"GOING OUT"

IS CHINA'S SKILLFUL USE OF SOFT POWER IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA A THREAT TO U.S. INTERESTS?

By JoANNE WAGNER

In iron ore–rich Gabon, the Chinese will build not only a railway from the mining territory 500 miles inland to the country's main port, but also a deep-water export terminal and a hydropower dam.[1] In copper-and cobalt-rich Uganda, China is building a $350-million road from Entebbe to Kampala.[2] In gold-and cocoa-blessed Ghana, Vice President John Dramani Mahama recently dedicated the Chinese-constructed Teshie General Hospital—while Chinese soap operas played on television and students studied Mandarin at the local campus of a Chinese university.[3]

African workers construct building funded by Chinese business

Now the world's second largest economy,[4] China is on the move in Africa, employing a wide range of soft power initiatives to secure influence, trade, and—most critically—the energy and mineral resources the Communist Party needs to continue the astonishing economic growth that undergirds its legitimacy.[5] Awash with cash, the Chinese are investing in extensive infrastructure projects; spending billions on oil-, copper-, and cocoa-secured loans to African nations; contributing to peacekeeping operations[6] in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, and Liberia; and spreading Chinese culture across the continent. Although Beijing's African courtship is not new, the intensity of its recent drive is, which raises the question: are China's soft power offensive and its scramble for natural resources in sub-Saharan Africa a threat to U.S. interests?

China's new "going out" policy and the soft tools Beijing is employing to implement it will certainly intensify economic-, energy-, and influence-based competition with the United States. However, the potential for bolstering stability on the troubled African continent, the openings China's expansive activity provides for partnership and deepened engagement with the United States, and the possibility, through cooperative action in Africa, of exposing China to international labor and human rights standards in action mean that on balance, "going out" presents more opportunity than threat to the United States.

this foray into Africa is a natural outgrowth of China's ideological, technical, and military support for African nations during their Cold War liberation struggles

This article explores the current state of and reasons behind China's soft power offensive, particularly its scramble for Africa's natural resources; analyzes its impacts on several African states; demonstrates why the potential for generating stability and expanding and deepening our relationship with Beijing through African ventures outweighs the competitive dangers posed to U.S. interests; and recommends U.S. policy approaches—including cooperative partnerships—to capitalize on the Chinese model.

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World Economic Forum

Soft Power and the "Going Out" Policy

The Chinese Communist Party has an urgent and accelerating need to secure the raw materials and natural resources China needs to feed its booming economy. With an export- and manufacturing-driven economy, and without sufficient raw materials or energy to sustain this economic expansion, China's rulers will be unable to keep the implicit bargain they made with the Chinese public: in exchange for social stability and, above all, the survival of the party, the government will ensure continuing economic growth. By all accounts, this bargain has been successful; since 1981, China has lifted 600 million citizens out of poverty.[7] Failure to keep this bargain, however, could bring about the fall of the party, and the intensity of Beijing's focus on feeding the industrial beast reflects that existential threat.

The strategy China has chosen to stave off that threat is the "going out" policy—a determination to accelerate investment of China's impressive foreign reserves overseas to secure the raw resources necessary to fuel Chinese building, manufacturing, employment, and other economic programs. Consequently, more than 100 state-owned enterprises "have been given the legal and administrative means, preferential access to finance, and diplomatic support necessary to break into markets outside of China."[8] The spending aspects of this policy have the added virtue of helping China avoid inflationary pressures (deadly in an economy where restless hundreds of millions still live below the poverty line) and the concomitant reduction in the value of its dollar assets.[9]

To make a virtue of its economic necessity, and to avoid alarming the world about its economic rise,[10] China has embarked on a charm offensive[11] that is at once attractive and eminently practical; Africa is a particular target of this very effective campaign. In fact, Sino-African trade has burgeoned—from $10 billion in 2000 to more than $108 billion by 2008[12]—and, with it, China's influence on the continent.

