

**CHINESE ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SINO-
USA RELATIONS**

(1990 – 2010)

BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my lovely children Kudzaishe, Kudakwashe and Anozivaishe for their moral support throughout the course.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CPC	Communist Party of China
CSIS	Centre for Strategic & International Studies
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Community
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MFN	Most Favoured Nation
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PLA	Peoples' Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organisation

ABSTRACT

The events following Tiananmen Square incident among other factors created the opportunity for China to establish a more prominent presence in Africa and in recent years, SINO-Africa relations have escalated. China seeks to rise as a global power in international arena thereby undermining the traditional USA influence, especially in Africa. The question that arises is what should the USA do, if anything, about the influence of China in Africa. The likely reaction by the USA in relation to Chinese engagement with Africa would be to compete for prominence in the same continent. Hence in terms of the resultant SINO-USA relations, it could be described as strategic competition. On the basis of that, this dissertation is based on the hypothesis that the potential strategic competition presented to the USA through Chinese engagement with Africa undermines traditional USA influence and creates an opportunity for mutual cooperation between China and the USA much to the benefit of African countries. The study was premised on the realist approach. It is acknowledged that principal actors in the international arena are states which always act in pursuit of their national interests. The approaches used by both China and the USA are different and the Chinese approach resonates with African countries. In a bid to counter China, the USA is poised to adopt strategies that are beneficial to African countries. . Research for this study involved the perspectives of key scholars in the Sino-Africa relations like Deborah Brautigam, David Shinn and Zhiqun Zhu. The study drew heavily from researches that provided a thorough background of China's past relations with Africa, current practices in the context of Chinese culture, and the effects of Chinese aid as a part of its larger goal to rise to global prominence. The researcher used documentary search and interviews to collect data. The research was conducted in Zimbabwe and key informants were from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chinese Embassy and western embassies, academics, politicians, to state but a few. The researcher also requested permission to proceed with fieldwork from the responsible university authorities, and was granted. Documentary search was used in order to extract information on the foregoing topical issues. This contributed to a balanced view by the researcher. Thus, literature which includes books, paper and e-journal articles, media clips and reports, official public statements and policy documents were analysed. The facts, opinions and arguments in the literature were drawn together to form a coherent argument regarding the nature of China's involvement in sanctioned states. Historically, the USA had always considered Africa its area of political and economic influence. However, the entry of China has meant competition for them, and they are not exactly amused. In fact they are getting clearly out-competed by the Chinese. This has led to baseless and self-serving Western-inspired attacks on the Chinese in Africa. The charges include that the Chinese are: indifferent to governance issues, supporting dictators in Africa, plundering Africa's natural resources in a new colonialism, not adding value to African commodities, bringing labour from China, and are engaged in unfair and poor labour practices. However, in the contemporary, China is engaging Africa at a time when it has grown economically to be able to challenge the USA in response to its threatened interests. In a bid to avoid confrontation by both parties, there could be a possibility of both China and the USA expressing willingness to engage on collaborative projects in Africa, but it would take a stronger upfront investment of political will and attention to launch these efforts. It is presumed that there will almost certainly be long-term benefits for Africa to such collaboration.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Problem

According to Taylor (1998) contemporary links between China and Africa trace their roots to two things: the crisis in China's international relations after the Tiananmen Square incident in June 1989, and the huge expansion of Chinese trade with Africa which began in year 2000, just after China had launched the first Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Prior to this period, Taylor (1998:3) contends that "the concept of active and constantly evolving Chinese engagement with African states appeared obsolete". In the same vein, Zheng (2005) asserts that, despite Beijing's usual denial, the critical part that Africa occupied in the Chinese foreign policy declined heavily in the 1980s. Chief amongst the reasons was that Africa had virtually no role to play in the Chinese Socialist Modernisation project which called for massive foreign investment and technology that was deemed available only from the West. Consequently the Deng Xiaoping's post-1978 policies then demanded economic investment and a non-confrontational approach to international politics. Accordingly, non-ideological relations with the United States among other countries, founded on increasing trade linkages and co-operation, took a centre stage in Chinese foreign policy.

After Tiananmen Square however, China-Africa relations were revived. According to a pro-Beijing newspaper in Hong Kong as cited by Taylor (1998:3), western states had an overheated relationship with China. Circumstances surrounding the Tiananmen Square led to a grave crisis in Chinese relations with the Western countries. The level of western denouncement caught the leadership of China by shock. Up to that period, China's allegedly poor human rights record was essentially ignored by Western countries. As of late, Western criticism of the human rights record of China came to be a huge issue. This was so despite some arguments that Tiananmen Square may have simply coincided with the time the issue of human rights became prevalent. In some way, the condemnation China got from the West

simply reaffirmed the realist thinking that states pursue own national interests hence the need to maintain permanent interests and not permanent friends.

The 1970s rhetoric of China and Africa being “all-weather friends” was revitalised and redeployed with vigour. In some way it can be argued that the Tiananmen Square incident created the opportunity for China to establish a more prominent presence in Africa, and in recent years Sino-Africa relations have escalated. However, this development has not been without the notice and interest of the United States of America (USA). In trying to describe the intensity of American interest in monitoring Chinese engagement in Africa, Holslag (2007:1) citing a Professor from the University of Lubumbashi in Congo asserts that, ‘there would be no a Berlin Conference by the end of the 19th century if international scrutiny was as severe as the huge and small states of the world are supervising the involvement of China in the in the African continent today’. In light of China’s amplified activity on the African continent in both the economic and political realms, it is becoming more evident that China seeks to rise as a global power in the international arena. Part of the debate includes an increasing focus on the implications that China’s growing international engagement, more so with Africa, could have for its “soft power” projection around the world, and consequently what this means for the USA economic and strategic interests.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In recent years, Beijing has identified the African continent as an area of significant economic and strategic interest. America and its allies are finding that their vision of a prosperous Africa governed by democracies that respect human rights and the rule of law and that embrace free markets is being challenged by the escalating Chinese influence in Africa. As China continues to gain influence as a political actor in an increasingly multi-polar world, the USA has experienced unfamiliar limitations of its power and grows more conscious of Chinese strategies and objectives. Indeed, China has begun to orchestrate a charm offensive that includes soft power strategies and minimizing criticism so as to assert a better image to the rest of the world. Western observers, especially politicians, media, and academics are prone to lock onto a few simplistic themes and assert that the PRC aids and abets oppressive and destitute African dictatorships by legitimizing their misguided policies and praising their development models as suited to individual national conditions.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were as follow:

- To explore the nature of Chinese engagement with Africa.
- To examine how Chinese strategies differ from those of the USA.
- To assess the impact of Chinese engagements with Africa on Sino USA relations.
- To proffer recommendations on how Sino USA relations can be bolstered to the benefit of both parties.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were critical for the purpose of this study:

- What is the nature and motivations of Sino Africa relations?
- In what ways are Chinese strategies different from those of the USA?
- How has Chinese engagement with Africa impacted on Sino USA relations?
- What strategies can be adopted to ensure the strengthening of beneficial relations amongst China, USA and Africa?

1.4 Hypothesis

The potential strategic competition presented to the USA through Chinese engagement with Africa undermines traditional USA influence and creates an opportunity for mutual cooperation between China and the USA much to the benefit of African countries.

1.5 Justification of the Study

As China is making some strategic inroads in Africa, it is worth studying the reaction of the USA, more so in a world stage that had been dominated by the USA itself. This has some significance in the academic field for it may help in the analysis of the future world order. Accordingly, the study may help to establish whether China is trying to consolidate a new world order, based on new moral values, conflicting with the current world order; or is China still a pragmatic actor, exploiting African resources in order to satisfy its growing demand for raw materials. From a practical perspective, the study could unearth the real and perceived motives of Chinese engagement with Africa, and the possible USA reaction, information of which could assist African states in their policies regarding interaction with these two countries.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The field of international relations has generally contending theories and a number of theoretical perspectives that are meant to explain events in the international system. This study is premised on the realist approach in international relations. The theory of realism, also referred to as political realism, remains a view of international politics whose focus is on the conflictual and competitive side. According to realists, the principal actors in the international system happen to be states whose pre-occupation are the security of national sovereignty, power and pursuit of national interests. Gilpin (1996) also asserts that power relations are a fundamental feature of international affairs. Carr and Morgenthau are purported by dominant international relations literature to be the two “founding fathers” of the realist theory of international politics. On one hand, classical realism emphasises on the issues of national interests. On the other hand, other scholars posit that realism is not the Machiavellian doctrine that anything is justified by reason of state. Donnelly (2000) argues that the following could be tenets that aptly describe realism:

- The state’s interests provides the spring for action.

