

SECTION 3: CHINA'S STRATEGIC AIMS IN AFRICA

Key Findings

- Beijing has long viewed African countries as occupying a central position in its efforts to increase China's global influence and revise the international order. Over the last two decades, and especially under General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Xi Jinping's leadership since 2012, Beijing has launched new initiatives to transform Africa into a testing ground for the export of its governance system of state-led economic growth under one-party, authoritarian rule.
- Beijing uses its influence in Africa to gain preferential access to Africa's natural resources, open up markets for Chinese exports, and enlist African support for Chinese diplomatic priorities on and beyond the continent. The CCP flexibly tailors its approach to different African countries with the goal of instilling admiration and at times emulation of China's alternative political and governance regime.
- China is dependent on Africa for imports of fossil fuels and commodities constituting critical inputs in emerging technology products. Beijing has increased its control of African commodities through strategic direct investment in oil fields, mines, and production facilities, as well as through resource-backed loans that call for in-kind payments of commodities. This control threatens the ability of U.S. companies to access key supplies.
- As the top bilateral financier of infrastructure projects across Africa, China plays an important role in addressing the shortage of infrastructure on the continent. China's financing is opaque and often comes with onerous terms, however, leading to rising concerns of economic exploitation, dependency, and political coercion. Many African countries borrowing from Beijing face growing debt burdens.
- China has shown an apparent willingness to leverage its influence in the UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs) system to advance its economic interests in African countries, raising the possibility that Beijing is subverting UN norms and procedures in the process. Beijing also relies on the assistance of African partners and private security contractors to advance its economic objectives on the continent.
- China's approach to security engagement allows Beijing to expand its influence in Africa's security domain while minimizing its visible military presence outside of its UN PKO contributions. As Beijing's economic and political influence on the

continent grows, it might leverage its security ties to establish another base in the medium to long term, as it did in Djibouti.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends:

- Congress require the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, within 180 days, to prepare a report on China's use of rules of origin intended to benefit countries eligible for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to ensure AGOA countries obtain the benefit of favorable trade policies and China is not using them to circumvent U.S. trade policies.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, China has reinvigorated its longstanding ties to African countries,* placing the continent squarely at the center of its ambitions to become a global leader. In its official policy documents, Beijing claims to assist African countries in choosing their own development path while upholding its principle of “non-interference” in African domestic politics. In practice, however, the Chinese government exports its model of state-led economic growth under one-party, authoritarian rule. Economically, Beijing contends it seeks to help Africa industrialize and promote “win-win” cooperation. Its trade and investment, however, are characterized by increasing control over key African commodities and infrastructure. Opaque loans from China are pushing some African countries deeper into debt. To some, these patterns are reminiscent of Africa's colonial past and have led to concerns among African citizens and leaders that China's economic presence is not mutually beneficial, but rather an example of Beijing's “debt trap diplomacy.”

China has accompanied the substantial increase in its political and economic engagement with a modest deepening of its military influence. To date, Beijing has mostly refrained from expanding its visible military footprint on the continent, focusing instead on alternative forms of military influence to support political and economic objectives. Military training programs, arms sales, joint exercises, and the deployment of military units under the auspices of UN missions have all served to enhance China's influence in key partner countries. Still, other military activities have served more purely operational ends. Beijing's first overseas military base, located in Djibouti, has allowed it to expand its military presence farther in and around Africa. As its economic and political influence grows, Beijing may be considering plans to establish a second base, while it has taken initial steps to extend its naval presence into the Atlantic Ocean.

This section explores China's growing influence across Africa and assesses its implications for the United States. It examines the strategic goals of China's Africa policy and Africa's significance to Beijing's global leadership ambitions. The section then assesses China's economic activity in Africa, including its desire for commodities and resources, investment in critical infrastructure and sectors,

*This section examines China's engagement in all 54 internationally recognized African countries, including those in North Africa and the Maghreb, areas that may fall culturally, politically, and economically as both part of Africa and the Middle East.

and role in Africa's growing digital economy. Finally, it discusses China's expanding security presence on the continent and examines how China leverages security cooperation to pursue its political and economic interests. The section draws from the Commission's May 2020 hearing on "China's Strategic Aims in Africa," the Commission's staff and contracted research, and consultations with policy experts and open source research and analysis.

China's Africa Strategy: Foundations for a New World Order

Beijing assigns Africa a central role in its foreign policy and views its ties with the continent as a cornerstone of its broader efforts to revise the international order. To demonstrate the consistency of this emphasis, China's foreign ministers have chosen African countries as their first overseas trip destinations each year since 1991.*¹ To date, Beijing has released two white papers on its Africa policy, one in 2006 and one in 2015.² While China's 2006 white paper called for a "new type of strategic partnership with Africa," the 2015 white paper assigns a much higher priority for the continent by elevating relations to the status of a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership—phraseology used by China's foreign ministry to denote its most important relationships.³ The 2015 white paper underscores Africa's role in building a "community of common human destiny," a CCP concept for a China-led global governance regime.⁴ It also notes that Beijing seeks to enlist African support for its broader foreign policy goal of achieving "comprehensive reform" of the current international system.⁵

In 2018, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi described the Chinese government as viewing its relations with Africa as a "template" for its "community of common human destiny."⁶ Christopher Maloney, acting assistant administrator in the U.S. Agency for International Development's Bureau for Africa, argued in his written testimony to the Commission that China "is looking for political allies [in Africa] who are sympathetic, whether by ideology or situation, to rewriting the rules of the international order."⁷ (See Chapter 1, Section 2, "The China Model: Return of the Middle Kingdom," for further discussion of China's global leadership ambitions.)

Beijing has also increased its efforts to export its political governance and economic development model to some African countries. In contrast to the 2006 white paper, the 2015 white paper articulates a discernibly China-inspired model for the continent's political governance and economic development.⁸ In one reflection of this more assertive approach, the 2015 white paper notes that Beijing seeks to enlist "chosen African countries"—referring to China's closest African partners—to promote state-led economic development across the continent.⁹ The 2015 white paper also highlights Beijing's comparative advantages in a variety of domains, such as law enforcement, the judicial process, media, and science and technology, while openly calling on African countries to learn from China's experience.¹⁰ Additionally, it describes a number of deficiencies in Africa, such as "backward infrastructure," "cyberspace management," and

*Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi repeated this pattern most recently with his visit to Burundi, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Kenya, and Zimbabwe in January 2020. Eric Olander, "Why Wang Yi's Boring, Uneventful Tour of Africa Was So Important," *China-Africa Project*, January 13, 2020.

“riot control,” and posits a Chinese role in guiding African countries to build up their capacity in these and other domains through training and exchanges.¹¹

More broadly, Beijing uses its relationships with African countries to accomplish other important objectives. These goals include gaining preferential access to the continent’s natural resources, using free trade zones to circumvent U.S. and EU trade quotas, opening up African countries as markets for Chinese exports, and enlisting African support for Chinese global diplomatic goals, such as garnering support for China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).^{*12} China blends all of its tools of national power—political, economic, and military—to accomplish these objectives.¹³

China Leverages Historical Ties to Africa

The foundations of Beijing’s current relationships with African countries are built on the influence China gained through its engagement with the continent during the Cold War. Africa has been a focus of Chinese foreign policy since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. From the 1950s to the late 1970s, the CCP actively supported various national liberation movements in Africa to advance its broader strategy of establishing Beijing as a leader of the global communist movement.^{†14} Beijing’s foreign policy in Africa during the Cold War was often in direct competition with both the United States and the Soviet Union.¹⁵ By the 1980s, however, changes in China’s internal politics diverted attention away from promoting revolution in Africa.¹⁶ Nevertheless, China’s engagement with Africa did not halt completely: Beijing continued to provide financial assistance to African political parties, organizations, and states, and by the mid-1980s had established formal diplomatic ties with a majority of African countries.¹⁷ By the turn of the millennium, Beijing began to reemphasize commercial, diplomatic, and political ties with African countries, in many cases leaning on those historical ties as Beijing looked to fill its need for raw materials and desire to court African political support internationally.¹⁸

Implementing Beijing’s Africa Strategy

China works to achieve its goals in Africa by leveraging its most significant bilateral relationships and exerting influence through key regional and international institutions.

^{*}Launched in 2013, China’s BRI is a well-resourced, whole-of-government concept for regional and global connectivity. Since its inception, BRI has climbed to the top of Beijing’s foreign policy agenda and has been extolled by General Secretary Xi as the “project of the century.” U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2018 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2018, 261.

[†]One of the People’s Republic of China’s goals during this time was leveraging African support to gain China’s permanent seat at the UN Security Council. The Republic of China was one of five permanent members of the Security Council until 1971. With 26 African countries voting in favor of UN Resolution 2758, Beijing gained the permanent seat at the UN Security Council when it replaced Taipei at the UN. United Nations General Assembly, “Resolution 2758,” October 25, 1971.

Reliance upon Key Strategic Partners

China has deepened ties with all countries across the continent—with the exception of Eswatini (Swaziland), which recognizes Taipei over Beijing—but clearly prioritizes its relationships with a set of major strategic partners located in each key African region.¹⁹ Some of Beijing’s top strategic partners on the continent include Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania in East Africa; Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa; Egypt and Sudan in North Africa; and Guinea and Nigeria in West Africa (see Figure 1).²⁰ Of all its strategic partners, Beijing relies most heavily on the African partners with which it developed close ideological ties during the Cold War. This ideological affinity, which draws on a shared socialist and anticolonial heritage, plays a key role in a number of China’s strongest and most enduring partnerships.*²¹ Beijing’s strategic partners rank among the most populous, economically dynamic, and culturally influential countries in each region.²²

China’s Strategic Partnerships in Africa †

Beijing has a multitiered system to rank its diplomatic partnerships with countries around the world, including in Africa. In general, the higher the partnership level, the more Beijing will engage with the country, such as by increasing economic ties and diplomatic exchanges.²³ The three highest levels of partnership are “comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership,” “comprehensive strategic partnership,” and “strategic partnership.” China counts the following African countries in these three levels of partnership:

Comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership: Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

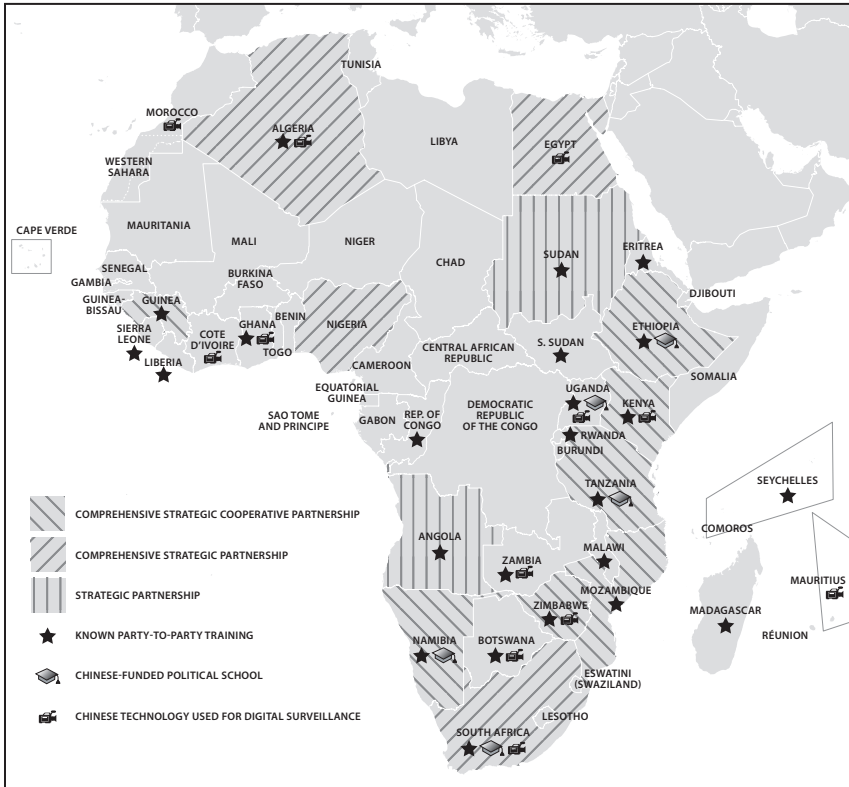
Comprehensive strategic partnership: Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa.

Strategic partnership: Angola and Sudan.²⁴

* Beijing leverages its shared ideological affinity with countries such as Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. Will Green, Leyton Nelson, and Britney Washington, “China’s Engagement with Africa: Foundations for an Alternative Governance Regime,” *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, May 1, 2020; Paul Nantulya, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China’s Military Power Projection and U.S. National Influence Strategic Aims in Africa*, February 20, 2020, 4.

† There are no clear definitions of China’s partnership arrangements. In some cases, agreements on partnership levels are negotiated bilaterally. In others, they evolve over time. In general, the higher the partnership level, the more Beijing will engage with the country through high-level engagements, enhanced contacts, and coordination of international affairs. For more on China’s partnership diplomacy, see *South China Morning Post*, “Quick Guide to China’s Diplomatic Levels,” January 20, 2016.

Figure 1: China's Strategic Partnerships in Africa



Source: Various.²⁵

Exerting Influence through Regional and International Institutions

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), established in 2000, represents a significant evolution from a relatively limited approach to the continent employed in the 1990s to a much more active one. FOCAC also significantly enhances Beijing's ability to garner widespread African support for its geopolitical and economic agenda.²⁶ FOCAC was the first major regional forum established by China* and holds meetings every three years in either China or Africa.† African participation in FOCAC has been very high, with the top leaders of nearly all African countries attending the most recent summit in 2018.‡²⁷ The various action plans published after

*Other China-led fora include the Boao Forum for Asia (2001), the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (2004), the China-CELAC Forum (2015), and the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations (2019). China's State Council Information Office, *China and the World in the New Era*, September 2019.

†The meetings could be held at either the ministerial or summit level. In total, there have been seven ministerial conferences and three summits held. *Xinhua*, "Full Text of Yang Jiechi's Written Interview with Xinhua News Agency," December 21, 2019.

‡The African countries that did not send their top leaders to attend the 2018 summit are Algeria, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, and Tanzania. These countries did send lower-ranking officials on behalf of their governments. Eswatini did not send a delegation at all as it does not have diplomatic relations with China. Yun Sun, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's Strategic Aims in Africa*, May

each FOCAC meeting provide a framework for China's engagement with Africa for the next three years. The meetings have often included Chinese pledges of additional financial support for the continent.²⁸ According to Yang Jiechi, Politburo member and director of the CCP's Central Foreign Affairs Commission Office, FOCAC allows China and African countries to use "[their] own voice" on international and regional issues, implying that Beijing's policies are accepted by all African countries.²⁹

At the 2018 summit, China and the 53 African countries in attendance agreed to defend each other's "core interests"—a term used to describe issues to which Beijing is particularly sensitive, such as human rights and Taiwan—as well as "the overall interests of developing countries."³⁰ The two sides also pledged to build a "new model of international relations" based on the "community of common human destiny." Paul Nantulya, research associate at the National Defense University, argued in his testimony before the Commission that enlisting African countries to endorse this pledge has been China's "driving objective" for FOCAC.³¹

Beyond FOCAC, Beijing uses other regional organizations and initiatives, such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to spread its influence in Africa.³² China attaches considerable importance to its relationship with the AU, which includes all 54 internationally recognized African countries and is a full member of FOCAC.*³³ Highlighting the close ties Beijing has cultivated with the institution, AU Commission Chairman Jean Ping pledged in 2009 that the AU would "continue to stand by China on major issues concerning China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," a sentiment that has continued to the present day.³⁴ The AU was also the first multilateral body to formally endorse Beijing's "community of common human destiny" framework.³⁵

In 2015, China established a permanent mission to the AU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where the AU is headquartered, and subsequently invited the AU to open an office in Beijing.³⁶ China designed, built, and paid for the AU's \$200 million headquarters, with Huawei installing the servers, raising concerns over potential Chinese espionage.† Construction consisted of a mix of Chinese and Ethiopian laborers.³⁷ David H. Shinn, former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia and Burkina Faso and currently adjunct professor at the George Washington University, noted in his testimony before the Commission that the headquarters serves as "a daily reminder [to African countries] of China's benevolence."³⁸ (See the section on China's "Digital Silk Road in Africa" for further discussion on Chi-

8, 2020, 7; Abdul Rahman Alfa Shaban, "Handful African Residents Not Attending 2018 FOCAC Summit in China," *Africa News*, March 9, 2018.

