THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA’S EXPANDING PRESENCE IN AFRICA

BY

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The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
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During the last two decades, China, under its zou chuqu or “going out” policy, rapidly expanded its presence and influence on the African continent. Leveraging a non-interference policy, state owned and state-controlled enterprises, and a combination of aid, loans, exports, and imports, China continues to secure access to raw materials, develop new markets for its exports, to cultivate international partners and to increase its influence. This paper provides the policy background from U.S., Chinese, and African perspectives and analyzes the potential economic, military, and diplomatic implications to the U.S. and its allies from China’s expanding presence in Africa. It considers three primary areas of concern: oil and strategic minerals and the potential impacts on defense, technology, and green energy programs; arms sales and security; and the impact of China’s non-interference policy. Finally, in each area of discussion, the paper considers potential areas of cooperation and actions to prevent or lessen negative strategic impacts.
THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA’S EXPANSION IN AFRICA

Observe calmly, secure our position. Hide our capabilities and bide our time. Be good at maintaining a low profile, never claim leadership.

—Deng Xiaoping

In July 2009, President Barack Obama addressed the Ghanaian Parliament and laid out the United States’ (U.S.) view on the continent’s role in the 21st century global world as well as the U.S.’s policy for engagement with states on the African continent. The speech included four key policy points, but the overarching theme of the speech was that any U.S.-Africa partnership “must be grounded in mutual responsibility and mutual respect” and that “Africa’s future is up to Africans.” While no one can argue that Africans must determine the future of the continent, it is also true that the path the individual states take to realize that future may have strategic implications for the U.S. and the international community. The current, Chinese-funded developmental path being taken by numerous African states has the potential to create multiple, strategic-level issues for the U.S. if not addressed properly.

At issue is the “intent”, both real and perceived, of China’s expanded development on the continent as well as the unintended consequences of its zou chuqu or “going out” and non-interference policies with respect to African countries. China’s intense focus on securing access to raw materials on the continent, developing new markets for its exports, and cultivating new partners for its expanding role on the international stage engenders reactions from uncertainty to distrust and a certain level of fear about the future availability of resources. How China handles its expanded influence on the continent and the reactions of individual African states, individual
Africans, and the international community are all critical components in determining whether China’s expansion is ultimately a stabilizing factor in the continent’s long-term future or a destabilizing one.

To understand the potential long-term strategic impacts of China’s expanding presence in Africa, this paper considers potential economic, military, humanitarian, and diplomatic implications to the U.S. and its allies. It provides the background for areas of potential misunderstanding and conflict by looking at current policy regarding external development assistance and aid to African states from U.S., Chinese, and African perspectives. Based on existing policies, there are three primary areas where China’s actions may cause issues for African states, the international community or the U.S.

The first area concerns the impact of China’s deals for concessions, controlling interest or long-term lease of key oil and strategic mineral sites across the continent. Second is the potential impact of China’s arms sales on the security of African citizens and on the cessation or easing of conflicts. The final area, and one that connects the previous areas, is the impact of China’s non-interference policy on governance within Africa. Finally, the paper considers potential areas of cooperation and actions to prevent or lessen negative strategic impacts.

Policy, Aid, and Assistance

The U.S. has a long and established record of economic, military, and diplomatic support and assistance to and partnership with a wide range of African countries. The significant role countries in Africa play in U.S. national and security interests is highlighted in key strategy documents including the 2010 National Security Strategy, which identifies Africa as a key interest area and specifically cites South Africa as an increasingly influential nation.\(^3\) In his July 2009 speech, President Obama reiterated
U.S. support to the continent and provided four mutual responsibility requirements to frame continued U.S.-African relations:

- Support “strong and sustainable democratic governments…what happens between elections”;
- Support “development that provides opportunities for more people”;
- “Strengthen public health”; and
- Decrease conflicts.

In support of these objectives, President Obama pledged $3.5 billion in food security initiative funding and $63 billion for global health initiatives including continued funding for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and malaria, tuberculosis, and polio eradication programs. The global health initiatives are in addition to ongoing development assistance. The U.S. provides assistance to 47 African countries with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) operating 23 bilateral and three regional missions in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2009, the U.S. increased its official development assistance (ODA) to Sub-Saharan Africa to $7.5 billion from $6.7 billion in 2008. In addition to direct aid, since 2000 the U.S. established or participated in a number of multi-lateral organizations or conferences with African countries including the Global Entrepreneurship Program, the U.S.-North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunity, and the U.S.-Sub Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, better known as the Africa Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA).