- The necessities of policy arise from the unregulated competition of states.
- Calculation based on the necessities can discover the policies that will serve a state's interests.
- Success is the ultimate test of policy, and success is defined as preserving and strengthening the state.

Academics have noticed that China recognizes and allies with African states in international forums, such as the United Nations, to promote shared values and policies. In the recent past, Sino-Africa relations have assumed a new twist which is marked by the rise of China as a comparatively wealthy power who invariably requires raw materials in order to sustain her huge economy and population. According to Owusu (2005) the increasing interest for African resources by some powers like India, Brazil and Canada in general, and the United States in particular, made China's competing aspirations develop even more into an issue of concern. The Sino-Africa partnership possibly represents hope for a multi-polar world in which a plurality of powers can exercise influence in international policymaking. China's actions merit attention from the United States because the two powers often cross paths as strategic competitors in the international community, but they are not the only power that seeks to increase its influence in the nations of the Global South in pursuit of own national interests.

1.7 Literature Review

China's interest in the African continent has increased in the last few decades and has provoked a range of reactions with major players in international politics, including the USA. It is argued that the USA has grown increasingly more aware and speculative about China's actions and intentions. As the world watches China transform to become an economic 'powerhouse', there is an increasing anxiety that eventually, Beijing will use this newfound strength coercively. However, there is acknowledgement from an economic perspective that healthy competition between China and the USA for trade, investment, and soft power may ultimately stimulate Africa's economic and development growth. Some experts believe that as China become more and more engaged with Africa, it poses a serious challenge for the USA for the role of the world's leading superpower. China is however conscious of the apprehension surrounding its rise and could be worried that such sentiments could impede

continued economic growth. Consequently China has sought to attach itself to the slogan “peaceful development” in an effort to reassure others that its new found strength is benign. While the African continent may seem an unusual location for China to focus its attention, the region is increasingly growing into an opportunity.

To place the recent escalation of Chinese engagement with Africa in context, it is critical to note that the USA is only recently beginning to fully comprehend the complexity of China’s presence on the continent. In that context, Brautigam (2009:54) asserts that “China’s increased visibility in Africa today should be seen in this context: *China never left*, we just stopped looking”. Indeed, China has more recently increased its assertion of influence, but it had maintained steady positive relations with the continent for years before it began to do so. Realising a gradual drain of USA’s support and investment over the past decades, China began to modify and amplify its own strategy to effectively build rapport with the African states. China’s policy statements on Africa began encouraging enterprises to invest and help build infrastructure, and in contrast as Shinn (2007:6) argues that it is “...something the West has been reluctant to do in recent years”. Though the Chinese have had a longstanding rapport with Africa, a number of authorities argue that they have not amounted yet to the same level of intimacy between African states and traditional Western donors like the USA. Nonetheless, in a constant struggle to fully develop and maintain self-sufficiency, the African states have gradually noticed the intensification of Chinese engagement as opposed to growing Western disengagement.

During the period under review, the USA’s attention shifted from combating Cold War tension to the Middle East and counterterrorism. At the same time, Sino-USA relations escalated, as the Chinese economy rapidly grew into a perceived international contender in the global arena. Contrastingly, Africa descended on the priority list of the USA as a promising venue for investment, mostly on the allegations of high levels of poverty, unstable governments, and risks that may outweigh the benefits of conducting successful business ventures. However, in the case of China, she engaged Africa in a pragmatic way thus strengthening relations. A positive attitude of Chinese is their hard approach to risks as supported by Zhu (2010:36) as he asserts that, “Unlike American business people, who are generally risk-averse and spoiled in terms of the personal lifestyle they expect, the Chinese take economic risks for the prospect of gain, and Chinese workers will go and live anywhere. In contrast, American companies have always had difficulty finding people to work in

Africa". At a time when the USA no longer wanted African business to thrive, China had to explore available options for new markets within the same abandoned African continent.

China intensified its relationship in line with a refinement of its own goals and strategic interests because it could do so during the period under review. Its internal shift to a more capitalist economy led to an opening of China and availability of exchange, as well as a search for new markets. As China seized the opportunity to strengthen its presence and relationship with Africans, it introduced new competition to the Western presence on the continent. Suddenly, Africa has become a location in which the Chinese seek to match and potentially one day exceeds USA efforts at alliance-building and economic endeavour.

Should increased Chinese engagement be of concern to the USA or African players involved? In trying to answer this question, Chidaushe (2007:111) notes that, "A huge concern is that currently China and Western relations with Africa are being approached from a competitive point of view. A way should be sought to combine these efforts to maximise the benefit for Africa". Indeed, concern for competition and the protection of each side's sovereign interests has emerged in Sino-USA relations, but it is also necessary to examine the way in which such competition or collaboration affects the African people. It is noted that Western media tends to portray China's presence in Africa as negative. While China's approach is not perfect, sensationalism has racked up insecurity and alarm on behalf of the USA. However, there are some who strongly believe that China's engagement with Africa presents no threat at all as aptly put forward by Shinn (2006:8) as he says, "Following talks in Beijing at the end of 2005, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jendayi Frazer, commented that she did not believe the US is in direct competition with China in Africa. She added that it would be a mistake to 'consider China an adversary in Africa'". In as much as Frazer's assertion suggests the activities of China in Africa to be of no consequence to the USA, the USA might not allow the media to distract it during its analysis and dealings between Africa and China. As an option, the US might guard its interests and in a pragmatic, while keeping an open mind for opportunities to collaborate for mutual benefit amongst the three key parties involved. However, it should be brought to the attention of the USA that China's intent to ascend to global prominence is not unusual. Besada (2008:30) notes that "First, China's activity is part of its continuing emergence as a truly global player, and as such is no different from what major powers traditionally have done". Rather than nurture bitterness, the USA must assess the complexities of China's motivations and strategies to determine the positive

and/or negative aspects of engagement and how it can be interpreted for the African people and the USA's own strategy.

In an attempt to better understand Chinese strategy in Africa, one must primarily sift through the motivations backing engagement and determine to what extent they are optimistic. The West has portrayed Chinese engagement as both positive and negative, with opportunities for mutual benefit for the two parties involved. Often, the misconception emerges that China has a malevolent plan, or some grand scheme that guides their actions. However, according to Brautigam (2009:277), "This belief in the 'grand strategy' also underpins assumptions that the investments of Chinese companies are masterminded by Beijing, with the single-minded goal of channelling natural resources back to China". It has become increasingly clear that China has set its focus upon long term engagement in Africa. Brautigam (2009:311) reaffirmed that "China's embrace of the continent is strategic, planned, long-term, and still unfolding". Therefore, it can be argued that China has asserted its intention to strengthen its ties with African states. Despite initial scepticism, Brautigam (2009:78) says "As should be clear by now, Beijing's engagement with Africa involved a well-thought-out and long-term strategy, not the hasty, desperate scramble familiar from media headlines". Reiterating what analysts of Sino-Africa relations have deduced, China has now made it known that it will take risks to ensure the success of its diplomacy and economic investment abroad. Furthermore, China intends to shape the path of its engagement so as to minimize risks and promote sustainable partnerships. In particular, China seeks to harvest stability in order to cultivate healthy business relationships, rather than encourage exploitation. According to Brautigam (2009:310), "The Chinese are linking business and aid in innovative ways". China's overarching approach to engagement involves the development of an environment in which efficient business and trade practices can occur and continue. African states have struggled with stability in the past and that has hindered their progress, but China wants to invest in their future. Clearly China has glimpsed opportunity in Africa, and it wants to capitalize upon that potential.