*The AU has 55 member states in total, including the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara), territory that Morocco partially controls. China does not recognize Western Sahara. David H. Shinn, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's Strategic Aims in Africa*, May 8, 2020, 6–8.

†In 2018, a French newspaper reported that the headquarters had been hacked and had its data transferred to a server in China, causing some AU officials to raise concerns over potential Chinese espionage. The AU and China later denied the allegations. Bukola Adebayo and Tim Schwarz, "China Denies Bugging African Union Headquarters It Built in Ethiopia," *CNN*, February 2, 2018; John Aglionby, Emily Feng, and Yuan Yang, "African Union Accuses China of Hacking Headquarters," *Financial Times*, January 29, 2018.

na installing telecommunications equipment in African government buildings.)

Smaller regional organizations also play into Beijing's calculus. For example, in 2018, the Economic Community of West African States accepted China's offer to provide the organization with a \$31.6 million grant to build its new headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria.³⁹ Building the headquarters in Abuja will strengthen ties with both the organization and with Nigeria, Africa's most populous country. Under the agreement, the Chinese government will choose the contractor to build the new headquarters, with the building's digital infrastructure likely to be installed by Chinese telecommunications companies.⁴⁰ Additionally, Beijing has a longstanding relationship with the OIC, which is not an Africa-focused regional organization but has 27 African members.⁴¹ Chinese and OIC senior officials conduct regular exchanges, and the OIC has supported the Chinese government's mass detentions of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups in China's western Xinjiang region.⁴² OIC officials have visited Xinjiang on delegation trips to China, such as in December 2019 when representatives from Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Niger, Nigeria, and Sudan visited the region.⁴³

China's Political Influence in Africa: Exporting an Authoritarian Model

Beijing views Africa as a uniquely promising testing ground for the export of its political and economic model and believes that if more African countries emulate China's system of governance, it will be easier for Beijing to advance its strategic objectives across the continent and globally.* As Yun Sun, codirector of the East Asia program at the Stimson Center, noted in her testimony before the Commission, "From Beijing's perspective, the popularity of the China Model is the best way to validate the credibility, or even the desirability, of the Chinese system."⁴⁴ Additionally, Beijing is able to leverage the considerable influence it gains through its political engagement to garner African support for China's broader diplomatic priorities, especially at the UN.

Deepening Influence through Political and Ideological Training

Although China's political engagement in Africa has evolved over the decades, under General Secretary Xi there has been an emphasis on spreading China's model in Africa. The Chinese government

*R. Evan Ellis, research professor of Latin American studies at the U.S. Army War College, argued in his testimony before the Commission that China's Africa strategy provides a template for Beijing's strategy in other regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean. For example, the model China employs in both Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean includes acquiring control over commodities extraction and processing operations, training media professionals and launching related influence operations, financing the construction of infrastructure, and requiring that Chinese firms do the work on Chinese-financed projects. China's efforts have not experienced as much success in Latin America and the Caribbean due to its historic ties to the United States and some countries in the region's relatively strong institutions. These factors have forced Beijing to modify its approach to Latin America and the Caribbean to adapt to local conditions, such as by emphasizing public-private partnerships and working with well-respected local partners and consultants. R. Evan Ellis, oral testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on the Chinese View of Strategic Competition with the United States*, June 24, 2020, 138; R. Evan Ellis, response to questions for the record for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on the Chinese View of Strategic Competition with the United States*, June 24, 2020, 211–213.

describes this push as “the exchange of governance experience,” implying mutual exchange between China and its African partners based on equality.⁴⁵ In reality, however, Beijing’s intention is for African states to adopt key aspects of China’s governance model, with these exchanges being “mostly a one-way street,” according to Ms. Sun.⁴⁶ To promote its model, Beijing pledged at the 2018 FOCAC summit to provide 50,000 capacity-building training opportunities for African partners, including for government officials, opinion leaders, scholars, journalists, and technical experts.⁴⁷ As Ms. Sun notes, “These are essentially the African political, economic, and social elites as well as opinion leaders that will shape the future of the continent and its relations with China.”⁴⁸

Despite the fact that Beijing is making a concerted push to enlist African elites to emulate the China model, according to a 2020 survey conducted across 18 African countries, the U.S. model was respondents’ most-preferred model of governance, although China’s model ranked a close second.⁴⁹ Additionally, according to a 2019 survey conducted across 34 African countries, three-quarters of Africans said they prefer regular, open, and honest elections to choose their national leaders—a preference that is directly in contrast to what Beijing has sought to export to Africa: state-led economic growth under one-party, authoritarian rule.⁵⁰

The CCP’s party training program is the primary mechanism Beijing employs to spread its ideology of authoritarian governance on the African continent.* The overarching goal of the program is to train African political parties to emulate China’s one-party system of governance and prevent large-scale democratization and political liberalization on the continent. According to an authoritative commentary written in 2012 by the CCP Central Liaison Department’s Africa Bureau,† the expansion of multiparty democracy in Africa in the 1990s had a “negative impact” on Sino-African political ties because Africa’s new, democratic parties “lacked understanding” of the CCP.⁵¹ The CCP claims the appeal of this training is mutual, asserting that in recent years the desire among African political parties (especially ruling parties) to conduct party-to-party training and engagements has become increasingly strong.⁵²

Operationally, Beijing is flexible in tailoring its party training to different countries. For example, the CCP would train the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), Ethiopia’s former ruling party with Marxist-Leninist roots, in traditional Leninist ideology, propaganda, and party management.‡⁵³ When the

*The CCP Central Committee’s International Department, an organization that is part of the CCP’s semiofficial diplomacy apparatus tasked with cultivating foreign officials and political parties, is the main organizing entity for Party training. The International Department is also known as the International Liaison Department. It is one of several organizations under the CCP’s Central Committee tasked with managing perceptions of Party outsiders, along with the United Front Work Department and the Propaganda Department. Alexander Bowe, “China’s Overseas United Front Work: Background and Implications for the United States,” *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, August 24, 2018; Joshua Eisenman and David H. Shinn, “China’s Strategy in Africa,” in Joshua Eisenman and Eric Heginbotham, eds., *China Steps Out: Beijing’s Major Power Engagement with the Developing World*, Routledge, 2018, 148.

†The CCP Central Liaison Department’s Africa Bureau is also known as the Fourth Bureau. *China Party-Government-Military Directory* (中国党政军名录), Mingpao Publishing House, Ltd., 2009. Translation.

‡The EPRDF was the dominant party in Ethiopia from 1991 to late 2019, when it was disbanded. For most of its history, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) led the broader EPRDF. The TPLF emphasized the EPRDF’s role as a vanguard party and the dictatorship of the proletariat and was at times particularly close with the CCP. The EPRDF had been dubbed the CCP’s

CCP trains African parties that do not have a socialist or left-wing heritage, such as South Sudan's current ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, the CCP will stress other aspects of authoritarian governance, such as the importance of the ruling regime retaining absolute control of the armed forces.⁵⁴ The CCP also engages with African opposition parties, but according to analysis by Ambassador Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, associate professor at the University of Notre Dame, these engagements are "subordinated" if they jeopardize the CCP's relations with the ruling party.⁵⁵

Many African political parties participating in these trainings are keen to integrate the CCP's teachings on governance into their own domestic political system. This is especially true among governing parties that already share elements of China's authoritarian political culture or ideological worldview. For example, during a training in China in 2011, Samson Gwede Mantashe, then secretary general and current chairperson of South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC), stated that "the Chinese Communist Party's ruling experience and party building theory merits the ANC's study and to be used as a reference."⁵⁶ In June 2020, the secretary general of Kenya's dominant Jubilee Party said, "Jubilee Party can only aspire, and where possible learn some lessons [from the CCP]."⁵⁷ After a September training session with the CCP that included lessons on General Secretary Xi's third volume of *The Governance of China*, the general secretary of the Republic of the Congo's ruling Party of Labor stated, "Congo will stand firmly on China's side under any circumstances."⁵⁸

According to Ms. Sun, these trainings "remain attractive to African parties that are inspired by the CCP's longevity and level of control" and will "ensure that the CCP continues to cultivate interest in its model from African parties well into the future."⁵⁹ Other parties that have participated in CCP trainings and engagements include the National Congress Party of Sudan, the South African Communist Party,[†] and the South West Africa People's Organization

"most eager student" for ideological training. The CCP focused its trainings for the EPRDF on critical principles underpinning a Leninist party-state, such as organizational work, ideological work, propaganda, cadre education, and relations between the central and local party committees. The CCP has also held trainings for EPRDF cadres on how China "guides" public opinion through media control. There had been some pushback from the Ethiopian opposition against the EPRDF for its close relationship with the CCP, with Ethiopian civil society and human rights activists asserting that the CCP was hardening the EPRDF's authoritarian tendencies. This pushback has even led to violence. In 2007, armed insurgents, considering Chinese firms as proxies to the EPRDF, attacked the Sinopec-operated Abole oil field, leaving at least 74 people dead. Yun Sun, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's Strategic Aims in Africa*, May 8, 2020, 8; Tom Gardner, "Will Abiy Ahmed's Bet on Ethiopia's Political Future Pay Off?" *Foreign Policy*, January 21, 2020; Tefera Negash Gebregziabher, "Ideology and Power in TPLF's Ethiopia: A Historic Reversal in the Making?" *Journal of African Affairs* 118: 472 (July 2019), 463–484; Yun Sun, "Political Party Training: China's Ideological Push in Africa?" *Brookings Institution*, July 5, 2016; *BBC*, "Scores Die in Ethiopia Oil Attack," April 24, 2007.

^{*}The Jubilee Party is a right-wing party in Kenya. As part of an agreement, the CCP has trained Jubilee Party officials on "democracy and party management." Moses Nyamori, "Jubilee Party Learns from Chinese," *Standard*, 2018.

[†]The ANC and the South African Communist Party, together with the Congress of South African Trade Unions, form a political alliance in South Africa. The CCP was an early supporter of the ANC in its struggle against apartheid, and Mao Zedong purportedly gave his blessing to the movement in 1960. These ties were disrupted during the Sino-Soviet split (1956–1966) in which the ANC backed the Soviet Union in its contest with China, but they were never truly lost. After the Cold War, former South African president and ANC leader Nelson Mandela established South Africa as a successful democracy, but the CCP's relationship with the ANC remains strong. Joshua Eisenman, "Comrades-in-Arms: The Chinese Communist Party's Relations with African Political Organizations in the Mao Era, 1949–76," *Cold War History* 18:4 (2018): 429–445; Martin

of Namibia. Beijing also funds political schools in Africa to educate Beijing's African partners on China's governance model and development experience.*⁶⁰

The CCP's party training program also acts as a unique venue for Beijing to promote its foreign policy goals. While attending training in China, African party participants receive lectures and training on a wide range of topics, such as the Chinese government's controversial international positions like Beijing's vast territorial claims in the Indo-Pacific region.⁶¹ Underscoring the role of these engagements in geopolitics, in October 2019 the CCP International Department hosted a South African delegation led by Deputy President of the ANC David Mabuza (who concurrently serves as deputy president of the country) focused on supporting China and South Africa's "core interests."⁶² In December 2019, the International Department hosted a delegation from Nigeria's ruling All Progressives Congress, which focused in part on promoting China's BRI.⁶³ As Chinese economic initiatives such as BRI expand in Africa, cooperation of ruling parties is essential for securing approval for major projects.⁶⁴

Enlisting African Support for Beijing's Global Diplomatic Goals

Beijing has used the influence it gains from its political engagement with African countries to secure support for its global diplomatic goals, including for its repressive domestic policies and disputed sovereignty claims, many of which have faced strong international criticism. Governments of multiple African countries have offered official support for the Chinese government's mass detentions of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups in China's western Xinjiang region, and many African governments have also offered approval for Beijing's suppression of the 2019 Hong Kong prodemocracy protests and its 2020 Hong Kong national security law.†⁶⁵ In a joint

Plaut, "Why Is the ANC Following the Example of the Chinese Communist Party?" *New Statesman America*, January 6, 2015.

* Beijing funds political schools in at least five African countries. For example, in July 2018 Chinese construction firms broke ground on the Julius Nyerere Leadership School in Tanzania. Named after Tanzania's founding president and revolutionary leader, the school is being built with Chinese financial support and will act as a political training academy for the ruling parties of Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. These parties make up the Former Liberation Movements of Southern Africa, an influential regional grouping of former liberation movements that have been dominant parties in their respective countries since they achieved independence. Other Chinese-funded political schools include the National Political School and the Oliver Tambo Leadership School in Uganda, the Tatak Political School in Ethiopia, Windhoek Political School in Namibia, and the Venterskroon Political School in South Africa. Will Green, Leyton Nelson, and Brittny Washington, "China's Engagement with Africa: Foundations for an Alternative Governance Regime," *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, May 1, 2020; Paul Nantulya, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's Military Power Projection and U.S. National Interests*, February 20, 2020, 4; Joshua Eisenman and Eric Heginbotham, "China's Relations with Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East," in David Shambaugh, ed., *China & the World*, Oxford University Press, 2020, 303; *Herald*, "Groundbreaking Ceremony of Julius Nyerere Leadership School Held," July 17, 2018.

† In July 2019, the following African states signed a letter to the UN Human Rights Council publicly supporting China's Xinjiang policies: Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, and Zimbabwe. Subsequent signers included Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zambia. In October 2020, 21 African states signed on to a statement offered by Cuba supporting China's Xinjiang policies at the UN General Assembly. Countries that did not support Beijing's policies in the 2019 public letter but supported them at the UN General Assembly in 2020 include Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Morocco, and Tanzania. Countries that supported China's policies in

statement issued at the “Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19” held in June, 13 African leaders* as well as the AU Commission chairperson used the forum to declare their support for some of Beijing’s controversial positions, such as its Taiwan policy.⁶⁶ The statement also lauded the leadership of World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in battling the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and issued calls for lifting international sanctions against Sudan and Zimbabwe.⁶⁷ In another example, a majority of African countries have issued statements in support of Beijing’s maritime claims in the South China Sea, key elements of which have been found to be illegal by a tribunal under the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.[†]⁶⁸ (See Addendum I for more on African countries supporting Beijing’s controversial international positions.)

Beijing has also used its influence to win African votes at the UN in support of key Chinese foreign policy priorities. Currently, the 54 internationally recognized African countries represent roughly one-quarter of UN member states and votes in the General Assembly. Beijing views support from these countries as vital to advancing its geopolitical objectives.⁶⁹ As Ambassador Shinn noted in his testimony, compared to other international fora “the United Nations General Assembly... and the UN Security Council... offer more effective forums [for China] to solicit African support.”⁷⁰ A study conducted by AidData, a research lab at William & Mary that collects aid and development assistance data, notes there is strong correlation between Chinese aid disbursements and African countries voting in support of China at the UN.⁷¹ In 2017 and 2018, China introduced resolutions for the first time to revise human rights and governance norms by inserting new language into UN texts.[‡] Both resolutions,

the 2019 letter but did not support them at the UN General Assembly in 2020 include Algeria, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, Djibouti, and Zambia. Catherine Putz, “2020 Edition: Which Countries Are For or Against China’s Xinjiang Policies?,” *Diplomat*, October 9, 2020; Catherine Putz, “Which Countries Are For or Against China’s Xinjiang Policies?” *Diplomat*, July 15, 2019; Joshua Eisenman and David H. Shinn, “Evolving Principles and Guiding Concepts: How China Gains African Support for Its Core National Interests,” *Orbis* 64:2 (2020): 271–288; Aggrey Mutambo, “China Seeks Support from Africa on Uyghur Policy,” *Daily Nation*, October 13, 2019.

*Leaders from the following countries attended the virtual summit: China, South Africa, Senegal, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Algeria, Gabon, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia. The AU Commission was also represented. *Xinhua*, “Full Text: Joint Statement of the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19,” June 18, 2020.

†Thirty-nine African countries have openly supported China’s position in the South China Sea disputes. For a list of these countries, see Wang Wen and Chen Xiaochen, “Who Supports China in the South China Sea and Why,” *Diplomat*, July 27, 2016.

