China’s policy towards Africa: Continuity and Change

Li Anshan
School of International Studies,
Peking University

JICA, Tokyo, Japan
January 29, 2007

1. “China’s Rise”: interpretations
2. China’s Policy: stages & transformations
3. China’s African Policy: characteristics
4. China’s Policy: misunderstandings & explanations;
5. China-African Relations: new challenges
“China’s Rise”: Interpretations

• Negative View
  (Theories of collapse and threat)
• Positive View
  (Gradualism and optimism)
• Concerns about China-Africa relations

Negative View

Theory of collapse

• Gordon Chang,
• Various problems occurred in China’s development and the negative effects after the entry into WTO will result in economic crisis, political disorder and social disaster, its collapse is inevitable.

• Minxin Pei:
  China’s reform is stalled with problems such as corruption, declining state power and credibility, as well as increasing inequality.


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**Negative View**

**Theory of threat**

J. Mearsheimer:

China’s rise with its power especially the military power will challenge the international order, bring conflicts with the U.S. and threat the world.

Positive View

• Gradualism
• Edward Friedman

  Although there are some unpredictable factors, China’s reformers are doing the right thing. Once the force against China’s peaceful rise gets the upper hand, everybody would be harmed.


• Optimism
  – Bruce Gilley
  – China’s economic development improved democratization, and it will become a democratic state.


  – Femi Akomolafe (Nigerian historian)
  – China’s rise is different from the west, and has provided experiences for Africa: if only there are a people with confidence, determination and view, everything is possible.

  , “No one is laughing at the Asians anymore,” New African, 452 (June 2006)
Concerns about China-Africa Relations

- Various seminars (workshops, conferences)
- Various interviews
- Various debates
- Various questions

2. China’s Policy:
   Stages and Transformations

- China and Africa: Similarities
- China’s policy towards Africa: Continuity
- China’s policy towards Africa:
  Three stages
- China’s policy towards Africa:
  Transformations
China and Africa: Similarities

Ancient;
Historical;
Present

China’ Policy Towards Africa: Continuity

• Mutual equality
• Respect sovereignty
• Common development
China’s Policy Towards Africa: Change

• Three Stages:
  1) Normal development (1950s-1978);
  2) Transitional period (1979-1994);
  3) Fast development (1995-present)

• Three Transformations
  1) Ideological basis;
  2) Bilateral exchange;
  3) Cooperation features

Normal Development Period (1956-1978)
1963-64, Zhou’s Visit: Five Stands

1) Support African anti-imperialism and colonialism struggle;
2) Support African non-align movement policy;
3) Support Africans to use their own way to realize unity;
4) Support Africans to solve conflicts through peaceful negotiation;
5) Support African countries’ sovereignty and oppose to foreign invasion and interference.
Eight principles for Economic Cooperation

1) According to the principle of mutual benefits, aid is not an singular offer, but mutual;
2) Aid is not accompanied with any conditions or privileges;
3) Loans can be prolonged to lessen other’s burden;
4) The purpose of aid: to help others go on self reliance;
5) Projects should be quickly effective, with less investment;
6) Provision of our best products with international price;
7) Provision of technical aid accompanied with guarantee that the aided country to grasp fully the technology;
8) Chinese experts get the same treatment as that of the aided country, not allowed to enjoy any special benefits.

• The Cultural Revolution and the setback;
• Mao: the African friends and U.N.
• Help Africa in three aspects:
  1) Support their struggle against colonialism;
  2) Support their struggle against hegemony;
  3) Support their economic construction
Transitional Period (1979-1994)

- 1979-1982: Sino-African relations fluctuated:
  1) Economic aid decreased;
  2) Trade was declined;
  3) Medical doctors lessened

Reasons

1) Cultural Revolution ended, everything needed recovery and money;
2) Economy needed foreign investment and technology; China’s attention turned to the relations with the West;
3) The relation with two major aided countries was worsened, realization of the limitation of aid.
4) The change of Chinese leadership
• Zhao Zhiyang’s visit to Africa (after 12 P.C.) put forward Four Principles of China-African economic and technological cooperation:

1) Equal and mutual beneficial;
2) Stress on effectiveness;
3) Multiple forms;
4) Common development

Note: Different from 8 principles, which mainly regarded China’s side, while four principles concern with both sides.

• China-African cooperation was set on the track with China’s reform
• The emphasis was no longer ideology, but put on economic construction
• Foreign trade system was to change;
• Foreign aid system was to change
Fast Development Period  
(1995- Present )

1) Political  
2) Economic  
3) Cultural

**Conclusion:**

Today’s China-African relation is a result or fruit of long time friendship and cooperation, not a sudden decision or change.