This foray into Africa, however, is not new, but is a natural outgrowth of China's ideological, technical, and military support for African nations during their Cold War liberation struggles.[13] This early support established China's bona fides on the continent and led to African appreciation of and backing for China as, for example, it vied for a permanent Security Council seat at the United Nations (UN) and faced political isolation in the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.[14] This in turn helped build an Africa receptive to Chinese overtures, particularly when, as now, China pursues major infrastructure projects designed and advertised as based on the principles of noninterference in the internal affairs of the recipient country, equal treatment, and mutual benefit.[15] These three principles, in contrast to those pursued by most Western donors, have won fans among African leaders, who often recoil at the good governance, transparency, and accountability stipulations and hectoring tone they find inherent in traditional U.S. and European aid packages.

China, however, has good reason to promote this particular triad. With separatist unrest in Tibet and the western Uighur territory, with Taiwan still outside China's full embrace, and with China's narrow definition of human rights focused more on employment than free speech, China follows an

interference "golden rule"—we'll stay out of your internal affairs, and you stay out of ours. Mutual benefit, in turn, is a critical and pragmatic element of China's strategy, even while it works to expand its soft power influence in the diplomatic, cultural, military cooperation, and economic/financial arenas.

For example, in the diplomatic realm, Beijing established the multilateral Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2000 to chart the way ahead for mutual collaboration. Hosted by President Jiang Zemin, 44 nations and 17 international and regional organizations sent representatives to the inaugural event. By 2009's fourth ministerial meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, Premier Wen Jiabao announced a $1-billion entrepreneurs' fund for Africa in addition to a $10-billion loan fund; promised to write off the debt of some of Africa's poorest states; noted that China will implement 100 new clean-energy projects in Africa, including solar and hydropower projects; and pledged to train 2,000 agricultural technologists to help address food security issues.[16] All projects are aimed, he said, at increasing Africa's self-reliance.[17] Additionally, China conducts regular security talks with South Africa, establishing trust and deepening the habits of cooperation; has built and paid for several African embassies in Beijing;[18] regularly sends senior physicians to train African counterparts and treat patients; and provides thousands of scholarships for African students to study in Chinese institutions.[19]

China's leaders have also made a particular point of cultivating personal relations with their African peers. In 2006–2007, President Hu Jintao visited 17 African nations,[20] deftly conveying respect while consolidating China's position as the leader of the developing world. China, in turn, benefits from the resulting relationships and positive predispositions toward Beijing that such soft power efforts help create. In contrast, the United States has been accused by Africans of calling on their leaders only to criticize them or to ask for something (a UN vote, troop contributions, or the like) from their continental counterparts.

To strengthen its appeal, China has also entered into cultural cooperation agreements with 44 African states, through which hundreds of artistic and educational exchanges have taken place.[21] Further, Beijing has established 282 Confucius Centers around the world, 21 of them in Africa. These centers (16 of which will open in North Carolina classrooms by 2013) serve as hubs for teaching Mandarin, hosting performance troupes, and cultivating youth groups, all aimed at creating a positive view of Chinese traditions and drawing Africans into China's cultural ambit.[22] These methods are similar to those employed by the United States through its public diplomacy initiatives, including its American Corners and International Visitors Programs; however, the scope of China's program far outstrips U.S. efforts, particularly since the post–Cold War "peace dividend" of the 1990s was used to justify permanently closing highly effective American libraries and research centers throughout the globe.

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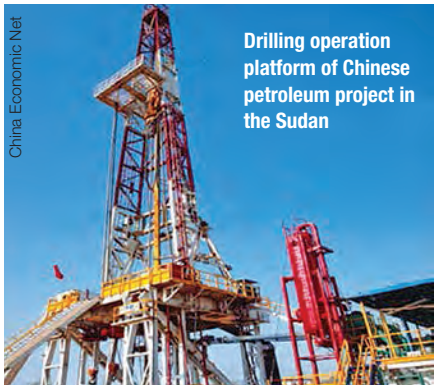
Furthermore, China has sought to intensify its attraction, "project an image of China as a responsible power," and alleviate fears about a rising China through cooperative military interaction.[23] Among other activities, it has contributed a 175-man-strong engineering unit to UN peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,[24] and a 315-member unit to Darfur.[25] Additionally, China has posted at least 14 defense attachés in its embassies across the continent to enhance relationships between respective militaries.[26] Although arguably more of the hard power mode, China also provides training and capacity-building for African militaries (as does the United States), building practical skills, instilling trust, and stretching tight continental military budgets.[27] Further, China has reportedly stationed up to 4,500 military personnel in Nigeria to protect that nation's multi-billion-dollar oil infrastructure (and its own interests in the same).[28] These activities burnish China's image as a rising power, help foster close relations in African power centers, and showcase Beijing's internationalist credentials as it acts under UN auspices.

