

# China's Rising Role in Africa: Is it a Greater Challenge to United States' Democracy Promotion Agenda in Africa or an Opportunity?

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## Abstract

The African continent is the second largest continent in the world after Asia and consists of 54 countries of which forty-one of them are former British colonies while the rest were colonized by other European powers except Liberia and Ethiopia. The aim of this paper is to explore some of the contested terrain involved in the relationships between the People Republic of China, United States and the African countries and what does China's "Africa Policy" places on the U.S. democracy promotion agenda in the African continent. Furthermore, the aim is also to assess the U.S. reactions to those types of strategies put forth by China and how those reactions from Washington and other Western Capitols have impacted the general well-being of vulnerable groups (so called "concerned groups") in Africa in terms of development aid, economic reconstruction, health projects and relief. Finally, the interest in the matter is to determine the motivations and likely directions of China's "Africa Policy" going forward by examining the past and current influences on China, identifying what China's current foreign policies are, as well as, projecting China's future policies towards Africa and the likely U.S. responses. The question this research really trying to ask is "Is China's relentless search for oil, strategic minerals, new markets in Africa for its goods and increased political influence poses numerous strategic challenges on the United States' democracy promotion business in the African continent or not"?

**Keywords:** China's Rising Role in Africa, US Democracy Promotion Agenda in Africa

## Introduction

China's involvement with Africa goes back to the early days of independence movements. Its intentions were primarily to shore up votes for the eventual rejection of Taiwan's position at the United Nations and to compete with superpowers (U.S., Russia and Western Europeans) for influence in Africa. African states were seen as natural allies that had suffered under colonial rule and had similar levels of economic underdevelopment. In the early 1960s the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai became the first Chinese leader to set foot on the Africa continent. The principles of peaceful coexistence became the bedrock of Sino-African relations. China's presence in Africa in those days could easily be identified with the large projects, such as the railroad linking Lusaka, Zambia and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania or the Benin Friendship Stadium in 1982 in Benin, and with technical experts, doctors, scholarships and other forms of aid. In the 1980s, the "good-will" projects faded when China became preoccupied with its domestic economic reforms. The value of its trade with Africa shrank from the peak of \$412 million in 1981 to \$60.4 million in 1988. After 1989, with China again isolated, African countries re-emerged as its friends.

The dominance of Taiwan in Sino-African relations continues to decline while Africa is playing an increasingly important role in China's efforts to deal with nontraditional security threats. Following 9/11 and the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, terrorism and the spread of deadly diseases have been given much more attention globally. These and other nontraditional security issues such as small arms smuggling, drug trafficking and transnational crime have all become very important and are documented as part of future China-Africa cooperation. In 2006, an agreement was concluded between China and several African governments on judicial cooperation, extradition and the deportation of criminal suspects. The agreement included a Chinese promise, as part of an eight step plan to build a strategic partnership with Africa, to give US\$38.5 million for "artemisinin", a compound long used in traditional Chinese medicine that can treat malaria, and build 30 malaria prevention and treatment centers for Africa. This is evidence of other nontraditional security cooperation. With regard to fighting terrorism, China and Africa have begun an exchange of intelligence as well as joint training programs in many African countries. Addressing threats of nontraditional security have enhanced China's consultation and cooperation with African countries in concrete ways and will take center stage in the security interests of Sino-African relations in the era of globalization. China's Africa policies are also driven by the need to sustain China's economic development.

Historically, Africa was marginal to US foreign policy. The continent was ignored by politicians until the end of the Cold War; only two presidents had ever visited Africa (Roosevelt in 1943 and Richard Nixon around 1973). It was neglected by the military; Africa was never really a big part of the strategic plan. It was always there, but it wasn't a strategic there, and so the United States really didn't recognize it. In diplomatic circle, Africa was regarded as a "backwater". After World War II, the US by and large left the struggle for independence to African people and their colonial powers so long as the Soviet Union did not intervene. In the 1990s, the ill-fated military operation in Mogadishu deterred the Clinton administration from taking any further steps to relieve the suffering of millions of Africans, including halting the genocide in Rwanda. Even Clinton's visit to Africa in 1998 did not change the US disengagement. In the 1990s, US bilateral aid to Africa declined by roughly one third.

