A Historical Overview of China-Africa Relations

Africa and Imperial China: It Started with Trade

Trade was the first link between Africa and China. Chinese scholar Gao Jinyuan noted that Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, who reigned between 51 and 30 BCE, reportedly wore silks that likely came from China. In about 166 CE the Han emperor received gifts, some of which originated in northeast Africa, from the Roman emperor, who ruled Egypt at the time.¹ Former Chinese ambassador to Kenya, An Yongu, stated that Chinese goods dating to the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) have been found in Africa.² British scholar Basil Davidson agreed that Chinese products reached the Red Sea, Mediterranean, and even Meroë in present-day northern Sudan by the beginning of the Christian era.³

British businessman, traveler, and writer Philip Snow’s popular account of China-Africa contact acknowledged that Chinese scholars date the trade relationship from the Han Dynasty.⁴ Based on available research as of 1930, East African expert W. H. Ingrams argued that Chinese trade with the east coast of Africa took place during a later period, probably beginning in the Tang Dynasty (618–907).⁵ As more evidence becomes available, we are learning that the trade began earlier than many scholars believed.

Largely confined in the beginning to northeast Africa, the eastern coastal areas, and African islands in the western Indian Ocean, trade now dominates China’s relationship with most of Africa’s fifty-four countries (fifty-five if you include the disputed Western Sahara). Although trade statistics for this early period are nonexistent, anecdotal information and archaeological evidence strongly support the existence of commerce
between Africa and China. Before the arrival of Chinese military commander Zheng He’s fleet on the East African coast in the early fifteenth century, the evidence suggests that intermediaries, usually Arab seafarers, conducted trade in both directions.6 Imperial China did not consider these transactions with Africa or any other foreign region as trade, which Confucian doctrine looked upon with disdain. Rather, they were seen as a payment of tribute and an indication of homage from remote barbarian peoples in the rest of the world to the Son of Heaven or Emperor.7

There is widespread agreement on what articles constituted the early trade between China and the limited geography of Africa where it occurred. Archaeological excavations have turned up Tang Dynasty Chinese porcelain and coins in Egypt, Kenya, and Zanzibar. Chinese coins and porcelain from the Song Dynasty (960–1279) and porcelain from the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368) have been found from the Somali coast to the southern coast of Tanzania and even inland to Zimbabwe. Chinese porcelain of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) has been recovered from an even wider area that includes Madagascar, the port of Suakin in Sudan, the Eritrean coast, and the Transvaal in South Africa.8 Many Chinese trade goods did not withstand the passage of time and, as a result, left no archaeological evidence. Chinese records indicate that rice was an important export to the Somali and Swahili coasts while textiles, especially colored satins and taffetas, were popular items throughout eastern Africa. China also exported sandalwood, pepper, beans, ivory boxes, lacquer ware, fine art objects, white and red cotton cloth, gold, silver, and copper to much of the eastern side of Africa.9

African exports to China were more exotic and included elephant tusks, which the Chinese considered superior to Asian ivory, rhinoceros horn, frankincense, myrrh, tortoiseshell, aloes, precious stones, and rare woods. China also imported oil of storax, the aromatic balsam exuded by liquidambar trees and used in medicine and perfume. Perhaps the most unusual export from Africa was ambergris, at the time thought by the Chinese to be solidified dragon spittle. Used in making perfume, ambergris is the waxy substance found floating in tropical waters from the intestines of sperm whales. It appeared frequently along the Somali coast. Occasional African giraffes, zebras, ostriches, and other animals also found their way to China.10

Although there was an active slave trade in eastern Africa conducted by the Arabs, it appears that relatively few slaves reached China. According to one account, an Arab ambassador took an African slave to the Chinese
court in 976. Sinologist J. J. L. Duyvendak stated categorically that some African slaves found their way to China. American scholar and civil rights leader W. E. Burghardt Du Bois and Columbia University professor Graham W. Irwin agreed that African slaves were sent to China. Although acknowledging the presence of black slaves in China, geographer Paul Wheatley was less certain they had come from Africa. He thought they might have originated in Papua or Melanesia but was inclined to believe that Arab slave traders had brought some from Africa. Snow offered one of the most extensive accounts of African slaves in China, suggesting that they may have come from Madagascar and the Comoro Islands. Assuming they were part of the Arab slave trade, they more likely originated in eastern Africa. The slaves appear to have been concentrated in Canton (now Guangzhou) and were kept by rich people according to a record dated in 1119. They did not necessarily belong to Chinese and were probably indentured by members of the Islamic trading colony in Canton. Snow said the Portuguese subsequently brought African slaves to Macao.

Face-to-Face Contact

There is no agreement on the first face-to-face contact between Chinese and African people. There is one report that the king of the ancient Persian Arsacid Dynasty sent an Egyptian magician and acrobat, “the Alexandrian good string,” to Xi’an in 112 BCE. This would constitute the earliest recorded Sino-African cultural exchange and possibly the first Chinese-African personal contact. Some scholars believe the Chinese first reached Alexandria in Egypt by traveling overland in the early first to early third centuries. The evidence is thin. Gao Jinyuan wrote that a Chinese officer named Du Huan, following his capture and release by the Arabs, traveled in Africa during the Tang Dynasty and eventually reached a malaria-infested region inhabited by black people that he called Mo-lin. Some scholars believe this was Malindi on the present Kenya coast while others said it was along the west coast of the Red Sea, eastern coast of Egypt or Morocco. Snow argued that Du Huan ended up in the Ethiopian Kingdom of Axum in the Red Sea coastal area of present-day Eritrea. In any event, Du Huan left behind the first significant Chinese descriptions of some undetermined parts of Africa.
Russian Sinologist Viktor Velgus hypothesized that the Chinese could have sailed to East Africa as early as the eighth century, but acknowledged there is no proof they reached the continent by sea that early.\textsuperscript{20} Between 1071 and 1083 an envoy from Zanzibar visited Guangzhou twice where the Northern Song emperor entertained him.\textsuperscript{21} The earliest accounts of Africa in Chinese literature appear during the Tang Dynasty. Between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, Chinese geographers and chroniclers increased their knowledge about eastern Africa and the western Indian Ocean islands. The Chinese almost certainly obtained most of this information second-hand from foreigners who made their way to China. The famous Moroccan traveler, Ibn Battûta, traveled in China in 1347, visiting Quanzhou, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, and Beijing among other locations.\textsuperscript{22}

One Chinese seafarer, Wang Dayuan, claimed to have made two voyages across the Indian Ocean in the first half of the fourteenth century and is thought by many Chinese to have reached the East African coast. It is clear, however, that China made little effort to reach Africa until Zheng He made his famous voyages early in the Ming Dynasty.\textsuperscript{23}

The first Ming Emperor, Hung-wu, appreciated the importance of naval power. He passed to his son, Yung-lo, a strong navy that Yung-lo used to explore regions far beyond China’s borders. Both Hung-wu and Yung-lo encouraged foreign countries and city states to engage in commercial relations with China.\textsuperscript{24} This brings us to the most important event so far in China-Africa relations—the naval expeditions of Zheng He, a Muslim and a eunuch in the court of Ming Dynasty Emperor Yongle. His Chinese fleet, which was comparable in size to the Spanish Armada, made seven voyages well beyond the shores of China. The fifth voyage (1417–1419) reached the Somali coast (Mogadishu, Brava, and Kismayu), probably Malindi on the Kenyan coast and possibly Mombasa farther down the Kenyan coast and Mafia Island off Tanzania. Brava and Mogadishu sent four tribute missions to China between 1416 and 1423 and Malindi sent a final mission in 1416. A squadron from Zheng He’s sixth voyage (1421–1422) made a return visit to the Somali coast.\textsuperscript{25}

China’s heightened engagement with Africa’s eastern coast declined precipitously at the end of the Zheng He era. China again turned inward. Emperor Cheng-t’ung in 1436 prohibited the construction of ships for overseas voyages and ended the building of warships. Imperial Chinese sea power never regained the position it had during the late Song, Yuan, and early Ming Dynasties. Unlike most other early visitors to the African coast,
the Chinese were neither conquerors nor immigrants; they were navigators and merchants. They left virtually no trace of their culture or genetic heritage. Making an invidious comparison with the subsequent arrival of the Europeans, Snow suggested that the Chinese treated the Africans with courtesy and restraint. Most important, they left, turning their backs on Africa abruptly and completely.

Chinese leaders today refer nostalgically to the Zheng He era, suggesting that its current “going out” policy is nonthreatening. State councilor Dai Bingguo told the head of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2010 that “Zheng He is still remembered as an envoy of friendship and peace” and “China is not to be feared.” Chinese archaeologists arrived in Kenya in 2010 to begin excavation of a sunken ship believed to have been part of Zheng’s armada. Historian Geoff Wade of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, a translator of Ming documents relating to Zheng’s voyages, disputes the portrayal of Zheng as a benign adventurer. Wade argued that historical records show the Chinese fleets carried sophisticated weaponry and participated in at least three major military actions in Java, Sumatra, and Sri Lanka.

The interruption of China-Africa contact can be attributed to a power struggle in the Ming court between the eunuch class, grown powerful during the period of maritime exploration, and the official class, which feared the power of the eunuchs. The official class disparaged maritime trade as extravagant and dependent on contact with barbarians. The official class won. In addition, while the Chinese rulers prohibited ship building and sea-going trade, the Europeans moved into Africa and Asia at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. Even if Africans had wanted to continue to send missions to China, the Europeans stood in their way.

