

China's Peace and Security Strategies in Africa: Building Capacity is Building Peace?

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Abstract: There is a growing body of scholarship that examines China's security engagement in Africa. However, such scholarship largely views security cooperation in terms of military aid and military equipment and considers security from a traditional perspective. This article proposes to expand the scope of security to include non-traditional aspects of cooperation such as capacity building programs and investments in human resource development. Going beyond the view that security should be understood in terms of military hardware and naval bases, I propose a security-development nexus as a framework to understand China's security practices in Africa. This nexus highlights the integration of security and development and views peace and conflict resolution to be the result of successful economic development. The core argument is that central to Beijing's security strategy in Africa are not only arms sales, deployment of combat troops, or establishment of military bases, but that equally vital are investments in human resource development through capacity building programs. The article closes with a critical analysis of the development-security nexus by highlighting its major shortcomings and unintended consequences. As China's experience in the South-Sudan indicates, over-relying on economic development as a broker for peace has its own challenges and limitations.

Introduction

"China stands ready to take an active part in Africa's efforts in capacity-building for maintaining and strengthening peace and security and support Africa in its endeavors to speed up development, eradicate poverty and realize durable peace." President Xi Jinping's speech during the Africa-China summit (December, 2015)

The Chinese government in 2006 released its first Africa white paper, an official document that outlined China's foreign policy strategy towards Africa, in tandem with the first China-Africa Summit.¹ A second edition of the white paper was released in December of 2015 in conjunction with the second China-Africa summit held in South Africa.² A quick content analysis of both papers reveals that the word "security" (in the sense of stability) was mentioned five times and the word "terrorism" was mentioned only one time in the 2006 paper. Approximately a decade later, "security" was mentioned fifteen times (in the context of peace and stability) and "terrorism" five times in the second white paper. The focus on peace and security cooperation

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v16/v16i3-4a3.pdf>

in China-Africa relations is indeed a much more recent development but one that is quickly gaining a lot of attention.³

This rapidly increasing interest in security is also reflected in there being a growing body of Africa-China scholarship addressing security cooperation from different angles. The extant literature has examined the contribution of China to peacebuilding efforts and how that reflects on norm-making and norm following (Alden 2014, Alden and Large 2013), China's role in conflict resolution in South Sudan (Anthony and Hengkun 2014, Large 2008, 2009, 2015), debates regarding China's adherence to noninterference principle in Africa (Aidoo and Hess 2015, Wang 2013, Xu 2012), debates over Beijing's response to the crisis in Libya and the principle of Responsibility to Protect (Garwood-Gowers 2012), the controversial Chinese arms exports to Sub-Saharan Africa (Shinn and Eisenman 2012, Hauauer and Morris 2014, Shinn 2015), and Beijing's cooperation with the African Union (AU) on security issues (Van Hoeymissen 2010, Benabdallah 2015). For the most part, however, extant literature treats security and military engagements from a material/hard power perspective.

The above-mentioned scholarship is concerned with such things as arms deals, boots on the ground, military presence in the form of naval drills, bases, etc. Without downplaying the importance of this aspect of security, this article identifies an under-researched set of security practices in China's Africa strategy that do not lend themselves to a hard power/material perspective on security. This aspect has to do with accounting for Chinese-sponsored capacity building and vocational training programs as an essential part of China's Africa security strategy. While there is a growing interest in researching the material aspect of China's security interests in Africa, we do not know much about the intangible investments in vocational training and their role in advancing China's security strategy in Africa. This article aims at complementing extant scholarship by adding an analysis of Beijing's investments in Human Resource Development (HRD) programs for security and military personnel. These HRD or capacity building programs target African high-ranking army officials, peacekeepers, as well as private security personnel who participate in Beijing-sponsored annual trainings and military-to-military exchanges.

Key to understanding the role of capacity building programs in China's foreign policy towards African states is examining three essential questions: (1) how does Chinese official discourse conceive of security and peace building; (2) how does this perspective shape Beijing's security policy and practices in Africa; and (3) how does this perspective translate into actual policies on the ground which aim at promoting security? To answer these three questions, this article proceeds as follows. First, it starts by giving an overview of Chinese perspectives on promoting security and maintaining peace and stability. By looking at China's domestic practices as well as official discourse on China's role in promoting Africa's security, I find that Chinese perspectives on security are intimately connected to development. In short, promoting security is seen to go hand in hand with reducing poverty and improving living conditions. Viewing security as hinging upon successful development applies both to China's domestic as well as its foreign policy making, which marks a significant difference from the way European powers and the U.S. have engaged peace promotion in Africa. To be sure, even though many Western powers seem to approach the issue of security from a military coalition commands and counter-violence measures, President Xi Jinping reaffirmed Beijing's position during the latest