From a military perspective, U.S. military and security assistance advanced to another level with the establishment of the U.S. African Command (AFRICOM) in 2007.
The U.S. Department of State (DoS) provides funds to AFRICOM to execute security assistance training and education through a variety of programs. Two of the primary programs are the International Military Education and Training (IMET) which in 2008 provided $17.9 million for current and future military and civilian leaders from 46 African countries to attend U.S. professional training programs and the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program which provides training and equipment to 22 partner countries in order to ensure troops are available to support Africa Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), and regional security organizations when they respond to crises on the continent.\textsuperscript{9}

Like the U.S., China’s assistance to and interactions with African states span multiple decades. The difference between the U.S.’s and China’s relationships with African countries is in the scope and consistency over the past twenty years. Starting in the 1980s, China based its interactions on Zhou Enlai’s “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” which called for:

- Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- Mutual non-aggression;
- Non-interference in each other’s internal affairs;
- Equality and mutual benefit; and
- Peaceful coexistence\textsuperscript{10}

Zhou’s principles continued to guide China’s interactions on the continent as they increased during the 1990s. The dynamics of the relationship between China and African states changed yet again in the 2000s as China expanded its search for reliable, external supplies of natural resources to fuel its economy and for partners to support it
in the international arena. In 2000, President Hu Jintao and Premier Zhu Rongji hosted 44 African countries in the first Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing with follow-on forums held in 2003 (Addis Ababa), 2006 (Beijing), and 2009 (Sharm el Sheikh).11

According to the declaration agreed to by all parties at the end of FOCAC I, the organization provides a means for China to engage in dialogue with African countries based on "equality and mutual benefit, that seeks to promote economic and social development" with a goal of fostering "the emergence of a new, just, equitable political and economic world order in which developing countries participate more effectively in the international process of decision making."12 The United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) charters, along with Zhou’s principles provide the underlying principles of the FOCAC in support of thirteen areas of cooperation: inter-governmental relations including giving preferential access to China; trade and investment; "infrastructure, financial cooperation, debt relief, tourism; migration, agriculture, natural resources and energy, science and technology, medical care and public health, education and human resources development, the environment and biodiversity, and cooperation in multilateral forums."13

Although the FOCAC sets the framework for China-Africa relations, since 2006 the basis for China’s actions on the continent has been its “China's African Policy.” Adherence to the “One China” principle provides the underlying foundation of China’s policy on Africa and its four general principles and objectives:

- “Sincerity, friendship and equality” based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence;
“Mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity”;
“Mutual support and close coordination” including cooperation in the UN and other organizations; and
“Learning from each other and seeking common development”\textsuperscript{14}

Similar to the U.S., China provides aid and development assistance in a variety of areas using a variety of programs as well as through the use of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Deborah Brautigam offers a comprehensive view of Chinese aid to Africa in her book \textit{The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa}. According to Brautigam, China’s total aid for Africa, consisting of aid, concessional loans and debt relief, grew from U.S. $689 million in 2001 to U.S. $2,476 million in 2009.\textsuperscript{15} Other sources place a significantly high value on the amount of aid provided by China with the Congressional Research Service reporting an increase in aid from $10 million in 2002 to $17,962 million in 2007.\textsuperscript{16}

In April 2010, Du Xiaocong, from China’s Permanent Mission to the UN, provided specifics on China’s partnerships and investments in Africa during his speech on “China’s Role in Africa.” He cited a relationship based on shared adversity and growth as well as China’s readiness “to make its contribution to the peace and development of Africa.”\textsuperscript{17} Du provided the following as background information on China’s involvement in Africa:

- Frequent high-level exchanges during the last 20 years with Africa being the first stop each year for foreign ministers
- Strengthened economic ties produced trade volumes that grew from $10 billion in 2000 to $106.8 billion in 2008
Foreign direct investment (FDI) totaled $7.8 billion at the end of 2008

Deepened person-to-person cooperation and cultural exchanges resulted in China providing 20,000 scholarships, training 13,307 professionals since 2007, and sending 239 volunteers to Africa

“Mutual support on international and regional issues” with African countries providing “unswerving support to China” and China supporting Africa within its capability”18

During his speech, Du also highlighted the 8-point measures Hu Jintao announced at the 2009 FOCAC. In combination with the 2006 policy, the measures provide the path forward for Chinese involvement in Africa and include:

- Establish partnership to address climate change with China building 100 clean energy projects
- Enhance cooperation in science and technology with 100 joint research projects
- Build African financial capacity with $10 billion in preferential loans and support Chinese financial institutions granting special loans to small and medium-sized businesses
- Open China’s markets by phasing “in zero-tariff treatments to 95% of the products from the least developed African countries.”
- Enhance agricultural cooperation by increasing technical demonstration centers to 20, sending 50 technical teams and training 2,000 technicians
• Deepen cooperation in medical and health care by providing approximately $76.2 million in equipment and anti-malarial materials and training 3,000 doctors and teachers

• “Expand people-to-people and cultural exchanges”\[19\]

Because Africa consists of more than 50 countries, there is no single or united policy guiding relations with China or the United States. The African states created regional organizations in an attempt to establish baseline, common standards and to address regional and continental issues including conflict and economics. These standards are meant to guide development and put the states on a more equitable footing when dealing with external actors with larger economies and greater power in the international arena. The organizations include the African Union and eight economic communities.

Established on July 9, 2002, the African Union (AU) is the successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and, with 53 members, is the largest and most comprehensive organization on the continent.\[20\] The AU includes ten “organs” covering executive functions, justice, specialized technical committees, economic, social and cultural issues, peace and security, agricultural, and financial. These components help the AU realize its vision of “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena.”\[21\] The AU established 14 objectives to shape its policies and actions. Although all 14 objectives are central to the continent’s long-term development and stability, the six objectives below specifically relate to the continent’s interactions with and place in the international community:
• “To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
• To promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
• To encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
• To establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
• To promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
• To work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.”