Along with the explicit economic intent of Chinese engagement with Africa, a combination of motivations drives China's approach. Primarily, three basic components comprise Chinese incentives: economic, diplomatic, and geo-political. The USA must attempt to understand the fundamentals of the Chinese approach in Africa to ascertain that which they value. The more

that the USA comprehends Chinese intentions, the better it can apply that knowledge during efforts to collaborate or to use in leverage.

China's economic endeavours appear to fuel engagement with Africa. China's own economy has experienced a rapid escalation of growth, and it has begun to expand its ventures to new markets that include Africa's. It has identified its need to pursue markets through overseas investment, the establishment of factories and brand names for the global recognition of Chinese companies as well as property acquisition. In accordance with most of the world players, China desires the vast array of rich resources in Africa too; it seeks to develop sustainable access to commodities such as oil, copper, and cobalt. Zhu (2010:23) explains that "... a top priority of China's diplomatic activities in Africa is to acquire energy and raw materials to fuel China's galloping economy". In accordance, "China is relentlessly searching for new sources of oil globally. China's fast-rising involvement with Africa grows out of its immense need for natural resources ... China often uses infrastructure projects to sweeten oil and mining deals" (Marks, 2007:9). In the final analysis, it can be argued that China contrives useful projects and loans supported by resource acquisition to satisfy its needs, but it also orchestrates such deals to the benefit of Africa. The basic logic behind China's approach towards Africa is premised on the fact that she is swiftly outgrowing her supply base, hence the need for China to step outside its comfort zone to seek new markets. Marks (2007:32) states that "Investing in African extractive industries is a risky business, but China is desperately in need of raw materials to feed its booming economy, hence the government is willing to shoulder most of the risk for Chinese companies looking to invest in Africa."

It should be noted that China does not target resource wealthy locations as a main tenet of its economic approach, as suggested by critics of Chinese investment overseas. Resources certainly are a priority, but not an endpoint or the primary motivation for Sino-Africa engagement. More important as an incentive for the somewhat daunting task of engaging African states is China's diplomatic interest. In trying to address the question 'why does China give aid', usually the conventional wisdom is to get access to resources. However, Brautigam (2009) argues that the answer is at best partial and misleading. Brautigam (2009:17) asserts that "Fundamentally, foreign aid is a tool of foreign policy. China is not an exception. All donors give aid for a variety of political, commercial, and moral reasons. Understanding the balance between these motives gives us one of the keys to unlock the black box of China's aid program". China intends to build diplomatic and friendly alliances

with as many of Africa's 53 states as possible. China views African states as fellow developing nations and potential allies in the global arena to further Chinese political objectives. Because China has had its own wobbly past in interacting with foreign powers, especially the West, it now seeks to gain support and representation for its beliefs in international organizations and forums through alternative methods. Chinese aid to Africa stems from its desire to achieve influence and international acclaim. Though China provides African countries with strong soft power initiatives, such an approach comes from a desire to create positive relations in the eyes of African leaders and civil society groups. Firm relationships with African leaders allow China to advance its goals in the global arena.

Economic and diplomatic advancement comprise part of China's motivations, but Chinese engagement with Africa emanates from its fundamental aspirations to rise as a global power. Self-interest is masked in its attempts to earn respect with the African people. While it does not seek to create policies that would harm the African people, China has a larger geopolitical perspective for its objectives and will promote its own well being first and foremost. Though debate exists concerning the nature of Chinese aid and policy initiatives, obviously states will look out for their own best interest. China is attempting to win allies through altruistic gestures and attentive responses to African needs. In any case, it is important to note that China has historically placed its interest above all, whether it explicitly displays its intention or hides it behind a smile. Chidaushe (2007:112) explains such a seemingly obvious idea within the context of other world powers' self-driven ideologies as he says "But it is critical for Africa to be cautious and take time to analyse the implications and real benefits of China's policy. After all, China is advancing aggressive superpower ambitions and may in the long-term harden its stance to ensure their achievement. As with the United States, Chinese ambitions and national interests will come first". Evidently, China has multiple priorities in African engagement. As China becomes a more prominent international power, it might be also important to assume that it could assert an element of antagonistic competition if it so desires. Whether or not China poses a threat to the USA, is what needs to be examined. In order to understand the driving forces behind China's active courtship of the African continent, one can examine more in depth how China executes its strategy, how it differs from that of the West, and how Sino-African relations impact the USA.

1.8 Methodology

There are broadly two approaches to research, that is, quantitative research and qualitative research. This study adopted the qualitative approach to research. Qualitative research is research which attempts to increase an understanding of why things are the way they are in the social world and why people act the ways they do. In other words qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. That is to say, it aims to help us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. Therefore in the context of this study, qualitative research was the most appropriate approach because the study sought to understand the driving forces behind China's active courtship of the African continent, how China executes its strategy, how the strategy differs from that of the West, and how Sino-African relations impact the USA.

1.8.1 Data Collection

In terms of data collection for this study, qualitative approaches which usually involve direct interaction with individuals on a one to one basis or in a group setting were used. Data collection methods are time consuming and consequently data is collected from smaller numbers of people than would usually be the case in quantitative approaches such as the questionnaire survey. The benefits of using these approaches include richness of data and deeper insight into the phenomena under study. Hence for the purpose of this study, interviews and content analysis were the major data collection methods of choice.

The researcher used documentary search and interviews to collect data. The research was conducted in Zimbabwe and key informants were from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chinese Embassy and western embassies, academics, politicians, to state but a few. To allow for objective and detailed responses, full anonymity is granted to those interviewed. The researcher also requested permission to proceed with fieldwork from the responsible university authorities, and was granted. Documentary search was used in order to extract information on the foregoing topical issues. This contributed to a balanced view by the researcher. Thus, literature which includes books, paper and e-journal articles, media clips and reports, official public statements and policy documents were analysed. The facts, opinions and arguments in the literature were drawn together to form a coherent argument regarding the nature of China's involvement in Africa.

1.8.2 Sampling

Since interviews formed the primary source of information in the study, a viable sampling technique had to be adopted. Sampling can be defined as the selection of the actual research participants from the whole population and the selection way differs depending on the type of study. Cost, inconvenience and time did not allow contacting every targeted respondent resulting in gathering of information from a few of the sampled population. The study utilized the mentioned technique to select eminent academics in international relations in general and foreign policy in particular. The technique also allowed the researcher to flexibly select embassy officials of various missions who might have given useful information that could inform the arguments and conclusions of the study. Bailey 1994 notes that the purposive sampling method is less ‘complicated, less expensive and may be done on a spur-of-the-moment’ basis to take full advantage of ready and at times unanticipated respondents and this technique foregoes the statistical complexity of probability sampling techniques.

1.8.3 Data analysis and presentation

Banche (2006: 34) notes that, “The main objective of data analysis is to transform data into meaningful forms in order to analyse the original research questions”. The researcher used, content, domain, discourse and thematic analysis to analyze data. After collecting data using various methods for instance interview transcripts, field notes, and policy documents, the researcher focused on identifiable themes and pattern of behaviour. The major task was to identify patterns and linkages. Thematic analysis also involves the application of codes to the data obtained in order to ascertain if there are any patterns in the interviewees’ views or responses. A valid argument is then built after identifying the themes and reading related literature. By reading the related literature the researcher was able to make inferences for the interviews undertaken hence conclusions could be drawn from interweaving the findings and theoretical literature. The hypothesis was analyzed within these parameters to ascertain its validity. Most information contained in this study is presented in essay format.

1.9 Delimitations

While it is acknowledged that Sino-USA relations might be shaped by different factors other than the relationship between China and Africa, this study focused only on the possible reaction of the USA towards China owing to China’s engagement with Africa.