‡In 2017, China offered its first independent resolution at the UN Human Rights Council on “the contribution of development to the enjoyment of human rights.” This resolution suggested that respect for human rights depends on “people-centered development” as opposed to being inherent to human dignity regardless of a country’s development level. It also included language on the importance of the “community of common human destiny” and “win-win outcomes.” In 2018, China offered a second independent resolution at the UN Human Rights Council on “promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights.” This resolution reflected Beijing’s insistence that constructive dialogue and capacity building should be the primary tools for promoting human rights at the UN. In practice, this would mean traditional resolutions that target specific countries for human rights abuses should be discarded in favor of softer mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review, a state-led peer review process. It also reemphasized the “community of common human destiny.” Paul Nantulya, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China’s Military Power Projection and U.S. National Interests*, February 20, 2020, 2; Ted Piccone, “China’s Long Game on Human Rights at the United Nations,” *Brookings Institution*, September 2018, 9–11; UN Human Rights Council, “Resolution HRC/37/L.36, Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, HRC/37/L.36,” March 19, 2018; UN Human Rights Council, “Resolution HRC/35/L.33/

which the United States opposed, passed with near-unanimous African support.⁷² China's cultivation of African support at the UN dates back to at least 2005, when Beijing enlisted African support to block Tokyo's bid for a seat on an expanded UN Security Council.⁷³

African support has proven particularly important in helping China attain leadership positions in key UN bodies. Chinese officials lead four out of the 15 UN specialized agencies, holding more positions than any other member country.* In June 2019, Qu Dongyu, China's vice minister of agriculture and rural affairs, was elected to lead the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (which is responsible for shaping global agriculture and food security policies) despite strong U.S. opposition to his candidacy.⁷⁴ African support for Mr. Qu was critical. Before the vote, Chinese diplomats reportedly met with Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni and pledged to invest at least \$25 million in new economic projects in the country in exchange for Uganda backing Mr. Qu.⁷⁵ In March 2019, a Cameroonian candidate for the position who was backed by the AU dropped out of the race after State Councilor Yang Jiechi announced that Beijing would cancel roughly \$78 million in debt Cameroon owed to China.⁷⁶ The timing of the announcement suggested a linkage between China's debt forgiveness and Cameroon's candidate dropping out of the race.⁷⁷ According to the South China Morning Post, Beijing was able to use its financial power to leverage support from African states to secure enough votes for Mr. Qu.⁷⁸ (See Chapter 1, Section 2, "The China Model: Return of the Middle Kingdom," for further discussion of China's pursuit of UN leadership positions.)

Beijing Relies on African Support to Isolate Taipei

The Chinese government has used its political influence in Africa to further its global campaign to isolate Taiwan on the international stage. As Ms. Sun asserted, one of the Chinese government's key aspirations on the continent is to end Taiwan's diplomatic presence in Africa.†⁷⁹ Since 2016, Beijing has successfully convinced two of Taipei's former diplomatic allies in Africa, São Tomé and Príncipe and Burkina Faso, to recognize Beijing.⁸⁰ In 1971, the year Beijing gained control of China's seat at the UN from Taipei, 20 African countries still had diplomatic relations with Taipei.⁸¹ According to Shin Kawashima, professor at the University of Tokyo, Chinese promises of political and economic support create "domestic pressure for [African states] to establish diplomatic relations with China so that they too can benefit from the economic largesse."⁸²

Rev.1, The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights, A/HRC/35/L.33/Rev.1," June 20, 2017.

*Chinese nationals lead the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Telecommunication Union, and UN Industrial Development Organization. U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *PRC Representation in International Organizations*, April 2020, 3–4.

† In July 2020, Taiwan made initial moves to establish ties with Somaliland, an African state that is not recognized by most in the international community. Taiwan set up a liaison office in Somaliland in August, with Somaliland following suit by setting up an office in Taiwan in September. *France24*, "Somaliland Launches Representative Office in Taiwan," September 9, 2020.

Beijing Relies on African Support to Isolate Taipei— *Continued*

China also seeks to limit the unofficial relations countries maintain with Taipei. In January 2017 during a visit by Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Nigeria's foreign minister announced that the Nigerian government had told Taipei to move its representative office from Abuja, the capital, to Lagos.⁸³ China has even leveraged its influence in Africa to undermine Taiwan's sovereignty and independent legal system. In 2016, at the request of Chinese diplomats, the Kenyan government decided to deport Taiwan citizens suspected of fraud to China instead of Taiwan, over the firm protests of Taipei.⁸⁴ (See Chapter 4, "Taiwan," for further discussion of this issue.)

Beijing Faces New Diplomatic Challenges

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges for Beijing's diplomatic efforts in Africa and may alter China's relationships and image on the continent. In April 2020, African leaders spoke out and complained to the Chinese government in unusually frank terms about the reported mistreatment of Africans living in China, including actions taken by local government officials and businesses that forced the evictions of some Africans living in Chinese hotels and prevented Africans from entering restaurants and shops.⁸⁵ These actions were ostensibly taken to stop the spread of COVID-19.⁸⁶ The AU as well as many African countries that have often been supporters of Beijing—such as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda—had expressed alarm at this development. The governments of Ghana and Nigeria, for instance, summoned the Chinese ambassadors in their countries to voice their displeasure with this apparent racially based discrimination.⁸⁷ Additionally, a group of South Africans living in China petitioned the South African Human Rights Commission to repatriate them to South Africa due to alleged abuses they suffered in China.*⁸⁸

The Chinese government encountered a further diplomatic setback in May when African countries opted not to support Beijing at the World Health Organization. Despite Beijing's strong opposition to a draft resolution proposed by Australia calling for an independent inquiry into COVID-19, the UN's African Group—consisting of all 54 internationally recognized African states—signed onto Canberra's initiative.⁸⁹ In August, Kenya moved to ban the importation of some personal protective equipment from China used to combat COVID-19, citing quality issues. According to Ambassador Shinn, although the ban will not significantly impact Sino-Kenyan relations, the concern over the quality of Chinese-made personal protective equipment is a "common theme heard throughout Africa."⁹⁰ Seeking to shore up China's reputation after global criticism of its handling of the pandemic and concerns over the quality of its medical equip-

*The South Africans who petitioned the South African Human Rights Commission complained about instances of racism, arrests by the Chinese police, and halts on payments for their jobs. Peter Fabricius, "South Africans Stuck in China Ask Human Rights Commission to Help Them Get Home," *Daily Maverick*, May 27, 2020.

ment, General Secretary Xi claimed in August that African countries will receive priority access to a Chinese-produced COVID-19 vaccine.*⁹¹

Beijing Intervenes in Africa's Domestic Politics to Further Its Interests

To promote its authoritarian political model in Africa and protect its interests on the continent, China has at times aggressively interfered in African domestic politics and sovereignty. In these cases, Beijing's actions have been in stark contrast to its public proclamation of noninterference in other countries' internal affairs.⁹² China's political interference in Africa has almost always been carried out to counter African pushback to Chinese influence and support elites sympathetic to China's governance model. Its tactics have included meddling in African countries' elections and threatening to cut off relations with governments that oppose China's policies.

One key approach Beijing has adopted to shore up parties sympathetic to China is interference in African elections. In the leadup to the 2018 presidential elections in Sierra Leone, opposition news sources reported China provided "material and financial assistance" to the incumbent pro-China All People's Congress (APC) party.⁹³ Prior to the election, Chinese nationals campaigned on behalf of the APC in full APC party uniform, and during the election APC campaigners openly admitted to "pledging allegiance" to Beijing.⁹⁴ Under APC President Ernest Koroma, whose tenure as leader of Sierra Leone lasted from 2007 to 2018, Chinese investment in the country expanded dramatically to nearly \$6 billion, while a Chinese construction firm built the APC headquarters.[†]⁹⁵ Despite China's apparent interference in the presidential election, the APC narrowly lost to the main opposition party.⁹⁶

Beijing also interfered in the 2006 Zambian presidential election to counter pushback against Chinese influence. In the run-up to the election, the Chinese ambassador to Zambia openly threatened to cut off ties with the country if it elected Michael Sata, who ran on a platform that was highly critical of the Chinese government.⁹⁷ Mr. Sata lost the 2006 election but went on to win the 2011 election.

*The Chinese government has also said it will give priority access for a COVID-19 vaccine to countries and regions of strategic interest, such as the Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Pakistan, Malaysia, and countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, in a likely attempt to improve its global standing. Some analysts have speculated that Beijing will seek to use its COVID-19 vaccine to enlist support for its broader foreign policy goals, such as China's claims in the South China Sea. Takashi Nakano, "Malaysia Promised Priority Access to China's COVID Vaccine," *Nikkei Asian Review*, October 14, 2020; China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin's Regular Press Conference on July 28, 2020," July 28, 2020; *CGTN*, "China to Prioritize Mekong Countries for COVID-19 Vaccine," August 24, 2020; Karol Suarez, "China Offers \$1 Billion Loan to Latin America and the Caribbean for Access to Its COVID-19 Vaccine," *CNN*, July 23, 2020; Diego Oré, "Mexico Says China Plans \$1 Billion Loan to Ease Latam Access to Virus Vaccine," *Reuters*, July 22, 2020; China's Foreign Ministry, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hosts Regular Press Conference on July 24, 2020" (2020年7月24日外交部发言人王文斌主持例行记者会), July 24, 2020. Translation: Saeed Shah, "China to Supply Coronavirus Vaccine to Pakistan," *Wall Street Journal*, August 13, 2020; Chao Deng, "China Seeks to Use Access to Covid-19 Vaccines for Diplomacy," *Wall Street Journal*, August 17, 2020.

† Under President Ernest Koroma, a Chinese company was supposed to build the new Mamamah International Airport for \$400 million, despite the World Bank and International Monetary Fund criticizing the idea due to the heavy debt burden it would create. Sierra Leone canceled the project in October 2018 after the main opposition party won the 2018 presidential election. *BBC News*, "Mamamah Airport: Sierra Leone Cancels China-Funded Project," October 10, 2018; David Rogers, "Will China Still Fund Sierra Leone's Fancy New International Airport?" *Global Construction Review*, January 25, 2016.

Once in office, Mr. Sata adopted a more nuanced approach to his relations with Beijing. At times he was an avid supporter of Chinese investment in the country and used the bilateral relationship to strengthen his position domestically.⁹⁸

In perhaps the most striking example of the Chinese government directly interfering in the internal affairs of another country, Beijing appears to have approved of a military-led coup d'état in Zimbabwe in 2017. By doing so, China allowed the repressive ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front, to maintain its control over the country, squashing democratic movements in the process.* From 2016 to 2017, mass demonstrations occurred against longtime ruler Robert Mugabe, with many prodemocracy groups backing or taking part in the protests.⁹⁹ One week before the coup that ultimately overthrew Mr. Mugabe and installed a new regime under President Emmerson Mnangagwa, General Constantino Chiwenga, President Mnangagwa's close ally, visited Beijing in what the Chinese Foreign Ministry dubbed a "normal military exchange."¹⁰⁰ Given the timing of General Chiwenga's visit and the fact that Beijing has deep ties to President Mnangagwa and General Chiwenga's political faction, the sequence of events suggests Beijing gave its blessing of the coup, ensuring pro-China factions retained control of the country.¹⁰¹ Beijing has officially denied any involvement in the coup.¹⁰²

Shaping Narratives and Perceptions

Beijing is seeking to shape narratives and influence the perceptions of China in African countries by gaining influence or control over African media. China is not only actively promoting its model of state-directed journalism but also seeking ownership stakes in major media outlets. The media environment in many African countries is underdeveloped, increasing the possibility of the Chinese government monopolizing news to export a Chinese worldview.¹⁰³ As part of its efforts to shape Africa's media landscape, China trains African journalists and promotes coordination between Chinese and African national broadcasting agencies and private broadcasters.¹⁰⁴

Beijing's Concerted Effort to Penetrate African Media

Chinese state-owned media has established a strong presence in every key media market in Africa. Nairobi, Kenya, hosts Xinhua's largest overseas bureau, with 150 journalists and 400 staff, and is estimated to distribute 1,800 stories monthly across the conti-

* Historically, Zimbabwe has been one of China's closest partners in Africa. China backed then guerrilla leader Robert Mugabe in his struggle against both Soviet- and Western-backed forces in the Rhodesian Bush War from 1964 to 1979, which culminated in the establishment of an independent Zimbabwe under the leadership of Mr. Mugabe and his party, the left-wing Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front. The Chinese government then diplomatically shielded the Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front regime—one of Africa's most repressive—and provided it with vital economic support. Fearing an apparent collapse of the regime as a result of the 2016–2017 protests, then Vice President and current President Mnangagwa led a coup that ultimately overthrew Mr. Mugabe in 2017. Jevans Nyabiage, "China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi Backs Call to Lift Sanctions on Zimbabwe," *South China Morning Post*, January 13, 2020; *Standard*, "Masses March against Mugabe," November 19, 2017; *BBC*, "Zimbabwe Crowds Rejoice as They Demand End to Mugabe Rule," November 18, 2017; *Zambian Observer*, "Former Zimbabwe VP Mnangagwa Begins Exile in China after Mugabe Accused Him of Witchcraft," November 8, 2017; Joseph Cotterill, "China Denies Reports It Was Forewarned of Zimbabwe Army Takeover," *Financial Times*, November 20, 2017; China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on November 15, 2017*, November 15, 2017; Anthony Lake, *The "Tar Baby" Option: American Policy toward Southern Rhodesia*, Columbia University Press, 1976, 32.

ment.¹⁰⁵ These stories are also available for free or with an inexpensive subscription service through other Chinese platforms such as *China Daily* and China Radio International, as well as StarTimes, a nominally private Chinese firm with deep ties to the CCP.*¹⁰⁶ Xinhua also has a news exchange agreement with Kenya's Nation Media Group, the largest media organization in East and Central Africa with 28 million social media followers, 11.3 million monthly page views, and 90,000 newspapers† in circulation daily.¹⁰⁷ China Global Television Network and *China Daily's* Africa operations are also headquartered in Nairobi.¹⁰⁸ The Chinese government employs its state-owned media in Africa in a way not dissimilar to the way Russia uses RT, its state-backed television network, in Europe and in the United States: to find fractures in independent media and fill them with alternative narratives.¹⁰⁹

In recent years, Chinese entities have bought stakes in African media companies to influence the content produced. As Ms. Sun argued in her testimony, "Chinese ownership of African media companies has offered Beijing direct channels of influence over the content, tone, and preferences of the media. And Beijing has used these channels."¹¹⁰ In one case, South Africa's influential Independent Media, in which Chinese entities hold a 20 percent stake, engaged in activities that have led to media censorship of journalists working at the outlet.¹¹¹ For instance, in 2018, after publishing an article critical of Beijing's mass detentions of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups in China's western Xinjiang region, an Independent Media columnist had his column removed.¹¹²

Additionally, African news organizations increasingly publish Chinese-produced editorial content while offering no indication that the content was produced by a Chinese state-run media outlet.¹¹³ For example, in November 2019 the Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation passed off as locally generated content a story lauding China's efforts to "alleviate poverty" in Xinjiang, without giving any indication of the involvement of Chinese state media.¹¹⁴ African journalists have also published pieces in Chinese state-owned media promoting China's model of governance. In May 2020, Mark Kapchanga, senior economics editor at Kenya's popular *Standard* newspaper, published an opinion piece in a Chinese state-owned media outlet lauding China's response to COVID-19 and criticizing multiparty democracy in Africa.¹¹⁵

China's leading role in modernizing African media from analog to digital technology has given Beijing added influence over the continent's media space.‡ Key to this transition is the "10,000 Villages"

*StarTimes is only nominally a private firm. It is the only company with authorization from China's Ministry of Commerce to operate in foreign countries' radio and TV industries. China's Export-Import Bank has provided the company with hundreds of millions of dollars in loans to enter the African market. StarTimes describes itself as having "cordial relations with its parent state." The company was founded in 1988 by Pang Xinxing, who worked in the CCP's Propaganda Department from 1975 to 1984 and maintains close ties with the central government. Jenni Marsh, "How China Is Slowly Expanding Its Power in Africa, One TV Set at a Time," *CNN Business*, July 24, 2019; Tsinghua University, "Pang Xinxing, Chairman of Star Times Group: Star Star's Overseas Development Strategy and Business Model," (四通时代集团董事长庞新星: 四达海外发展战略及商业模式), May 13, 2010. Translation. http://www.sem.tsinghua.edu.cn/tzggcn/TZ_37988.html.

†This figure refers to all newspapers in circulation under Kenya's Nation Media Group. Paul Nantulya, Research Associate, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, interview with Commission staff, July 31, 2020.

