African state and continental relations through wider lenses incorporating these larger international concerns.

The notions of state sovereignty and non-interference, however, will continue to be the basis on Sino-African relations. Specifically within international affairs, Africa's close association and agreement with a number of Beijing's declaratory positions (most importantly the democratization of the international system) will continue to serve China's interests in

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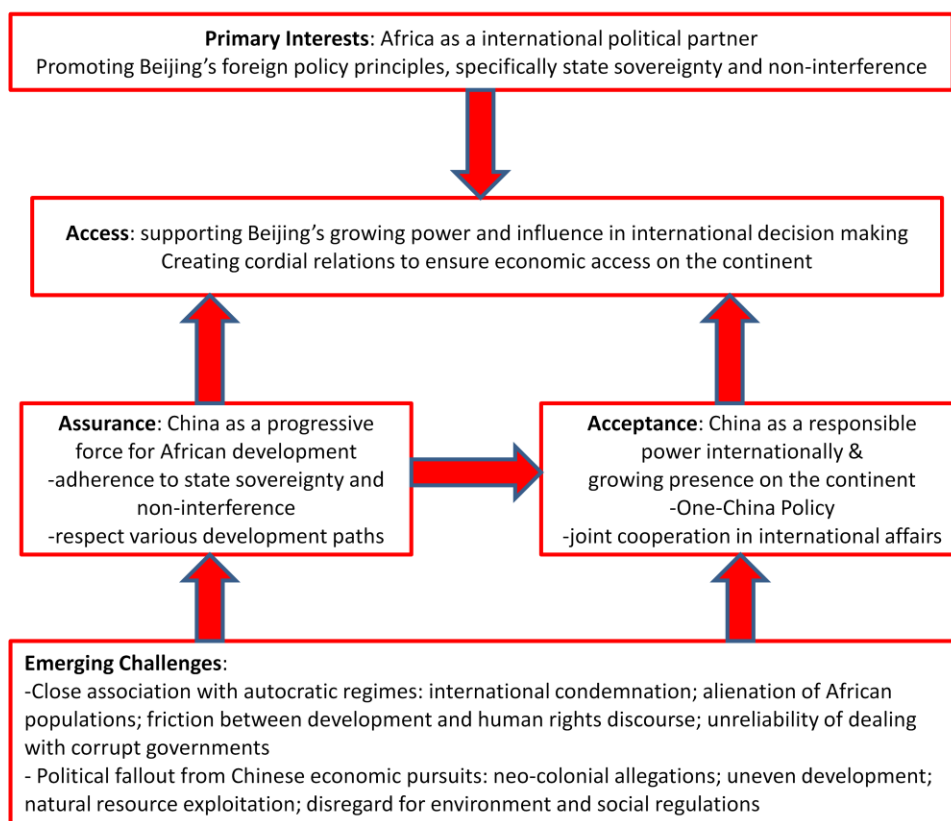
<sup>273</sup> The attachment of political conditions to trade in US and EU policies towards Africa as a whole inextricably links their involvement with the continent in a larger framework characterized by a desire to restructure African political and economic life, invariably affecting social aspects as well. Alden, *China in Africa*, pp. 102-105.

generating assurances and acceptance of their growing international influence, ultimately assisting in gaining further access to levers of power in international decision-making. In these endeavours, African states have been crucial in hedging against Western criticism of China, including both its internal and external behaviour; acceptance of the One-China policy, furthermore, as the basis of relations have further assisted Beijing in marginalizing Taiwan also.

While there has been a relaxation away from such policy rigidness, this movement does not reflect a change in interests but more accurately a re-prioritization of them. In these pursuits, Beijing's attempts to display themselves as a development partner, a progressive force, will increasingly dictate adjustments to their current state sovereignty and non-interference discourse, particularly in assuming a more active role in response to changing political circumstances on the continent. In so doing, Beijing's shifting away from these principles shall be incremental, local, and calculative to ensure a growing milieu of interconnected interests related to status and access to material benefits continentally and internationally remain favourable to China.

Figure 7

### Access, Assurance and Acceptance: The Political Dimension



## The Military Dimension

The military dimension of China's current engagement with Africa constitutes the smallest aspect of their developing relationship, primarily playing a supportive role to Beijing's larger economic and political interests<sup>274</sup>. Such a phenomenon exists throughout China's foreign policy in general as international (particularly American) scepticism of their growing military power impacts the desirability of employing this power asset, with economic and political avenues perceived as less hostile and more appealing to a number of countries including many African states wary of foreign militaries' presence on the continent<sup>275</sup>. Despite these reservations, the incremental growth in African military relations is part of a broader global military engagement pursuit aimed at generating assurances of the peaceful intentions behind their augmenting military capabilities and acceptance of their rise to great power status. Ultimately, these objectives are perceived as vital in ensuring growing influence and involvement internationally as Beijing increasingly deploys its military forces (primarily under UN mandates) beyond their immediate geographical locale and deepens military linkages abroad<sup>276</sup>.

The military dimension can be delineated into three policy aspects which have over time increasingly come to clash with other foreign policy objectives, demonstrating tensions between

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<sup>274</sup> The reluctance to discuss a more broadly defined security dimension stems from the lack of declaratory policy and available research in these areas such as judicial and police cooperation, illegal immigration and combating terrorism. While these areas of joint cooperation will most likely increase in the future, security in Sino-African relations currently is dominated by a traditional military focus conducted at the state level. The growing importance and impact, however, of non-traditional security challenges is discussed in the conclusion.

<sup>275</sup> On the desirability of various power resources in Chinese foreign policy see Lampton, David M. *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money and Minds*.

<sup>276</sup> The growing importance of the international component in China's defence policy has not gone unobserved by other states. In particular, in their 2009 report on the military power of the PRC, the US Department of Defense included a special section investigating the characteristics of and interests underpinning this developing phenomenon. See "Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009", 'Special Topic: China's Global Military Engagement', pp. 54-57.

immediate and longer terms pursuits. Such policy conflicts, furthermore, reflect the incoherence of their African military pursuits in general, with varying and at times contradictory aims and practices creating friction within and between their interests continentally and internationally. First, China's declaratory policy is pillared upon establishing and strengthening official military diplomacy in order to further assurances of their intentions militarily as peaceful and mutually beneficial to their African counterparts. Second, China's growing involvement with peacekeeping operations (PKOs) is their most visible military presence on the continent aimed at generating acceptance of their role as a responsible power internationally and within Africa itself. Finally, arms sales constitute the most controversial aspect of China's military relations, motivated by profit desires; used as an incentive in negotiations to ensure economic access to natural resources; and increasingly seen as necessary to protect their investments in a number of unstable states. Defacto allying with autocratic elites, usually engaged in bitter internal conflicts, is the most immediate challenge to China's military endeavours on the continent as false attempts to disassociate arms deals with political support further reveal conceptual and empirical shortfalls of adherence to their foreign policy principles of state sovereignty and non-interference (as demonstrated in the economic and political dimensions as well). While close military (and almost inevitably intertwined with economic and political) relations with a number of these states, most controversially Sudan, achieve short term goals of access to raw materials, they cast doubt internationally of China's responsible power discourse threatening their longer term interests of assurance and acceptance.

Amongst these contradictions, as well as renewed American and French military interest in Africa, it is uncertain the trajectory or position the military dimension will follow in China's African strategy as their relationship evolves. Despite the existence of some Western narratives

inaccurately and prematurely portraying China's military relations with the continent as focused on a future proxy conflict between Beijing and Washington over resources and influence<sup>277</sup>, there is little evidence to suggest either an accelerating role for military matters in their African pursuits much less a more aggressive and confrontational approach<sup>278</sup>. Most likely China will increasingly rely on economic and political avenues in furthering their objectives of access, assurance and acceptance, seeing them as more desirable paths in terms of interest achievement. The will and effort, as a result, Beijing directs towards rectifying detrimental diplomatic issues regarding military relations, specifically arms sales to a number of African regimes, will largely be a function of how beneficial or damaging they become with respect to their larger political and economic endeavours in general.

### **Sino-African military relations: from revolutionary support to limited engagement**

The shifting nature of China's military relations with Africa is one of the most noticeable permutations in their evolving relationship since their re-engagement in the 1990s, reflecting changes in the international system; the prioritization of Beijing's foreign policy interests globally as well as continentally; and indeed the nature of the Communist regime itself. For the first two decades of the PRC's diplomatic interaction with the continent, military relations were heavily influenced by the context of the Cold War. During these times, Maoist China played an active role in militarily supporting numerous liberation groups attempting to overthrow their

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<sup>277</sup> For example see Skypek, "The Great Game in Africa: Washington's emerging containment strategy".

<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, the employment of force to achieve international pursuits has for the most part currently been abandoned by leaders in Beijing. Lampton, pp. 75-77; see, also, Kim, Samuel S., "China's Path to Great Power Status in the Globalization Era".

colonial rulers, supplying monetary assistance, arms and training through the Organization of African Unity<sup>279</sup>.

The resultant schism between Beijing and Moscow in the 1950s, however, complicated foreign military support on the continent, resulting in a three-way competition across Africa with China allying with ideologically acceptable subsidiaries including liberation movements, insurgent groups in newly independent countries and successful rebel groups which had come to power in opposition to proxies associated with American ‘imperialism’ and Soviet ‘revisionism’<sup>280</sup>. Despite such a portrayal, Chinese support paled in comparison to that of the two superpowers, with the far majority of their funding concentrated in a select few states particularly Tanzania, and later on Egypt and Zimbabwe as well<sup>281</sup>. While noting the mixed record of those supported by Beijing in achieving political power, years of heavy investment and co-operation with particular successful entities such as Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe African National Union has created solid foundations of deep military contacts which continue to this day<sup>282</sup>. Sino-African relations, furthermore, have not been detrimentally affected by Beijing’s past backing of failed guerrilla groups, with China presently having diplomatic relations with all African countries save the handful which recognize Taipei<sup>283</sup>.

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<sup>279</sup> Shinn, David D., ‘Military and Security Relations: China, Africa and the Rest of the World’, in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *China into Africa: Trade, Aid and Influence*, p. 156.