Following a review of relevant Chinese materials, Asian scholar Wang Gungwu agreed with those who said that Chinese ruling classes determined the voyages were unnecessary, wasteful, and could be ended without any serious consequences for China’s economy or political position. He concluded they illustrated that advanced Chinese maritime techniques and China’s early awareness of Africa played no part in the growth of Chinese trade with the western reaches of the Indian Ocean. The accomplishments and acknowledged maritime skills of Zheng He also played a relatively small role in the decisions of subsequent ruling classes about future voyages for exploration or even profitable trade.
Chinese Laborers and Traders Come to Africa

Following a long hiatus in China-Africa contact, except for the continuation of trade conducted by intermediaries and visits to Egypt by Chinese Muslims making the pilgrimage to Mecca, the next significant development began with the migration of Chinese laborers and traders to Africa. The regions geographically closest to China—Africa’s western Indian Ocean islands—and South Africa were the first to experience modest Chinese immigration. Snow wrote that a Frenchman, Comte d’Estaing, abducted three hundred Chinese from Sumatra in 1760 to work in the fields of Mauritius. Traders by tradition, the Chinese objected to field work and d’Estaing sent them back to Sumatra. English, French, and Danish ships transported more than three thousand Chinese to Mauritius in 1783. The British, who subsequently seized Mauritius from the French, imported a group of Chinese in 1829 to work on the sugar plantations. The European sugar planters worked them like slaves; the Chinese revolted and the effort failed. By 1846 an estimated fifty Chinese were arriving in Mauritius each year. Under pressure from foreign governments, Imperial China finally recognized the right of Chinese to leave the country in 1860.32

Merchants from Fujian Province and Canton brought Mauritius into the China trade soon after 1750. Two Chinese started a tea plantation in 1770 and by 1817 there was a small Chinatown on the island. By one account in the mid-1840s, Chinese dominated the market in the principal city, Port Louis, and by the mid-1880s they numbered several thousand. The first Chinese-language newspaper published in the western Indian Ocean, the Mauritus Chinese Gazette, appeared in 1895. The Chinese, then numbering about 3,000, established some of the earliest factories on the island. By the turn of the century, more than 80 percent of them were traders and in 1909 they organized a Chamber of Commerce. It was entrusted with controlling the arrival of Chinese immigrants to Mauritius and performed functions normally assigned to consulates. By the early twentieth century, there were some twenty-five to thirty Chinese clans in Mauritius, mainly Hakka (people who trekked historically from the north of China to the southeast coast and then continued on to create Chinese communities in Southeast Asia) and Cantonese. The Chinese population in Mauritius was just over 3,500 in 1901 and just under 3,700 in 1911.33

According to Leon Slawecki, one of the leading authorities on the Chinese in Madagascar, there is no evidence that Chinese arrived in Madagascar
before the middle of the nineteenth century. The first recorded sighting of a Chinese national on Madagascar occurred in 1862 in the village of Toamasina (then called Tamatave) on the east coast. There were six Chinese at Nossi Bé on the northwest coast in 1866; others reached Toamasina during the 1870s. A small group of Chinese laborers temporarily came to Antsiranana (then called Diego Suarez) on the north end of the island in the late 1880s. Permanent immigrants eventually arrived from Fujian Province followed soon thereafter by Cantonese. By 1893 there were an estimated forty Chinese in Madagascar. By the end of the century there was considerable coming and going by the Chinese, especially to and from Mauritius and the French Indian Ocean territories of Réunion and the Comoro Islands. Following the French conquest of Madagascar in 1896, more Chinese were attracted to the island. The first group of 1,025 Chinese coolies arrived in that year to help build the road from the interior capital, Antananarivo, to Toamasina. Eventually more than 3,000 coolies worked on the road, a railroad between Antananarivo and Toamasina that began in 1901, public works projects, and in agricultural services. The coolies are not, however, the ancestors of the current Chinese community on Madagascar. The French required that the coolies leave at the end of their contracts and nearly all of those who deserted were rounded up by French authorities and deported. The 1904 census for the island identified 452 Chinese, including 3 women and 6 children. The 1910 estimate rose to 540 with eleven women and seventeen children. Most of the early Chinese immigrants came from Mauritius or Réunion. A permanent Chinese community had begun to develop in Madagascar.

The Seychelles were inhabited much later than Mauritius and Madagascar and even today the island chain has a population of only about 100,000. The early Chinese community was correspondingly small. According to one account, the first Chinese traders came to the Seychelles in 1863. The 1871 census made, however, no mention of Chinese. In 1886, 23 Chinese traders arrived in the islands. Census reports listed 45 Chinese in 1891, 110 in 1901, and 81 in 1911. In a study of the islands published in 1907, a British geographer said there were only “a few” Chinese shopkeepers whom he described as recent immigrants. In the waning years of Imperial China, the Chinese community in the Seychelles was less significant than its counterparts in Mauritius and Madagascar.

Perhaps the most intriguing and certainly most thoroughly documented early presence of Chinese in Africa occurred in South Africa. Beginning in 1658, the Dutch East India Company imported slaves to the Cape of Good
Hope, which the company used as a penal colony for criminals and political exiles from Batavia in the East Indies. Small numbers of Chinese, believed to be primarily from Fujian Province, were part of this movement. Never numbering more than fifty to one hundred at any time, the Chinese convicts worked as basket makers, fishermen, and masons. After they completed their sentence or received a pardon, the Chinese either returned to Batavia or remained in the Cape as “free blacks,” a term that included persons wholly or partially of African and Asian descent. By the 1740s, a dozen or so free Chinese operated restaurants or served as traders, chargers, and craftsmen. The number of free Chinese declined in the latter part of the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century, the various South African administrative jurisdictions adopted varying policies toward Chinese immigration. The net result was only modest growth in their numbers, although there was a significant increase following the discovery of diamonds in South Africa in 1867 and gold in 1886.38

South African historian Karen Harris, who has studied Chinese labor, suggested there were fewer than 5,000 Chinese in the country at the beginning of the twentieth century. This situation changed dramatically in 1904 when the Anglo-Chinese Labour Convention and the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance permitted the introduction of indentured labor to work in the gold mines. As an expression of its racial concerns, South Africa passed the same year a Chinese Exclusion Act aimed at preventing Chinese from remaining permanently in the country. The European mining companies recruited 63,695 Chinese indentured laborers to work in the Transvaal gold mines under a contract that limited their stay to three years. At the end of the contract, which was renewable, the regulation required that they return to China. While the small numbers of free Chinese who arrived in South Africa as independent immigrants were primarily from the southeastern regions of China, the indentured laborers were from the northern provinces.39 At the beginning of 1907, there were nearly 54,000 Chinese in the Witwatersrand fields. They constituted almost 35 percent of the total unskilled work force.40 By 1910, when the four self-governing British colonies—Cape, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange River—amalgamated to form the Union of South Africa, only 2,000 of these workers remained in the Transvaal fields. The others had been repatriated to China.41

The rights and racial status of Chinese in white-ruled South Africa was a contentious issue from the beginning. The relatively small Chinese community joined the larger Indian community, led by Mahatma Gandhi who
lived in South Africa from 1893 until he returned to India in 1915, to achieve racial acceptance. The Indians claimed to be British subjects with the right to be treated the same as whites in South Africa. Leung Quinn, chairman of the Cantonese Club in South Africa, petitioned the Chinese embassy in London to inform the South African government that Chinese should not be subject to South Africa’s Asiatic Registration Act. South African legislation in the early twentieth century disappointed the entire Asian community. South African authorities deported or arrested a number of Chinese near the end of the Imperial era.  

The sizeable Chinese community in South Africa led to what was Imperial China’s first and probably only diplomatic/consular representative in Africa. South African journalist Melanie Yap and librarian Dianne Leong Man, in a detailed account of the Chinese consulate-general in South Africa, documented that the first person to hold this position was Lew Yuk Lin, who arrived in Johannesburg in 1905. He remained until 1907 when his secretary, Liu Ngai, became acting consul-general. On the eve of the Chinese Revolution of 1911, China recalled Liu Ngai and the American consul in Johannesburg assumed responsibility for China’s affairs.

The use of Chinese labor in Africa during the Imperial period was not confined to the Indian Ocean islands and South Africa. The British colonial government in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) recruited small numbers of Chinese laborers to work in the gold fields. Newspaper accounts reported that sixteen to thirty Chinese arrived in 1897 but only remained for a month. A few more Chinese came in 1902 and about thirty joined the workforce in 1914. Africans in the Gold Coast generally opposed the use of Chinese labor and the colonial government stopped recruiting them.

The Portuguese brought several thousand Chinese laborers from Canton to build the first railway in the southern part of Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Mozambique also permitted the entry of Chinese traders. By 1912, there were some three hundred Chinese in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) and smaller numbers in other coastal towns. Germany brought about 2,000 Chinese laborers from Shandong, Shanghai, Fujian and Guangdong to colonial Tanganyika to build railways. Together with local workers, they built the railway from Dar es Salaam to Mwanza. When completed in 1914, only six hundred Chinese laborers had survived, and most of them returned to China. Local residents thought the Chinese were the most industrious and honest people they had ever met. There is a village along the line called
“Shanghai,” where many of the laborers once lived. The Germans concluded Chinese coolies were also the best choice to work on the coffee and tobacco plantations in colonial Tanganyika.