However, it is in the areas of economics and development that China has most vigorously exercised its soft power muscles, where the "mutual benefit" is most apparent, and where the United States should be most wary of losing influence.

Economic Soft Power

As an overarching theme, the fact that China continued to grow while the rest of the world struggled (and continues to struggle) through the most recent economic crisis has encouraged African leaders to consider emulating Beijing's increasingly attractive combination of strong—even repressive—central authority and a more open market economy; for any leaders of a dictatorial bent, the Beijing model justifies—for a time, at least—oppressive policy choices in the name of growth. The "Beijing Consensus," where markets have been substituted for taut communist ideology, has thus gained some rather influential currency and has led politicians to question the rival—and often painful—Washington Consensus free trade model.

Against this background, China's practice of bundling infrastructure projects with concessional, resource-backed loans has proven particularly appealing to impoverished African nations. Through this model, African nations receive enormous, so-called no-strings loans at below world market rates for major infrastructure projects. In return, these resource-rich countries pay back the Chinese with oil, copper, cobalt, and other minerals, often over a long-term period. These are welcome bargains, particularly for countries where Western debt forgiveness terms preclude their acquiring additional debt of a size necessary to finance dams, bridges, and the like. In any case, many Africans perceive that, when freed from troublesome, Western-style requirements for good governance and transparency clauses, projects are delivered quickly and with an eye toward hard-nosed practicality. The Africans get the infrastructure they require, minus the lecture. In return, the Chinese secure access to much-needed resources, lock in long-term supplies, spend their


China Economic Net

Drilling operation platform of Chinese petroleum project in the Sudan

excess cash, and enhance their influence with the partner nation's elite. Simply put, these arrangements are seen as pragmatic, mutually beneficial, and unembellished with the trappings of Western human rights and forced democracy.

while development projects may purportedly come without strings (save the requirement that each nation with which China interacts accept the "One China" policy with respect to Taiwan), these arrangements can nevertheless trigger destabilizing social, economic, and environmental reactions

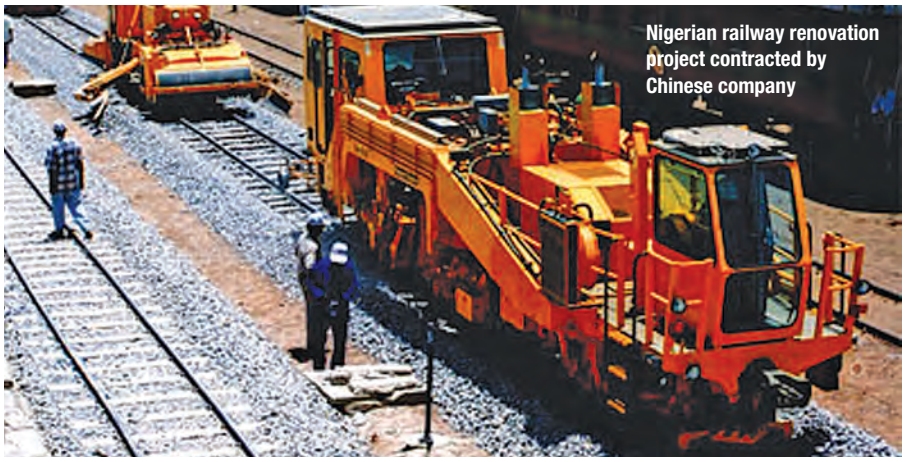
Such arrangements have had a particularly striking effect in Angola, where bilateral trade increased from $150 million in the early 1990s to $12 billion by 2006.[29] Angola is now China's largest trading partner in Africa and its third largest supplier of oil.[30] In return, China has embarked on a series of infrastructure projects financed by oil-backed concessional loans that, thanks to China's foreign reserves, Beijing provides on far more generous terms than are (or can be) offered by Western entities. The World Bank reports that the average interest rate on such Chinese loans is 3.6 percent with a 4-year grace period and a 12-year repayment schedule.[31] One tranche of Chinese activities conducted in Angola pursuant to those loans covers more than 150 projects worth up to $5 billion—dwarfing Western contracts and including rehabbing roads, hospitals, district health centers, irrigation systems, and secondary schools; building a fiber optic network; and supporting fisheries projects.[32]