The AU has matured significantly since its establishment and is actively working to provide African solutions to African problems. The organization provided peacekeepers to Somalia and Sudan. They suspended member states, including Côte D'Ivoire, who violate AU principles by engaging in coups or failing to recognize the results of free and fair elections. The AU developed four continent-to-continent and seven continent-to-country partnerships to improve relations and trade. While the AU still has not completely achieved its objectives of ending the marginalization of Africa and closing the development gap between the continent and the rest of the world, it has made significant strides in becoming a credible voice for African states.
Along with the AU, various states within Africa joined together to create regional economic communities. The objectives of the communities vary, but all include goals related to economic integration, exchange of science and technology, free trade and movement of goods, commodities, and services, and promotion of external trade. The communities include the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD) with six members; the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) with 19 members; the East African Community (EAC) with five members; the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) with ten members; the Economic Community of West African States with 15 members; the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) with six members; the Southern African Development Community (SADC) with 15 members; and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) with five members. The UN recognizes each of the regional organizations which allows them to not only address regional economic issues, but also apply influence in political and diplomatic issues.

In July 2001, the OAU adopted the framing document for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The document, crafted by Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa, laid the groundwork for member states to put the African continent on a path to renewed growth and development across multiple sectors including infrastructure, agriculture, and science and technology. To date, 30 countries have signed onto NEPAD and agreed to its main objectives: “reduce poverty; put Africa on a sustainable development path; halt the marginalization of Africa; fully integrate Africa into the global economy; and empower women.” NEPAD’s strategic focus areas include:
"To reduce the risk profile of doing business in Africa;

To create the conditions conducive for investment, high economic growth and sustainable development;

To increase Africa's competitiveness in the world economy;

To transform the unequal and donor/recipient relationship with the developed countries and multilateral institutions to a new partnership that is based on mutual responsibility and respect; and

To increase investment on the continent in order to ensure social and economic development."\(^{30}\)

In addition to NEPAD, the AU and its member states agreed upon a final program to assist in reforming and improving developmental and governance processes on the continent. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is intended to foster transparency and accountability in the developmental and political processes of participating countries, currently 29, in four areas: “democracy and political governance; economic governance; corporate governance; and socio-economic development.”\(^{31}\) The APRM process is transparent to ensure there is no manipulation by countries under review and to ensure the review process does not become a punitive measure used by the AU or external states or organizations to deny loans or aid.\(^{32}\)

**Oil and Strategic Minerals**

Sustained economic growth depends on a variety of factors, but petroleum products and key minerals are essential elements to a strong industrial and technology production base. The increasing worldwide consumption of energy, the push for increased use of green energy and technologies, and the increasing demand for high-
tech items such as flat screen televisions and laptops are all placing stress on known supplies of oil and minerals. The number of mineral-derived elements used in computer chips, for example, increased from 11 to 15 in the 1990s and is predicted to rise to 60 in the future. For China, it no longer has sufficient domestic supplies of petroleum, minerals, timber, and other raw materials to support the industries which are the foundation for its current growth rate. The need to secure external sources for these materials is one of the primary forces behind China’s zou chuqu policy and its expanding presence in Africa.

Starting in 1993, China became a net importer of oil with net imports increasing from 632 thousand barrels per day (bbl/d) in 1997 to approximately 4.1 million bbl/d in 2008 when it became the world’s third largest importer of oil. China’s Ministry of Land and Natural Resources predicted that in 2010, China would still be able to meet at least 51 percent of its demand with domestic sources. However, by 2009, China’s production rate of 3,991 thousand bbl/d was already less than half of its consumption of 8,200 thousand bbl/d. Of the more than 4 million bbl/d of oil imported by China, 1.2 million bbl/d or 30 percent is from Africa with 644 thousand bbl/d from Angola, 244 thousand bbl/d from Sudan and 127 thousand bbl/d from Libya. In comparison, the U.S. imports more oil from Africa than it does from the Middle East bringing in 2,199 thousand bbl/d or 18.8 percent of its oil from Africa with 809 thousand bbl/d from Nigeria, 493 thousand bbl/d from Algeria, and 460 thousand bbl/d from Angola.

While there have been no direct U.S.-China confrontations over access to oil exports from Africa, there is growing concern over long-term access due to agreements and deals between China and individual African states. China’s three primary oil and
gas SOEs have made significant strides in securing long-term access to petroleum resources with the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) securing 40 percent of Sudan’s Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company; the China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) receiving concessions for future exploration and for guaranteed delivery of 10 thousand bbl/d in exchange for a $2 billion line of credit to Angola through China’s Eximbank; and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) purchasing 45 percent of one of Nigeria’s oil and gas fields. Additional concessions and purchases include: an $800 million deal between the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and PetroChina to supply 30 thousand bbl/d; Kenya granted CNOOC offshore exploration rights to 44.5 thousand square miles of territory; and Nigeria granted CNPC first right of refusal on four oil exploration blocks in exchange for China buying a controlling interest in Nigeria’s Kaduna Refining and Petrochemicals Company which has a current yield of 110 thousand bbl/d.

