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## **Research Paper**

# Do Peacekeeping Advance China's African Economic And Securityinterests? an Interest Based on Objective Analysis

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ABSTRACT: China's interest in Africa has become a common point of discussion among analysts, academics, politicians and the general population. Understanding the role or meaning of China's African interests can shed light on the goals the leadership want to achieve. This paper identifies peacekeeping as a foreign policy instrument which explains security and economic goals, placed within the framework of the national interest. In the African security and economic environment, goals towards a path of direction determine China's actions, which affect the protection of interests. By using peacekeeping as an inclusive means to achieve peace, security and economic development, China's goal-seeking behaviour can be partially answered. The analysis reveals that certain conditions of peace and development have a high priority and properly labeled in the 'national interest'.

Keywords: China, Peacekeeping, Interests, Objectives, Behaviour

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most frequently invoked criteria by which policymakers attempt to interpret international situations and formulate policies suitable to them is 'national interest' (Clinton, Thompson, and Morgenthau, 2005). The fixed and irreducible content of the idea of the national interest would normally include the preservation of the nation as an independent political community, capable of maintaining the integrity of its territory and population and of safeguarding the autonomous development of its institutions (Beard, in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff2008). The variable content is a function of myriad factors, the traditional national mythos, or set of ideals, on which most people agree, the personality of political leaders, the differing political philosophies of rival political parties, the international conditions prevailing at a given time, contemporary trends in public opinion, the impact of changing technology, and so forth. These factors might influence the decision-maker'sattitudes toward what 'the national interest' demands in respect to military security, defense alliances, international peacekeeping, and foreign aid (Franke 2005).

In the Chinese language, the concept of 'national interest' has two meanings. One is national interest in the context of international politics, meaning the interests of a nation state in a global arena. This concept must be contrasted with group interests, international interests, or global interests. The other is state interest or interests of state as the highest level in domestic politics, meaning governmental interest or a government that represents the peoples' interest. Interests of state are more important than local interests, collective interests or individual interests (Gao 1992, 69). In 1954, Chairman Mao, at an extended meeting of the Chinese Communist Party Politburo, said "our policy toward farmers is not like the Soviet's, but it is one that takes care of both the interest of farmers and the interests of the state." (Zhou 1990, 2). The national interest that Mao Zedong was talking about is in the category of domestic politics. In 1989, when Deng Xiaoping met with the Thai prime minister, he said, "China wants to maintain its own national interest, sovereignty and territorial integrity. China also believes that a socialist country cannot violate other countries' interests, sovereignty or territory." The national interest that Deng Xiaoping was talking about here meant national interest in the context of international politics. Premier Zhou Enlai said in 1949: "When no war or violation takes place, national interests need to be protected domestically and internationally. In the international arena, diplomacy has become front line work." (Zhou 1990, 2). The national interest in this sentence includes both types of interests. This paper will examine the former; that is, national interests in terms of the international (African) context.

In conformity with China's African policy and the whitepaper "China's Peaceful Development", state sovereignty, territorial integrity, overall social stability, and safeguards for ensuring sustainable economic and

social development constitute the core African interests or what the leadership aims to achieve (Feng 2014). Adhering to peaceful and diplomatic means in resolving African disputes may serve state sovereignty, national security, and territorial integrity. On the contrary, coming into long-term tensions or even conflicts with African countries over disputes may pit "state sovereignty" and "territorial integrity" against "China's political system established by the constitution and overall social stability" and "basic safeguards for ensuring sustainable economic and social development" (Feng 2014).To fulfill the fundamental task of China's diplomacy, the leadership should strive to create and preserve a scenario where "state sovereignty" and "territorial integrity" are in a mutually facilitating, instead of mutually containing, relationship with "China's political system established by the Constitution and overall social stability" and "basic safeguards for ensuring sustainable economic and social development" (Chan 2015, 43).