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Strategic Transformation  
(12th Party Congress)

- 1) Shift to economic development  
- 2) Foreign policy: independence and peace  
- 3) Current theme: from “war and revolution” to “peace and development”  
- 4) Emphasis: economy serving diplomacy changed to diplomacy serving economy
Ideology: from Emphasis to Neutrality

1) the one-sided policy of pro-USSR and anti-U.S. (the 1950s)
2) the policy of double-attack of anti-imperialism and anti-revisionism (1960s)
3) the policy of alliance with U.S. while opposition to USSR (1970s).

Three Features

1) the principle of contact is no longer ideological.
2) the partnership of contact is not confined to ruling parties
3) the content of contact is not limited in party politics
Bilateral Exchange: From Unitary Form to Multiple Channels

1) The exchange covers various fields, such as economy and trade, culture and education, medical and sanitation, military fields, and civil content.
2) Educational cooperation (intellectual aid from the 1990s)
3) Economic cooperation

Economic cooperation
Various changes

1) State-managed trade to state and private trade together
2) Unitary form to multiple form cooperation on multi-level
3) Trade volume greatly increased
4) Chinese favorable balance to African surplus
5) Aided cooperation to win-win cooperation
Field of Cooperation: from Single Aid to Win-win Strategy

• Early 1980s-mid-1990s, Africa was experiencing marginalization:
  • 1) decrease of investment
  • 2) increase of debt

• Change of Aid Form
  • Exchange of the experience of development or poverty reduction
  • Bilateralism of Economic Interests
China-Africa Relations: Characteristics

1) Diplomacy in chief;
2) Concept of Equality;
3) Mutual benefit and win-win strategy;
4) Formulation of mechanism

Diplomacy in Chief

1) 50 African heads of states and more than 20 government leaders visited China;
2) 2000, 5 African leaders visited China; and 5 Chinese leaders visited Africa; 2002-04, 30 African leaders visited China;
3) Jiang Zeming and Hu Jingtao all visited Africa four times;
Concept of Equality

1) Equality means to respect other’s sovereignty, cooperation for mutual benefits, consultation and coordination;
2) Principle of non-interference with other’s internal affairs;
3) Not taking aid as singular offer, but take it as mutual;
4) Political equality and mutual belief.

Mutual benefit and win-win strategy

1) Political support each other;
2) Economic mutual benefit and win-win;
3) The purpose of cooperation: to raise partner’s capability
Standardization of Mechanism

1) China-African Cooperation Forum;
2) Various coordination and negotiation organizations;
3) Annual economic and trade fairs;
4) 11 Centers of promotion for investment, trade and development;

Conclusion

1) Diplomacy in chief set up the basis of China-African relations;
2) Concept of equality is the soul of the relations;
3) Mutual benefit and win-win is the nature of the relations;
4) Standardization of mechanism is the guarantee of the sustainable development of the relations
China-African relations: Misunderstandings & Explanations

Wrong View 1:
sudden interest for oil
1) Logic problem: relations began from the 1950s;
2) 1979-1990s relations continued;
3) Since 1991, MOFA has taken Africa as the first place to visit every year;
4) Support China: Taiwan, human rights issues

Wrong View 2:
Sacrifice democracy or human rights to support authoritarian regimes simply for oil
1) principle: non-interference with others’ internal affairs;
2) China-Africa: economic complementarity;
3) Africa sells natural resources: voluntary action; commercial behavior and mutual benefits;
4) China buys natural resources: in international market and compete with other countries (also in other countries)
5) African Union’s attitude for China’s standard
6) China’s human rights problem
Wrong View 3
China’s Neo-colonialism or economic imperialism
1) Unequal political relations and base one’s own interests on other countries;
2) China and African countries: sovereignty;
3) China and African countries: respect each other;
4) Economic and trade relations: mutual willingness;
5) International rule and competition;

New Challenges
1) China (enterprises) and Africa (enterprises);
2) China’s national interests and Chinese enterprises’ interests;
3) China’s interests and vested big powers’ interests;
4) China’s exploitation of natural resources and African sustainable development;
5) Human being’s short term interests and long-term interests

Conclusion: By facing the challenges and settling the problems properly, China and other powers can show the world a responsible attitude for peaceful development and prosperity for mankind.
• End of the speech.
• Since this is a rough translation, please don’t not quote without the speaker’s permission. Thank you.