China’s interest in Africa is not limited to oil. China also exports significant quantities of timber, cotton, and minerals. As highlighted in Table 1, the African continent is the source or potential source for fifteen minerals, groups of minerals or rare earth elements (REEs) the U.S. considers as strategic or critical materials. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 2008 Minerals Yearbook: Africa, the continent’s reserves of bauxite, chromite, cobalt, manganese, and platinum group metals rank first or second in the world. The continent’s reserves include 27.4 percent of bauxite; 37.1 percent of chromium; 55.6 percent of cobalt; 33.7 percent of manganese; at least 89.8 percent of platinum; and 31 percent of zinc.
Similar to its deals and concessions for petroleum products, China has concluded multiple bilateral agreements for long-term access to minerals and metals. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a primary source for cobalt and copper, China invested more than $9 billion in long-term infrastructure development in exchange for mineral concessions. China expects one pyrometallurgical plant, constructed through a Chinese-Congolese joint venture in DRC, to produce one thousand tons of cobalt per year. In Gabon, a Chinese firm received exclusive access to iron ore mine production in exchange for several billion dollars in railway and hydroelectric infrastructure construction. China also concluded similar arrangements in Zambia by investing $800 million in development projects and designating the Zambian Copper Belt Province a special economic zone. In 1998, the China Non-Ferrous Metals Corporation purchased 85 percent of the Chambisi copper mine in Zambia for $20 million. The full scope of China’s growing reliance on Africa’s extractives industry is best illustrated by the 299 percent increase in the total value of ores and minerals imported from Africa between 1994 and 2003.
REEs present the third natural resource commodity with the potential to impact long-term relations between the U.S., China, and African states. REEs are essential components in the manufacture of a variety of consumer products including televisions, liquid crystal displays on cell phones and laptops, fiber-optic telecommunication cables, magnets, hybrid and electric vehicles, and wind turbine generators. From a defense perspective, REEs are essential components in a wide-range of systems including fighter engines, stealth technology, missile guidance systems, underwater mine detection, antismissile defense, and satellite systems.

China currently controls more than 90 percent of the world’s REE production capabilities and has shown a willingness to manipulate REE supplies and end products for political as well as economic ends. Starting in 1999, China began setting quotas for REE exports with a 20 percent drop between 2005 and 2009 and a 40 percent drop implemented in July 2010. The economic impact of the steadily decreasing export levels is best illustrated by the fact that the cost for one specific catalyst, cerium oxide, is 20 times higher than it was in 2005. After a September 2010 territorial dispute in the South China Sea, China began withholding REE exports to Japan and later expanded the export hold to the U.S., Germany, and the European Union. China has denied economic manipulation by stating that export quantities are limited in order to meet internal demands. Regarding accusations of political manipulations, China’s commerce director stated that all 32 Chinese businesses halted the exports on the same day due to their own feelings toward Japan.

To ensure continued access to adequate and secure supplies of REEs the U.S. and other countries must seek additional sources of REEs. Within the U.S., USGS has
identified approximately 30 sites across 16 states that have known or potential deposits of REEs. The best known U.S. site is the Mountain Pass mine in California which a Chinese firm attempted to buy from Unocal before the U.S. Congress blocked the sale. Market forces and Congressional direction to reopen Mountain Pass and develop new sites is complicated by environmental and regulatory factors as well as the need to address radioactive byproducts including thorium and radium. In addition to the long lead time required to reopen Mountain Pass or to develop new sites, efforts to make the U.S. self-sufficient in REEs will be hampered by the fact that the master patents for the primary REE-based permanent magnets used in the U.S. are owned by Hitachi Metals in Japan and Magnaquench, a former U.S. firm, in China.

In addition to deposits in the U.S., Australia and Canada, international firms are moving to exploit REE deposits in Africa. Prior to China’s takeover of the REE market in the 1990s, South Africa and the U.S. were the top two producers. In addition to South Africa, the USGS and other organizations cite potential REE sources in Angola, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. While there are no records of China specifically targeting REE deposits in these countries, the international community must be concerned that China will attempt to secure concessions and long-term leases for these deposits similar to their acquisition strategy for oil and mineral resources.

For African states, the international interest in its oil, mineral and REE resources provides an opportunity to increase development, improve its infrastructure, and increase the continent’s influence in the international community. As discussed earlier, without a unified approach to external investors, the possibility remains that African
states will be unable to capitalize on the new wave of investments, especially the increase in Chinese investments. The view of the impact of China’s expansion in Africa on the continent’s long-term development, stability, and security vary widely.