#### II. DEFINING CHINA'S AFRICAN INTERESTS

What are the interests of China in Africa and especially with regards to achieving security and economic objectives? The interest of China is not simply what the political leaders say, a mere rhetorical device designed to justify the pursuit of security objectives and particularly a strong peacekeeping presence. The claim can be made that the foreign interests of China transcend the type the political leaders envisage and make national survival with respect to the realist theories of international relations a minimum objective. National survival sometimes referred to as a core or vital interest implies that the maintenance of the sovereign status of the Chinese state is a right to exercise power and authority. In the peacekeeping environment, this allows leaders to act independently in the conduct of its foreign affairs. A second core interest is economic vitality and prosperity. Economic prosperity is not only sought on behalf of the citizens of the Chinese society, but it can also be an important source of power in international affairs.

While strategic interests arise from matters and developments that do not bear immediately on state's security, well-being, and domestic tranquility, peacekeeping intervention has the potential to directly affect vital interests or the capacity to progress or defend them. For example, peacekeeping is a tool that addresses China's strategic needs in Sudan, with soldiers not only instructed to maintain the mission's mandate, but indirectly protecting Chinese oil interests. Chinese peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) secure the strategic needs of the government. Troops are visible close to oil installations to actas guardiansand protect a range of economic goals, such as, leveling the playing field for putting forward business interests, the implementation of policies to promote commerce and trade policies, and ensuring that open business exchanges follow between merchants from China and Sudan. Despite the strategic importance of Africa, China does not try to safeguard a foothold in the region by unilaterally projecting military power. In Africa, China's military diplomacy remains limited when compared with defense initiatives in other regions. If China does pursue bilateral cooperation programs, these are more likely to be a part of its diplomatic charm offensive, rather than addressing threats to China's economic and security interests (Holslag2009).

Conservative nationalism as the dominant cognitive paradigm defining the thinking of China's security and military planning in the post-Mao era forms an important element in studying the country's national interest. The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) conservative nationalism has two major components: nationalism and conservatism. The central premise of nationalism is that in the post-ideology, post-Cold War era, the nationstate has become the central category that defines internal organization and hierarchy and external uncertainty and vulnerability (Flanagan and Marti 2003, 70). To the extent that China exists in a competitive international environment where uncertainty and fluidity reign, the survival and security of the Chinese national have become of paramount importance. To achieve the goals of survival and security, it is first necessary to build up the Chinese economy and technology to reduce China's disadvantages relative to advanced countries. But for the development of economy and technology to proceed smoothly, it is also necessary for Chinato become externally secure (Flanagan and Marti 2003, 70). Peacekeeping, as a non-violent show of force in an external environment enhances this role of the PLA through several specific missions, with securing economic resources, such as raw materials supplies, manufacturing platforms, infrastructure, and trading routes, vital in sustaining the development of the economy and technology. Traditionally, the PLA's role is to preserve the integrity of Chinese territories and secure the borders that are currently under Chinese control and does it have no outward projection power as is the case with the United States' (US) military. Defending the Chinese nation and maintaining the status quo defines this external security factor (Zhang 2015, 9). However, the military is starting to play an indispensable and central role in enhancing China to attain its economic objectives and is the latter also dependent on diplomatic negotiations, economic promotions, and cultural interactions.

Conducive to China's emerging role in the development of African business and infrastructure, promoting multilateralism and regionalism, the concern with security and stability to advance economic interests, peacekeeping as a division of the military acts as goal-seeking supportchannel. For example, a call by Liberian farmers that peacekeepers help with manuring of arable land in a dual collaboration effort with the ministry of agriculture had the effect that both countries strengthened agricultural cooperation. Such a move

demonstrated that achievements in agricultural development produced and encourages more farmers to engage in agricultural production in order to reduce poverty (African Defense, 2015). In addition, peacekeepers as agents enhance issues related to the country's foreign policy and assist in leading the Chinese nation on a path of economic and technological development.

