This publication is part of Friends of Europe’s Peace, Security and Defence programme. It brings together the views of scholars, policymakers and senior representatives from Friends of Europe’s network of civil society and international organisations partners. These articles offer concrete and innovative recommendations for future cooperation, but their value and relevance goes well beyond this discussion paper. They contribute to the wider debate of renewed interest in Africa and its resources and the subsequent consequences.
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China’s mutation from an economic power to a global security player has been widely documented, yet its security role in Africa is not yet well understood in EU and NATO circles.

The Chinese government and its diplomats play their cards close to their chests, so the implications of China’s move away from its longstanding policy of non-intervention have still to find their way into the shaping of Western strategies.

China’s more assertive stance in Asia may risk accentuating a number of latent tensions, and its “One Belt, One Road” initiative has clearly led to reactions. Elsewhere, Chinese non-trade policies in certain parts of the world will remain shrouded in mystery until there is some clarification.

The overall picture, meanwhile, is changing: China is moving towards a more active role as a security actor in Africa, for instance in its contributions to the NATO-led counter-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden. More significantly perhaps, Chinese officials around the world are engaging with new partners in government and civil society.

This discussion paper is the latest in a series of partnerships between Friends of Europe and the Chinese Mission to the EU. It is a good example of the changing Chinese commitment to the international security debate. For the time being it may be construed by some chiefly as a listening exercise, but our belief is that it is leading towards a constructive new dialogue capable of greatly improving mutual understanding.

Giles Merritt, Founder and Chairman, and Pauline Massart, Deputy Director for Security and Geopolitics, Friends of Europe
Today’s Africa is a dynamic continent. Development and improvement of the livelihood of the people is the most important mission faced by African countries. As a good friend, good partner and good brother of Africa, China remains committed to enhancing friendship and cooperation with Africa to realise our shared dream for peace, prosperity and progress. In light of this, we very much look forward to promoting communication and cooperation with the EU to support peace and security in Africa, since this endeavour constitutes an important part of the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. And we very much welcome the initiative by Friends of Europe, supported by the Chinese Mission to the EU, to produce a discussion paper on China-EU security cooperation in Africa. I am fully confident that the paper will be constructive and will contribute to facilitating and promoting stability and prosperity in Africa.

Yang Yanyi,
Ambassador and Head of the Chinese Mission to the EU
EU INVOLVEMENT IN THE AFRICAN SECURITY FIELD

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH AND ITS LIMITS

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The EU’s commitment to peace and security in Africa:

**adapt** to stay credible

Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa at the European External Action Service (EEAS)

The European Union’s commitment to peace and security in Africa is growing. For example, the EU’s €6m grant to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2007 is projected to increase to about €240m in 2016. That growing involvement can be directly linked to the security challenges Africa is facing. But it is worth also noting that support in the field of security is not rooted in the European Union’s DNA. So the EU had to be inventive, adaptable and strong-willed to become a recognised strategic actor in African security. It must retain these qualities if it wants to remain credible and effective in that area.

The big peace and security challenges facing Africa cover the whole continent, from the West to the Horn. They include terrorism, transnational organised crime (trafficking of
humans, arms, drugs and raw materials), inter-ethnic and religious violence, and conflicts linked to diminishing natural resources, piracy or armed conflicts. Unsurprisingly, these major security threats happen mainly in those countries that lack the means to cope with them. This is the reason why EU involvement in peace and security is necessary, through a variety of means, to reinforce the capabilities of local and regional actors.

The most visible EU involvement falls under Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations. There are currently eight missions or operations deployed in Africa – three in the Sahel region, three in the Horn region, one in Central Africa and one in Libya. Only one of these eight missions has an executive mandate (EUNAVFOR Somalia) whilst the other seven aim to reinforce the capabilities of their recipients – three training missions (EUTM), three capacity-building missions (EUCAP), one border assistance mission (EUBAM).

There is also EU involvement in the African Peace Facility (APF) - certainly the most emblematic EU instrument in this area. Created in 2004, the APF’s main goal is to allow Africans to bring “African solutions to African problems” through the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Its 2014-2016 action programme was given a €1.07bn grant to support African peacekeeping missions (such as AMISON or a multinational force against Boko Haram), APSA and the early response mechanism.

The EU is also mobilising other financial instruments, such as the European Development Fund (EDF). €350m of EDF funding has been attributed over seven years to regional security programmes. Other tools include the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI), or recently-created trust funds to support initiatives such as those focused on conflict prevention or mediation.

But a description of EU action in the field of peace and security would not be complete without mentioning its major political role in the continent, aiding conflict management and prevention. Our close partnership with the African Union and the sub-regional organisations is above all political; it aims to align our efforts, as proved by regular consultations at the highest level between our organisations. There are many other initiatives too: political dialogue between partner states; the possibility to suspend cooperation (for example, under Article 96 of

Support in the field of security is not rooted in the European Union’s DNA.
The reinstatement of security is a prerequisite to restarting more conventional development programmes.

the Cotonou Agreement); or support to the Kimberley Process and the new initiative of the Commission on trade in minerals linked to conflicts. The combination of all these instruments and policies perfectly illustrates the EU’s comprehensive approach.

This growing involvement of the EU in security and peace is far from over. While fully assessing the EU’s actions is difficult, some lessons have been learned.

Twelve years after the creation of the APF, the money invested by that instrument (close to €1.5bn) has not led to the creation of an autonomous APSA that is able to ‘solve African problems’. None of the standby forces is really operational. The majority of actions launched by the AU or the regional economic communities still largely depend on support from external donors. And the crisis management structures of these organisations are themselves too dependent on EU financing, which leads us to question the real ownership of these organisations by their member states. Even if some operations have led to a significant downgrading of the threat they were supposed to face (AMISOM in Somalia, or the regional cooperation initiative against the Lord’s Resistance Army), in the absence of a structural solution, persisting tensions remain between the countries contributing forces, the partners, and the AU and the sub-regional organisations.

We now see an expanding terrorist threat, covering entire regions such as the Sahel or the Lake Chad Basin. This new threat, without doubt the most remarkable evolution of the African security environment in the recent years, calls for out-of-the-box answers from the EU, pushing it to become more and more adaptable.

Besides the inadequacy of regular security responses to this threat (in particular among standby African forces), terrorism also compromises EU’s capacity to engage in these regions for its usual development programmes, with implementing partners departing due to a lack of security for their staff. An additional complication is that the affected areas do not match the traditional regional and political organisations. For example, Boko Haram has been prevalent in four countries – Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon – which belong to two different organisations (ECOWAS and ECCAS). So the regional response is carried out either by ad hoc organisations (G5 in the case of Sahel) or older ones with a security mandate that was
never really implemented until now, as it is the case for the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

The EU is now forced to revise its methods to be able to effectively face the new threats in the African continent. First, efforts must be made towards more EU involvement in the security field. Now that the security situation has worsened, we must accept that the EU’s answer should, first and foremost, be security-oriented. The reinstatement of security is a prerequisite to restarting more conventional development programmes. From my point of view, we need less stringent eligibility criteria for development aid grants to the security sector.

Furthermore, the APF must be revised – not only to reinforce the APSA, but also to give effective and quick support to African operations that are facing a terrorist threat perceived as existential by African States. New rules must be implemented to better confront the operational emergency.

This adaptability must be sought when backing organisations such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission or the G5 Sahel. Such organisations are not officially part of the APSA and so cannot receive direct financial support from the EU – either through the APF or regional programmes of the EDF. The EU has to find ways to support ad hoc regional coalitions without necessarily going through the AU or regional economic communities.

Finally, the EU needs to be creative. It must find ways to further support the security capacity of partner states by better combining its development and security instruments. This must be achieved through a better distribution and coordination of tasks between the EU and its member states. The effort must, of course, be part of the overall objective of the EU in Africa - to support good political and economic governance.

New threats call for new responses. That is the challenge facing EU involvement in the security and peace field in Africa.

New threats call for new responses. That is the challenge facing EU involvement in the security and peace field in Africa. The good news is that the EU has not waited for this article to launch a debate in the field. Work is continuing, looking at the possibility of the EU equipping national armed forces\(^1\) in addition to the training already provided under CSDP missions. The EU is aware of the challenges it faces and is ready to provide innovative solutions.

\(^1\) “Capacity Building for Security and Development”, as its area of action goes beyond the African continent.
Africa faces major maritime security challenges: in the Gulf of Guinea, off the Horn of Africa and in the Mediterranean. However, the budgets of European governments are constrained. Development organisations, African governments and local communities are feeling the pinch as shifting priorities and scarcer resources mean that European-funded programmes are closing. Maritime companies are affected too; the market potential in Africa is growing, but the attempt to seize this comes with greater exposure to regional and local security challenges – violent robbery, piracy, kidnapping, corruption, and more.² Neither the African host states nor European public and private stakeholders have the resources to tackle these issues alone, but all have an interest in improving security and supporting development.

How can the EU contribute to solving these challenges with fewer means? How can it work together with African and European partners? This article suggests that the EU should do away with the dogma of separating business, security and development. Instead, the EU should be a pioneer, recruiting and bringing together maritime security and development experts at EU delegations in
African countries. These experts can help to mobilise new resources for development while building greater resilience in African local communities tied to European maritime interests.

**THE FUSION OF BUSINESS, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

Shell, Chevron, Starbucks and Heineken are engaging in peacebuilding ventures in some of the most fragile, impoverished and conflict-affected regions of the world. Meanwhile, traditional government and intergovernmental peacebuilding stakeholders have begun to work with businesses, creating public-private partnerships to stimulate poverty reduction and socio-economic growth. With government budgets shrinking, this development seems not just mutually beneficial, but necessary.

Optimists see opportunities for new insights, initiatives and funding. They argue that business activities advance stability in a number of ways: they grow markets and economically integrate regions, facilitating a “peace dividend”; they encourage local development; they import democratic accountability. They also change the drivers of conflict by undertaking direct diplomatic efforts with warring parties. Pessimists, as well as some more traditional actors, see this as “peacewashing” at best and corporate exploitation at worst. Even so, the United Nations – the international gold standard of neutrality – has ramped up its public-private engagements with an 8,000-strong network of businesses engaged through the Global Compact initiative (UNGC), the Business for Peace platform and the Sustainable Development Goals.³ Similarly, the Danish government engaged businesses in its new foreign and security policy strategy, as did the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) during its work to combat piracy in East Africa. These new networks are merging business, security and development where they have converging interests.

Maritime businesses have historically played a key role in counter-piracy efforts in East Africa. They improved best management practices, fitted ships with barbed wire and water cannons, and hired private armed guards. But these efforts, despite their combined effectiveness, offered more symptomatic relief than treatment of the root causes, which still rest ashore today. In East Africa, however, the Danish NGO Somali Fair Fishing (SFF) is trying to solve this problem by combining community-building and security interests to collect donations from maritime businesses active in the area. SFF seeks to provide income, sustenance and a livelihood through local fishing in Somalia, and established the first-ever fish processing station in Berbera, Somaliland, with seven refitted containers, an ice machine and an office building. In 2014,

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² My latest report describes some of these interwoven business, security and development issues more broadly and how to strategically mitigate them in the maritime domain. See Smed, Ulrik Trolle: Maritime Security and Development in Africa, Centre for Military Studies, University of Copenhagen, April 2016.

³ See, for instance, Miklian, Jason, Peer Schouten & Brian Ganson: From Boardrooms to Battlefields: 5 New Ways That Businesses Claim to Build Peace, Harvard International Review, June 10, 2016 (online).
The EU should do away with the dogma of separating business, security and development.

25 local employees refined 400 tons of fish with an estimated market value of US$1.3m and a turn-over of $100,000. Today, they service 50 local fishing company partners, representing 500 fishermen and about 85% of all active fishermen in the area. Local users of this facility have increased their income by an average of 92%. Recently, SFF signed a contract with the EU to expand its project funding by €3m.

The SFF’s community-based approach is not only an effective way to give young locals an alternative to piracy, it is also cheap (costing $1.1m). Its cost equals that of hiring private armed guards for 18 vessels passing through the high-risk Gulf of Aden (which costs around $60,000 per trip). 20,000 vessels pass through the Gulf each year. The downside is that such a project is hard to upscale; but a new policy idea could provide an opportunity to meet this challenge.

THE NEXT STEP – DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE, SUPPORT STABILITY, AND SECURE BUSINESSES

How can this fusion of business, security and development provide new opportunities for maritime security? The potential lies in the overlapping interests of the five different actors involved here – the European maritime industry, European governments, development organisations, African governments and local communities. Maritime companies want stability for their businesses in Africa and are willing to invest in strategic community-building when this benefits their activities. Development organisations can deliver the regional expertise and contacts needed to reduce risks tied to the local geographic and social environment, and make these investments worthwhile. In exchange, they require new public-private partnerships and more funding
Maritime companies want stability for their businesses in Africa and are willing to invest in strategic community-building when this benefits their activities.

for their target groups. Meanwhile, local communities are likely to engage actively in the protection of businesses and provide an innovative workforce, if they can see that this leads to economic development and more attractive prospects for themselves and future generations. Finally, both African and European governments have an interest in increased trade and growth in Africa and in lending legitimacy to such strategic partnerships, which could increase funding from international donors.

Maritime companies can use NGOs in a number of ways. First, NGOs may use their regional insight to offer market analyses that allow companies to consider new consumer potential. If the company shows interest, the next step would be an impact assessment of how new installations – such as port facilities or off-shore platforms – would affect and be received by the local population. This could help to avoid costly mistakes.4 Private companies could also hire NGOs to provide contacts and logistics for business exploration trips. Finally, companies might see this work as part of their grander corporate social responsibility strategy, and a way of improving employee satisfaction.5

Sometimes these partnerships would be little more than having development organisations

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4 Recently, the Danish wind power company Vestas joined the Lake Turkana Wind Power project to set up turbines at an estimated project value of €620M. Electricity from the turbines would increase Kenya’s energy output by 15-20% and bring electricity to €2,5M additional Kenyans. But the project has faced strong headwind since residents from a nomadic local community filed lawsuit against it and the Kenyan government, dragging the project to a halt and endangering its future. Consulting local NGOs could have informed Vestas better about the risks involved in taking on such a project and how to cope with them in case they became reality.

5 The Danish dairy product producer Arla, for instance, have a highly specialized workforce who normally spend all their time in industrial complexes in rainy Denmark. Today, they are letting them contribute their skills to improve dairy products in Ethiopia together with the Danish Church Aid, which highly increases their motivation and job satisfaction – in addition to Arla creating a surprisingly profitable new market.
as consultants. At other times, there may be greater scope for collaboration. Companies interested in operating in conflict-prone societies will need “hard” security measures, such as guards and fences. But they will also need resilient surrounding communities that do not fall prey to criminal activities. This requires communities to experience economic development and feel that they benefit directly, on a day-to-day basis, from a company’s presence in the area. By forming strategic partnerships with NGOs, companies can focus their efforts on their core business and effectively outsource sustainability efforts to insightful consultants. This partnership can also provide access to valuable local information and a community dedicated to protecting the company’s activities.

How could maritime security and development advisors at EU delegations help facilitate this process? The EU should by no means become a substitute for direct contact between stakeholders. Rather, these advisors should act as facilitators, promoting these public-private projects and attracting new European and international donors, such as the World Bank or the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, which already have multi-million-dollar fisheries projects in West and East Africa. These donors could reinforce the momentum generated by the partnership between local communities, development organisations and maritime businesses to build resilient societies. EU experts should facilitate contact between interested businesses and NGO experts, and act as a door-opener to African governments when necessary.

European governments still have an immense interest in safeguarding their maritime businesses in Africa, despite their shrinking budgets. There is an opportunity for the EU to position itself as a caretaker of common European maritime interests. The EU also has a much larger coordination, economic and bargaining potential than a small maritime state like Denmark. Moreover, many member states have maritime interests in Africa but only few would feel that these would merit investing in new advisor positions at their embassies. By drawing on the collective European interest, the EU is in a strong position to become a pioneer in this field.

LESSONS LEARNED

There is growing potential for synergy between business, security and development actors in Africa. Maritime security and development advisors at EU delegations would represent an opportunity to mobilise and coordinate new resources for development, while building greater resilience in local communities around European maritime interests in Africa. When a local community is more resilient, it is more likely to mitigate elements of instability or crime, in turn making it more attractive for businesses, which is in the interest of all stakeholders.
The Brexit referendum vote has triggered uncertainty over Britain’s place in the world. Chinese observers have two main concerns: first, will it diminish the UK’s role as a global player and its contribution to peace and development, given that Britain was the first major economy to meet the UN’s target of spending 0.7% of gross national income on development? Second, will the ‘golden age’ of China-Britain ties continue in the post-Brexit era, enabling London and Beijing to cooperate still closer?