As late as 2000, President George W Bush declared that Africa does not fit into the national strategic interests of the United States as far as he can see. However, recently, some politicians in the Washington have shown their interest in Africa's rich resources. In the *National Energy Policy*, the National Energy Policy Development (NEPD) Group led by then Vice-President Dick Cheney emphasized the importance of African oil and recommended making energy security a priority. It also proposed the President direct the Secretaries of State, Commerce and Energy to promote geographic diversification of energy supplies and to continue supporting American energy firms competing abroad and use U.S. membership in multilateral organizations and U.S. bilateral relationships to level the playing field for US companies. An increasingly unstable Middle East prompted think tanks and anxious politicians in Congress to look to Africa for alternative energy supplies.

In January 2002, a symposium on African Oil was held: A Priority for US National Security and African Development was attended by various officials in the Bush administration, politicians, international consultants, oil companies and think tanks. In July 2003, another task force on Rising US Energy Stakes in Africa was created in the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), funded by the US Institute of Peace, a government institution created by Congress. Two years later, another task force was organized by the Council on Foreign Relations

to study the oil situation in Africa as an issue of current importance to US foreign policy. All these efforts concluded the Gulf of Guinea is a nexus of vital US foreign policy priorities and a comprehensive and long-term strategy for dealing with Africa was needed. They argued:

- Africa is too important to be left alone;
- African oil should be treated as a priority for the national security after 9/11 (oil security
- The Gulf of Guinea is an area of vital interest to the US and that
- The US should mobilize all forces, political, diplomatic, intelligence, military and economic to secure control of the region.

Among the combination of interests in Africa, a fundamental and abiding concern for, and involvement in, the geopolitics of oil was highlighted as the top priority because of three developments, the rising domestic energy demand, new discoveries and production of oil in Africa, and new players moving into the continent. First, already U.S. consuming over 25 percent of the world's total oil production (with more than half of it imported), American domestic oil consumption rose much faster than all Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries except Canada between 1994 and 2008. Looking for more secure energy supplies became ever more urgent. Second, new oil discoveries and production in Africa, especially the Gulf of Guinea, made the continent more attractive to the U.S., and in fact, Africa holds 9.5 percent of world oil reserves and comprises 12 percent of world production in 2005. West Africa is expected to be one of the fastest growing sources of oil supplies. It is therefore in the vital interest of the US to gain control of the access to this fastest-growing source of oil and gas to diversify its oil supplies. In addition,

- The region's light, sweet grade crude articulates closely with US environmental considerations and the design of US refineries
- Much of West Africa's oil is offshore, insulated from domestic political or social turmoil
- The Gulf of Guinea benefits from the absence of narrow shipping maritime lanes known as "chokepoints" and is also closer to the US, it takes about 6 weeks to transport oil from The Middle East to the US market, but only 2 weeks from the Gulf of Guinea; and
- Africa is one of the few places where international oil companies, particularly American oil companies, have retained access to exploration of large oil reserves.

Third, US interests in Africa rose because the new players were pursuing oil interests in Africa, particularly China. Sudan is often quoted as the best example of the challenges China presents to the US. After investing millions of dollars to find oil in Sudan in the 1970s, Chevron withdrew from the country after several employees were killed. The US government imposed sanctions. Arakis, a Canadian company, acquired Chevron's lost concessions in 1992, made several new discoveries and began shipping crude oil to a domestic refinery. In 1996, Arakis put together the first African consortium of Asian national oil companies: Malaysia's Petronas, and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), with the Sudan state oil company as a silent partner, formed the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC). In August 1998, Talisman Energy acquired Arakis which by then only owned 25 percent of the interest of GNPOC. When Talisman pulled out of Sudan under strong domestic pressure, CNPC, Petronas and ONGC took over the operation. Once it gained access, China expanded its activities. These new players,

particular China, was seen as a real threat to America's energy security because of its potential to stop providing America, or the rest of the world for that matter, with an exponentially increasing supply to match its increasing demand. Seemingly, the only door open for the United States would be to deepen bilateral and multilateral engagement to promote a more receptive environment for US oil and gas trade, investment and operations.