Peacekeepers, who operate in a multi-task force environment, endangered by elements of threat and vulnerability, should implement measures to counter operational constraints. These measures take the form of protecting their own interests, alertness not to deplete available resources and more importantly, showing that intention is a source of threat between whatdecision-makers perceive as threatening and what the evidence and military capabilities suggest. PKOs is a component of the military structure that contribute to state security goals and imbues the ways of realizing the nationalist agenda. Troops favor the gradual buildup of the post-conflict economies, which in return, contribute to consolidation of the Chinese state. This is an area where peacekeepers assist with unification and establishing social stability. The risk of weakening economic growth and technological development is then lowered and more effective competition in a highly vulnerable environment of external uncertainty is increased.

A deliberate attempt by China to indicate what it perceives as threat perception and the consequent difficulty in establishing signals that are viewed as credible influences decisions in the African strategic and security environment. If China accurately and completely represents privately held information, the rationalist decision-making model suggests that the outcome of possible confrontations with other security seeking states in the region would be minimized or totally avoided. China is not purely interested in its own security but is also wary of other state's rising security, as the growth of power in a state such as India, which is also actively involved in African PKOs, can make China's power less secure. This line of reasoning is based on the paradox of the security dilemma. In the opinion of (Waltz2010), all states are interested in security and if their sole interest in security was known to all, not state would pose a threat to any other; all can maintain their position by upholding the status quo. Because all are interested only in security and all know that no state need fear that another will attempt to overturn the status quo (Morrow, in Lake and Powel1999, 79). Nevertheless, China is concerned about other states' power and policies. Even if the peacekeeping environment is conducive to maintaining a position of power and presents opportunities to expand power, China's decision-makers cannot be certain that others will exert less power to maintain their positions or even to moderate revisions of the status quo. Rational accounts of the security dilemma emphasize the signals that states send and on the formulating of credible commitments rather than on the perceptual dynamics of the perceiver (Jervis, Lebow and Stein, 1991).

How is China using multilateral military engagement to improve its standing in the world or protect a range of interests? Given its foreign policy agenda and interests, Chinahas been forced to reevaluate norms of sovereignty and non-intervention at the same time as it tries to become a powerful and responsible international leader. It is going through the process of military modernization at the same time as it must diplomatically engage recipient states that recognize Taiwan, a direct threat to the "One China principle" (Holslag2009). But Chinese efforts have dexterously managed a balance between traditional norms and contemporary responsibilities that require a more engaged, outgoing China. Establishing itself as a nation contributing to global peace and security, China simultaneously tends to recipient needs as well as political, strategic and economic interests (Holslag2009). The determination that peacekeeping is a tool of marginal significance is not borne out in this analysis. It appears that major powers are able to contribute to the public good of peacekeeping while at the same time receiving private benefits as their reward (Karlsson2011, 4). Furthermore, for the period 2000-2011 China's has behaved no differently, securing an image of a rising and responsible power, a modern military and protecting domestic interest abroad (Karlsson2011, 4).

# III. OBJECTIVES OVER INTERESTS

Objectives are influenced by threats emanating from the distribution of capabilities and the differentiation of units among the super, great and emerging powers. Specific threats relate to the external security setting, political instability, and insecurity of post-conflict societies. Countries that can endanger the lives of Chinese citizens and peacekeepers, the uncertainty that exists to conduct business in a safe business environment and the awareness in the minds of decision-makers that objectives might fail due to poor policy implementation are viewed as threats. There are a host of other factors that might stand in the way of achieving objectives but the latter ones pose a direct challenge to the degree of importance and prominence of the issues. China's foreign policy is based on the peaceful co-existence with other states, and in Africa this policy finds effect in creating an environment for the strengthening of trade relations, the commitment to help with infrastructure development and establishing stability in post-conflict societies. These elements all contribute to maintain durable and lasting relationships. In addition, it is hardly unthinkable that problems may or may not occur in implementing policies which are acceptable to both parties. Peacekeeping is one mechanism of state action that projects a positive image of China's and is an uncompromising element of statecraft that shows what China's wants and the means they employ to achieve these objectives (LePere 2015). Non-state and transnational

actors, such as, international business, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and arms dealers, also play a minor role in the decision of the Chinese government to send peacekeeping troops to post-conflict societies. They level the playing field to establish business partnerships and open channels of diplomatic communication. Furthermore, Chinese security and strategic interests in Africa is not only concerned with upholding China's traditional security objectives, but also address problems of non-traditional security threats, such as, food and water insecurity, environmental conservation and illegal immigration. In all these instances, peacekeeping troops are exposed to the imminent dangers of the threats.