1.10 **Limitations**

This study was not able to assess the Sino-Africa relations on a country to country basis due to time constraints. Equally the same, face-to-face interviews with the Chinese presidium could have helped bring to the fore the grand Chinese strategy. However, the Chinese Ambassador to Zimbabwe and his selected staff came in handy in giving the official position of China and its relations with Africa and their own interpretations of USA reaction. Data could not be collected from the USA Embassy in Zimbabwe as originally planned because accessibility was a challenge.

CHAPTER II

CHINA- AFRICA- USA RELATIONS: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL VIEW

2.0 Introduction

Exploring the links between China and Africa and identifying their implications for future USA policy making is a mammoth task. Historical background in Sino-USA relations and Sino-Africa relations is critical in analysing today's contentious issues that arise between and amongst same players. Relations between and amongst nations are directed and guided by a country's foreign policy. Bruce and Starr (2001:158) assert that "Foreign policies are the principles and plans that guide a nation's behaviour abroad; their objective is to protect the nation's rights and interests. Because the international system lacks a method of equally distributing wealth, every nation requires foreign support to achieve its objectives. An effective foreign policy must therefore be capable of influencing the behaviour of others". Exerting influence requires strategic assets, as well as channels through which to use them. Bruce and Starr (2001) identify two types of strategic assets. The first one is national security assets, such as military power, allies, international or security organizations, etc. The second one is economic assets, for instance economic power, market scope, market access, etc. In this study the historical relations shall be traced starting 1949 when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded. An attempt would be made to bring to the fore the evolution of Sino-USA relations in the context of Sino- Africa relations.

2.1 The Evolution of Sino-Africa Relations

During the period covering the 1950s and 1960s, the New China was faced mainly by security threats. At the time, the West led by the USA had not recognized new China, the Korea War broke out in 1950, Taiwan Strait Crisis came in 1958 and the Vietnam War broke out in 1961. Consequently, the new-born China was facing the military challenge from the powerful United States of America in three directions. In addition, in the early 1960s, with the split of the China-Soviet alliance, China's diplomatic room in international stage was getting smaller than before. In order to break through the strategic besiege from the former Soviet Union and the USA as well as China's diplomatic isolation, the late Chairman Mao put forward the famous "three worlds divided" theory. The theory regarded the former Soviet

Union and the USA as the first world, the Asia, Africa and the Latin America developing countries including China as the third world, and the developed countries between the above two as the second world. He thought that only the countries and people of the Third World could be called the basic power in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. Chairman Mao implored Chinese people to mainly rely on and unite with Third World countries as direct allies (the second world was the indirect ally). Zendong (1994:408) pointed out clearly that, "In making friends in the world, we should put the stress on the Third World". It was Mao's conviction that the struggle and victory achieved by the other Third World countries could weaken and destroy the colonial system of imperialism and this would divert the enemy's power and lighten the pressure on China. On the basis of this principle, the Chinese government provided a large number of sincere and selfless political, economic and military support to the African people in their struggle for national liberation and against apartheid. China gave support to African countries and yet she was in serious financial difficulties then.

In order to enhance the scope for better relations with Africa, it was Chairman Mao's conviction that there was need for comprehensive literature on African studies. According to Anshan (2005:62) citing Chairman Mao's speech given on April 27, 1961, "An institute of Africa studies should be established, studying African history, geography and the present situation, so a concise book is badly needed. It should include the content of how imperialism came, how it suppressed the people, how it met people's resistance, why the resistance failed and how it is rising". According to Qichen as cited by Anshan (2005:63), "China strongly supported the national liberation movements and wanted to win new friends from African nations". In 1963-1964, Premier Zhou Enlai led China's first high-level delegation to Africa. According to Wright (1956:25), Enlai "carried the message that China and Africa shared a common experience and could build a new pattern of what would be later known as South-South cooperation". The message filtered through the whole continent of Africa to the extent that, according to Wright (1956:26), "in the next decade China was to reach the peak of its real cooperation with African states". The basis of the policy was the relative isolation of China from the mainstream of the international community of either East or West. As China broke with the Soviet Union, it sought to demonstrate that it was possible to wage a more active struggle against what was called American imperialism. China's own activities were virtually confined to Asia, where it supported revolutionary movements and helped Vietnam take on American power.

As noted by Larkin (1975), China-Africa ties during the 1970s was characterised by the fact that the amount of African states with diplomatic ties with China were on a gradual increase. This happened to such a point that in 1967 13 Chinese diplomatic missions were dotted around Africa and these rose to 30 by the end of 1974. Larkin (1975:67) asserts that “the increase in Chinese diplomatic missions made China’s position strong at international fora to the extent that through the support by many African states, she entered the UNSC in 1971, usurping Taiwan’s seat in the entire international body”. At the time, the USA supported Taiwan. From then on, Chinese support for African states increased. It is worth noting that according to Snow (1988:127), in the view of China, Russia and USA and its Western allies were entirely responsible for the political turmoil marked by proxy wars that were wrecking havoc in the African continent. China then assumed a duty of supporting the Africans in their respective wars of liberation. Hence according to Meidan (2006:73), “China’s Africa policy was marked by anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and anti-revisionism, but in hindsight, this seems to contemporary Chinese analysts as an unfavourable stance made necessary by the dictates of the international situation. Pursuing an ideology-based foreign policy only hindered China’s ties with the continent”. At first therefore, the interest was ideological, where Africa had become a place for new socialist revolution. Chinese assistance was provided to “freedom fighters” and revolutionary groups in African countries. Estimates are that between 1955 and 1977, China sold \$142 million worth of military equipment to Africa, which according to Meidan (2006) accounted for 75 percent of all military aid from outside the continent. As could be projected from current cooperation projects between China and Africa, in many ways China’s policy today is an extension and deepening of its past assistance and cooperation with the continent.

The Tazara railway line that linked Zambia and Tanzania was the biggest aid venture by the Chinese government in Africa. The Asian power was however committing itself to even bigger and more prestigious projects in the 1970s across the African continent. However, as China financed the 1 860 kilometre long railway linking Tanzania and Zambia, the Western powers also built a nearly parallel road system. In any case, according to Meidan (2006:121), “African states loyal to China were offered federal buildings, stadiums, factories, infrastructure, medical teams and student exchange programmes”. It is however Snow’s (1956:141) assertion that “China’s intentions remained, nevertheless, primarily ideological: first, to counter recognition of Taiwan as the representative of China and thus to shore up votes for the eventual rejection of Taiwan’s China credentials in the United Nations; second,

to compete at first with Western influence in the continent, and then with the Soviet Union”. Accordingly, China never ceased to assist liberation movements which were fighting imperialist forces and calling for political independence. Arguably, China saw the need for African nationalist movements to disentangle themselves from the hegemonic West. In Zimbabwe in the 1970s, for example, in the most obvious instance of this rivalry, China backed ZANU, the liberation movement of Robert Mugabe, while the Soviet Union backed Joshua Nkomo’s movement, ZAPU. Mugabe’s ultimate election victory laid the foundation for the close relationship that exists between China and Zimbabwe today. However, it should be noted that Snow (1956:143) contends that “the USA remained involved in Africa not as a direct response to Chinese engagement in Africa for China was not considered to be a threat in that regard”. Further to that, Meidan (2006:47) appears to dismiss China as a strategic contender to the USA in Africa then when she says “Chinese actions in Africa were a great sacrifice as she was not developed to the level that could be compared with the US”. Consequently, the post-Maoist period that commenced in 1978 saw fresh economic investments that were meant to modernise the Chinese socio-economic system. The foreign policy of China was therefore modelled towards the promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI), external trade and economic modernization. In the view of Chinese leaders, a stable and peaceful milieu was a pre-requisite of a viable economy thus making peace their major thrust in its foreign policy towards Africa. Therefore, according to Snow (1988:152), “Beijing’s focus shifted, from ideology to economics and a more pragmatic approach to Africa, following the start of Chinese reforms in 1978. Efforts were made to maintain a good relationship with the African countries, but by the mid-eighties, Africa had lost its importance to the Chinese, since the need for outside technology and expertise, could not be provided by African countries”. At this point in time, China heavily relied on the trade and investment linkages and technical assistance from the western countries thus allowing relations between the two sides to normalize and effectively strengthen. Africa was simply not an asset to China’s economic development goals at that time.