In the late 1800s, Belgium undertook to build a railway from Matadi on the Congo’s Atlantic coast to the future capital of Léopoldville (now Kinshasa). Unable to locate enough African labor, the Belgians recruited 550 Chinese from Macao to work alongside the Africans. Conditions were harsh and most died or abandoned the project. Some of the Chinese reportedly settled permanently in the Congo. In 1898, the administrators of the Congo Free State established by King Leopold II of the Belgians concluded a treaty of commerce and friendship in Peking with the Qing government. It gave Chinese the right to settle in the Congo, buy fixed and moveable assets, practice their professions, and change jobs. According to Snow, this was the first formal Sino-African treaty, albeit with the colonial power. The French also deployed Chinese workers to build a rail line from the town of Kayes to the Niger River in West Africa.

Links between Africa and Imperial China, although not substantial, were more extensive than the oft-cited trade and the fifteenth-century voyages to eastern Africa by Zheng He. There was widespread use of Chinese labor in Africa on major infrastructure projects although very few of the laborers remained permanently on the continent. This is a tradition that continues with more recent Chinese laborers brought to Africa for construction projects. There is also a long tradition of Chinese traders, merchants, and service providers immigrating to Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, South Africa, and Mozambique. Some of these Chinese became permanent residents and eventually citizens of those countries. Some became thoroughly integrated with the local population, as in the case of the Seychelles, while others tended to retain their identity, as in South Africa. There is every reason to believe that many of the recently arrived and similarly employed Chinese will become part of new permanent communities.

**Africa and the Republic of China, 1912–1949**

A new National Government of China (referred to hereafter in this section as the Republic of China or ROC) begun by Sun Yat Sen and later led by Chiang Kai-shek replaced the Qing or Manchu Dynasty (1644–1911) on 1
January 1912. It was preoccupied with maintaining control over the country and often failed. Two world wars, rampant warlordism, an internal communist challenge and the Japanese occupation combined to thwart the ROC’s leaders. These challenges left virtually no time for interaction with faraway Africa. In any event, only three African countries—Ethiopia, Liberia, and white-ruled South Africa—were independent throughout the period until 1949 when the communists pushed the ROC off the mainland to Taiwan. Egypt received partial independence from the United Kingdom in 1922, but did not obtain full sovereignty until the overthrow of the British-backed Egyptian monarchy in 1952.

The ROC maintained limited contact with Africa from 1912 through 1949. The ROC gave more attention to countries such as South Africa and French-ruled Madagascar that had sizeable Chinese communities. Curiously, the ROC seems to have taken less interest in the British-controlled Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, which had the largest permanent Chinese community in Africa. The two agreements that the ROC signed with African countries were also surprising. The first one was an exchange of notes on most-favored nation treatment of goods traded between semi-independent Egypt and the ROC. Signed in 1930, it remained in effect for less than a year. The second was a treaty of friendship between independent Liberia and the ROC. Signed in Paris in 1937 by their respective diplomatic representatives to France, it entered into force in 1941. It constituted China’s first treaty with a fully independent African country. Liberia did not, however, establish diplomatic relations with the ROC until 1957. Until then, there was virtually no interaction between the ROC and Liberia.

China maintained a special interest in the Arab world and Egypt in particular because of China’s own minority Muslim community. Chinese Muslims studied at Al-Azhar, the center of Islamic learning in Egypt. In 1931, Al-Azhar appointed the first Chinese Sheikh, Mohammad Ibrahim Shao Kuo-chen, to its faculty. Chinese interest in Islam led to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Egyptian monarchy and the ROC in 1942, when Tang Wu became China’s first diplomatic representative resident in Cairo. Egypt established an office in China in 1944.

Following its defeat on the mainland in 1949, the ROC’s diplomatic relations were a shambles as it transferred the government to Taiwan. Only seven nations, none of them African, initially established permanent diplomatic missions on Taiwan. The ROC did not take a strong political interest in Africa until a number of years later, when the African colonies began
to achieve independence. Fierce competition with the People’s Republic of China for acceptance and diplomatic recognition by the new African states inspired this attention by ROC leaders.

The most significant Chinese diplomatic contact with independent Africa during the republican era occurred with South Africa because it was home to one of the largest Chinese communities. After the recall of Chinese consul-general Liu Ngai in 1911, the United States retained responsibility for Chinese affairs until 1919, when Liu returned to South Africa and reopened the consulate-general. The British government also recognized Liu as the consul-general for Basutoland (now Lesotho), Swaziland, Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana), and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). An activist, he established contacts with Chinese throughout South Africa, solicited funds from them to pay the cost of operating the consulate-general, and outspokenly advocated on their behalf vis-à-vis the South African government. In the process, he ran afoul of the white South African leaders. He remained until 1930, when a succession of ROC government representatives served as consul-general until 1948. None of them remained more than three years. South Africa occasionally allowed the appointment of local Chinese leaders as honorary consuls in key cities. At no time during the ROC period did South Africa assign diplomatic or consular personnel to China.55

The Chinese community in South Africa grew slowly during the republican era, rising from 1,905 in 1911 to 2,944 in 1936 and 4,340 in 1946. Most lived in the Cape and Transvaal and most were small traders. Many of them retained a strong allegiance with China and supported the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang (KMT). Beginning in 1920, Chinese communities established KMT branches in South Africa’s larger cities. The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) united the Chinese community in South Africa with China and led to fund-raising campaigns in support of the ROC. When South Africa entered World War II as an ally of China, white South African liberals began to condemn the long-standing discrimination against the Chinese. After the KMT fled to Taiwan, however, Chinese in South Africa again found themselves facing racial hostility and with no prospect their situation would improve in the racially divided country.56

There was considerable Chinese support in Madagascar for the KMT, which had some 1,500 members and twenty-seven cells by 1947. France had permitted the ROC to open a consulate in Antananarivo the previous year. The first Chinese consul, Kou Chao-fen, sensing a communist victory
in China, helped organize a Communist Party of China branch and subsequently defected to the PRC. Kou and his staff left Madagascar for the PRC in mid-1950, leaving behind a politically divided Chinese community.57

On Mauritius, the China Society, also known as the Harmony Society, supported the republican revolution. Eventually the Chinese Chamber of Commerce became the official headquarters of the KMT. Following the death of Sun Yat Sen in 1925, most Chinese in Mauritius shifted their allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek. At the same time, they did not initially perceive communism as a threat to Confucian values. In addition, Chiang Kai-shek’s strategy to take the communist threat more seriously than the Japanese one confused them. Although the ROC opened its first consulate in 1945, support in the Chinese community for the KMT began to waver.58

During the time the ROC ruled from the Chinese mainland, its engagement with Africa was never significant. The ROC was preoccupied with the Japanese occupation and Mao Zedong’s communist insurgency. Whatever concerns it had about relations with African countries, they were generally negotiated in colonial capitals such as Paris and London, where the ROC had diplomatic representation. To the extent it had any interest in Africa, it tended to focus on modest trade links and maintained contact with the small Chinese communities in a few countries on the African continent and islands in the western Indian Ocean. The ROC became considerably more interested in Africa once the communists seized power on the mainland. It then began to press the African countries for recognition as the sole representative of China.

The PRC and the Role of Exogenous Events

Many scholars have analyzed PRC-Africa relations over different chronological periods. Some were unusually nuanced and included events that spanned only a few years while others preferred sweeping generalizations that covered a decade or more for each stage. There is little consistency in the way they chronologically grouped the policy changes that occurred in the China-Africa relationship after 1949.59 The chronology in this chapter is equally arbitrary, but offers, we believe, a reasonable way to categorize the interaction between the PRC and Africa. China-Africa relations tended to be dictated by Chinese foreign policy ideology, at least in the first two
decades, Chinese internal developments, and other events that were exoge-
nous to Africa. This is not surprising for several reasons. While the PRC
has the luxury of speaking with one voice, African countries have never
been in this position. The Organization of African Unity and its successor,
the African Union, do not speak for all members when they deal with China
or any other non-African country; differences among individual African
states remain considerable. Countries such as South Africa, Egypt, and
Nigeria because of their large populations and economic power inevitably
receive more attention from China than smaller and economically weak
ones such as Togo, Lesotho, and the Central African Republic. Until re-
cently, when Africa became a major exporter of oil, even collectively Afri-
cans had little influence on international politics or global markets.

The major exogenous developments that affected China-Africa relations
include the Cold War, which continued from the beginning of the relation-
ship in 1949 until about 1990. It accounted for many of the PRC’s differ-
ences about Africa with the West and especially the United States. The
existence of colonial rule and white-ruled regimes in Africa worked to the
advantage of China’s communist ideology. The PRC supported the Africans
in their efforts to end Western colonialism. Although the Africans them-
selves were instrumental in removing colonialism, the colonial powers
played a significant role in determining the timing of African independence
and the structure of most of the first African governments. Seventeen Afri-
can states became independent in 1960 alone, offering a major opportunity
for Chinese diplomacy.