The global system presents states not only with threats to national interests but also with opportunities that may influence the formulation of foreign policy objectives (Viotti and Kauppi 2015). Military capabilities are an essential element of national power and are used to make or deter war. These capabilities are, however, also uniquely suited to actions short of war by which they can bring their power to bear on others (Freeman 2007, 53). Such nonviolent military actions include shows of force, the provision of training and logistical support to the armed forces of other states, intervention to restore order, the monitoring of truces or verification of the implementation of agreements, and the delivery of emergency assistance (Freeman 2007, 53). Interests are so general that they are an inadequate guide for actual policy making. They do, however, inform more specific goals or objectives (Viotti and Kauppi, 2015). Inferring from this statement, it is relatively safe to assume that becoming a responsible player and establishing a relatively dominant position in PKOs is a security goal, which are all part of the five principles of peaceful development and co-existence with other states. China's objectives with PKOs also raise the prospect of projecting power outside the region into an area where the stake for protecting business interests and maintaining diplomatic ties with Africa partners are high. Securing traditional security objectives and specifically protecting its oil interests in Sudan Darfur under the watchful eye of peacekeeping troops is an important national objective to maintain economic prosperity.

China, advocates that the UN peacekeeping system should reform to norms and standards more acceptable to most countries contributing to PKOs. With several states including China dissatisfied with the current UN peacekeeping system, a transition can take place that distributes power per member's influence in post-conflict societies and not necessarily based on military capabilities as proclaimed by the structural realism. The influence exercised in these countries, for the better part, relies on the economic benefits China can obtain.

President Hu Jintao's announcement that Chinese soldiers' help contribute to peace, stability, reconstruction, and development in Liberia and that their actions forge closer economic relations between the two countries, is an example where Chinaviews peacekeeping as a means toward a goal, and not the goal itself (Moumouni 2014, 5). China's peacekeeping presence in Sudan is probably the best case in study where the peacekeeping troops act as agents of the state to level the playing field for sound economic ties. China obtains ten percent of its oil from Sudan and the interaction troops has with local populations shapes a certain perspective(IPI Global Observatory 2016). As one observer notes: "Sudanese and Africans positively see China due to its policy of non-interference, only doing business. The Chinese don't influence our politics, they don't comment on it, and what they want, they pay for, sometimes double the amount. This tends to make all Africans happy, from the dictators to the democrats; there isn't a party in Africa that doesn't like them. Even if you're a rebel movement and you say to them you can secure gold, the Chinese will simply say they want to buy it. The only foreign policy advice I heard from China's was when they said to Sudan, 'Don't go back to war.' That's all they said. They didn't push anything else (Shadbolt 2011)."

Wolfers (2012) points out that techniques or means can, by subtle transformation, become ends in themselves. Beyond this, the most that is really done by way of analysis of objectives of state action is to classify them as power of security, economic, moral, prestige, and ideological. National security, usually regarded as a basic objective, is rarely subject to an attempt of definition and for this reason the connection between national objectives and national interests remain somewhat unclear (Wolfers 2012). This condition also applies for separating China's objectives and interests in Africa and might become intertwined at times.