‡This objective was prioritized in China's 2015 white paper. According to the white paper, China "will continue to promote the digitization of radio and TV broadcasting in Africa, provide related financing, technical support and personnel training, and encourage Chinese and African

program announced by General Secretary Xi at the 2015 FOCAC summit. The program aims to provide digital satellite television to rural communities in 24 sub-Saharan countries.¹¹⁶ As of January 2020, Beijing claims it has completed equipment installation in over 80 percent of the communities participating in the program.¹¹⁷ StarTimes is the sole contractor for the project.¹¹⁸ As of September 2018, StarTimes is available to 20 million users in more than 30 African countries.¹¹⁹ The fact that the company generally does not feature Western programming on its platform, offers inexpensive access to Chinese television, and is the sole contractor for the 10,000 Villages program makes it a vital soft-power mechanism for Beijing.*

The Chinese government routinely sponsors African journalists and media figures to travel to China for training in Beijing's priorities and worldview.¹²⁰ One such initiative, the China-Africa Press Center, launched in 2014, grants African journalists all-expenses-paid trips to China for training.[†]¹²¹ African journalists who have attended training in China have been found to incorporate Chinese talking points into their home news outlets. As Reporters Without Borders notes, a group of Zambian journalists who attended training in China later published a piece praising Beijing's media governance model and arguing that Zambia should learn from China's experience.¹²² David Bandurski, codirector of the China Media Project, an independent research program in partnership with the University of Hong Kong, notes that the goal of this training is not only to improve China's image abroad but also to get "control of the narrative and legitimization of the [Communist] Party's power and governance."¹²³ Mr. Bandurski adds that China's efforts to legitimize the CCP abroad might also create a shift in international journalistic norms.¹²⁴

Beijing Exports Techno-Authoritarianism

Beijing is actively promoting its model of techno-authoritarianism, or political control facilitated by repressive internet governance and intrusive technologies, to Africa. China's dominance of Africa's telecommunications market has created conditions for authoritarian leaders on the continent to further institutionalize their repressive

enterprises to engage in joint venture cooperation." *Xinhua*, "Full Text: China's Second Africa Policy Paper," December 5, 2015.

*Some of StarTimes' deals have come under scrutiny. For example, as part of a deal to transition Zambia's migration from analog to digital technology, Zambia's state broadcaster formed a joint venture with StarTimes after securing a \$273 million loan from the Export-Import Bank of China. According to David Shullman, senior advisor at the International Republican Institute, the joint venture, which violated Zambian competition laws, would allow Chinese entities to effectively control the national broadcasting service. David Shullman, "Chinese Malign Influence and the Corrosion of Democracy: An Assessment of Chinese Interference in Thirteen Key Countries," *International Republican Institute*, 2019, 36; Li Xia, "Zambia Describes China-Funded Village Television Project as a Success," *Xinhua*, May 14, 2019; *Xinhua*, "Zambia Hails China's Funds for Digital TV Migration," July 13, 2018.

†Approximately 25–35 journalists typically participate in trainings held by the China-Africa Press Center under the China Public Diplomacy Association each year. The implementing unit is the School of Journalism at Renmin University. More broadly, Beijing is estimated to host about 1,000 media professionals in China for trainings, exchanges, and visits each year. Aubrey Hruby, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's Strategic Aims in Africa*, May 8, 2020, 9; Yun Sun, senior fellow and codirector of East Asia Program, Stimson Center, interview with Commission staff, April 13, 2020; *Economist*, "China Is Broadening Its Efforts to Win Over African Audiences," October 20, 2018; China Public Diplomacy Association, "African Journalists' China Development Research and Media Exchange Training and Graduation Ceremony Held at the School of Journalism," (非洲记者“中国发展研究与媒体交流”培训结业仪式在新闻学院举行), October 31, 2016. Translation. <http://www.chinapda.org.cn/chn/xhdt/t1413160.htm>.

inclinations through internet control and digitally enabled surveillance technologies. In contrast to the democratic multistakeholder internet model, Beijing markets to African governments the concept of “internet sovereignty” in which each country has the right to control its domestic internet space.¹²⁵ According to Adrian Shahbaz, research director for technology and democracy at Freedom House, “Chinese authorities are selling to local politicians not only products for ‘controlling’ their societies, but also a vision of how to build a prosperous and stable state without having to devolve power to the citizenry.”¹²⁶

A number of countries are emulating China’s approach to internet governance. For example, Brian Mushimba, Zambia’s minister in charge of transport and communications, has invoked a “China way” for internet governance, which includes threats to ban Google and Facebook, allegedly to combat online disinformation.¹²⁷ As part of these efforts, Zambia is moving to enact legislation on cybercrime and cybersecurity that would make posting online information deemed to harm national security punishable by jail time.¹²⁸ At least several Zambians have already been sent to prison on charges of defamation for criticizing President Edgar Lungu in social media posts.¹²⁹ Civil society organizations such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa Zambia and Bloggers of Zambia have criticized the government’s cybersecurity plans.¹³⁰ Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe have also sought to adopt aspects of Beijing’s model for internet governance.¹³¹

Chinese telecommunications companies have provided autocratic regimes direct assistance in suppressing opposition figures. According to senior Zambian security officials, technicians from Huawei helped the government access the phones and Facebook pages of a group of bloggers running a key opposition website that had repeatedly criticized President Lungu.¹³² At least two Huawei experts based in a cybersurveillance unit of Zambia’s telecoms regulator were in constant contact with police units dispatched to arrest the bloggers.¹³³ China has similarly supported President Museveni, now in his 33rd year as Uganda’s ruler, in maintaining power by employing Chinese technology to crack down on dissent. In August 2019, the Wall Street Journal reported that in 2018, senior Ugandan intelligence officials enlisted Huawei technicians to assist them in penetrating the digital communications of Bobi Wine—an opposition member of parliament who is running against President Museveni in 2021—which led to the arrest of Mr. Wine and dozens of his supporters.*¹³⁴

Beijing is also contributing to the growth of digitally enabled authoritarianism in Africa through the sale of advanced surveillance technologies. These efforts include Beijing’s promotion of the “Digital Silk Road”—a subset of BRI—through which China has greatly expanded the sale of digital technology to the continent. (For more on China’s expansion into Africa’s e-commerce market and digital economy, see “The Digital Silk Road in Africa” later in this section.)

*Mr. Wine has been arrested a number of times by the Museveni government. He was most recently released from police custody in January 2020. Mr. Wine has continued to campaign for the 2021 elections. Denis Edema, “Police Disperse Bobi Wine supporters in Jinja,” *Daily Monitor*, July 11, 2020; Rufaro Samanga, “Bobi Wine Released from Police Custody Following Arrest,” *OkayAfrica*, January 7, 2020.

Steven Feldstein, nonresident fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted in his testimony before the Commission that 12 African countries currently use Chinese companies to supply their advanced surveillance technologies.¹³⁵ There are a number of legitimate applications for these technologies, including those used in smart city projects* such as managing traffic congestion, directing emergency vehicles, and fostering sustainable energy use.¹³⁶

There are also examples of governments abusing these systems. In Uganda, for instance, President Museveni signed a \$126 million deal with Huawei for a smart city surveillance technology project, part of which is focused on building a new digital surveillance unit for the police force and installing hundreds more street cameras in the capital, Kampala.¹³⁷ Ugandan opposition lawmakers have criticized the project for its lack of transparency and potential security risks, with one saying, “There appears to be a policy to hand over the country’s entire communications infrastructure to the Chinese.... It’s unwise given our concerns about spying and creating backdoor channels.”¹³⁸ Chinese companies have also provided advanced surveillance technologies to Zimbabwe, a country with which Western firms generally do not do business due to international sanctions.¹³⁹ As Mr. Feldstein argued, these Chinese firms are “directly propping up an oppressive government [in Zimbabwe] that willingly and violently subdues its population.”¹⁴⁰

Some Africans have expressed alarm that data gathered by Chinese technology companies for African governments may be shared with Beijing. As Mr. Feldstein noted in his testimony, this worry over data privacy is a concern in some African states, particularly in democratic countries such as Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, and South Africa.¹⁴¹ There is already at least one example of a country possibly sharing with the Chinese government data gathered by a Chinese technology company. In 2018, the Zimbabwean government signed an agreement with CloudWalk Technology, a Guangzhou-based firm, to build a national facial recognition database and monitoring system.¹⁴² Under the deal, Zimbabwe would send biometric data on millions of its citizens to China to assist in the development of facial recognition algorithms—an arrangement that had no input from the Zimbabwean people.¹⁴³ The Australian Strategic Policy Institute describes this deal as a form of “data colonialism.”¹⁴⁴

China’s Economic Activity in Africa: Building Africa’s Infrastructure while Controlling Its Resources

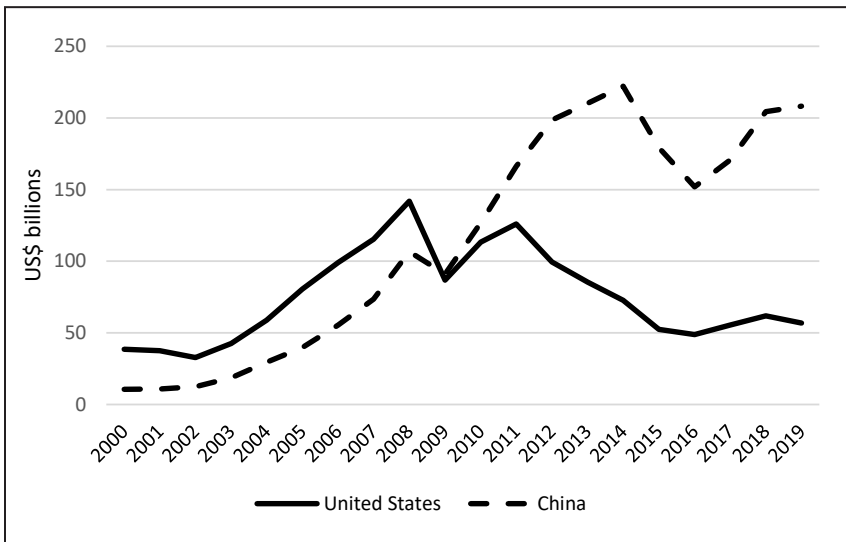
China’s economic activity across Africa represents a small but growing segment of China’s overall economic activity abroad. While China’s trade with and investment across Africa has typically been defined by

* Smart cities use connected technologies including cameras, sensors, and GPS devices to collect a wide variety of data for urban management applications ranging from moderating traffic flow to policing and crime prevention. Smart city surveillance technology refers to advanced surveillance technology that can be used in smart cities, including cameras equipped with artificial intelligence applications such as facial recognition. Safe city systems provide immediate solutions for platforms to integrate and manage various surveillance tools. Nine African countries use safe city systems provided by Chinese firms: Botswana, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia. Steven Feldstein, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China’s Strategic Aims in Africa*, May 8, 2020, 5–6; Steven Feldstein, nonresident fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, interview with Commission staff, April 17, 2020; Steven Feldstein, “The Global Expansion of AI Surveillance,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, September 17, 2019; Adam Segal, “When China Rules the World,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2018.

infrastructure and commodities, Africa's growing digital economy has provided new avenues for economic engagement, particularly as Beijing seeks to increase its technological influence through its Digital Silk Road development initiative. China is Africa's largest trading partner, having surpassed the United States in 2009.¹⁴⁵ In 2000, the year of the first FOCAC summit, China-Africa trade was \$10.6 billion, with China exporting \$5.1 billion and importing \$5.5 billion.¹⁴⁶ By 2018, bilateral trade expanded to \$204.3 billion, with China exporting \$105.7 billion and importing \$98.7 billion.¹⁴⁷

China is also a significant source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa, with its cumulative FDI totaling \$46 billion in 2018, the fifth-largest amount of investment in Africa that year.¹⁴⁸ The United States ranked fourth, with \$48 billion of cumulative investment in 2018.¹⁴⁹ The acceleration in China's investment is notable: Chinese FDI grew by 44 percent between 2014 and 2018, in contrast with a 30 percent fall in U.S. FDI over the same period.¹⁵⁰ As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, economic activity between China and Africa has seen a pronounced slowdown in 2020, with bilateral trade in the first half of the year falling to \$82.4 billion, down 19.3 percent compared with 2019.¹⁵¹

Figure 2: U.S. and Chinese Bilateral Goods Trade with Africa, 2000–2019



Note: Figures include total goods exports and imports. U.S. and Chinese aggregations of African trade data may include minor differences in trade partners.

Source: China General Administration of Customs via CEIC Database; U.S. Census Bureau, *Trade in Goods with Africa*.

Lending constitutes an important part of China's economic relations with Africa.* According to Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced

*While China is Africa's largest bilateral lender, the United States is by far the largest provider of aid (i.e., financial assistance that does not require repayment). Between 2013 and 2018, U.S. aid to Africa totaled over \$72 billion; by contrast, China's foreign aid expenditures worldwide totaled \$16.8 billion over the same period. United States Agency of International Development, *Foreign Aid Explorer*; SAIS China Africa Research Initiative, "Data: Chinese Foreign Aid."

International Studies (SAIS) China Africa Research Initiative (CARI), Chinese loans to Africa between 2000 and 2017 totaled more than \$145 billion, with financing coming primarily from the Export-Import Bank of China (China EXIM Bank) and China Development Bank, two of China's policy banks.¹⁵² A 2018 report by the Jubilee Debt Campaign, an international organization focused on debt alleviation for the world's poorest countries, stated that bilateral debt from Chinese lenders accounts for 24 percent of Africa's external debt, compared to 32 percent from global private sector lenders (excluding China), 16 percent from the World Bank, 19 percent from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral institutions, and 10 percent from Paris Club governments.*¹⁵³ At the 2018 FOCAC summit, General Secretary Xi encouraged Chinese companies to invest no less than \$10 billion on the continent from 2018 to 2021 and pledged \$60 billion in financing.†¹⁵⁴

While traditional sectors such as infrastructure and commodities dominate China's economic engagement with Africa, Chinese manufacturing firms also have a growing presence in Africa. According to a 2017 report by McKinsey, Chinese firms produce 12 percent of Africa's manufacturing output.¹⁵⁵ Chinese investors, drawn by lower labor costs and an abundance of raw materials, have funded the construction of free trade zones and industrial parks in Africa.¹⁵⁶ Chinese firms have also shipped goods through these zones in Africa in order to gain advantage of preferential trade policies toward African countries, a process known as transshipment.¹⁵⁷ (For more on Chinese transshipment through African countries, see the textbox "Chinese Firms Benefit from the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act" in this section). As of 2018, 45 free trade zones and industrial parks affiliated with China are located in 16 African countries.‡

Some African countries have sought Chinese manufacturing investment as a means of advancing domestic industrialization. For example, as of 2020, Ethiopia, which has set a goal of becoming Africa's leading manufacturing hub by 2025, has used Chinese investment, construction, and technology to build 12 of its industrial parks, with plans for three more.¹⁵⁸ Chinese manufacturing investment, however, does not always translate to benefits for the domestic manufacturing industries. A 2020 study by SAIS CARI examining Chinese manufacturing investment in Nigeria, for instance, found low levels of skill and technology transfer from Chinese to Nigerian firms. The study concluded Nigeria's experience "raises questions over the efficacy of special economic zones in spurring clustering and economic spillovers and reinforces the need for adequate logistics and proper management, both of which have been a struggle in Chinese-established industrial zones."¹⁵⁹

*The Paris Club is a group of officials from 22 major lending countries; it includes the United States but not China. Paris Club, "Permanent Members."

†China's \$60 billion financing pledge includes a combination of aid, loans, credit, and special funding. Christian Shepherd and Ben Blanchard, "China's Xi Offers Another \$60 Billion to Africa, but Says No to Vanity Projects," *Reuters*, September 3, 2019.

‡The African countries with free trade zones or industrial parks are Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Li Humei et al., "Information Dataset of China's Overseas Industrial Parks from 1992 to 2018" (1992–2018年中国境外产业园区信息数据集), *Science Data Bank*, 2019. Translation. <http://www.csdata.org/p/318/>; Emily de La Bruyère and Nathan Pearsic, "Two Markets, Two Resources: China's Africa Engagement in Context," Horizon Advisory (prepared for the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission), November 2020, 78–79.