Official Chinese media reacted quickly to the vote. “Cooperation won’t change because of Brexit”, wrote the overseas edition of the People’s Daily two days after the June 23 referendum. Chinese policy makers and academics do not expect leaving the EU to end Britain’s global ambitions. Instead they see it giving the UK more scope to use its diplomatic and military capabilities to position itself as a world power.
The UK and China are both significant trade and development partners for Africa. Both have veto powers on the United Nations Security Council. They share interests and responsibilities in Africa.

For China, the security demands of protecting its massive investments and large numbers of personnel in Africa are increasing dramatically. The 2015 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation summit announced peace and security as one of 10 fields of cooperation.

China and the UK have had different approaches to African peacekeeping. The UK has mainly sought to promote peace and security through funding and training programmes. China now contributes by deploying its own personnel to support operations in Africa. In 2015, China sent its first infantry battalion to participate in a peacekeeping operation, in South Sudan.

Yet, in spite of differences in principle and practice, the UK and China have been cooperating in African security affairs for years. On the governmental level, the UK has provided technical and language training to Chinese peacekeepers and police at China’s Langfang training centre. The two countries also worked together in the fight against Ebola. On the secondary track, British NGO Saferworld and the Shanghai Institute for International Studies - a key Chinese foreign-policy think tank - created a conflict prevention working group and organised several rounds of research dialogue.

There are several factors behind the UK’s willingness to cooperate with China on African security.

UK security policy has undergone great changes since the 2003 Iraq War and the Libya War in 2011. Policy makers - and the public - have become more cautious over foreign military intervention. The UK’s armed forces are expected to shrink from 102,000 soldiers in 2010 to 82,000 by 2020. A 2015 poll by the Pew Research Centre, found that over half of the British public are reluctant to use force, even to defend a NATO ally. In 2013, the British Parliament voted against intervention in Syria. The recent Chilcot report on Iraq has triggered even more debate on the use of military force. Britain’s preference is clearly for conflict prevention rather than military involvement. All this makes China’s

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8 “Syria crisis: Cameron loses Commons vote on Syria action”, BBC News, retrieved on 29 August, 2016.
China feels it can learn from Britain’s holistic approach to security affairs - combining diplomacy, defence and development tools.

developmental approach to addressing security problems appealing to the UK.

Britain also wants to share responsibility with China in the provision of public security in Africa. Through cooperation, London seeks to integrate China into the rules-based international system which is still dominated by the West.

Working directly with China on security issues could be a way to build broader relations with Beijing. During its EU phase, the UK used membership of the Union to pursue its national interest and extend its international influence. In the Brexit era, relations with non-EU countries will become even more central to UK efforts to maintain global power status. Greater engagement in African security could strengthen bilateral ties with China, which faces its own security challenges in Africa.

Since the coming into force in January of the UN Sustainable Development Goals to guide development policy over the next 15 years, the UK has been approaching China for security cooperation through the SDG platform, particularly under SDG16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. This is a new element now affecting China-UK security cooperation in Africa.

Discussions over the development-security relationship have seen some dramatic changes over the past decade. Previously, Britain gave precedence to security over development, while China considered development as its paramount concern. Since the adoption of Agenda 2030 and its universal goals for all countries, both China and the UK agree that development and security now form two - equally important - sides of the same coin.

China feels it can learn from Britain’s holistic approach to security affairs - combining diplomacy, defence and development tools. The UK’s main security strategies - including the National Security Strategy, the Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Building Stability Overseas Strategy and the Conflict Pool Strategy - are all jointly issued by the Department of International Development, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence. Although different departments still have different interests, this shows the UK’s willingness to integrate development, diplomacy and security. China’s development and security policy making is more fragmented.

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9 Interviews and conferences with the Saferworld representatives in Beijing, December 2015.
The integration of security into the development agenda is aiding the shift from militarised responses to security challenges towards developmental approaches that address the structural problems at the root of insecurity and instability. The UK had a lead role in shaping the 2030 agenda and China has accepted its security targets. However, China and the UK still have different understandings and focuses on security.

As a strong behind-the-scenes advocate of SDG16, the UK is dedicated to “the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.”

Observed closely, SDG16 contains striking similarities with the three specific areas highlighted in the UK’s Building Stability Overseas Strategy: free, transparent and inclusive political systems; effective and accountable security and justice; the capacity of local populations, regional and multilateral institutions to prevent and resolve conflicts. The UK has used policy leverage to successfully integrate its national vision into the global framework of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.

China has always been an advocate of interdependence between development and security. While the UK still emphasises governance as crucial to security, China has a different focus. China puts more emphasis on the role of inclusive economic growth - including elements such as infrastructure, health and agriculture - in building sustainable security. As President Xi Jinping told the UN last year, ‘development is the greatest form of security’. China is not against the UK position on good governance, but it has a different understanding of what governance means in the SDG16 context. China is concerned that the SDG16 agenda could become dominated by the North, or would evolve in a way that allows Northern powers to impose their own interests on the South. China also worries that the UK’s over-emphasis on the security aspects of development will cause a shift of priorities that reduces development resources, raising the risk of conflict. One
example is the UK decision to devote 30% of official development assistance to fragile and conflict-affected countries\textsuperscript{10}.

However, SDG16 brings prospects for China-UK security cooperation in Africa. China used to outsource security to governments in conflict-affected countries. But Beijing is gradually engaging more with local communities, showing a better understanding of how this helps mitigate security problems. Since the 2030 Agenda requires a global, multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development, China-UK security cooperation could be pursued at various levels, among governments, think tanks, business and NGOs.

Compared with the UK, China has limited knowledge of the politics, culture, religion and civil society of conflict-affected countries in Africa. China can learn how to involve civil society players in its African security strategy. In March 2016, with the assistance of the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation, Saferworld organised a visit of South Sudan civil society representatives to China for a dialogue on security issues. That was a good sign of China’s willingness to break out of its comfort zone of inter-governmental cooperation. It should serve as a first step towards more trilateral cooperation among business and civil society in China, the UK and Africa.

The UK’s desire for a security partnership with China in Africa is stronger than China’s desire for partnership with the UK. For China, Brexit will reduce the added value of Britain’s position as a leading player in the EU. However, compared with other potential security partners in Africa such as the United States and France, the UK is providing a more proactive cooperation option for China. The positions of conflict-affected African countries are crucial to China-UK security cooperation. African security affairs cannot be solved, or even discussed, without the involvement of African countries.

Security cooperation between the UK and China should start from areas of low-sensitivity and focus more on sustainable economic development to address the root cause of conflicts.

The root cause of the current refugee crisis is years of economic inequality, poverty, political instability and violence caused by failed states and civil wars in North and Central Africa and the Middle East. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 83% of arrivals via the Mediterranean Sea are from countries in these regions – Syria (33%), Nigeria (five percent), Eritrea (four percent), Gambia, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Sudan, Somalia, Senegal, Mali and others.

For Europe, the migration ‘problem’ began in 2015, with huge flows of Syrian refugees fleeing their war torn country. But migration from Africa has been consistent for years, causing many deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, considered one of the most dangerous migratory routes in the world. How are EU policies striving to address the root causes of the unrest in Africa?
COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY: THE EU’S INSTRUMENT FOR REGIONAL INTERVENTION

The EU is trying to find a solution to the influx of refugees entering Europe, which has caused political problems across the continent. One approach, aside from humanitarian aid, has been to use the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to stabilise states and regions through civilian and military operations.

The CSDP was created in 1998 as a response to European powers’ failure in the Balkans in the early 1990s. But as a French expert confirmed several years ago, another reason for the creation of the CSDP was to have an instrument that could contribute to the stabilisation of Africa and, in turn, help Europe avoid large influxes of migrants. Such concerns in European capitals have existed for years: since the 1990s, there has been a debate in Europe about conflict prevention and peace-building in Africa, and peace and development, intertwined, have remained at the heart of the EU’s strategy towards Africa.

The purpose of the CSDP, initially developed in a bilateral agreement between the UK and France, is to provide civilian, military, or civilian-military instruments that can stabilise Europe’s neighbourhood. Since its first missions in 2003, the CSDP has mainly been deployed in the Balkans and Africa. Out of a total of 36 CSDP missions, 17 are ongoing: 11 civilian; six military. Most missions have taken place in Africa.

The distinction between civilian and military missions is an important one. Military operations are usually financed through national funding, although some can be financed through collective funding. (Collective funding takes place under the “Athena mechanism”, which was developed in 2004 and can finance common costs of EU military operations and national-borne costs such as lodging and fuel.) By contrast, civilian operations are mainly financed by the EU budget, with some additional national contributions.

Since the Eurozone crisis began, the CSDP has been seen by most European capitals as a luxury product.

The overall cost of the CSDP to the EU is only minimal - just 0.16% of overall EU expenditure in 2013. But since the beginning of the Eurozone crisis, the CSDP has been seen by most European capitals as a luxury product. In addition, the member states seem to have lost sight of a common security strategy, which is confirmed by the recent document produced by the European External Action Service (EEAS). Financial constraints combined with a lack of strategic foresight have contributed to inertia and the failure of EU powers to deal individually with the root causes of the refugee crisis.
EU INTERVENTIONS IN AFRICA

As argued by Alex Vines in a 2010 article on the EU and security in Africa, the CSDP has been used in two ways: on an ad hoc basis, allowing the EU and its member states to address pressing crises; and in the adoption of long-term capacity-building strategies towards Africa. The former took place with the deployment of “boots on the ground” in Chad, the Central African Republic, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and elsewhere. These missions, Vines argued, have provided limited security benefits to Europe. The latter type of operation requires a much more developmental approach and long-term commitments.

Apart from budgetary differences, the mandates of civilian and military missions tend to vary. There are three types of civilian mandates: strengthening (capacity-building), monitoring (third-party observation of reforms in security sectors and implementation of agreements) and executive (substitution of the local state, but this has happened only in the case of Kosovo). In the case of military operations, the mandate is given through a resolution of the United Nations Security Council or via a request by the host state.

The table on the right illustrates the ongoing civilian and military missions in Africa conducted by the EU.

Over the last decade, the EU has produced several strategy documents: some comprehensive, like the 2016 EU Global Security Strategy, and others that are more region- or issue-specific. In the case of Africa, the long-term approach, embodied by the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy, focuses on building ties with African countries and the African Union to address issues related to conflict prevention, counterterrorism, organised crime, migration, border management and security sector reforms. The 2011 EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel was developed to address increasing instability in the Sahel region and the transnational nature of security threats. The EU sees the security threats faced by the region, such as poverty, the effects of climate change, poor governance (corruption and weak institutions), terrorism and trafficking, as serious destabilising factors. The CSDP missions are supposed to address some of the shortfalls, but are often too small and limited in their mandates to truly offer a comprehensive solution.

SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current context in Africa and Europe calls on us to examine several scenarios. First, the Mali case is becoming the “new normal”, whereby an EU member state takes the lead in using military force. Soon after the 2011 Libyan military intervention, Paris began two military operations in Africa: Operation Barkhane in the Sahel and Operation Sangaris in Central African Republic (since 2013). The French intervention in Mali, initially launched under Operation Serval, helped to stop the progress of terrorist networks. Once stabilised, the EU launched EUTM Mali to contribute to the
## ONGOING EU CSDP OPERATIONS IN AFRICA

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<th>MILITARY OPERATIONS</th>
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<td><strong>EUNAVFOR Atalanta</strong> off the coast of Somalia (2008-)</td>
<td>• deter and disrupt piracy off the coast of Somalia</td>
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<td>EUTM Somalia (2010-)</td>
<td>• strengthen the Transitional Federal Government and Somalia’s institutions</td>
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<td>EUTM Mali (2013-)</td>
<td>• train Somalia’s armed forces</td>
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It may be time to “unplug” the CSDP and merge it with NATO.

Second, the CSDP missions are too small and receive too little national support to carry out complex operations. A civilian mission in charge of building the authority of a sovereign state, ensuring territorial integrity, building institutions, reforming the security sector and empowering the rule of law cannot be completed in the short term. The fact that mandates of the missions are often extended by one or two years underlines the strategic short-termism of Brussels and the 28 national governments. One of the few CSDP missions considered as a relative success is EULEX in Kosovo, which was deployed in 2008. It is the largest CSDP mission, with 1,700 personnel and the EU holding executive power with its involvement in monitoring, mentoring and advising local partners. This operation is one of the few “state-building” missions undertaken by the EU. Compared to EULEX Kosovo, no operation in Africa is anywhere close in terms of political, material, financial and human commitments.

Third, it may be time to “unplug” the CSDP and merge it with NATO – a position advanced by many experts, such as Jolyon Howorth. This approach emerged after the 2011 Libyan military operation, which highlighted the limited military capabilities of France and the United Kingdom, who were both highly dependent on American military support, and the complete absence of the CSDP. Unfortunately, NATO seems to be in a period of a strategic inertia. NATO has not been able to address the core question of its purpose since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and appears to be unable to recover from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. So the United States may not wish to get involved in the stabilisation of Africa.
Fourth, the EU and its member states have only one option if they are serious about addressing the root causes of the current refugee crisis and contributing to the development of Africa: the implementation of a substantive, combined development-security approach. Considering the long history of European powers in Africa, European military presence in former colonies may be efficient in the short term; however, a transition to local authorities, despite some of their weaknesses, is the only possible option to empower local communities. Until more substantial economic cooperation, through fair trade and long-term investments, takes place between the EU and Africa, the current challenges will only be superficially solved. The challenge is the level of decentralisation of the EU and the role played by each institution (the EEAS and the Commission), other regional institutions (like the African Union) and international organisations (such as the United Nations). They do not always cooperate efficiently – but this is the only strategy worthy of investment.
CHINA’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE AFRICAN SECURITY FIELD
FROM ECONOMIC TO SECURITY PLAYER
When I read Joseph Conrad’s novella, The Heart of Darkness, what came to my mind was the hypocrisy of imperialism which has plagued Africa under the guise of development - what French imperialists termed ‘mise en valeur’.

Africa has long been the scene of wanton, indiscriminate exploitation of human and natural resources for Western industries and a dumping ground for junk goods. This was done under the pretext of helping develop Africa. China was a late arrival, but has repositioned itself skilfully at the centre of the exploitation game played by European countries since the 19th century.

Between the 1870s and 1900s, Africa was a victim of European imperialist aggression, military invasion and eventual conquest. African societies resisted the imposition of foreign domination, but by the dawn of the 20th century, most of Africa had been colonised. This ruthless imperialistic aggression paved the way for European powers to loot Africa’s raw materials to feed industries back home.
The European imperialist adventure was fuelled by social, economic and political factors. It took off after the end of the slave trade and the expansion of the European capitalist Industrial Revolution. The demands of capitalist industrialisation for raw materials, guaranteed markets and profitable investment outlets, drove Europe’s scramble for Africa and the eventual partition of a conquered continent. The primary motivation for the European intrusion was a selfish economic endeavour to develop Africa. The ambition of the European countries was never to salvage Africa from its socio-economic developmental deficiency, but to loot Africa of its resources.

Power struggles between Britain, France, Germany and other European nations added to their ambition to acquire territories in Africa.

As a result of industrialisation, major social problems emerged in Europe - unemployment, poverty, homelessness, displacement from rural areas. These problems emerged partly because not everyone could find employment in the new capitalist industries. In response, European powers sought to establish settler colonies in Africa to export ‘surplus population’.

The interplay of these factors led to frenzied attempts by European commercial, military, and political agents to establish stakes in different parts of the continent. They engaged in inter-imperialist commercial competition, made exclusive claims to particular territories, imposed tariffs on other European traders, and laid claim to exclusive control of waterways and commercial routes.

Another form of economic imperialism emerged in the 1990s under the disguise of globalisation\textsuperscript{11}. It was like hemlock meant to kill Africa’s tottering economy.

China has made rapid, profitable investments throughout the continent. It has started to provide development assistance in some areas as part of efforts to extend security to its overseas population and investments.