China's peacekeeping objectives, essentially is to form an image in the mind of decision-makers how the future state of affairs is to be achieved under a set of conditions or a set of specifications. Four aspects of the future state of affairs are useful in analyzing a state's goals (Snyder, Bruck, Sapin and Hudson2014). They are (1) the target, (2) a generalized directional element, (3) expectations, (4) and time dimension. Generally, the target for peacekeeping contingents operating under the traditional style is to keep warring groups or belligerents apart, bring peace and stability and maintain the mandates of the mission. They are not required to perform any other duties that are contradictory to their assigned roles. China, however, does not simply carry out the roles and duties in a delegated manner but has ambitions in mind which surpasses the standard objectives desired by other countries. A specific objective is to elevate the status among post-conflict societies and increase its international image. The ultimate state of affairs envisaged by China is to develop a total strategy of cooperation with African states and peacekeeping stands in relationship to this strategic decision making.

Like any other country who gets involved in PKOs, the leadership has expectations about actions and consequences and results might not be achieved in the absence of actions embodying the objective. Rewards

from UN staff, force commanders and praise from local populations are examples of expectations the decisionmakers has in mind before they embarked on setting goals for specific mission areas. Even though expectations cannot be taken for granted, determination, hardship, and commitment to change the situation are characteristics that earn the respect of other parties and facilitate getting what you expect. The time dimension is an aspect that is difficult to define considering the duration of the conflict and UN Security Council Resolutions. However, China's cooperation with African states under the framework of the Forum on China-African Cooperation (FOCAC) and regional institutions generally sets a time limit for the attainment of goals. If PKOs are well and truly executed until lasting peace is installed, then, there is a time limit for troops to carry out their functions and under such a time limit, the objective is to strengthen and solidify relationships with post-conflict societies and to give impetus to the plans formulated under FOCAC and with other role-players. Objectives are the directional aspect of state behavior; such behavior is toward something (Snyder et al 2014). One more aspect of the objective of the state is to operationalize the term in the setting it is supposed to find meaning. But the task of discovering if objectives correspond to national security interests, image building, projecting military power, promoting multilateralism, or becoming a responsible power is not made easier by the fact that the decisionmakers often do not operationalize their statements of objectives, that is, specify in detail what the envisaged state of affairs would look like (Wolfers 2012).

In the peacekeeping environment, it happens that actions are often verbal, consisting of declarations made by officials, exchanges with diplomats and conversations taking place in forums, such as FOCAC and between members of civil society groups. Inferring from the opinions and suggestions from citizens means that objectives only indirectly correspond to the peacekeeping state of affairs. Wolfers(2012) call this situation as one where symbols (goodwill and peaceful intent) substitute for actual conditions (perception and threat). China, however, does not simply carry out the roles and duties in a delegated manner, but has ambitions in mind which surpasses the standard objectives desired by other countries. A specific objective achievement for China is to elevate the status among post-conflict societies and increaseits international image. The ultimate state of affairs envisaged by China is to develop a total strategy of cooperation with African states and peacekeeping stands in relationship to this strategic decision making. The activities of Chinese peacekeepers are in unison with small-to-medium states who are neutral, and able to provide an unbiased and non-partisan security role in a peacekeeping mission (Broadhead2012).

Is there any evidence that the non-violent use of military means acts as an indicator to safeguard interests? The concept of self-help, indeed, implies that the deployment of peacekeeping troops weakens the threat China faces and that by joining the international community to intervene in African security issues, the sovereignty of post-conflict societies, with whom China has strong bilateral relationships, are protected. At the same time these nations provide China with a free will to set the rules of the game in economic interaction. Because the conflict societies where China has troops stationed are dependent on the Asian giant for trade, such trade relationships are mutually beneficial and built on economic cooperation. The peacekeepers can help to offset perceptions Africans might have toward Chinese troops by using the environment to portray a positive or negative image. These perceptions create a certain image of the peacekeeping troops, Chinese people in general and of specific goals China has in mind. Even if a state comes to realize that there is an opportunity that can be seized, there can be disagreement as how best to take advantage of the situation. Indecisiveness may result from the absence of consensus on foreign policy and national security objectives both within a state and among allies (Viotti and Kauppi2015).