Forum of China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Johannesburg that creating development opportunities is the best contribution to security.⁴ It should also be noted that many African leaders (including AU Chairperson Dlamini Zuma) agree that the root cause of instability is found in socio-economic conditions and that more development will lead to more security.⁵

Second, the article applies the theoretical framework of the Development-Security nexus to Chinese-sponsored security-related HRD for Africans. It does so by drawing on the broad security studies literature but also puts it in the context of China's domestic and foreign policy conduct. This section argues that China's adherence to the development-security nexus within its own borders informs how it conducts its foreign policy in Africa with regard to peace and security issues. Locally, Beijing strongly adheres to the understanding that creating jobs and connecting youth from rural areas to jobs and opportunities is the backbone of maintaining security. This section shows how the security-development nexus and Beijing's experience with domestic development is reflected in its security strategy in Africa.

The third section of the article argues that capacity building and vocational training programs are an important aspect of Beijing's security policy in Africa, and are as important if not more so than its contribution to material military equipment, boots on the ground, and other military presence in the continent. China's contribution to development projects in Africa go beyond security-related capacity building programs and include HRD programs for civil servants, agribusiness specialists, medical doctors, journalists, among other professions. However, in this study I look at human resource development programs which are specifically related to military and security cooperation. Yet, to be clear my argument about the centrality of HRD investments to China's Africa strategy should not overlook China's interest in expanding its military presence in ways that are manifested in such policies as the new logistical navy base in Djibouti. Nor does it downplay Beijing's financial support of the African Union (AU) task force with military equipment. Instead, this study seeks to complement our understanding of the whole picture of China's involvement in security (broadly understood). It sheds light on the capacity building programs that are sponsored by the Chinese government and target skills transfers from Chinese experts to their African counterparts. Chinese officials present these programs as Beijing's contribution to stability and peacebuilding efforts in Africa.

The Development- Security Nexus and China's Africa Strategy

Chinese official discourse is explicit in tying security promotion and conflict resolution to economic development. For example, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi stated: "We [Chinese policy makers] believe that development is the foundation for peace in Africa. Conflict and poverty often come hand in hand and form a vicious cycle. If Africa is to achieve durable peace and stability, it needs to speed up economic and social development and let all the people share the benefits of development."⁶ This section of the article traces Chinese foreign policy's emphasis on the development-security nexus to Chinese domestic policy and domestic experience with development as the basis for security. However, before doing so, it presents a brief overview of the development-security nexus.

At base, a development-security nexus points at the centrality of the interdependent connection between improving socio-economic living conditions and the prevention of conflict.⁷ This view of security rests on two principle assumptions. The first principle is a negative

understanding of security that takes absence of conflict to mean security. The second principle takes conflict to be rooted in economic development grievances.⁸ This means that this particular understanding of security highlights that improving living conditions by creating more jobs, reducing poverty, implementing more development projects is the way to conflict resolution and prevalence of security. The international practice of conflict resolution and peacekeeping, through institutions like the UN, has also shifted its focus from traditional military and political missions to missions that enhance economic and social development. Post-Cold War peacekeeping missions are a great example of the development-security nexus given that the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations Report in 2000 (known as the Brahimi Report) proposed that achieving a sustainable peace required more than establishing ceasefire and more peace-building efforts.⁹ The Report instigated the UN to restructure its peacekeeping operations to move beyond the conventional military tasks to include economic and social development programs as the key to peacebuilding. This view of achieving sustainable peace through emphasizing development is coincidentally congruent with contemporary Chinese perspectives on peace and security.

While development-security is a Western coinage as such, the concept is not without equivalent in the Chinese context. In fact, China has had over thirty-five years of domestic experience with strengthening security and stability through focusing on economic development.¹⁰ China's own history with political interference in economic development since the inception of the CCP under Mao's rule has resulted in a strong belief in the necessity of economic growth to maintaining internal order. Under Mao political campaigns such as the decade-long Cultural Revolution undermined China's economic growth and caused turmoil for years to come. By contrast, Deng Xiaoping's regime was characterized by placing economic progress through campaigns such as "open door policy" at the center of the party's goals. His emphasis on industrialization and shifting the party's politicized focus toward economic reform became the new standard practice for the post-Cultural Revolution CCP. Indeed, following the footsteps of Deng Xiaoping, in Jiang Zemin's regime "development was regarded as the key to solving all problems in china," and it was set out as the main objective of the CCP.¹¹ Likewise, Hu Jintao came up with the concept of scientific development, and Xi Jinping invented the China Dream, both of which place economic development as the central task of the party.