One view is that China’s expansion and support is good for the continent because it includes funds to build or rebuild transportation, electrical distribution, and communications infrastructure. Proponents of continued Chinese expansion contrast the speed and focus of Chinese aid and investments compared to those from Western nations. In their view Western aid, economic reforms, and development efforts have not reduced poverty on the continent.63 They view interactions with China and the Chinese firms moving onto the continent as being on a more equal and mutually respectful footing than interactions with the West. In the words of Sierra Leone’s ambassador to China, “We like Chinese investment because we have one meeting, we discuss what they want to do, and then they just do it. There are no benchmarks and preconditions, no environmental impact assessment.”64

Many on the continent take the opposing view of China’s expansion. In their opinion, there is no discernible difference between China’s presence and investment in Africa and that of Western nations. In some cases, they believe China’s increasing presence is potentially more destabilizing than that of the West. They bolster their arguments by citing the continent’s continued exportation of raw materials coupled with an increasing reliance on Chinese imports and investments which undermines the intent of NEPAD’s goal of transforming the donor/recipient relationship into a mutually beneficial partnership.65 Officials as high as South Africa’s President cite the unequal balance in trade as a major issue with President Mbeki stating that China cannot “just
come here to dig for raw materials and then go away and sell us manufactured goods." They see the increasing number of Chinese laborers, estimated at 700 thousand in eight countries, and the approximately 800 state-owned businesses operating on the continent as direct contributors to rising or stagnant unemployment rates. Their final argument is that China’s non-interference policy leads to the continued unequal distribution of profits from oil and resource extraction; to environmental degradation; and to prolongation of autocratic rule and conflict in some countries.

China’s increasing appetite for resources, how it acquires them, and its willingness to use resources and access to them to apply economic and political pressure are all increasing concern in the U.S. and elsewhere about continued availability of strategic resources. Taylor and other authors point out that just as the US. is concerned with China’s expansion and bilateral deals, China is concerned with what it sees as the U.S.’s attempts to contain its development and has actively sought access to African oil as an alternative to acquiring oil from the Middle East which it views as under the U.S.’s influence.

When combined with the differing African views on Chinese expansion, the ongoing Chinese and U.S. concerns with secure and uninterrupted access to critical resources create the potential for future conflicts over resources and development on the continent. The U.S. should continue working with the AU, regional economic organizations, and individual African states to ensure U.S. aid, development efforts, and business investments are tailored to assist in achieving long-term African goals as well as supporting U.S. interests. The AU and regional organizations must continue to craft a continent-wide approach to achieve the goals of NEPAD and to increase the number of
states participating in the APRM process. To ease potential conflicts over REEs and other strategic materials, the U.S. should implement the strategy outlined in the Department of Energy’s 2010 Critical Materials Strategy, which includes a multi-pronged approach to find alternative or substitute materials, improve reuse and recycling, expand integrated research and development, increased workforce education and training, financial assistance, and increased diplomatic efforts.\textsuperscript{70}

**Arms Sales**

Arms sales on the African continent are second only to economics and access to strategic natural resources as the driver of future strategic level impacts. The U.S. is the world’s largest seller of arms worldwide with 66.3 percent of its total sales value from 2002-2009 made to developing countries\textsuperscript{71} and 0.25 percent of its 2006-2009 sales made to African states\textsuperscript{72}. Several authors, including Brautigam, cite this fact as a reason the U.S. should refrain from castigating China for its arms sales in Africa. However, there are two major differences between U.S. and Chinese arms sales and associated policies that may create potential diplomatic and military issues for the U.S. and the international community.

The first difference is the volume of sales to developing countries in general and to Africa specifically. As shown in Table 2, 97.5 percent of China’s 2002-2009 arms sales were to developing countries with 8 percent of its 2006-2009 sales going to African countries.\textsuperscript{73} The second major difference is that, in spite of its stated policy of non-interference and its goal of helping stabilize the continent, many of the African countries that China sells arms to use them against their citizens are in insurgency and cross border disputes. China is also willing to sell to African countries with existing embargoes, sanctions or those that have been censured by the international
community. Ely Ratner highlights the fact that Chad, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are among China’s African clients—all are in the top five of *Foreign Policy* magazine’s 2010 Failed State Index. Ratner further contrasted the U.S. policy on arms sales to the continent with that of China by highlighting that nearly 60 percent on the countries receiving major conventional weapons from the U.S. were designated as “free” compared with 15 percent receiving conventional arms from China.

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Note: Excludes Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen which are included in Near East category.

Table 2. Arms Transfer Agreements with Africa

The willingness of Chinese SOEs to sell arms to certain states places it at odds with the U.S.’s, UN’s, and AU’s goals of reducing conflict on the continent. Taylor believes that China’s government has lost its ability to completely control arms exports. In his view, China’s bid to join the World Trade organization forced the People’s Liberation Army to stop openly supporting civilian businesses and led to the demise of the five centrally-directed corporations and the establishment of ten defense-industrial conglomerates. The new market-driven firms, Taylor and others argue, often make deals without the express consent or support of the central government.