As mentioned above, attention to Africa waned in the 1980s as China embarked upon its modernization and opening up to the rest of the world. According to Meidan (2006:74), “It also found itself unable to compete with Western aid programs. Less Chinese development aid was destined to Africa (as China was also a receptor of development aid)” and this forced China to have cordial relations with USA. Sino-USA relations remained good until 1989, after China’s isolation due to the Tiananmen Square events, that the country turned its

attention to Africa once again. The flag of Third World solidarity was raised and China's international condemnation and isolation for violation of human rights was moderated by the support of African countries in the United Nations. Meidan (2006:74) asserts that "African support in multilateral forums was, for the second time (the first time having been during the vote to give Beijing the seat on the United Nations Security Council instead of Taipei) an important contribution to achieving Beijing's goals". The weight of African countries in such forums has therefore been an important motivation for China to shore up their support, especially when this could also be done at Taiwan's expense.

2.2 The Evolution of Sino-USA Relations

In order to have a better understanding of implications for the Sino-US relations in the wake of Chinese engagement with Africa, it is worth highlighting China's policies towards the United States in history. The policies were meant to promote gradual elimination of the USA policies and behaviour that were harmful to China's interests. The events and examples that are cited below might not have been in direct response to activities undertaken by both parties in Africa, but they provide the basis for the likely outcome in relation to the topic of this study.

According to Bruce and Starr (2001:137), there are three basic forms of policy framework which China has employed in history to promote gradual elimination of the US policies and behaviour that were harmful to China's interests. In terms of policy effectiveness, Keohane (2002:105), citing Kenneth Waltz argues that "the ultimate measure in policy evaluation is whether it succeeds resulting in the implementing country surviving and increasing in strength". This chapter applies this principle to post-Cold War China-USA relations, examining the influence of China's policies on US behaviour.

Bruce and Starr (2001) refer to the first policy framework as strategic conciliation. This entails utilizing China's security assets to cooperate with the USA on issues that are of mutual interest, thereby exchanging benefits and altering the USA's negative impression of China. There are a number of examples where strategic conciliation was exercised by China ranging from 'Shaking off isolation and sanctions' (1989-1992) to 'Confronting the United States on Taiwanese independence' (2000-2004). However, for the purposes of this study, 'Shaking off isolation and sanctions' (1989-1992) shall be reviewed in an effort to bring to the fore at the time.

The tragedy that unfolded around Tiananmen Square in June 1989 had an immediate impact on China's foreign relations. Internationally, the Chinese government was widely condemned for the use of force against protesters. Together with its allies, the USA quickly imposed a series of diplomatic and economic sanctions against China. According to Ross (2000:123), “the details of those sanctions varied from country to country, but in general they involved the following: The suspension of any arms sales or other USA exports to China; the suspension of exchanges between the USA and Chinese military leadership; the suspension of exchanges with officials at or above the rank of Assistant Secretary of State; and the postponement of any further aid or loan assistance from international financial institutions”.

According to Ge (1998:592) “in July, the G7 held a conference in which they endorsed the economic sanctions. Under pressure from the United States and members of the European Community (EC), the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) agreed to halt lending to China”. These official actions, according to Ross (2000:87) were “supplemented by the unofficial and spontaneous decisions of private individuals and institutions in the United States and her allies to reconsider the desirability of conducting business with China”.

In the face of USA sanctions, China held its ground and bided its time. Xiaoping (1993:321) asserts that China “...held ground by continuing its ‘reform and opening’ and maintaining stable economic development; it bided time by behaving within its means and not opposing the US hegemony, striving instead to retain national sovereignty”. With this in mind, China took advantage of international events that were of strong concern to the USA, adopting a series of measures that promoted China–USA cooperation. Firstly, according to Ross (2000:154), “China did not oppose the US troops in the Persian Gulf”. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, the United States organized a multinational force to restore Kuwait's sovereignty. In order to acquire UN approval, the United States hoped that China would support its actions in the Persian Gulf. While China did not approve the use of force, it did not generate any determined opposition and developed a tacit agreement with the USA. It is on record, as confirmed by Xiaoping (1993: 322) that “from 2 August 1990 to 3 April 1991, the UN passed 14 resolutions regarding the Persian Gulf crisis, with China voting in support of twelve. To grant the USA-led multinational force the moral and legal basis for action, China abstained on Resolutions 678 and 686, both of which authorized the use of UN troops”.

Secondly, China signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction had been one of the most important objectives of USA foreign policy since World War II. The USA began attaching even greater importance to this issue during the late 1980s and early 1990s in response to the regional conflicts that threatened USA security. Xiaoping (1993: 322), asserts that “China's attitude towards the spread of these weapons completely changed after 1989: it no longer wanted to completely reject a comprehensive nuclear weapons ban”. Accordingly, in August 1991, Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng announced that the Chinese government would join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, officially joining in March 1992. In addition, Ge (1998:620) says “...during November 1991, China welcomed the elimination of the three USA sanctions in exchange for joining the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)”.

Thirdly, China advanced peace in Cambodia. In July 1990, the USA changed its primary objective in Cambodia policy to prevent the Khmer Rouge from returning to power. According to Qingguo and Wei (1998:70-71), “China historically maintained close relations with Cambodia, and even supplied weapons to those in the Khmer Rouge fighting the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen”. In August 1990, however, after all five permanent members of the UN Security Council decided on a framework to approach the Cambodia problem, Qingguo and Wei assert that China halted all military assistance. Instead, China announced that it would treat all parties in Cambodia equally by not interfering in the affairs of the Cambodian government, regardless of whether the Khmer Rouge regained power.

China's responsiveness and cooperative posture were effective. In July 1989, the USA Secretary of State James A. Baker met with the Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, and held talks in Cairo. Yixian (1997:460) points to the fact that “...although the United States did not seem to think so, these meetings symbolized the end of the ban on high-level talks”. Accordingly, in November 1990, President Bush met with Minister Qian in the White House to express his gratitude for Chinese support in the Persian Gulf. This was the first time since the June 1989 sanctions that the USA President had met with a Ministerial Head.

Ge (1998:622) contends that “After the US announcement in December 1989 that a portion of the economic sanctions would be eliminated, beginning the latter half of 1991, all of its (China) sanctions were progressively removed or restrained. In November 1991, Secretary of State Baker visited China with no strings attached, signifying the end of the prohibition on high-level meetings”. In January 1992, Prime Minister Li Peng had some talks with President

Bush at the UN General Assembly. According to Qingguo and Wei (1998:93-94), “at the end of 1992, the United States officially announced the removal of the ban on high-level contacts. Additionally, it ended another portion of its economic sanctions and international organizations gradually restored loan assistance”.

The cases cited above help to demonstrate that much as the USA was a hegemony, China then attempted to alleviate USA foreign policy pressure. In the same vein, now that the influence of China in Africa has grown from strength to strength the implications for the Sino USA relations could be a case of both parties trying to avoid confrontation and cultivate the spirit of mutual understanding much to the benefit of Africa.

Strategic coercion is the second policy framework identified by Bruce and Starr (2001). It is basically utilizing China's security assets to thwart the USA objectives, including using or threatening to use force, forming alliances to curb USA power and voting against proposals favourable to the USA in international organizations.

