

China's growing security relationship with Africa: for whose benefit?*

By **David H. Shinn****

*Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University
Washington, United States of America*

Abstract

China's security relationship with Africa has evolved significantly since the 1960s and early 1970s when China was a modest provider of military assistance and training for African liberation and revolutionary groups. China has become an increasingly important supplier of conventional and light weapons to African governments and stepped up the volume of its military exchange visits. It is a major troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, a member of the international anti-piracy force in the Gulf of Aden, and is taking steps to protect its growing physical presence and interests in Africa.

**Forum contributions are discursive and topical articles written by authors to encourage debate or share new information and ideas. Forum articles do not form part of the peer-reviewed section of the AEAA but contribute by extending the academic discussion beyond the limits of a review process.*

***David Shinn has been teaching at George Washington University since 2001 and served for 37 years in the U.S. Foreign Service, including assignments as ambassador to Ethiopia and Burkina Faso.*

Introduction

China's security relationship with Africa has evolved significantly since the 1960s and early 1970s when China was a modest provider of military assistance and training for African liberation and revolutionary groups. China has become an increasingly important supplier of conventional and light weapons to African governments and stepped up the volume of its military exchange visits. It is a major troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, a member of the international anti-piracy force in the Gulf of Aden, and is taking steps to protect its growing physical presence and interests in Africa.

As China develops its strategy as a regional military power and eventually a global naval presence, it is important, however, to put Africa in perspective. Compared to the countries on China's periphery, near neighbours and especially those with substantial energy resources, Europe, and North America, Africa is a low security priority. Africa is geographically distant and poses no security threat to China except to its personnel and interests in Africa and in offshore waters. As is the case with all nations, China will try to maximise its leverage, influence, and ability to protect its interests in Africa. This will not always work to the mutual advantage of Africa generally or for individual African countries.

While China is paying increasing attention to its security interests in and around Africa, the challenge for African countries is to obtain maximum benefit from China's security initiatives. This will require concerted effort by the African Union, sub-regional organisations, and the leaders of key African states. As African leaders and organisations grapple with maximising benefits from Chinese responses to security interests, most of them will also want to avoid alienating Western countries, several of which already have major security interests in and co-operation with African states. In addition, African countries will need to balance China's security interests with those of key emerging nations such as India, Brazil, Turkey, and the Gulf States.

The current China-Africa security structure

Former President Hu Jintao launched the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security at the 2012 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) ministerial meeting in Beijing. The stated purpose was to deepen co-operation with the African Union and African countries for maintaining peace and security, to provide financial support for African Union peacekeeping missions, to develop the African Standby Force, and to train more security personnel and peacekeepers for the African Union (Xinhua, 2012). To the extent China follows through, all of these objectives would seem to benefit Africa.

The Fifth FOCAC Ministerial Action Plan (2013-2015) added that China will support African countries' efforts to combat illegal trade and circulation of small arms and light weapons. China agreed to contribute within its means to Africa's conflict prevention, management, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction. It pledged to continue support for UN peacekeeping missions and implied it stood ready to mediate African conflicts. China agreed to strengthen co-operation with Somalia, the African Union, and relevant African sub-regional organisations in combatting piracy in the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somalia. Finally, China said it was prepared to increase co-operation in fighting all forms of terrorism (FOCAC, 2012).

In remarks at the UN in 2013, China's Deputy Permanent Representative, Wang Min, called on the international community to promote peace and stability in Africa, strengthen collaboration with the African Union and sub-regional organisations, and take concrete measures to help Africa reinforce its collective security mechanism. He added that China is actively pursuing the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security by providing personnel to UN peacekeeping missions and military aid to the African Union (Wang Min, 2013). In 2014, Premier Li Keqiang reaffirmed China's support for the Initiative and promised to enhance collaboration with Africa on peace and security issues.

The ninth and most recent of China's military white papers made few references to Africa, but commented that China's national security is more vulnerable to international regional turmoil, terrorism, piracy, serious natural disasters and

epidemics, and the security of overseas interests concerning energy and resources, strategic sea lines of communication, as well as institutions, personnel and assets abroad. China's interests in Africa are relevant to all of these concerns and the paper underscored the need to safeguard the security of China's overseas interests (China, 2015).