## IV. CONCLUSION

This paper pointed out that China's objectives in African PKOs support the economic and security objectives of the leadership. The Chinese government do not just react or adjust to challenges by the external environment but as a nation-state have needs and purposes to reach and this is done by exerting influence. In the peacekeeping environment objectives are achieved through the ordering of various actions and that reflect needs and purposes. On the one hand the objectives are specific, relating to creating conditions for peace and stability and on the other hand more general, such as establishing sound economic and trade relations with post-conflict societies. The commitment to help with infrastructure development and achieve political and societal elements essential to durable or lasting relationships with post-conflict societies are also classified as general objectives. China's African policy involves purpose and values and this is carried out to both change the African security and economic environments, to bring about sustainable development and to impose a set of rules, structures, costs, and benefits in the relationship with African countries. What is evident from this analysis is that the Chinese leadership is committed through their participation in PKOs to enhance economic and security efficiency by creating an 'image' of a combination of circumstances that will advance influence and changing behaviour. What it means is that the desires of the decision-makers regarding peaceful development and co-existence are satisfied and this adds value to African security and economic engagement.

The term objective is used to describe many of China's African collective interests and values that finds expression in foreign policy. However, the finding is that decision-makers, diplomats, military officials, and bureaucrats do not spend their time specifically pursuing peacekeeping goals to meet ends. Goals and interests are viewed in conjunction with China's broader engagement in the security and economic realms and interpreted in accordance with China's independent foreign policy of peaceful development and co-existence with other states. On the other hand, not all the security and strategic actions are compatible with achievement of national goals and at best seem to support policies in the immediate surroundings. For example, China's actions in PKOs are routine and unplanned and could primarily serve the interests of actors on the margin and not necessarily the leadership. One could say that goals meet interests haphazardly, with no apparent relationship between decisions taken and policies in favor of the achievement of collective goals. The fact of the matter is that, just like any other country, China pursue security goals under the burden of crises in post-conflict societies with the government not having a real policy but sharing in the peacekeeping ambitions of others. Dealing with actions as they arise in specific mission areas are dealt with by emphasizing decision-making as central focus and combining internal and external factors to the benefit of the Chinese state. Evident from the analysis is that decision-makers analyze situations by concepts such as the paths of action and then specifying the properties of the objectives. This allows the leadership to identify what relations exist between actions and how to establish rules, strategies, and particular aspects of mission areas.

China's African interests is better understood through an analysis of goal-seeking behavior than attempting to adopt an interest-based definition by assumption and implication. Considerable ambiguity and intermixture of purposes characterize national interests and in the case of China, the term is rarely defined in the African context. It appears that scholars, China-watchers, and other interested persons, all seem to understand what China's African interests are. However, analyzing the use of the term, it is by no means clear whether China's Africa interests refers to more fundamental values which must be maintained. Do interests lay the foundation for strategic interaction, determine specific objectives in relation to establishing peace and security, add significance to participation in events such as FOCAC, promote bilateral diplomacy and affect outcomes of policies? Do goals align with interests in all or only some of these? The finding is that China's African 'national interest" translate as a given form and substance though the actions of decision-makers and specific situational analysis. The reality is that interests is a cluster of definitions which share certain characteristics and notably the rules which affect or bind all groups of decision-makers.

China's African goals are modestly pursued to give a meaningful sense to the term 'national interest'. With respect to peacekeeping, the goal is to place a higher value on such ends as solidarity with African states, promoting peace and a stable environment and as a mechanism within the decision-making process to establish influence. Influential groups and participants in the decision-making process view peacekeeping to place a high value on the universal cause of peaceful development and co-existence with other states. Pressures by these groups are affecting the course of China's African policy. This leads to a more modesty interpretation of the national interest and concessions for the sake of peace. Whether China is successful in aligning peacekeeping goals with international, humanitarian, or other 'subnational' interests, depends on the opportunities the African environment presents and if they are realistically engaged.

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