\textit{Africa has long been the scene of wanton, indiscriminate exploitation of human and natural resources for Western industries and a dumping ground for junk goods.}

Historically, China has provided shadowy military assistance in the form of arms and training for African countries. Chinese arms and assistance helped in the fight against colonial powers, for example in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Algeria and Angola. During the 1960s, under Mao Zedong, China was a frontline combatant in global ideological battles, supporting liberation movements in Africa. The aim was to create a sphere of influence in those African countries.  

With China’s rapid economic growth and high demand for raw materials, Beijing has given increased focus to Africa. As with the European powers, the Chinese imperialistic presence has been aimed at milking Africa dry of resources. The Chinese are everywhere in Africa: in unsustainable agriculture, mining, fishing, construction, commerce, tourism. The list is inexhaustible. Chinese investors have made billion-dollar deals with African governments to mine natural resources. Chinese immigrants have moved into cities, towns and villages. China’s increased presence in Africa can be looked at as part of a wider effort to ‘create a paradigm of globalisation that favours China’.

Some see China as a genuine partner to Africa in its development, others believe its engagement is exploitative, driven primarily by China’s interest in Africa’s resources. In fact, the nature of Sino-African relations is ambiguous and difficult to define as purely rapacious or reciprocally advantageous.

While China exploits Africa’s natural resources to feed its industrial output, it also exports cheap — often shoddy — manufactured goods to Africa. As a result, local companies become less competitive and increasingly dependent on China.

Recent research has also shown the Chinese presence in Africa has failed to bring significant skill developments, adequate technological transfer or any measurable upgrade of African productivity levels. Most Chinese projects in Africa are manned by skilled labour ferried in from China at a cost to African employment. The Chinese presence in South Africa may have cost the country 75,000 jobs from 2000 to 2011. In Nigeria, the influx of cheap

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Chinese imports has caused 80% of textile companies to close.\textsuperscript{14}

Recently, China has become more tactful in its approach to Africa trying to counter perceptions that its presence brings only one-sided benefits.

China’s deep economic involvement is pushing it towards an increased military presence in Africa. China is overcoming any discomfort over overseas bases as its forces are drawn into protecting Beijing’s African interests. China’s economic expansion in Africa is leading it to strategically position itself as a military superpower. If an enemy were to target Chinese interests in Africa, it would strike at its economic epicentre. Thus, China is seeking to head off crises with preventive diplomacy and deference. The Chinese military presence in Africa is mostly meant to protect its nationals abroad. The recent deaths of three Chinese business executives when Islamist militants attacked a hotel in Mali are said to have increased pressure on President Xi Jinping to find a response.\textsuperscript{15}

The fact that China obtains about 5% of its oil imports from South Sudan has pushed China to contribute 700 troops to protect its economic interests there under the guise of the United Nations’ peacekeeping mission. China’s political influence in Africa is inescapable due to its investments and huge emigrant population. Since some parts of the continent are in conflict zones, the Chinese cannot risk their investments and people. Chinese imperialistic strides in Africa are just continuing the legacy that European countries started in the 19th century.


China’s growing engagement with Africa is increasing the need for a more pro-active Chinese role in African peace and security.

Peace and security cooperation is already one of the most important pillars of the comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership between China and Africa, and its significance is growing, thanks to the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security (ICACPPS) launched at the 5th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in July 2012.\textsuperscript{16}

Peace and security cooperation was included in China’s first Africa policy white paper, issued in 2006\textsuperscript{17}. In a 2015 update, China said it will deepen military cooperation, help Africa secure peace and security and support African efforts to confront non-traditional security threats.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{Chun Zhang}, Deputy Director of the Institute for Foreign Policy Studies at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS) and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of both the \textit{Global Review} and the \textit{China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies}


\textsuperscript{17} Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China’s African Policy, Beijing: 2006.

\textsuperscript{18} China’s Second Africa Policy Paper, Xinhua News Agency, December 5, 2015, accessed on December 6, 2015.
At the December 2015 FOCAC Summit in Johannesburg, China and Africa promised to implement the ICACPPS, support the building of a collective security mechanism in Africa, and jointly manage non-traditional security issues and global challenges.\(^{19}\)

China-Africa peace and security cooperation is proceeding on bilateral, regional and international tracks. Bilaterally, China has close cooperation with those African countries with which it has diplomatic relations. Twenty-eight African countries have defence attachés in Beijing and China maintains 18 defence attaché offices in Africa. There is also a delegation of over 100 Chinese People’s Liberation Army officials in Tanzania to help it build military capacity.

At the regional and continent-wide level, China has cooperated with a number of organisations, including the African Union, the East Africa Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community. One prominent example is China’s support for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development as the core platform for mediating in South Sudan’s civil war.

Multilaterally, China participates in various international efforts for improving African peace and security, for example, President Xi Jinping announced at the Johannesburg Summit that China will provide $60 million in grants to support the building and operation of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis. “China will continue to participate in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and support African countries' capacity building in areas such as defence, counter-terrorism, riot prevention, customs and immigration control”, he said.\(^{20}\) At the UN Peacekeeping Summit last September, Xi said China would also send the first peacekeeping helicopter squad to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, and announced $100 million in military aid to support the AU.\(^{21}\)

Despite such progress, there is room for improvement. China-Africa peace and security cooperation is mainly focused on traditional security issues, carried out principally at governmental level and mostly bilateral. There is a debate about the nature of FOCAC. China has, it seems, drafted a detailed, well-funded plan for cooperation over the next three years, but there remains wide scope for more strategic thinking.

Faced with fast-changing security and governance challenges, China has to offer a distinctive approach to improve the current situation in Africa. The most important challenge may be to find a way to balance

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\(^{19}\) Declaration of the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, FOCAC Website, December 25, 2015, accessed on December 26, 2015.


\(^{21}\) Xi Jinping, “China is Here for Peace”, Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People’s Republic of China at the United Nations Peacekeeping Summit, 28 September, 2015.
principles of non-intervention and non-indifference. It is hard to avoid the dichotomy between intervention and non-intervention. The Chinese Approach of Solving Hot Issues, advocated by Foreign Minister Wang Yi, is more of a practical concept rather than a theoretical or academic one.

The balance between non-interference and non-indifference should embrace four main ideas:

1. Non-discrimination. It is necessary to stick to the tradition of treating all states equally, whether they be large or small, rich or poor, peaceful or conflict-affected. This is in accordance with the international principles established by the Westphalia System and it avoids moral distinctions between countries.

2. Non-intervention. Because the resolutions and actions of the United Nations Security Council have collective legitimacy, they should not be regarded as intervention. China should participate in more collective actions taken by the UNSC while insisting on non-intervention bilaterally. Through sticking to the core role of the UNSC, China can also take part in regional and sub-regional solutions as it did in South Sudan.

3. Non-militarisation/securitisation. It is important to maintain political dialogue and seek diplomatic solutions to conflicts, keeping military options as a last resort.

4. Non-stop development support. To secure long-term solutions, the root causes of insecurity must be addressed by pursuing transformation and sustainable development both before conflicts and post-conflict.

Because security challenges change quickly, China should re-set its priorities. We need an updated set of principles to re-prioritise Sino-African peace and security cooperation. This should be done keeping in mind six principles: African lead, African way, African peace; China focus, hot issues focus, multilateral focus.

The first three principles set Africa at the centre of cooperation with China. That will contribute to the legitimacy of such cooperation and help it gain wider acceptance. Africa should have the leading role in tackling regional issues; China should support African Solutions to African Problems; and it should help Africa find a balance between security and development.

The other three principles focus more on implementation. China focus emphasises the protection of China's overseas interests; the hot issues focus highlights the key fields in Sino-African cooperation; and multilateral focus aims to apply regional and sub-regional platforms, and avoids the non-intervention dilemma in bilateral cooperation.

China should then develop a more detailed approach based on these guiding principles. The first thing is to focus on early warning.
That means helping Africa build and improve its early warning and response mechanisms, especially its capacity in anti-terrorism and peacekeeping. Africa also needs help to establish the African Human Security Index proposed in the first 10 year implementation plan of the African Union’s Agenda 2063.

Secondly, China should align its cooperation with the construction of African peace and security architecture. That should include support for the building and operation of regional and sub-regional security structures; support and funding for the establishment of an early response system in Africa; support and funding for the setting up of an African peacekeeping force; and promoting cooperation mechanisms among African countries in regional and sub-regional institutions.

Thirdly, China has to put Africa development at the centre of peace and security cooperation. Development is the first priority and the key to addressing security problems. Sustainable development will help improve the balance between development, stability and reform, as well as promoting sustainable post-conflict transformation.

China should also help Africa build a peaceful culture by supporting and investing in peace and security education. This will help to achieve the Agenda 2063 goal of silencing guns by 2020.

Another important objective is to improve the operational mechanisms for peace and security cooperation. China and Africa should align their strategies, taking into account Africa’s increased strategic planning awareness. China should combine all plans for promoting African development, including initiatives like the ‘Three Networks’ programme for developing highways, high-speed trains and aviation; the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development; and Agenda 2063, etc.

Shared experience and shared insight are very important for China-Africa peace and security cooperation. At the governmental level, both parties should enhance experience sharing in areas such as ethnic-relations management, cross-border security governance, early warning and response mechanisms and social-security monitoring. At the business level, China should improve the corporate social responsibility performance of its entrepreneurs through education to develop their sense of impending crises, consciousness of environment protection, integration and respect for local societies. Finally, at the intellectual level, China and Africa should encourage think tanks to contribute more to decision-making and implementation, to participate in the building of early warning systems and in follow-up evaluation mechanisms.
We need an updated set of principles to re-prioritise Sino-African peace and security cooperation. This should be done keeping in mind six principles: African lead, African way, African peace; China focus, hot issues focus, multilateral focus.
Africa has played a pivotal role in China’s economic rise since 1978. The story of China’s economic miracle since 1978 is by now a familiar one and so, increasingly, is the pivotal role that the African continent has played in making it possible. Over the past 15 years, Africa’s natural resources have been vital in sustaining the economic expansion on the mainland spearheaded by China’s state-owned enterprises. Angola, for example, alternates with Saudi Arabia as the People’s Republic’s top foreign oil supplier. Simultaneously, Chinese firms - from telecoms giant Huawei to family grocery stores in Chinatowns across the continent - have penetrated African markets and recorded year-after-year profits in an environment of regulatory ambiguity, political uncertainty and nightmare logistics. The Sino-African relationship has, in other words, never just been a story of rapacious resource exploitation. Imports from and exports to Africa have been well balanced since 2000. This complementarity has made China the continent’s foremost commercial partner. Between 2003 and 2013, Africa experienced its best economic decade since the 1960s. The China factor - in the form

**From trade partner to custodian of African security:**

why China will increasingly intervene in Africa

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**Harry Verhoeven**, Assistant Professor at the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University in Qatar and Convenor of the Oxford University China–Africa Network (OUCAN)
of trade, aid and investment - undeniably deserves credit for helping to sustain years of growth that lifted millions of Africans out of poverty.

Yet if the first phase of China’s ‘Go Out’ policy has been a resounding triumph, the complexities of Beijing’s current extensive engagement with Africa require a different approach. China’s very success in developing extensive supply lines to the continent and acquiring large stakes in African economies is vastly increasing its exposure to political risk. The greater its dependence on African goods and African markets, the greater also the costs when access is disrupted. More than one-third of China’s energy imports are now supplied by African partners - a significantly higher proportion than the EU’s or America’s. That is a huge liability when political instability worsens in key producing states.

Outstanding loans by Chinese financial institutions to African governmental entities total more than $70 billion - as much as $100 billion according to some estimates. Questions about the ability of African partners to repay their Chinese debts are becoming more acute as global commodity prices drop and sharp economic downturns in places like Ghana, Angola, Nigeria and Zambia painfully illustrate the mismanagement of the resource bonanza. After years of trumpeting Africa as a land of opportunity, Chinese diplomats and investors are now increasingly describing the continent’s internal dynamics as a headache that threatens their expansion plans.

Traditionally, great powers defend their deepening external economic interests by stepping up political involvement abroad, through embassies, foreign visits and meddling in domestic politics. Over time, they are want to also expand their military presence, in the form of joint exercises, bases, even non-consensual intervention. A classic example is the mutation of the Persian Gulf from geopolitical backwater in the early 20th century into an ‘American lake’ 40 years later. Following the discovery of phenomenal quantities of oil in the 1930s, Western energy titans poured in. They were quickly followed by diplomats and political advisors to buttress the nascent Gulf monarchies who greenlighted the colossal rates of extraction of hydrocarbons. Then came the aircraft carriers and stealth bombers deployed to safeguard pro-Western governments such as Saudi Arabia, or to isolate and even topple ‘rogue regimes’ like post-1979 Iran and Saddam’s Iraq.

Such projection of power is usually less a deliberately plotted strategy by imperial mandarins than an ad hoc escalating response to evolving local conditions. Gradual politicisation and militarization of relations stems from great powers’ fretting that their growing exposure to risk means they need to constantly do more to minimise liabilities and control political uncertainty. Historians thus discern two highly consequential correlations: on the one hand, between surging economic interests in a region and a growing realisation by outsiders that those interests face greater political risks than initially anticipated; and, on
Outstanding loans by Chinese financial institutions to African governmental entities total more than $70 billion - as much as $100 billion according to some estimates.

the other hand, between the levels of great power anxiety about local politics in resource-rich areas and a tendency to intervene politically and militarily.

A sober, historically grounded assessment of China’s Africa policy today shows that Beijing is displaying many of the symptoms associated with this great power tendency to translate economic interests into a diplomatic and military presence as perceptions of Africa shift from opportunity to the more complex world of risk and liability.

The Chinese Communist Party remains officially committed to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries – a cornerstone of Chinese foreign policy since 1949. Yet its response to recent events in Africa has signalled Beijing’s de facto departure from that previously sacrosanct norm. Among the permanent members of the UN Security Council, China’s troop contributions to UN missions are by far the most extensive. It has sent more than 3,000 military and police to Congo, Liberia, Darfur, Mali and South Sudan, a remarkable reversal of the situation 15 years ago when Beijing fielded less than 100 blue helmets. China has begun deploying combat troops on UN missions, rather than just engineers or civilian police, confronting recalcitrant rebels and jihadist militants. Moreover, the PRC is an important military partner to regional heavyweights such as Algeria, Angola and Nigeria, providing training, arms and technical assistance. From 2008, the Chinese navy also joined European
anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden; China has supported a hardline international stance against Somalia’s al-Shabaab rebels, sharing Western worries over their capacity to spread instability to the wider region. This was also evident during the Libyan civil war in 2011 when, in order to evacuate over 35,000 trapped Chinese nationals, several Chinese ships crossed into the Mediterranean for the first time in the modern era, coordinating their operations with NATO. Furthermore, the PRC green-lighted French intervention in Central African Republic and Côte d’Ivoire even though those operations decisively shifted the domestic political balance in favour of one side. All of this illustrates how the principle of non-interference has been eroded over the last five years.

Nowhere has China’s interventionist policy been more evident than in South Sudan where civil war broke out in 2013 following the country’s secession from Sudan in 2011. Chinese petro-interests there are well documented and the development of an oil industry in the midst of violent conflict has provided a steep technical and political learning curve over the last 15 years for Chinese governmental and business actors. However, the rift among South Sudan’s ruling elite and the destruction brought to oil-producing areas in the ensuing civil war forced Beijing to take on a role it had not previously played in Africa.

Thousands of Chinese nationals required evacuation. Beijing approved the deployment of Special Forces to protect its assets in the states of Unity and Upper Nile. Its much-lauded Special Envoy for Africa, Ambassador Zhong Jianhua, has devoted much time and energy working with the United States, Ethiopia and the African Union to find a political solution. To bring belligerents to the table and force them to sign a peace deal, China has shown itself willing to help threaten and impose international sanctions on both government officials and insurgents. It has also received rebel delegations in Beijing and tabled proposals for security sector reform in ways that fundamentally contradict the interests of the president of South Sudan, Salva Kiir. The realities of Chinese engagement on the ground in South Sudan look very different than Beijing’s historical interpretation of the principle of non-interference.

Ongoing conflicts in Burundi, Mali, Nigeria and Somalia and terrorism in Egypt and Kenya are only amplifying pressures for China to step up its involvement. This is the context for Beijing’s 2015 decision to open a ‘naval installation’ - many would say ‘naval base’ - in Djibouti. The location could not be more strategic. Djibouti is the gateway to the Indian Ocean, Red Sea and Suez Canal; it is crucial for monitoring the Saudi-Iranian proxy war in Yemen; and it is the main port for provisioning the 100 million citizens of Ethiopia, a country where China has major economic interests.