The most contentious arms sales are to Sudan and Zimbabwe. In Sudan, Chinese firms established three small light arms factories and continued to provide to export arms in spite of the UN arms embargo. The UN estimates that Chinese firms
provide approximately 88 percent of Sudan’s imported small arms.\textsuperscript{78} While international appeals to China to act as a responsible world leader were somewhat successful in getting China to employ a more restrained policy of support in Sudan, they continued to provide military assistance to Sudan in spite of UN-sanctioned embargoes. In November 2010, China voiced its intention to veto the renewal of the UN’s mandate for the panel of experts on Darfur due to language in a proposed report that cites Chinese ammunition being used against peacekeepers in Darfur.\textsuperscript{79} Although the full report is not publicly available, the UN Security Council did publish an annex to the report in December 2010 which discussed the embargo violations, but contained no specific mentions of China.\textsuperscript{80} China continues to insist that its arms sales to Sudan and other states conform to existing UN resolutions and embargoes specifically stating:

The Chinese government consistently adopts a prudent and responsible attitude towards arms sale[s]. We have strict laws and regulations on it. China only exports military products to sovereign countries and requests the commitment of relevant countries not to transfer China’s weapons to a third party. We strictly abide by relevant UN resolutions and do not export military products to the countries and regions on [the] UN arms-embargo list. China has only limited arms sale[s] to Africa, which is confined to conventional weapons in a very small amount.\textsuperscript{81}

Arms sales to Zimbabwe are also problematic for China and the international community. In April 2008, South African port authorities halted a Zimbabwe-bound Chinese cargo ship loaded with 70 tons of small arms, 3 million rounds of ammunition, and 1.5 thousand rocket-propelled grenades.\textsuperscript{82} Since 2004, Zimbabwe has purchased Chinese jets; \$28 million in conventional arms over a two-year period; and 53 tons of ammunition shipped through the DRC.\textsuperscript{83} In 2005 ahead of elections, Zimbabwe used Chinese funding to procure military-strength radio jamming equipment which enabled Robert Mugabe’s government to block broadcasts from opposition parties.\textsuperscript{84}
While arms sales to Sudan and Zimbabwe are the best known examples of problematic dealings, Chinese firms sold or sell to a number of other African states that have been involved in or are heading towards conflict. In 1995, Tanzanian authorities turned around a Chinese ship with 152 tons of ammunition and light weapons bound for Tutsi-dominated army in Burundi; and between 1998 and 2000, Chinese firms sold approximately $1 billion in arms to Eritrea and Ethiopia as they armed themselves for war.85 When combined with China’s policy of non-interference, these sales present a challenge to the AU’s, U.S.’s and UN’s ability to reduce conflict on the continent and increase the likelihood that additional peacekeepers will be required.

These sales are also beginning to present a challenge to Chinese firms and citizens working in Africa and to China’s continued rise as a world power. Growing resentment of China’s domestic practices as well as its support of autocratic regimes and its labor and environmental practices is creating new threats to China’s continued expansion on the continent. Ratner argues that China’s economic and non-interference policies create three new security threats: “international terrorism; foreign instability and state failure overseas; and overtly anti-Chinese regimes.”86 Specifically, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb pledged to attack Chinese workers and business in northwest Africa in support of the Muslims in Urumqui, China while Nigerian militants warned of attacks and stated that it would treat Chinese oil workers as thieves.87

In his article, China’s New Security Strategy in Africa, Jonathan Holslag posits that China must change its security strategy in Africa to address the increasing number of attacks against Chinese firms and citizens.88 Holslag highlights the following incidents as keys that will drive a new security policy for China:
• 2004 – Rebels abducted Chinese workers in southern Sudan;
• April 2006 – Nigerian separatist movement detonated a car bomb in southern Nigeria; warned they would treat Chinese investors as thieves; and threatened attacks on oil workers and infrastructure;
• 2006 – Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) condemned China for their $2.2 billion stake in delta oil fields;
• July 2006 – Violent protests at a Chinese-owned copper mine in Zambia resulted in five deaths and significant property damage;
• November 2006 – Sudanese rebels attacked three Chinese-run oil facilities and seized an oil field close to Darfur;
• January 2007 – Gunmen in Nigeria kidnapped five Chinese telecommunications workers;
• January 2007 – Nine Chinese oil workers in Nigeria were deemed missing after an attack by an armed group;
• February 2007 – One Chinese worker killed when four assailants raided a Chinese stone plant in Kenya;
• April 2007 – Nine Chinese and 65 Ethiopian oil engineers were killed during an assault on an oil exploration site in Ethiopia; and
• 2007 – An ethnic Somali group kidnapped and then released seven Chinese workers.  

China has already begun to change its position on African conflict and security issues in an attempt to alleviate some of the drivers behind the violence. The public announcement in July 2007 by China’s special envoy to Sudan that China was working
to stop the use of Chinese weapons in Darfur was seen by some as an acknowledgement by the government that China could no longer ignore criticism of its actions in Africa without suffering unintended and reputational consequences.\textsuperscript{90} To mitigate the costs to its reputation when Chinese firms operating overseas act in an irresponsible manner, China issued “good corporate citizen guidelines” to govern the actions of SOEs operating in Africa.\textsuperscript{91} In a broader sense, China is slightly modifying its stance on non-interference. With 2,039 personnel, China now supports multiple UN peacekeeping operations including those in Sudan\textsuperscript{92} and is involved with international anti-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia. China must also relook its labor, safety, and environmental policies for firms operating in Africa. Their willingness to abide by international legal norms in South Africa\textsuperscript{93} is proof that other African states can work to ensure compliance by leveraging China’s need for their resources.

