

From non-interference to preponderance: China's future grand strategy in Africa

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Abstract

The emergence of China in Africa is fast transforming the geo-political and economic landscape of the region. The policy of non-interference embedded in the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence* largely prevents Beijing from interfering in the domestic affairs of other nations; and there has been no marked change in her interests, plans and relations. China strategically toes the same line she has pursued from 1954: that of non-interference. The paper argues that the strategy of non-interference is not in sync with present realities. Beijing needs to revisit this strategy in order to protect its economic investments and political interests, which have come under threat in recent years. The paper concludes that a choice mechanism would be more suited within China's approach. It proposes the strategy of "preponderance", which is an alternative to Beijing's current grand strategy.

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Introduction

There are many divergent arguments about “preponderance” by different scholars however; the paper shall briefly examine some significant ones. According to the oxford dictionary, preponderance means superiority in weight, power, importance or strength. Furthermore, Melvyn Leffler (1992:1) observed that “to prevent fears from becoming realities, and to prevent a repeat of past mistakes, the United States developed a foreign policy based on a ‘Preponderance of Power’”. The policy called for a grand strategy which identified national security interests and then formulated ways to attain them. The plans entailed the use of economic, military, political, and diplomatic means. In addition, Christopher Layne (2007) agreed that national security demanded an “open international economy and a favourable balance of power”. He concludes that America proposed: 1) to rebuild Western Europe; 2) to rely on a reconstructed Germany and Japan to maintain a viable and strong Western European economy; and 3) to promote gradual decolonisation of third world in order to secure needed cheap raw materials for the Western European infrastructure (Layne 2007).

China’s avowed position to not have a military presence in Africa is now stale as it is not in consonance with today’s economic reality and emerged world order where investing powers use all their influence to ensure that nations benefitting from their investments provide them with a military base to ostensibly watch over their hosts while using their military presence to guard their investment. Thus, Beijing should take more interest in having a military presence in Africa so as to safeguard its investments rather than to hide under a parochial strategy of non-interference.

The dominant view of some critical analysts is that over the past decade the United States of America’s (USA) empire-building has suffered a series of economic shocks, experienced military defeats, and now faces severe competition and the prospect of further economic losses. The emergence of China in Africa is fast transforming the geopolitical economy of the region. Beijing strategically toes the same line of non-interference in the internal affairs of any nations (Alula, 2013:1).

Although non-interference applies to military interventions and regime change, the principle has been Beijing's modus-operandi in its investment and economic relations with Africa and the rest of the world (The Economist, 2014:1).

However, according to Alula (2013:1) states that there has been no corresponding change in Beijing's interests and relations; the Asian power is following the same policy it pursued from 1954 till present: that of non-interference. Whether this grand strategy will serve her interests in the twenty-first century is arguable. This research paper looks to stimulate a more searching argument about Beijing's future grand strategy options because of her chameleonic posture in Africa. To fulfil this task, the research compares the policy of non-interference to a proposed alternative grand strategy, namely: preponderance.

The reason for adopting an alternative grand strategy is prospective: though sustainable for perhaps another decade, the strategy of non-interference cannot be sustained much beyond that period. The time to think about alternative grand strategies is now, before Beijing is overtaken by events.

The research paper is structured as follows. Firstly, the paper analyse the policy of non-interference, with a clear focus on its theoretical underpinnings and policy components. Secondly, the paper demonstrates non-interference policy weaknesses. Thirdly, the paper outlines the elements of an alternative grand strategy, namely, preponderance, which the researcher felt Beijing is adopting in Africa in the twenty-first century.

Beijing non-interference strategy: a pattern of continuity.

China has pursued the same grand strategy, non-interference, since the late 1950s. The non-interference strategy states that Beijing does not meddle in the internal affairs of nations; it is devoid of political conditionality (Alula, 2013:1). The non-interference grand strategy has been serving China well since (1954). The strategy derives from the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*: mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, "equality and benefit, and peaceful coexistence. [This grand



strategy] was designed to reach out to non-communist [nations] in Asia as well as reflect [solidity] with newly independent post-colonial states in Africa, with an emphasis on territorial sovereignty defined in the most rigid and traditional Westphalian terms. [However], non-interference applies to military interventions and regime change, the principle has been [Beijing's] *modus-operandi* in its [economic] and [investment] interactions with Africa and the rest of the world" (Brown, 2013:1). Chan (2013:114) asserts that "Beijing's non-interference in internal affairs' a cornerstone of its foreign policy, although the recent engagement of its military and navy in Sudan and Somalia at the behest of the African Union seem to point to a different way in the future".