In 1995-1996 China responded to changes in USA–Taiwan relations in a manner that demonstrated strategic coercion resulting in favourable relations between USA and China. The USA had gradually restructured its Taiwan policy to be more pro-Taiwan after the end of the Cold War. According to Ge (1998:640), in September 1992, “US President George H. Bush announced the sale of 150 F-16s, in clear violation of the August 1982 Joint Communiqué”. In the 1982 Joint Communiqué Ge (1998) contends that “...the United States Government states that it does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, ..., and that it intends gradually to reduce its sale of arms to Taiwan, leading, over a period of time, to a final resolution”. Given the foregoing, one is inclined to conclude that, in so stating, the USA acknowledged China's consistent position regarding the thorough settlement of this issue. However, after President Clinton took office, USA–Taiwan relations went a step closer. Ge (1998) confirms that in April 1994, Clinton signed the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, which included the Congressional signal that the Taiwan Relations Act took precedence over the Joint Communiqué. Further to that, in July same year, the Clinton administration's Taiwan Policy Review announced a new framework for relations with Taiwan. According to Ge (1998:730), “...despite consistent US support for a ‘One China’ policy, its rejection of Taiwan's entrance into the UN, as well as its willingness to maintain only informal relations, the bulk of the substance is of obvious benefit to Taiwan”. High-level exchange visits between USA and Taiwan officials increased to the

extent that 1995 became the turning point where for the first time in 16 years of the China–USA relations, the USA allowed Taiwanese leaders to travel to the USA, a reflection that USA–Taiwan relations had again been pushed to a new level. It was Li Denghui's obtainment of a USA visa that altered Chinese thinking and stance towards the USA and became more assertive. Nathan and Ross (2000:80) contend that “China offered only limited protests to the sale of F-16s and the new Taiwan ‘framework’, believing that the United States still honoured the basic principle behind the Taiwan problem and that fluctuation in policy was reflective of government pressures to make compromises”. However, China became more assertive in May 1995 when she decided to postpone plans for its Defence Minister Chi Haotian's visit to the USA and immediately suspended the visits of State Council member Li Guixian and Air Force Commander Yu Zhenwu. According to Ge (1998:740-48) “from 21 to 28 July, Chinese PLA forces in the East China Sea launched surface-to-surface missile drills, and between August 15 and 25, live missiles and artillery exercises were conducted 90 miles north of Taiwan. In October, numerous exercises were carried out in Chinese territorial waters among the branches of the Chinese military. This continued in March 1996, with several more weeks of missile drills, live navy exercises and joint operations’. Such offensive manoeuvres made the USA to reconsider her relations with Taiwan and became more inclined to the PRC.

China's forceful policies made the USA to realise the dangers of Taiwanese separatism, and consequently, the Clinton Administration had to curb it. According to Suisheng (1998:20) “Even the US Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, who had originally asked authorities, ‘Why not recognize Taiwan?’, changed his approach to one in which support for Taiwan was carefully managed”. Hence in March 1996, Ge (1998:751) says “...the United States put pressure on Taiwan, cancelling the Wanping and HanGuang joint military operations in the Mazu region, which were originally planned for April and May, respectively”. In addition, Jian (1998:41) contends that “during late 1996 and 1997, the United States again closely examined its Taiwan policy, proposing the ‘Three No's’: no ‘Two Chinas’ or ‘One China, One Taiwan’ policy; no Taiwanese independence; no Taiwanese entrance into the UN or other international organizations consisting of sovereign nations. On many levels, this position began a transformation away from supporting Taiwan to maintaining the status-quo with Beijing”. The USA still initiated movements towards improving Sino–USA relations to the extent that when meeting with China's President Jiang Zemin after President Clinton's re-election in November, according to Ge (1998:752) “Clinton expressed a willingness to

establish a 'strategic partnership' with China. During subsequent visits in 1997 and 1998, Clinton publicly reiterated the 'Three No's' policy".

Bruce and Starr (2001) also identified economic inducement as another policy framework that was at the disposal of China in dealing with shaping of relations with USA. The policy entails using China's economic resources, such as market size, market access, etc, to meet the economic needs of USA.

When Clinton became President of the USA in February 1993, he laid out the essence of his China policy, which was to use most favoured nation (MFN) status to promote improvements in human rights and democratization. In some way, this was an attempt to use economic measures to force political change in China. According to Ge (1998:672-3), in May 1993, Clinton issued an executive order extending China's MFN status by a year, but making the following year's extension 'dependent on whether China's efforts to improve human rights make overall significant progress'. Ge (1998:673), contends that "Clinton listed seven requirements, including two 'necessary conditions' that China: Substantially promotes the freedom of emigration objectives in the Trade Act of 1974; complies with the 1992 bilateral agreement concerning prison labour; takes steps in adhering to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; releases and provides an acceptable accounting for Chinese citizens imprisoned or detained for the non-violent expression of their political and religious beliefs; ensures criminals humane treatment and permits international humane and human rights organizations to carry out inspections on prisons; protects Tibet's distinctive religious and cultural heritage; and permits international radio and television broadcasts in China".

In response, China utilized economic measures to lower the China–USA trade imbalance, thus withering the political pressure. According to Ge (1998:694) "In April 1993, before the United States decided on MFN status, China sent trade delegations to the United States that invested \$1 billion in American cars and planes", companies of which concluded a host of lucrative contracts during 1992 and the first quarter of 1993. Lampton (2001:40) echoes the same sentiments when he says "...at the same time, the expansion of China's economic diplomacy was luring other developed nations into China's market, making the United States realize the importance of the Chinese market to its economy". Ge (1998:692) asserts that "China also bypassed the US sanctions by looking to France, which became China's primary partner in building nuclear power plants".

The above outlined economically driven policies that brought about huge economic benefits for the USA companies in China forced the USA to think of ways to influence the China policy. According to Ge (1998:692) Chairman of the USA–China Business Council said, “American interests require stable China–US relations”, and “during the process of promoting the return to normal of China–US relations, American industrial and commercial circles must actively participate”. Lampton (2001:40) says “During 1992 and 1993, large German and French profits in China shocked US business circles, and US officials began realizing that the US allies were unwilling to pressurise China but more than willing to embrace business opportunities disregarded by the United States”. Gradually discovering that using MFN status to pressurise China was not only disadvantageous to USA interests but also put them in a rather passive position, Clinton announced the ‘severing’ of human rights from MFN status in 1994, in direct negation of the previous year's policy. His policy of using economic measures to force political change in China had failed. Human rights disputes between the two countries eased. In the final analysis, one could conclude that ‘economic inducement’ showed obvious effectiveness in resolving economic disagreements as well as political issues, the most prominent example of which was the disentangling of human rights and MFN status.

In the contemporary, China is engaging Africa at a time when it has grown economically to be able to challenge the USA in response to its threatened interests. The events of 1989 in Tiananmen Square stunned the westerners as China revealed her poor human rights record. At the same time, Africa was mum about the Tiananmen Square incident since the trouble never affected them. Such state of affairs coerced China to reconsider its erstwhile friends in Africa thus marking the beginning of the principle of south-south cooperation. Consequently, in the late 1990s China's view of Africa changed for a number of reasons. According to Meidan (2006:76) “First, China's dynamic economic growth fuelled an increasing appetite for energy and other raw materials, such as iron ore, titanium, copper, uranium, aluminium, manganese, and timber, all to be found aplenty in relatively untapped markets in Africa. Second, China's growing political and diplomatic clout led it to rethink its international voice and status, consequently raising speculation and apprehension with regard to the nature of rising Chinese power and its long-term global objectives”. China's new found interdependence and integration in overseas markets and commercial transactions placed it in the limelight of international attention. While China's foreign policy has been essentially pragmatic and passive, what is perceived as its neo-mercantile approach came under closer

scrutiny. The American call pronounced by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick in his speech in September 2005, for China to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system reflects growing frustration in the West over the perceived Chinese “free riding” on the system and highlights the need for China either to change its pragmatic attitude, or to give it better ideological backing. While China’s initial interest in Africa was undoubtedly economic and commercial, the need has arisen in Beijing to rethink China’s global policy and its diplomatic objectives. However, above all, when Chinese officials visited Africa during the early 1990s to year 2000 and beyond, the major guiding principle theme was non-interference in the internal affairs of others. Taylor (2001:45) cites a Chinese official that remarked to the effect that non-interference in the internal affairs of others was supposed to form the basis of the new and emerging global order and this was an indirect attack to western concerns of other governments’ human rights records.