Indeed, China's commitment to the development-security nexus approach can be traced back to Deng Xiaoping's vision and plan for China's industrial revolution. During that period, the Chinese Communist Party started implementing development plans that enhanced economic growth and focused on improving living conditions for its citizens by creating job opportunities for the youth and reducing poverty levels. These measures were successful on basically three fronts: they created the economic growth the CCP had targeted, they resulted in more stability and satisfaction among the people, and they brought legitimacy for the CCP as it was perceived by the people to be efficient in its leadership. This experience with achieving security based on launching development plans came to shape Chinese officials' conceptualization of the "new security" in the post-Cold War era that was based on a shift from understanding security as self-help to a more mutual/common security.¹² This mutual/common view of international security was mainly based on Chinese policy makers being convinced that their methods of enhancing legitimacy of CCP and security at home should also be applicable

abroad. Mutual security was viewed as the result of win-win cooperation on economic growth and development projects. For Chinese policy makers, regional and global security could not be achieved "by an increase in arms, or by military alliances. Security should be based on mutual trust and common interest... We should solve disputes through peaceful means and strive for common development."¹³ Furthermore, more recent versions of the "New Security" concept hone in the non-traditional approach to security which views threats as not just military or political but also environmental, epidemiological, diaspora-related, etc. A 2015 update of China's military strategy paper reiterates Beijing's adherence to an approach to security in which mutual peaceful development, trust, and win-win relations are central.¹⁴ Furthermore, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized a continuation of this development-security nexus when he stressed that to build security:

We need to focus on development, actively improve people's lives and narrow down the wealth gap so as to cement the foundation of security. We need to advance the process of common development and regional integration, foster sound interactions and synchronized progress of regional economic cooperation and security cooperation, and promote sustainable security through sustainable development.¹⁵

Xi Jinping even took a step further in this case by tying sustainable security to sustainable development practices and projects.¹⁶ For him the two are connected and his view of the synchronized and integrated connection between economic development and security is found not only in China's security policies within its region but also expands to its security practices in Africa. On this matter, at the 2013 World Peace Forum the Chinese foreign minister expressed that "when conducting diplomacy, we must be fully committed to development, which holds the key to numerous problems in the world."¹⁷ Chinese foreign policy officials take economic development as an essential means for promoting peace and security, and this is a view shared by many state leaders in global south countries.

Therefore, China's domestic experiences with economic development being the "cement" of security suggest that its views on how to contribute to international peace and security are very much influenced by a development-security nexus. The integration of security and development is readily apparent in Chinese official discourse toward African states so much so that scholars such as Alden and Large view this as an expression of China's partaking in the "formative process of 'norm making.'"¹⁸ They argue that these norms (including economic development priority over democracy, insisting on African countries self-reliance in choosing what counts as a priority for their own situation, and state centrality in the international system) are guidelines shaping China's alternative approach to peacebuilding.¹⁹ Contrary to what could be described as a traditional Western liberal model for peace-building, which rests on a firm belief that good governance via liberal democracy is the foundation for human rights and security, China has rather emphasized the priority of development over good governance, and this has distinct political implications for its interaction with certain African states.²⁰

Many scholars in China agree that China's emphasis on development projects, even the ones as basic as providing clean water supplies, vaccinations, and food security should be viewed as part of Beijing's contributions to promoting stability and reducing sources of grievances and conflict. For example, Liu Hui, much like Li Anshan and Xuejun Wang, argued

that “development, stability and harmony is more attractive” than “democracy, freedom plus market economics for Africa.”²¹ Along similar lines, Yizhou Wang accounts for China’s peacebuilding contributions by proposing that military involvement is not all that counts and that “development can be tied to post-conflict reconstruction measures.” He further asserts that by his account, China can be said to have “participated in the post-war reconstruction of many African countries, including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan, Angola, Congo (DRC), etc. The process involved the Chinese government, China Development Bank, large-scaled state-owned enterprises (SOEs) at state and provincial levels as well as private businesses.”²² Hence, development goes hand in hand with peacebuilding efforts, and security and development are seen as two sides of the same coin in China’s Africa strategy.

Such emphasis on the priority of development and stability over democracy and good governance is implemented through several policy programs that are outlined in each of the six editions of the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation meetings. However, this article is particularly focused on exploring Chinese government-sponsored HRD programs and how they contribute to development and security. The next section gives an overview of China’s HRD programs for African states.