In the same address, it is worth remembering that the strategy was welcomed and embraced by many African countries as it came to represent, particularly from the early 1990s onward, an alternative to the USA conception of a new kind of world order (Alula, 2013:2) one in which the "Third World" nations, found it increasingly complicated to manage their own political and economic affairs. Alula Ilayasu (2013) argued that non-interference was viewed as a refreshing departure from the prescriptive policy of the USA and the European countries which forced African leaders into the straitjacket of the so-called "Washington consensus" with its structural adjustment programs designed to mould Africa in the image of the "West". In the same vein, Alula found that (2013: paraphrased): structural adjustment programs and other Western deriving economic prescriptions for Africa have proved detrimental to African nations, at worst, and unfit to African socio-economic and political realities, at best. By contrast, the hallmark of Beijing's economic relations with Africa, in line with its non-interference grand strategy and its non-prescriptive nature was embraced enthusiastically by many African leaders. The strategy's emphasis on the state as a sole principal actor for economic development, contrary to the USA and EU vilification of the state and emphasis on the private sector, also meant that African countries with a yet to mature private sector fully welcomed Beijing as their economic partner and source of capital for development. That said, the strategy has been applied selectively to suit China's interest at various times, beginning in its earliest days of implementation, circa 1960s and

1970s when Beijing supported revolutionary movements in Africa and Asia. More often than not, at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Beijing often abstains from voting on resolutions that mandate sanctions or interventions. This allows several interventions to go ahead without China having to reverse its commitment to non-intervention” (Alula, 2013, 2).

In the similar development, in the case of Libya, according to Hughes (2012) Beijing expressed grave reservations over the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) campaign; it chose not to use its UNSC veto to block the intervention. Instead, it abstained when Resolution 1973 was passed to impose a no-fly zone and to authorise all measures necessary to protect civilians, though it supported the UNSC in imposing an asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo against Gaddafi’s regime. Interestingly, Beijing’s adoption of a flexible and pragmatic approach in its diplomatic stance on Libya was arguably to protect its economic interests in the country, which was contrary to its principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries. More so, there are growing concerns that the strategy is merely used to benefit Beijing’s investment and interests in Africa as it largely overlooks realities of contemporary crises and socio-political realities on the continent. This is because in practical terms, the application of the policy has been tailored to suit Chinese interest wherever it is at stake on the continent (Hughes, 2012).

Understanding non-interference and south-south co-operation

The definition of non-interference is certainly far from perfection; however it represents Beijing’s very articulation of the principles by which it has largely and consistently dealt with its South-South allies. After Zhou and Nehru’s meeting in 1954, various delegates from 29 African and Asian countries converged on Bandung, Indonesia, affirming the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence which would shape the agenda of the emerging Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At the Bandung conference in 1955, The Bandung Declaration served as a watershed in modern history, initiating the age of the non-aligned world, which in turn revolutionised relations between China and its neighbours as well as other members of

the NAM, who all adopted the five principles to guide their foreign relations (Alden & Hughes, 2009: 563-584).

In 1955, Zhou Enlai of China, Sukarno of Indonesia, Nehru of India and the Egyptian leader, Nasser, coming from Africa were key figures and decision makers at the Bandung Conference. They supported the idea that a resolution on world peace should be based on the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*. Similarly, China maintains that the internal affairs of any state are its own responsibility and China's investment in the war ravaged countries such as Nigeria, Gabon and the Democratic Republic of Congo reflects the policy (Tukumbi, 2007:8-16).

The emergence of China as a global power, along with the rise of other BRICS members (Brazil, India, Russia and South Africa), is facilitating their economic growth in Africa. The BRICS have emerged as donors and established a different way of economic co-operation: south-south economic co-operation (Gordhan, 2011:2). Through increased engagement mainly in infrastructural development that emphasise win-win co-operation, mutual support and respect, and non-interference in domestic affairs, the BRICS have increased their trade with Low Income Countries (LICs). For instance, the trade levels between the BRICS and the African continent has increased ten-fold over the past decade to reach a value of some US\$ 340 billion in 2012 (Hamza, 2013:3) More so, many of the BRICS' imports and investments in Africa are still mainly dominated by energy and commodity goods (for example, oil and mineral ores) whose extraction may have high environmental and social impacts (Tales, 2013). The BRICS and their public financial institutions have gone beyond the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the traditional international financing institutions (IFIs) in terms of aid conditionality. Thus, the practices of BRICS has changed the landscape of development assistance financing through more competitive concessional/grant aid flows, tied aid credits and the so-called "infrastructure-for-resources" loans. More particularly, Brazilian, Indian and Chinese public financial institutions have established schemes that pre-allocate credits which are tied to market-oriented deals or natural-resource access by State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Government Linked

Companies (GLC) (Guerrero, 2012:1).