On the softer side of soft, Angolans have also reacted favorably to diplomatic initiatives, particularly reciprocal visits by Angola's and China's presidents to the other's capital.[33] The respect such visits indicate contrasts sharply with perceived U.S. neglect of most African nations. In addition to the concrete impact infrastructure projects have on the daily lives of average citizens, the size and the scope of the projects create positive views of Chinese commitment to African development.

In central Africa, China signed a $5-billion long-term infrastructure development deal in 2008 with the Democratic Republic of the Congo to build 2,400 miles of roads, 200 miles of railway, 32 hospitals, 145 health clinics, and 2 universities. At the same time, the national mining company agreed to ease two major Congolese firms out of key copper mining areas and gave the concessions instead to state-owned Chinese companies,[34] even though the mines are not expected to produce copper until 2020. This Chinese approach signals a long-term commitment to working with Kinshasa (or at least with its governing body) and to meeting its own long-term development needs.

More broadly, the Chinese have established five Special Economic Zones in Africa: two in Zambia focused on copper mining, in which China will invest $450 million; one in Mauritius focused on developing a manufacturing hub and financial and tourism service centers, with a $750-million investment; and two in Nigeria centered on mineral extraction and manufacturing, powered by a $500-million investment.[35] Accompanying these investments are infrastructure projects clustered around the economic zones, including dams, roads, and rail lines. These investments have the potential to help integrate African economic activity, create hundreds of thousands of jobs,[36] and, in concert with China's other large infrastructure programs, transform Africa's economic landscape.

However, while development projects may purportedly come without strings (save the requirement that each nation with which China interacts accept the "One China" policy with respect to Taiwan; on this core issue there is no leeway), these arrangements can nevertheless trigger destabilizing social, economic, and environmental reactions.



Nigerian railway renovation project contracted by Chinese company

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Criticism of China's Approach

First, contracts for resource-backed infrastructure projects are awarded primarily to state-owned or provincially backed Chinese firms operating in Africa, which generally supply the bulk of the labor; certain contracts, in fact, stipulate that 70 percent of the labor will be supplied by the Chinese.[37] Partially as a result of such requirements, there are currently more Chinese in Nigeria than there were British at the height of colonial rule.[38] While such clauses provide considerable outlets for China's surplus labor supply, they are perceived as meaning that Chinese interlopers steal jobs from locals, provoking resentment and, occasionally, violent responses. For example, during the immigrant-focused demonstrations in South Africa in 2008, protesters accused Chinese workers of taking local jobs much to the same extent as the Zimbabweans who had fled ruinous inflation in their home country.[39]

Similarly, in Zambia, opposition leader and failed presidential candidate Michael Sata echoed fairly extensive Zambian sentiment when he claimed that "the Chinese are not here as investors, they are here as invaders."[40] While China-bashing was a significant part of Sata's electoral platform and his rhetoric may well have been part of playing to the crowds, he complained that Chinese workers—even manual laborers such as bricklayers and those pushing wheelbarrows—were displacing unemployed Zambians.[41]

Second, Chinese-owned firms, factories, and cheap imported goods crowd out local entrepreneurs while also failing to promote technology transfer, creating fears that Chinese colonization may be permanent and harmful to indigenous development—

particularly when Chinese workers remain in-country, opening shops and restaurants after their development contracts expire. In Zambia, a 65-year lease to a Chinese management company for Lusaka's Kamwala market has displaced local merchants while creating opportunities for Chinese who used to work on mining projects.[42] In 2008, an angry President Thabo Mbeki cautioned China against dumping cheap textiles and plastics in South Africa, and then imposed a quota on the Chinese textiles that were supplanting local products and enterprises.[43] Again, these types of responses can be destabilizing.