Official communications from the People’s Liberation Army stress the ‘outpost’ is meant for low-scale resupply and refuelling of ships
participating in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. While this is not incorrect, it is incomplete: the naval facility is an important signal that strategists in Beijing are increasingly framing their economic interests as leading inexorably to political and security responsibilities. Djibouti, which also hosts French and American military bases, is a key node from which the projection of more raw forms of power in Africa is now, for the first time, being considered as an option for Beijing.

Does this mean that a new Cold War, this time between China and the West, is on the horizon, with possibly devastating consequences for Africans? Not necessarily.

Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed his vision of China as a global maritime power, a responsible international player and a partner for African peace and development - roles the Chinese President sees as mutually supportive. For the time being, China’s increasingly interventionist instincts on the continent dovetail with Western stabilisation agendas and African incumbents’ clamours for external support to hold jihadists and ethno-regional insurgents at bay. Rather than pitting different powers against one another, the growing militarisation of Africa rests on a broad consensus. Western and African leaders, along with Chinese business executives, are urging a more proactive security role for the People’s Republic.

In the longer run, however, divergent interpretations of political crises on the continent and sharp-edged differences between internal and external players are bound to surface. When inevitably they do, China will not limit itself to rhetoric of South-South solidarity and political agnosticism. Rather, the Communist Party will be increasingly tempted to rely on and experiment with the ever more comprehensive spectrum of political, diplomatic and military instruments at the disposal of its Africa policy.

Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed his vision of China as a global maritime power, a responsible international player and a partner for African peace and development.
Although China has played a role in African security for many years, it has cooperated only with international organisations such as the United Nations, and not with other countries. For a variety of reasons, China didn’t participate in UN peace operations until the end of the 1980s. There is no official explanation for this; possible reasons are a lack of confidence in UN peace operations, the UN being seen as the arena for American-Soviet rivalry during the Cold War, or China’s perception of the UN’s questionable role on matters such as the Congolese independence in the 1960s.

Since China started to reform and open up at the end of the 1970s, China has been on a path of gradual change in its perceptions of the UN.

THE HISTORY OF CHINESE PARTICIPATION IN UN PEACE OPERATIONS

China first took on UN peacekeeping roles at the end of the 1980s. The country formally allied to join UN Special Commission on Peacekeeping Operations in 1988, and China participated in the UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia in 1989. Since

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then, China has participated in dozens of UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. China has often stepped into UN peacekeeping roles when Western countries have retreated – for example, after the United States stepped back from peacekeeping roles in 1994, following a presidential decree after the US experience in Somalia. The US even set some limitations on the logistical assistance it would provide to UN peacekeeping operations. 22 Almost at the same time, European countries shrank their military presence in Africa. But China’s presence has grown: according to the Chinese Defence Ministry, the country has participating in 16 UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, and by July 2016 a total of around 27,000 Chinese soldiers have been members of African blue helmet forces. 23

China’s involvement in UN peacekeeping operations has taken a step-by-step approach. In the beginning, China sent only logistical and medical personnel to join UN peacekeeping forces. The principle of non-interference and the effects of the Cold War are the main reasons that shape China’s attitude toward UN peacekeeping operations. But in recent years there have been some changes in China’s foreign policy. China sent soldiers to Mali for a peacekeeping operation for the first time in 2013. It is unclear whether China intends to change its foreign and defence policy completely – policy adjustment is a long process. However, it is an indication that China is open to new methods of involvement in African security issues.

**HOW CHINA-UN COOPERATION HAS HELPED AFRICA**

Stability is a precondition to development. Conflict has hindered socio-economic development in Africa, notably after the Cold War, when a series of disasters hit the continent – notably the genocide in Rwanda and the two Congolese civil wars (1996 to 1997, and 1998 to 2003). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, millions died in the civil wars and more were displaced. There was widespread destruction of the economy and infrastructure. Many factors cause conflict: religion, race, poverty, social injustice. However, China has realised that the main causes of African conflict are poverty and underdevelopment. The Beijing Declaration, drawn up by the China-Africa Cooperation Forum in 2000, noted that economic and social factors are the causes that lead to political instability, social tension and

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continuous conflict. Cooperation between China and the UN has made a contribution to lasting peace and development in Africa.

Since China began to take part in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, it has become a constructive force. The number of Chinese peacekeeping soldiers has been increasing by a factor of 20 since 2000; most have been deployed in Africa. China has participated in almost all UN peace operations in Africa. So far, there have been around 1,800 Chinese soldiers taking part in peacekeeping operations. In addition, China promotes the African agenda in the UN Security Council. When the security situation in Somalia deteriorated in 2006, China played a key role in approving the UN Security Council Resolution 1725 and in supporting the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in organising Somali peacekeeping troops. China’s participation in UN peace operations in Africa has been good for African security and has helped to promote African peace and development.

PROSPECT OF FURTHER COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA AND THE UN

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China places a great emphasis on the UN’s role in world peace. As the largest developing country, China thinks that African security issues are a key part of world peace. So involvement in African security is about maintaining world peace.

There are many factors driving Chinese participation in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. They include the ability to modernise the Chinese army, protect Chinese interests in Africa, and improve the country’s reputation. Like any country, China has its own interests to defend. But why has China taken a different approach to other countries?

China identifies itself as the largest developing country, and as a “responsible” developing country. This means that China acknowledges the international order and has no intention of changing that order by force. So China focuses on “peace development”. As a developing country, China also takes Africa’s interests into account. Its identity means that China will not collaborate with other powers to damage Africa’s interests. The UN is therefore a good, multilateral platform on which to defend the interests of developing countries. Maybe there is no perfect solution at the UN, but it avoids extreme answers effectively.

Cooperation between China and the UN will continue. And with changes in the international situation and the country’s growing power, China will increase its input on African security issues, including UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. In addition, some Chinese scholars will call on China to strengthen cooperation with non-governmental organisations on African security issues.

China’s security engagement in Africa is not new, but the nature and scale of recent policy developments are elevating its involvement to a new level. Beijing’s security challenges in Africa are entering a new phase by its widening economic and political interests there.

Africa is playing a prominent part in Chinese foreign and security policy as Beijing searches for responses to the complex demands of its evolving global role. China’s Africa policy should not be seen in isolation from other foreign policy trends under President Xi Jinping.

At the same time, a variety of African actors are looking for ways to best fit China into existing peace and security structures and wonder how this will affect relations with other outside players like the European Union.

The People’s Republic of China’s military relations with Africa date back to the 1960s.

Daniel Large, Assistant Professor at the School of Public Policy of the Central European University in Budapest
China supported various African anti-colonial liberation movements but its role was mostly confined to military training and assistance. From the 1980’s, amidst domestic reform and opening, China’s relations with Africa became increasingly dominated by economic considerations, yet the shared post-colonial military history is still used to enhance current military partnerships, for example between the People’s Liberation Army and Sudan’s armed forces.

Since around 2000, when the development of China-Africa relations was marked and given further impetus by the first Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, relations between the continent and continental-like China have become more consequential and complex. In this new phase, the need to protect existing and expand further economic interests in Africa has required China to take on a more engaged, and at times politicised role. Despite its efforts to uphold long-sacrosanct foreign policy principles of non-interference, the practical reality is that the Chinese government is facing mounting challenges posed by greater Chinese involvement in African politics.

Exposure to conflict has raised the importance of investment protection, as seen in South Sudan. Insecurity is also an impediment to new projects, seen for instance when three senior employees of the China Railway Construction Corporation were killed during a November 2015 assault on the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako, Mali. This prompted China’s foreign minister to pledge to fight extremism...
and strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation with Africa.

China’s greater visibility in Africa has heightened expectations and increased calls for Beijing to undertake a security role commensurate with its economic interests. The potential for boosting its reputation by exercising international responsibility and contributing to peace and security in Africa is another factor behind China’s changing role.

Mass Chinese migration has brought pressure for Beijing to protect its overseas nationals. This has become a key driver behind efforts to enhance force-projection capability, as shown by the evacuation of Chinese civilians from Chad, Libya and Sudan.

From the African side, there is also interest - led by the African Union - in enhancing security cooperation with China in areas such as anti-terrorism.

Security was declared an area of dedicated China-Africa cooperation in 2012. Before, China had bilateral military relations with most African states, but security was not formally part of the FOCAC process, which was focused on economic and political relations. Since then however, things have developed quickly.

In 2012, FOCAC established the China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security, designed to provide financial assistance, capacity building and other forms of institutionalised support. This came against the backdrop of the Arab Spring and regime change in Libya. In December 2015, measures to promote cooperation on peace and security were strengthened at the sixth FOCAC summit in Johannesburg.

The range of security engagements is now wide. It encompasses traditional and non-traditional threats, evolving beyond purely military concerns and state-based engagement to involve diverse actors, such as oil corporations who have had to develop their own security protocols. Even in non-traditional areas however - such as China’s response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa – the PLA remains bound up in China’s response.

China’s role has expanded beyond the FOCAC process and bilateral relations. It is involved in anti-piracy patrols and maritime humanitarian diplomacy, for example.

Although China’s engagement is Africa- and AU-centred, it has a considerable UN component in which China’s seat on the UN Security Council plays a notable role. President Xi Jinping announced increased Chinese contributions to UN peacekeeping and the creation of a standby force at the 2015 UN General Assembly. China’s maintains an active, high-profile UN peacekeeping role in Africa. This enables China to raise its international profile, improve relations with host countries and Western governments, and indirectly protect its interests abroad.
The evolution of China’s peacekeeping contributions from support roles to force protection, has the added value of providing operational experience for the PLA, for example the first deployment of Chinese combat troops under a UN Chapter VII mandate enabling military force, in the UN Mission in South Sudan.

China’s global security engagement has also fed into its growing African ties. Since 2012, China has been seeking to establish itself as a ‘maritime great power’. The leasing of a military logistics base in Djibouti, announced in December 2015, is a significant departure from its previous policy. As China’s first overseas military base, it confirms Beijing’s use of power projection in foreign policy.

A number of challenges are important in their own right and as the potential basis for China’s increased cooperation with other external partners in Africa.

First, China has been deepening its already important military relations with some African states. This is illustrated by recent joint exercises with Tanzania and connections with East Africa under the Maritime Silk Road initiative. However, the issue of arms transfers remains contentious. China’s role in the arms trade is not as great as some imagine, but it is significant and is rendered more complicated by the actions of profit-seeking arms-manufacturing corporations.

Second, the Chinese government has supported efforts of the AU and regional
Beijing's old foreign policy principles are being tested by the evolving realities of its diverse engagement with the continent.

bodies to mediate in conflicts such as South Sudan. This has involved coordination with European governments and the United States. China’s future role in peace mediation is an area to watch, but Beijing’s default position is likely to remain a preference for following the AU’s lead.

Third, tensions between state-based engagement and the wider diversity of Chinese interests have been exemplified by the challenges of protecting Chinese nationals. Clearly China needs enhanced measures to protect its citizens and investments in Africa, but putting them into practice is very demanding.

Fourth, China faces tensions between its foreign policy principles and the practicalities of protecting its interests. Beijing continues to uphold the principle of non-interference and only supports what it deems legitimate peacekeeping interventions based on state consent and due UN process. However, faced with threats to its reputation and its economic interests, Beijing - in places such as South Sudan - has had to negotiate the difficult terrain between non-interference and the concept of 'non-indifference' as set out by the African Union.

Finally, the changing economic context of China-Africa relations may also compound tensions caused by security issues. A widely proclaimed view in China, reiterated by President Xi in December 2016 at FOCAC, is that economic development is the best
guarantee of security. This echoed the official view that development is the best guarantee of security. In part this underscores the connections with China’s domestic policy context and its Africa relations. The economic downturn in China has increased fears that development initiatives will suffer in the context of ‘new normal’ economics. The impact on China’s engagement with security is unclear.

In peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, China’s engagement involves debate about its conceptual differences with African and Western thinking. It also reprises dilemmas about the relationship between security and development which in practice has proved challenging for China. Notwithstanding such dynamics, it is clear that working towards greater peace and security in Africa is of vital importance to China and all parties concerned.

China’s peace and security engagement in Africa involves many aspects that are evolving concurrently with its changing role in the continent and the world.

Beijing’s old foreign policy principles are being tested by the evolving realities of its diverse engagement with the continent. As seen with the death of two Chinese UN peacekeepers in South Sudan in July 2016, media coverage is closing geographical distance and testing the Chinese Communist Party’s ability to react. A vigorous debate within China about how best to respond has already brought in European and African participation. Further such dialogue would be constructive in advancing understanding on possible paths forward.

Peace and security have taken on a prominent official position in China-Africa relations, but it is unclear how aspirations will be converted into practice within the African peace and security architecture. The AU’s interest in working with external partners to advance security has created potential for future cooperation. Now, much will depend on how the African Union Peace and Security Council can take partnerships forward.

China’s growing security role combines reactive and adaptive approaches with efforts to address more strategic policy concerns. This creates opportunities for collaborative ventures to address Africa’s many serious security challenges. The EU should bear in mind that China’s default position reflects that of the AU: that cooperation on security ventures should be proposed, agreed and led by Africa. That means EU efforts to collaborate on security with China must give a central role to the AU, regional organisations and other key African players.
WHAT FUTURE FOR EU-CHINA COOPERATION IN AFRICA?
Challenges and opportunities for peace and security cooperation

Bernardo Mariani, Head of China Programme at Saferworld, and Chloë Gotterson, Project Officer, China Programme at Saferworld

China and the European Union have both committed to promoting peace and security in Africa. They both support the African Union’s Agenda 2063 goal to eliminate violent conflict by 2020.

The Chinese government prioritises the maintenance of peace and security as a key development ambition in Africa, alongside the acceleration of industrialisation and improvements in public health. Beijing recognises the need to support UN and AU missions, to help African countries build their own peacekeeping capacity and to assist African-led efforts to address non-traditional security threats such as piracy and terrorism. It promotes sustainable development to address the root causes of conflict and is increasing dialogue with African judicial and police departments.

Peace and security is also a priority in the EU’s Africa policy, alongside others such as democracy, good governance and human rights; sustainable and inclusive development. The EU’s African Peace Facility is designed to support African-led peacekeeping operations, build African conflict-prevention and conflict-management capacity, and assist AU-mandated forces
Despite growing economic relations between China and the EU, progress on security cooperation in Africa has been relatively insignificant. Working to counter ‘terrorist’ groups such as Boko Haram. It has also recognised that building African peace and security capacities ‘can be better achieved if the EU and China combine their efforts’\textsuperscript{25}.

This shared ambition for security cooperation is echoed in the official China-EU dialogue on African peace, stability and sustainable development, which was initiated by the EU in 2006 with the aim of integrating China into international efforts to improve and coordinate development. The dialogue has been complemented since 2013 by the EU-China Strategic Agenda for Cooperation in which peace and security cooperation form one of the four main pillars.

China and the EU have agreed potential areas for collaboration. They include joint efforts to combat organised crime, counter terrorism and prevent the diversion of small arms\textsuperscript{26}. The EU has also proposed collaboration in peacekeeping. However, despite the numerous joint statements, cooperation at a practical level has been limited and primarily focused on maritime security.

Chinese vessels have escorted World Food Programme aid shipments to Somalia as part of the EU’s Operation Atalanta since 2011. Information sharing and coordination between China and the EU has taken place within the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE)


\textsuperscript{26} See for example China’s 2014 policy paper on the EU ‘Deepening the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for mutual benefit and win-win cooperation’ and the EC’s 2016 joint communication ‘Elements for a new EU strategy on China’.
counter-piracy initiative. Joint missions have evacuated Chinese and EU citizens from violence in Libya. These were some of the first instances of Chinese security forces deploying in international security missions outside China’s sovereign territory. They demonstrate Beijing’s increasingly proactive foreign policy.

As China expands its engagement in Africa and continues to adopt a more pragmatic approach to foreign policy, such practical cooperation is likely to increase. Given the failures of the international community to prevent conflict in Africa, new partnerships and fresh approaches are needed to tackle the drivers of conflict.

Despite growing economic relations between China and the EU, progress on security cooperation in Africa has been relatively insignificant. This is due in part to the two sides’ different approaches to building peace and security.