It is unknown whether these diplomatic, military and economic efforts have helped the US secure its access to African oil. Some oil experts are skeptical not because of the quality or quantity of African oil, but because of the instability in the region. Nigeria, for example, as the 5<sup>th</sup> largest supplier of oil to the US, suffered more than a 40 percent reduction in oil production in 2006 alone because of conflicts. Those oil experts do not believe the US military presence in the Gulf of Guinea would be able to deal with such local discontent. Regardless, US oil companies are expanding their exploration and production in Africa and US crude oil imports from Africa have gone up over 34% between 2002 and 2008. Politically, current US policies under Obama are supported by politicians whose main concerns are the potential spread of terrorists to poverty-ridden Africa, the challenges from new powers as a threat to the US interest in the continent and those who have fewer ties with oil interests. Little opposition has been expressed, even those who do not feel comfortable with the state of natural resources can justify the American military presence by the war on terrorism and the righteousness of American foreign policy, spreading the democratic principles and protecting the human rights.

### **Significance of the Issue**

The role of the Hegemon is deeply embedded in China's national identity, and after more than a century apart, China is seeking to reacquire the great power role it sees as its destiny. Economic growth is the means to China's strategic ends, and to keep the ship of state moving forward requires an enormous amount of energy and raw materials. Given Africa's large reserves of oil, natural gas and minerals, China has made expanding its influence in Africa a strategic priority. China seeks essentially three things from Africa: unimpeded and virtually exclusive access to natural resources; new markets for its export-driven economy; and increased influence among international political bodies. China's "Africa policy" has been extremely successful largely because it is accompanied by a clear government policy in support of African commercial ventures, abundant financing and tax benefits for Chinese firms operating abroad and robust diplomacy toward the region.

China's "Africa policy" has also been very successful because China possesses advantages in dealing with African nations that the United States does not. First, many African governments do not consider China to be imperialist. Second, China's noninterventionist policy does not demand good governance, democracy, human rights or governmental transparency. As Joseph Kabila, the current President of Congo has been quoted as saying; the U.S. will talk to you about governance, efficiency, about security, about the environment. The Chinese just ask: how do we procure this license. Third, African countries that sign deals with Chinese companies receive diplomatic protection. For example, China used its position on the U.N. Security Council to stop the investigation and punishment of Robert Mugabe's 2005 "clean-up campaign" where police destroyed slums and markets in Harare, the capitol of Zimbabwe. Like China, the United States also considers Africa an area of strategic significance, especially since it imports sixteen percent of its oil from West Africa, particularly Nigeria. However, U.S. strategic interests in Africa extend beyond oil and other resources to preventing the spread of terrorism; promoting

responsible government and democratic values; increasing trade and addressing transnational health and environmental concerns. To that end, the U.S. is establishing Africa Command to improve its strategic position on the continent by integrating U.S. interagency efforts and assisting diplomatic and developmental initiatives. While the then Bush Administration insists that Africa Command will not exist to counter China's influence in sub-Saharan Africa, its presence and mission will challenge the strategic status quo and likely lead to political and economic conflict.

### **Three sides “perspectives” on democracy**

United States and western European view democracy as a form of government in which power is held by “the people” under a free electoral system along with the two principles that all members of the society (citizens) have equal access to power as well as that all members (citizens) enjoy universally recognized freedoms and liberties, while in African view, democracy is not merely the right to vote and seize power, but a whole complex of rights and duties which citizens must exercise if a government is to be open, accountable and participatory. The African viewed democracy as a western-style democracy that places people into artificial antagonistic boxes, turns friends into enemies, and aims at arousing unnecessary competition at one another. The Chinese understanding of democracy, according to my research, is that the “fundamental rights” of citizens include freedom of speech, freedom of press, the right to a fair trial, freedom of religion, universal suffrage, and property rights like the western-style democracy. However, these provisions do not afford significantly protection against criminal prosecution by the state or provincial governments. My research also reveals that China is not evolving towards democracy in the western sense, for example, one-man-one vote, not just distaste for corruption. Even more unsettling to Americans and western Europeans is that “new generation” of Chinese, in some ways so much “unlike the American generation Y in the United States”, do not want democracy in their country nor has it introduced in other places such as Africa where their strategic interests are developing day and night.