Third, critics accused China of flouting local labor laws, refusing to offer competitive wages or respect work hour limitations, and, in some cases, refusing to pay at all.[44] In Zambia, one Chinese copper mining company reportedly pays higher wages to its Chinese employees than to locals in the same jobs.[45] Things came to a head at a second mine in March 2008 as Zambian workers rioted over low wages and unsafe working conditions (an explosion in a Chinese-run copper mine killed 50 Zambians in 2005). When Chinese workers fought back with more aggressive weapons than the stones used by the Zambians, relations deteriorated, and bitterness now remains.[46]

Critics also blame what they consider China's resource rapaciousness and self-interested trade practices for serious environmental degradation. Environmentalists claim that the majority of wood imported from Cameroon, Gabon, and Republic of the Congo meant to fuel China's extraordinary building boom, for example, is illegally harvested, thus contributing to deforestation (and corruption) in those countries.[47]

Additionally, uneven distribution of the wealth garnered by elites that fails to trickle down to local citizens has caused deep resentment against Chinese corporations in some areas. In Nigeria, for example, a 2006 bomb targeting an oil refinery was accompanied by a warning from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta: "We wish to warn the Chinese government and its oil companies to steer well clear of the Niger Delta. The Chinese government[,] by investing in stolen crude places[,] [is putting] its citizens in our line of fire."[48]

Perhaps most troubling for Western liberals is China's consistent approach to business as strictly business, both in divorcing its interactions from judgments regarding the unsavory character of its counterpart regimes and in remaining resistant to international criticism for doing so. For years, China—Sudan's biggest foreign investor—supported the corrupt, murderous government of Omar Hassan al-Bashir (now an indicted war criminal), importing 40 percent of Sudan's oil[49] while building a presidential palace. China also built Sudan's Merowe dam, "one of the world's most destructive hydropower projects . . . displacing 50,000 residents from the fertile Nile Valley to arid desert locations,"[50] and circumventing a regional Nile Basin Initiative to address water issues. More sinister power than soft, China also built weapons and ammunition factories in Sudan before finally sending peacekeepers to Darfur.[51] Despite that peaceful overture, "Beijing's support for the Khartoum government is widely regarded as instrumental in prolonging conflict" in Darfur's troubled region.[52]

Furthermore, although the accusation should be viewed in light of the bitter political rivalries extant there, opposition figures in Zimbabwe accuse China of cooperating in President Robert Mugabe's violent 2007 crackdown on street traders who were competing with Chinese merchants. Whether or not the accusations are true, both the Sudanese and Zimbabwean regimes have likely been emboldened by Chinese support.[53]

One Sierra Leonean ambassador summed up China's approach to Africa, good and bad, this way: "The Chinese just come and do it. They don't hold meetings about environmental impact assessments or human rights, bad governance and good governance. I'm not saying its right, just that Chinese investment is succeeding because they don't set very high benchmarks."[54]

Threat or Not?

It is easy to conclude, in light of these criticisms, that China poses a genuine threat to U.S. interests in Africa. Business displacement, worker abuse, environmental degradation, and attempts to secure Africa's resource wealth while the benefits related to those resources fail to reach local populations are potentially destabilizing and a cause for concern. China's penchant for dealing with often-corrupt governmental elites while ensuring preferential resources-for-infrastructure exchanges can undermine Western attempts to leverage aid to promote governmental reform, democratic principles, and human rights. Such contracts can also increase competition for the oil and minerals the United States needs by taking these resources out of the transparent bidding process and tying them to China for the duration of the long-term contracts Beijing typically employs. Political agreements that supersede the market—including accusations that China is not above substantial bribery to secure favorable contracts or taking deliberate losses on resource investments in order to ensure access—make U.S. firms less competitive and diminish U.S. influence. Further, the fact that the head of China's influential Shanghai Institute for Strategic Studies has recommended that China work with African nations to lead a new world order to counter "some powerful nations [that] continue to dominate the world" sounds alarm bells in Western ears.[55] Even more sobering is China's pragmatic and tone-deaf proclivity for bedding down with the world's most deeply distasteful regimes.