<sup>280</sup> For detailed analysis of Chinese military support to various African guerrilla groups and states during the Cold War see Taylor, *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*. Particularly concerning the impact of the Cold War on Chinese military support see Chapter 2: ‘Historical Introduction to China in Africa’. See, also, Legum, Colin, ‘Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Africa’ in Stuart, Douglas T. and Tow, William T., eds, *China, the Soviet Union and the West: Strategic and Political Dimensions in the 1980s* and Somerville, Keith, *Foreign Military Intervention in Africa*.

<sup>281</sup> For example, in the 1960s China exported \$42 million worth of arms to its African subsidiaries (US and Soviet funds at this time were in the high hundreds of millions of dollars) of which 83% were destined to Tanzania. African arms sales shifted, however, in the 1980s with Egypt becoming their largest customer. Shinn, pp. 158-159.

<sup>282</sup> See Taylor, *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*, Chapter 6: ‘Relations between China and Zimbabwe’.

<sup>283</sup> For example, in the case of Angola (currently one of China’s key economic and political partners on the continent) despite military support of numerous insurgent groups against the Movimento Popular de libertação de Angola

Chinese military relations in Africa curtailed significantly, however, in the 1980s with a general retraction of interest in the continent as Beijing fixed its gaze on internal development and strengthening relations with the West. Such a displacement stemmed from the interconnectedness of changing geopolitical circumstances globally and a reorientation of interests within the Communist regime which would, though, come to redefine Sino-African relations following their rapprochement in the 1990s. With the death of Mao and heightened by the emerging political realities in the aftermath of the Cold War, Chinese foreign policy moved away from a revisionist outlook fixated on exporting communism in a international competition against Western capitalism towards a focus on economic modernization and an attempt to portray itself as a status-quo power, seeking deeper linkages with the international system. The desirability of military power, as well, decreased as Chinese leaders believed attempts to challenge US primacy militarily would be far more detrimental than using economic and political avenues to advance their pursuit to great power status<sup>284</sup>. Within these changing circumstances, the ideological underpinnings (particularly those heavily influencing military support) withered away with a new focus on Africa as a strategic economic partner and to a more limited extent a political ally in China's responsible power discourse seeking acceptance of their growing involvement internationally. Chinese military assistance to sub-state guerrilla groups, therefore, ceased as Beijing became fixated on establishing diplomatic relations with all states based upon a policy of respecting state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs.

While Beijing has always promoted a 'purely defensive' posture, a growing emphasis on Chinese international cooperation towards building a 'harmonious world' of peace and security

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(MPLA) government, which still remains in power presently, official relations commenced between Luanda and Beijing in 1982 and have accelerated over the past decade. Ibid, Chapter 4: 'PRC relations with Angola'.

<sup>284</sup> Lampton, pp. 25-36; Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security*, pp. 20-29.

is demonstrated by its gradual deployment of military forces and the strengthening of military connections worldwide in which Africa is playing a small but nonetheless important role<sup>285</sup>. In this respect, the enhancement of military issues in Sino-African relations is evident by its inclusion as one of the four policy sections of China's African Policy. Specifically, establishing and advancing high level military exchanges, training, military technology transfers, conflict settlement (including PKOs), and in general 'support defense and army building' are the declaratory foci of Beijing's military engagement with the continent<sup>286</sup>. Military relations, furthermore, are conducted at the state-level based on mutual recognition of one another's sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs; an obvious alteration in policy compared to Maoist China in which the vast majority of military support was directed towards numerous sub-state entities ultimately focused on undermining the authority of the state.

The growth in military relations, however, has drawn concern (though not outright condemnation) from the US and France whose military interest over the past decade in the continent has increased as well<sup>287</sup>. For the US, Africa as a strategic geographical region is best demonstrated by the creation of Africa Command in October 2008, removing the continent (save for Egypt) away from Central Command into its own exclusive realm of authority. Such recent American military interest in the continent largely stems from their global engagement in the 'War on Terror' following the September 11 attacks, with many parts of Africa such as Somalia

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<sup>285</sup> For more on the international component of China's defence policy see 'Preface' and 'The Security Situation' in "China Defense in 2008".

<sup>286</sup> "China's African Policy", *military cooperation* under 'Section IV: Enhancing all-round Cooperation between China and Africa'.

<sup>287</sup> While concerns regarding Sino-African military relations are held by a number of other states, American and French interests and apprehensions are mentioned for these two states presently have the largest foreign military presence on the continent.

seen as hotbeds and potential breeding grounds of terrorist activity<sup>288</sup>. This renewed focus on the continent, also, is apparent by the doubling of American military spending on the region between 2000 and 2005 to \$597 million along with an increasing amount of military exercises with a number of African states<sup>289</sup>. While pledges not to construct additional military bases on the continent have so far be kept, current installations such as the one in Djibouti have been greatly enhanced technologically and in terms of units deployments<sup>290</sup>.

France's military presence, also, is growing on the continent following a steep retraction in the 1990s<sup>291</sup>. Though currently the majority of French military forces on the continent are included in various UN missions, there exist unilateral force concentrations in a number of their former colonies, primarily the Ivory Coast, Chad and the Central African Republic. While like the US there is a heavy emphasis on counter-terrorism operations, the rationale of France's recent military re-engagement with the continent is uncertain but concerns of growing American and to a certain extent Chinese influence (particularly in their traditional sphere of influence in West Africa) appear to be driving motivations<sup>292</sup>.

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<sup>288</sup> See Pham, J. Peter., "Next Front?: Evolving United States-African Strategic Relations in the 'War on Terrorism' and Beyond", *Comparative Strategy*, 2007, pp. 39-54. The focus on counter-terrorism is evident in the mission objectives and rationales of their various military operations on the continent including Joint Task Force Horn of Africa and Operation Enduring Freedom Trans Sahara.

<sup>289</sup> Xu, "China and the United States in Africa: Coming conflict or commercial coexistence", p. 21.

<sup>290</sup> "No Bases Planned for Africa, Bush says", *The Washington Post*, 12 February 2008. Due to African apprehensions of the deployment of foreign forces on the continent, the establishment of basing agreements in the island state of Mauritius is perhaps a sign of developing offshore force capabilities allowing for quick insertion and extraction operations in the continent.

<sup>291</sup> See, Utley, Rachel, "'Not to do less, but to do better...': French Military Policy in Africa", *International Affairs*, 2002, pp. 129-146.

<sup>292</sup> For more on France's military activities and relations in Africa see Church, William, "Africa: France Increases Arms Sales and Intervention", *American Chronicle*, 6 November 2006 and Hansen, Andrew, "The French Military in Africa", *The Council on Foreign Relations*, 8 February 2008. On French perceptions of China's growing presence in Africa in general see, Marchal, Roland, "French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations" in Alden, Large, and de Oliveira, *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*, pp. 181-196.

Though the importance of African natural resources, most notably oil, is a primary interest in American (and French) military focus on the continent, publicly the US has stated it does not see China as a military threat on the continent as some narratives suggest<sup>293</sup>. Particularly arguments of a growing arms competition on the continent appear to be overblown, including speculation for the potential of PLA soldiers in the future operating as mercenaries and allegations of thousands of Chinese troops in Sudan which have not been verified to any credible extent<sup>294</sup>. A more accurate portrayal of American (and others) concerns of China's growing military involvement in the continent is the close association via military diplomacy and arms sales between Beijing and a number of autocratic regimes, specifically those internationally out-casted by the West.

While association with such regimes draws condemnation, in other less publicly demonized (though not necessarily less ruthless) states assistance in terms of army building, military infrastructure development and the use of arms sales as economic leverage appears to be part of a growing low level competition between China and the United States vying for the loyalties of elites in resource-rich countries<sup>295</sup>. For example, the relaxation of American regulations allowing US private military companies to train the presidential guard of Equatorial Guinea, amongst deepening ties between Malabo and Beijing, is indicative of their growing competition to win favour politically from the Obiang regime in accessing their growing oil

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<sup>293</sup> Cohen, Herman J., "In Sub-Saharan Africa, Security is Overtaking Development as Washington's Top Policy Priority", *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 2008, pp. 94-95.

<sup>294</sup> For example see Puska, Susan, "Military backs China's African adventure", *Asian Times*, 8 June 2007. David Zweig and Bi Jianhai assert that upwards of 4,000 plain clothed PLA soldiers are in the Sudan currently securing oil installations and other Chinese assets; there are no sources to confirm or deny this assertion.

<sup>295</sup> Klare & Volman, pp. 306-307.

resources<sup>296</sup>. While noting this emerging reality, analysis of the three aspects comprising China's military engagement - military diplomacy, PKOs and arms sales- reveal that while contradictions exist within them as well as conflicts of interests with Western goals and pursuits, this dimension constitutes a small part of China's wider African strategy. Furthermore, awareness of generating international apprehension regarding their growing military power will continue to weigh heavily on the minds of the Chinese leadership regarding any attempt to augment the importance and placement of this dimension in Sino-African relations at large.

### **The purpose and extent of China's military diplomacy in Africa**

The expansion of Sino-African military contacts is a gradual but nonetheless growing phenomenon, part of a larger project of establishing and strengthening military relations globally. While these relations are evolving, Africa as an area of military focus in general remains a low priority currently in Chinese defence policy, evident by the small number and limited extent of their military relations on the continent compared to those in other states and regions. Within the continent itself furthermore, the bulk of military relations are concentrated in a select few countries where even these are largely overshadowed and play a subordinate role to Beijing's greater political and economic interests. The intensity of their military connections, however, is also influenced by other factors including Beijing's perception of the state's importance within larger continental and international strategic concerns and the history which exist between their militaries. Though contacts, exchanges, visits and to a certain extent security consultations will most likely expand and deepen in the future, Beijing appears committed to its declaratory positions of not establishing alliances, bases or stationing of soldiers in other states<sup>297</sup>.

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<sup>296</sup> Behar, p. 3.

<sup>297</sup> Shinn, p. 180.

As of 2007, China maintains 14 military attachés (a sign of permanent military relations<sup>298</sup>) in Africa residing in Algeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sudan, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe<sup>299</sup>. While this number has grown from 9 in 1985, China's total deployment of military attachés over the same period has nearly doubled from 57-109, in part demonstrating that while it is a component of a wider trend Africa remains a small military consideration overall<sup>300</sup>. Investigation, however, into these relations reflect the myriad of interests which underpin their existence. For example, while economic relations heavily influence China's military contacts with Nigeria and Sudan, the growing continental and international role Egypt and South Africa play appear to be a large factor in these relations as well. The history of close military contacts with specific regimes also, such as with Zimbabwe (stemming back to Chinese support of their liberation campaign) add a further dimension of these deepening relationships. Markets for Chinese arms sales comprise another important component of military relations but shall be investigated in the final section.