Capacity Building Programs: Beijing’s Contribution to Peace and Security in Africa

African leaders unanimously praised China during the Johannesburg Summit for contributing to capacity building and technical training programs for African personnel. South Africa’s President Jacob Zuma in his opening address requested that Beijing provide even more of these training programs.²³ His call was echoed by AU Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma who noted that by 2050 Africa will have the world’s largest working-age population, and capacity building is needed to capitalize on that.²⁴ From the supply side, Chinese leadership reiterated China’s firm belief that “development is key to all problems” and stressed the similarity between African and Chinese perceptions of security as closely related to economic and social development. To illustrate, the most recent FOCAC action plan promised vocational training workshops for two hundred thousand personnel, thirty thousand government scholarships, train no less than one thousand media specialists, provide forty thousand professional training opportunities in China, send thirty teams of senior agriculture experts to train African farmers, and establish more agriculture demonstration centers.²⁵ Premier Li Keqiang vowed to “expand cooperation in personnel training, intelligence sharing and joint exercises and training, and assist Africa to enhance its capacity building in peacekeeping, counter-terrorism and counter-piracy.”²⁶ Beijing’s interest in “training” is apparent as the Premier used the word twice in one sentence as well as offering to enhance Africans’ counter-terrorism and peacekeeping capacity not by giving military aid or equipment but by offering to train officials and promote capacity building.

Chinese-sponsored capacity building programs target African personnel and professions of diverse backgrounds. Programs for vocational trainings include seminars and scholarships for journalists, peacekeepers, civil servants, agribusiness specialists, doctors, engineers, and students from different fields. There are also some vocational training programs that are organized and held at China’s many Confucius Institutes across Africa. A branch in China’s Ministry of Commerce called Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO) gives public

access to aggregated data on all the training programs Beijing sponsors for African officials.²⁷ By early 2014, AIBO had sponsored 603 training seminars of a varying duration, among which 43 seminars were at the ministerial level. According to AIBO data, these seminars invited 14,545 officials from all over the world (about 152 countries) among who 483 were high-ranking government officials (mostly at the level of ministries). Over a third of the total workshops targeted African officials.

To take a closer look at these programs, I have combed through all the seminars and short training programs sponsored for participants from Africa in the year 2014.²⁸ First, my goal was to get a sense of what were the main subjects of the courses, where they were going to (which regions/countries in Africa were participating most in these trainings), and how recurrent they were. A second interest in this survey work was to see if there is any correlation between the countries that receive most of the training program opportunities and those possessing natural resources or having other geopolitical assets of importance to China. I was able to identify no less than twenty-six different categories ranging from diplomacy to health, sports, agriculture, infrastructure, public administration, education, and art among other topics. The training appears to come in three different categories depending on who are the targeted participants. Some training courses are for ministerial cabinet level officials, others are for senior civil servants, and the last category is for unofficial individuals.

The initial survey shows that the training programs were targeting very diverse countries but Anglophone countries seem to benefit more from these programs than Francophone ones. To give an illustration, from a sample of 446 participants (in the second quarter of 2014) from across the continent in twenty-six different areas of training (e.g., solar energy, trade in services, machinery use, prevention of diseases, and infrastructure maintenance), Tanzania sent forty-eight participants, Zimbabwe thirty-seven, Ghana thirty-two, Ethiopia and Kenya thirty-one each. In contrast, Francophone countries sent fewer participants. Cameroon had the largest quota with twenty-five, while Mali had sixteen, Senegal twelve, Cote d'Ivoire seven, and Algeria six. As far as Lusophone countries go, in this sample Mozambique participated with only six trainees while there was no available data for Angola. In addition, it was quite visible that Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe ranked at the top list of countries targeted by these training programs. The results from the other quarters of the year 2014 were congruent with the patterns found in the case of the second quarter of 2014. Contrary to received wisdom about Beijing strategically investing its resources and FDI exclusively in African countries that could assure continuous supplies of natural and mineral resources, from the examined sample it is not possible to conclude that natural resources are the main driving force. The countries that received the most training include Ghana, which has a lot of mineral resources, but also Ethiopia and Kenya, which are not resource rich countries. Likewise, it was difficult to single out one defining characteristic or pattern in the audiences these training programs were targeting other than the aforementioned Anglophone vs. Francophone dynamics. Rather, the survey findings suggest an interest on the part of Chinese foreign policy to expand its circle of relations and interact with as many country representatives as possible. As explained in the manual put together by China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), these training efforts "complement China's comprehensive foreign policy needs, help train the human capital of developing countries, and drive forward friendly relations and

trade cooperation with developing countries." The manual briefly explains that the trainings contain "an advanced quality: Course content should reflect China's broad development achievements and strengths in relevant fields or disciplines, and point out that China's economic development achieved substantial success principally after the reform and opening period."²⁹

Equipping African professionals and officials with skills based on Chinese expertise and experience for the aim of enhancing their capacity to be more productive in society is compatible with China's handling of potential conflicts internally. Sponsoring as many human resource development programs is also a way for Chinese foreign policy to set norms and diffuse its own expertise for other Global States to follow. There is a potential commercial benefit for Chinese equipment to be advertised during training workshops and for Chinese expertise in general. Additionally, enhancing African capacity building also serves a political objective for China's foreign policy as it projects an image of China as a responsible power that's investing in enhancing sustainable and peaceful development for African countries in a way that minimizes interventionism. The following section focuses on capacity building programs that are specifically related to security cooperation between China and African counterparts. The case of Chinese training for African peacekeeping troops serves as an illustration of the security cooperation programs.