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Some may argue that while in hard-nosed pursuit of the resources it needs to address its strategic vulnerabilities, China is merely mimicking the pattern of exploitation set by Western colonial powers centuries ago; many Africans agree and fear a Chinese brand of neocolonialism. While an "imitation excuse" does not justify a conscious decision to perpetuate such an approach, the argument could be made that China's willingness—albeit at the cost to Africans of their natural resources, environment, jobs, and so forth—to provide such things as medical training for African doctors; to engage in mutually beneficial security talks; to forgive substantial debt; and to fund special economic zones and enormous infrastructure projects such as dams, roads, and railways that Africa needs to pull itself out of poverty but that the West cannot afford has the potential, if properly managed,

to profoundly and positively change the economic equation in Africa. Roads, for example, provide a means for farmers to bring crops to market, making increased cultivation feasible and profitable; railways open up export possibilities; and hydroelectric plants provide engines for growth. Growth, in turn, while not a panacea (indeed, in Nigeria the single resource "curse" has contributed to instability as factions and regions scramble for their share of oil wealth), can help anchor stability on the continent, a clear U.S. strategic priority.[56]

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There are additional advantages for the United States in a partnership approach. Although China is jealous of the United States' status as the champion of the developing world, its growing confidence as a rising world power gives Washington an opportunity to urge China to play a role in Africa commensurate with that status. This is, in fact, explicit U.S. policy. In a January 14, 2011, speech, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged that "on international development, [the United States and China] could make a significant impact by aligning our investments and coordinating projects."[57]

This strategy, however, is not without considerable risks. Since China sees itself as Africa's primary defender, Beijing may resist sharing that title with what it views as an already-overinvolved superpower; traditionally China has shunned having too close of an identity with the Americans. Beijing may not relish the increased competition for copper and oil that might result from greater U.S. involvement in Africa. To this point, the infrastructure programs have been considered generally successful; China may question why it should share this success with a cash-strapped United States. Further, a U.S. partnership would involve greater emphasis on transparency, anticorruption efforts, and sustainable development, which the Chinese would likely consider unwanted adjuncts—even interferences—with their resource contracts. African leaders themselves may prefer China's no-strings, quick-action approach to major projects to American approaches and may favor keeping the two powers separate so as to play them against each other as a means of gaining some leverage over the development heavyweights.

On balance, however, the genuine possibility for jointly increasing African stability, while pursuing a more muscular engagement with China (and thus laying further groundwork for addressing more intractable problems such as climate change), argues for overcoming probable Chinese, African, and domestic reluctance and attempting a partnership approach. Additionally, the reasons for pursuing cooperation are deeply pragmatic. While some may fear that a partnership-focused adaptation to Chinese facts-on-the-ground may make the United States appear weak, realistically speaking, China will—in fact, must—continue to pursue what are genuine domestic imperatives through its African ventures. Better, then, to try to help steer the Sino train than to attempt to derail it.

We also have propartnership arguments that should appeal to the practical nature of the Chinese. Through the sheer extent of its investment and its long-term contracts, China is betting a great deal of its own national interests, and party survival, on its African success. This leaves the United States an opening and gives certain leverage for demonstrating that two major powers, working with African partners to the same ends, have a better shot at assuring a successful gamble.

Consequently, while not abdicating our own interests in promoting fair competition, democratic values, and human rights, a practical, clear-eyed U.S. approach that, consistent with our National Security Strategy, seeks to co-opt China as a development partner and thus help shape Chinese approaches in Africa could provide opportunities for all parties—including the Africans—and diminish the more threatening aspects of the Chinese policy. Some areas are particularly ripe for U.S. overtures. At the same time, we should renew our efforts to bolster our own soft power and influence in Africa.