### **Source of Conflict**

China is determined to reacquire the superpower status it sees as its birthright, and its activities in Africa have strengthened its strategic position by providing unimpeded access to natural resources, new markets for its export-driven economy and political influence in international bodies such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The U.S. insists that it is not creating Africa command to counter Chinese influence in Africa but to engage terrorists and promote democracy in the continent. However, China's diplomatic and economic activity in the African continent has created strategic challenges for the U.S., and Africa Command will exist to improve America's strategic position on the continent. By engaging in security cooperation and other activities, Africa Command will challenge the strategic status quo by which China has profited largely, and will make economic and political conflict likely.

### **Policy for building allies and influence**

Oil drives China's policy in Africa, and the character of the supplier is irrelevant. As China's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs said it recently, after he was questioned by journalists about Darfur crisis and the role of China in it, no matter if it is rogue's oil or a friend's oil, we don't care. Human rights? We don't care. We care about oil . . . anyone who helps China with energy is a friend. It is estimated that China's share of world-wide consumption of fossil fuels will rise between seven and twelve percent between 2010 and 2025. Currently, China receives ten

percent of its oil from Africa, but its energy situation is precarious. It is possible that within the next ten years, China will be the world's largest consumer of oil, but it possesses no strategic petroleum reserve. Consequently, China is determined to reduce its dependency upon Middle Eastern oil. To that end, China has invested billions of dollars for drilling rights in Nigeria, Sudan and Angola, and has exploration or extraction deals with Chad, Gabon, Mauritania, Kenya, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia. Oil, however, is not the only African commodity that interests China. China is actively acquiring the strategic minerals cobalt, chrome and platinum from the Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. China is also attempting to corner the market on minerals such as Cerium, neodymium, lanthanum and dysprosium, which are essential to applications for making electronics, disk drives, display screens, and missile guidance systems.

China has also used foreign trade to greatly expand its influence in Africa. In 2008, China had over \$55 billion in trade with Africa, but all that glitters is not gold. The influx of cheap Chinese imports has led to the loss of over 70,000 textile jobs in South Africa. In order to protect its textile industry South Africa has imposed quotas on textile imports to prevent "dumping" by Chinese manufacturers. Additionally, China's booming construction, manufacturing and extraction industries in Africa have led to massive legal and illegal immigration of ethnic Chinese, which has led to friction with the indigenous population. Beijing, which depends upon African support for its policies in the U.N. and other international bodies, is very sensitive to any discontent. In a recent speech given in Pretoria, South African, Chinese President Hu Jintao promised that China would work to eliminate its trade imbalance with Africa, and noted that priority should be given to agriculture, infrastructure, manufacturing and public welfare projects that are vital to the people's livelihood. Reaffirming China's nonintervention policy, Hu noted that China has never imposed its will or unequal practices on other countries and will never do so in the future.

### **China's ambition in African is unknown**

China's relentless quest for oil, strategic minerals, new markets for its goods and increased political influence poses numerous strategic challenges for the United States. First, the United States seeks an Africa that lives in liberty, peace and growing prosperity. However, China's unconditional financial aid and infrastructure assistance damages Africa by undermining years of western foreign assistance efforts aimed at increasing responsible government in Africa's fragile, weak-democracies that lack strong civil liberties and other foundational elements of democracy. Perhaps the worst example is China's relationship with Sudan, where government is aiming genocide on civilians. China has invested over \$8 billion in joint oil exploration contracts in Sudan, mainly in the South the Darfur region. In fact, China is supplying arms used in the South and Darfur conflicts in return for oil, and despite evidence that Sudan's government is contributing to mass murder in Darfur; China remains Khartoum's top business and military partner. At the 2006 China-Africa Cooperation Forum, Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir thanked China for blocking a U.S. sponsored resolution in the U.N. Security Council that called for the deployment of an international peace keeping force to Darfur. China has also used its veto power in the U.N. Security Council to block any proposed sanctions against Sudan for the genocide in Darfur. As the head of Human Rights Watchdog, Africa Division, has recently noted in UN headquarters in New York City concerning China, the Africans see no evil (referring to China). They hear no evil. That's very bad for them.