There are differences over values and interpretations of sovereignty; over the responsibility to protect and humanitarian intervention; and on the use of foreign policy tools. The Chinese government is often slow to get involved in overseas crisis mediation because of sovereignty concerns, while the EU prioritises early mediation to avoid more expensive post-conflict responses.

The lack of clear and comprehensive policies on African security also inhibits the development of mutual understanding and trust that are essential to building an effective partnership. The Chinese government does not have a public policy outlining its approach to peace support in Africa. It lacks the transparency needed to make its intentions and capabilities understood by EU leaders. At the EU level, the continued prerogative of member states over security and defence remains a challenge to consistency.

Britain’s decision to leave the EU will impact on efforts to build China-EU cooperation on peace and security in Africa. The UK has helped shape EU foreign and security policy. Its financial, military and diplomatic assets, including the permanent UN Security Council seat, have been important sources of influence for the EU. The climate of uncertainty clouding the future of UK-EU relations suggests the EU, at least in the short term, is likely to lose security and foreign policy clout, including in dealings with China. This is heightened by the recent UK drive to become China’s ‘best partner in the West’, which has ushered in a ‘golden era’ of Sino-British relations and a new Sino-British development partnership.

As Beijing expands its engagement overseas and seeks to play a more active role in support for international peace and stability, there will be significant windows of

28 This is a phrase used by several members of the UK Cabinet around the time of President Xi’s October 2015 State Visit, including Chancellor George Osborne and Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond.
opportunity for China and the EU to convert rhetoric on African security cooperation into concrete action. The growing need to protect its citizens, businesses and interests overseas has led the Chinese government to adopt a more pragmatic and politically nuanced approach to foreign crises. This has challenged traditional non-intervention policies, allowing Chinese engagement in mediation efforts in countries such as South Sudan.

China and the EU have identified priority areas for collaboration to promote peace and security. Combating organised crime is one increasingly seen as critical given criminal networks’ contribution to instability and violence across Africa. Nevertheless, such cooperation should be carefully considered. In many cases, counter-narcotic efforts have been responsible for pushing people into poverty, harming governance and worsening conflict. Collaboration on such issues is only likely to reap significant rewards or become a successful launch-pad for wider cooperation if it adequately addresses the local development challenges behind organised crime.

Given that China and the EU already have some experience of joint counter-piracy operations, this could be a natural stepping-stone towards joint efforts to disrupt organised crime networks. Joint counter-piracy initiatives are likely to increase following the opening of China’s planned naval base in Djibouti. Maritime security cooperation could also expand to other African regions – notably the Gulf of Guinea. Beijing has called for greater international support to help countries around the Gulf of Guinea build anti-piracy capacity and the EU’s 2014 Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea urges coordination with China.

However, international efforts to counter piracy have neglected its root causes. To successfully prevent piracy and promote regional peace, an approach which addresses human security issues in communities where piracy is incubated is essential alongside the maritime efforts.

Another stated priority for China-EU cooperation in Africa is combatting terrorism. The EU has suggested a focus on the root causes, stemming sources of terrorist finance and preventing radicalisation. New ways of thinking about counter-terrorism and new partnerships should be welcomed. So should the commitment to addressing terrorism’s root causes, but there must be a more holistic approach to peace building. Saferworld’s research has shown that a narrow focus on terrorism can lead to the neglect of other factors contributing to insecurity. China and the EU should use this opportunity to ensure that the security of people in unstable African nations is prioritised over national or international security goals.

The UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism outlines some of the potential causes of terrorism including lack of socioeconomic opportunities, marginalisation and discrimination, poor governance, violations of human rights and the rule of law, prolonged and unresolved conflicts.

The international community has committed to address these issues through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The promotion of ‘peaceful, just and inclusive societies’ was identified as one of five priorities in the 2030 Agenda, which world leaders – including those from every European state and China – signed up to in September 2015. Those goals were highlighted as a priority during the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) summit in July 2016. Ensuring that this is done through African-led and African-owned initiatives which reflect the views of African people as well as their governments presents an excellent opportunity for China and the EU to work together to promote peace and address other priorities such as terrorism, organised crime and arms control.

China and the EU have long recognised the value of working together to deliver more effective arms control, but this has produced few practical results. Improving international capacity to prevent the diversion of arms to unintended recipients should be a priority. It is particularly relevant for China in a case like South Sudan’s civil war. Beijing is actively involved in conflict mediation and peacekeeping operations there, yet both the Sudan People’s Liberation Army and its foes in the Sudan People’s Liberation Army in Opposition are armed with Chinese weapons.

The EU has identified Mali and Somalia as target countries for increased EU-China collaboration on peacekeeping. In both countries, there is already basic-level cooperation between the Chinese peacekeeping contingent and its counterparts from EU member states. One area where this could be further developed is joint training for personnel and local forces. The People’s Liberation Army has already voiced an interest in sending personnel to Europe for training ahead of peacekeeping missions.

However, the growing Chinese and EU engagement in African peacekeeping presents a significant opportunity for shared values to be championed in support of UN reforms to establish a more people-centred approach. Such reforms should favour the use of civilian expertise in peace support

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31 See, for example the ‘Joint declaration of the People’s Republic of China and the European Union on Non-proliferation and Arms Control’, Brussels, 8 December 2004.
operations to better anticipate crises and protect local populations, rather than military responses.

Some friction is likely to endure in China-EU relations, but existing obstacles are not insurmountable and there are strong incentives for increased cooperation on peace and security in Africa.

In order to maximise opportunities, the EU needs to ensure a coordinated, joined-up effort from all member states and the Chinese government should devise a comprehensive policy on how it intends to support African peace and security. This will facilitate a speedier and more efficient Chinese response to escalating crises while helping those in the EU policy community to better understand the Chinese approach and identify further opportunities for cooperation.

It is also advisable that China and the EU:

- initiate a new Africa-China-EU dialogue to support the implementation of Agenda 2030, with particular emphasis on Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies;
- introduce trilateral mechanisms for information exchange and coordination on issues related to organised crime and terrorism, whilst ensuring a holistic approach to prioritise people’s security needs over national and international security objectives;
- consider alternative approaches to maritime security cooperation – including the adoption of additional strategies that tackle the underlying drivers of piracy;
- share experiences, lessons and policies to tackle small arms and light weapons proliferation and misuse, and encourage joined-up international action to prevent the diversion of arms to unintended or proscribed users;
- encourage the AU and UN to undertake more effective peace support operations, including by jointly supporting the design and implementation of a new wave of peacekeeping in Africa which places the needs of local populations at the fore.

There are robust opportunities for the EU and China to expand their security relations and further cooperate in support of peace in Africa. How and to what extent China and the EU will be able to seize such opportunities remains to be seen. It is however plausible that through incremental approaches they will adopt more concrete measures that deliver tangible and sustainable improvements for conflict-affected populations in Africa.
EU-China cooperation on HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA: prospects for finding a common ground

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China and the European Union have long taken divergent approaches towards development cooperation with Africa, particularly over human rights. However, the current trajectory of EU-China relations suggests it might soon be possible to find common ground. Cooperation in the peace and security fields and in activities to advance sustainable development could bring tangible results in other areas. The joint statement on human rights and sustainable development issued at the 2015 EU-China summit could create a more fertile environment for cooperation.

The EU’s push for trilateral cooperation with China and Africa was largely seen as a response to the rise of Chinese engagement on the continent, which traditional donors watched with some concern. Instead of ignoring or trying to contain China’s role, the EU attempted to work with the People’s Republic. The idea was to “engage with a process in which China is considered a partner with legitimate interests in Africa, identify common interests between the EU, Africa and China and pursue those through dialogue and cooperation while also addressing differences through dialogue,”
The Chinese may also have harboured reservations that the EU’s interest in trilateral cooperation raises issues of sovereignty and an attempt to impose EU norms and values.

Uwe Wissenbach, a former coordinator of the EU’s Africa-China relations, explained in 2009.

Already in the context of the 2006 and 2007 EU-China summits, China agreed to a dialogue on possible trilateral cooperation, for example through NEPAD - the New Partnership for Africa’s Development - launched by African leaders in 2001. However, Chinese officials stayed hesitant. Chinese unease over working within Western donor frameworks, which evolved without input from Beijing, has been cited as one reason. African leaders too are not exactly pushing for more trilateral cooperation. They worry it could diminish their bargaining power with two important donors.

Differences in aid structures also hinder practical cooperation. EU budget support policies stand at odds to the direct project funding approach of the Chinese. However, this may change as the EU re-examines its budget support approaches and looks more critically at its cooperation and funding modalities in different African countries.

The Chinese may also have harboured reservations that the EU’s interest in trilateral cooperation raises issues of sovereignty and an attempt to impose EU norms and values. Although the EU-China partnership
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sidesteps Brussels’ usual emphasis on shared values in strategic partnerships and cooperation agreements, observers such as Prof. Liu Lirong of Fudan University’s Institute of International Studies argue “the EU tries to establish various dialogue mechanisms to ‘further enmesh China into a web of norms and rules and socialise Beijing into the international community’.” This fear of ‘socialisation’ has clearly been linked to the diverging perceptions of human rights.

However, there are studies suggesting that norms and values concerning human rights perceptions in third countries will gradually converge. Others suggest that in practice, they have never been that different.

The cleavage between the human rights stances of China and the EU seem wide at first glance. The EU tries to harmoniously wrap good governance, human rights, and other political, economic, social and environmental concerns into all forms of development cooperation. In contrast, the PRC - at least rhetorically - sticks firmly to its foreign policy principle of ‘non-interference’.

European media have frequently criticised aspects of China’s engagement with Africa, for example Beijing’s relations with Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe, or the regimes of Angola and Sudan. China has been accused of propping up dictators and authoritarian regimes. In practice, such regimes have often benefited from European private-sector investment despite political and media criticism. “African dictators in most resource-rich countries had always options. They were never very dependent on the champions of human rights,” wrote Prof. Deborah Brautigam, of John Hopkins University, in her 2010 book ‘The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa’.

It is important to note that China does not engage with autocratic regimes in order to provoke the EU or Western donors in general, it simply works with almost all countries in Africa regardless of the regime. The Forum for China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was launched in 2000, with six ministerial conferences held to date, most recently in Johannesburg in December 2015. The Forum’s agenda is publicly available.

There are a number of developments in the areas of peace and security, governance and human rights that indicate cooperation can make progress.

We have already seen security cooperation between the EU and China in Africa. Since 2008, warships from both sides have worked
alongside each other to fight piracy in the Gulf of Aden. For both sides, the missions were historic: the first by an EU naval force and the first conducted by the Chinese navy far from its home shores. Coordination has not always gone smoothly, but the naval operations share a common goal, to secure trade routes important to the economic interests of both.

China’s departure from a strict non-interference approach was perhaps best illustrated by the Darfur conflict. Beijing originally backed the Khartoum government and objected to any interference with the internal affairs of the country, triggering strong international criticism. Since mid-2008 however, China began to change paths. It supported the United Nations African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and added its voice to pressure on the Sudanese government to accept the peace-keeping troops.

As for governance, China shares the concerns of other players in Africa seeking stability and security to maintain political and economic relations. Chinese investors have gone into markets that were previously largely untapped and uncompetitive. Increasingly, China realises that political stability and economic rationality are preconditions for successful relationships. That does not always fit with the principle of non-interference. Where China sees regimes failing to comply with its development policies in ways that threaten to undermine a sustainable and prospering relationship, it will raise concerns. In this way, the EU’s and

It is important to note that China does not engage with autocratic regimes in order to provoke the EU or Western donors in general, it simply works with almost all countries in Africa regardless of the regime.
China’s visions will ultimately converge, as Ian Taylor, Prof. of International Relations at the University of St Andrews argued in 2011.

With this convergence on security and governance it should be possible to evolve a dialogue on human rights. Working on economic, social and cultural rights could be a start.

While China has been accused of undermining Western human rights efforts in Africa, it could be argued that China’s engagement with Africa has actually improved development prospects and the level of economic and social human rights.

There are worries that China tends to externalise its own neglect of other forms of human development, like environmental and labour standards. Significant human rights abuses related to the behaviour of Chinese contractors have been reported, but Chinese companies, especially medium-sized enterprises, are not as tightly controlled by the state as some might imagine. Moreover, China’s growing commitment to green growth and the Sustainable Development Goals suggest that we might find more common ground.

China’s socio-economic ‘achievements’ and ‘new environmental policies’ do not justify malpractice, but they do add a valuable notion to the human rights discourse. If the EU acknowledges these efforts and works with China to find a conceptual framework that comprises Europe’s notion of sustainable development and China’s commitment to Agenda 2030 and its emphasis of socio-economic rights, that could create common ground for a human rights dialogue.

Despite China’s and Europe’s diversified international cooperation priorities and their foreign and security policy differences in other regions, the human rights discourse may not be as gridlocked as it seems. Africa could yet become fertile ground for an EU-China dialogue.
The EU-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of 2003 included a call for greater cooperation in peace and security between the two partners. Security was also a key pillar of the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, a document agreed in 2013 as a blueprint for links between China and the European Union for the next decade.

The 2013 document promised to ‘raise the level of EU-China dialogue and cooperation on defence and security, advancing towards more practical cooperation’\(^{34}\). In terms of policy objectives, the Strategic Agenda sought to increase cooperation in the fields of counterterrorism, counterpiracy, international nuclear security, non-proliferation, arms export control and cybersecurity. The Agenda was further supported by China’s EU policy paper of 2014, which also called for greater security cooperation between both actors.

But despite these policy papers, cooperation between the two parties in the area of security has been limited. This is due to several factors. Practical concerns, such as the EU embargo on arms sales to China, tension between the

United States and NATO members wishing to increase cooperation with China, and the lack of transparency in the Chinese arms trade all play a role.

However, differing views on the norms and values of international relations play a much larger role in reducing cooperation. For example, conflicting interpretations of human rights, statehood and sovereignty have resulted in China and the EU viewing issues such as humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect in fundamentally divergent ways. This creates a situation where China’s and the EU’s positions on international security affairs – for example, the conflicts in Syria and the island disputes in the South China Sea – are at odds with each other. Given such barriers to cooperation, it is justifiable to ask whether security cooperation between the two giants is simply rhetoric, or whether a sustainable level of cooperation could realistically develop.

Africa offers the greatest opportunity for security cooperation between China and the EU. Both powers are major trading and investment partners with Africa, and bilateral trade between China and the EU relies on safe shipping lanes around Africa’s coasts, which are threatened by a lack of security in the region. Africa is a major supplier of oil and gas to both the EU and China, so a stable, peaceful Africa is also a major factor in improving energy security for both actors. Africa also plays a key part of China’s “One Belt, One Road” initiative.

A number of non-economic factors make Africa strategically important to both China and the EU. For the EU, North Africa’s status as a “launch pad” for refugees attempting to travel north makes Africa a particular concern. Both China and the EU have a large number of citizens who now call Africa home, making everyday security in Africa a concern for Europeans and Chinese citizens. But while the EU has traditionally been a strong actor in African security, China has attempted to withdraw from security matters in Africa since the 1980s.

With China’s increased economic interest and the growing presence of Chinese citizens in Africa, things are starting to change, with China adopting a more flexible non-interference policy on the continent. China now has a naval logistical facility in Djibouti, which it has used as a base for rescuing Chinese citizens in conflict zones, most notably in Yemen in 2015. There are rumours that China plans to open a similar facility in Namibia. China has increased its contributions to United Nations peacekeeping in Africa; it has sent combat
troops to Mali and South Sudan; and it has sent naval vehicles to the Gulf of Aden as part of international anti-piracy missions.

China’s increased activity in Africa’s security architecture has led to some cooperation with the EU. Dutch and Chinese troops have worked together as part of the UN-led Peacekeeping Operation in Mali (MINUSMA). Chinese navy vessels cooperated with EU navy vessels during the Gulf of Aden anti-piracy missions. However, the level of cooperation in both cases was limited. In the Gulf of Aden, the Chinese navy refused to participate in the International Recommended Transit Corridor. Clingendael reported that in the case of MINUSMA, Dutch troops questioned the capability of Chinese troops to conduct such a peacekeeping mission, a concern that led to limited interaction.

Beyond direct military cooperation, both China and the EU have moved to strengthen the role and capacity of African regional security bodies to react to a crisis. The Chinese and the Europeans have attempted to strengthen the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the standing organ of the African Union dealing with conflict management and resolution. China and the EU both back the PSC financially and diplomatically, giving it support at high levels of global governance.