Like attaché deployments, visits between Chinese and African militaries and defence personnel are growing but at an incremental level. For example, in 2007 of the 89 state visits by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) only 9 were in Africa; in 2008 this number increased to 11<sup>301</sup>. Presently Egypt, with a long history of military relations and a major customer of Chinese

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<sup>298</sup> While Beijing currently has established military relations with almost all states they have diplomatic relations with, military attachés deployments reflect a deepening of these contacts towards a permanent basis with regular contact between military and defence personnel stationed in one another's embassies. Presently China has military relations with 150 states, of which 109 have attachés. "China Defense 2008", 'XII: International Security Cooperation'.

<sup>299</sup> 18 African states, as well, have military attachés in Beijing including Algeria, Egypt, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe (all with Chinese attachés) as well as Burundi, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Niger and Tanzania. Shinn, p. 163.

<sup>300</sup> Marks, Stephen, "China's Mythical Military Menace", *All Africa*, 30 October 2008.

<sup>301</sup> "China Defense 2008" under 'XII: International Security Cooperation'.

arms has received the highest number of PLA senior delegations<sup>302</sup>. Within Africa, however, China only conducts regular security consultations with South Africa, stemming from the establishment of a strategic partnership in 2000 and the creation of a bi-national committee regarding defence and security. Even with these regular contacts, though, military relations are subordinate to Sino-South African political and economic relations<sup>303</sup>. The establishment, however, of strategic partnerships with Nigeria and Algeria, two oil-rich states Beijing is interested in deepening economic linkages, may see the enlargement of security consultations on the continent<sup>304</sup>. Despite these augmentations in military relations, China has never conducted military exercises with any African state either on the continent or abroad, and naval visits (a growing part of Beijing's global military engagement pursuits) have only come to the continent twice, in Tanzania and South Africa in 2000 and Egypt in 2002<sup>305</sup>.

The incremental nature of their military diplomacy demonstrates the limited interests currently associated with it, perhaps a sign of wariness held by leaders in Beijing of growing international scepticism stemming from any sort of acceleration in Sino-African military relations. While military relations shall continue to expand and deepen with certain states, their rise to a level of policy equality to Beijing's economic and political interests will not most likely occur. Their importance, however, in a supportive role shall increase as Africa continues to become a main supplier of raw materials and oil. Particularly, military relations in resource-rich

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<sup>302</sup> While not objecting to such close ties, Sino-Egyptian military relations appear to be more a function of Chinese desire and pro-activeness than motivations coming from Cairo in which the interests behind these pursuits remain somewhat uncertain. Shinn, p. 165.

<sup>303</sup> Garth, pp. 260-262. See, also, Alden, Chris, "South Africa and China: Forging Africa's Strategic Partnerships", *SinoAfrica*, 2 October 2008.

<sup>304</sup> Shinn, p. 165; Taylor, Ian, "China's relations with Nigeria" *The Round Table*, 2007, p. 631.

<sup>305</sup> Shinn, p. 180. Reversely South Africa is the only African state whose navy has visited China, with their October 2008 port call indicative of not only the growth in Sino-South African military relations but indeed Pretoria's growing military engagement internationally.

states where there exists a growing value of Chinese investments, such as the Nigeria and Sudan, will further develop in order to support political ties to maintain economic access.

### **China's embrace of PKOs: seeking international and continental approval**

More than any other aspect of their relationship, China's recent embrace and heavy contribution to UN PKOs over the past decade is the most visual sign of their military presence in Africa, currently volunteering forces to 6 operations on the continent<sup>306</sup>. Growing Chinese support for PKOs is one of the most noticeable changes in their foreign policy over the past decade. In particular, concerns by Beijing regarding the widening of PKOs in the 1990s were addressed in the 2000 Brahimi report calling forth more rigid measures with respect to the use of force, clear mission statement, and well established and understood objectives. The retention of host state-consent, as well, is seen by Beijing as a vital aspect of PKOs, falling in line with their state sovereignty principle<sup>307</sup>.

With such modifications, PKOs have become a central focus in China's military engagement strategy and an entrenched facet in their defence policy<sup>308</sup>; the fact that Beijing has supported every PKO since 2000 is indicative of the growing acceptance and importance they have in their wider foreign policy outlook<sup>309</sup>. PKOs, furthermore, assist in achieving an assortment of Beijing's international objectives including generating assurances of China's peaceful intentions despite its augmenting military power; creating acceptance of their growing military presence and role internationally as a great power; and access via the UN Security

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<sup>306</sup> As of May 2009 there existed 16 PKOs of which 7 are in Africa. The only African PKO China has not deployed forces to is the United Nations Mission in Central African Republic and Chad. "United Nations Peacekeeping Operation: Background note 30 April 2009", *The United Nations*.

<sup>307</sup> Stähle, pp. 654-655.

<sup>308</sup> See 'XII: International Security Cooperation' in "China Defense 2008".

<sup>309</sup> For a historical analysis of Chinese perceptions and support of PKOs see He, Yin, "China's Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations", *Institute for Security and Development Policy*, Asian Paper July 2007,

Council (UNSC) in influencing and defining the characteristics of these PKOs in a forum inhibiting moves of unilateralism, most notably by the US<sup>310</sup>. In particular, the willingness on the part of Beijing to not simply diplomatically support but indeed contribute to PKOs (with China the 15<sup>th</sup> largest UN contributor in terms of personnel, only behind France of the Permanent Five (P5) members of the UNSC<sup>311</sup>) is congruent with its declaratory emphasis on shouldering broad international obligations as part of its responsible power discourse<sup>312</sup>. Militarily, involvement in PKOs is building considerable operational experience, including in diverse African environments, for Chinese units and developing contacts with other militaries also<sup>313</sup>.

Nowhere in the world is China's recent embrace of PKOs more evident than in Africa where over 1,900 soldiers and military observers, comprising approximately 86% of their current contributions to PKOs, are operating on the continent<sup>314</sup>. Such deployments, however, are not solely designed to generate assurance and acceptance from the international community at large, but on the continent China wishes to portray itself as a responsible military partner. Besides more macro foreign policy objectives, such as their responsible power discourse, the use of PKOs sometimes serve more localized political and economic interests to maintain favour with elites and protect Chinese investment. These interests are best exemplified by China's heavy pressure

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<sup>310</sup> In this respect, the circumventing of the UNSC by the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in their military engagement with Kosovo created concerns amongst Chinese leaders of the ease at which their interests and influence could be sidelined beyond the UNSC. Stähle, pp. 653-654.

<sup>311</sup> As of April 2009, China currently contributes 2,146 personnel to UN PKOs; France ranked 12<sup>th</sup> with 2,544 personnel. As for the other P5 members, Russia ranked 41<sup>st</sup>, the United Kingdom 42<sup>nd</sup> and the US 65<sup>th</sup> out of 118 contributors. "Ranking of Military and Police Contributions to UN Operations: Monthly Summary March 2009", *United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations*.

<sup>312</sup> Gill & Reilley, "Sovereignty, Intervention, and Peacekeeping: The View from Beijing", p. 41.

<sup>313</sup> Rogers, Phillippe D., "China and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa", *Naval War College Review*, Spring 2007, pp. 88-90.

<sup>314</sup> For an exact breakdown of Chinese deployments to various PKO see 'Appendix III: China's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations' in "China Defense 2008".

for and contribution to the hybrid UN-AU mission in Darfur established in 2007. Not only does Chinese support meet AU demands for outside reinforcements, the willingness of Beijing to deploy military forces appears to have been a major political tool to entice consent from Khartoum to accept the mission<sup>315</sup>. Such moves, ultimately, are designed both to improve Beijing's image internationally as well as block unilateral action against Sudan which may threaten their economic interests in the country<sup>316</sup>.

As long as Beijing continues to support and contribute to UN PKOs they will maintain a large, noticeable presence in a number of African states, furthering their attempts to portray their military outreach with the world as peaceful and beneficial. While larger foreign policy interests of augmenting their responsible power discourse will continue to guide their acceptance of PKOs (though usually after a number of compromises and conditions to mission objectives and force composition within the UNSC) there appear to be more localized concerns in support of particular missions, most notably the Sudan. Close association with Khartoum, however, has produced calls by some minor Darfur rebel groups for Chinese peacekeepers to leave the region or face military attack<sup>317</sup>. Despite these threats, however, of the three aspects of China's military engagement with Africa, contributions to PKOs have been the least controversial pursuit in achieving their objectives, particularly in generating international consent for Beijing's continued and growing military involvement globally.

### **Arms sales to Africa: economic opportunism and political support**

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<sup>315</sup> de Montesquiou, Alfred, "Sudan Welcomes Chinese Peacekeepers", *Associated Press*, 1 February 2008. The denial of peacekeepers from a number of countries including Thailand and Nepal but acceptance of Chinese ones by Khartoum points to such a suggestion.

<sup>316</sup> Holslag, p. 75.

<sup>317</sup> "Darfur rebels tell Chinese peacekeepers to go home", *Agence-France Press*, 25 November 2007.

The growth in Chinese arms sales to Africa is based upon a multitude of economic and political rationales which increasingly have come into conflict with a number of Beijing's other interests<sup>318</sup>. Specifically, a desire by Beijing to promote state-owned arms industries; employing arms agreements as political leverage to further entice economic cooperation; and supporting ruling elites in unstable states where there are heavy Chinese investments and natural resource interests are the primary motivations underpinning their weapons exports to the continent. While military exports are not restricted to states which have other deep economic ties with China (Tanzania as a case in point<sup>319</sup>), the concentration of them in a few select states in many instances is highly indicative of their defacto allying with resource-rich regimes, many engaged in internal contestations of power and home to some of the most violent conflicts on the continent<sup>320</sup>. Though hardly the only foreign state militarily supporting a number of illiberal regimes and economically benefitting from these conflicts, the presence of Chinese weapons in a number of African war zones (including instances of supporting multiple parties as in the Eritrea-Ethiopian war<sup>321</sup>) and the close political support with certain regimes have generated international and continental backlashes which threaten China's responsible power discourse. Furthermore, close military support with certain governments as well, may threaten their economic holdings in these countries in the future.