The paper emphasised the role of the PLA Navy (PLAN), which will gradually shift its focus from "offshore waters defence" to a combination of "offshore waters defence" with "open seas protection," and build a combined, multi-functional and efficient marine combat force for that purpose. It added that great importance must be attached to managing the seas and oceans and protecting maritime rights and interests. The paper said that China will develop a modern maritime military force commensurate with its national security and development interests, safeguard its national sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, protect the security of strategic sea lines of communication and overseas interests, and participate in international maritime co-operation, so as to provide strategic support for building itself into a maritime power (China, 2015). While China did not spell out what "open seas protection" means in practice, it is a major strategic shift towards a more assertive maritime strategy.

The paper also noted that the armed forces will continue to conduct military operations other than war such as emergency rescue and disaster relief, counterterrorism and stability maintenance, rights and interests protection, guard duty, international peacekeeping, and international humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. In this regard, China pledged to continue escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and other seas as required, enhance exchanges and co-operation with naval task forces of other countries, and jointly secure international sea lines of communication (China, 2015).

Support for United Nations peacekeeping and combating piracy

Over the last 15 years, China has contributed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. As of 30 September 2015, it had 2,420 troops, 171 police, and 26 experts assigned to seven of the UN's nine peacekeeping operations in Africa

(United Nations, 2015). This constituted more than any other permanent member of the UN Security Council but was notably less than the number from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, or Ethiopia.

China has traditionally assigned non-combat engineers, medical, and logistical personnel to UN peacekeeping operations. This began to change with the assignment of combat guard forces to the UN operation in Mali. In 2015, China deployed a 700-person combat infantry battalion to the UN mission in South Sudan, where China has significant interests in the oil sector. This was its first ever deployment of a combat infantry battalion to a UN peacekeeping operation. The UN, African countries, and even the United States have welcomed Chinese participation in these peacekeeping operations.

President Xi Jinping announced at the UN General Assembly in 2015 that China will contribute 8,000 troops to a UN peacekeeping standby force, although he gave no details on timing. He pledged US\$100 million over five years in military assistance for African Union peacekeeping missions. Xi also committed US\$1 billion over ten years to a joint China-UN peace and development fund (Huang, 2015).

Late in 2008, China began sending PLAN vessels to the Gulf of Aden to join an international force dedicated to deterring Somali piracy. Usually consisting of two frigates and a supply ship, these vessels are continuing their engagement and rotate every four months. The Chinese operate independently of Western naval task forces, but have been widely praised for their professionalism and co-operation. The decision to join this operation marked a major turning point in China's response to security threats beyond its borders. It has resulted in a significant increase in PLAN visits to African port cities and led to a discussion within China over the need for more formal arrangements with other countries to support its naval vessels.

China pursues its national security interests in Africa

China, like any other nation, pursues its own national interests in Africa and elsewhere. President Xi Jinping stated in a 2014 speech that "We should protect China's overseas interests and continue to improve our capacity to provide such

protection" (Xinhua, 2014; Godement, 2014). China's security interests often align with those of African countries. African leaders seek, for example, political stability, which is in China's interest for economic reasons.

It is not surprising that China often contributes troops to UN peacekeeping operations in countries where it has significant commercial interests such as Sudan (oil), South Sudan (oil), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (minerals). The peacekeeping operations also provide China with experience and training for its troops far from its borders and underscore China's global reach. It contributes to China's desire to be seen as a great power.

China has engaged in the anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden in its own interest. Chinese flagged vessels and crews were subject to attacks and kidnapping by Somali pirates. Public criticism in China that the government was not being sufficiently responsive hastened its decision to send frigates to the Gulf of Aden. In addition, much of the commerce passing through these waters was headed to or from China. Had these Chinese interests not been present, it is questionable whether the PLAN would have engaged (Erickson and Strange, 2015:73-75).

Chinese arms sales are welcomed by African leaders, especially those in countries facing Western sanctions such as Sudan and Zimbabwe. For China, arms sales are a source of foreign exchange, one of its basic interests. On the other hand, neighbouring countries, political opposition groups, and elements of civil society do not necessarily welcome the importation of Chinese weapons or those from other countries, especially when they reach repressive African governments or are not subject to adequate controls.