Chinese Firms Benefit from the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act

Chinese manufacturing firms operating in Africa have benefited from preferential U.S. trade policies toward African countries, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a U.S. law providing manufacturers from eligible African countries tariff-free access to the United States for certain products, most notably textiles. A 2012 study from the University of Oxford's Center for the Study of African Economies analyzed apparel exports from AGOA countries to the United States in 1996–2008, when Chinese textile exports to the United States were subject to quotas.* The study found a significant share of apparel exports from AGOA countries during this period were originally produced in China and transshipped through Africa.† For example, according to the study as much as 64 percent of U.S. textile imports from Botswana and 55 percent of U.S. textile exports from Uganda were originally made in China.¹⁶⁰

After the expiration of the majority of quotas on Chinese textiles in 2005, the practice of transshipment through AGOA countries declined significantly.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, the extent to which China, rather than Africa, benefits from AGOA has remained a topic of controversy on the continent.‡ In 2016, Tito Mboweni, now South Africa's minister of finance, criticized China's use of AGOA, saying, "Chinese entrepreneurs benefited from [AGOA]... [but] very few African entrepreneurs benefited. For our governments to build many shell factories and literally hand them over to Chinese entrepreneurs is actually an embarrassment for all of us."¹⁶² Moreover, recent trade tensions between the United States and China, including U.S. restrictions on certain products made with forced labor in Xinjiang, raise the possibility that Chinese manufacturers could begin transshipment through AGOA countries again.¹⁶³

Beijing Extends Control over African Resources

China is the world's largest importer of oil, natural gas, and coal. Since the mid-1990s, African energy and minerals have been a large component of those energy imports, making these resources an increasingly important part of China's economic ties with many African countries.¹⁶⁴ In 2019, 81.2 percent of all Chinese imports from

*Quotas on Chinese textiles expired at the end of 2008. Lorenzo Rotunno, Pierre-Louis Vézina, and Zheng Wang, "The Rise and Fall of (Chinese) African Exports," *University of Oxford Center for the Study of African Economies*, August 2012, 9.

†Shipping goods through an intermediary country in order to avoid trade barriers is known as transshipment. Transshipment is typically impermissible under trade agreements, which generally contain rules of origin setting forth criteria for how much processing must occur in a given country for a good to be deemed to originate from that country. AGOA, however, contains waivers on rules of origin for textiles for many African countries, making transshipment of Chinese goods legally permissible. Lorenzo Rotunno, Pierre-Louis Vézina, and Zheng Wang, "The Rise and Fall of (Chinese) African Exports," *University of Oxford Center for the Study of African Economies*, August 2012, 2.

‡Unlike many trade agreements, AGOA does not include rules of origin for many countries, which set forth criteria for how much processing must occur in a given country for a good to be deemed to originate from that country for purposes of determining tariffs. As a result, businesses in AGOA countries can source goods from China and reexport them to the United States. David Thomas, "Does AGOA Unfairly Benefit Chinese Firms?" *African Business*, February 13, 2017.

Africa were oil, ores, and precious metals.¹⁶⁵ In 2018, Africa supplied more than 25 percent of China's oil and gas imports, making it China's second-largest supplier after the Middle East.¹⁶⁶ Africa is also China's biggest source of other key minerals. In 2018, 72 percent of China's imports of base metals including tungsten, cobalt, magnesium, and titanium came from Africa.¹⁶⁷

Beijing's acquisition of African commodities goes beyond open-market purchases. It also seeks to gain control of these commodities at the source in line with the strategy articulated in the 1990s under the construct of "two markets, two resources."¹⁶⁸ In 2003, Yao Guimei, Africa researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, called the development of African mineral resources "a major strategy to solve the safety and long-term stable supply of China's mineral resources under the guidance of the Central Government's principle of 'using Two Resources and opening Two Markets.'¹⁶⁹ Instead of relying on open-market purchases of commodities from Africa, Yao said, "[i]t is a better policy to go to African countries for exploration, to establish independent mining companies, and to gradually set up our own global mineral resources supply guarantee system."¹⁷⁰

"Two Markets, Two Resources": Beijing's Plan to Control Foreign Commodities

Due to China's high dependence on imports of natural resources, Chinese policymakers have long sought not only access to but also control over commodities produced in foreign countries. This desire for control over foreign commodities has manifested in Beijing's "two resources, two markets" initiative, which emphasizes investment in foreign commodities. At the Third Plenary meeting of the 14th Party Congress in 1993, the CCP defined China's foreign economic agenda as fully using domestic and international markets, as well as the resources of both, in order to meet China's commodity needs.¹⁷¹ Beijing has also discussed the importance of "two markets and two resources" in framing the BRI. In 2016, China's then Minister of Commerce Gao Hucheng stated in a speech about BRI that China needs to "better take advantage of the two markets and two resources."¹⁷²

By investing abroad, Beijing ensures that China has steady access to critical commodities as well as greater control over the global supply chain of these commodities. This affords Beijing not only a degree of pricing power for commodities but also the potential to restrict access to other producers and consumers of these commodities. As Emily de La Bruyère of Horizon Advisory noted in her testimony before the Commission, Beijing's "two markets, two resources" strategy represents "one-sided integration. It promises asymmetric leverage over a globalized system, the ability to obtain without sharing and shape without being shaped."¹⁷³

China's first large-scale investment in African commodities was in oil in 1997, when the China National Petroleum Corporation took a 40 percent stake in the Greater Nile Petroleum Company, a Sudanese company. Since 1997, 63 percent of Sudan's crude petroleum exports have gone to China.¹⁷⁴ China has continued to make signif-

icant investments in the oil industries of various African countries. Between 2005 and 2017, Chinese FDI to African oil and gas projects totaled \$20.6 billion.¹⁷⁵ Niger was the largest recipient of Chinese oil FDI, with \$4.9 billion of investment; other countries with substantial FDI investment include Angola, Mozambique, Uganda, and Nigeria.¹⁷⁶ China continues to place a special emphasis on investment in African oil. According to estimates, Africa will be the top destination for FDI from China's national oil companies through 2023, with an estimated \$15 billion in investment.*¹⁷⁷

Aside from oil, China has invested heavily in mineral commodities, most notably cobalt. Crucial to the manufacturing of products such as electric vehicle batteries and jet aircraft, cobalt has seen accelerating global demand as adoption of these technologies grows.¹⁷⁸ In 2017, China imported 98 percent of all cobalt it refined, mostly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which produced more than two-thirds of cobalt mined globally.¹⁷⁹ To help manage this import dependency, China has been taking direct stakes in cobalt mines. As of 2017, eight of the 14 largest cobalt mining companies in the DRC—accounting for nearly half the country's output—were Chinese-owned.†¹⁸⁰

China has also invested in African platinum, a necessary component for manufacturing catalytic converters that reduce automobile emissions.¹⁸¹ In 2015, China's Zijin Mining Group Company completed its acquisition of NKWE Platinum Limited, which holds assets in South Africa's Bushveld Complex, a vast geological formation that contains the world's largest known reserves of platinum group metals.¹⁸² China has ownership stakes in other African mineral operations as well, including manganese ore, ferrochrome, bauxite, and copper ore.¹⁸³ According to analysis by the United States Geological Service, China's ownership stake in African commodities operations provides Beijing with potential leverage over other countries that depend on African commodities, including the United States, which is highly dependent on African imports of commodities such as cobalt, tantalum, and platinum group metals.¹⁸⁴

Working Conditions at Chinese-Owned Commodities Firms in Africa Cause Controversy

African and foreign observers have criticized Chinese-run firms in Africa's mining sector over their treatment of African workers. While controversy over China's labor practices is not limited to the commodities sector, the inherently dangerous nature of mining operations has increased scrutiny over labor conditions in Chinese-owned or -operated mines. These practices have at times been enabled by lax enforcement and outright corruption

*According to data and analytics firm GlobalData, this investment is the fourth highest planned in the region between 2019 and 2023, following investments from multinational oil companies BP, Royal Dutch Shell, and Eni. GlobalData, "China's NOCs to Be Fourth Highest Upstream Investors in Africa over Next Five Years, Says GlobalData," June 19, 2019.

†When China's overseas cobalt ownership is taken into account, China's net import dependence for cobalt falls from 97 percent to 68 percent, according to analysis by the United States Geological Survey. China's ownership of foreign commodities production lowers the country's import dependence because it has control over those commodities at the source to the extent of its ownership share; therefore, while those commodities are imports, they are not subject to the same supply risks. Andrew L. Gulley, Erin A. McCullough, and Kim B. Shedd, "China's Domestic and Foreign Influence in the Global Cobalt Supply Chain," *Resources Policy* 62 (2019): 317–323.

Working Conditions at Chinese-Owned Commodities Firms in Africa Cause Controversy—Continued

in African countries.¹⁸⁵ In 2011, Human Rights Watch found that Chinese-run mines had far worse working conditions than other foreign-owned copper mines in Zambia, including poor ventilation, long working hours, and a lack of personal protective equipment.¹⁸⁶ Other reviews of China's labor practices in Africa have found that China is not an outlier among mining companies operating in Africa. For instance, a 2019 study by SAIS CARI examining violence against African mining workers in the DRC, South Africa, and Zambia found that Chinese-owned mines had fewer incidents of violence than mines owned by South African and United Kingdom (UK) companies.¹⁸⁷

Chinese-owned firms continue to receive criticism over their treatment of African workers, however. In April 2019, employees of a Chinese-owned lime plant in Zimbabwe accused the firm's Chinese management of underpaying workers, failing to provide personal protective equipment, and physically and verbally attacking workers.¹⁸⁸ In June 2020, Zhang Xuelin, the Chinese owner of a coal mine in Zimbabwe, was charged with attempted murder after shooting two local workers during a wage dispute.¹⁸⁹ The Chinese Embassy in Zimbabwe issued a statement expressing concern but called the shooting an "isolated incident."¹⁹⁰ The Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association, a public interest group based in Zimbabwe, characterized the shooting, however, as "part of a systematic and widespread pattern of labor rights violations by Chinese companies and investors in the extractive sector."¹⁹¹

In addition to FDI, China has also gained steady access to commodities across Africa by providing infrastructure loans to African countries under a structure that requires in-kind payments in commodities, also known as resource-backed loans. China has used this method of financing so frequently with Angola that it has been termed the "Angola model." In the mid-2000s, China had identified Angola as a potential source for oil, but Angola's infrastructure was in severe disrepair following a decades-long civil war that ended in 2002. Beijing offered to meet much of Angola's infrastructure needs by sending Chinese construction companies to complete the jobs in exchange for oil shipments instead of cash.*¹⁹² Angola's arrangement with China remains the most prominent example of the resource-backed loan model in Africa, with \$24 billion worth of such loans as of 2016.†¹⁹³ At least nine other African countries, howev-

*According to Transparency International, a nongovernmental organization that studies global corruption, Angola is among the most corrupt countries in the world, ranking 146 out of 198 countries in 2019. Isabel dos Santos, daughter of former president José Eduardo dos Santos, has been charged with embezzling \$1 billion during her tenure as chairwoman of state oil company Sonangol. Assets recovered by Angolan prosecutors included properties owned by the Hong Kong-based China International Fund. Candido Mendes, "Angola Seizes Properties Held by China International Fund," *Bloomberg*, February 11, 2020; *BBC*, "Isabel dos Santos: Africa's Richest Woman Accused of Fraud," January 23, 2020; Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index."

†A review of Angola's infrastructure investments from 2013–2016 by Chatham House, a UK nongovernmental organization focusing on international affairs, found that despite abundant financing, Angola's infrastructure development has been largely ineffective due to factors such

er, have entered into resource-backed loan agreements with China, most notably the Republic of the Congo (\$5.1 billion as of 2016), the DRC (\$3.5 billion as of 2016), and Guinea (which contracted a \$20 billion loan in 2017 backed by its bauxite production).^{*194}

Infrastructure Financing

Lack of adequate infrastructure remains a key economic challenge for Africa. According to a 2019 estimate by the African Development Bank, Africa's annual infrastructure needs are between \$130 billion and \$170 billion, but current funding falls short by between \$68 billion and \$108 billion per year.¹⁹⁵ Although most observers agree that China is the largest bilateral financier of infrastructure in Africa, lack of comprehensive data and consistent metrics makes a definitive assessment challenging. According to the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, a data agency associated with the African Development Bank, China committed \$25.7 billion to African infrastructure projects in 2018, while the United States committed \$297 million.^{†196} According to Deloitte, between 2018 and 2019 China financed 20.4 percent and built 31 percent of construction projects in Africa.[‡] Over the same period, the United States and international development finance institutions together financed 10.2 percent of projects, and U.S. companies constructed 2.9 percent of projects.¹⁹⁷ Infrastructure constitutes a significant majority of China's overall lending to Africa: according to SAIS CARI, of the \$105 billion in Chinese lending to Africa from 2012 to 2017, more than three-quarters was for mining, agriculture, power, transportation, and water.¹⁹⁸

In contrast to loans from multilateral institutions, Chinese loans are notable for not including a competitive bidding process. As Scott Morris of the Center for Global Development noted in his testimony before the Commission, infrastructure loans from entities such as the World Bank include standards for "international, competitive bidding, sometimes with preferences for local firms" in order to guard against potential corruption and achieve a high-quality project at the lowest cost.¹⁹⁹ By contrast, Chinese infrastructure loans typically come with a particular Chinese construction firm in mind and have "little evidence of, or process for, competitive bidding arrangements even among Chinese firms, let alone on a global basis."²⁰⁰ This lending practice, which Mr. Morris refers to as "tied" financing, raises the risk of corruption, inflated project costs, and lower quality.²⁰¹

Tied financing also excludes foreign bidders from competing for Chinese-funded infrastructure projects. China's dominance in construction is not solely due to its tied financing. Chinese firms have

as "insufficient capacity, a lack of transparency, low levels of skilled labor, corruption, and unbalanced planning." Søren Kirk Jensen, "Angola's Infrastructure Ambitions through Booms and Busts: Policy, Governance, and Reform," *Chatham House*, September 2018, 1.

*As of 2016, the following African countries have taken out resource-backed loans from China: Angola, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, the Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. David Mihalyi, Aisha Adam, and Jyhjong Hwang, "Resource-Backed Loans: Pitfalls and Potential," *Natural Resource Governance Institute*, February 2020, 7.

†The numbers for the United States do not take into account U.S. support for multilateral lending institutions such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank. Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, "Infrastructure Financing Trends in Africa – 2017," 84.

‡The Deloitte report tracked construction projects valued at \$50 million or above. Deloitte, "Africa Construction Trends Report," 2019.

benefitted from significant government subsidies, allowing them to submit lower bids for many construction projects.²⁰² According to Aubrey Hruby, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Africa Center, Chinese firms have won 42 percent by value of all World Bank open-bid contracts with bids that are often 40 percent less expensive than competitor firms.²⁰³ Nevertheless, tied financing presents an additional significant obstacle to non-Chinese firms. As Ms. Hruby noted, "The opaque nature of [Chinese infrastructure deals] creates a data gap, making it difficult to assess the scale of competitive disadvantage faced by U.S. companies in African markets," but given China's tied lending practices, U.S. companies "will continue to struggle to compete with the Chinese for large infrastructure projects for the foreseeable future."²⁰⁴

China's investments and loans afford it the opportunity to exercise control over African infrastructure. China's investment in African ports highlights the extent of this control. According to a 2019 study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 46 existing or planned port projects in sub-Saharan Africa are funded, built, or operated by Chinese enterprises.²⁰⁵ Of these 46 port projects, China has constructed 41 of the ports, has provided financing for 27, and has operational control of 11.* One of these ports, the Port of Djibouti, is already a dual-use military-civil facility, and several other civilian ports have the potential for military use by the People's Liberation Army (PLA).²⁰⁶ (For more on the dual use of ports, see Chapter 3, Section 2, "China's Growing Power Projection and Expeditionary Capabilities.")

Concerns over China's Role in Africa's Growing Debt

While China plays an important role in helping Africa meet its infrastructure needs, its lending practices remain controversial. The World Bank and IMF have cautioned that Africa's rapidly rising debt is unsustainable and have pointed to China's opaque lending practices as a particular source of concern.²⁰⁷ Because China's government does not publish official data on its overseas lending, the exact amount of Africa's debt is unclear, but by any account it is substantial and growing. According to a 2019 working paper by the National Bureau of Economic Research, fully half of Chinese lending to developing countries is not reported to the World Bank or IMF.²⁰⁸ The study found that the top 50 recipients of Chinese lending—a group that includes 24 African countries—owe an average of 40 percent of their external debt to China as of 2017.²⁰⁹ Moreover, 13 African countries owe the equivalent of at least 10 percent of their gross domestic product to China, according to the study.†

According to Rhodium Group's 2019 analysis of Chinese debt renegotiations, none of the 22 publicly disclosed instances of debt renegotiation with African nations resulted in asset seizures, with outcomes instead including refinancing, write-offs, deferments, and

*The study defines "operation" of ports as ports where Chinese entities own more than a 50 percent equity share or have been contractually granted the right to operate the facilities or ports. Judd Devermont et al., "Assessing the Risks of Chinese Investments in Sub-Saharan African Ports," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, June 4, 2019.