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<sup>318</sup> Increasing arms sales to Africa is part of a broader trend of augmenting Chinese arms exports to the developing world over the past decade. "The creeping reach of Chinese arms", *Malaysian insider*, 13 June 2009. For a brief overview of recent Chinese arms sales to Africa, though hardly complete due to the lack official documentation see Pham, J. Peter, "Hu's Selling Guns to Africa", *World Defence Review*, 27 June 2007.

<sup>319</sup> The provision of Tanzanian rail and port services for Zambian copper exports, however, may in part influence Chinese arms sales to Dar es Salaam. Shinn, p. 161.

<sup>320</sup> A notable exception is Egypt which though having large trading relations with Beijing is not a major resource supplier to China. The growing regional role assumed by Cairo combined with over 50 years of military contacts with the PLA are better explanations of the strong arms exports relations which exist.

<sup>321</sup> It is estimated that China earned approximately \$1 billion supplying both sides during their 1998-2000 war. Shinn, David D. & Eisenman, Joshua, "Duelling Priorities for Beijing in the horn of Africa", *Association for Asian Research*, 2005.

Arms sales to Africa have undergone a re-orientation resulting from larger foreign policy changes which have come to redefine their relationship. While before their re-engagement in the 1990s, Chinese arms exports were dominantly guided by ideological support to a number of like-minded state and sub-state entities, in contemporary Sino-African relations they are largely informed by economic motivations. Specifically, following the 1998 decision to de-link the PLA from its State Owned Enterprises (stemming from apprehension within the Party leadership of the influence of the military within the economy) arms manufacturers were reorganized into profit seeking companies, encourage by Beijing to search abroad for markets though still remaining assets of the government but housed in civilian ministries<sup>322</sup>. The inability of these entities, however, to compete with more advanced Western state-of-the-art arms manufacturers motivated them towards the market places of the developing world, primarily targeting clientele either denied access to more sophisticated military technologies (due to arms embargos such as Sudan and Zimbabwe) and/or those more interested in seeking quantity than quality of arms such as a number of impoverished African states<sup>323</sup>. Though export information is incomplete and vague, estimates range that 95-100% of Chinese arms exports are with states considered part of the developing world, with annual sales recorded at \$2.3 billion. While China is increasingly becoming a growing arms supplier to Africa, its current share of the market is widely disputed<sup>324</sup>.

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<sup>322</sup>Shinn, p. 115. For a more comprehensive analysis of this issue see Mulvenon, J. *Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978-1998*; see, also, Shambaugh, David, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems and Prospects*, 'Chapter 6: Defense Industries and Weapons Procurements'.

<sup>323</sup> Grimmett, Richard, "Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2000-2007", *Congressional Research Service*, 23 October 2008, p. 11. See, also, Gill, Bates & Evan S. Medeiros, "Chinese Arms Exports: Policy, Players and Process", August 2000, *The Strategic Studies Institute*, Chapter 1: Background Trends in Chinese Arms Exports.

<sup>324</sup> Richard Grimmett's findings in his report lists China as the largest arms supplier to Africa, comprising almost 30% of all total agreements by value (see Grimmett, Richard, "Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2000-2007", 'Table 1E: Percentage of Total Agreement of Value by Supplier to Regions, 2000-2007'). Many others, however, contend that China currently makes up no more than 6-7% of the African arms sales markets (for example, see Alden, *China in Africa*, pp. 25-26).

Arms sales, as well, have been used as diplomatic leverage in enticing natural resources agreements with autocratic regimes desperate for weapons. For example, arms exchanges for lumber in Liberia during the 1990s (despite a UN embargo against the Taylor government), ivory with Zimbabwe, and oil in Equatorial Guinea demonstrate the willingness by Beijing to militarily supply such states to achieve their resource demands<sup>325</sup>. The use of arms exports as a tool to enhance political support and economic access is evident, also, in China's developing relations with Nigeria. Over the past half decade, a number of arms purchases by Abuja from Beijing including fighter jets, missiles, and patrol boats (in this instance after the lethargic response by the US to fulfill such a request) have gone hand in hand with the awarding of a number of oil agreements with China. Not only do such arms dealings appear to assist Beijing in gaining access to Nigerian oil, military support is important to quell violence in the Niger Delta to ensure the smooth flow of oil exists and protect Chinese investments and production in the region<sup>326</sup>.

The plethora of interests underpinning arms exports is best demonstrated, however, by China's relations with Sudan. Chinese arms manufacturers (while not the only foreign entities supplying Khartoum) have found a niche in the internationally isolated state supplying upwards of 90% of their small arms, making Sudan the second largest recipient of Chinese weapons<sup>327</sup>. Besides taking advantage of the market vacuum due to international embargos and sanctions, arms exports motivations also reflect their growing importance in maintaining cordial political relations with the Bashir regime to further protect Chinese economic investments in the country which presently amount to roughly \$7 billion; the establishment of three arms factories outside

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<sup>325</sup> See "People's Republic of China: Sustaining conflict and human rights abuses-the flow of arms accelerates", *Amnesty International*, June 2006, pp. 7-13.

<sup>326</sup> Taylor, "China's Relations with Nigeria", p. 638.

<sup>327</sup> "Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009", p. 58.

Khartoum producing a number of small and heavy calibre Chinese weapons including mortars, ammunition and T-55 tanks is a further sign of the deep military connections and importance Beijing attaches to this relationship<sup>328</sup>.

Furthermore economic relations between Beijing and Khartoum have become embedded in arms sales as oil revenues (of which China currently consumes well over 50% of Sudan's petroleum exports) are increasingly directed towards the purchasing of weapons (in which China is a main supplier, particularly of small arms) to suppress internal conflicts most notably in Darfur<sup>329</sup>. Despite Beijing's support for UNSC Resolution 1591 prohibiting the deployment of any weaponry by Khartoum to Darfur without their official approval, the well documented presence and use of Chinese imported weapons, including helicopter gunships, military trucks, and various small arms in the region has become a diplomatic nightmare for Beijing; specifically as international outrage grows over numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity allegations committed by the Bashir regime and their sponsored militias<sup>330</sup>. The nature of this incident, as well, reveals the conflict of interests within the Chinese regime itself as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) attempts to deal with the political fallout of these issues while Chinese defence industries appear more focused on profits than such political sensitivities<sup>331</sup>.

While Sudan is the most glaring example of the contentiousness concerning Chinese arms exports, these issues stem from a larger policy fallacy maintained by Beijing arguing arms transfers conducted at the state-level are part of normal commercial relations between countries

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<sup>328</sup> Shinn, p. 171.

<sup>329</sup> For more see "China's Involvement in the Sudan: Arms and Oil (2003)", *Human Rights Watch*.

<sup>330</sup> "China and Russia defy Sudan arms embargo", *The Telegraph*, 10 May 2007; "People's Republic of China: Sustaining conflict and human rights abuses-the flow of arms accelerates", pp. 18-19. See, also, "Sudan: Arms continuing to fuel serious human rights violations in Darfur", *Amnesty International*, 2007.

<sup>331</sup> Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa*, p. 118.; see, also, Gill, Bates, & Evan S. Medeiros, "Foreign and Domestic Influences on China's Arms Control and Non-proliferation Policies", *The China Quarterly*, March 2000, pp. 90-93.

which do not influence their internal affairs. Such a belief is listed in Beijing's military export regulations directing that arms sales are only to be conducted under the following principles:

- ‘1. Being useful to the self-defense capability of the recipient country;
2. Being not harmful to the peace, security, and stability of the relevant region or the world;
3. Staying hands off the recipient country's internal affairs’<sup>332</sup>

Besides the vagueness of these guidelines, the reality of arms exports is aptly stated by Ian Taylor: ‘Arms sales are not and can never be neutral’<sup>333</sup>. This is particularly relevant with respect to a number of African states which are Beijing's primary arms recipients that largely rely on coercion to remain in power. Despite, therefore, China's neutrality argument, in reality the contestation of power in many of these countries including Sudan and the Niger Delta in Nigeria results in a defacto allying with regimes which have captured and rule the state by force<sup>334</sup>; in these ongoing conflicts, therefore, Beijing is an active participant and supporter of these governments in their internal conflicts to retain power. Such close associations have resulted in numerous warnings, kidnappings and murders of Chinese nationals (mostly oil workers) in a number of these countries, threatening not only the lives of their citizens but their economic holdings as well<sup>335</sup>.

Despite declaratory arguments of remaining ‘hands off’ the internal matters of states, Western states see Chinese arms exports as an obvious sign of support to these regimes, many of those internationally out-casted due to allegations of human rights abuses in their own countries.

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<sup>332</sup> “Regulations of Control of Military Products Export”, *The Information Office of the State Council*, 22 October 1997 (updated 2002).

<sup>333</sup> Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa*, p. 117.

<sup>334</sup> See Taylor, Ian, “Arms sales to Africa: Beijing's Reputation at Risk”, *China Brief*, Vol. 7, Iss. 7, 18 May 2007.

<sup>335</sup> The most obvious case of such threats and attacks have occurred in the Niger Delta by the Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) which have warned the Chinese to ‘stay well clear’ of the Delta due to Beijing's close links with Abuja, resulting in a number of kidnappings and murders of Chinese nationals over the past three years. Taylor, “China's relations with Nigeria”, pp. 638-639.

The reluctance of China furthermore to enter into international protocols which establish criteria, including human rights, in guiding arms exports further fuels international scepticism of Beijing's declaratory stance of the neutrality of its arms exports<sup>336</sup>. The international uproar following the attempt to offload arms supplies destined for Zimbabwe in the spring 2008 amongst the violent suppression of political opposition by the Mugabe government following presidential elections was down played by Beijing which argued 'it is pointless for some people to politicise this issue'; furthermore, Chinese officials reaffirmed that arms sales are conducted at the state level, are part of normal commercial endeavours, and subject to strict export regulations<sup>337</sup>. Additionally, supplying arms to states such as Sudan whose war in Darfur has spread into neighbouring Chad and the flooding of refugees into neighbouring South Africa from Zimbabwe following the 2008 government crack downs (using not only Chinese military equipment but anti-riot gear as well) challenges Beijing's own regulatory measures of ensuring arms exports do not constitute a threat to regional peace and stability.