Beijing's Investments in Security-Related HRD Programs

Historically, the first instances of training African military personnel by Chinese authorities date back to Beijing's commitment to supporting African revolutionary wars of independence, but it was limited to a few countries and had short-term goals. After that, the interest in vocational trainings waned down given China's turn inward in the 70s and 80s. Interestingly, up until the early 2000s, the interest in security and vocational trainings was marginal. FOCAC's action plans from the first and second meetings (2000 and 2003) show very little attention given to security cooperation beside general statements about counter-terrorism cooperation and statements about China's nine peacekeeping participations.³⁰ However, China's 2006 Africa policy states "China will promote high-level military exchanges between the two sides and actively carry out military-related technological exchanges and co-operation. It will continue to help train African military personnel and support defense and army building of African countries for their own security."³¹

Chinese peacekeeping missions engage in providing trainings for local security forces. Former Malian Prime Minister Moussa Mara expressed that "Chinese peacekeepers are not only a force of peace; they are also a force of development. They understand that maintaining peace not only means weaponry and sending troops, but also means improving the livelihoods of locals. Chinese peacekeepers have won the hearts of the Malian people."³² Moussa Mara's statement indicates that Chinese peacekeepers play an important role in shaping China's image abroad and work diligently to convey the role of China in Africa as peaceful and non-aggressive. The training for peacekeeping forces also come in two distinct types, short and long courses. The long training courses usually involve Chinese PKO troops and experts conducting trainings while on mission abroad. For the short course training, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense invited a group of peacekeeping trainees to China for a week for the first time

in June 2016.³³ The training lasted a week and covered twenty-three subjects including peacekeeping legal framework, civilian protection, and logistical support.

Indeed, China is now the largest provider of peacekeeping troops among all the United Nations Security Council permanent members. Despite China being a longtime skeptic about peacekeeping missions and has been known for vetoing and resisting multilateral collective action mechanisms, it has come around to become a vital support for peacekeeping missions in Africa and elsewhere.³⁴ Since 1990, which is China's first contribution to peacekeeping, its position has changed from blocking the missions at the UNSC on grounds of non-interference principle to actively contributing personnel and funding to make them more successful. About 10 percent of UNPKO budget is supported by Beijing. As expressed by Premier Li Keqiang while addressing the African Union: "China has contributed more personnel to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa than other permanent members of the UN Security Council, and Chinese peacekeepers are serving their duties in multiple hotspot areas across the continent." The Prime Minister further explained that "the solidarity and mutual trust between China and Africa serve not only our respective development but also peace and progress of the world."³⁵ Chinese peacekeepers have indeed participated in nine out of the fifteen UN peacekeeping operations around the world and seven out eight of the UN missions in Africa.³⁶ While the number of Chinese peacekeepers worldwide is much smaller than that of Bangladesh (10,757), India (8,919) and Pakistan (10,656), China is effectively expected to be involved even more as the Defense Ministry announced that China will provide 10 percent of the UN peacekeeping budget.³⁷ With regard to missions specific to Africa, according to numbers provided by Shinn, over the past decade, "China has contributed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. As of 30 September 2015, it had 2,420 troops, 171 police, and 26 experts assigned to seven of the UN's nine peacekeeping operations in Africa."³⁸

The vast majority of the units are non-combat units consisting of engineers, doctors, and other professionals, many of who are tasked with training the local populations in basic development enhancing techniques. Even when the peacekeepers have military background, they are asked by the peacekeeping academy officials in Beijing to engage in training local security forces in confidence building measures, problem-solving techniques, among other peaceful conflict resolution strategies. As expressed in a report by the Chinese Ministry of Defense, "Chinese peacekeepers have renovated and built roads spanning 110,000 kilometers and more than 300 bridges. They have also diffused 9,400 landmines and explosives, shipped 1.1 million tons of materials, completed 450 patrols and 230 convoys, and treated about 149,000 patients."³⁹

One issue, however, which puts a limitation on peacekeeper training is that more and more UN peacekeepers are asked to keep a safe distance from interacting with locals. Despite these warnings, Chinese peacekeepers are still engaged in such interaction far more than other peacekeepers. For example, in May of 2016 Chinese peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo opened a Chinese language class for orphans.⁴⁰ The report indicated that this initiative goes to show how well-received and well-meaning Chinese peacekeeping troops are in Africa. In fact, they receive praise for teaching and training ways that promote better living conditions. Chinese peacekeepers often were lauded for playing a "significant" role in promoting peace and development in Ebola-hit West African countries such as Liberia.⁴¹ In

addition, Sudan's government recognized the extra humanitarian efforts of Chinese peacekeepers and commanded their interest in sharing their skills and expertise with Sudanese people.