In the same breath, as China “is continuously prodded to distinguish its policies and engagements from that of the [USA and EU] in Africa, [image] is of paramount [significance]. For [Beijing], keeping a carefully managed image in Africa will be critical to undercutting the arguments of neo-colonialism that are levied by its critics. The [strategy] of non-interference has always been [China’s] answer to queries about its policy and economic gains in Africa” (Richard, 2012).

Andrew, (2007) observes that the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence* still serves:

“a useful purpose. They offer an alternative to the [USA] conception of a new kind of world order—one in which international regimes and institutions, often reflecting [USA] interests and values, limit the rights of sovereign states to develop and sell weapons of mass destruction, repress opposition and violate human rights, pursue mercantilist economic policies that interfere with free trade, and damage the environment. China's alternative design for the world stresses the equal, unfringeable sovereignty of all states—large and small, Western and non-Western, rich and poor, democratic and authoritarian – each to run its own system as it sees fit, whether its methods suit [the West] or not. Another Chinese term for such a system is [multipolarity]” (Andrew: 2007).

That is, roughly speaking, a vision of the world as a stage where a variety of policies, unique to specific nations, may be implemented without friction. *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence* explains why USA should not be able to impose its political ideology on weaker nations. Thus the core idea behind the strategy as interpreted by China today is sovereignty – that one state has no right to interfere in the internal affairs of another state (Andrew, 2007:1-2). Finally, the strategy of non-interference has variedly won the hearts of some African leaders who perceived it as a much-needed break from the quid pro quo relations with the “West”.

Non-interference in Africa and the post-Cold War: a critique

In this section the paper critiques the strategy of non-interference, focusing on Chinese involvement in some parts of Africa, using different methods in expanding its economic sphere of influence.



According to Aubyn (2013:20) that China's role in African security issues has been guided by the key principle, of non-interference which Chinese government does not allow interference in its own domestic affairs. However, there are growing concerns that the strategy is merely to benefit Beijing's economic and investment interests in African continent as it largely overlooks realities of contemporary conflicts and socio-political realities on the continent. This is because in practical terms, the application of the strategy has been tailored to suit Chinese interest wherever it is at stake on the continent (Aubyn, 2013:20). For instance, Beijing supplied the Sudanese government with arms and weaponry even when the Darfur upheaval was still ongoing. In fact, the majority of these arms were used for persistent and systematic violations of human rights by government and rebel forces. The supply of arms to the government of Sudan for example, indicated a paradigm shift in Beijing's strategy (Large, 2008:93-106). More so, in its desire to maintain a reliable source of oil, China has indirectly but actively sought to sustain a form of political control within Sudan: that of the ruling National Islamic Front which clearly suits its own narrowly-defined interests (Large, 2008).

In a similar way, Ali Askouri (2014) asserts that since the mid-nineties, Beijing has been supplying the government of Sudan with all types of weaponry, and ammunitions, including jet fighters, helicopters, small arms and machine guns, amongst other things; not only that, but Beijing has upped its economic support for the internationally isolated government pouring billions of US dollars into ill prepared infrastructure projects (such as the Merowe dam). Despite the excessive human rights violation that the government security committed in these projects, China turned a blind eye to the suffering of the communities and continued to fuel the repressive machinery of the government with arms and money (Large, 2009:614).

Guinea Bissau is also in the picture; Beijing's "focus is on extracting the raw materials necessary to support its economic growth and soaring energy demands, while also trying to cement its place as a global leader. China continues its diplomatic relations with and financial support to Guinea-Bissau despite the country's [political] instability. China has financed, among other things, the Ceba River

Dam, international scholarships, rice shipments and even unpaid government salaries. In return, China has received exclusive rights to Guinea-Bissau's deep-water fisheries and is involved in oil exploration to extract [Guinea] Bissau's suspected reserves. [Some] Chinese [State owned] companies were criticised by environmentalists for the deforestation of [Guinea] Bissau territory shipping over 800 containers of protected timber to China in June 2013. Thus China provides much-needed donations and development, and then utilises its influence for the extraction of resources" (Kyle, 2013). **At the same time**, Alden and Hughes (2009) noted that when the non-intervention policy is employed to justify opacity in dealings with elites, from aid disbursements to business engagement, the view becomes more widespread that Beijing is just another hegemon out to exploit the African continent (Alden & Hughes 2009:569).