While China has taken some steps to modify its behavior in Africa, additional steps must be taken by China and African governments to preclude additional conflicts. FOCAC members must gain China’s commitment to enforcing the principles of the 2000 Beijing Declaration which pledged China to cooperate with African governments in stopping “the illegal production, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in Africa.”\textsuperscript{94} The AU and regional organizations should ensure China does not increase Chinese security forces on the continent and work within the guidelines of NEPAD, APRM, and other programs and processes to increase stability and security and reduce the risks of conducting business in Africa. The AU and the international community must continue to monitor the extent to which the People’s Liberation Army’s
“new historic missions” of actively participating in international peace and security operations impact the continent.⁹⁵

From a U.S. perspective, the U.S. should continue to work with the AU and regional organizations to provide training and assistance through programs such as IMET and ACOTA that allow African military and police forces to provide security within Africa. The U.S. should also continue aid and development assistance aimed at helping African organizations and states improve their infrastructure, diversify their economies, and improve the living standard for all citizens. Of specific interest is working with African organizations, China and the World Trade Organization to restore the planned trade benefits of AGOA to African businesses rather than the Chinese firms that relocated to Africa. The U.S. should also continue to work with the UN, the European Union and other international organizations to urge China to accept the responsibilities that come with being a world leader and not just act on the privilege generated by its economic might.

Non-interference Policy

All of the previous issues share a connection to or are a result of China’s policy of non-interference or the perceptions of that policy. Although the principle of non-interference has been a cornerstone of China’s zou chuqu policy since its inception, most scholars believe china is slowly coming to the realization that there is an inherent dichotomy between being a world leader and adhering to a policy of non-interference. Current Chinese leaders are finding that can no longer follow Deng’s advice to “never claim leadership” if they want to move from being a developing country with significant economic power to a near peer competitor of the U.S.
In the past, China could invoke the non-interference policy when asked confronted with its support of questionable regimes. Their argument was they were only engaged in business with the other state and had no right or responsibility to intervene or influence that state’s actions. More frequently than in the past, Africans at multiple levels of society as well as members of the international community are questioning and challenging on the validity of its non-interference policy.

The first argument against the validity of the policy is the requirement for African states to adhere to the “One China” policy if they want to engage in preferential trade with China. The second argument against China’s adherence to the policy is the actions of Chinese firms and representatives in various parts of Africa. In Zambia, Chinese representatives are accused of attempting to influence the vote to ensure the opposition leader, Michael Sata, who ran on an anti-Chinese platform, was not elected. According to Brautigam, the real issue during the campaign was Sata’s insistence that if elected he would recognize Taiwan which led the Chinese ambassador to state that if Sata was elected Beijing would break off relations with Zambia. In Zimbabwe, as discussed above, the funds they provided for electronic jammers prior to the elections in 2005 was not in line with the policy.

As previously discussed, China has, to some degree, moved away from this stance in Sudan by providing peacekeepers. More quietly, they have moved away from strong support for Robert Mugabe’s government in Zimbabwe. Although Robert Mugabe warned the West and his opponents not to challenge him because he was backed by Chinese weapons and support, the major bilateral deals he expected to conclude with China did not occur because he failed to deliver on his end of the deals.
The major concern with China’s policy is that one consequence of it is the tacit approval of the autocratic and oppressive leaders who prevent the whole of their societies from benefitting from increased development and export revenues. Many in Africa and the international community believe that the policy is responsible for the reversal of democratization in Africa. Bruce Gilley asserts that the continent experienced consecutive years of democratic decline beginning with a resurgence of coups including Togo in 2005, Mauritania and Guinea in 2008, Madagascar in 2009, and Niger and Guinea-Bissau in 2010.99 Several leaders have attempted to use China’s economic success and expansion in Africa as a means to justify a move away from democratic goals and to extended terms with Nigeria’s People Democratic Party claiming

that the absence of stability and visionary leadership were the principal cause of Africa’s underdevelopment and that provision of the same by oligarchic ruling parties with long tenures in power had enabled Singapore and China to become contemporary economic miracles.100

China is receiving pressure to publicly move away from its non-interference policy and actively assist in conflict resolutions on the continent.101 The AU must develop a comprehensive platform for engaging with China and other external actors. The AU and individual states must emphasize to China how its interaction with and tacit support of isolated regimes undermine the attempts of regional organizations to resolve or prevent conflicts.102 Along with the UN and the international community, the AU must continue to move China away from its hands-off, accept anything approach when dealing with certain regimes. The UN and the international community must highlight China’s need to accept responsibility for its actions as a member of the Security Council and as a world leader. They must stress that continued support of these regimes with
no checks or balances and no changes or improvements to standards of living will ultimately lead to destabilization, increased risks to firms doing business on the continent, the potential loss of access to oil and strategic minerals, and an increased need for peacekeeping forces.

Conclusion

China’s zou chuqu policy and its associated expansion in Africa must be viewed not only in terms of its need for external sources of oil and strategic minerals, but in the broader terms of its long-range goal of being a world economic and military power on par with the U.S. Its need for allies in the international arena as a counter to what it sees as U.S.-dominated Western influence also drives its interactions on the continent. While China’s long-range goals and certain aspects of its African Policy are problematic for the U.S. as well as individual African states, they do not have to presage conflict.