Limitations of the Development-Security Nexus

After having unpacked the development-security nexus that characterizes China's engagement with security issues in Africa, it helps to analyze some of the potential challenges and weaknesses to this understanding of security. This section asks what are the negative consequences of assuming that more development means more security? First of all, it is important to note that a rigid belief that underdevelopment is the root cause of conflict may result in unintended consequences that are negative for indigenous populations, the environment, and social justice. Authoritarian governments have frequently justified taking away land rights on the grounds that their actions are meant to enhance development and therefore by extension security. In addition, China's foreign policy in South Sudan—where China is a key player in peace talks and development—seems to be facing challenges that put to question the efficacy of the development-security nexus. To be sure, the Chinese government has worked hard in providing investment, development, and capacity building programs for South Sudan, and to a certain extent there has been a significant increase in South Sudan's GDP due to China's involvement. Yet, despite all efforts, economic growth in South Sudan did not translate into enhanced peace and security. Even more crucially, China's bilateral relations with South Sudan are at a very low point, which I expand on after providing a brief timeline of China's involvement in the Sudan–South Sudan disputes.

During many years of the Darfur conflict, Beijing remained unmoved by African, US, or European calls on China to use its economic and political leverage to stop the conflict. African governments condemned China's silence and non-engagement in the Darfur crisis while China continued to pursue its natural resource supplies as usual from Sudanese president al-Bashir and reiterated its non-interference principle.⁴² However, the conflict began to spill over into Chad, and Chad's Ministry of Foreign Affairs appealed directly to Beijing to urge the Sudanese government to stop the violence. Beijing's non-action had in fact stirred several international human rights and advocacy groups to call on boycotting the 2008 Olympic Games unless it took a stand on Darfur.⁴³ Such a diplomatic dilemma was a delicate task to sort out for the Chinese government. It henceforth became a milestone in China's changing discourse of non-interference in African security issues.⁴⁴

Consequently, Chinese government's continuous blocking of UN Security Council votes on implementing an oil embargo on Al Bashir's government were tweaked and pressure put on Sudan's aggressive policies towards South Sudan. China, after much reticence to interfere, was among the first countries to recognize the establishment of the new state of South Sudan, and business as usual was carried on in securing oil exports to China.⁴⁵ However, in the later part of 2013, a series of violent fights broke out between rival factions within South Sudan. This time about four hundred Chinese oil workers had to be evacuated, which led to decreased oil exports to China. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) did not evoke its non-interference principle when it rushed to issue statements calling for an immediate ceasefire and soliciting South Sudan's government to protect Chinese nationals in the country.⁴⁶ The MOFA played a

proactive role in mediating negotiations between the warring factions in Addis Ababa in 2014, and by May 2014 China had contributed 314 troops to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).⁴⁷ This first deployment consisted of non-combat peacekeeping troops who were mandated to work on development projects such as drilling water, building housing units, and providing basic medical assistance. In September 2014, China announced the deployment of a second unit with UNMISS, this time of seven hundred troops (four hundred of whom were evacuated by April 2015 when a rebel group took over the main oil fields).⁴⁸ This was the first time in China's history of peacekeeping contributions to send combat troops. Their mandate includes protecting civilians, peacekeepers, and infrastructure in South Sudan. Yet despite all efforts, relations between China and South Sudan deteriorated following remarks by Minister of Finance and Planning David Deng Athorbei essentially accusing "the Chinese government of stealing South Sudanese oil and resources without doing anything for the suffering South Sudanese people."⁴⁹ The bilateral relations between South Sudan and China are a challenge to Chinese foreign policy's insistence on development being the root cause of conflict and on its policy sponsoring capacity building programs that are expected to lead to development and peace.