More importantly, in 2010, China National Offshore Oil Cooperation (CNOOC) "forcefully lobbied the Ghanaian government for the [US\$4] billion oil shares on sale by Kosmos Energy from ExxonMobil. With such competitive resource deals comes the increasing lure to continuously flirt with the powerful domestic actors to ensure the uninterrupted access to these strategic resources [while minimising] local discontent. This dilemma will continue to challenge non-interference as a policy that sets Beijing from the [traditional trading partners] in Africa" (Richard, 2012:2).

More so, Richard (2012:3) wrote that "the Arab Spring and other political movements that have swept through parts of North Africa have also strained Beijing's non-interference strategy. Saddled with the policy of non-interference, Beijing's response to this unexpected political movement is being closely monitored by its critics. Some of China's strategic responses during the Arab Spring, such as its decision to meet with Libyan opposition forces in Qatar before the demise of Muammar Gaddafi, have revealed the elasticity of non-interference" as Beijing positioned itself to be a significant power in the aftermath of the political and social turbulence (Richard, 2012:2-3).

"In this case and others, China arguably broke with the tenets of non-interference

for the sake of a [‘resourceful’] posterity. Then again, this is possible given that after six decades, the [strategy] of non-interference is still amorphously defined, hence mostly perceived as a doctrine that [characterises] Beijing’s passivity in a rather complex international system where states must often make hard choices” (Cheru & Obi, 2010).

Another weakness of non- interference from Beijing is poor labour practices by Chinese government companies and by Chinese private companies. Chinese companies establishing operations on the continent typically use a mostly Chinese labour force rather than locals including cooks and relatives, these attitudes by Chinese companies precipitated a considerable resentment in African communities. More so, this resentment has been tapped into by a number of African politicians and has put pressure on African governments to respond to exploitative labour practices of Chinese companies (Cheru & Obi, 2010).

Beijing has placed a high priority on preserving strong relations with its African energy suppliers; unfortunately China’s investments and its strategy of non-intervention in the local affairs frequently works in favour of some of the most infamous African dictators. Sudan, Zimbabwe and Congo-Brazzaville, who all have grim human rights records, have accounted for 82 per cent of Beijing’s crude-oil supply in Africa. Chinese engagements with “no strings-attached” allow these regimes to ignore good governance, norms and human rights issues (Nora, 2012:2). In the similar development, “the Angolan government sought funds to rebuild after [the] civil war; it looked to the International Monetary Fund, [which] was determined to force the regime to be more transparent. However, Angola ceased negotiations when [Beijing] offered a better alternative: China’s export-credit agency counter-offered with a [US\$ 2] billion and asked in return that 70 per cent of future substantial construction contracts be awarded to Chinese businessmen in addition to also guaranteeing more oil for China. Therefore although enthusiasts of the relationship may point to the fact that China has brought Angola more revenue, (Angola was China’s top trading partner in 2010-with a trade value of US\$ 24.8 billion). This one example shows how this relationship is not necessarily benefitting the population of African countries” (Nora, 2012:1).

Preponderance: an alternative grand strategy for Beijing in Africa

An alternative to the strategy of non-interference is “Preponderance”. As discussed above, “Preponderance” means superiority in weight, power, importance or strength. In this section the paper describes Beijing’s economic and military presence in Africa as preponderant. Beijing has exhibited greater commitment to peacekeeping activities by increasing its participation in UN operations and peace building efforts as well as providing diplomatic support to African countries during debates at the (UNSC). Since its first participation in the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia in 1989, China has deployed its personnel to African countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Sudan, Western Sahara, Cote d’Ivoire and Mozambique (Aubyn, 2013:16). Beijing is currently Africa’s largest trading partner (Abutu, 2013:57-59). With all these qualities, Beijing is capable of taking responsibility in order to protect her economic interest in Africa. However, three distinct factors appear to motivate Beijing’s behaviour in African affairs.