China has had a long-term policy of getting behind the views of regional bodies in areas that are affected by conflict – for example, it supported the African Union–backed no-fly zone during the 2011 Libya crisis. The EU has developed a policy of backing regional bodies to strengthen their crisis response capacity through financial, training and logistical support. But despite similar positions towards the role of African regional bodies in conflict management, there is little or no cooperation or coordination between the EU and China in this area, with both parties wanting their efforts to be seen as part of a wider interaction with Africa. The EU wishes to be viewed as a normative power that guides the African Union towards developing the capacity to respond to regional crises. China wishes its support to be seen as part of its long-term policy of “all-weather friendship” with Africa. This friendship presents China as an equal partner to Africa and as a state that will protect the interests of developing

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nations. This is, of course, a soft-power policy that aims to increase Chinese influence in the developing world, and in particular Africa.

Similarly, both China and the EU focus on meeting Africa’s non-traditional security needs – for example, water and food security – to prevent further conflict on the continent. Both actors provide financial and technical support to African-led projects, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. The EU, its member states and China have all attempted to build up the capacity of African states to respond to climate change, organised crime and water and food insecurity, through government aid bodies, NGO funding, state-owned enterprises or international organisations. But as with the African regional security bodies, cooperation or coordination between the EU and China in non-traditional security is minimal or non-existent.

Europe’s colonial past is also a huge barrier to cooperation. French and British interventions in Africa – be they direct military interventions or not – are often seen both in Africa and China as quasi-imperialistic ventures. This will always reduce the policy space in which the three can cooperate in the area of security. While many see Europe’s diversity as the EU’s weakness, in the case of EU-China security cooperation in Africa, diversity may be the Union’s greatest strength. The People’s Liberation Army has shown interest in having Chinese troops assigned to overseas UN peacekeeping missions trained in Europe. Such training could be done in tandem with training of African peacekeeping troops. This should be led by non-NATO members of the EU, which have good records in peacekeeping. This would prevent the cooperation causing tensions within NATO and would build trust among the three actors, allowing them to become more effective in peacekeeping in Africa.

The EU must also accept diversity within global security governance. China has moved towards a flexible policy of interference, whereby China will intervene in the internal affairs of a state when such interventions are approved by the UN and threaten the territorial integrity of a state. This can be seen in the case of Mali. If the EU wishes to cooperate with China in African security, it should target conflicts that align with this new policy. The EU should also consider allowing member states that do not have a history of colonial rule in Africa to take the lead in cooperating with China – helping to avoid the mission being branded as a quasi-imperialistic venture. It is clear that despite the fact that China and the EU hold similar positions on non-traditional security and strengthening African regional security bodies, cooperation will be limited due to particular political goals. But if both partners agree to allowing these bodies to coordinate the support China and the EU give to them, there may be the possibility to create entities with a greater capacity to deal with security issues in Africa.
Combating security threats through enhanced Sino-European cooperation in Africa

The presence of the People’s Republic of China in Africa dates back to the 1950s, but its role on the continent has undergone a significant shift over the last decade.

That increased Chinese involvement prompted the European Union back in 2008 to propose the development of trilateral cooperation with China and Africa. The initiative enjoyed little success at the time. Yet there is untapped potential for increased cooperation, notably in jointly addressing non-traditional security threats such as piracy in the Gulfs of Aden and Guinea, pandemics, arms proliferation and terrorism.

That potential for cooperation has been highlighted in the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. Despite opposing narratives on issues of sovereignty and non-intervention, there are signs of a gradual convergence of strategic interests and - to a lesser extent - policy responses for dealing with African security challenges.
Europe and China have an important stake in Africa’s stability. Peace and security feature prominently in the dialogues and summits that China and the EU each host with their African counterparts. For Beijing, this has accelerated since the establishment of the China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security in 2012.37

Expanding investments by Chinese companies in fragile African states and approximately one million Chinese citizens estimated to be living and working in Africa has left China deeply entrenched in the security dynamics of the continent.

Chinese workers and facilities have been targeted by terrorists and rebel groups including Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, ISIS and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Three Chinese railway executives perished during the 2015 terrorist attack on the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako. Three Chinese peacekeepers were recently killed in South Sudan and Mali.

Such events have triggered a debate in China on foreign policy concepts looking beyond traditional non-interference principles. They have led to a more activist foreign policy and a robust physical engagement in Africa as demonstrated by the willingness of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to engage in ‘Military Operations Other than War’. This has included troop deployments on UN peacekeeping operations, anti-piracy missions, rescue-and-relief activities, civilian evacuations and counter-terrorism exercises. China has also built its first overseas logistics facility, in Djibouti.

China’s 2013 National Defence White Paper, for the first time, includes a section on ‘protecting overseas interests’ that acknowledges the vulnerability of Chinese national interests to the changing nature of security threats. Consequently, it affords a foreign policy priority to the protection of overseas citizens and assets.39

37 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (2012, 10 September) “Fifth Ministerial Conference of FOCAC opens further China-Africa cooperation”, FOCAC.
This evolution in China’s strategic engagement with Africa opens new avenues for cooperation with the EU.

Beijing is becoming an increasingly important partner for Brussels in international efforts to combat terrorism. This has been facilitated by China’s first counter-terrorism law which took effect at the beginning of 2016 and explicitly authorises “exchanges of intelligence information, enforcement cooperation and international financial monitoring with foreign nations and relevant international organisations.”

China has also become increasingly supportive of UN peacekeeping operations. Until three years ago, China deployed only non-combat forces such as engineers, logistics and medical units on UN peacekeeping operations. Since then, it has sent a battalion of 700 combat troops to the UN mission in South Sudan and an infantry detachment to serve with the UN Stabilisation Mission in Mali. In Mali, the Chinese infantry is based alongside a Dutch unit and, for the first time in the PLA’s history, is also responsible for the security of other countries’ forces. This has led to praise from the international community. Bert Koenders, Dutch foreign minister and former UN Special Representative to Mali, has commended China for its “important work [that] has exceeded expectations.”

Among the permanent UN Security Council members, China is the largest troop-contributing country. Around 2,500 Chinese troops are based in Africa, making up 90 percent of its peacekeepers. In addition, President Xi Jinping, in 2015, announced the establishment of a permanent standby force of 8,000 peacekeepers. The increasing number of Chinese and European soldiers deployed to Africa creates opportunities for closer day-to-day operational communication and information sharing that could prove crucial given China’s lack of experience of such combat operations.

Anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden have already created numerous opportunities for interaction and intelligence sharing between European and Chinese armed forces, through their involvement in SHADE – the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction Mechanism. This voluntary multilateral cooperation initiative among naval forces has been regarded as a successful framework that could be applied to future piracy hotspots. This has strengthened mutual trust. EU NAVFOR and PLA Naval units have exchanged visits and participated in joint counter-piracy exercises to strengthen operational cooperation. In addition, EU and Chinese ships have escorted World Food Programme vessels carrying aid to Somalia.

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40 Counter-Terrorism Law of the People’s Republic of China, passed by the 18th Session of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People’s Congress, December 27, 2015, Xinhuanet.
41 The Diplomat (2013, August 9), China Embraces Peacekeeping Missions.
42 Reuters (2015, September 28) China’s Xi says to commit 8,000 troops for UN Peacekeeping force.
43 For more information, see http://oceansbeyondpiracy.org/matrix/shared-awareness-and-deconfliction-shade.
While international efforts have led to a steady decline in piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia, the Gulf of Guinea has seen an increase in attacks on shipping and hostage taking. Assaults there account for almost a quarter of all recorded piracy attacks, making it “one of the most dangerous maritime areas in the world”, according to the International Crisis Group.44

So far, the EU and China have taken different approaches with little coordination between them. China’s approach has been mostly bilateral: strengthening the capacity of individual nations, building infrastructure, military training, providing financial and technical resources. The Chinese navy made its first port calls in four countries in West Africa in 2014 and conducted joint anti-piracy drills with the Nigerian and Cameroonian navies.45 The EU, for its part, has a dedicated anti-piracy mission – the EU Critical Maritime Routes in the Gulf of Guinea Programme.46

However, at present, the EU is not considering a military solution on the model of EU NAVFOR in the Gulf of Guinea. Instead, Brussels is giving preference to strengthening regional and national ownership. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) adopted a code of conduct on fighting against piracy in 2013.47 However, the EU and China should devise a scenario to build on synergies between them should national and regional efforts risk being overwhelmed by a surge of piracy attacks. China, for instance, could join the G7++ friends of Gulf of Guinea Maritime Capacity Building Platform, which aims to enhance coordination on regional capacity building.

**Anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden have already created numerous opportunities for interaction and intelligence sharing between European and Chinese armed forces, through their involvement in SHADE– the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction Mechanism.**

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45 China Military Online (2014, June 3), Chinese Naval Fleet Pays First Visit to Cameroon; China Military Online (2014, May 29), Chinese and Nigerian Navies Conduct First Anti-Piracy Joint Drill
46 For more information, see http://oceansbeyondpiracy.org/matrix/eu-critical-maritime-routes-programme-cmr.
A widely cited area of potential cooperation between European militaries and the PLA is the evacuation of non-combatants from crisis zones, especially since protection of nationals is acquiring a bigger priority in China’s foreign and security policies. Over the past decade, China has conducted several non-combatant evacuation operations, most notably the lifting of 35,000 citizens from Libya at the outset of the civil war. It received assistance from EU member nations. In 2015, Beijing evacuated hundreds of China National Petroleum Corporation workers in South Sudan; and in Yemen, China’s military has assisted for the first time in the evacuation of foreign nationals. China and the EU should discuss scenarios for future evacuation cooperation in Africa.

Arms control is key to successful anti-terrorism strategies. The EU and China have worked together in the framework of the Africa-China-EU Expert Working Group on Conventional Arms. It met several times between 2012 and 2014 to find ways of tackling the circulation of illicit small arms across the continent and develop better arms control mechanisms. In its final report, the group highlighted potential areas for future cooperation: EU and Chinese technical expertise could enhance stockpile management and help refurbish storage facilities in line with international standards; they could assist African governments working to enhance border monitoring against arms smuggling. Cooperation in this field is, however, limited by the EU arms embargo on China.

The inclusion of epidemics as non-traditional security threats gained importance after the Ebola crisis. Particular attention should be given to devising research projects and common strategies to investigate and combat major pandemics like malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Although still at a very early stage, it is worth highlighting cooperation initiated in 2015 between France’s Merieux Foundation and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences to conduct joint research on emerging pathogens in Mali.

These examples illustrate that the myriad of non-traditional security challenges cannot be addressed by one country alone. Addressing these challenges requires new cooperative and innovative approaches. Europe’s and China’s shared concern surrounding Africa’s stability (for reasons of geographical proximity in the case of the former, and as a result of the exponential growth of its investments in the case of the latter) and the prioritization of non-traditional security threats in their respective foreign policies provides a strong basis for increased cooperation.

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The pragmatic evolution of Chinese foreign policy in Africa in response to the changing nature of security threats has also paved the way for greater diplomatic and security cooperation with the EU, although a concrete roadmap for bilateral cooperation has yet to fully materialise. China’s approach to security will likely remain cautious, characterised by self-restraint and minimal use of force. It also remains to be seen how recent military and civilian casualties will affect China’s stance on peacekeeping. However, China’s role as a global security provider should be warmly welcomed.
The idea of European Union-China cooperation ‘in’ Africa is problematic. It suggests Africa has no say. Despite the weaknesses Africa often exhibits and the fact that the trilateral idea originated from the EU, Africa has a role to play. A more useful approach would define cooperation as ‘in and with’ Africa.

The term ‘cooperation’ is also awkward. It implies equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit. Yet between Europe, China and Africa, the situation is unequal and often unfair towards Africa. The term ‘relations’ fits better.

There are many ways of looking at relations between Africa, the EU and China. There are political and cultural dimensions, but the focus of this article is on economic and trade relations. Most of Africa’s economic relations with the developed world are conditioned by colonial structures of production, accumulation and trade, in other words, neo-colonialism.
By the turn of the last century, the image of Africa as a hopeless ‘dark continent’ prevailed in many parts of the world. In 2000, the World Bank\(^51\) asked ‘Can Africa claim the 21st Century?’ That same year, The Economist\(^52\) described Africa as ‘The hopeless continent’ in a cover story. It followed up in 2001 with another damning headline: ‘Africa’s elusive dawn’.


Changing narratives do not always reflect changing realities. Debate is still raging over whether ‘Africa Rising’ is fact or myth. Despite commodities’ inspired growth and the success of some countries - like Kenya - outside the primary sector in fields such as technology, a compelling case can be made that unfair trade and the untransformed nature of national economies continue to inhibit Africa’s development and competitive potential.

When discussing EU-China relations ‘in and with Africa’, it is important to position Africa in an ever-changing geopolitical reality. The interests of Africa should not be undermined by a geopolitical narrative that dismisses the continent as a non-space among the major world powers.

Historically, Europe and China have had very different relations with Africa. Europeans exerted colonial lordship for generations. China’s presence in Africa is not as recent as some think. During the Cold War the Chinese leadership actively supported national independence movements by providing development and technical assistance.

The history of colonialism and slavery still weighs heavily in today’s Africa. Many Africans are wary of China as a ‘new coloniser’. The Europeans and China – despite their rhetoric on development and trade partnerships – keep national interests at the heart of their dealings with the continent.

The world that emerged in the 1970s was one of triumphant capitalism and great promise, at least for many in the West. It came to represent progress and prosperity. It was a world, Joseph Stiglitz wrote, of ‘closer

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\(^{53}\) The Economist, March 2, 2013.

integration of the countries and peoples of the world’.\textsuperscript{55}

To some, John Ralston Saul wrote in 2005, economic globalisation meant “all civilisations from now on were going to be led by commerce … the other constituent parts of human activity – from politics to social policy to culture – were going to be perceived principally through the prism of economics, which, once released from most of government interference, would find its natural balances.”\textsuperscript{56}

What has since happened is that Europe – excepting the 2008 economic crisis, the euro-zone crises and re-emergence of narrow nationalism – has joined the rest of the Western world to reap the greatest benefits from globalisation. China has managed to reform to be able to compete and integrate internationally.

Yet, while other regions have benefited from globalisation, Africa has fallen behind, forced to carry the burdens of the changed global economic order.

Indeed, Africa has experienced lost decades trying to experiment with industrialisation in the immediate post-colonial era. Those failures were compounded soon after by the structural adjustment programmes imposed on African countries.

Africa was hurt by a combination of globalisation, uneven development and unfair, neo-colonialist trade. The legacy of colonialism in Africa bears the imprints of both material and cultural dispossession. Today, Africa needs to shake off constraints in its relations with the EU and China and seize the many opportunities they bring.

Two things are crucial for Africa to take advantage of those opportunities. The first is sovereignty which means, in the words of Noam Chomsky, the “ability to control internal economic development and to enter international market systems on one’s own terms … a crucial prerequisite to economic development.”\textsuperscript{57} The second is building effective institutions.

Recent interest in Africa mirrors the same old interests of the previous century: natural resources, markets, human capital, etc. For China’s part, growing concern over energy

\textsuperscript{57} Chomsky, N. 2010. Hopes and Prospects, p. 15.
security has increased its demand for Africa’s oil and gas. Its relationship with Nigeria, Angola and Sudan illustrates the point.

In terms of official policy, the ‘Beijing Consensus’ is based on “the Taoist tradition and it emphasises non-hegemony, non-interference and no alliances as the main axis of the Chinese foreign policy,” wrote Vasiliki Papatheologou in 2014 in the Journal of African Studies and Development. Official EU foreign policy towards Africa mirrors that of most Western governments emphasise good governance, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, etc.

However, there are contradictions in the approach of both sides. The EU is complicit when member states like France take part in illegal invasions and violations of sovereignty, such as in Cote d’Ivoire and Libya. China contradicts its ‘non-interference’ policy when, for example, it imposes loan conditions on Angola stipulating that only 30% of construction contracts will be allocated to local companies.

Unfair and unequal trade as well as failed aid policies is what relations between Africa, the EU and China must confront and resolve.

The current European migration crisis is an example of how dishonesty can come back to haunt you. Africans drowning in the Mediterranean while searching for a better life and the insecurity currently pervading Europe are both the result of those unfair and unequal relations. Some African leaders are also to blame through their complicity in taking away the development rights of millions.