Existing U.S., China, and AU policy have several mutual goals that can provide the basis for long-term, multi-lateral cooperation and growth. All parties agree that a strong, diverse economy and effective aid and development programs are necessary to improving Africa’s long-term outlook. The parties also agree that a stable and secure Africa is of benefit not only to Africans, but to the international community. The key to avoiding conflict is capitalizing on the points of agreement while addressing the points of contention including use of domestic labor sources; arms sales; access to resources based on a free market; and the consequences of China’s non-interference policy on regional stability and democratization efforts.

The AU and the regional economic organizations should continue to work together to develop a comprehensive position on engaging the U.S., China and other non-African states. To achieve its primary objectives of just and democratic governance;
providing opportunities for more people; improving health and living conditions; and decreasing conflict, the U.S. should continue its existing engagement and policies while working with African organizations and states, China, and the international committee to address concerns with long-term development, economic growth and diversification, improved governance, and access. The incentive for engagement and development of a comprehensive policy and plan is long-term stability and economic growth on African terms and a decrease in the potential for multiple destabilized countries requiring increased political, economic, and military assistance.¹⁰³

Endnotes


⁴ Obama, “Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament on July 11, 2009”.

⁵ Ibid.


⁸ Program and conference details can be found on the U.S. State Department’s website. Each of the programs aims to use public-private partnerships and regional or bi-lateral agreements in order to provide or improve opportunities for economic growth in Africa. Referenced documents include: “Global Entrepreneurship Program (GEP),” (Washington, DC:

9 U.S. Africa Command Public Affairs, “Fact Sheet: International Military Education and Training,” and “Fact Sheet: Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA),” (Stuttgart, Germany: U.S. Africa Command), http://www.africom.mil/activityIndexDB.asp (accessed November 10, 2010). IMET is jointly coordinated by DoS and the DoD. The fact sheet lists the three objectives of the program as “further the goal of regional stability through effective, mutually beneficial military-to-military relations”; “provide training that augments these capabilities of participant nations’ military forces”; and “increase the ability of foreign military and civilian personnel to instill and maintain democratic values.” The ACOTA fact sheet states that this is the successor program “to the Africa Crisis Response Initiative” which started in 1997. ACOTA trains approximately 20 battalions each year and has trained 45,000 African soldiers since 2004.

10 Deborah Brautigam, The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 30. Brautigam states that the true scope of China’s traditional aid is unknown as they do not publish official figures and there is an overall lack of transparency of the transactions.


12 Ibid.

13 Ibid. According to Alden’s the cooperation areas has remained relatively unchanged from the original action plan created after the first summit.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.


21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.


26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.


32 Ibid.


41 Ian Taylor, China’s New Role in Africa, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 45-46.

42 For an in depth discussion on the significance of rare earth elements see Cindy A. Hurst, “China’s Ace in the Hole: Rare Earth Elements,” Joint Force Quarterly, no. 59 (4th quarter 2010): 121-126. REEs are typically defined to include the 15 elements in the periodic table with atomic numbers 57 through 71, along with several other elements. REEs include lanthanum, cerium, neodymium and europium.


50 Ibid.


54 Humphries, Rare Earth Elements: The Global Supply Chain.


59 U.S. Geological Survey, “Rare Earth Elements—Critical Resources for High Technology”.

60 Chu, Critical Materials Strategy, 16.


Ibid., 39.


Alden, China in Africa, 52-53. Alden highlights the varying population figures for Chinese immigrants in Africa. He believes the variety of figures stems from inaccurate documentation on the part of African States as well as a tendency for some Africans to include Koreans, Japanese and other non-Indian Asians in the count of Chinese immigrants.

Ibid., 42.

Taylor, China’s New Role in Africa, 41.

Chu, Critical Materials Strategy, 100. The strategy lays out eight broad program and policy directions to assist the U.S. in decreasing its reliance on imports and at risk supply lines. The eight areas are: research and development; information gathering; permitting for domestic production; financial assistance for domestic production and processing; stockpiling; recycling; education; and diplomacy.


Ibid., 39.

Ibid., 26-38. Table 2 is a summary of Tables 1 (page 26), 6 (page 37) and 7 (page 38) from Grimmett’s report. According to the report summary, all U.S. agreement and transfer data is for government-to-government Foreign Military sales transactions. Grimmett’s analysis confirms that the majority of foreign arms sales activity continues to be to developing countries. The value of arms deliveries declined in 2009 to the lowest value in the 2002-2009 period.

75 Ibid., 37-38. The statistics are based on reports by the independent watchdog Freedom House.

76 Taylor, China’s New Role in Africa, 114-115.

77 Alden, China in Africa, 26.

78 Rotberg, China Into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence, 18.


82 Ibid., 119.


85 Taylor, China’s New Role in Africa, 125.


87 Ibid., 31-32.


90 Taylor, China’s New Role in Africa, 128.


93 Alden, *China in Africa*, 45.


96 Ibid., 35.


100 Obiorah, “Who’s Afraid of China?” 45.