The first significant factor is that Africa is a major market for Chinese manufactured goods such as textiles, clothing, consumer goods and machine tools and at the same time, the import market of energy (oil) and raw materials such as minerals (copper, bauxite, uranium, aluminium, manganese, iron ore), precious stones, timber, cotton, and fish products (Rotberg, 2008). For this important reason, securing markets for Chinese goods and the supply of raw materials from Africa for Beijing’s manufacturing companies has been a major priority in China’s engagement with the continent. More importantly, trade between Africa and China has grown at a breath-taking pace, “against the background of sluggish global economic recovery in recent years; China-Africa trade development has maintained comparatively rapid momentum. In 2012, the total volume of China-Africa trade reached US\$ 198.49 billion, a year-on-year growth of 19.3 per cent. Of this, US\$ 85.319 billion consisted of China's exports to Africa, up 16.7 per cent and US\$ 113.171 billion was contributed by China's imports from Africa, up 21.4 per cent. Total China-Africa trade volume, China's export volume to Africa and China's import volume from Africa all reached new highs” (Xinhuanet, 2013).

Another factor is that China's broader foreign policy objective of expanding its political spheres of influence and desire to be seen as a responsible global power that is contributing to international public good of maintaining peace and security is also accountable for its somewhat active role in African security (Aubyn, 2013:15). That is to say, Beijing's interest in African security issues is also motivated by its global ambitions of being recognised as a distinct power on the international scene. For example, apart from contribution to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, China's participation in anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden is symptomatic of this assertion (Kostecka, 2010). Though some analysts and scholars would argue that China's involvement in the Gulf of Aden was motivated by "geo-politics and the protection of national economic interests, it also reflects its willingness to share the burden of upholding international peace and security as a responsible big power" (Saferworld, 2011).

The third factor is that Beijing has many investments, especially, in the energy and mineral extraction sectors across the continent, most notably in: Nigeria, Sudan, South Sudan, Algeria, Zambia, Ethiopia and Kenya. In Sudan, for instance, China's National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) dominates the oil sector with an investments which are valued to be over US\$ 7 billion (Hellström, 2009: 13). Other Chinese national oil Companies such as the China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec), Petro-China and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) also have considerable investments in numerous African countries (Taylor, 2006). In addition, in the mineral extraction sector, Chinese companies have been given access to gold mining in Eritrea, manganese in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Gabon, bauxite in Guinea, titanium in Kenya, uranium in Niger, chromium in South Africa, copper in Zambia, oil in Nigeria and coal and platinum mines in Zimbabwe (Hellström, 2009:19-20). In addition, most of these investments have come under serious threat due to conflicts and political instability. For example, In west Africa and to be precise, Ghana since 2011, there have been several violent clashes between local mining communities and small-scale Chinese miners who are often accused of illegal gold mining activities known in Ghana as "galamsey". Such activities have also caused huge environmental destruction to

farmlands and rivers through the use of heavy machinery, bulldozers and pay loaders (Aning & Aubyn, 2013). In order to protect and safeguard its economic interests and investments, China has inevitably been forced to take a keen interest in the stability and development of those countries where its companies have invested. This partly explains why in certain conflict situations, like that of Sudan where its interests were at stake, Beijing had to be flexible on its dogma of state sovereignty and non-interference to the extent that, it had to publicly encourage Khartoum to allow UN peacekeepers into Darfur (Aning & Lecoutre, 2009; Large, 2007).

In recognition of this, China's policy of non-interference has become ambiguous and complex in some parts of Africa. However, as discussed above, preponderance suggests that in reality non-interference policy does not mean that China sits back and watches without getting involved or that non-interference equals indifference. China relaxes its strategy, usually allowing China to protect her interest wherever is at stake in the region. In addition, Beijing supplied arms to the Sudanese government during the Darfur crises which was condemned by the United Nations and other civil right activists in the world. This reinforced perceptions that Beijing supports pariah regimes on the continent especially after the latter's involvement in Zimbabwe (Aubyn, 2013:21).