While most likely in many of their arms export agreements Beijing is well aware of the intentions behind the recipient country's purchasing of them, weak export regulations as well have assisted in the proliferation of Chinese weapons (particularly small arms) into a number of conflict zones including Eastern Congo and in areas of Chad and Darfur. Such realities do not only hurt Beijing's international responsible power discourse but endanger the lives of their soldiers deployed on PKOs to these regions as well<sup>338</sup>. Poor post-shipment regulations are most likely to blame for the acquisition of Chinese arms by sub-state entities as Beijing appears to

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<sup>336</sup> "People's Republic of China: Sustaining conflict and human rights abuses-the flow of arms accelerates", p. 1.

<sup>337</sup> "Zimbabwe arms shipment returns to China", *The Guardian*, 24 April 2008.

<sup>338</sup> "People's Republic of China: Sustaining conflict and human rights abuses-the flow of arms accelerates", pp. 8-12.

have no control over a number of intermediate arms dealers operating on the continent<sup>339</sup>. The vagueness of current export regulations and the general absence of verification measures are major hurdles Beijing must rectify if it is serious in creating a more rigid arms exports regulatory mechanism. While the 2007 decision to publish information on major types of conventional arms sales to the UN Conventional Arms Registry (following a ten year hiatus in protest to American disclosure of arms sales to Taiwan) is an improvement in their export transparency, the majority of their weapons dealings, specifically small arms, are still shrouded in opaqueness<sup>340</sup>.

While, to reiterate the fact, Beijing is not the only weapons supplier to Africa, the use of Chinese arms in currying favour with elites in enabling access to natural resources is a common occurrence across the continent, legitimized by a policy where sovereignty is the only requirement to engage in the otherwise ‘normal’ commercial endeavour of arms sales<sup>341</sup>. In reality, however, arms sales have furthered deep political and economic relations with a number of regimes of ill-repute drawing international condemnation which threatens China’s responsible power discourse. Pragmatically, as well, the further linking of Beijing’s fortunes to specific regimes via the augmentation of arms exports may in the future threaten such interests if changing political circumstances occur in these states. While Beijing does not profess to support a specific regime type and wishes to be seen as a development partner assisting in the betterment

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<sup>339</sup> Taylor, *China’s New Role in Africa*, p. 118. The presence of other Western built arms in a number of African warzones, particularly Darfur, however, also highlights regulatory issues within these processes as well; a point usually omitted in criticisms of China’s African arms dealings. See “Over 30 Countries at risk of Violating Darfur Arms Embargo”, *Human Rights First*, 9 October 2008.

<sup>340</sup> For the latest list of Chinese major conventional weapons exports see “China defense in 2008”, ‘Appendix IV: Imports and Exports of Seven Major Types of Conventional Arms of the PRC (2007)’.

<sup>341</sup> For more on such declaratory arguments by Beijing see Spiegel, Samuel J. and le Billion, Phillippe, “China’s weapons trade: from ships of shame to global resistance”, *International Affairs*, 2009, pp. 323-346.

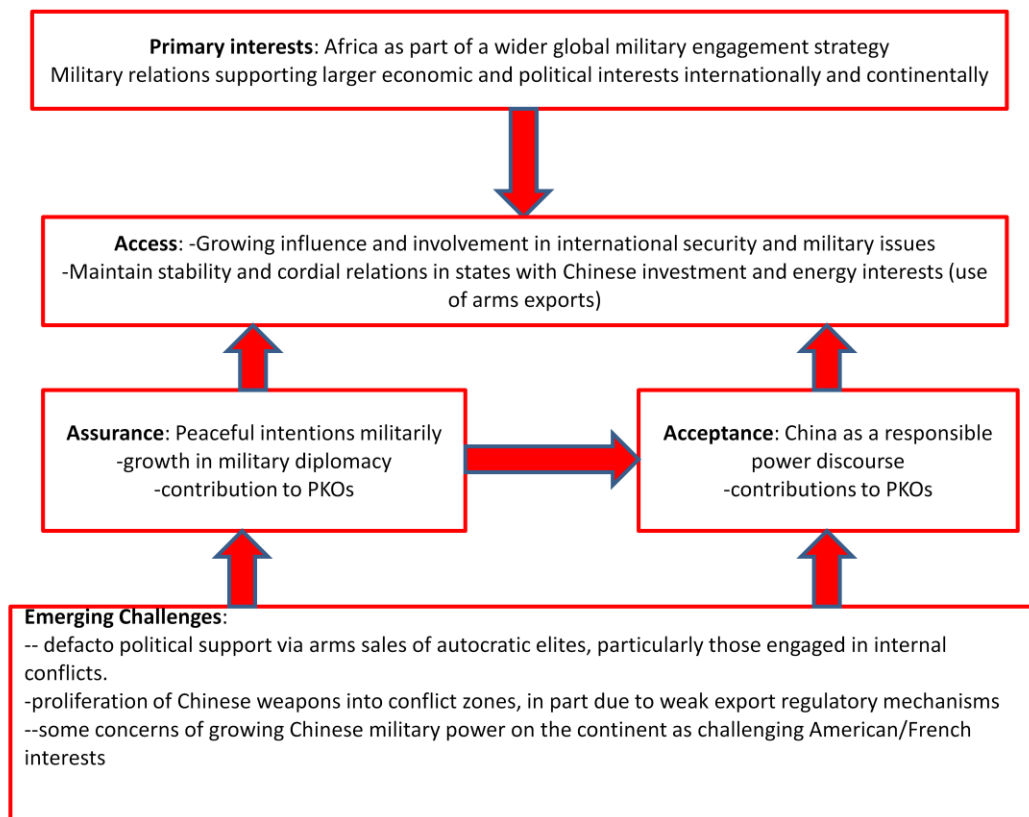
of African states and populations, arms exports draw a clear linkage of political support between Beijing and many of the most ruthless authoritarian governments on the continent.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the limited, subordinate and supportive role military relations play in China's overall African strategy, contradictions and conflicts within and between military and other political and economic interests demonstrates the lack of coherence in their overall military pursuits; a reality Beijing is increasingly feeling pressured to rectify as particular issues continue to frustrate and inhibit many of their central foreign policy objectives. While China's presence on the continent in numerous PKOs assists their responsible power discourse, the strengthening of military links, with arms sales the most obvious example, with many autocratic governments is continually seen by the West as a defacto aligning with these regimes and their practices. Though these close linkages assist in gaining access to natural resources from these states, they complicate Beijing's diplomatic arguments for assurance and acceptance of their growing military role internationally as peaceful and responsible (see figure 8).

Figure 8

## Access, Assurance and Acceptance: The Military Dimension



While there exists large levels of African support of China's growing military power in general, Beijing shall most likely proceed cautiously in furthering military relations with the continent due to American (and others) unease of their military outreach<sup>342</sup>. The use of military diplomacy and arms sales, however, are increasingly being employed in competition to win favour in a number of countries against American, French and other foreign powers operating on the continent. Such recognition is important to ensure China is not the only state chastised for supporting many illiberal regimes on the continent. In this respect, the use of arms exports to

<sup>342</sup> For example, a recent international survey revealed those African states questioned had the highest support for China's growing military power on average while many Western states are viewing this phenomenon with increased scepticism. "Global Unease with Major World Powers: 47-Nation PEW Global Attitudes Survey", *The PEW Global Attitudes Project*, June 27 2007, pp. 41-42.

achieve short terms interests of natural resources access will most likely continue, especially if other present and emerging players use similar strategies. Despite these occurrences, however, contemporary Sino-American military cooperation in rebuilding the Liberian military, including weapons, training and infrastructure demonstrates the willingness of Beijing (and Washington) to work together on the continent and counter claims that their military relations are totally doomed to confrontation<sup>343</sup>.

For Beijing, however, the greatest issue in the military dimension are the false attempts to delineate arms sales from political support. Movement in this policy area is occurring, however, as evident in their more recent pro-active approach with Sudan due to the association of China with the atrocities committed in Darfur, slowly eroding Beijing's strict adherence to non-interference. Furthermore, such connections, obviously detrimental to China's responsible power discourse, may lead to a more conditional approach to arms exports in an attempt to save face with the international community that they are not simply interested in profits, resources, and supporting iron-willed dictators. The tension and importance placed on short term access to natural resources on one side and generating assurance and acceptance of their growing role militarily on the other will come to define the extent to which Beijing alters its military relations with these specific regimes and the continent as a whole.

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<sup>343</sup> Christensen, Thomas J. & Swan, James, "Policy Statement: China in Africa: Implications for US Policy", Address to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 4 June 2008.

## **Conclusion: the Future of China's African Strategy- Prospects and Challenges**

China's contemporary re-engagement with Africa is largely informed by an emerging foreign policy strategy directed towards ensuring international conditions are conducive to their continued focus on domestic development and augmenting power and influence globally. This guiding central logic has structured broadly the interests, policies and power assets utilized in achieving these aims while still remaining highly contingent on specific situational contexts and relationships. In particular, Beijing's three broad foreign policy objectives-access, assurance and acceptance- largely encompass and explain their international pursuits, expressing the reflexive nature of these interactions as they attempt to be seen as a status-quo power; but one not fully content with the current power configuration and value orientation underpinning the present-day international system. In these endeavours, while still occupying a subordinate position to relations with their Asian counterparts and Western great powers, a numbers of characteristics and endowments have placed Africa in a unique and increasingly entrenched placement in Beijing's foreign policy strategy, not only incorporating specific African state relations but indeed the continent as a whole.

Investigating the ways in which access, assurance and acceptance inform China's pursuits on the continent through the three dimensions explored – economic, political and military- demonstrates the manner and successfulness in which these power assets are employed as well as unpacks the multitude of rationales which have strengthened and deepened Africa's importance in China's contemporary foreign policy. In this respect, increasing reliance on Africa as an economic (specifically natural resources) and political partner appear to be stronger pillars cementing relations than previous eras of ad hoc and infrequent interaction largely based on

ideological solidarity within the Cold War context. While it is important not to overemphasize the coherence and congruence within and between these power dimensions (for as illustrated in all three a number of real contradictions exists) they are important in explaining the role of access, assurance and acceptance in China's African strategy, securing not only interests continentally but indeed supporting larger foreign policy principles and pursuits.