†The countries are Djibouti, the Republic of the Congo, Niger, Zambia, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, and Uganda. Sebastian Horn, Carmen M. Reinhart, and Christoph Trebesch, "China's Overseas Lending," *National Bureau of Economic Research*, May 2020, 15.

withholding of further lending.²¹⁰ The Rhodium Group analysis also found that the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka remains the only confirmed instance of an asset seizure related to Chinese infrastructure loans.*²¹¹

In 2020, most countries in Africa suffered several shocks that threaten to derail their economic growth and exacerbate ongoing debt problems. According to the World Bank, the worldwide economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to cause the first recession in sub-Saharan Africa in 25 years, with economic contraction estimated between -2.1 percent and -5.1 percent this year.²¹² This recession exacerbates an ongoing agricultural disaster in East Africa, where the worst locust infestation in 70 years has devastated crops in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Eritrea, and Djibouti, jeopardizing agricultural production and food security in these countries.²¹³ Amid these economic shocks, calls for African debt relief have increased, particularly with regard to China, whose status as the largest single lender to the continent makes its participation in African debt relief efforts critical.²¹⁴

In the wake of the economic slowdown caused by COVID-19, Beijing has made several public commitments to debt relief and financial assistance. In April, G20 members, including China, agreed to a Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) that will suspend debt payments for 73 eligible low- and lower middle-income countries through the end of 2020. In October, the G20 announced the DSSI would be extended through the end of June 2021.²¹⁵ Forty-one African countries are eligible for DSSI; as of October, 29 African countries are participating in the initiative. Of the debt due from countries participating in the DSSI, 70 percent (\$7.2 billion) is owed to China.²¹⁶ In October, Zhao Lijian, spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced that China EXIM Bank had signed deals with 11 African countries under the DSSI and that China would forgive loans for 15 African countries set to mature at the end of 2020.²¹⁷ Mr. Zhao also stated non-official creditors had reached deals with some African countries under the DSSI. Mr. Zhao did not disclose the names of the countries or the terms of the deals, though Angola, the Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Kenya, and Zambia have reportedly engaged in debt restructuring negotiations with the Chinese government.²¹⁸

Officials from other creditor countries have criticized China for its lack of transparency in the DSSI as well as for excluding China Development Bank loans from the initiative. In September, G7 finance ministers issued a statement following a conference on debt relief initiatives that expressed regret over “the decision by some countries to classify large state-owned, government-controlled financial institutions as commercial lenders and not as official bilateral creditors, without providing comparable treatment nor transparency”—a thinly veiled criticism of the Chinese government.²¹⁹ Fol-

*In October 2020, the government of Sri Lanka was in negotiations for a \$500 billion loan from the China Development Bank, the second tranche in a \$1.2 billion syndicated loan from the institution. The government of Sri Lanka, which is seeking to avoid defaulting on foreign debts, chose the Chinese lender over approaching the IMF. Nivard Cabraal, Sri Lanka's Minister of Money and Capital Market and State Enterprise Reforms, said approaching the IMF would be a “danger signal.” Marwaan Macan-Markar, “Sri Lanka Turns to China Rather Than IMF to Avoid Default,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, October 12, 2020; *Yahoo News*, “Sri Lanka Looking Forward to USD 1bn Currency Swap with India to Boost Foreign Reserves,” October 1, 2020.

lowing the conference, Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso offered more pointed criticism, calling China's participation in the DSSI "totally insufficient" and saying the G7 "must apply further pressure on China."²²⁰ World Bank President David Malpass has also criticized China's lack of participation in the DSSI. During a speech on debt relief in October, Mr. Malpass singled out "the rapid growth of new official lenders, especially several of China's well-capitalized creditors," which "have expanded their portfolios dramatically and are not fully participating in the debt rescheduling processes that were developed to soften previous waves of debt."²²¹ Mr. Malpass had earlier said the inclusion of China Development Bank loans in the DSSI was "important to make the initiative work."²²²

Some African countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya, have so far declined to participate in the DSSI, likely due to concerns that doing so could lead to a credit downgrade and jeopardize their access to international capital markets.²²³ Some African countries have also expressed reluctance to accept the G20's conditions for suspension of debt payments, which include full disclosure of public sector debt and a prohibition on accepting most new nonconcessional debt.²²⁴ The Chinese government has been unwilling to report publicly on the amounts, durations, and rates of its loans to developing countries—disclosures that are viewed as an important part of sustainable lending by institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF.²²⁵ Therefore, China may continue its traditional approach of dealing with debt relief on a bilateral basis, an idea that has already found some support in Africa.* According to Mr. Morris, while "Chinese officials might want to approach each of these countries on a case-by-case basis, wrapping debt restructurings in the traditional cloak of foreign policy, there is no precedent for China or any other government to address a systemic crisis in this way."²²⁶

If debt relief occurs but does not include adequate contributions from Beijing, other creditor countries risk bailing out China's irresponsible lending practices. Some African governments have reported that Chinese government officials have cited loan provisions calling for the transfer of collateral to Beijing for debt forgiveness. Senior Zambian government officials have stated that they may transfer ownership of the country's third-largest copper mine to Beijing in order to receive debt relief.²²⁷ Additionally, two Chinese loans to Uganda—one to upgrade an airport and another to build a power plant—contain asset-forfeiture provisions in the event of a default.²²⁸ These reports have given rise to further claims by African commentators that China is engaging in debt-trap diplomacy.²²⁹

The Digital Silk Road in Africa

While infrastructure investments continue to play a dominant role in China-Africa economic relations, China has made increasing inroads into Africa's digital economy, particularly Africa's mobile

* Kenya's Treasury Secretary Ukur Yatani Kanacho said in May that Kenya will negotiate bilaterally with its creditors, including China. Discussions stalled in July as the Kenyan government reportedly decided to participate in the DSSI; however, as of October, Kenya is not a participant. Jevans Nyabiage, "All Eyes on China as Africa Spurns G20 Debt Relief Plan," *South China Morning Post*, May 26, 2020; Eric Olander, "Kenya-China Debt Relief Talks Stall," *China-Africa Project*, July 10, 2020; World Bank, "COVID 19: Debt Service Suspension Initiative."

phone handset market.* Shenzhen-based Transsion controls 64 percent of the African feature phone market and leads the smartphone market with a 36 percent market share.†²³⁰ Chinese companies also have dominated the efforts to build Africa’s telecommunications infrastructure: Huawei and ZTE have built more than 40 3G networks in over 30 African countries, and Huawei has built roughly 70 percent of Africa’s 4G networks.²³¹ This expansion into Africa was facilitated by generous loans from China’s policy banks: Huawei received \$30 billion in loans from China Development Bank, while ZTE received \$15 billion from China Development Bank and nearly \$4 billion from China EXIM Bank.²³² While 5G remains in its earliest rollout stages in Africa, Huawei has already established a role in building the continent’s 5G networks and has signed an agreement with the AU to increase 5G networks.²³³

In constructing African telecommunications infrastructure, Chinese firms have achieved unusually high market dominance. Ethiopia’s national telecommunications network, for instance, was constructed largely by ZTE, and was described by ZTE’s then CEO Zhang Zhenhui as “the world’s only project in which a national telecom network is built by a sole equipment supplier.”²³⁴ This dominance positions Chinese companies to set standards for emerging technologies such as 5G on the continent.²³⁵ (For more on the Chinese government’s efforts to influence technical standards worldwide, see Chapter 1, Section 2, “The China Model: Return of the Middle Kingdom.”)

China’s presence in Africa’s digital economy affords Beijing another way to leverage economic ties for other purposes. Beijing’s access to Africa’s digitized data creates security risks for African countries and organizations. In 2018, French newspaper *Le Monde* reported that the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, which was constructed by a Chinese company and had servers installed by Huawei, had been routinely hacked and had its data transferred to a server in Shanghai.²³⁶ An investigation of the building also found that listening devices had been installed.²³⁷ China’s Foreign Ministry and the AU both denied the allegations.²³⁸

According to a May 2020 report by the Heritage Foundation, the risk of Chinese government surveillance extends far beyond the AU headquarters, as China has built at least 186 governmental buildings in Africa, constructed 14 intragovernmental telecommunication networks, and donated computer equipment to at least 35 African governments.²³⁹ African governments are aware of the security risk, and some have attempted to mitigate the risk of hacking. A Zambian government official in charge of the country’s national data center, which was built by Huawei, stated, “Once someone’s built you a home, you change the locks. That’s what we did.”²⁴⁰ According to U.S. intelligence officials as well as officials from the UK, Japan,

*As Ms. Hruby noted in her testimony, e-commerce and digital economy are two related but distinct concepts. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development defines e-commerce as “the sale or purchase of goods or services conducted over computer networks by methods specifically designed for the purpose of receiving or placing of orders.” The digital economy has no agreed-upon definition but can include all activities that use digitized data, including telecommunications.

†A feature phone is a mobile phone that lacks features of smartphones. Feature phones remain popular in Africa due to their relative affordability and long-lasting batteries, which are helpful in countries with unreliable power supplies.

and Germany, however, countries cannot safely guard against the threats posed by Huawei-built computer systems.²⁴¹

Africa's e-commerce market, though small by global standards (\$5.7 billion in 2017), has enormous growth potential, with the world's fastest-growing mobile market as well as the fastest-growing tech startup ecosystem.²⁴² Chinese companies are increasingly paying attention to business opportunities offered by Africa's digital economy, but have not yet established significant e-commerce operations on the continent. According to testimony from Ms. Hruby, Africa's e-commerce market remains dominated by Jumia, a European-founded startup based in Africa, as well as by local African firms.²⁴³

Over the past several years, Africa's e-commerce has seen increasing participation by Chinese firms in other capital flows such as venture capital. Africa's venture capital market is small by global standards but raised \$1.3 billion in 2019, an 84.6 percent increase over the amount it raised in 2018.²⁴⁴ In 2017, Chinese-owned internet browser Opera announced plans to invest \$100 million in Africa's digital economy, with \$30–40 million earmarked for the Nigerian market.²⁴⁵ In 2018, Alibaba founder Jack Ma announced the Netpreneur Prize, a \$10 million fund for entrepreneurs in Africa's digital economy.*²⁴⁶ Financial services are currently a particularly popular sector for Chinese investment. In 2019, Opay, a Chinese-owned mobile payments platform focused on Africa, raised \$170 million in two rounds of financing that included Chinese investors.²⁴⁷

China's Expanding Security Footprint in Africa

Beijing uses its military activities and influence in African countries to support and reinforce its political goals and economic interests. At the same time, China has taken advantage of its economic influence to establish and expand its military presence on the continent. Beijing is successfully using this multidimensional approach to expand its influence in Africa's security domain while minimizing its visible military presence, excepting its military units deployed as part of UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs). China has increased its political influence on the continent by facilitating ideological education for African militaries that promotes regime or party control of the military. Beijing is also attempting to establish itself as a security partner of choice for African countries by participating in joint exercises and humanitarian operations and exporting arms to many African countries regardless of their political system. China has employed its own military assets, as well as security assistance from African partners, to protect Chinese companies, critical infrastructure, and resources in countries where it has significant economic interests.

China's growing political and economic influence in Africa provides it with important leverage for expanding its military presence on the continent. China's first naval base was established in Djibouti in 2017, a country in which Beijing holds significant influence due

*The inaugural Netpreneur Prize Initiative competition occurred in November 2019. Ten thousand applicants entered, with ten finalists receiving a share of \$1 million in total award money. *Business Wire*, "\$1 Million Awarded to African Entrepreneurs in Grand Finale of the Jack Ma Foundation Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative," November 17, 2019.

to the high degree of indebtedness to China. Beijing also has over 2,000 troops deployed to African countries on UN PKOs,* many of which are located in countries where China has significant economic interests. The Chinese government has shown an apparent willingness to leverage its influence in the UN PKO system to ensure these interests are protected. Additionally, the PLA Navy conducts regular patrols off the Horn of Africa, an area that encompasses trade routes whose protection is crucial for Beijing's energy needs. The PLA Navy has also made initial forays up Africa's west coast into the Atlantic Ocean where one of China's top economic partners, Angola, is located.²⁴⁸ Furthermore, the PLA Navy has participated in combined exercises with key African partners, such as Egypt and South Africa.²⁴⁹

Goals of China's Security Presence in Africa

Beijing aims to strengthen its ties with African security partners by bolstering security cooperation, such as military aid and security assistance programs, to address regional security challenges and become the security partner of choice for countries across Africa. China also leverages security engagement to protect economic investments and improve its expeditionary capabilities. The Chinese government's 2015 Africa white paper provides insight into how Beijing uses its diplomatic relations and military assistance to build stronger ties with African security partners.²⁵⁰ Military exchanges, technological cooperation, joint military training and exercises, intelligence sharing, and capacity building are identified as key areas of engagement between China and African partners to address security challenges.²⁵¹

The Chinese government has also increased security cooperation by investing in new security assistance initiatives. The investment positions Beijing to play a leading role in addressing security challenges that allow it to garner international and domestic support for its security initiatives, address threats that pose a risk to Chinese economic assets, and strengthen its military posture on the continent. In 2015, General Secretary Xi announced China would provide \$100 million in security assistance to the AU† over a five-year period to support the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis.‡²⁵² Beijing committed

*As of August 31, 2020, approximately 83 percent of Chinese peacekeepers are deployed to UN PKOs in Africa. Out of a total of 2,102 personnel (including troops, staff officers, experts, and police) deployed to UN PKOs across Africa, China currently has 1,072 personnel in South Sudan (UNMISS), 426 personnel in Mali (MINUSMA), 367 personnel in Darfur (UNAMID), 226 personnel in the DRC (MONUSCO), 2 personnel in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and 9 personnel (experts only) deployed to Western Sahara (MINURSO). Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Rwanda are the top contributors to UN PKOs globally and are also significant contributors to key UN PKOs in Africa. Bangladesh currently deploys more personnel to South Sudan, Mali, Western Sahara, the DRC, and the Central African Republic than China does. Ethiopia currently deploys more personnel to South Sudan and Darfur than China does. Rwanda currently deploys more personnel to South Sudan, Darfur, and the Central African Republic than China does. United Nations Peacekeeping, "Troop and Police Contributors."

†In fiscal year 2019 alone, the United States allocated over \$400 million in security assistance to sub-Saharan Africa through Title 22 programs administered through the State Department. These programs include Peacekeeping Operations; International Narcotics Control and Law; Non-proliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs Enforcement; International Military Education and Training; and Foreign Military Financing. See Tomas F. Husted et al., "U.S. Assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa: An Overview," *Congressional Research Service*, May 20, 2020.

‡The African Standby Force is an intercontinental peacekeeping entity that was established by the AU in 2003. The African Standby Force is composed of five regional brigades comprising military and civilian personnel who are tasked with responding to humanitarian crises. The AU

to additional security assistance on the continent during the 2018 FOCAC summit, when it pledged to launch 50 security assistance programs to pursue China's interests under BRI and to support UN peacekeeping, antipiracy, and counterterrorism efforts.²⁵³ During the summit, African representatives expressed support for China's escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and also encouraged China's participation in antipiracy missions in the Gulf of Guinea.

African counterterrorism engagement involves protecting "major domestic economic projects... [and] the safety of Chinese nationals, companies, and projects."²⁵⁴ In 2019, China hosted its second China-Africa defense forum,* with 100 senior representatives from the defense departments of 50 African countries and the AU in attendance.²⁵⁵ At the event, African military officials voiced support for furthering China-Africa security cooperation. Cameroon's Defense Minister Beti Assomo called on China and African countries to "step up win-win cooperation and build a closer China-Africa community of shared future," echoing language used by Chinese officials.²⁵⁶

While Beijing's security activities on the continent are neither as extensive as its political and economic efforts nor representative of the level of PLA activity found in East Asia, Beijing has clearly signaled a commitment to broadening its security presence in the region. As Joshua Meservey, senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation, noted in his testimony before the Commission, China's ability to integrate its political, economic, and security levers of influence is a "distinguishing feature of China's engagement strategy for Africa," which it has used to legitimize the CCP by garnering international prestige, gaining domestic support, securing citizens and economic assets on the African continent, and improving the PLA's capacity to carry out expeditionary operations.²⁵⁷ Although China's security footprint in Africa remains relatively small, its security activities have furthered its political, economic, and military objectives on the continent.