Recommendations

The United States can help change the zero-sum threat narrative regarding U.S.-Chinese competition by focusing first on stability-enhancing projects that yield relatively simple wins. For example, China is deeply involved in promoting African health, as is the United States through the multi-billion-dollar President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria programs.[58] Cooperative programs to address health issues are desperately needed in much of Africa, should involve little controversy with respect to competition, are already considered U.S. priorities and thus are (to some extent) funded, and would give an acceptable, truly humanitarian flavor to a joint project. Cooperative ventures to help assure supplies of clean water could follow a similar trajectory.

Promoting agriculture and education are also promising partnership areas; cooperative efforts are already in train. In 2010, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Chinese government held a workshop on food security meant to "act as a vehicle for future collaboration in Africa and around the world . . . [to] boost agricultural productivity and distribution."[59] Similarly, in Liberia, the United States and China have already collaborated on rehabbing a university engineering school, demonstrating that joint efforts (albeit small) are possible,[60] while offering an opportunity to promote international labor standards. The United States and China can expand these programs and build on these successes to deepen Sino-U.S. partnership to the benefit of our African counterparts.

Forum on China-Africa Seal

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In a more complex arena, because China is an African and a global trading power, it is likely that the Americans and Chinese can find common ground on certain macroeconomic policies, such as tariffs and protection for investments.[61] The volume of China's investments and contracts on the continent may also make

jointly promoting the rule of law in African states more attractive (at least with respect to commerce), providing recourse to remedies should contract disputes arise. Similarly, as Beijing is already beginning to discover, as China becomes more involved in African and global commerce, its noninterference policy will become more difficult to sustain; the intersection and impact of nations' actions on each other make strict sovereignty notions more problematic. Consequently, Beijing's economic interests may help Washington to nudge China away from its strict noninterference policy toward responsible intervention in global matters, perhaps even (eventually) in favor of "responsibility to protect" missions, by showing such actions to be in Beijing's financial interests.

Peacekeeping cooperation is more problematic due to congressional restrictions on U.S. cooperation with the People's Liberation Army for other than humanitarian purposes. However, when the United States and China are both engaged in UN-sponsored peacekeeping operations, we have the ability to press for respect for international human rights norms vis-à-vis the military. Further, greater antipiracy cooperation in African waters can both help protect African, Chinese, and American shipping and strengthen U.S.-China ties.

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As we look for Sino-U.S. partnership opportunities in Africa, we should also take certain unilateral and bilateral actions to enhance our own economic and soft power base. First and foremost, the United States must develop alternative energy modes and sources. While the United States receives only about 15 percent of its oil from sub-Saharan Africa, the long-term nature of China's resource-backed loans, Beijing's desire to lock in supplies, and the certainty of increased competition for oil as rising nations clamor for more energy make rapid development of alternatives a national security imperative. China has already moved in that direction, designating alternative energy development as one of seven strategic industrial targets and hosting the world's largest wind farms.[62] It is high time the United States got serious about this goal.

In addition to enhancing existing U.S. public diplomacy programs (including highly effective military ship visits to African ports—in fact, coordinated U.S. Africa Command engagement with African militaries and civilian groups is one of our more effective soft power tools and should be continued), the United States should spend more high-level time on Africa. If other world crises leave President Barack Obama and his top advisors unable to travel as extensively in Africa as Hu Jintao, U.S. leaders should make more time for pull-asides at major international meetings such as the UN General Assembly and for placing periodic phone calls to those counterparts it is in the U.S. interest to cultivate. Adding more scholarships for African students to study in the United States is a low-cost investment in future leaders, and more public-private partnerships with universities on these and similar projects should help spread the financial burden.