### **Access**

China's contemporary African strategy is primarily driven to secure resource-acquisition as Beijing continually searches abroad to fulfill their increasing raw material needs. Economically, as well, Africa is becoming a growing market for their export industries and a testing ground for their multinationals emergence into international competitive market places. In achieving these pursuits, the heavy involvement of Beijing in using financial and diplomatic incentives including low-interest, readily accessible loans with no political conditions as well as arms sales and joint cooperation on other projects<sup>344</sup> has generated a number of contracts and agreements across the continent. Access, however, does not only relate to economic resources, but increasingly Africa is becoming an important international political partner supporting a number of Beijing's larger foreign policy pursuits. With Beijing's interest of gaining influence in international decision-making organs, Sino-African cooperation is directed towards the continued multi-polarization of the international system best demonstrated by promoting its democratization via multilateral forums, allowing the further inclusion of Africa into these processes as well. The reliance on Africa, specifically as a unified actor, within these settings,

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<sup>344</sup> For example, the launching of a Nigerian satellite by China in 2007 was largely seen as supporting Beijing's attempts to create cordial relations with Abuja to further oil investments. Taylor, Ian, "China's Relations with Nigeria", p. 636.

furthermore, aids China by blocking Western policies and actions seen as detrimental to Beijing such as human rights reviews.

### **Assurance**

Generating assurances of the peaceful intentions underlying Chinese foreign policy is seen as absolutely necessary to mitigate to the furthest extent possible barriers to economic and political access to resources. Specifically, Chinese economic activities and investment on the continent are portrayed as a 'win-win' strategy assisting one another in their varying stages of development. Beijing is quite conscious of the narratives portraying their refocus on the continent as reminiscent of previous colonial practices (particularly with respect to resource extraction) and is constantly engaged in a spirited diplomatic campaign to demonstrate not only to African states but the international community at large that their intentions are peaceful and beneficial for Africa. Discourses concerning their relationship as a development partnership are positioned upon Beijing's often cited narratives of their common past of Western colonialism and exploitation in order to ease uncertainty regarding their growing presence and influence on the continent. In this fashion, China's support for state sovereignty and non-interference are the critical political foundations in which Sino-African relations are based upon furthering Beijing's position that they harbour no hegemonic or imperial ambitions in the continent. The slow but augmenting military contacts between the two, as well, is part of a broader global military engagement strategy aimed at generating assurances of China's peaceful intentions behind their increasing, but still incremental, international military outreach.

### **Acceptance**

Within China's concerns regarding the international system as a whole, African states play a vital role in accepting and promoting the idea of China as a peacefully developing great power, legitimizing its augmenting power capabilities and influence internationally and within the continent itself. Continentally, China attempts to be accepted as a development partner both from amongst its African counterparts and other, specifically Western, powers operating on the continent. Closely related to China's development partner agenda is the notion of a responsible power. Internationally, Sino-African joint cooperation is designed to increase acceptance of China as a responsible great power supporting the current international system but in so doing promoting certain aspects which favour China's growing role without generating Western inhibiting actions. Specifically, respecting state sovereignty and non-interference combined with the advancement of the continued democratization of the international system has been highly receptive to many African states. Beijing's continued attempts to further identify and strengthen ties with Africa under the banner of a unified notion of South-South cooperation directed towards their further inclusion into the international system legitimizing China as a great power but still a developing country as well. Militarily, China's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa and the furthering of traditional military diplomacy assists in their responsible power discourse by demonstrating their willingness to support and contribute to international peace and security.

**Figure 9: China's African Strategy**

Dimension	Primary interests	Access	Assurance	Acceptance
Economic <u>Policy tools:</u> - <i>The Angolan Model</i> Natural resources for infrastructure loans -no political strings attached policy -state support for Chinese businesses	-Africa as a strategic economic partner	-Natural resource pursuits paramount -Africa as an emerging market for export industries	-mutually beneficial discourse of common development	-China's increasing role as a development partner
Political <u>Policy tools:</u> - state sovereignty and non-interference -international cooperation -One-China policy	-Africa as a international political partner	-Assisting in Beijing's growing international role -creating cordial conditions to ensure economic access	-China as a progressive force for African development	-China as a great power but developing country as well -One-China Policy
Military <u>Policy tools:</u> -participation in UN PKOs -traditional military diplomacy -arms sales	-Africa as part of China's global military engagement strategy -Support political and economic objectives on the continent	-China's growing influence in international security issues -maintain and support regimes where there exist heavy Chinese investments and interests	-peaceful intentions militarily with the continent	-China as a responsible power

### **Emerging contradictions, conflicts and future influences in China's African Strategy**

While noting the large levels of support received economically, politically and military, from a number of states, China's African strategy has not been met with universal praise and

cooperation from the continent. Contrary to narratives which portray China as triumphantly marching across the continent gaining access to economic resources and political support, as Beijing has become more deeply entrenched in Africa a number of real and growing contradictions and conflicts challenge their declaratory policy and abilities to maintain cordial relations. As the divide between policy and practice grows, questions are increasingly being raised within Africa itself, including from a small but growing number of elites best demonstrated by then South African President Mbeki's 2006 warning, of the costs and benefits of China's growing influence<sup>345</sup>. At the heart of these matters is the friction within China's foreign policy objectives of access, assurance, and acceptance in relation to the audiences they are directed towards and the time-line of interests they aim to achieve. While Beijing's presence on the continent is depicted as a development partnership of mutual 'win-win', immediate desires to achieve access to economic resources have created conditions in many African states which reflect similar exploitative trade relations to those of previous foreign powers characterized by a focus on natural resource extraction while distribution of economic wealth within these states remains highly uneven<sup>346</sup>.

Furthermore, emerging phenomena are threatening the ability of China to maintain policy cohesion, specifically regarding short term objectives of access and the longer term objectives of assurance and acceptance. While fundamentally pillared upon assurance and acceptance, a number of current practices to ensure access threaten these longer term objectives, questioning the level of commitment by Beijing to their own declaratory discourse. These policy contradictions and conflicts are not simply the result of their unfolding in static settings,

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<sup>345</sup> "Mbeki warns on China-Africa ties", *BBC News*, 14 December 2006.

<sup>346</sup> For a comprehensive overview of similar practices and outcomes of foreign countries, including the US, EU, China and India, economic policies in Africa see Bond, Patrick, *Looting Africa: The Economics of Exploitation*.

however, for as continental and international geopolitical circumstances alter these impact China's presence and actions on the continent. These emerging influences can be grouped into four broad challenges confronting China's African strategy which will undoubtedly affect the nature of their actions, and perhaps beliefs, defining future Sino-African relations.

1) The rise of the social dimension:

As economic and political linkages between China and Africa increase, social interactions and demographic reconfigurations are augmenting as well creating new and somewhat unforeseen challenges to China's African strategy. Specifically, as China extends and intensifies connections throughout the continent, growing Chinese Diaspora communities, immigration flows, and tourists add an emerging dimension to Sino-African relations which present a plethora of issues to leaders in Beijing with respect to maintaining their strictly state-led foreign policy<sup>347</sup>. These developing social interactions, however, are not condemned by Beijing but have been actively encouraged and supported to further connections with the continent. For example, over 10 Confucius Cultural Centres are spread across Africa with the mandate to promote an enhanced understanding and exposure to Chinese culture and language<sup>348</sup>. Furthermore, scholarship opportunities for Africans students<sup>349</sup> and the establishment of regular flights between China and a number of African states are directed towards creating the infrastructure necessary to increase social contacts between their populations<sup>350</sup>.

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<sup>347</sup> See Politzer, Malia, "China and Africa: Stronger Economic Ties Means More Migration", *Migration Information Source*, August 2008.

<sup>348</sup> The first Confucius Institute was established in Kenya in December 2005. Deng, *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*, p. 231.

<sup>349</sup> Roughly 1,200 government scholarships are awarded yearly to African students to study in a number of Chinese universities. "China has educational exchanges with over 50 African countries", *FOCAC*, 18 October 2006.

<sup>350</sup> As well over 200 cultural agreements and exchanges have been enacted further facilitating social interactions. Ding, p. 200.

While the Chinese state still assumes a central role in these processes, Communist leaders are increasingly dealing with an African environment in which a growing number of Chinese sub-state actors are operating whose interests and practices are not necessarily in-line or congruent with Beijing's larger foreign policy concerns. Though some of these entities maintain little to no formal links with the central government, their activities are largely associated with the Chinese state by African communities disgruntled by their presence. It should not, however, be interpreted that these entities are 1) coherent actors in themselves and 2) are purposely acting to undermine the interests of Beijing. These perceptions of close relations with Beijing, whether accurate or not, however, increasingly pressures the capabilities of the central government to exert influence over these agents in order to address these criticisms. While Beijing would prefer its diplomatic core and state-backed companies to be the vanguard of their activities on the continent, the emergence of these sub-state actors has severely challenged the coherence, cohesion and control of their state-led model.

Reversely, the small though rapidly growing African Diaspora community in China, particularly in the south around Guangzhou<sup>351</sup>, is increasing playing a role in Sino-African relations. In particular, the recent African protest in China over the death of a Nigerian man following a police raid reopens concerns revolving around Chinese racism towards Africans, an issue which has fluctuated in intensity over the past few decades climaxing in the 1988-1989 Anti-African protests in Nanjing. While a plethora of different circumstances and issues have influenced these various instances including anger at preferential educational assistance to African students; concerns of African men dating Chinese women; and illegal immigration, an undercurrent of racism, specifically a notion of Africans as not equals to Chinese and almost

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<sup>351</sup> Desires to benefit from China's economic boom have driven many Africans to the south of the country, establishing and developing a sizable merchant class with estimates that over 20,000 Africans now reside in Guangzhou. Osnos, Evan, "The Promise Land", *The New Yorker*, 2009.

barbaric in nature, is a consistent characteristic and has troubled Africans integration into Chinese society<sup>352</sup>. While currently such matters appear to have not impacted Sino-African relations in any large systematic sense, Chinese racist attitudes towards Africans, whether in China or Africa, poses major challenges to Beijing specifically as they are increasingly promoting further interaction and cooperation between both communities.