Strengthening Security Ties for Political Gain

A primary avenue for China to increase its military presence and influence in Africa is its training and exercises with African partners. Beijing's security cooperation with African countries is in step with party-to-party trainings. African officers attend PLA political schools, where they receive ideological education along with senior civilian officials. Beijing prioritizes security partnerships with militaries governed by former national liberation movements because similar models of governance between Beijing and these countries provide an opportunity to build strong ideological ties based on a shared authoritarian political culture.²⁵⁸ Beijing, however, also seeks to build partnerships with countries that do not share ideological similarities with the CCP, such as Kenya, Senegal, and Botswana. These countries are of geostrategic importance to Beijing's initiatives, although military engagement between Beijing and these countries is less frequent.²⁵⁹ According to Mr. Nantulya, the PLA

established the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis in 2013 as a temporary stand-by force until the African Standby Force reaches full operational capacity.

*The first defense forum, the China-Africa Defense and Security Forum, was held in June 2018. The second forum was held in 2019 under a different name: the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum.

also engages with militaries in countries that have been “frozen out of the international system” through international sanctions due to human rights abuses, such as Eritrea and Burundi, with the aim of gaining economic and political benefits, including port access in Eritrea and support from Burundi at the UN.²⁶⁰

Beijing facilitates and funds professional military education (PME) in basic skills or support functions and provides ideological education for African officers. According to Mr. Nantulya, African officers believe U.S. PME is superior to Chinese PME because it is internationally recognized at the senior level and is considered more “refined” and “crucial” for career advancement.²⁶¹ African militaries, however, value Chinese military education for the training of non-commissioned officers and junior and mid-level officers, as well as for technical training in subjects such as engineering, technology, and mechanics.²⁶² China regularly hosts African military officials in Beijing, facilitating training in military management and counterterrorism.²⁶³ Beijing also invites several hundred African military professionals to visit and study at Chinese military institutions annually.²⁶⁴ For example, during the 2019 China-Africa defense forum, African military officials visited China’s Special Police College, where People’s Armed Police forces train for counterterrorism operations.²⁶⁵ Additionally, China is increasing its engagement through combined military exercises and drills with African countries.*

This military-to-military cooperation strengthens China’s security partnerships with African countries, which helps China in its effort to become a preferred security partner in Africa. In April 2019, Egypt hosted the PLA Navy and its Russian counterpart in a training exercise simulating PLA Navy collaboration with Egypt on antipiracy operations in the Red Sea and broader Horn of Africa region. The five-day mission involved six Russian frigates and three Chinese guided-missile frigates.²⁶⁶ In November 2019, South Africa hosted China and Russia for combined naval exercises with the purpose of encouraging “interoperability” and strengthening relations between the navies.²⁶⁷

Beijing also prioritizes security engagement as a method for promoting its governance model in Africa. During the Cold War period, Beijing facilitated educational exchanges for African officers in Chinese military institutions and sent instructors to national liberation movement political and ideological schools in Africa, training African military officers in ideological education that characterized the military as an instrument of the ruling political party.²⁶⁸

Beijing continues to incorporate ideological training in its security engagement with African partners today, influencing civil-military

*Like the United States, China incorporates exercises, equipment instruction, and professional education into its security partnerships with African countries. The United States conducts more frequent bilateral and multilateral exercises with African partners than China does. The United States conducts two annual training exercises and seven joint and regional exercises with countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, Djibouti, Mauritius, Mozambique, Tanzania, Seychelles, Kenya, Madagascar, Comoros, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cape Verde, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Togo, Niger, Ethiopia, and Liberia. In contrast, in 2019 China conducted only two military exercises in Africa, with a total of 15 military exercises from 2002 to 2019. See National Defense University Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, “Chinese Military Diplomacy Database Version 3.0,” June 22, 2010; Judd Devermont, response to questions for the record for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China’s Strategic Aims in Africa*, May 8, 2020, 227; David Vergun, “DOD Supports African Partner Nations in Multiple Ways,” *U.S. Department of Defense*, May 1, 2020; U.S. Africa Command, *Exercises*.

relations in countries like Uganda, Tanzania, and South Sudan. In Uganda, for example, the chief political commissar, a senior officer in the Uganda People's Defense Force, supervises political commissars and leads ideological education efforts for each military unit to "propagate the spirit of nationalism" and ensure regime control of the military.²⁶⁹ The CCP's International Department is funding Tanzania's Julius Nyerere Leadership School, a former training base for liberation movements, which will train approximately 400 civilian and military leaders and cadres from Tanzania, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe annually.²⁷⁰ South Sudan's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Moral Orientation is modeled after the PLA Political Work Department, and its mission is to teach Sudan People's Liberation Movement ideology to South Sudanese forces.²⁷¹ Since 2011, the office has trained 4,100 personnel and leaders in China's ideological schools, where they are taught that the ruling regime exercises absolute control over the military and thus that the military is an instrument of the regime.²⁷²

China's Growing Involvement in Africa's Arms Market

Arms exports have been another key feature of China-Africa security cooperation, bolstering China's image as a partner of choice. Beijing's willingness to sell arms to authoritarian governments and countries under international sanctions, its flexible financing terms,* and the low cost of Chinese-manufactured weapons make China a preferred military partner for some countries. Chinese arms exports to Africa have grown significantly over the years, increasing by 55 percent from 2008–2012 to 2013–2017.²⁷³ China's share of total African arms imports increased from 8.4 percent to 17 percent during the same period.²⁷⁴ China now ranks second only to Russia as the largest exporter of arms to sub-Saharan Africa. China's share of total African arms imports has decreased slightly since 2017, however, accounting for 13 percent of Africa's total arms imports as of 2019.²⁷⁵

The types of weaponry China sells are diverse, as are the recipients of these arms. North Africa is a top destination for Chinese arms, taking in 49 percent of China's export flows to the continent, while East Africa constitutes 21 percent of Chinese weapons exports to Africa.²⁷⁶ From 2014 to 2018, China exported military equipment to 26 African countries, including armored vehicles to the Central African Republic; Y-12 military transport aircraft to Mali; and Red Arrow HJ-9A antitank guided missiles to Rwanda, the only known foreign destination for this type of antitank missile.²⁷⁷ China has also provided armed drones, satellite imagery, and intelligence to the Nigerian government—where China has invested heavily in the oil sector—to aid in the fight against terrorist group Boko Haram.²⁷⁸ Additionally, China has sold Morocco and Sudan the AR-2 and WS-2 multilaunch rocket systems, respectively.²⁷⁹ Chinese arms manufacturers are able to provide these weapons at low cost, allowing China to undercut competitors in the small arms and light weapons

*Beijing provides soft loans and rescheduling options, particularly for heavy weaponry, including tanks and combat aircraft. Beijing has also allegedly supplied arms to countries in exchange for commodities, such as copper from Zambia and aluminum from Zimbabwe. See Paul Nantulya, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's Strategic Aims in Africa*, May 8, 2020, 5.

market, as well as the heavy weapons market, for which it provides loans and loan rescheduling options.²⁸⁰ Chinese defense firms are also invested in building up Africa's indigenous defense industries, engaging in partnerships and joint ventures in Angola, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe, among other countries.²⁸¹

Beijing sells arms to African countries without regard for their form of government or human rights standards. China has sold arms to internationally sanctioned countries facing scrutiny for human rights abuses, including South Sudan.²⁸² In one notable example, China's largest arms manufacturer sold \$20 million in antitank missiles, guided launchers, grenade launchers, automatic rifles, and ammunition to South Sudan's government despite Beijing's promise to halt arms sales because of human rights abuses committed by the South Sudanese military.²⁸³ Chinese arms have also been used during conflicts in the DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, and Somalia.²⁸⁴

Chinese companies have also played a part in building national security information technology infrastructure for African countries. In his testimony before the Commission, Judd Devermont, director of the Africa program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, stated that Chinese tech company ZTE has played a part in supporting sensitive information technology networks for African forces.²⁸⁵ In 2011, China financed an independent secured mobile network for Tanzanian defense forces, a project aimed at decreasing communication costs and increasing connectivity between Tanzania defense forces for better information sharing.²⁸⁶

Building an Image of a Responsible Global Power

Beijing has also used the PLA's presence in Africa to emphasize China's role in global public health. Most recently, the PLA Navy delivered personal protective equipment to the South African National Defense Force as a part of its efforts to assist countries impacted by COVID-19.²⁸⁷ In 2018, the PLA conducted drills in Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria and its medical units trained with counterparts in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Zambia to enhance medical readiness. Beginning in 2014, Beijing deployed the PLA to assist West African countries affected by the Ebola virus epidemic, sending approximately 500 PLA personnel to Sierra Leone and Liberia to deliver medical assistance in China's largest medical overseas assistance operation.²⁸⁸ According to Jennifer Bouey, Tang Chair in China policy studies at the RAND Corporation, China's response to the Ebola outbreak was an effort to improve Beijing's "damaged public health image" after the government mishandled the 2002–2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in China.²⁸⁹

*According to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission's report, *The Chinese Military's Role in Overseas Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief*, "U.S. military efforts [in West Africa during the Ebola virus epidemic] involved the deployment of more than 2,300 personnel who built 11 facilities for treatment of patients, formed six mobile laboratories for testing of patient samples, trained health care workers, and provided airlift for medical materials and personnel using several types of aircraft. The British military deployed around 900 personnel to build treatment centers, train and treat local medical workers and staff, and provide security." See Matthew Southerland, "The Chinese Military's Role in Overseas Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: Contributions and Concerns," *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, July 11, 2019.

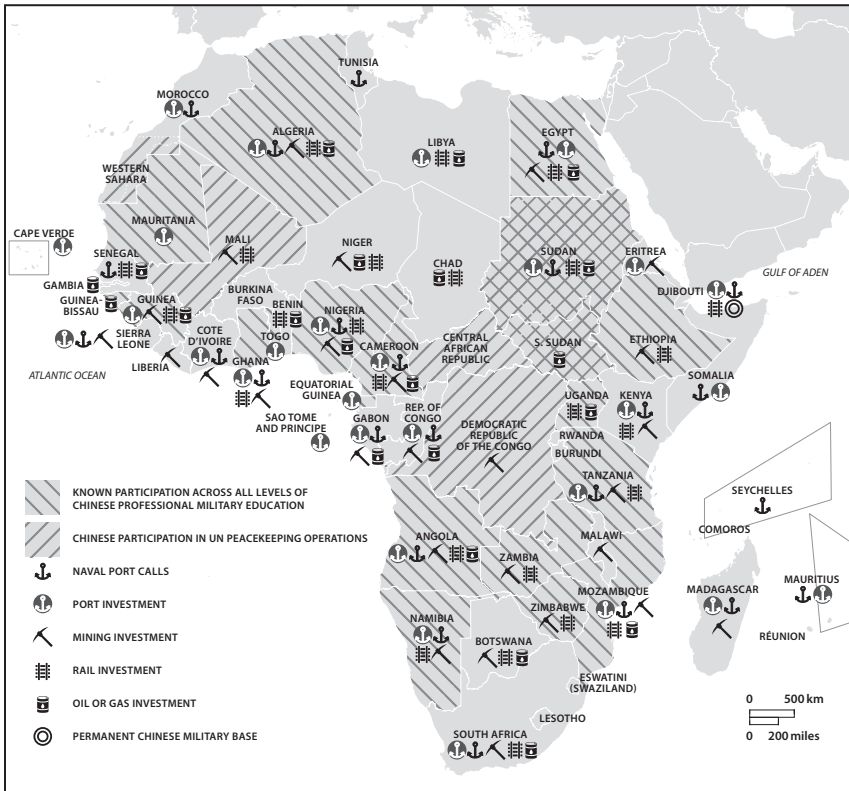
China is a significant contributor of troops to UN PKOs and is the second-largest financier of these missions, behind the United States.²⁹⁰ Although Chinese media emphasizes that “strengthening the UN and multilateralism, acting as a responsible country, and sharing common concerns of maintaining global peace and security” is the intent of China’s peacekeeping efforts, these operations also serve to protect Chinese economic interests in conflict zones and provide an opportunity for Chinese troops to gain operational experience deploying and sustaining forces on missions abroad that may translate to other force projection or combat needs of the PLA.²⁹¹ In September 2020, Beijing released its first white paper on UN PKOs, which advocated “contributing Chinese wisdom and sharing experience” to these missions, an indication of China’s desire to take a leading role in the UN PKO system.²⁹² The white paper also claims that host countries should “independently choose social systems and development paths based on their national conditions,” implying that Beijing’s authoritarian model is superior to democratic governance in countries suffering from civil conflict.²⁹³

Using Security Forces to Protect Economic Interests

A second key driver of China’s increasing security presence in Africa is its desire to protect its economic investments across the continent. China combines traditional force projection, such as deployments by the PLA Navy, with an array of alternative security arrangements to protect these interests. This multitiered approach to addressing security threats on the continent allows China to advance its economic interests without deploying PLA forces in certain situations where a more visible PLA presence would receive pushback from local communities. As Mr. Nantulya stated, “Beijing has favored a ‘soft approach’... to avoid an overt military presence, in part to downplay the strategic dimensions of China’s engagement and avoid generating suspicion among Africans. China also fears that a muscular posture might trigger more deployments into Africa by its competitors like the U.S., UK and France, potentially undermining its influence.”²⁹⁴

The Chinese government has accordingly allocated resources to strengthen its security presence to protect Chinese national and commercial assets. Incidents that have led to an increased Chinese military presence on the continent include Libya’s civil war, leading to the evacuation of over 30,000 Chinese nationals in 2011, the killing of Chinese peacekeepers in Mali and South Sudan, and the threat of Boko Haram in Nigeria.²⁹⁵

Figure 3: China's Economic and Security Activities in Africa



Note: Investment includes projects that are built, planned, and in negotiation.
 Source: Various.²⁹⁶

China Leverages Its Influence in the UN Peacekeeping System to Advance Its Economic Goals

Most of China's major peacekeeper contributions in Africa have been in countries where it has significant economic interests.²⁹⁷ For example, China Molybdenum, a Chinese mining company, has an 80 percent stake in one of the world's largest cobalt mines and the largest copper mining operation in the DRC.²⁹⁸ Beijing has also deployed combat troops and peacekeepers to Mali, a BRI participant that has received Chinese development assistance for critical infrastructure projects.²⁹⁹ Moreover, in at least one case, Beijing has worked through the UN to update key guidelines to secure its economic interests, and Chinese state media and security personnel have documented China's interest in using peacekeeping forces to directly protect Chinese investments.

A key instance where the Chinese government seems to have used its political influence in the UN to advance its economic objectives is South Sudan. China currently has 1,072 peacekeeping personnel deployed in South Sudan and the China National Petroleum Cor-

poration controls a 40 percent stake—the largest of any stakeholder—in a consortium that extracts South Sudan’s oil.³⁰⁰ In 2012, the Chinese government dispatched its first combat unit to the continent to support the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).³⁰¹ After civil war broke out in the country in 2013, Beijing played a significant role in increasing the UNMISS authorized troop strength and modifying UNMISS’s mandate to include a broader interpretation of the UN’s nonintervention policy.³⁰² In this expanded mandate, Beijing successfully lobbied for a provision to include the protection of workers on oil installations.³⁰³ Although the provision initially encountered resistance from officials in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, who argued the change would undermine the UN’s neutrality and place peacekeepers on the side of the South Sudanese government and the oil industry, the mandate expansion was ultimately adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council in 2014.*³⁰⁴ According to Mr. Meservey, the new mandate “effectively aligned” peacekeepers with the South Sudanese government and the country’s oil sector, and by extension, Beijing’s economic interests.³⁰⁵ A year after the mandate was expanded, Beijing deployed 700 PLA combat troops to support the peacekeeping mission.³⁰⁶

Chinese state media and security personnel have documented China’s interest in using peacekeeping forces to directly protect Chinese investments. According to a 2018 article in the *Journal of the Chinese People’s Armed Police Force Academy*,† Chinese peacekeepers participating in UN Mission in Liberia, whose mandate completed in 2018, should “use the patrol time to increase patrols of Chinese-funded enterprises and Chinese-inhabited areas... and ensure the safety of Chinese people and Chinese funded enterprises in Liberia.”³⁰⁷ Chinese state media have also referred to direct cooperation between Chinese peacekeepers and economic actors, lauding cooperation between Chinese peacekeeping forces and a Chinese SOE building a highway project in Liberia in 2018.³⁰⁸

Beijing Uses Private Military Contractors and African Partners to Protect Its Economic Assets

To protect assets in the region, China has increasingly relied on private military contractors since the launch of BRI in 2013, as well as African military partners. There are over 3,000 demobilized PLA and People’s Armed Police officers employed in Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Zambia, and Zimba-

*To garner support for expanding the mandate, Beijing had purportedly promised in closed-door negotiations that it would provide additional peacekeeping troops to South Sudan in exchange for the provision’s adoption. Beijing initially only wanted to deploy its peacekeepers to the key oil-producing provinces, but ultimately agreed to deploy peacekeepers to other areas of the country. Other members of the UN Security Council ultimately backed the provision, arguing that attacks on South Sudan’s oil sector threatened to undermine the country’s economy. Colum Lynch, “U.N. Peacekeepers to Protect China’s Oil Interests in South Sudan,” *Foreign Policy*, June 16, 2014.