Another important development for Africa was the Sino-Soviet conflict
that began in the late 1950s and continued until the mid-1980s. This dis-
pute became highly public by 1960 when Soviet technical advisers left the
PRC, Chinese students returned from the USSR, and Soviet assistance to
China dried up. A combination of the Cold War and the Sino-Soviet split
essentially dictated the PRC’s political/strategic approach to Africa until the
mid-1980s, when only the Cold War remained as an issue. China’s Great
Leap Forward from 1958 to 1960 or 1961 affected PRC activities in Africa.
Designed to transform China from an agrarian to a modern industrial
economy, it was largely an economic failure, which limited China’s ability
to assist Africa.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began in 1966 and remained
intense through 1969; it continued in a milder form until 1976. Launched
by Mao Zedong to rid the country of its liberal bourgeoisie and revitalize
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the revolutionary class struggle, it resulted in carefully controlled chaos and violence. The Great Leap Forward, which the CPC subsequently deemed a serious policy error, had the effect of diminishing contact with Africa during the late 1960s. On 25 October 1971, the PRC, after a long diplomatic struggle, replaced the ROC on the UN Security Council. A significant majority of African states voted in favor of the PRC, a development Beijing continues to highlight in its relations with African countries. This change put the PRC in a position to assist its African friends on controversial issues before the Council.

The 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown and its aftermath indirectly affected relations with Africa because of the harsh criticism expressed by the West about China’s human rights practices. The end of the Cold War had important implications for China-Africa ties by allowing China to refocus its economic priorities on industrialization, trade, and competing in the global economy. It even offered the possibility of collaboration with the West in Africa. At the same time, it raised Chinese concerns about the role in Africa of the world’s only remaining superpower—the United States. It is not yet clear how the newest exogenous factors—counterterrorism, climate change, global financial challenges, and growing interest in Africa by countries such as India and Brazil—will affect China-Africa relations. Even if they do not reach the importance of earlier developments, they are already influencing the relationship. New issues will certainly come into play; a global food crisis and China’s goal of achieving increased sea lane security may be among them.

**Taking Power Until the Eve of Bandung**

Mao Zedong’s “long march” and removal of the ROC from the Chinese mainland in October 1949 was followed by a period of relative disinterest in Africa and much of the rest of the world. As the PRC consolidated its power, it focused on domestic issues. The PRC did send troops to Korea in support of the communist government in Pyongyang and participated in the 1951–1953 negotiations at Panmunjom that eventually led to an armistice. In 1954, it had representatives at the Geneva Conference that ended French colonial rule in Indochina. The communist government also used this period to sign a mutual defense treaty with the Soviet Union and to strengthen relations with North Korea and the countries of Eastern
During these years, to the extent that the PRC engaged in external affairs, there were no differences with the Soviet Union concerning policy toward Africa. Africa did not become a serious part of Beijing’s foreign policy agenda until the historic Bandung Conference in 1955.

In any event, there were few independent African states in the years immediately after the communists seized power in China. In addition to Ethiopia, Liberia, South Africa, and Egypt, only Libya became independent in 1951 before the Bandung Conference. Liberia had close ties to the United States while white-ruled South Africa envisaged its future with the West and particularly the United Kingdom. Ethiopia and Libya were developing strong security relationships with the United States. Ethiopia even sent two battalions to Korea to fight alongside South Korea and the United States. Following the 1952 coup in Egypt, this left only Gamal Abdel Nasser as a potential partner with the Chinese communist government.

The PRC did not completely absent itself from African affairs during the six years before the Bandung Conference. There were a few meetings between CPC officials and African delegates attending Soviet-financed international meetings. A small number of Africans went to China during this period. Walter Sisulu, Secretary General of South Africa’s African National Congress (ANC), visited in 1953. The ANC eventually received most of its support from the Soviet Union and the PRC aided the ANC’s major rival, the Pan Africanist Congress. Félix Moumè, one of the leaders of Cameroon’s Union des Populations du Cameroon (UPC), visited the PRC the same year. The PRC refusal to collaborate with the French colonial government in Cameroon caught the attention of Beijing. These early contacts with an opponent of the white-ruled government in South Africa and a leader of a group in Cameroon that was unwilling to cooperate with French colonialists were harbingers of PRC policy in support of African liberation movements and several revolutionary groups. To some extent, Africa served as an entry point into Europe and a way to pursue goals that impacted Europe.

The PRC began to turn its attention to Africa in the second half of 1954. Zhou Enlai, in a report to the First National People’s Congress, expressed the desire to promote business relations with Middle Eastern and African countries to improve understanding and create favorable conditions for the establishment of normal relations. He did not, however, consider Africa a likely ally at that time. By the end of 1954, the PRC showed increased appreciation for the importance of Africa following the communiqué from
the Bogor (Indonesia) Conference, which served as a preparatory session for the Bandung Conference. The PRC realized it had concerns in common with Africa. Commenting on the Bogor communiqué, which proposed an Afro-Asian conference, *People's Daily* noted that much of Africa has long been subjected to oppression and enslavement by colonialism and most Africans have suffered the scourge or threats of war by imperialist aggressors. It added that a new dawn is breaking over the African continent.

### The Afro-Asian Period: From Bandung to Winneba

The 1955 Asian-African conference at Bandung, Indonesia, attracted representatives from twenty-nine Asian and African states. It marked an important change in the PRC’s relations with Africa. Premier Zhou Enlai led the Chinese delegation. There were representatives from six African countries—Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, and soon to be independent Sudan and Ghana. The Chinese delegates had an opportunity to meet personally with the Africans. They developed a particularly good relationship with the Egyptians and began a dialogue on trade. Two Egyptians visited China after Bandung to continue the trade talks. The Chinese also met with representatives of several African liberation movements who attended as observers. It provided a forum for Zhou Enlai to speak out against colonialism and imperialism in Africa and to support independence movements in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. He also upheld Egypt’s claim to the Suez Canal as a new crisis over its control approached.

The Bandung Conference, which eventually led to the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement, incorporated the PRC’s “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” into the “Ten Principles of Bandung.” The original five principles remain as an essential part of China’s policy toward Africa. Zhou Enlai initially proposed the five principles in 1953 as the preamble for the Indian-Chinese Trading Treaty in Tibet. Known as the Panchsheel, China and India agreed to them in 1954. The principles include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other’s internal affairs, equality, and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. Bandung was a personal triumph for Zhou Enlai and a watershed for Chinese diplomacy, including its relations with Africa.

Building on its success at Bandung and the Conference of Asian Countries that took place several days earlier in New Delhi, the PRC decided to
expand its engagement with the Afro-Asian world in an effort to mold its thinking and actions in a fashion that accorded with Chinese ideology. Following Bandung, this effort began to meet some resistance from the USSR, which had not been invited to the conference, and from some other nonaligned countries. China sent a delegation to the first Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) Conference in Cairo, which began in late 1957 and continued into early 1958. China took note of the growing role of Africans in this movement. Even before the Conference opened, China held a rally in Beijing where the head of the delegation expressed support for several African national liberation movements, including those in Algeria, Kenya, Cameroon, and Uganda. Early in 1958, the CPC acknowledged the growing importance of Africa in world politics.\(^{68}\)

By early 1960, Afro-Asian solidarity had become an essential component of China’s foreign policy. In a key speech, China’s Chairman of the Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity, Liao Cheng-chih, pledged support for Africa’s struggle against colonialism and reaffirmed adherence to the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” He singled out the United States for criticism, arguing that Washington intended to supplant the colonial powers in Africa. He described “U.S. imperialism” as the most dangerous enemy of African independence. The answer to America’s “imperialist aggression” was Afro-Asian solidarity. Liao Cheng-chih pledged that China would uphold sovereignty and territorial integrity, adding that China regarded as its international duty the backing of “national liberation struggles of all oppressed nations.”\(^{69}\)

The second AAPSO conference took place in Conakry, Guinea, in 1960 with representatives from more than fifty countries. It was an opportunity to solidify relations with a growing number of independent African countries. It also became clear there was increasing friction between China and the USSR.\(^{70}\) After Conakry, AAPSO became a venue for Sino-Soviet hostility. By 1961, China concluded that the Soviet Union should not be eligible to take part in the organization. AAPSO members were generally reluctant to take sides in the Sino-Soviet dispute, which dominated the third AAPSO conference in Moshi, Tanzania, in 1963. The PRC sought to portray itself as more revolutionary than the Soviet Union. It urged the creation of an international united front that included itself and the independent and colonized countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America to destroy capitalism and imperialism. The conference in Moshi and its Sino-Soviet conflict overtones alarmed many African representatives. The 1962 Sino-Indian border
war emerged as an issue at Moshi. Most African countries remained silent after the outbreak of conflict while some of the more militant African countries expressed concern about the damage it was doing to Afro-Asian solidarity. Among the African participants, however, only Niger condemned Chinese aggression against India; several others spoke out elsewhere. At a meeting of the AAPSO Council in 1964, the Chinese representative criticized the Soviet position on peaceful coexistence, disarmament, and solving territorial disputes by peaceful means. The Africans concluded that the rupture between the USSR and China was complete. In 1965, the fourth AAPSO conference in Winneba, Ghana, again demonstrated the corrosive effect of the Sino-Soviet conflict on Afro-Asian solidarity. The Afro-Asian organization never recovered. Winneba was the last large gathering limited to Afro-Asian states.71