The increasing importance and influence of these actors has frustrated the maintenance of policy direction in Beijing as these populations become the front lines of Sino-African interactions. On this point Chris Alden predicts: ‘...as ties between China and Africa grow in depth and complexity, the relationship will increasingly be determined not by government declarations and deal-making between elites but rather through the experiences of individual Chinese and Africans in all walks of life’<sup>353</sup>. While this emerging phenomenon should not be seen as completely hollowing out the power of Beijing, for currently the Chinese state remains the most powerful actor in these processes, daily interactions encompassing integration issues, cultural concerns and economic competition between African and Chinese communities shall come to further define the future trajectory of Sino-African relations. Though Communist leaders have developed a number of coordination mechanisms, such as the Chinese business centres, in part to further extend influence and surveillance over these entities, increasingly Beijing remains incapable of monitoring and controlling this disperse and diverse groups of players. Finally, with respect to this emerging social dimension, there is a serious shortage of Western, Chinese and

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<sup>352</sup> See Sautman, Barry, “Anti-Black Racism in Post-Mao China”, *The China Quarterly*, June 1994, pp. 413-437; Sullivan, Michael J., “The 1988-89 Anti-African Protests: Racial Nationalism or National Racism?”, *The China Quarterly*, June 1994, pp. 438-457.

<sup>353</sup> Alden, *China in Africa*, p. 6.

African field research and analysis though there are some signs that interest in this aspect is germinating as these issues increasingly impact Sino-African relations in general<sup>354</sup>.

Even within the state, there are a number of departments and agencies whose mandates and interests at times compete and conflict with one another, adding a further layer of complexity to Beijing's state-led model. Differences between various entities, most prominently the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) over a number of issues including oil contracts and arms sales, while not expressed in a publicly hostile way do show signs that tensions exist<sup>355</sup>. The growing outreach and commercial interests of provincial and municipal governments as well present another potential area of conflict between these levels of government and Beijing, particularly as their State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) increasingly become active on the continent<sup>356</sup>.

Within Africa itself a number of the regimes Beijing has close relations with are largely removed from their populations, using armed force in ongoing contestations of control to remain in power. The most immediate challenge for China in this respect as outlined in the political chapter is the case of Sudan with the almost certain succession of the South in 2011. While maintaining strong links with Khartoum, China is showing a gradual relaxation of conducting relations at the state level as they engage with South Sudanese authorities to develop cordial ties to retain their oil holdings. While not arguing that a number of African states are facing issues of

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<sup>354</sup> For example see Kuang, Emmanuel Ma Mung, "The new Chinese migration flows to Africa", *Social Science Information*, 2008, pp. 643-659. Academically, the study of social interactions and integration between Chinese and African Diaspora communities is slowly beginning to emerge which has brought Western and African scholars into greater collaboration but the inclusion of Chinese academics (not including those working outside of China) appears to be marginal. As an example of greater academic attention to these issues see the "Chinese in Africa/ Africans in China International Working Group" at the University of Johannesburg, [www.uj.ac.za/csr/ResearchProjects/AfricansinChinaChineseinAfrica/](http://www.uj.ac.za/csr/ResearchProjects/AfricansinChinaChineseinAfrica/)

<sup>355</sup> Furthermore, friction exists even within these departments amongst various entities whose interests and mandates are increasingly conflicting within Africa. For examples within the MoC and MFA see Gill & Reilley, "The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. In Africa", pp. 42-44.

<sup>356</sup> In this respect, it is estimated that upwards of 90% of Chinese foreign investments abroad are made by provincially owned SOEs. Ibid, p. 44.

fragmentation, the far majority of Beijing's strongest African partners are small cadres of elites whose ability to remain in power is uncertain, potentially straining future relations if these regimes are removed.

## 2) Augmenting non-traditional security challenges

Although not covered within the military chapter, it is important here to briefly outline the growing number of non-traditional security challenges within Sino-African relations and their gradual inclusion and accepted importance, though to varying levels, from Chinese and African governments. While information on these matters remains scarce, in part due to the lack of scholarship in this field but also a result of their actual underdevelopment within Sino-African relations, these issues will further come to influence China's African strategy. In the 2003 Addis Ababa Action plan for 2004-2006, designed and promulgated at the conclusion of the Second Forum on China-African Cooperation in Ethiopia, a specific section was dedicated to outlining the host of non-traditional security threats facing Sino-African relations and declaratory commitments to increase cooperation and coordination in dealing with them. In particular, terrorism, small arms trafficking, drug trafficking, illegal migration, transnational economic crimes, infectious diseases and natural disasters were listed as the greatest challenges facing their present and future relationship<sup>357</sup>; these issues were further included into China's African Policy released in 2006.

On many of these issues there has been a noticeable augmentation of importance and policy focus but in reality they remain subsidiary issues to those covered in the economic, political and military chapters. Nevertheless, monetary assistance and joint research projects (including Beijing's long held commitments of sending medical teams to the continent) are

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<sup>357</sup> See '2.3 Non-Traditional Security Issues' in the "Addis Ababa Action Plan (2004-2006)", *Forum on China-African Cooperation*.

underway with regards to disease treatment and prevention, largely directed towards malaria<sup>358</sup>, though Chinese aid pales in comparison to other donors, specifically the US<sup>359</sup>. Declaratory support, as well, is given to the Centre of Studies and Research on Terrorism in Algiers though actual cooperation on these matters between China and African governments appear to be quite limited currently<sup>360</sup>. In recent years, the issue of piracy off the coast of Somalia has garnered growing Chinese interest due to concerns of protecting its commercial fleet and international shipping in general combined with demonstrating itself as a responsible great power with the deployment of Chinese warships to the region in later 2008. Despite this growing interest and activity, there appears to be little actual dialogue between Chinese and African governments but rather a focus on communication with other foreign states who are militarily conducting UN sanctioned anti-piracy operations in the area<sup>361</sup>.

One issue not directly mentioned under non-traditional security challenges, the environment, nonetheless has risen in importance over the past half-decade. While environmental issues, including emphasis on joint cooperation regarding water resources, resource and energy conservation, anti-desertification and bio-diversity, is listed under ‘environmental cooperation’ in China’s African Policy, the fallout from Chinese economic practices on the continent, most prominently in the logging and oil sectors, is increasingly gaining the attention of African governments, some wary of the long term ecological footprint

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<sup>358</sup> “Medical aid focuses on Malaria”, *China Daily*, 1 February 2007. Currently Chinese aid to Africa for disease prevention and treatment, primarily directed towards malaria, is around \$40 million.

<sup>359</sup> Though much commentary of former President W. Bush’s African policies focused on military and oil matters, little coverage was given to the nearly tripling of US aid to assist in combating HIV/AIDs to the continent to nearly \$ 15 billion for the next 15 years; current anti-malaria aid totals almost \$2 billion. Fletcher, Michael A. “Bush has Quietly Tripled Aid to Africa: Increased Funding to Impoverished Country is Viewed as Altruistic or Pragmatic”, *The Washington Post*, 31 December 2006.

<sup>360</sup> He, p. 24.

<sup>361</sup> For more on China’s growing interest and activities in anti-piracy missions off the coast of Somalia see Kaufman, Alison A., “China’s Participation in Anti-Piracy Operations off the Horn of Africa: Drivers and Implications”, *Center for Naval Analysis*, July 2009.

forming. In this manner while Beijing from a declaratory standpoint constructs environmental matters as a social issue defined by cooperation, many governments across Africa have raised serious concerns of the detrimental impact of Chinese economic practices, framing this subject more in security terms which need immediate rectification. Though China has been somewhat receptive to these concerns as demonstrated by the 2005 Conference on China-Africa Cooperation in Environmental Protection held in Nairobi and the 2006 promulgation of foreign investment principles, including respecting environmental regulation, ecological matters are still largely a subsidiary issue in the minds of Chinese leaders and resource companies' executives<sup>362</sup>. Furthermore, Ian Taylor argues that while domestically Beijing has increasingly implemented measures to curb environmental degradation, particularly following the 1998 Yangtze River floods caused in part by the removal of forests illegally, apathy towards environmental concerns is being exported by their multinationals (a mindset in large measure a function of their experience in China's own development) seeking resources abroad with little regard for the detrimental impact they are producing environmentally in these countries<sup>363</sup>. With the present low level of policy importance the environment assumes in China's African relations, movement on this issue will most likely be in relation to the effort and collaboration between African governments to bring these matters to the political agenda, though presently there remains a large amount of environmental apathy on the part of many African governments as well.

While currently non-traditional security elements have remained for the most part under the radar in Sino-African relations, as their populations increasingly work, live and interact together many of these issues shall become inflamed and will most likely draw increasing

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<sup>362</sup> Environmental concerns of Chinese business practices are evident in a host of African states including Gabon, Ghana and Sierra Leone. For more on these and others' wariness see Bosshard, Peter, "Africa: China's Environmental Footprint", *Pambazuka News*, 29 May 2008.

<sup>363</sup> See Taylor, Ian, "China's environmental footprint in Africa", *China Dialogue*, 2 February 2007.

concern from policy communities in Africa and Beijing. For example, illegal immigration is increasingly highlighted both within Africa and China due to issues of economic competition between African and Chinese labour and merchants, and the resultant hostility and sometimes outright racism that exists. For example, the previous mentioned recent riot in China by Africans following the death of a Nigerian man began as a police raid to apprehend the suspect as an illegal immigrant<sup>364</sup>; issues of disease control and organized crime as well shall most likely become growing priorities as barriers to travel decrease between China and the continent. In sum, while more traditional issues of foreign relations as detailed in this project shall continue to dominant Sino-African relations in the near term future, the plethora of non-traditional security matters and their influence on these traditional areas (economic, political and military) shall increasingly gain concern, focus and action from Chinese and African academics, policy communities and governments.

### 3) The flawed notion of non-interference and the issue of development

The greatest contradiction within China's African strategy, and indeed its foreign policy in general, is the notion of non-interference. Specifically, Beijing's continual attempts to portray themselves as a development partner and not a new imperialist or colonizer are largely predicated on their adherence to remaining 'hands off' the internal affairs of African states. As has been demonstrated, however, within all three dimensions investigated the notion of non-interference is based on false premises as Chinese activities inevitably impact domestic conditions within these countries whether intentional or not. While Beijing does not have a restructuring agenda for the continent as due to the Western great powers, and thus is should be

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<sup>364</sup> "Africans protest in China after Nigerian dies in immigration raid", *The Guardian*, 16 July 2009.

acknowledge that there are degrees of interference, China has assisted in the entrenchment of varying political-economical-and social conditions across the continent.