2.3 Conclusion

For the last decade, Chinese politicians and businessmen have been taking the African continent by storm. China’s growing demand for raw materials has led it to closer involvement in the continent, balancing its growing trade deficit with exports of commodities and labour. But China has not neglected the ideological component of its African policy and is stressing South-South cooperation and promotion of a new world order. It is turning much of its investment aid to Africa, and unlike the West, investment aid from China comes with no political strings attached except ‘one China policy’. The question that arises is China’s interest in and goals for its ties with Africa. Is China trying to consolidate a new world order, based on different moral values, conflicting with the current world order; or is China still a pragmatic actor, exploiting African resources in order to satisfy its growing demand for raw materials? Given the outlined historical perspectives of both parties, what will therefore be the impact of China’s engagement with Africa on Sino USA relations

CHAPTER III

CHINA- AFRICA- US RELATIONS: APPROACHES AND IMPLICATIONS

3.0 Introduction

Alterman and Garver (2008:19) contend that “there is a distinct style in China’s approach to relationship building: it practices an omni-directional friendship policy that emphasises the importance of state sovereignty and non-interference with the objective of securing stable and sustainable access to resources and opening new markets to fuel its economy”. In contrast, the USA national interests lie in effectively countering these developments in Africa by deftly encouraging democratic processes, economic freedom, and respect for human rights across the African continent. However, there could be a possibility of both China and the USA expressing willingness to engage on collaborative projects in Africa. It is presumed that there will almost certainly be long-term benefits for Africa to such collaboration.

3.1 Nature and Motivations for Sino-Africa Relations

It is difficult to elicit China’s interests in Africa when discussing with Chinese officials on the Chinese motivations in their engagement with Africa. Rather, the emphasis would be on numerous general principles like high regard for the sovereign independence and development of African states and win-win cooperation. The current President of PRC, Xi Jinping reiterated the same themes when he gave a speech in Tanzania on 25 March 2013. He made a statement to the effect that the guiding features of Sino-Africa relations happen to be equality and mutual respect among others. According to the Premier, Africa is also expected to honour the one China principle as the Asian giant promotes common development. In any case, based on the current literature and actual activities on the ground, it is possible to discern China’s interests in Africa. Therefore, based on the analysis of literature and Chinese activities in Africa, Shinn (2011:2) contends that the Asian giant holds four clear and ‘hard’ interests on the African continent. These include the maintenance of access to natural resources, fostering cordial ties with every African state allowing China to count on Africans diplomatic backing in the UN; gaining access to African markets; and dissolving Taiwanese of diplomatic ties with Africa.

The magnitude of China's engagement with Africa has grown exponentially since the mid-1990s. According to Shinn (2011:5), this increased engagement was resulting from enormous strides towards industrialisation and economic growth in China. Economic emergence of China created the necessity of raw material importation to feed the manufacturing sector of China. The economic activities exchanges assumed above suggest some foreign direct investment and aid which does not appear to be the case on the ground. It is worth highlighting that China's biggest plays have been in Africa's oil producers, that is Angola, Sudan, Nigeria, Algeria, Libya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Some even argue that instead of bringing equipment, why not transfer the technology so that the equipment required is finally manufactured in Africa. However, another school of thought is that where Chinese bring own material, equipment and workers is in some way an expression of China's confidence in Africa as an investment destination, a continent which the USA once labelled in *The Economist* as 'The Failed Continent'. The current Chinese President, Xi Jinping openly expressed confidence in Africa as an investment destination when he described the continent in his speech in Tanzania on 25 March 2013 as "...a continent of hope and promise". It is on the basis of 'hope and promise' that China engaged Africa and they are talking about business, about investment, and about win-win cooperation. China now offers African countries another economic alternative to the USA and the West generally. Hence in trying to gain its lost ground, USA might place greater emphasis and priority on encouraging and supporting American businesses to invest in Africa as well. Maybe this competition and change will be good for Africa.

Shinn (2011:7) notes that, "China has diplomatic relations with fifty of the fifty-four African countries. The other four, that is, Burkina Faso, Swaziland, Gambia, and São Tomé and Príncipe recognise Taipei. Beijing has an embassy in all but one of the fifty countries". With the exception of Somalia, whose security state in its capital Mogadishu obviously precludes a resident mission, other countries do have. Fifty African states that recognize China and its 'One China Principle' do have embassies in Beijing with the exception of the Comoro Islands and recently independent South Sudan. This plethora of embassies herald cordial relations between African countries and China. However, also the USA has diplomatic relations with all fifty-four African countries by virtue of fifty established embassies. These embassies and consulates are the conduits through which diplomatic and economic interests are pursued. In this case, China and the USA appear to be at par in terms of their presence in Africa through

embassies. However, what would bring about an edge for China over the USA would be the guiding principles in the cultivation of relations. Speaking at the first FOCAC in 2000, Cooke (2008:45) notes that the Minister of Trade and Economic Cooperation of China, Shi Guangsheng declared that: “China will unswervingly side with African countries and peoples to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the vast number of developing countries and push for the establishment of an equitable and rational new international political and economic order”. The declaration by the Minister echoes some sentiments of a nation that wishes to show –case economic muscle and prove beyond doubt that it is on the path to pre-eminence thus down-playing the traditional USA influence in Africa.

According to the Chinese Ambassador to Zimbabwe, the PRC is particularly good in fostering successful state-to-state ties and places specific regard to high profile interactions and personal contact. The former Chinese premier, Hu Jintao, toured a number of African countries in the six trips that he made while in office as both president and vice president. Besides these presidential visits, it has been the tradition that the minister of foreign affairs in China would visit abroad annually but Africa should be his first destination, usually in January. This has been the trend since 1991. The Chinese government has also emphasised on party-to-party relations. This has seen senior officials of the Communist Party of China (CPC) making frequent visits to the African continent with the mission of expanding relations. Recently, current President of China Xi Jinping visited Tanzania, South Africa, and DRC. However, it should be pointed out that the USA has no similar concept nor does it rely as heavily on presidential and vice presidential visits to Africa. Chinese government’s invitations of African leaders to visit China have exceeded those made by the US for African leaders to visit Washington. The CPC frequently invites leaders of African political parties to visit China. All this would be aimed at building strong diplomatic relations with African countries.

Critical to the Chinese diplomatic engagement with Africa is its emphasis on the notion of ‘respect’ for African countries, embodied in its policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign countries. This approach resonates with many African governments. In his speech in Tanzania, the Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasised on the principle of sovereign equality and win-win cooperation. The foregoing statement by the Chinese President gives African states hope for development that is free from interference and intimidation. The win-win concept has stood the taste of time to the extent that in the present

day, the current President of China, Xi Jinping, in his speech in Tanzania on 25 March 2013 emphasised the point that China and Africa have remained as communities of shared histories and historical experiences, vision and shared development tasks. Such a perspective by China invariably strengthens China-Africa relations in a big way. The FOCAC ushered in a new type of strategic partnership between China and Africa. It is the conviction of the researcher that the cooperation in various fields as provided for through FOCAC produced notable results. The current President of China Xi Jinping brought to the fore some of the achievements when he gave his speech in Tanzania on 25 March 2013. The revelation by Xi Jinping is a clear testimony that there has been some effort put by China, with Africa as a recipient, in trying to improve Africa-China relations through cooperation in various fields.

3.2 US Engagement with Africa

The Chinese expansion in Africa seems to coincide with the growth of USA interests and engagement in Africa. According to Shinn (2011:7), “...rising energy stakes, the global “war on terror” with its emphasis on weak and failing states, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and conflict resolution have all generated a dramatic increase in U.S. commitments” in Africa. The US launched a number of major initiatives in Africa meant to help to bolster African health, development, and security, all done in the hope to improve Africa-USA relations. However, the US approach to Africa could lead to the conclusion that in the eyes of Americans, Africa is seen largely through the lens of assistance and security, with economic potential and investment or trade potential a distant third. The vehicle through which assistance and security is given to Africa by the USA is Africa Command, a military establishment. It is on the basis of that kind of arrangement that Shinn (2011:5) contends that “the introduction of the African Command was clumsily done, without prior explanations to Africans and with descriptions so broad and all-encompassing that many Africans believed that the US Department of Defence was slated to take over US policy toward Africa”. Naturally, African leaders and their people feel threatened with the presence of AFRICOM and this may not yield good relations between Africa and the USA.