Furthermore, Zimbabwe is another significant example that reflects Beijing's support for a Pariah regime. The Zimbabwean government strategically toed the line of structural adjustment programmes since the 1990s, and in the wake of protest from urban dwellers and ex-soldiers embarked on land reform of white-dominated commercial land. Its defiance of the norms of property law of the Zimbabwean constitution drew criticisms from Western media, government and other non-governmental organisation (NGOS). The criticism increased steeply after the Zanu-PF led government rigged elections against the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, and criticism turned into targeted sanctions against the regime. Foreign direct investment dried up and Mugabe's government faced economic hardship. The Zimbabwean government searched for new partners to replace the Western investors and development assistance programmes. Beijing's willingness to

publicly embrace Mugabe, despite international sanctions imposed from 2002 onwards, precipitated in Harare's official promulgation of its "Look East" strategy in 2005. Similarly, Mugabe stated that:

"We are returning to the days when our greatest friends were Chinese. We look again to the East, where the sun rises, and no longer to the West, where its sets" (Alden, 2007:65).

There is thus a need for Beijing to acknowledge that its policy of non-interference does not fall in line with the contemporary realities and verities of conflict and political instability in some parts of Africa. Using its preponderant status as a global economic power in addition to its veto power in the UNSC, China needs to play a much greater role in the prevention, management and resolution of African security challenges to establish sustainable peace and stability on the continent. If not, the consequences of conflicts and political instability for Chinese investments and economic interest in Africa could be extensive. Playing an active role in African security issues would invariably help change the perception that Beijing is purely exploiting African countries and is Africa's new imperial master rather than a development partner (Hellström, 2009:19).

Conclusion and Recommendation

According to Brown (2013:1) "the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China has been predicated on non-interference for more than half a century, respect for the sovereignty of others, non-aggression and peaceful co-existence. These were the principles set down by Premier Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Peace Conference in 1955". Brown, further argued that while Beijing strategically toes the same line of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, it has not practiced what it preached (Brown, 2013:1). Frequently Africa and China have "strengthened their economic and trade relations which many see as complementary. [However, Africans] need access to capital, foreign direct investment (FDI) and technology transfers while [Beijing] needs [African] raw materials, resources and access to markets for its goods and services despite the asymmetric relations in favour of Beijing, China's investment is not only needed, but is also welcomed

by some African governments” because of her strategy of non-intervention (Iyasu, 2013:2).

China’s projection of soft power in Africa, facilitated in no small part by the promise of non-interference, has in recent years yielded some results by winning the hearts of some African leaders. The policy of non-interference has thus possibly served as one of the mechanism that the Chinese government has used to gain entry into niche markets where it can effectively compete with more established rivals like the USA and the EU. Increasingly, as Beijing has rapidly transformed from a new emerging player forging a foothold on the continent to an established power with substantial investments, assets and citizens in residence - it has become more intimately bound to the internal affairs of its African partners.

China has traditionally adopted a state-centric approach towards each African country governed by principles of state sovereignty and non-interference instead of a one-size-fits-all approach to the whole of Africa (Aning & Lecoutre, 2009). Much more importantly, the most significant and visible aspect of this growing partnership is perhaps the new US\$ 200 million African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that was donated by the Chinese government in January 2012 (BBC News, 2013). China has arguably been instrumental in supporting the African Union (AU) in its aim to find African solutions to African problems. The Chinese government has, through the provision of both material and financial assistance to the AU, supported the implementation of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

In order to show more commitment to the continent, China for example contributed US\$ 100,000 to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Peace fund in 2008. In 2005, China appointed representatives to the South African Development Community (SADC), ECOWAS and the AU, signifying its burgeoning relationship with these organisations. Diplomatically, China has also aligned with the positions of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) at the UNSC. A typical case was in 2008 when China and the Russian Federation vetoed UNSC’s measures intended to impose sanctions against Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mu-

gabe and 13 other government and security officials considered responsible for the violent crisis in the country. China supported the offices of SADC and the AU, and called upon all parties not to take any action that might have a negative impact on the situation (UNSC Department of Public Information, 2008).

Conclusively, Beijing preponderance in Africa has increased, particularly since 1990 when China agreed to join in UN peace-keeping responsibilities. In January 2005, 598 Chinese peace keepers were sent to Liberia. Others were sent to Western Saharan as part of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Sierra Leone, the Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Beijing presently has military alliances with six African states, four of which are major oil suppliers: Sudan, Algeria, Nigeria and Egypt (Hurst, 2007). To this end, the research submits that it is imperative Beijing uses its status as a global economic power in addition to its veto power in the UNSC. China needs to play a much more significant role in the prevention, management and resolution of African security problems to establish sustainable peace and stability on the continent while protecting its investment. Finally, China and the United States of America can ensure that African security issues take a higher priority in their relations. To this end, trilateral dialogues such as China-Africa-US forums can be initiated to allow for frequent exchanges of views and perspectives on security issues concerning Africa.

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