Second, China's financial practices are potentially destabilizing to African nations. By offering easy money, Chinese lending may lead to the rapid reestablishment of an unsustainable level of debt in Africa once again, and has caused the U.S. Treasury Department to label People's Republic of China a "rogue creditor" that practices predatory lending. China has also forgiven the debts of thirty-five African nations by turning "loans" into grants. China's willingness to provide more loans than the World Bank undermines the effectiveness of programs like the Millennium Challenge Account, which offers financial assistance to countries that meet standards of accountable governance, and the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which grants African countries preferential access to U.S. markets. All of this matters because it is in unstable areas and failed states where Islamic terrorists establish footholds.

Third, China's activity in Africa, particularly West Africa potentially threatens United States access to oil. In the 2006 State of the Union address, President Bush called on America to replace more than 75 percent of U.S. oil imports from the Middle East by 2025. According to the Energy Department, the United States has taken significant steps to reduce itself from Middle East fossil fuels, largely due to Africa's abundant energy resources. In fact, Nigeria has moved past Saudi Arabia as America's third largest supplier of oil, and if you add the oil purchased from Angola, the two states supply more oil to the United States than Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates combined. Consequently, Beijing's relentless pursuit of energy resources in Africa is of particular concern to United States. In 2006, China's national petroleum company, CNOOC, signed an agreement with Nigeria to pay \$2.3 billion for interest in an oil and gas field. This followed an \$800 million crude sales agreement, wherein China agreed to buy 30,000 barrels per day from Nigeria for five years. Should Nigeria come to favor China over the U.S. as petroleum customer, the U.S. would have to find an alternate supplier of oil, which could force the U.S. to pay more per barrel and send shockwaves throughout the U.S. and world economies. Generally speaking, I do believe that Africa Command will be "target" in safeguarding West African oil and other energy production against terrorist attack, especially since instability in the Middle East has placed a great deal on U.S. security alliances and energy sources in Africa.

Fourth, China's influence may challenge U.S. access to major African ports, which could have economic, military and humanitarian implications as it has been recently seen with pirates attacking the U.S. vessels off the coast of Somalia. As a nation that depends largely on sea, freedom of the seas and access to major ports is I think is crucial to American security. The National Strategy for Maritime Security states the safety and economic security of the United States depends in substantial part upon the secure use of the world's oceans. Consequently, Africa's seaports are vital points of access for imports and exports, and there are few on the continent capable of handling the largest ships. On the Atlantic Ocean, only Capetown, South Africa, has a deep enough port to support large and medium speed roll-on and roll-off vessels (LMSR), while on the Indian Ocean, only Durban, South Africa, has LMSR berths. The only remaining large and medium speed roll-on and roll-off vessels berth is at Mombasa (East Cost of Kenya). The West Coast, including the Gulf of Guinea, has no large and medium speed roll-on and roll-off vessels ports. Naturally, China has formed strong relationships with South Africa and Kenya. Should the ports be unavailable to the U.S., it could significantly impact America's ability to trade with African nations or to receive oil, and interestingly to delivers humanitarian aid to Africa. Militarily, the U.S. would need access to the large and medium speed roll-on and roll-off vessels ports to conduct operations in Africa, and should access be either denied or

unavailable, the missions may either be impossible or ended. This means that American “policymakers” must confront the reality that access for the largest class of vessels capable of delivering sizeable amounts of equipment and material into available African seaports may be denied due to conflict with commercial interests at the port for all but a forced entry scenario. Such a scenario would be unacceptable for the U.S. from a strategic and superpower status standpoint.