China used AAPSO conferences to announce policies and encourage their acceptance by African and Asian nations. Chinese representatives also established contact during these meetings with leaders of African governments and African nationalist leaders, some of whom would later lead independence movements in their countries.72 At the same time, the PRC worked hard in Africa to achieve diplomatic recognition and political support. The fact that the ROC continued to hold China’s seat in the UN Security Council drove much of this diplomatic effort. After an agreement in 1955 to purchase Egyptian cotton and an exchange of trade offices in their respective capitals, the following year Egypt was the first African country to recognize the PRC. Cairo was the center of the Arab world, headquarters for AAPSO, and host to several African liberation groups. Beijing established an important embassy in Cairo and used it to considerable advantage to expand its diplomacy in the Arab world, including North Africa, and eventually in Sub-Saharan Africa. Following the outbreak of the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, China strongly backed Egypt. It offered Cairo a $5 million credit, another Chinese first for Africa, and called on the UK and France to end their aggression. China restrained itself, however, by urging an end to the conflict by peaceful negotiations.73

An important component of China’s early policy toward Africa was rhetorical and material support for independence movements and revolutionary groups that opposed several established African governments. The PRC eventually ended its practice of supporting revolutionary organizations committed to overthrowing existing African governments. Chinese support for liberation movements began with Algeria’s Front de Libération
Nationale (FLN), established in 1954. China offered rhetorical support the following year and then stepped up contact with Algerian revolutionaries. The PRC promptly recognized Algeria’s Provisional Government in 1958 followed by a credit for the purchase of arms and training of Algerian fighters in China. The FLN, for its part, agreed to a communiqué in 1960 that fully supported the PRC’s control over Taiwan. Beijing subsequently insisted that the “One China” policy be part of any agreement on diplomatic recognition. The FLN, which achieved victory over France in 1962, was one of the relatively few revolutionary groups in Africa supported by the PRC that took over the reins of government. Throughout its support, China appeared primarily interested in the fact that the FLN remained anti-imperialist, which it saw as a way to confront its main enemy—the United States—in these early years. The PRC also perceived Algeria’s struggle as similar to its own war for liberation.

In the early 1960s, the failure of China’s Great Leap Forward severely limited assistance the PRC could provide to the newly independent African countries. As a result, Beijing sought influence on the cheap. One tactic was the establishment of numerous front organizations. Two examples were the China Peace Committee or the Chinese branch of the World Peace Council and the Chinese Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity, which served as the Chinese branch of AAPSO. The PRC also relied on people-to-people organizations such as the Chinese-African People’s Friendship Association established in 1960 as an umbrella organization to oversee a plethora of such groups. Following the establishment of diplomatic relations with an African country, China created a separate friendship association under the control of the Chinese People’s Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. The success of this effort varied widely from country to country, often depending on the closeness of the official relationship and amount of tangible support China offered the country.

China’s diplomatic breakthrough in Egypt opened the door for other successes in both North and Sub-Saharan Africa. One important diplomatic development was Zhou Enlai’s historic ten-country visit to Africa at the end of 1963 and beginning of 1964. Although it was not the first high level Chinese delegation to visit Africa, it was the most dramatic. It also signaled the beginning of a Chinese policy to emphasize the importance of regular, senior, face-to-face contact with African leaders. This practice continues to the present day. Zhou Enlai used the African tour to unveil the five principles guiding China’s relations with African and Arab countries. They
continue to be widely quoted by Chinese officials and scholars, although China’s 2006 African policy statement updated, modified, and expanded the five principles. When he announced the principles in Accra, Ghana, Zhou emphasized that they were in accord with the previously mentioned “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” and the “Ten Principles of Bandung.” Zhou Enlai also presented during his African tour eight principles governing China’s foreign aid. They are cited in the chapter on assistance. The five principles concerning relations with African and Arab countries were:

• China supports the African and Arab peoples in their struggle to oppose imperialism and old and new colonialism and to win and safeguard national independence;
• It supports the pursuance of a policy of peace, neutrality and non-alignment by the governments of the African and Arab countries;
• It supports the desire of the African and Arab peoples to achieve unity and solidarity in the manner of their own choice;
• It supports the African and Arab states in their efforts to settle their disputes through peaceful consultation; and
• It holds that the sovereignty of the African and Arab countries should be respected by all other countries and that encroachment and interference from any quarter should be opposed.

These principles are sufficiently general that they have withstood the test of time. China did not, however, always adhere to them. Chinese support in the 1960s for several African revolutionary movements committed to the overthrow of independent governments violated the principles of noninterference, settling disputes through peaceful consultation, and respect for sovereignty of African countries. Nevertheless, this was the public face of China’s African and Arab policy after 1963; the principles became a litany in official rhetoric.

The economic relationship with Africa was not very important through the mid-1960s. Although China was quick to sign trade agreements with African countries, the volume of trade was small and roughly in balance. It was not until the 1990s that trade became a significant part of the relationship. China was not in a position to offer much economic aid until the 1990s. It did begin to send more Chinese technicians to Africa after 1960. For example, the first Chinese medical team arrived in Algeria in 1963.
Chinese direct investment in African economies, an important effort later, was not part of the Maoist agenda.

From the Cultural Revolution to UN Admission

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution marked a new phase in the China-Africa relationship. There was considerable debate in China about the Cultural Revolution before Mao Zedong formally launched it at the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee in August 1966. In terms of China-Africa relations, the Cultural Revolution was also an attempt by Mao to move the center of world revolution from Moscow to Beijing. Influential Defense Minister Lin Biao, a strong supporter of the Cultural Revolution, wrote in 1965 that Asia, Africa, and Latin America were the main battlefields in the struggle against American imperialism and its lackeys. He called for world revolution and the promotion of wars of national liberation. The most damaging internal phase of the Cultural Revolution, which included attacks by the Red Guards on perceived nonrevolutionaries, occurred from 1966 through 1969. It continued in a milder form until Mao’s death in September 1976 and the purge of the Gang of Four in October. The Cultural Revolution set back modernization and production, disrupted education and science, and tended to isolate China from the rest of the world.82

The impact of the Cultural Revolution on Africa was significant and its beginning coincided with the overthrow of governments in Dahomey (now Benin) and the Central African Republic. The new governments in both countries expelled PRC embassy personnel. In 1966, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, who allowed the PRC to train African revolutionaries in his country, was removed from power while visiting China. The new government in Accra immediately sent 430 Chinese staff, including thirteen guerrilla warfare instructors, back to China and significantly reduced the size of the embassy. Beijing accepted this setback even as it endured the worst abuses of the Cultural Revolution and chose to keep open its mission in Accra in order to wait for a more favorable political situation. This early demonstration of patience and pragmatism became a hallmark of later PRC policy in Africa. By the end of the year, Accra charged that China was supporting an attempt by Nkrumah to return to power; Beijing then closed
its embassy. China also experienced serious difficulties in its relations with Kenya, although the two countries maintained diplomatic relations.\(^8^3\)

In 1967 China recalled its ambassadors worldwide, except for the one in Cairo, to answer charges brought by the Red Guards against the foreign ministry and its senior personnel. Ambassador Huang Hua remained in Cairo to coordinate policy toward Africa and the Middle East in the absence of other ambassadors. During the Cultural Revolution there was a sharp drop in high level African visits to China and senior Chinese to Africa. By 1969, four fewer African countries recognized the PRC than in 1965, trade was down moderately, and new PRC loans to Africa had dried up. China did not terminate cooperative initiatives in Africa, but tended to focus on countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, Mali, Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville, and Algeria, with which it had especially close relations. China continued to support African liberation movements throughout the Cultural Revolution, but its preoccupation with internal developments diminished its ability and willingness to engage as actively as before. These unsettling events in China caused anxiety among China’s African friends. Although some militant Chinese embassy personnel in Africa tried to encourage Africans to follow a similar revolutionary model, very few African countries showed any interest. Tanzania created its own half-hearted version of the Cultural Revolution known as “Operation Vijaana,” complete with “Green Guards.” It was a poor copy. In spite of all the turmoil in China, Beijing generally handled its relations with Africa competently and Chinese officials maintained their long-term foreign policy objectives toward the continent. For example, in 1967 China made the final decision to move forward with financing the Tanzania-Zambia railroad project. Nevertheless, the Cultural Revolution was a setback for China’s relations with Africa.\(^8^4\)

China adopted a pragmatic policy designed to accommodate the African countries as it competed with Taiwan for diplomatic recognition. Zhou Enlai demanded patience and understanding from China’s diplomats in the establishment of diplomatic relations. (See Appendix 1 for the order and dates that African countries established diplomatic relations with the PRC.) Faced with African skepticism and suspicion of China, Zhou told Chinese diplomats to wait as long as necessary for the right moment and even agreed to sign cultural agreements and set up trade offices in countries with diplomatic relations with Taiwan. China operated in these early years in Africa on the basis of the Chinese phrase “when water flows, a channel is formed.”\(^8^5\)
As dismally as this stage of China-Africa relations began, it ended in October 1971 with one of Beijing’s crowning achievements—admission to the UN and replacement of the ROC on the Security Council. The tactic for keeping the PRC out of the UN was a U.S.-inspired procedural vote in the General Assembly that allowed admission of the PRC only if it received a two-thirds majority. This ploy failed for the first time in 1971. The General Assembly then admitted the PRC by a vote of 76-35 with 17 abstentions. The PRC received 34 percent of its votes from African countries. Beijing received the support of twenty-six African states; only fifteen voted with Taipei. Ten of the fifteen countries that supported Taipei recognized Beijing in the next few years.\textsuperscript{86}

China repaired with surprising speed the damage to its relations with Africa during the Cultural Revolution. It began returning experienced career ambassadors to African capitals in 1969. By 1970, China increased significantly the number of friendship, cultural, technical, and governmental delegations visiting the continent. For the first time, China became the largest provider of foreign aid to Africa by a communist country. The PRC launched a diplomatic offensive that helped achieve its successful result at the UN. Some outside developments also worked to its advantage. U.S. president Richard Nixon announced in 1971 that national security adviser Henry Kissinger had made a secret visit to China and that Nixon had agreed to visit within a year. In view of long-standing U.S. opposition to the PRC holding a seat on the Security Council, this clearly sent mixed signals to Africans and the rest of the world. In addition, many Africans had become disappointed with apparent American indifference to the continent. For its part, the Soviet Union’s 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia disillusioned many Africans.\textsuperscript{87} China took advantage of these developments. This fast reversal of fortune is a reminder that China is capable of making colossal mistakes, for example, the Cultural Revolution, but once it puts its collective mind to repairing the damage, it can achieve quick and impressive success.