Africa, EU and China relations must be based on genuine cooperation and partnership. It is in the hands of Africans to make sure a fair deal is reached. It is in the broader interests of Europe and China to eschew narrow ‘national interests’ but Africa cannot expect any sudden change from them. It will be a struggle, but this time Africa must get a fair deal so it can claim the 21st century as an era of dignity for Africans.

The perceptions of the European Union and China in Africa

David Monyae, Co-Director of the Confucius Institute (UJCI) at the University of Johannesburg

In Africa, the European Union is perceived both as the home of former colonial masters and as the greatest promoter of free trade and liberal democracy. China is seen as a new strategic partner for economic development, particularly in the arena of physical infrastructure. However, these perceptions are not uniform across Africa. They vary based on people’s knowledge and experience of the activities of the EU and China on the ground. How the EU and China fare in assisting the African Union implement its Agenda 2063 vision will be crucial to how both are viewed by generations of Africans.

Since the late 20th century, China has made massive investments in Africa. The establishment in 2001 of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has seen more than $300 billion invested in various African states, mostly on infrastructure. Direct foreign investment has brought visible infrastructure development through such project as the Lagos-Kano railway in Nigeria ($12 billion), an oil refinery in Lobito, Angola ($5.8 billion) and the Nairobi-Mombasa railway in Kenya ($3.4 billion). The magnitude of Chinese investments speaks to their commitment to a developed Africa.
Lack of infrastructure has long been an impediment to Africa’s development. Chinese investments have begun to answer Africa’s needs with roads, border posts, harbours and conference centres. The fragmentation of Africa with arbitrary boarders has also held back regional integration, communication and planning. The Nairobi-Mombasa railway shows how infrastructure developed by China can assist regional integration through movement of people and goods. China adapted to the African environment much faster than the EU and it approves loans quicker, brings projects to life in a short period of time. The EU remains stuck in the past, defining developmental assistance in liberal and idealist terms, seeing itself as a ‘force for good’. It tends to muddle developmental issues with its desire to advance liberal democracy. This approach worked during the Cold War, but it’s not clear if it is of any use at this particular juncture of the global order.

Despite the 2008 global financial crisis, Africa remains home to many of the world’s fastest-growing economies, such as Mozambique, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Rwanda. Their growth is phenomenal considering the small bases from which it comes. China’s contribution to Africa’s economic development is significant, despite negative impacts in terms of environmental damage, unequal trade and ill-considered investments. Sino-African relations can be credited for creating the
‘Africa Rising’ phenomenon by attracting many more players to invest in Africa. The EU appears to be reacting to China’s Africa engagement by constructing its own policy towards Africa, independent of China.

There are critics of the China-Africa relationship who liken it to European colonialism. Others praise China’s unprecedented investments and its loans free of attachments or interest. Although China’s rise has been peaceful, it has raised suspicions from traditional global powers and their allies. Yet most credible surveys of African views of the Chinese presence show a favourable image. Beijing’s cancelation of African states’ debts and provision of interest-free loans has boosted Chinese soft power.

China’s economic growth has been watched with marvel by African states. According to the World Bank’s 2012 report, China has managed to lift 500 million people out of poverty since 1981. Forecasts show China’s gross domestic product overtaking that of the United States. Chinese life expectancy has drastically improved and infant mortality has been curbed largely due to improved health care. These are also African aspirations, enshrined in development goals. The state’s involvement in China’s growth, contradicting traditional Western narratives calling for the rolling back of the state, has showed Africans that different models of governance can work.

Sino-African economic activities have attracted other players that traditionally did not have interests in Africa. Middle Eastern and Asian countries - including South Korea, India and Turkey - have increased their presence. Even traditional partners from the West have upped their game in response to China’s presence. This influx of non-traditional investors creates potential for political and economic developments with clear interests for the continent. China has to be credited for being the first mover. While it may still dominate the large infrastructure sector, there are opportunities for new players to carve out positions in areas such as IT and small business.

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The ‘Africa rising’ phenomenon emanates from the close relationship African states have had with China over the past two decades. What is particularly intriguing about China’s rise is the return of a state narrative to development activities. The rejuvenation of the ‘developmental state’ thesis is a major highlight of Sino-African relations. It opposes the Western narrative developed in the 1980s and 1990s through the neoliberal policies of Margret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. IMF and World Bank structural adjustment
programmes have not left positive legacies. The rollback of the state from health care, education and other essential sectors has slowed economic development in many African countries. Privatisation of key services like water and electricity caused setbacks to poor Africans who relied on the state for their livelihoods.

It is crucial for Africans at governmental, sub-regional and regional levels to be part and parcel of the development of new relations with foreign powers, as opposed to being mere bystanders. African states should play a prominent role in deciding what they want from the countries investing in their economies. At policy level, sound plans and strategies must be developed as guiding blueprints. The 2020 aim to silence guns and create an AU Standby Peacekeeping force are notable goals that have brought in external support, notably from China through the FOCAC framework.

Western aid was long conditioned by colonial-era ‘dark continent’ mind-sets and the perception of assisting lands on the periphery of civilisation and modernity. The early phase of the aid narrative focused on Western assistance to rescue ‘backward Africa’ from poverty and disease. Aid advocates still argue that poverty is so deep that the smallest help can go a long way in proving relief. Aid has to be credited for saving lives, particularly through such success stories as the anti-malaria and HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns. However, critics point out that aid has prevented African growth by creating a dependency relationship.

The end of the Cold War in the 1990s brought a resurgence of internationalism which sought to bringing trade and aid together into a developmental framework. The 2000 Millennium Development Goals became the guide for Africa and the rest of the developing world in key issues like education and healthcare. The MDGs were to be achieved through a consolidated global effort. Indicators were to be revisited to adjust and measure development. At the heart of MDGs is the notion that the most peaceful and stable democratic governments can register substantial development. Good governance, civil society participation, entrepreneurial spirit and the private sector were to be the drivers for achieving the MDGs.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are the successors of the MDGs. There are 17 goals with 169 targets crucial to African states. African countries performed poorly in the MDGs. Only Botswana and Equatorial Guinea met the first goal of halving the number of people living below the poverty line. Analysts calculated that to meet some of the goals, African states would have needed to register annual growth rates of 7%. With the new SDGs in place, African states still need to accelerate economic growth in order to meet the 2030 targets.

Sino-African engagements on the SDG goal of affordable and clean energy are important. China needs to commit to environmentally friendly infrastructure and energy - sectors
where it has heavily invested in Africa. Beijing has taken steps to invest in renewable and clean energy, including wind power in Ethiopia and solar energy in Sudan. However, the focus on clean energy is limited. The environmental costs of China’s rise should be a lesson for African states gearing up for industrialisation.

African underdevelopment has long been a topic of contentious debate. Guyanese historian Walter Rodney famously argued that Africans were on a quest of development before 1500. His 1972 book ‘How Europe Underdeveloped Africa’ still resonates with dependency theorists who point to slavery and colonialism as detours to an African development route that had been established before contact with Europeans. Echoes of this thinking can be found in calls for reparations for colonialism and the scrapping of African colonial debt.

The African Union spearheaded the drive for African decolonisation in the 1960s and 1970s. Its mandate pushed for development through a Pan-African vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent guided by its citizens, acting as a dynamic force in the international arena. Post-colonial Africa’s development debates are an amalgamation of home-brewed ideas like those of the Economic Commission for Africa and those of Bretton Woods institutions, such as the World Bank’s Berg Report in 1981. One prominent African proposal can be found in the Lagos Plan of Action for African Development drafted in 1980. It was a direct response to the IMF and WB structural adjustment programmes. The AU’s ambitious Agenda 2063 vision is indebted to this rich history of African development ideas.

Agenda 2063 is the African Union’s blueprint for the future based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. It calls for an integrated Africa guided by Pan-African ideals; an Africa shaped by good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and rule of law; a peaceful and secure Africa; an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics; an Africa whose development is people-driven with a key role for woman and youth people; a strong, united Africa that can be an influential global player.

As part of the first 10-year implementation plan, ending all wars by 2020 is a goal that perhaps transcends all the rest. Strategic global partners - including China - are a key part of Agenda 2063’s vision. China’s $1 billion funding pledge for Africa’s Standby Peacekeeping Force speaks volumes about Beijing’s commitment to African development.

Africa needs to strengthen its ties with other global powers. Through these relations, African states can benefit from increased investment and cooperation in multilateral organisations like the World Trade Organisation and United Nations Trade and Development Conference. As the post-1945 global order expires, Africa needs to strategically align itself with all powerful players. Yet Africa’s development must be shaped and defined by Africans.
Africa’s relationship with China blossomed in the mid-1950s, as many African states gained independence. As the Cold War intensified, many African states opted for “non-alignment” – a position adopted by China, which became a key partner against the imperialist exploitation of African resources and support for remnants of colonial domination. China offered military support to a series of African liberation movements, in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Many other astute African leaders managed to win aid both from NATO countries and from the Soviet Union.

Among major benefits for Africa was the construction – with Chinese aid – of the TAZARA Rail project. The World Bank had refused to finance the rail and road link between Zambia’s copper-producing area and the Tanzanian sea port of Dar es Salaam. China stepped in with a 30-year interest-free loan and the project was successfully completed in 1975. In the words of one of Africa’s leading statesman, former Tanzanian president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, “You don’t need to be a communist to see that China has a lot to teach about development”.

Idayat Hassan, Executive Director of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) in Nigeria
China generated affection in Africa in the 1960s and continues to do so among many parts of African society and growing section of Africa’s ruling class. When elected in 2002, Kenya’s president Mwai Kibaki said it was time for African countries to look eastwards. He visited China in 2010 and came back with unprecedented infrastructure deals covering transport, energy and telecommunications59.

Fast forward to this decade, and China’s presence is felt all over Africa, in technology, manufacturing, oil, hospitality, agriculture, construction and textiles. China continues to intensify its efforts to foster economic and diplomatic ties with all African countries: it has embassies and/or consulates in 49 of the continent’s 54 countries.

Africa seems at last to have an alternative partner in the quest for development. It can no longer be dictated to by the Breton Woods institutions. One example: in the midst of a financial crisis, Nigeria turned to China and reached an agreement on a currency swap deal (issuing renminbi-denominated bonds) as a way of shoring up the Nigerian currency, the naira, and funding the country’s budget deficit. In addition, a visit by Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari yielded more than US$6bn of additional investments in Nigeria’s economy. In the same vein, Zimbabwe is combating American and British sanctions and surviving as a nation thanks to Chinese government-funded projects.

Africans can no longer be trampled upon by Western imperialists, as Chinese companies pump in investment with no political and other strings attached. The rise of right-wing, populist politics in Europe and the Americas is also fuelling perceptions of political risks for Africa regarding aid and foreign direct investment from these economies.

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of living; meanwhile, living standards in China have been doubling roughly every decade for the past 30 years\(^60\).

Why should Africa continue servitude to Europe – which, according to historian Walter Rodney, is hostile to the idea of developed Africa\(^61\) - when China offers aid and assistance programmes without condition? According to a Chinese State Council Information Office white paper on China's Foreign Aid\(^62\), “China does not attach any political strings to its aid and its foreign aid programmes are based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit and mutual development". The prospect of partnering with a country that does not have explicit political agenda is the main incentive for several African rulers to build relations with China. Put more baldly, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe says he prefers Chinese aid because Beijing does not force him to 'embrace homosexuality'\(^63\).

China’s ties with sub-Saharan African countries have flourished over the past decade. In 1995 China-Africa trade accounted for just one percent of China’s total foreign trade volume. Between 1995 and 2012, China-Africa trade volume grew to 26%, including a 19% increase from 2011 to 2012. The value of China-Africa trade went from approximately $166bn in 2011 to around $198bn in 2012\(^64\). Meanwhile, China’s official development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa expanded from $500m in 2000 to $3.2bn in 2013.

We must, however, ask the question: who is benefiting most from these relationships – Africa or China? And how well have China and its investments and soft aid contributed to the economies of the countries in which they operate? For instance, while cheap Chinese exports into Africa benefit consumers, they have crippled domestic producers. The Nigerian textile sector, previously a large employer, shrank from 124 firms to 45 firms\(^65\) between 1994 and 2005, largely due to cheap imports from China and other Asian countries. 87% of jobs were lost in that period, with a fall from 150,000 employees to about 20,000. The few surviving firms have been operating at less than 40% of installed capacity; the total collapse of the industry is imminent.

As China continues to build economic relationships with Africa, it is important to critically analyse the extent to which the series of agreements between African governments and China contribute to job creation and reduce the high levels of unemployment in Africa. Besides poor working conditions, China imports citizens as menial labourers. One highly visible case is the $124m African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, financed with a loan to Ethiopia and constructed by the China State Construction Engineering Corporation. 90% of the workforce is thought to be Chinese.

To consolidate its trading position, China lends billions of dollars to Africa. The terms

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\(^60\) "What’s Gone Wrong with Democracy": The Economist, Essay.
\(^61\) "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa": Walter Rodney, 1972.
\(^62\) "China’s foreign aid comes with 'no strings attached'": Beijing international.
\(^63\) "Robert Mugabe says he prefers Chinese aid because Beijing does not force him to accept homosexuality": The Telegraph, 31 August 2014.
\(^64\) "Robert Mugabe says he prefers Chinese aid because Beijing does not force him to accept homosexuality": The Telegraph, 31 August 2014.
of these loans are secret, but are tied to guaranteeing Chinese companies contractor rights and ensuring the use of Chinese goods in development projects (deals with Western countries have similar clauses). The loans tend to be granted when their repayment can be guaranteed by payments from China for African exports. As is typical of Western commercial practices, China is buying African exports but trying to ensure that African export revenues are spent on Chinese goods and companies. China is also trying, in the longer term, to boost African GDP and its share of the African market of one billion consumers.

On the human rights front, the labour conditions meted out to Africans working in Chinese firms have been described as inhumane. In Nigeria, there is a popular saying that you ‘work with Chinese and lose your groin’. This is based on allegations that Chinese employers often kick non-submissive staff in the testicles: Maaji Meriga, a former employee of China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), was left potentially impotent due to injuries inflicted during the construction of railway tracks in Nigeria’s capital, Abuja. There are similar stories of brutal conditions in Chinese firms across the continent. These stories have unwelcome consequences not just for development, but also for people’s acceptance of China as a partner. They fuel a belief that China is in Africa only to exploit its resources, and is in no way different from the other colonialists.

On the political front, China has maintained that it does not attach any political strings to its foreign aid programmes. But this statement is a long way from reality. Many democracy-watchers and activists fear that the political impact of China and its foreign aid is a cementing and spreading of authoritarian regimes across the continent. For instance, the lack of conditions attached to aid programmes means that leaders such as Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Haile Mariam Desalign of Ethiopia – to mention just a few – can continue to flout basic human rights and get away with it.

Africans also worry about the impact on human rights and good governance of Britain’s departure from the European Union. One immediate concern is that if foreign aid

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64 “Africa and China Trade Relations”, Tralac Trade Law Centre, 2013.
66 “Chinese Expats Treat Nigerian Employees As Punching Bags”: Sahara Reporters, 18 October 2011.
Moving forward, any engagement with Africa must be on a people-to-people basis, not government-to-government.

from Britain and the European Union reduces, there will be less incentive to implement good governance practices. Will we see the return of “presidents-for-life”? What will happen to defenders of human rights in Africa, especially as more countries gravitate towards China? How do we encourage China to promote human rights and good governance when they flout local regulations in countries in which they operate? Paradoxically, European and American corporations have invested heavily in China at the expense of jobs in their own countries and, thereby built up massive popular support for racist and xenophobic political parties in their countries.

Transparency is another key area. Secret government-to-government agreements entered into by China and most African states militate against transparency and accountability. Corruption remains the bane of African governments, and while African countries subscribe more and more to the open data and government system, one of the imminent challenges civic groups will face is the secrecy that clouds agreements with China.

To the Africans, the proposed EU-Chinese Cooperation on Africa represents a rehash of the same old imperialist relationships, based on European access to Africa and its resources – Africa, once again, being shared like a cake.

Moving forward, any engagement with Africa must be on a people-to-people basis, not government-to-government. If China wants to strengthen its political and economic ties on the African continent and among African people, it must seriously address people-to-people relations. Part of this must be to start hiring the majority of workforces locally, which is likely to reduce local hostility.
It is widely acknowledged that there is a great deal of common interest between the United States and China to build bilateral cooperation on African security issues. Both countries have considerable economic interests in Africa that require a peaceful and stable domestic environment. As two great powers, both carry important international responsibility for peace and stability in less-developed countries in Africa. Certain non-traditional security threats on the continent, such as piracy in the Gulf of Aden, affect the national interests of both the US and China. While bilateral cooperation on African security issues has been rather limited, US-China cooperation is taking place through multilateral platforms, such as through United Nations peacekeeping and counter-piracy mechanisms.