†The article was written by Wang Honghai and Kong Weiliang of the Department of Peacekeeping Training at the People’s Armed Police Force Academy. According to Joel Wuthnow, senior research fellow at the National Defense University, the paramilitary People’s Armed Police “has emerged as a partner of choice for foreign governments in areas such as counterterrorism and peacekeeping training, in addition to its longstanding role as contributors to United Nations peacekeeping missions.” Joel Wuthnow, “China’s Other Army: The People’s Armed Police in an Era of Reform,” *China Strategic Perspectives* 14 (April 2019): 3; Wang Honghai and Kong Weiliang, “Liberia’s National Security Situation and the Security Response Strategy of the Chinese Peacekeeping Police in Liberia” (利比里亚国家安全形势现状与中国驻利维和警队安全应对策略), *Journal of the Chinese People’s Armed Police Force Academy*, 2018. Translation.

bwe.³⁰⁹ In South Sudan and the Central African Republic, countries heavily impacted by civil wars, Chinese company DeWe established private security facilities to protect Chinese companies located in these countries.³¹⁰ In South Sudan, the China National Petroleum Corporation has also hired private security contractors to protect employees and commercial assets, in addition to deploying a PLA unit to protect civilians, installations, and oil fields under UN auspices.³¹¹

African partners have also assisted Beijing with asset protection. For example, in 2018 the Kenyan government sent a cohort of police officers to China to train in railway security as a part of an effort to enhance protection of the Standard Gauge Railway, a major BRI project.³¹² After Burkina Faso's decision to sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 2018, the PLA began developing ties with Burkina Faso's military, and the two countries' security cooperation will likely involve training in counterterrorism and infrastructure protection, two key Chinese priorities in the Sahel.*³¹³ Finally, in 2018 the Ugandan government began using its national military to protect Chinese companies in the country that were impacted by a string of robberies.³¹⁴

An Expanding Military Footprint

Beijing has deployed PLA troops to African countries for purely military purposes, leveraging its growing political and economic influence to secure basing rights and gain experience deploying combat units overseas. China's establishment of a permanent base in Djibouti† in 2017 improves its ability to deploy and sustain troops in Africa and sets the precedent for it to take advantage of economic leverage over other African countries to push for additional military bases on the continent.³¹⁵ Meanwhile, Beijing's deployment of combat troops in support of UN PKOs has allowed the PLA to gain important operational experience overseas. (See Chapter 3, Section 2, "China's Growing Power Projection and Expeditionary Capabilities," for further discussion on China's power projection capabilities.)

China's Djibouti Base and the Potential for Future Basing

Should China establish additional military bases in Africa, it is likely to do so by employing political and economic leverage in a manner similar to Beijing's establishment of its Djibouti base. China's deep diplomatic and economic ties with Djibouti were factors that played a part in the Djiboutian government's decision to allow China to build the base. Beijing's ability to leverage its influence in Djibouti could allow it to gain control of the Doraleh Container Terminal at the Port of Djibouti, which could pose a security problem for Washington given that most supplies for the U.S. base in Djibouti come through the Doraleh Container Terminal.³¹⁶ China's

*The Sahel falls below the Sahara Desert and stretches across parts of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Niger, Cameroon, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.

† Djibouti owes a significant amount of debt to China, equivalent to 75 percent of its gross domestic product. China is also a leading financier of Djibouti's infrastructure, wrapping investment deals and infrastructure projects into the agreement for its military base. The extensive political and economic leverage Beijing held over Djibouti was a critical factor that allowed China to stand up the base. Joshua Meservey, written testimony for U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's Strategic Aims in Africa*, May 8, 2020, 6.

Djibouti base is located approximately six miles from the U.S. base in Djibouti, which presents unique security risks for U.S. forces. As Janes argues in a contracted research report for the Commission, the proximity of the Chinese base creates the “potential for disruption and observation of U.S. military operations and personnel in Djibouti.”³¹⁷ The report further notes that China’s position in Djibouti could allow it to gather intelligence on U.S. military capabilities and operations.³¹⁸ The report also outlines tools of leverage that Beijing may employ over a country to establish additional bases, including the presence of major BRI investments, debt to China, a history of hosting the PLA Navy for port calls, and geopolitical support for Beijing.³¹⁹

Mr. Meservey predicts that China is “setting the conditions for establishing [additional military bases in Africa] in the medium to long-term,” although it is unlikely to do so in the short term.³²⁰ Countries that are economically important to China, are strategically located near key sea lines of communication, and have friendly relations with China are potential candidates.³²¹ According to Mr. Meservey, potential locations with these characteristics include Angola, Comoros, Eritrea, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia.*³²² China has shown interest in projecting power into key areas of the Atlantic Ocean, making investments in ports like Walvis Bay in Namibia, a country with which it has strong diplomatic and economic ties.³²³

Implications for the United States

China’s engagement with African countries reflects Beijing’s attempts to promote its one-party, authoritarian model of governance as an alternative to the liberal international order. Taken together, the 54 countries in Africa are home to the world’s youngest and fastest-growing populations and boast dynamic economies, a growing middle class, and an increasing footprint in global affairs.† Therefore, the degree to which China succeeds in advancing its model in Africa will have significant consequences for U.S. political, economic, and military interests on the continent.

If the CCP is able to popularize its authoritarian model on the continent, Africa will become less open, less dynamic, and less democratic, limiting the ability of the United States to build sustained political and economic partnerships with African countries. China’s approach could also constrain development on the continent, adversely impacting U.S. objectives of fostering stability and sustainable growth in Africa. Moreover, China’s engagement in Africa carries implications beyond the continent as Beijing attempts to apply its approach to Africa to other regions in the world, such as Latin America and the Caribbean.

China’s political engagement in Africa is often diametrically opposed to U.S. goals and actions. Where the United States seeks to

*According to the U.S. Department of Defense, Beijing has probably already made overtures to Namibia to set up a base. The department also concludes that China has likely considered Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Angola as locations for a future base. U.S. Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China*, 2020, 129.

†According to a 2019 Brookings Institution analysis, 60 percent of Africa’s population is under the age of 25 and by 2050, one-third of the world’s youth population will be in sub-Saharan Africa. Fred Dews, “Charts of the Week: Africa’s Changing Demographics,” *Brookings Institution*, January 18, 2019.

support good governance and strengthen democratic institutions in politically fragile countries, China often bolsters authoritarian regimes and fosters corruption on the continent. The Chinese government's willingness to provide economic assistance and security aid to countries under international sanctions for human rights abuses further jeopardizes freedom and civil liberties on the continent.

Beijing also leverages its assistance to garner African support to promote its diplomatic priorities on the global stage, diminishing the impact of U.S. diplomacy in African countries and at the UN. China's growing diplomatic influence has already been seen in the widespread African backing for China's ongoing persecution of Muslim minority ethnic groups in Xinjiang and support for the CCP's repression of Hong Kong's prodemocracy movement. As Beijing increases its influence in Africa, it will likely be able to continue to rely on African countries to secure key international leadership positions over candidates supported by the United States and its allies and advance other diplomatic goals that run counter to U.S. interests.*³²⁴

China has leveraged its manufacturing and export capacity to carve out a central role in Africa's growing markets, often to the exclusion of U.S. firms. Beijing has been particularly successful in establishing dominance in Africa's telecommunications sector, which depends on Chinese equipment and services for internet connectivity.³²⁵ The early entry of Chinese firms Huawei and ZTE into Africa's telecommunications sector, aided by generous subsidies from the Chinese government, has helped Chinese companies gain an advantage over competitors in the market. As Beijing steps up its technological and political engagement, there is also a risk that African countries will adopt new Chinese technical standards, ensuring long-term economic dominance for Chinese firms at the expense of U.S. firms. Equally important, adoption of Chinese technology and standards by African countries could entrench China's model of techno-authoritarianism and diminish U.S. influence on the continent.

China's economic engagement has helped bring much-needed infrastructure to Africa, but it also threatens progress achieved by the United States and partner countries and institutions in fostering self-sufficiency and a fair economic environment on the continent. Beijing's projects often exclude U.S. and other non-Chinese firms from participation, which not only denies U.S. companies economic opportunity, but also ensures Beijing is able to conduct these projects in a noncompetitive and opaque manner. Moreover, Chinese projects often lack sound economic rationale, robust environmental impact assessments, and protection for workers' rights, and they may promote local corruption.

Beijing has benefitted from U.S. efforts to foster sustainable economic development in Africa, while itself contributing little to these efforts. The Chinese government's practice of funding projects with

*There are multiple upcoming international leadership contests over the next two years, including the International Civil Aviation Organization (2021), the UN Industrial Development Organization (2021), the Universal Postal Union (2020), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (2021), and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (2021). China already maintains leadership over the International Civil Aviation Organization and the UN Industrial Development Organization. For more details on China's UN leadership positions, see Chapter 1, Section 2, "The China Model: Return of the Middle Kingdom." Brett D. Schaefer, "6 Upcoming UN Elections That Could Impact U.S. Interests," *Heritage Foundation*, March 31, 2020.

opaque loans has contributed to a mounting debt problem in Africa. Beijing continues to avoid a transparent multilateral discussion of debt relief with African countries, which may mean the United States and other responsible lenders shoulder an undue part of the burden associated with African debt, essentially bailing out the Chinese government's irresponsible lending practices.

In addition to debt relief, Beijing may also benefit from other U.S. economic policies in Africa. Chinese firms have already taken advantage of AGOA to bypass U.S. quotas on Chinese textiles. As trade tensions and scrutiny over China's forced labor in Xinjiang lead to greater U.S. restrictions on Chinese imports, Chinese companies may start transshipping goods through African countries. This risk may become more pronounced as the United States considers further trade agreements with African countries, including the one with Kenya. If these agreements do not contain robust country-of-origin rules, China may further profit from U.S. trade policies intended to strengthen U.S.-Africa commercial ties.

Beijing's expanding military presence creates challenges for U.S. security interests on the continent. The proximity of China's military base to the U.S. base in Djibouti, in addition to China's growing presence in African ports, enhances Beijing's ability to gather intelligence on U.S. forces operating across the continent. As the United States remains the top financial contributor to UN PKOs, Washington risks unwittingly subsidizing Beijing's subversion of these important UN missions.³²⁶ China's willingness to sell weapons to countries under U.S. and international sanctions, including Sudan and South Sudan, also undermines U.S. efforts to address human rights violations and could further destabilize civil conflicts across the continent.

Further, China's substantial investment in Africa's civilian ports could lead to dual-use arrangements or the establishment of additional military bases that would allow Beijing to increase its naval presence around the continent. While China's ability to challenge the United States militarily in and around Africa is currently limited, an expanded Chinese military presence in Africa in the future, such as by permanently basing warships in Djibouti or West Africa, could allow the PLA to impede the movement of the U.S. Navy in the western Indian Ocean and even the southern Atlantic.

Beijing employs a multidimensional and sustained Africa strategy, supported by high-level focus emanating from the most senior levels of the Chinese government. Nevertheless, despite China's deepening influence in Africa, the United States retains many important advantages in African countries. Not least among these is continued widespread support for the United States and democratic governance across Africa. According to a 2020 survey* measuring African views of the United States and China conducted across 18 African countries, the U.S. model was respondents' most-preferred model of governance, although China's model ranked a close sec-

* *Afrobarometer* is a pan-African, independent, nonpartisan research network that measures African attitudes on economic, political, and social matters. In its 2020 survey, 32 percent of survey respondents preferred the U.S. model and 23 percent preferred China's model. Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents rated China as a "somewhat" or "very" positive influence in their country, whereas 58 percent said the United States was a "somewhat" or "very" positive influence in their country. Edem Selormey, "Africans' Perceptions about China: A Sneak Peek from 18 Countries," *Afrobarometer*, September 3, 2020.

ond.³²⁷ A similar survey conducted in 2019 showed that three-quarters of respondents preferred regular, open, and honest elections to choose their national leaders—a preference directly in contrast to what Beijing seeks to export to African countries.³²⁸

The U.S.-China competition in the African context is a long-term contest in which African governments seek to increase economic and security cooperation with both the United States and China and use one country against the other to derive the most benefits for themselves. It does not represent a zero-sum competition, and some aspects of China's engagement in Africa are not intrinsically harmful to the United States. If Washington, however, fails to devote significant attention to Africa, recognize African countries' diverse national interests, and actively offer an attractive alternative to China's model, it risks more African leaders and populations turning toward Beijing. This would be an outcome with dire consequences for the future of open markets and democratic government, not just in Africa but around the globe.

Addendum I: African Diplomatic Support for China's Controversial International Positions

Country	Publicly Supported China's Xinjiang Policy*	Publicly Supported China's Conduct in the South China Sea†	Publicly Supported China's Positions on Hong Kong‡	Recipient of International Debt Relief§
Algeria	X	X		
Angola		X		
Benin		X		X
Botswana				
Burkina Faso	X			X
Burundi	X	X	X	X
Cameroon	X	X	X	X
Cape Verde				
Central African Republic	X	X	X	X
Chad	X			X
Comoros	X	X		X
Republic of the Congo	X	X	X	X
Democratic Republic of the Congo	X	X		X
Côte d'Ivoire				X
Djibouti	X	X	X	
Egypt	X	X	X	
Equatorial Guinea	X		X	
Eritrea	X	X	X	
Eswatini				

*"Publicly Supported China's Xinjiang Policy" refers to African countries that signed a letter in July 2019 publicly declaring their support for China's Xinjiang policies, as well as subsequent signers, countries that supported Beijing via other individual or joint statements, and countries that supported China's Xinjiang policies at the 2020 UN General Assembly.

†"Publicly Supported China's Conduct in the South China Sea" refers to African countries that declared their support for China's conduct in the South China Sea via official statements and declarations.

‡"Publicly Supported China's Positions on Hong Kong" refers to African countries that supported Beijing's suppression of the 2019 Hong Kong prodemocracy protests as well as states that declared their support for China's 2020 Hong Kong national security law via individual or joint statements and countries that supported China's position on Hong Kong at the 2020 UN General Assembly.

§"Recipient of International Debt Relief" refers to African countries that received debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative led by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other creditors.

**Addendum I: African Diplomatic Support for China's Controversial
International Positions—Continued**

Country	Publicly Supported China's Xinjiang Policy	Publicly Supported China's Conduct in the South China Sea	Publicly Supported China's Positions on Hong Kong	Recipient of International Debt Relief
Ethiopia		X		X
Gabon	X	X	X	
The Gambia		X	X	X
Ghana				X
Guinea	X	X	X	X
Guinea-Bissau	X	X	X	X
Kenya		X		
Lesotho		X	X	
Liberia		X		X
Libya		X		
Madagascar	X	X	X	X
Malawi		X		X
Mali		X		X
Mauritania	X	X	X	X
Mauritius				
Morocco	X	X	X	
Mozambique	X	X	X	X
Namibia				
Niger	X	X	X	X
Nigeria	X			
Rwanda				X
São Tomé and Príncipe				X
Senegal		X		X
Seychelles				
Sierra Leone	X	X	X	X
Somalia	X	X	X	X
South Africa		X		
South Sudan	X		X	

**Addendum I: African Diplomatic Support for China's Controversial
International Positions—Continued**

Country	Publicly Supported China's Xinjiang Policy	Publicly Supported China's Conduct in the South China Sea	Publicly Supported China's Positions on Hong Kong	Recipient of International Debt Relief
Sudan	X	X	X	
Tanzania	X	X	X	X
Togo	X	X	X	X
Tunisia		X		
Uganda	X	X	X	X
Zambia	X	X	X	X
Zimbabwe	X	X	X	

Source: Various.³²⁹

ENDNOTES FOR SECTION 3

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