China emerged from the Cultural Revolution pursuing less extreme policies toward Africa. Not only had relative moderates in China such as Zhou Enlai prevailed, but some of the most radical African leaders including Ahmed Ben Bella in Algeria, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and Modibo Keita in Mali had been replaced by Africans who exercised more restraint. As a result, China ended support for revolutionary groups in Africa whose goal was the overthrow of established governments. Rather, it limited its material assistance to those liberation movements engaged in the removal of
colonial and white-ruled governments. At the same time, it recognized and worked closely with governments of all kinds irrespective of their political and economic ideology. This policy has prevailed to the present day.

**Stirrings of Pragmatism and Third World Focus in the 1970s**

China was unusually active in Africa in the early 1970s. Following its political success at the UN, it began a campaign to secure additional diplomatic recognition. China significantly increased its assistance commitments to Africa and invited sixteen African heads of government to visit Beijing by the end of 1975. By 1971, for example, China had replaced Great Britain as Tanzania’s principal trade partner and by the middle of the decade China was fully engaged in constructing the Tanzania-Zambia railway. It continued to support African liberation groups, but found it difficult to compete with a Soviet Union that had deeper pockets. From 1970 to 1976, however, China actually provided more aid (mostly loans) to Africa than the Soviet Union—$1.8 billion to twenty-eight African countries compared to the USSR’s $1 billion to twenty states. After 1976 Chinese aid commitments fell sharply.

Although trade with Africa grew in the 1970s, China accounted for only about 1 percent of total African exports by the end of the decade. Snow wrote that beginning in the late 1970s, Chinese diplomats were telling their African interlocutors that socialist governments should privatize their economies, offer material incentives to motivate their workers and encourage investment from other countries. China’s revolutionary rhetoric continued, but its policy in Africa became more pragmatic.

Alan Hutchison, a British journalist with extensive African experience, asserted in the mid-1970s that although China’s stated aims were revolutionary, its policy toward Africa, except during the Cultural Revolution, was evolutionary and eventually pragmatic. It evolved toward accommodation with conservative governments such as Emperor Haile Selassie’s Ethiopia and Mobutu Sese Seko’s Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo). China had little in common ideologically with either country. Sudan offers an especially telling example. A failed coup in 1971 by army officers sympathetic to the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), a surprisingly strong organization, resulted in the imprisonment and execution of SCP members. China remained silent about the executions. Furthermore,
Zhou Enlai subsequently commented that the Sudanese government “victoriously smashed a foreign subversive plot.” China concluded that it preferred an anti-Soviet, reactionary Sudanese government to one dominated by the SCP, which was sympathetic to the Soviet Union.95

An American expert on China-Africa relations, George Yu, identified three major components of China’s policy in Africa during the 1970s. First, China saw itself as an alternative development model to the Western liberal model implicitly encouraged by the former colonial powers and the United States. African governments became increasingly dissatisfied with the Western model at a time when African socialism resonated in much of the continent. China perceived that its approach to development would appeal to Africans. Although Tanzania adopted, with notable lack of success, some key tenets of Chinese social and economic theory, few other African countries offered more than lip service.96 Mali tried to launch a Chinese-style class struggle in 1968 and the Comoro Islands did likewise in the mid-1970s. Both regimes soon fell from power. Although it is not surprising that Africans had little interest in adopting wholesale the Chinese version of communism, China was equally disinterested in trying to teach it to them.97 Second, China emphasized the struggle against the two superpowers—the Soviet Union and the United States. During the 1970s, China perceived the USSR as a greater threat to its interests in Africa than the United States. Beijing believed that Moscow pursued a policy of world domination and set out to prevent a Soviet success.98 Washington’s recognition of Beijing at the beginning of 1979 helped ameliorate China’s concern about American activities in Africa, although other contentious issues prevented a significant improvement in the relationship. Third, China attached extraordinary importance during the 1970s to the role of the Third World, of which Africa was an important part. This component of China’s strategy requires elaboration.

Beginning with the Ninth CPC Congress in 1969 and continuing until 1979, in accordance with Mao’s so-called Three World’s Theory, Beijing underscored that the Third World was the principal force for confronting the two superpowers. In its effort to unite the Third World against the superpowers, China improved its state-to-state relations, especially in Africa.99 Deng Xiaoping, in his capacity as chairman of Beijing’s UN delegation in 1974, summarized China’s Third World policy before the General Assembly. He proposed that “the world today actually consists of three parts, or three worlds, that are both interconnected and in contradiction to
one another. The United States and the Soviet Union make up the First World. The developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and other regions make up the Third World. The developed countries between the two make up the Second World.”

The Three Worlds Theory held that the two superpowers sought world hegemony, were the biggest international exploiters and oppressors of the day, and were the source of a new world war. Real power, Beijing argued, resided in a united Third World that avoids the plunder of its natural resources by the superpowers. To this end, in his 1974 speech Deng pledged China’s support to developing countries for improving the terms of trade for their raw materials. He emphasized that China is a socialist and developing country that belongs to the Third World, adding that “China is not a superpower, nor will she ever seek to be one.”

Ironically, the concerns that Deng expressed in 1974 about the Soviet Union and the United States concerning African natural resources are heard today in connection with China’s policy toward Africa.

The 1980s: More Pragmatism But Less Interest in Africa

China’s policy toward Africa in the early 1980s did not change significantly from the late 1970s. During 1979–1982, there was a modest reduction in economic aid, a decline in trade and a drop in the number of medical teams sent to Africa. The Twelfth National Congress of the CPC in 1982 marked a shift in global Chinese policy from “war and revolution” to “peace and development.” The new policy reaffirmed, however, the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” Two elements of the new policy had important implications for China’s approach to Africa. China set a course that emphasized domestic economic development and said that it would pursue a peaceful and “independent” foreign policy. On the one hand, this served warning that China would make fewer resources available for aiding other countries. China also signaled that it was not prepared to align itself with any major power. This underscored support for its goal aimed at enhancing the role of the Third World. These policy adaptations also led to the development of relations between the CPC and ruling political parties in African countries.

Premier Zhao Ziyang visited eleven African countries in late 1982 and early 1983. This tour recalled Zhou Enlai’s in 1963–1964. The visit was an
effort to reaffirm China’s interest in Africa. Zhao repeated Beijing’s support for African liberation struggles, the consolidation of African independence and South-South economic cooperation. Importantly, he indicated that China was ready to normalize relations with the Soviet Union and that Africa no longer had to choose between China and the USSR. He also announced China’s “Four Principles on Sino-African Economic and Technical Cooperation.” These are discussed in Chapter 5. Zhao’s visit emphasized China’s continuing interest in Africa and provided a foundation for China’s current relations with Africa. It set the stage for a different kind of economic cooperation in view of China’s focus on domestic modernization. Zhao also encouraged Africans to resist influence from the USSR and the United States. Finally, Zhao used his stops in three North African countries to reiterate Beijing’s support for the “just struggle” of the Arab people, Israel’s right to exist so long as it withdrew from occupied Arab lands, and Palestine’s right to exist.104

British scholar Ian Taylor has been writing about China-Africa relations for two decades. He concludes that Africa became less important to China in the 1980s, especially during the second half of the decade, as China focused on economic modernization and the Cold War began to diminish as a policy factor toward Africa. Preoccupied with its economy, China provided less aid to Africa and Sino-African trade grew slowly in the 1980s. Beginning in the mid-1980s, there were fewer high level visits from China to Africa, although they increased to other parts of the world. Following an improvement in China’s relations with the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s, China no longer considered Africa an area of contention between them. Beijing became increasingly skeptical about Africa’s requests for assistance and even began warning visiting African leaders of the dangers of uncritically embracing socialism as a developmental model. By the late 1980s, China’s policy toward Africa was one of relative disinterest.105

One of China’s leading Africanists, He Wenping, although she made every effort to emphasize the positive, described China-Africa relations in the 1980s in a circumspect manner. She said the guiding principle of Chinese diplomacy changed from “ideological idealism to pragmatic idealism and from unconditional internationalism to a priority of national interest.”106 He Wenping wrote that China no longer developed relations with African countries based on their ideology or their policies toward the United States and USSR. She pointed out the number of African countries recognizing Beijing increased from forty-four in the 1970s to forty-eight in
the 1980s and that fifty-five African presidents visited China from 1981 to 1989. At the same time, He Wenping acknowledged that China’s economic modernization left the country short of capital and unable to provide Africa the same level of economic assistance as before. China also moved away from loans and emphasized other forms of development cooperation such as signing commercial contracts, engaging in joint ventures, and providing technical services. In sum, China’s relations with Africa shifted increasingly from the political to the economic arena.