Most controversially in this respect is China's close relations with a number of internationally out-casted autocratic regimes, hampering their responsible power discourse and has in many cases generated local hostility for their alignment with these governments. It is, however, important to caution against claims of Beijing having a pariah policy as well as any portrayals of China as the only outside power contributing to such realities. While Beijing's close relations with Sudan and Zimbabwe are well documented within the study of Sino-African relations, Chinese and others, including American, support for a host of corrupt, (neo) patrimonial but less international isolated regimes such as Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo are largely absent from these accounts; in this respect, a cold dose of reality is needed over much of the Western coverage of China in Africa for while Beijing is contributing to the coercive rule in many of these states they are hardly the only ones involved<sup>365</sup>. Furthermore, emphasis on African responsibility towards the issues of development and governance to utilize the massive influx of Chinese capital as well as concentrate their efforts to pressure China on issues such as social and environmental regulation are for the most part omitted, placing blame squarely on China's shoulders<sup>366</sup>.

Within the larger continental political picture, China's self-proclaimed role as a development partner is increasingly coming under strain and scrutiny from within and beyond the continent. Intimately attached to its non-interference principle, China's mutually beneficial

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<sup>365</sup> Perhaps the best example of such biased analysis is the case of Equatorial Guinea in which growing American support for the patrimonial Obiang regime has occurred with virtually no media or academic attention directed towards it. For a rare exception see Mass, Peter, "Equatorial Guinea: A Touch of Crude", *Africa News Archives*, 1 March 2005.

<sup>366</sup> Amosu, Akwe, "China in Africa: It's (Still) the governance, Stupid", *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 9 March 2007.

development policy of ‘win-win’ is coming to conflict with the realities of Chinese economic and political practices on the ground. While pillared upon narratives of their common history of colonial exploitation, exemplified by Premier Wen’s 2006 comments in Africa that ‘The ‘hat’ of neo-colonialism simply does not fit China’<sup>367</sup>, current economic activities enclosed within a no-political strings attached policy have largely benefitted Africa’s political and business elites while social-economic conditions remain stagnant for the vast majority of Africans. Though the massive influx of Chinese capital towards infrastructure development is a noted difference compared to previous foreign powers in the continent, if China wishes to maintain a credible development discourse they must begin to realize their ‘hands off’ approach is flawed and supportive of massive social, political and economic divisions in many African states.

Specifically, concerns over natural resource exploitation; the flooding of cheap Chinese goods; a number of work and social practices of Chinese companies operating on the continent; and in general the lack of technological transfers to Africa are the most pressing issues with respect to Beijing’s development agenda. While China has shown itself somewhat willing to address these matters, such as their 2006 self-imposed textile quota, changes in African politics including the slowly (but hardly assured) growing adoption for the New Partnership for African Development’s governance agenda, will further pressure Beijing to ensure its development discourse is congruent with these endeavours. Despite the fact that China’s Angolan model will continue to be appealing to a host of African states, specifically autocratic regimes which are internationally isolated, Beijing has recently adopted a more vigorous diplomatic stance

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<sup>367</sup> “From ‘brothers’ to ‘partners’ China, Africa build strategic ties”, *China Daily*, 3 November 2006.

promoting their presence as development oriented and not one of a reactionary force solely concerned about resource acquisition<sup>368</sup>.

#### 4) Growing international interest and attention towards Africa

Finally, it should be remembered that Beijing's renewed engagement with the continent is part of a larger growing international interest in Africa as a whole. China's success in establishing economic and political relations has no doubt motivated others to augment their relations, ranging from Africa's traditional trading partners in the West to the arrival of a number of states considered part of the global South such as India and Brazil. In this respect while it is premature to talk of a 'scramble' for Africa in terms of access to resources and influence, similar practices particularly by other Asian states hungry for natural resources has created low level competitions for favour with local elites; in part this is a reflection of Beijing's successfulness on the continent with their current strategies, encouraging others to employ similar practices which ultimately may influence China to maintain these policies<sup>369</sup>.

The re-emergence of Western interest, however, reinforced by the recent speech by President Obama in Ghana of the need for good governance and democracy in Africa<sup>370</sup>, presents a contrasting international perspective regarding relations with the continent which shall undoubtedly influence China's African strategy. In this regard, it remains uncertain the level of commitment by Western states to their political and economical restructuring agenda particularly

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<sup>368</sup> This has been most recently demonstrated by China's arguments that President Hu's 2009 African visit to Mali, Mauritius, Senegal and Tanzania, all non-oil exporting countries, was aimed to boost cooperation and friendship across the continent as a whole regardless of the resource endowments of specific states. "President to visit Africa to consolidate friendship", *China Daily*, 4 February 2009.

<sup>369</sup> In this respect, India's political and economic policies are the most similar to those of Beijing's and their increasing presence on the continent will most likely come to be the greatest challenge from those states of the global South to China's dominant position. See Naidu, Sanusha, "India's Growing African Strategy: Competing with China", *Presentation to Royal Geography Society Conference*, 29 August 2007; Nelson, Dean, "India joins 'neo-colonial' rush for Africa's land and labour", *The Telegraph*, 28 June 2009.

<sup>370</sup> Ross, Will, "Tough love from a brother", *BBC News*, 12 July 2009.

with the emergence of a number of resource-hungry Asian states which like China appear more concerned about economic access than assisting in any longer term reformation of African politics. In any event, Beijing increasingly is placed within these two competing policy foci. Do they continue with their current practices, essentially maintaining the business/politics divide to ensure cordial relations with African elites or does China take a more proactive approach to issues considered 'internal affairs' such as governance not only to ease Western concerns but help to ensure continentally they are not seen as a reactionary force is uncertain at this point; issues of corruption and stability may also be driving forces motivating Beijing to increasing take interest in previously unconcerned matters of states' internal affairs to ensure they get returns on their economic investments in these countries.

The future of Sino-African international cooperation, also, is an area of ambiguity. Despite Beijing's declaratory pronouncement of deep linkages with the developing world, as Beijing's power and influence grows, the role Africa shall play in furthering China's larger foreign policy objectives is unknown. While China in the foreseeable future will continue to deepen international political relations with African states to buffer them from Western criticism and pressure, the level and rationale behind Beijing's promoting the multi-polarization and democratization of the international system remains unclear. In any event, the rationales underpinning their relationship are most likely bound to change in the future, including the extent of consent Beijing's receives from the current great power establishment of their position within the international system.

### **Can the strategy be maintained?**

While it should be cautioned against asserting that a holistic and absolutely coherent African strategy exists, over the past two decades noticeable policies and practices have emerged

that largely outline and inform China's continued interests and linkages with the continent. Success defined by access, assurance, and acceptance objectives, however, has not been universal. In fact, as China extends and deepens its connections across the continent, emerging policy contradictions from contemporary practices are creating conditions which threaten their future existence. Specifically, conflicts between China's development discourse and the realities of their activities and investments in a number of African countries strain the ability of Beijing to ensure their presence is accepted. As a result, even over just the past half decade there have been a number of noticeable, yet gradual, permutations which though may not be indicative of any real value reorientation or policy redirection does demonstrate the transformative nature of China's African strategy. In this sense, the politics/ business divide which largely dominates the rhetoric of Sino-African relations has been relaxed to a certain degree, specifically as a result of a loosening of absolute adherence to the non-interference principle as outlined above. Furthermore, while still adamantly rejecting allegations of harbouring exploitative and imperial intentions, there is a growing recognition within Chinese political and academic circles that a number of unforeseen issues have stifled their development discourse and need rectifying if they are serious about their development agenda<sup>371</sup>.

In this regard, the evolving nature of China's African strategy must be acknowledged and analyzed to uncover presently the motivations and rationales behind this evolving phenomenon. Are these changes the result of a deep desire to assist in African development or is Beijing more concerned about maintaining cordial relations for economic access? This is perhaps the greatest question facing not only outside analysts and policymakers but indeed the leadership in Beijing. Are their motives simply rationalist to ensure growing amounts of economic access and

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<sup>371</sup> For example see He, Wenping, "The Balancing Act of China's African Policy", *China Security*, Summer 2007, pp. 23-40 and Luo, Jianbo & Zhang, Xiaomin, "China's African Policy and its Soft Power", *AntePodium*, 2009.

increasing their international sphere of influence or do deeper internalizations of the norms and values they profess to be the pillars of Sino-African relations dictate their future policies and practices is yet to be determined.

Increasingly this policy/practice divide reflects and is reflected in the forces of continuity and contingency which increasingly define the current state of Sino-African relations. Within this occurrence to pass sentence on the intentionality of Beijing's interests in Africa is a highly undesirable project for it prematurely categorizes them in which many such endeavours do not really attempt to understand China's thought process, and its evolution, but instead are more focused on policy/intellectual parsimony. While this account portrays Chinese behaviour currently as largely fixated on ensuring immediate access to economic resources and political support this does not imply an outright rejection of their declaratory discourse as purely rhetorical nor assume that their behaviour and beliefs will not shift within the course of future, foreseen and unforeseen, events. Due to the changing nature, therefore, of Sino-African relations in which the reasons underlying these policies permutations are vague, China cannot be categorized into one role (a competitor, development partner, colonizer etc.) or another no matter how appealing an academic and/or policy option that would be.

In the immediate future the main issue for Beijing with respect to its African strategy is the emerging friction between practices employed to ensure short term access to natural resources and the longer term, but essential, issues of assurance and acceptance. In these instances contemporary practices have been well received by many of Africa's political and business elites but in changing circumstances, including continental endeavours to promote democracy; the West's restructuring agenda for the continent; and the growing fallout from a range of negative effects resulting from their economic practices may challenge the degree to

which China is welcomed as a partner. In this regard, future geopolitical changes within Africa, both on a state and continental level will increasingly affect the manner in which Beijing approaches these relations. In particular whether the continent as a whole adopts a more cohesive and unified approach to Sino-African relations, drawing greater weight and leverage against Beijing than the current relationship engaged on a bilateral basis will be one the most influential factors in the future trajectory of their interactions. In the end, while international opinion and pressure will continue to attempt to mould China's behaviour on the continent, ultimately the degree to which Beijing attempts to rectify the current and growing divide between its declaratory discourse and practice in Africa will largely in the foreseeable future depend on who holds the levers of power to ensure access on the continent itself.

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