### China’s Aid Commitments to Developing Countries

(In millions of U.S. dollars)

Source: Samuel Kim, *The Third World in Chinese World Policy* (Occasional Paper No.19),

Years	Annual Average								
	1953-60	1961-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Africa	4	46	319	94	20	14	107	259	133
Asia	160	172	310	160		41	1	30	37
Europe			8	6					
America	8	4	24	3			3		17
Oceania					6				
Total	172	222	661	263	26	55	111	289	187

Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1989, p.38.

### China-Africa Trade Statistics ( 1980-1987 )

(In 10,000 U.S. dollars)

Year	Total	Export	Import	Year	Total	Export	Import
1980	113,103	74,703	38,400	1984	87,608	62,373	25,235
1981	109,749	79,809	29,940	1985	62,677	41,844	20,793
1982	119,099	97,844	21,255	1986	85,447	63,845	21,602
1983	92,074	67,576	24,498	1987	100,883	85,428	15,455



### China's Aid-Medical Teams and Doctors in Africa ( 1963-1983 )

Start Year	Countries with Chinese Medical Teams	Station	Doctors in 1983
1963-67	Algeria, Tanzania, Somalia, Congo	17	326
1968-72	Mali, Tanzania, Mauritania, Guinea, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea	18	197
1973-77	Serra-Leone, Tunisia, Zaire, Togo, Senegal, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Upper Volta, Guinea-Bissau, Gabon, Gambia	23	300
1978-83*	Benin, Zambia, Central Africa, Botswana, Djibouti, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Libya	13	173
1963-83	Total	71	996

Source: Eisenman and Kurlantzik, "China's Africa Policy." *Current History*. May 2006, 219-224, [www.afpc.org/china-africa.shtml](http://www.afpc.org/china-africa.shtml).

#### Alternatives analysis

In contrast to China's systematic and well-planned efforts, the United States' involvement in Africa has been disjointed, as evidenced by the geographic division of the continent among three separate combatant commands. The former Bush Administration understands Africa's strategic significance and has established Africa Command in order to strengthen U.S. security cooperation with Africa and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of African nations. Africa Command will enhance U.S. efforts to help bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote American common goals of development, health, education, democracy and economic growth in Africa as previously discussed during my presentation last week. The secondary goal is to build the capacity of African countries to reduce conflict, improve security, defeat terrorists and support crisis response.

Africa Command's focus will be to build the capacity of African partner nations to reduce conflict, improve security, defeat terrorists and support crisis response, and it will be unlike existing combatant commands because its primary mission will not be operational. In fact, Africa command will be an almost quasi-diplomatic organization that works closely with other U.S. government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and African regional organizations such as the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) to oversee the so called 'theater security activities' and enhance strategic cooperation while building support for nonmilitary missions. Moreover, Africa Command will not have a large troop presence and will try to be as "small and as uninterfering in African Affairs as possible. Africa Command's goal is not to assume a leadership role on the continent, but instead to support African leaders by emphasizing humanitarian missions, civil affairs, and assisting in the improvement of border and maritime security. Africa Command will play a prominent role in implementing the following three significant U.S. national security strategies:

- The establishment of stronger bilateral relations with four major impact countries: South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria
- Coordination with European powers and international institutions essential to conflict mediation and peace operations
- The strengthening of Africa's reforming states and sub-regional organizations to address transnational threats (AU and NEPAD for example).

First, building bilateral security partnerships will be a "key mandate" for the new command, so Africa Command will work with African militaries to improve their level of professionalization and technical proficiency. Second, Africa Command will work with regional and international organizations to prevent conflict by addressing threats at their inception through theater security cooperation. Implicit in this task is working with the African Union, which has a standby force that has already performed peace operations in Burundi, Darfur and the Comoros. The focus on security and stability will directly involve U.S. Africa Command in the inter-agency process and require a major break with conventional doctrinal mentalities both within the armed services and government agencies. Third, the strong State Department and USAID presence on the U.S. Africa Command staff evidences the intent to work with regional organizations to help states develop the political and economic stability necessary to address transnational threats such as AIDS and Islamic militancy. Given its structure, U.S. Africa Command will be very well suited to working with NEPAD, which works to place African countries on a path of sustainable governance by enhancing the full integration of Africa into the global economy.