China has not always been sufficiently attentive to the transfer of its weapons as occurred when the government of Sudan provided Chinese arms to its ally in Darfur, the Janjaweed, which then engaged in ethnic cleansing. This outraged opposition groups in Darfur and led to several attacks on Chinese personnel and facilities in Sudan. Similarly, Norinco announced in 2014 the delivery of US\$ 38 million in arms to the South Sudanese government in the middle of a civil war (Henry, 2014). This put into question China's neutrality as a mediator in the conflict; Beijing eventually

ended the shipment. Increasingly, because of their ubiquity, Chinese weapons are showing up in conflicts in the eastern Congo, Darfur, and Somalia. In some cases they were purchased at international arms markets, but on other occasions they were transferred by African governments that sympathised with the rebel movements (Shinn and Eisenman, 2012:172-179; Enuka, 2011:70-79).

The huge financial losses and evacuation of almost 36,000 Chinese nationals from Libya in 2011 after the fall of the Muammar el-Qaddafi government was a wakeup call. Most of the Chinese in Libya were working on contract for Chinese companies on infrastructure projects valued at almost US\$ 19 billion. While China orchestrated a successful evacuation, this incident exposed its limited ability to protect its economic and security interests and resulted in a serious reassessment of ways to preserve its interests in Africa (Alden, 2014:4). The Libyan evacuation highlighted the need for China's state-owned enterprises to protect Chinese nationals overseas and resulted in the principle that whoever sends personnel overseas is responsible.

The larger the Chinese presence in Africa, the greater the likelihood that Chinese nationals will find themselves in harm's way and the louder will be calls by Chinese netizens to protect their own. A couple of recent cases make the point. In 2014, Nigeria's Boko Haram terrorist group seized ten Chinese construction employees with Sinohydro in neighbouring Cameroon, which had recently acquired Chinese military equipment (McGregor, 2014). They were released several months later, presumably after a ransom payment was made. There are about 60 Chinese state-owned and 400 private companies in Angola today. There is growing Angolan resentment to this large presence. The drop in the price of oil has resulted in a sharp downturn of Angola's economy. Angolans are engaging in the kidnapping and ransoming of foreigners. In 2015, the Chinese chamber of commerce in Luanda sent a letter to the president of Angola requesting more protection of foreigners (Coroado, 2015).

More Chinese living in Africa will probably lead to higher numbers of unscrupulous individuals. In 2012, China's Ministry of Public Security sent 30 police officers to Angola to work with local police in countering a Chinese mafia operation. Angola

arrested and deported 37 Chinese nationals to China. In 2015, Kenyan authorities arrested 30 Chinese nationals in Nairobi for cybercrimes and repatriated them to China where they now face trial (Anthony, Esterhuysen and Burgess, 2015:3)

There has been a greater emphasis on risk assessment, especially in the case of national oil companies and state-owned enterprises. China is also taking a closer look at the role of private security protection of its nationals overseas. The problem is that the Chinese private security industry is relatively new and largely confined to China; it is only beginning to emerge overseas. The Shandong Huawei security company has, for example, entered into a partnership with a South African security company (Anthony, Esterhuysen and Burgess, 2015:3). On the other hand, there are no Chinese private security companies operating in South Sudan, one of the countries from which China evacuated oil workers in 2014. The Libyan evacuation and a series of other attacks on Chinese nationals have resulted in new procedures by China's embassies in Africa to protect its interests and led to a re-evaluation of its non-interference principle.

Evolving policy on non-interference

There is an on-going debate concerning a possible modification of China's long-standing policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of foreign countries. China's government insists there has been no change in this policy but others disagree. In the case of Africa, the debate dates back to China's policy in Sudan in 2007 and 2008 when it applied pressure on President Umar Hassan al-Bashir to accept a hybrid African Union/UN peacekeeping force in Darfur. Al-Bashir reluctantly accepted the hybrid force (Shinn, 2009:90-94).