The most official and consistent channel of communications between the two countries is the US-China consultation on African affairs. As of 2016, the State Department and the

**US-China cooperation on African security affairs**

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Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs have held seven rounds of such bilateral consultations. Vice-ministerial level bilateral consultations take place every two years on average, with its venue alternating between Beijing and Washington, DC. The consultation is jointly chaired by the Chinese vice/assistant minister and the US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, who are the top officials in charge of the African policies for their countries.

Until 2011, Chinese official press releases on these consultations suggested that much of the conversation focused on learning about each other’s priorities for their African policies and new issues in their cooperation with Africa. Such wording has disappeared since the fifth round of consultations, as has the phrase ‘positive comments by the US on the contribution China has made to African development in recent years’. One consistent theme of the consultations has been ‘in-depth exchanges of opinions’ on the situation in Africa and key regional issues. Based on these exchanges, the US and China are committed to strengthening communications and coordination to help Africa achieve peace, stability, and development.

Although Africa has emerged onto the US-China bilateral cooperation agenda, the action doesn’t meet the rhetoric. Cooperation on the ground generally takes place in a multilateral context – such as through UN missions, where the US and China work together on African peace and conflict issues. The US remains the largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping, amounting to 28% of the $8.2bn annual budget, while China is only the sixth-largest financial contributor, providing 6.64% of the total peacekeeping budget. However, China is the largest contributor of peacekeepers among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The total number of Chinese peacekeepers (2,262) is almost twice as large as the other four countries’ contributions combined. Since 2013, China has provided security forces for the first time in MINUSMA, the UN’s mission in Mali. This trend continued in 2014, when China started to deploy combat troops to UNMISS, the mission in South Sudan.

The two countries work with each other in strengthening the UN’s peacekeeping capability. Last September the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, used his state visit to the US to reach an agreement with his American counterpart, Barack Obama, under which both countries would increase their “robust” peacekeeping commitments. Responding to Obama’s call, Xi announced that China would join the new UN peacekeeping capability readiness system and would lead in setting up a permanent peacekeeping police squad, building a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops.

Besides top-level political commitments to cooperate, the two countries recognise the need to deepen their partnership on peace operations and learn from each other’s practical experiences. For example, in March 2016 an eight-member US military observer delegation visited the Chinese peacekeeping infantry battalion in South Sudan. The visit did
not go beyond a courtesy call, but highlighted that there is an exchange of communications and information.

Another key area for multilateral security cooperation between the US and China in Africa is counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. Under the authorisation and mandate of UN Security Council Resolutions, countries including China and the US have deployed forces in the region to tackle the rising threat of piracy. For instance, the Chinese naval presence focuses on escorting Chinese and foreign ships in the area. The US and China have held bilateral counter-piracy exercises in the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa aimed at promoting partnership, strength and presence. For example, an exercise held in 2014 included combined visit, board, search and seizure operations, communication exchanges and various other aspects of naval operations. Beyond this exercise, both the US and China participate in multilateral mechanisms for information-sharing.

The counter-piracy cooperation highlights the great potential for US-China collaboration. The two powers have committed resources and are willing to work together when the stakes are high and the threat is dire. This counter-piracy work could pave the way for more cooperation in broader areas on safeguarding freedom of navigation and addressing non-traditional, lethal security threats in other parts of Africa.

The scope of bilateral collaboration under a multilateral framework is expanding. Nevertheless, certain obstacles will hinder the pace and depth of cooperation. Using the escort missions in the Gulf of Aden as an example, China prefers unilateral escort missions to multilateral cooperative ones for fear of being ensnared in the rules, systems, and agendas of Western countries. As a result, the nature of the Chinese escort missions has remained largely defensive and protective; China is very reluctant to actively pursue pirates. This approach is closely associated with China’s defensive overseas military strategy, and is unlikely to change in the near future.

Discussions between the US and China on counter-piracy in Africa seem to be gaining momentum recently, at least on the Track-II level, that is non-governmental, informal and unofficial contacts and activities. On 27 July 2016, the Carter Center convened its third Africa-China-United States Consultation for Peace and Development in Lomé, Togo. This year’s consultation focused on maritime piracy as well as peace-related issues in the Sahel region (covering western and north-central Africa from Senegal to Sudan). China’s
former special representative for African Affairs, Zhong Jianhua, and the former US special envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Princeton Lyman, co-chaired the Track-II dialogue. This may indeed be the first trilateral dialogue between Africa, China and the US on maritime security.

Given the challenges and the stakes, people may expect more in-depth dialogue and concrete action involving the US and China regarding African security. While action is focused on the multilateral level at the moment, there is still great potential for bilateral cooperation. When compared to heated US-China discussions on other security issues, Africa perhaps presents the best opportunity for cooperation between Beijing and Washington.
NATO and China in Africa

Brooke Smith-Windsor, Deputy Head and Founding Member of the NATO Defense College (NDC) Research Division, and Alexander Moens, Professor of Political Science at the Simon Fraser University in Canada

Neither NATO nor the People’s Republic of China is new to the African continent. NATO has been engaged in North Africa since 1994 through its so-called “Mediterranean Dialogue”, and in 2005 it gave its first support to the African Union (AU), beginning with the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS).\(^6^7\) China, with a seemingly insatiable appetite for Africa’s oil, iron ore, metals and new export markets, has in the last fifteen years become the continent’s largest economic partner, with trade totalling an impressive $160bn in 2015.\(^6^8\)

There is little doubt about China’s long-term interest in the continent. In December 2015 Chinese President Xi Jinping told the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) that investment in the continent would be tripled, to $60 billion\(^6^9\).

So what can we make of the future relationship between these two significant geopolitical actors on the African stage? On what issues might they converge or diverge? A closer examination of China’s motivations, juxtaposed with the interests and role of NATO, may provide some answers.

\(^{67}\) See www.nato.org
\(^{68}\) Rudyard Kipling, “What China Knows about Africa That the West Doesn’t”, The National Interest.
\(^{69}\) Yun Sun, “Xi and the 6th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation: Major commitments, but with questions”, Africa in Focus, Brookings, 7 December 2015.
CHINESE MOTIVATIONS AND NATO

China’s involvement in Africa is based on two pillars: strategic diplomacy and business. In its early years, the People’s Republic reached out to non-aligned countries in Africa and established warm (though not very consequential) relationships with socialist regimes in countries such as Tanzania. The shift towards developing China’s economy began under Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s and changed the tone and nature of relations with Africa. Securing raw materials for China’s state-owned enterprises became the main focus of China’s enhanced approach to the African continent. As was typical of China’s “peaceful rise” era, Chinese businesses set up shop and developed commercial relations in many African countries without attracting much Western attention. Meanwhile, China’s strategic diplomacy changed in purpose by focusing almost entirely on Taiwan. African states that had relations with the island were “punished” by being cut off from China; those that switched allegiance were rewarded. Business interests and cultivating many of Africa’s 54 United Nations General Assembly votes became twin objectives.

In 2006, Beijing issued its first White Paper on Africa, calling for ‘comprehensive and long-term cooperation’. Following an old Chinese saying, ‘to end poverty, build a road’, Chinese companies have become increasingly involved in building infrastructure, power plants and bandwidth, as well as exploring minerals and establishing markets for Chinese products.

The most recent switch of emphasis in Chinese foreign policy has been a subtle change in China’s strategic diplomacy. With the rise of Xi Jinping, China has dropped the “keeping a low profile” description of Chinese foreign policy and replaced it with “striving for achievement”. Western literature often calls this China’s “new assertive approach.” The main change in China’s strategic diplomacy in Africa is its willingness to go beyond economic infrastructure-building and move into “international structure”. The argument advanced by a leading group of Chinese scholars is that China’s relations with Africa (as well as developing areas in Latin America and Asia) should take on more “comprehensive political power”, highlighting China’s moral and political alternative to the Western democratic model. The ideal formulated by this school of thought is for China to be recognised as a “humane authority” that is on the ground not only to do business, but also to use its power and influence to provide “strategic reliability”. The goal is ambitious: it involves creating a global perception of China as the world power that offers stable and prosperous friendship.

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73 For example, see: “Dialogue of the deaf,” The Economist, 4 June 2016, p. 38.
75 Ibid, p. 88.
We see this new policy at work in Africa, where China underwrites more and more UN peacekeeping work. In 2010, China was the largest peacekeeping contributor of the five permanent UN Security Council members. China offers engineers, transportation and logistics, civilian police, medical staff and facilities. Between 2000 and 2010 there was a twenty-fold increase in China’s participation, growing to with more than 2100 peacekeepers, perhaps more aptly called peacekeeping support staff, in 2010.

With this backdrop to the evolution of China’s presence in Africa, an April 2014 analysis by Brookings offers a useful summary of the key policy drivers behind the country’s contemporary engagement in Africa:

‘Politically, China seeks Africa’s support for China’s “One China” policy …

‘Economically, Africa is seen primarily as a source of natural resources and market opportunities to fuel China’s domestic growth.

‘From a security standpoint, the rising presence of Chinese commercial interests in Africa has led to growing security challenges for China, as the safety of Chinese investments and personnel come under threats due to political instability and criminal activities …

‘China also sees an underlying ideological interest in Africa, as the success of the “China model” in non-democratic African countries offers indirect support for China’s own political ideology and offers evidence that Western democratic ideals are not universal.’

NATO is the world’s preeminent military Alliance, established to, in the words of its 1949 founding treaty, ‘safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of [its] peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law [and] to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area’. As such, it is necessarily principally concerned with China’s security and ideological motivations as set out in the Brookings analysis. Both China and NATO share a preoccupation with stability and security in Africa, but have differing approaches towards governance.

ENSURING AFRICA’S SECURITY AND STABILITY

During his tenure as NATO’s Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen often argued that China and the Alliance had common security concerns regarding ‘transnational terrorism, nuclear proliferation, cyber threats, regional stability, energy security and maritime piracy’. It is not hard for the contemporary analyst to see a number of these concerns –

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particularly terrorism, instability and maritime risks – continue to be a reality on the African stage.

From North Africa to the Sahel, uncontrolled migration, the rise of Islamist terrorist groups, arms proliferation and continued political instability in places such as Libya, Mali and Somalia continue to pose a threat to Europeans and their economic interests. While African migrants may be less of a concern for China, there are dangers posed to its economic interests – for example, the pursuit of lawful commerce at sea close to African shores, and the protection of its growing diaspora on the continent. During the 2011 Libyan uprising, China had to evacuate more than 35,000 Chinese workers. So given these converging security concerns, what might NATO and China do on land and at sea to address them? Historic precedent suggests a preference for complementary rather than joint initiatives, although the latter cannot be entirely excluded.

At sea, both NATO and China have deployed naval assets to address the risk of piracy off the coast of Somalia. This is part of a broader international effort – for NATO under its Operation Ocean Shield; for China (as for India and some others) on an independent basis. While NATO and China’s operations are distinct, interaction – through meetings of the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) initiative, for example – had helped to build mutual trust over the years. Thanks to the SHADE process, ‘China, India and Japan in early 2012 agreed to coordinate their merchant vessel escort convoys through the Internationally Recognized Transit Corridor (IRTC) with one country being ‘reference nation’ for a period of three months on a rotational basis.

While NATO’s Ocean Shield is set to wrap up at the end of 2016 due to the near eradication of piracy off the coast of Somalia, there is the possibility of future Alliance interaction with the Chinese navy to maintain order at sea.

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82 See: www.nato.int.
84 Mohammed Osman Farah, “NATO to Open Office in Djibouti to Support Anti-Piracy Efforts”, Bloomberg, 23 April 2015.
As the Alliance’s July 2016 Warsaw summit communiqué stated:

‘We note that the last successful pirate attack in the Indian Ocean took place in May 2012. While we have agreed to terminate the Operation at the end of 2016, NATO will remain engaged in the fight against piracy by maintaining maritime situational awareness and continuing close links with other international counter-piracy actors.’

In this context, it is interesting to note that both NATO and China have established long-term relations with strategically-located Djibouti: China signed a ten-year leasing agreement to build a logistical hub; and NATO established an official liaison office in 2015. In the Mediterranean, the increased presence of Chinese naval assets alongside long-standing NATO ships have led some analysts to go as far as argue for joint Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) patrols. At a minimum, complementary capacity-building efforts to assist Africans in the implementation of their continent-wide “2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy” (2050 AIM Strategy) would be a worthwhile pursuit.

Complementary land-based efforts to forge Africa’s security and stability are also foreseeable. While China is unlikely ever to countenance the deployment of the People’s Liberation Army under a NATO-led UN-mandated operation, it may do so as part of a UN force where NATO and Chinese interests coincide. This is, in fact, already happening in Mali: since 2013, China has deployed a force protection unit as part of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). In this context, it is useful to consider once more, the NATO Warsaw summit communiqué:

‘Terrorist acts and the trafficking of arms, drugs, and human beings across the Sahel-Sahara region continue to threaten regional and our own security. We welcome the efforts of the UN and the EU, and underscore the importance of a strong commitment by the international community to address the complex security and political challenges in this region. In Mali, we welcome the endorsement of the peace agreement, the steps taken in its implementation, and the support of the international community to the stabilisation of the country.’

China and NATO may also work together to build up the AU’s own peace and security architecture. Both parties are committed to the principle of “African solutions to African problems” or – as it is otherwise described – the tenet of “Africa-proposed, Africa-agreed and Africa-led.” This principle becomes practice in a shared commitment to help operationalise the African Standby Force (ASF). Although the form of support may differ

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84 See: www.nato.int.
– NATO offers training, education, logistical and operational support, but no direct financing and equipment, while China recently pledged $100m in military aid – the end goal is the same. As a senior Chinese diplomat recently remarked:

‘China advocates a new concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in cooperation with Africa. We propose that all countries should make concerted efforts to jointly build a road of shared security that is win-win to all, and abandon the Cold War and zero-sum mentalities … We support African people in addressing African issues and highlight the leading role of the AU…’

The Chinese position appears to be in line with NATO’s Warsaw summit communiqué: ‘We look forward to further strengthening and expanding our political and practical partnership with the AU, so we are better able to respond together to common threats and challenges.’

AFRICAN GOVERNANCE

While China and NATO may have a shared interest in helping Africans to provide for their own continental security and stability, questions of engagement and governance are another matter. As the American analyst Robert D. Kaplan observes:

‘Chinese military aid does not come with lectures about human rights the way the West’s does … Chinese foreign policy, without being in any way extreme or bellicose, nevertheless represents the bleakest form of realism. It indicates a new bipolarity in the world: between those states that employ human rights as part of their policy calculations and those that do not.’

So, while Beijing will have no qualms about engaging with any African regime – despotic or democratic, the most brutal violator of human rights or the most peaceful – NATO will, by virtue of its founding principles, be more discerning. Governments committed to the rule of law and individual liberty – and the AU, with its 2000 Constitutive Act, is no exception in this regard – will assume pride of place. As these authors have argued elsewhere, the Alliance’s common principles do not put NATO’s foreign and security policy beyond criticism. Its members are also self-interested states pursuing material benefits. However, restraint is a key and regular feature of military policy and action. The rule of law guides domestic and foreign decisions. Kaplan chooses to refer to this as ‘Realpolitik with a conscience’. Simply put, China may engage with some African regimes that NATO will not countenance.

\[38\] Remarks by Chinese Ambassador to Ghana, Sun Baohong, at Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 20 May 2016.
\[39\] See: www.nato.int.
\[42\] Kaplan, p. 190.
CONCLUSION

The global strategic “competition” between Western (including NATO and the EU) and Chinese values is a political reality that is now extended to the field of security. However, it does not preclude NATO and China working towards the same objectives. African peace-building is the shared goal. Ultimately, African nations will decide which political model suits them best. Focusing on the shared goal deflects from a zero-sum formulation of the relationship. As a result of constructive interaction in many (although clearly not all) parts of Africa, NATO and China may gain strategic and tactical benefits: strategic, in the sense of finding common objectives and mutually reinforcing efforts that include dialogue; tactical, in the sense of working alongside and learning from each other.