Joshua Eisenman notes that "today, Mao's Red Book has been replaced by a balance sheet. Africa is now a component in China's larger strategy to cultivate political support, bolster its claims to Taiwan, acquire energy and natural resources, and secure its commercial interests."[63] China will certainly continue to pursue these aims, but with prudent, pragmatic, and strategic actions, the United States may be able to nevertheless promote African stability, deepen Sino-American relations, and press for good governance, democracy, and human rights values. And that just may help tip that balance sheet our way. **JFQ**

NOTES

[1] Hany Besada et al., "China's Growing Economic Presence in Africa," The Centre for International Governance Innovation Policy Brief no. 6, October 2008.

[2] "China to Construct $350m Entebbe Road," NewVision.org, January 12, 2011.

[3] Samuel Dowuona, "The Other Side of the Chinese Coin," January 18, 2011, available at <www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php>.

[4] BBC News, "China Overtakes Japan as World's Second-Largest Economy," February 14, 2011, available at <www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-12427321>.

[5] For purposes of this article, soft power includes not only Joseph Nye's sense of attractive, behavior-shaping power, encompassing "culture, political values and national foreign policies," but also the more exhaustive range of "economic and diplomatic levers like aid and investment and participation in multilateral organizations" described by Harvard's Joshua Kurlantzick. See Parama Sinha Palit, "China's Soft Power in South Asia," RSIS Working Paper no. 200, June 8, 2010, 4.

[6] Bonny Ling, "China's Peacekeeping Diplomacy," *China Rights Forum* no. 1, 2007, available at <www.hrichina.org>.

[7] Anup Shah, "World Bank's Poverty Estimates Revised," 2010, available at <www.globalissues.org/poverty/4-around-the-world#WorldBanksPovertyRevised>.

[8] Chris Alden and Ana Cristina Alves, "China and Africa's Natural Resources: The Challenges and Implications for Development and Governance," South African Institute of International Affairs Occasional Paper no. 41, September 2009.

[9] Al Jazeera, "China's 'Going Out' Buying Spree," August 14, 2009, available at <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/.../08/20098109731244921.html>.

[10] Ian Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2009), 4.

[11] China's greatest soft power success is arguably its triumphant execution of the 2008 Olympics. The beautifully orchestrated event (and the fact that China topped the medal board) showcased a confident, world-class China; the fact that thousands of citizens were summarily displaced to build Olympic venues and to hide less savory neighborhoods was given little press coverage.

[12] Kerry Brown and Chun Zhang, "China in Africa—Preparing for the Next Forum for China-Africa Cooperation," Chatham House, June 2009, 3.

[13] Alden and Alves, 7. See also Ian Taylor, "Unpacking China's Resource Diplomacy in Africa," Center on China's Transnational Relations Working Paper no. 19, 2007, 2.

[14] Phillip C. Saunders, *China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools*, Institute for National Strategic Studies Occasional Paper 4 (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, October 2006), 17.

[15] Alden and Alves, 8.

[16] Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, available at <www.focac.org/eng>.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Stephanie Hanson, "China, Africa, and Oil," Council on Foreign Relations, June 6, 2008, available at <www.cfr.org/china/china-africa-oil>, 4.

[20] Greg Mills, "Partners or Predators? China in Africa," *The Jamestown Foundation China Brief* 8, issue 2 (February 4, 2008).

[21] Brown and Chun, 6.

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Buy, Build, or Steal: China's Quest for Advanced Military Aviation Technologies

by Phillip C. Saunders and Joshua K. Wiseman

Although China lags 15–20 years behind world leaders in developing and producing fighter aircraft and other complex aerospace systems, it has progressed from reliance on other countries to the ability to pursue an array of strategies. It remains unclear, however, what obstacles must still be overcome for China to join those nations with sophisticated air forces and aviation industries. This study devises a general model consisting of three procurement strategies (buy, build, or steal) and three subavenues (reverse engineer, coproduce, or codevelop). It then applies the model to Chinese efforts over five time periods in the last 60 years. The authors show that China's history in this area reflects an ongoing tension between the desire for self-reliance in defense and the need for access to foreign technologies. They note two important conclusions: the Chinese military aviation industry will have to rely on indigenous development of "single-use" technologies in the future; and China will likely rely more heavily on espionage to acquire critical aviation technologies it cannot acquire legitimately from foreign suppliers or on its own.

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