Attacks against Chinese citizens and business interests around the continent are yet another challenge for the development-security nexus, as it seems that Chinese policymakers may soon have to think about more military options for ensuring the safety of Chinese nationals rather than relying on promoting development as a means to security. Indeed, a long list of attacks on Chinese companies and individuals in Africa includes incidents such as in November 2015 when "three top executives of state-owned China Railway Construction Corporation were fatally shot in the Radisson Bleu Hotel Attacks in Bamako."⁵⁰ In May 2014 Boko Haram targeted a Chinese road construction firm in Cameroon, injuring one Chinese worker and killing the guard.⁵¹ Similarly, in 2012, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) publically declared that the estimated 70,000 Chinese oil industry workers in Angola were not guests but supporters of the regime.⁵² The FLEC claimed three ambush attacks in the city of Cabinda on Chinese nationals affiliated with the China National Petroleum Corp. In the summer of the same year, Chinese workers and other foreign nationals were subject to violent racial attacks in South Africa. Even more dramatic was the evacuation of over 35,000 Chinese nationals from Libya in 2011 after the fall of the regime. Most of the Chinese in Libya were working on contract for Chinese companies on infrastructure projects valued at almost \$19 billion. In 2010, one Chinese mineworker was shot dead and a dozen others seriously injured in a riot targeting foreign mining practices in Zambia.⁵³ In January 2007, gunmen kidnaped five Chinese telecommunications workers in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.⁵⁴ During that same year, sixty-five Ethiopians and nine Chinese oil workers affiliated with Zhongyuan Petroleum Exploration Bureau died after an attack in April 2007 in Ethiopia's Somali region of Jijiga.⁵⁵ Such incidents are likely to keep increasing given that Chinese companies operate in some of the continent's riskiest areas. This means that more pressure will be put on the Chinese government to be more directly involved in ensuring their safety. Yet, the extent to which China is involved in conflict resolution and peace building in Africa may seem marginal compared to the West if one takes the definition of security assistance to hinge upon military assistance including boots on the ground, naval bases, or counter-terrorism collaboration. It is the ongoing Chinese foreign policy

belief that poor development is the root cause of instability and prolongation of conflict.⁵⁶ Therefore, Beijing understands its engagement in African peace and security issues to extend beyond military and traditional definition of security into including the role of promoting development.

Conclusion

This article focused on an under-examined aspect of China's security practices in Africa and consequently provides an overview of China's capacity building programs Africa. While much of the extant literature satisfactorily examines security aspects such as arms deals, military aid, and other material factors, scholars have not paid much attention to the development-security nexus that underwrites Chinese government views on security as being rooted in development. By taking this into consideration, Chinese investments in capacity building programs become part and parcel of China's contribution to sustaining peace and security in Africa. Since China's government experienced impressive levels of stability internally due to its economic reforms and development records, it also believes that investing in human resource development, technology transfer, and forming skilled labor constitute key solutions to conflicts in Africa. So far, China's understanding of its own role in peacebuilding has been mainly centered on promoting development, including capacity building programs for military personnel, civil servants, students, journalists, and other professions. To be sure, this view of security is congruent with that of many African leaders, as they frequently express satisfaction with the role China plays in training African professionals and ask for more of such programs. This focus on such an indirect (non-military) approach to security and peacebuilding is not exclusive to China's foreign policy in Africa. Indeed, issues such as climate change and a sustainable marine economy are examples of a broader understanding of security that have motivated some development projects for several decades. What is new about China's approach is the scale at which it is investing in capacity building programs and the positive impressions it receives from local political actors and international organizations. Nonetheless, as this article has shown, the development-security nexus can have serious flaws, especially when high rates of economic growth do not correlate with a reduction of conflict and insecurity. Additionally, increasing terrorist attacks putting at risk both Chinese overseas nationals and interests are also a challenge to the development-security nexus and may put pressure on Beijing to adopt a more direct approach to security and peacebuilding. All in all, this article's goal was to complement and build on existing literature that has already examined China's material and military capabilities and add to this the hitherto under-examined investments in human resource development and capacity building programs.

Notes

- 1 China 2006 for full text.
- 2 China 2015.
- 3 One of the reasons why cooperation on peace and security is off to a later start compared to other fields of cooperation such as agribusiness and trade is due to Beijing's adherence to the principle of non-interference. Evidently, security cooperation (especially if understood as military presence on African soil) seems to be a direct violation of that principle. However, as

discussed in subsequent parts of the article, pressures from international institutions, local African governments, as well Chinese nationals and business owners have all weighed in on the shift from a strict interpretation of non-interference to more lenient “selective engagement.”