The decade ended with a setback for China following its harsh repression of the protests in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989. The 1980s reaffirmed that China largely structured the China-Africa relationship. China was almost always in the position of taking the initiative. African countries found themselves reacting to developments in China and decisions taken by Beijing. Of even greater concern to many Africans, there was no coordinated African response to China’s policies and actions.

**Post-Cold War Relations During the 1990s**

Two significant developments exogenous to Africa affected Sino-African relations at the dawn of the last decade of the twentieth century. The most important was the end of the Cold War. This event had positive implications in that it ended East-West competition in Africa and, theoretically, offered the possibility of a peace dividend. The downside, however, was decreased interest in and commitment to Africa by the West and, especially, by the former Soviet Union and its East European allies. The end of the Cold War roughly coincided with another event that had the potential for a negative impact on Sino-African relations—the military crackdown on the protestors in Tiananmen Square. While Beijing’s response to the crisis elicited a sharp condemnation from Western countries, most African countries were indifferent and a few supported Beijing’s actions.

The end of the Cold War provided an opportunity for China to take advantage of the relative disinterest in Africa by traditional donor countries and to initiate a more normal relationship based on economic interaction. Although concerned about the African reaction to Tiananmen Square, Beijing was relieved by the response. Angola’s foreign minister, Namibia’s president, and Burkina Faso’s president, who now recognizes Taipei, publicly supported the government of China. In the aftermath of Tiananmen
Square, Botswana opened its first Asian embassy in Beijing in 1991.\textsuperscript{109} The prevailing reaction in North Africa suggested the crackdown was a necessary and understandable response by a legitimate government that felt threatened.\textsuperscript{110}

Leaders in China and many African countries had long believed that Western countries unfairly criticized their human rights practices. This was an issue where many African governments and China could support each other. Looking to control the damage, China began a campaign to improve its contacts with Africa. Between June 1989 and June 1992, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen visited seventeen Sub-Saharan African countries and Vice Premier Wu Xueqian went to another three. During a 1989 visit to six countries in southern Africa, Qian Qichen pointed out that most African countries considered events at Tiananmen Square an internal Chinese issue. During the same period, Beijing invited sixteen Sub-Saharan African heads of state or government and twenty-three other senior officials to China. Beijing welcomed the support, or at least silence, from Africa. As a result, its assistance to the continent increased in the period immediately following Tiananmen.\textsuperscript{111}

Taiwan has always been a critical consideration for the PRC’s policy in Africa. Beijing routinely insisted that diplomatic recognition include acceptance of its “One China” policy. When Taiwan officially abandoned its claim in 1991 to represent all of China, the leaders in Taipei sought to create a special status that seemed to be a prelude to a declaration of independence. The PRC vigorously opposed any Taiwan independence movement and Taiwan’s efforts to obtain diplomatic recognition. This message was pervasive in China’s dialogue with African leaders. The return of Hong Kong to Chinese control in 1997 underscored that Taiwan remained free of Beijing’s reach and reinvigorated PRC efforts to rule in Taiwan.\textsuperscript{112}

Chinese president Yang Shankun visited Africa in 1992, when he set forth the following as China’s African policy:

- Support for African sovereignty, national independence and economic development;
- Opposition to foreign intervention;
- Respect for different political systems and development paths;
- Support for African unity, cooperation and the Organization of African Unity; and
• Belief that African states should participate actively in the international system as equal members.\textsuperscript{113}

There is nothing particularly new in this policy except that it shed the revolutionary rhetoric of earlier statements. It also highlighted China’s opposition to foreign (read Western) intervention in Africa.

President Jiang Zemin made his first visit to Africa in 1996. In a speech at the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa he announced a five-point proposal for long-term cooperation with Africa during the twenty-first century. The five points were anodyne and in keeping with previous policy statements:\textsuperscript{114}

• To foster a sincere friendship and become each other’s “all weather friend”;
• To treat each other as equals, respect each other’s sovereignty and refrain from interfering in each other’s internal affairs;
• To seek common development on the basis of mutual benefit;
• To increase consultation and cooperation in international affairs; and
• To look into the future and create a more splendid world.

In 1993, China became for the first time a net importer of petroleum. During the 1990s, imports of energy and raw materials from Africa were increasingly important to sustaining China’s booming economy and its export of ever-larger quantities of consumer and industrial products. In addition to oil, China sought iron ore, titanium, cobalt, copper, uranium, aluminum, manganese, and timber.\textsuperscript{115} China downplays the importance of Africa’s raw materials as one of its interests in the continent. Sino-African trade grew impressively during the 1990s, from about $1 billion at the end of the 1980s to well over $6 billion by the end of the 1990s. Chinese investment in Africa also began to feature as a significant part of the relationship, reaching almost $4 billion by the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{116} The 1990s established the base for phenomenal expansion of China-Africa relations in the twenty-first century.

China never abandoned its focus on the Third World. The end of the Cold War and its bipolar international system, the fact that the United States remained as the world’s only superpower, and China’s interest in becoming a global economic power led to its self-identification as leader of
developing countries. As a result, China began increasingly to refer in policy statements to developing countries rather than the Third World. More important, before the end of the last century it began to encourage a multipolar world aimed at diluting American power. China continued to strengthen cooperation with developing nations “in their common struggle against power politics so as to promote the establishment of a multipolar world.”

The Development of Chinese Policy in the Twenty-First Century

In view of the rapidly growing ties between the PRC and African countries, Beijing concluded that it needed a multilateral, consultative mechanism to help coordinate the relationship. As a result, eighty ministerial-level officials from China and more than forty African countries attended the first FOCAC conference in Beijing in 2000. It focused on strengthening cooperation between China and Africa. Premier Wen Jiabao then joined thirteen African leaders and more than seventy ministers from China and forty-four African nations at the second FOCAC conference in Addis Ababa in 2003. The third conference returned to Beijing in 2006 when nearly every African head of state or government that recognized Beijing participated. Wen Jiabao headed the Chinese delegation to the fourth FOCAC conference at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009. FOCAC has proven to be a useful tool in improving coordination between China and Africa. The initiative began with China and decisions largely remain in the hands of China.

One of the first foreign policy changes introduced publicly under Hu Jintao was the “peaceful rise” concept in 2003. Zheng Bijian, former senior CPC official and subsequently chairman of the China Reform Forum, conceived the idea following meetings with American officials in Washington in 2002. According to this concept, as China achieves economic development and raises the standard of living of the Chinese people over the next half century, China will not destabilize the international order or oppress its neighbors. In other words, China’s rise will not seek external expansion, but will uphold peace, mutual cooperation, and common development. Although senior Chinese leaders publicly embraced the new theory, within a year, apparently in response to concerns that the term “rise” was seen as threatening, Hu Jintao stopped using it and substituted “peaceful development.” Since late 2005, the official mantra has been peaceful development,
although “peaceful rise” still appears in Chinese academic journals. This debate has more relevance for China’s neighbors and the United States; nevertheless, it is also intended to reassure the rest of the developing world. It has implications for China’s involvement in global security, including UN peacekeeping operations in Africa.\(^{119}\)

China presented at the 1997 ASEAN Summit the idea of a New Security Concept, which it refined in subsequent years. Known as “The Four No’s,” Hu Jintao publicly endorsed the doctrine during a speech in April 2004. “The Four No’s” consisted of no hegemonism, no power politics, no military alliances, and no arms races. Although not aimed at Africa, many developing countries concluded that “The Four No’s” encouraged mutual confidence and international cooperation while avoiding Cold War conflict and confrontation.\(^{120}\)

Another policy debate focused on the concept of “harmonious society” and its foreign policy alter ego “harmonious world.” It first appeared in the international arena in 2005 when Hu Jintao proposed at the Asia-Africa Summit that Asian and African countries “promote friendly coexistence, equality-based dialogues, and common development and prosperity of different civilizations, in order to create a harmonious world.”\(^{121}\) The concept marks a shift in the leadership’s understanding of China’s position in the world and has become a guidepost for foreign affairs. “Harmonious world” suggests that China is moving to a new stage of development and is more willing to engage in international activities such as UN peacekeeping operations. It is based on the assumption that China’s economic well-being is its highest priority and this will only be possible in a benign international environment. It is also an invitation for the outside world to participate in China’s development. These concepts have important implications for Africa where China supports the status quo and African peacekeeping operations, and where it depends increasingly on African raw materials to fuel its economy. African countries are even encouraged to invest in China as South Africa, Mauritius, and several others are doing.\(^{122}\)

The State Council issued a white paper in 2005 that outlined a foreign policy strategy for China. Called “China’s Peaceful Development Road,” it stressed that achieving peaceful development has been the “unremitting pursuit” of the Chinese people and administration for almost thirty years. The strategy aims to sustain a peaceful international environment that helps Chinese development while allowing China to contribute to the building of a harmonious world. The white paper pledged increased aid to developing
countries, especially those in Africa. Sinologist Robert G. Sutter explained the strategy is recognition that China is prepared to accept the world as it is and to avoid disruptive initiatives characteristic of the Maoist period. China is also ready to work with international and regional organizations in a variety of fields.