Perhaps no other issue will be more critical to U.S. Africa Command's strategic effect than its location. Suspicion of the military plus the history of colonialism has led to much skepticism about U.S. Africa Command's presence on the continent. However, while Kenya, Zambia, Algeria, Cameroon, South Africa and Libya have all expressed either reservations or outright rejection, Morocco has expressed preliminary interest in hosting Africa Command, and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has officially offered her country to host its headquarters. While the nature of Africa Command's reception on the continent is uncertain, there is a basis for optimism. As Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has put it during the African leaders' summit in Ghana "African nations must acknowledge that security and development are conditionally linked. There is no greater engine for development than a secure nation, and no better way to build secure nations than through professional militaries and security forces that are responsible to civilian authorities who safeguard the rule of law and human rights. . U.S Africa Command should be seen as the end-product of a significant strategic realignment a long time in the making U.S. Africa command is undeniably about the projection of American interests, but this does not mean that it is to the exclusion of African ones". In that case, Africa Command's success will depend largely upon convincing other African nations that President Johnson's words are true.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

In international relations, conflict is the rule, not the exception, since nations are always pursuing their own strategic interests at the expense of others. That said, China has achieved great strategic success in Africa in the past decade and has profited beautifully from America's disjointed efforts on the Continent. The establishment of U.S. Africa Command will challenge the strategic status quo of China in Africa, and china is not pleased. Although the China's

leaders have made no official statement concerning U.S. Africa Command, the People's Daily (a government controlled press in China) has warned of the impending U.S. military 'intervention' of Africa and noted that the continent has been subjected to the joint jurisdiction of the U.S. European, Pacific and Central commands. The autonomous Africa Command will surely facilitate coordinating or overseeing U.S. military actions for an effective control of the whole of Africa. Beijing's unease is understandable, since its indifference to good governance and democratic values has brought virtually unfettered access to oil and markets throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The last thing that China wants is Africa Command working with individual governments and regional organizations such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) to establish democratic values, the rule of law and accountability. Such developments might threaten the access to the resources that fuel China's drive to become the dominant Asian power.

Moreover, with its focus on establishing bilateral relations with African nations and working with African regional organizations, U.S. Africa Command's presence may threaten the considerable political influence that China has established on the continent and in international bodies such as the U.N. African nations comprise twenty five percent of the U.N. membership, and China has come to rely upon their support for its policies, which is why China does not want a larger pro-American block established in the U.N, which has proven to be a valuable surrogate in courting the United States around the world. Adding to China's unease is the reality that its position in Africa is not changing. China's involvement in Darfur has lowered its international reputation; its trading practices threaten native African industries and labor markets; its nonintervention policy angers human rights groups, and China has a history of working with repressive Islamic governments in order to meet its short-term needs and counter U.S. interests. Nonetheless of China's engagement in Africa, U.S. strategic interests are well-served by a stable, healthy and prosperous Africa contributing to global security and a stronger world economy. Perhaps if I could suggest something, it would be that-- what the U.S. needs is an African contingent plan complete with expanded pledges of humanitarian aid; enhanced participation in existing U.N. relief and security apparatus; increased high level diplomatic contacts, and the implementation of comprehensive economic stimulus package complete with low cost loans, grants, and infrastructure development. Should the U.S. pursue such a strategy, U.S. Africa Command and USAID alongside many other American organizations in Africa will play a major role in the implementation of those projects. Finally, these more explicit approaches addressed in this paper will strengthen the U.S. response to Africa's humanitarian needs, not weaken it. The results will not end poverty in Africa, but they will raise hope within the bounds of realism. Once in place, the policies, the programs, and the organizational improvements that this paper of mine recommends should together enhance United States' position in Africa, deepen the understanding of American intentions, and increase the hopes for African people that United States is the right partner and not China.

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