Following the independence of South Sudan and the outbreak in late 2013 of civil war, China was active in efforts to bring the fighting to an end. Early in 2015, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi engaged in an effort to strengthen the Intergovernmental Authority on Development peace process aimed at ending the conflict in South Sudan (Tiezzi, 2015).

Even Chinese officials and scholars are having trouble explaining the best way to

describe China's evolving policy on non-interference and support for state sovereignty. The Director General of the Foreign Ministry's Department of African Affairs, Lu Shaye, said China needs to adopt the tactic of "constructive involvement" on the basis of non-interference. He makes the case that China's adherence to the non-interference principle should not remain rigid but has to become flexible (Duchâtel, Bräuner and Hang, 2014:18-19).

The vice dean of the School of International Relations at Peking University, Wang Yizhou, coined the concept of "creative involvement." He argues that it does not contradict non-interference because it is based on the consent of the parties concerned, support from the UN and regional organisations, full exploration of all possible diplomatic means, and prudent views on the use of force (Wang Yizhou, 2012). A professor at Renmin University, Zhongying Pang, believes that China's objective is not to abandon or replace the non-interference principle, "but rather to improve on its definition." He adds that "China is adopting a new approach which combines non-interference with *conditional* intervention." (Zhongying, 2013:46).

Zhejiang Normal University professor, Wang Xuejun, acknowledges that China's responsibilities as a big power and its need to protect its nationals and interests have forced it to get more involved in African security issues. As a result, China's traditional concept of sovereignty and non-interference "underwent some changes" and is becoming "increasingly pragmatic." (Wang Xuejun, 2012:91).

To my mind, all of these explanations constitute a semantic threading of the needle. An excellent study in 2014 by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute titled *Protecting China's Overseas Interests: The Slow Shift away from Non-interference* concluded that "Since non-interference remains crucial for Chinese 'core interests'—and especially for regime survival and territorial integrity—China will not easily relax its vigilance and drop this principle in the foreseeable future" (Duchâtel, Bräuner and Hang, 2014:57). The authors added that "China has engaged in a policy of pragmatic adaptation and shown growing flexibilities in its practice of non-interference. The emergence of new concepts facilitates this gradual change and equips China with more leeway to pursue an increasingly engaged

foreign policy posture" (Duchâtel, Bräuner and Hang, 2014:57).

The People's Liberation Army Navy strategy in Africa

China is engaged in a major expansion of the PLAN. It has already developed an impressive long-range submarine force, which is beginning to make appearances in the Indian Ocean, and put its first carrier, a retrofitted Soviet-era ship, into service. There is strong evidence that China has laid the keel for its first home-built carrier that some believe could be completed as early as 2017. Experts suggest that China intends to maintain at least three carrier groups (Qi, 2015:35; O'Connor, 2015).

Since the beginning of its anti-piracy deployment in the Gulf of Aden, PLAN vessels have made at least 16 port calls at Djibouti and one or two each at Algiers, Alexandria, Mombasa, Casablanca, Maputo, Port Victoria, Durban, Walvis Bay, and Dar es Salaam (Erikson and Strange, 2015:81-82). The PLAN deployment in the Gulf of Aden has significantly improved its ability to operate in waters far from China and underscored the need for naval support facilities. China has also used submarines in the anti-piracy operation in an effort to improve the skills of its submarine force (Defenceweb, 2014).

China's growing economic interests in Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Indian Ocean are putting increasing demands on the PLAN to operate in "open seas" far from China's coast to protect Chinese nationals, investments, and shipping. President Xi Jinping's announcement in 2013 of the Maritime Silk Road, which is designed to connect China's coast to Europe through the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, will add to China's interests in eastern and northern Africa (Alden and Sidiropoulos, 2015:3-4; Zheng, 2015; O'Rourke, 2015:44-45).

There has been considerable discussion in recent years, especially by Indian and Western analysts, concerning China's perceived intention of developing a series of naval bases along the northern rim of the Indian Ocean and continuing to the eastern coast of Africa. In 2015, for example, a Chinese state-owned enterprise signed a 40-year lease for over 2,000 acres of land at the port Chinese companies are developing in Gwadar, Pakistan as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It is widely

believed in India that Gwadar could be converted into a dual-use port facility by China to extend PLAN power into the western Indian Ocean (Panda, 2015). Dubbed the “string of pearls” strategy, the facilities China is constructing are ostensibly designed for commercial use. There is no hard evidence at this point to suggest China is pursuing the development of full-fledged military bases (Brewster, 2014; Singh, 2011).