China issued a widely publicized white paper titled “China’s African Policy” in 2006 as part of the run-up to the FOCAC conference in Beijing at the end of the year. It set forth the general principles and objectives of China’s policy:

- Sincerity, friendship and equality. China adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, respects African countries’ independent choice of the road to development and supports African countries’ efforts to grow stronger through unity.
- Mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity. China supports African countries’ endeavors for economic development and nation building, carries out cooperation in various forms in economic and social development, and promotes common prosperity of China and Africa.
- Mutual support and close coordination. China will strengthen cooperation with Africa in the UN and other multilateral systems by supporting each other’s just demands and reasonable propositions and continue to appeal to the international community to give more attention to questions concerning peace and development in Africa.
- Learning from each other and seeking common development. China and Africa will learn from and draw upon each other’s experience in governance and development, strengthen exchange and cooperation in education, science, culture and health. Supporting African countries’ efforts to enhance capacity building, China will work together with Africa in the exploration of the road to sustainable development.

The 2006 white paper concluded with a strong reiteration of the PRC’s policy on Taiwan, emphasizing that China stood ready to establish diplomatic relations with any country that was willing to accept the “One China” principle.

Hu Jintao made his sixth trip to Africa early in 2009, visiting Mali, Senegal, Tanzania, and Mauritius. He used the stop in Dar es Salaam to
make a key speech on China’s policy toward Africa in view of the growing global financial crisis. He set out a new six-point strategic partnership:

- China will implement its promises of assistance to Africa made at the 2006 Beijing summit and even increase its aid “within its capacity.” It will also continue to reduce or cancel debt.
- China will try to increase high level contact, strengthen communication and participate actively in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa.
- China will implement preferential measures to increase imports from Africa and transfer technology to the continent.
- China will increase educational and cultural cooperation.
- China will work closely with African countries in multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the WTO to address climate change, food security, poverty alleviation and development.
- China will strengthen FOCAC so that it can improve China-Africa cooperation.\(^{126}\)

Late in 2009, China’s *Outlook Weekly*, which reflects the views of the CPC, discussed a significant foreign policy initiative known as “Hu Jintao’s Viewpoints About the Times.” The five viewpoints provide a theoretical guide for China’s future participation in global affairs. They deal with profound changes in the world situation, constructing a harmonious world, joint development, shared responsibilities, and enthusiastic participation in the world situation. Several of these views reflect earlier principles. The emphasis on shared responsibility and enthusiastic participation suggest, however, that Beijing is now prepared to assume more global responsibility because of China’s growing economic and political power. In Africa, this has resulted in increasing troop commitments to UN peacekeeping operations, engaging in efforts to resolve the crisis in Sudan’s Darfur region, contributing ships to the anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, and aligning more closely with African positions on global climate change. China has also learned to adapt quickly to political change in Africa even when its interests are challenged by a potentially unfriendly new regime. Beijing reacts with restraint, avoids becoming entangled in international sanctions, maintains its focus on sovereignty, and does not allow regime change to threaten its economic interests in the country.\(^{127}\)

At the 2009 FOCAC conference in Egypt, Wen Jiabao announced a series of measures for strengthening ties with Africa. Half of them reiterated
earlier promises. Several of them suggested a new emphasis in Chinese policy. Wen Jiabao called for partnership with the Africans on climate change and agreed to increase cooperation in science and technology, including the creation of one hundred joint demonstration projects with Africa. He announced a special loan of $1 billion for small and medium-sized African businesses and said China will offer zero tariff treatment to 95 percent of the products from Africa’s least developed countries with which it has diplomatic relations.

China is a major force in Africa, rivaling the United States in some countries. In 2009, China became Africa’s largest trading partner, passing the United States. Sino-African trade reached $127 billion in 2010. Chinese investment in Africa, although still modest compared with European investment, is growing faster than Western investment. Total aid to Africa is still small compared to that of Western countries—averaging perhaps $2 billion annually in the last few years. By comparison, assistance to Africa from Development Assistance Committee countries is running at about $30 billion annually. On the other hand, China is offering huge low-interest loans, often tied to infrastructure projects built by Chinese companies and paid for in natural resources shipped to China. In some countries, these loans surpass the total of all loans from other countries or international banks.

Between 1956 and 2006, there were more than 800 high level visits between African countries and China. Chinese leaders and foreign ministers made more than 160 visits to Africa while 524 Africans of ministerial rank or higher made 676 visits to China. Many African countries helped defeat eleven anti-China resolutions in the UN Human Rights Commission and thirteen attempts by Taiwan to return to the UN General Assembly, and they supported China’s successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo.

China’s increasingly pragmatic approach to Africa makes every effort to appear nonthreatening. China is sensitive that its enormous economic power and growing military strength has the potential to worry mostly small, poor, and weak African countries. Hence, it constantly describes its trade, aid, and investment activities in Africa as “win-win” for both China and Africa. Its twenty-first-century policy rhetoric of “peaceful development,” “The Four No’s,” and “harmonious world” all underscore themes of noninterference, nonconfrontation, and cooperation. In 2009, Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo described China’s “strategic partnership” with
A African countries as based on political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation, and cultural exchange. Put bluntly, China is trying hard to increase its global economic and political power while not scaring the rest of the world, including Africa.

### China as a Development Model for Africa

The literature on China-Africa relations is replete with commentary on China as a development model for Africa. Many scholars and African leaders argue that China, or the “Beijing Consensus,” as it is now often called, serves as a model for Africa. China’s officials have been careful, however, to avoid this idea; some have even publicly warned African countries away from following China’s experience. A billion people live in Africa compared to China’s more than 1.3 billion. Making the argument that China serves as a developmental model often overlooks the fact that Africa consists of fifty-four highly diverse countries, the largest of which has a population of about 150 million. A number of African countries have fewer than a million people. Suggesting that China is a model for Africa strains credulity. On the other hand, some of China’s more successful policies may be appropriate for some African countries.

In recent years, the debate has centered on the “Washington Consensus” versus the “Beijing Consensus,” a term coined by American Joshua Cooper Ramo. He based the term on China’s “Four No’s,” discussed above. Ramo described the “Beijing Consensus” as similar to the Monroe Doctrine. He sees it less as a development model and more as a broader security concept. Nevertheless, the “Beijing Consensus” has become a catchword for China’s development model. Chinese scholar Wei-Wei Zhang suggested that it is inaccurate to describe the Chinese model as the Beijing Consensus. He argued that China’s experience is unique because it adapted some foreign ideas to its own cultural and policy background.

The development implications of the “Beijing Consensus” include a high national savings rate, a huge pool of cheap and compliant labor, state-targeted capital investments, a coherent continent-wide market with a single currency, internal market integration, a relatively well-educated and highly motivated workforce with a common language, investment from the Chinese diaspora, developed state institutions, and political unity within a
single ruling party to implement large-scale economic reform policies. No African country has even half these attributes.

In addition, there are downsides to China’s development: growing income inequality between urban and rural areas and among regions, devastating pollution problems, and willingness to sacrifice human rights and democratic governance for national development. In fact, there is no single development model in China. The industrial, export-dominated model in the urban areas along the Chinese coast is quite different from that in much of rural China. This entire debate is largely polemical, many Chinese and some Africans acknowledge.\textsuperscript{139} Chinese scholar Pang Zhongying argued that because the “Beijing Consensus” is nothing more than a revised U.S. neoliberal model, its success or failure in Africa is also the success or failure of the “Washington Consensus.”\textsuperscript{140}

African leaders can benefit from studying China’s approach to development and adapt piecemeal policies that benefit their own countries. African attempts to adopt Chinese economic policies without modifying them to fit local conditions will result in failures and disappointments similar to those that accompanied attempts to follow the “Washington Consensus.”\textsuperscript{141} David Shambaugh concluded “that while there are some individual elements of China’s development experience that are unique, they do not constitute a comprehensive and coherent ‘model’—nor are they easily transferred abroad.”\textsuperscript{142}

Two Chinese programs that have attracted considerable interest in Africa are poverty reduction and Special Economic Zones, which are now appearing in Africa.\textsuperscript{143} In an extensive analysis of China as a development model, Edward Friedman concluded that many African governments will treat China as a model for their own economic success.\textsuperscript{144} In 2010, China established the China-Africa Economic and Technology Cooperation Committee of the China Economic and Social Council to share its development experience with African countries. It promotes exchanges and cooperation between Chinese businesses and African countries.

China has positioned itself as a country that can help Africa on the basis of mutual benefit, nonconditionality, and demonstration by example.\textsuperscript{145} But the relationship between China and Africa is asymmetric, especially in trade, where African countries export natural resources and primary products to China while China exports labor and capital intensive goods to Africa. Total Chinese trade by dollar value is almost three times that for all fifty-four African countries combined. No single African economy can
compete on an equal basis with China or adopt its policies wholesale. Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, reflecting growing Chinese confidence, commented in 2011 that China had greater relative success in weathering the 2008 global financial crisis. As a result, China has become more inclined to tout its development model, not suggesting it is exportable, but that China is on the right path.