- 4 Xi Jinping 2015b. The Forum of China-Africa Cooperation is a summit held every three years by Chinese and African leaders. Ministerial Conference Archives as well as official white papers and speech transcripts can be accessed on <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/>. For more on FOCAC see Taylor 2011 and Anshan 2012.
- 5 Zuma, N. 2015. See also http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/2015-12/05/content_22637260.htm.
- 6 See <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dsjbzjhy/hxxd/t756377.htm>
- 7 For more on the security-development nexus literature see Duffield 2010; for a historical perspective on the origins and principles of the nexus see Hettne 2010; for an application of the nexus in the context of South Africa see Jensen 2010.
- 8 Reid-Henry 2011, p. 97.
- 9 The Brahimi report marked a turning point for the UN peacekeeping operation as it recommended these be reformed and that peacekeeping had to be anchored in a firm commitment to sustainable and lasting peace. For more information on the Report, see http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/brahimi_report.shtml
- 10 Wang 2010, p. 4.
- 11 Ibid., p. 5.
- 12 White Paper on China's National Defense 1998 (<http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/5/index.htm>).
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 China's New Security Concept 2014
http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml.
- 15 Xi Jinping 2014.
- 16 For further elaboration on his views linking peace, security, and development, see his first address to the UN. Xi Jinping 2015a.
- 17 Wang Yi 2013.
- 18 Alden and Large 2013, p. 23.
- 19 Ibid., p. 24.
- 20 In a speech at the Second World Peace Forum, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi reiterated Chinese diplomacy's position regarding the centrality of the development agenda: “when conducting diplomacy, we must be fully committed to development, which holds the key to numerous problems in the world.”
http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjzb_663304/wjzbz_663308/2461_663310/t1053908.shtml
- 21 Hui 2005. Also see Anshan 2005 and Wang 2010.
- 22 Wang 2013, p. 84, adds that “the development of Sino-African relationship provided an important opportunity for China to promote and strengthen such an image. Through peacekeeping missions, counter-piracy operations and weapon proliferation prevention efforts in Africa, China not only contributed to Africa's peace and security processes, but also achieved “quite a success in public relations.”

- 23 Zuma, J. 2015.
- 24 Zuma, N. 2015.
- 25 FOCAC 2015, Section 4.3.6. Section 4.3.2 announces that the “Chinese side will offer 2,000 degree education opportunities in China and 30,000 government scholarships to African countries.” Section 3.1.11 explains in more detail the trainings in agribusiness and agriculture. Section 5.2.1 expands on the seminars sponsored for African journalists (radio and TV) to be exposed to Chinese theories and practices in journalism.
- 26 Li 2014.
- 27 <http://china-aibo.cn/> the webpage is in Mandarin Chinese.
- 28 I would like to acknowledge the assistance of two junior fellows from the University of Florida Department of Political Science, Monica Eichner and Juliette Holthaus.
- 29 MOFCOM 2012, Clause 3 (author’s translation).
- 30 See <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dejbjzjhy/DOC22009/t606801.htm> for a full text of the 2003 action plan. For summaries of the main points see Taylor 2011.
- 31 China 2006 for full text.
- 32 In an exclusive interview with Xinhua on the evening of June 4, 2016
http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Opinion/2016-06/06/content_4670851.htm.
- 33 Chinese Ministry of National Defense news from June 6, 2016.
http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2016-06/06/content_4670932.htm.
- 34 Alden 2014, p. 4.
- 35 Li 2014.
- 36 The seven missions are in Darfur, DRC, Liberia, Mali, and South Sudan, as well as small contingents in Cote D’Ivoire and Western Sahara. Thrall 2015, p. 54.
- 37 Chinese Ministry of Defense. News release May 2016.
http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Peacekeeping/2016-05/31/content_4667753.htm.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid. http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2015-05/08/content_4583900.htm
- 41 Ibid. http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2015-10/30/content_4626701.htm
- 42 Ahmed 2010, p. 16.
- 43 More substantially, in 2007 a Chinese-ran oil field (in Defra) came under attack by the rebel movement (JEM). The rebel group spokesperson made statements that it targeted Chinese interests in the region on purpose because of Chinese support for the Sudanese government. The rebel forces declared that all foreign companies that stayed in South Sudan beyond the evacuation deadline given to them would be considered guilty of assisting the Sudanese government in purchasing weapons used to violate the rights of South Sudanese families. Shinn 2009, p. 90; *Xinhua* News 14 March 2008.
- 44 Shinn 2009, p. 92; Jian 2012, p. 7.
- 45 Jian 2012, p. 8.
- 46 Foreign Minister Wang Yi 2014 interview.
<http://brisbane.chineseconsulate.org/eng/zgxw/t1116509.htm>

- 47 <http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/in-south-sudan-conflict-china-tests-its-mediation-skills/> and <http://www.ibtimes.com/china-middle-south-sudans-biggest-oil-importer-learns-wield-its-clout-1568133>
- 48 <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article52308>
- 49 "China-south Sudan bilateral relations at a brink of collapse."
<http://www.nyamile.com/2016/06/07/china-south-sudan-bilateral-relations-brink-collapse/>
- 50 For more on how this incident relates to Africa-China summit see
<http://africasacountry.com/2015/11/the-china-africa-summit/>
- 51 <http://www.africareview.com/News/Chinese-workers-leave-Cameroon-over-Boko-Haram-attacks/-/979180/2328440/-/7qw4kk/-/index.html>.
- 52 <http://online.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704388504575418990791137242>.
- 53 Sautman and Hairong 2014, p. 1072.
- 54 Holslag 2009, p. 109.
- 55 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6588055.stm>.
- 56 Xi Jinping 2015b.

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