While China continues to restate its long-standing policy of opposing overseas military bases, it is, however, seeking ways to support more effectively its PLAN vessels in the Indian Ocean and African waters. A scholar at the Communist Party School in Chongqing, Xu Yao, suggested in January 2015 that to ensure its energy security, “China can obtain a staging post or access to some temporary facilities on the maritime route to overseas oil supply.” (Xu, 2015). China is also interested in expanding its influence in the Indian Ocean so that it will be in a stronger position to take part in deep seabed mining opportunities, perhaps in collaboration with other countries in the region (Chellaney, 2015).

The vice president of the PLA Dalian Naval Academy, Senior Captain Fang Jiang, commented in July 2015 at a symposium on the Maritime Silk Road that military bases are an important part of the PLAN’s maritime strategic pre-positioning. He said the PLAN “will establish strategic support points overseas with a focus on personnel and materials support and warship maintenance.” While he suggested U.S. military bases are strongly offensive and not what China has in mind, he emphasized that China “needs to ensure safe navigation along the Maritime Silk Road” and suggested China will build overseas military bases on the basis of strategic need (Fang, 2015).

Chinese analysts usually argue China will not build “Western-style” military bases overseas but could take a gradual approach to first set up a relatively long-term and stable logistical support and maintenance base. For the time being, the PLAN’s strategy in African and Indian Ocean waters seems to be one of enhancing the ability to service its ships and crews by creating a facility or agreement with host governments that can plausibly be described as something less than a military base.

As China becomes a major maritime power, however, this begs the question as to how long such a policy will meet the needs of the PLAN.

Reports of possible PLAN facilities in Africa

While the public discussion in China of possible PLAN overseas naval facilities has been muted, it has been lively in the Western, African, and Indian media. Much of the commentary has centred on the Seychelles, Namibia, and Djibouti.

Chinese Defence Minister, Liang Guanglie, visited the Seychelles in 2011 when the government of Seychelles invited the PLAN to use its ports for resupply and recuperation as PLAN ships supported the anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden. Some of the media accounts suggested that Seychelles was offering China a military base. China was quick to clarify that it would consider the Seychelles for resupplying its ships but rejected the idea it had any intention to establish a military base (Buckley, 2011). China and the Seychelles subsequently increased their military contact, but there is no evidence a Chinese base has been or is being built in the islands.

There have been persistent rumours since 2014 that China is in discussion with Namibia concerning the establishment of a naval base at Walvis Bay. Senior Namibian and Chinese officials have denied the reports (Hartman, 2014). In 2014, the PLAN's escort task force did visit Walvis Bay and in 2015 Chinese Defence Minister, Chang Wanquan, led a delegation of 15 PLA officials to Namibia where he donated US\$ 5 million of military equipment to the government. There is, however, no evidence that a naval base is being constructed in Namibia and one has to ask why at this point in the development of the PLAN it would need a naval base in a country so far from its current operational area.

The most likely location for the PLAN's first naval facility in Africa is Djibouti, with which it signed in 2014 a defense and security agreement. PLAN vessels have made frequent visits to Djibouti since 2008 in order to resupply ships that support the anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden. China has stated that it will continue indefinitely to support the anti-piracy effort. Djibouti is already home to military

bases of the United States, France, and Japan.

The President of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh, stated in May 2015 that “discussions are ongoing” between his country and China concerning a military base, adding that Beijing’s presence would be welcome. The chief of staff of the PLA general staff, General Fang Fenghui, and the deputy chief of the Chinese Air Force visited Djibouti in November 2015. Fang told Djiboutian officials that China looks to deepen co-operation with Djibouti’s military but made no mention of talks on the naval facility. Referring to the visit, a Chinese naval expert, Li Jie, suggested that China is developing a facility to support the anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden and to counter terrorism in the region (Agence France-Presse, 2015).

The state-owned China State Construction Engineering Corporation has a US\$ 420 million contract to improve Djibouti’s port infrastructure, including a railway to Ethiopia and two international airports. China has neither confirmed nor denied the ongoing negotiations with Djibouti over some kind of support facility for the PLAN. The only question seems to be whether the final agreement succeeds in permitting China to make the plausible argument that the facility is something less than a military base. If not, a military base in Djibouti would end China’s policy established in 1949 that it has no overseas military bases. A facility in Djibouti would also open the door to the establishment of other Chinese overseas military bases.

Maximising benefits for Africa

China’s expanding security interests in Africa and the Western Indian Ocean pose a challenge to African leaders for deriving the most benefit from this evolving relationship. Since the 2012 FOCAC ministerial meeting, China has made a series of pledges, some subject to limitations within its means, to help African countries in meeting their security needs. President Xi Jinping significantly increased China’s commitment to peacekeeping during his remarks at the UN General Assembly in 2015. It is now the responsibility of the African Union, African sub-regional organisations, and individual African states to hold China to these pledges. Some involve financial support while others require greater policy intervention.

While China has been extremely helpful in contributing to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa and the anti-piracy effort in the Gulf of Aden, its financial contributions to other security challenges, at least until 2015, have been modest. China provided the African Union Mission in Somalia US\$ 4.5 million worth of equipment and material to combat al-Shabaab and US\$ 1.8 million in 2007 to the African peacekeeping mission in Sudan (Alden, 2014:6). In 2015, China donated military equipment worth US\$ 5.5 million to Uganda for its forces in Somalia. China donated US\$ 100,000 in 2013 to the West and Central African Maritime Security Trust Fund of the International Maritime Organization, donated five patrol boats since 1987 to Sierra Leone, and gave Benin US\$ 4.8 million in 2011 to purchase a patrol boat (Zhou and Seibel, 2015:16).

To take advantage of China's increasing security interests in Africa, African countries individually and collectively need to have a better understanding of China's goals and how those goals coincide with African security requirements, including ways for obtaining more policy and financial help from China in meeting those needs. In 2006, the African Union established a Task Force on Africa's Strategic Partnership with China, India, and Brazil. Comprised of African experts, it produced an excellent report complete with recommendations (African Union, 2006). Something similar could be established by the African Union to look specifically at ways African countries can obtain greater benefit from their security co-operation with China and other countries (Benabdallah, 2015:61-62).

One underdeveloped policy area is the Maritime Silk Road. The Chinese government's 2015 white paper titled "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road" makes scant reference to Africa. In fact, the section that speaks of co-operation with multi-lateral co-operation mechanisms refers to ten organisations in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe but none in Africa; there is no mention of FOCAC (China, National Development and Reform Commission, 2015). Some analysts are questioning whether the Maritime Silk Road will offer any benefits to Africa (Wekesa, 2015:154-157).

One forum for looking at maritime security co-operation may be the Indian Ocean

Rim Association (IORA). It has 20 members, eight of them African countries; China is a “dialogue partner” of the IORA. Indonesia now has the chair; its term ends in 2017 when South Africa will assume the chairmanship presenting an opportunity to emphasize African concerns.

The African Union’s “2050 Africa’s Maritime Strategy” makes minimal reference to foreign naval involvement in Africa. This would seem to be an important omission from this comprehensive document. The final draft of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development “Integrated Maritime Safety and Security Strategy (2030)” and an associated “Action Plan” has been completed but is not publicly available. It is not clear if it deals with the issue of foreign navies in African waters (Walker, 2015).

When it comes to security, China, like every nation, is primarily focused on its own interests. There are cases where China’s security engagement in Africa coincidentally works to the benefit of African nations. Chinese contributions to peacekeeping and the anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden are cases in point. Arms transfers have a mixed legacy as the arms increasingly are appearing in conflict zones and China makes little effort to monitor their movement after they have been transferred to African governments. The impact on Africa of several other initiatives is not yet clear. Will China’s growing naval involvement in the western Indian Ocean offer benefits for African countries? How will the Maritime Silk Road affect Africa? It is clear, however, that if Africa wants to maximise the benefits of these activities, the African Union and key nations will have to take the initiative in its interaction with China.

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