3.3 Implications for Sino-USA Relations in the Wake of China-Africa Relations

The heightened Chinese engagement with Africa since the mid-1990s has important implications for Sino-USA relations. As noted before, China now offers African countries another political and especially economic alternative to the USA and the West generally. A good example is a case where China ignored Western sanctions against Zimbabwe. The effect of that is the general weakening of USA influence on the continent, thus undermining its hegemonic power. Therefore by implication, the Sino-USA relations would invariably be characterised by competition for influence in Africa. Many African countries would find themselves in a position where they can be much more selective in taking advice from the USA. In some complimentary effort, China makes every effort to cultivate the maximum number of African countries on all issues of interest to Beijing that arise in international forums. When Tibet became an issue in 2008, China leaned on African countries and most of them decided to either remain silent or even make supportive statements. On the business front Chinese companies offer much lower prices for products that many Africans believe are of adequate, though of somewhat lower quality compared to their Western alternatives. The bottom line would be strategic competition between China and the USA as both countries try to get a bigger share of the market through innovation, an aspect which is likely to benefit Africa in the long-run.

It is generally the assertion of the USA that China does not have a good record in Africa for worker safety and labour practices. Though sensitive to all of these criticisms, China may not renounce its own principles and interests for international norms that emanate from the USA's hegemonic agenda or the double standards that the West applies to curtail China's development. Therefore in terms of relations between the two countries, it might be confrontational or the other option open to the USA would be to avoid confrontation with China and create a spirit of mutual cooperation to the benefit of Africa.

A stable and peaceful environment is generally good for business and it would be logical to assume that both countries usually, the USA and China, seek stability in Africa. While the USA seeks stability through regime change, China normally supports whatever government is in power irrespective of its pedigree or ideology. Therefore by implication, if China suspects that the USA is seeking regime change in any particular African country, she is likely going to keep its distance. Coordinated diplomatic engagement between China and the USA also

tends to raise suspicions among some African parties that the USA and China are ganging up against them. Given China's guiding principles in terms of its relations with other countries, she becomes especially sensitive to this charge and will be reluctant to work with the USA on any issue where this is the perception by one or more of the African parties involved in the conflict. There may well be ways for China and the USA to coordinate diplomacy as they help to resolve the enormous challenges facing African countries. China will consider such collaboration, however, only if it is convinced that the USA is not seeking regime change in any of the African countries.

3.4 Conclusion

In the 1990s, the relationship between China and Africa gradually changed. The approach became more pragmatic and economic development was clearly China's priority. In the face of the USA's declining ability to uphold an engaging relationship with many African states, China's atypical characteristics reinforce its mounting presence on the continent. It has received a great deal of credibility for the way it conducts its affairs with Africa and for its increasingly adaptive approach. Contrarily, the USA practices a more idealistic approach that Africans find unflattering and unfeasible at times. The USA portrays itself as understanding, but often spins unrealistic visions for Africa, moreover, it does little to reconcile its views with African perceptions. Yet, China knows what appeals to underdeveloped nations because it has not forgotten its historical roots.

CHAPTER IV

CHINA AND USA IN AFRICA: POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

4.0 Introduction

This chapter establishes through content analysis and thematic analysis whether China's influence, gained through its independent foreign policy, presents some strategic competition to the USA and ostensibly undermines USA attempts to effect positive change and achieve its strategic objectives in Africa.

4.1 USA – China: Strategic Competitors in Africa?

The notion of strategic competition suggests that there is a common ground/interests on which both parties involved wish to have a long-term advantage over the other. In the case of China and the USA in Africa, one respondent contends that as from year 2000, China had put some thrust in “opportunistic creation of strategic counterbalances designed to increase its influence and limit that of the United States”. Exerting influence requires strategic assets, as well as channels through which to use them in pursuance of national interests. According to Saunders (2006:2), “China's national objectives (economic expansion, increased international prestige, a unified China and Taiwan, and domestic stability) directly or indirectly fuels its keen interest in Africa”. On the contrary Saunders (2006:2) contends that “U.S. strategic aims in Africa are intended to promote good governance, market reform, and stability and security, which in turn help limit the spread of the war on terror and maintain U.S. access to the continent”. However, David H. Shinn has been consistent in his attempt to discern what he believed to be US interests in Africa, interests of which tend to overlap with those of China, thus giving enough ground for competition. According to Shinn (2011:3), “US interests in Africa included the following: first, it wants to ensure continuing access to oil and a few minerals; second, the US seeks political support from as many as possible of Africa's fifty-three countries. This includes African support in regional organizations, the United Nations, World Trade Organization, etc. African countries constitute more than one-quarter of the members of the United Nations. Thirdly, it desires to gain the support of African countries in the fight against terrorism, drug smuggling and international crime; fourth, the

United States has an interest in maintaining and/or expanding access for its military aircraft to over fly/land in African countries and for its Navy ships to dock in African ports; and fifth, it hopes to increase U.S. exports to Africa.” The above US interests as identified by Shinn are basically the same as those of China in Africa save for the fourth one which might eventually become important Chinese interest in future. The ways and tools employed by China and US to achieve the above stated objectives certainly bring about competition between the two countries.

It would appear the USA is putting some spirited effort to enhance competition with China in Africa. The Bush Administration policy towards Africa is a clear testimony of the USA trying to regain her influence in Africa through competition. According to Shinn (2011:8), amongst other measures, “the Bush administration tripled the level of aid to Africa over that of the Clinton administration; initiated the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which has resulted so far in about \$5 billion in development grants for some seventeen African countries; and expanded the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which began during the Clinton administration”. Shinn (2011:10) further asserts that “AGOA and the generalized system of preferences now permit duty free entry into the United States for about 6,000 products from forty eligible African countries”. All these efforts were done in the spirit of competition which in the end might force the two countries to cooperate much to the benefit of Africa.

4.2 China, USA in Africa: A Pedestal for Mutual Cooperation?

There are situations involving African political and possibly economic issues where USA and China’s interests overlap and therefore the likelihood of mutual cooperation. However, some respondents had the view that mutual cooperation between China and the USA was less likely. It was the view of one respondent that “As Beijing continues to expand operations in Africa, the likelihood of Chinese and American policies clashing will increase, possibly forcing underlying tensions into open conflict”. However, as highlighted above that China has an edge over the USA in Africa, there is a possibility of the USA crafting a strategy that would incorporate all instruments of power designed to counter Chinese influence in Africa. This would include increasing diplomatic presence in Africa. According to Shinn (2012:10) this would entail “...accentuating and reinvigorating currently successful political, military, and economic incentive programs; and directly engaging China in Africa through cooperation, inclusiveness, and challenging it to abide by international norms of behaviour”.

In Chapter 2, there was some demonstration that much as the USA was a hegemony, China attempted to alleviate USA foreign policy pressure. In the same vein, now that the influence of China in Africa has grown from strength to strength the implications for the Sino-USA relations could be a case of both parties trying to avoid confrontation and cultivate the spirit of mutual understanding for the benefit of Africa.

4.3 China and USA in Africa: Beneficial for Africa?

In a significant move to build strong alliances and cultivate its image on the African continent, China has expressed its desire to produce mutually beneficial partnerships between the two very different regions. After examining both the positive and negative results thus far in the Sino-Africa relationship, a win-win approach cannot stem from one side; rather, both the Chinese and African states must communicate their own desires and establish cooperation in their dealings and exchanges. Naturally competition comes with creativity and innovation. China has demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that her approach in her engagement with Africa resonates with all African countries. African leaders acknowledge that to some extent China brought required type of development to their countries and in a favourable fashion given that there are no strings attached to their aid and loans as is the case with the USA. However, some respondents echoed the sentiments that China lack a good record on issues of labour standards and environmental regulations. Also worth noting is that Sino-Africa trade relations have transformed the African continent into a dumping site of substandard goods. However, sensitive to all of these criticisms, China would seek ways to deal with these problems and the move by both parties would benefit Africa.

4.4 Conclusion

China serves as a strategic competitor for the US, but both must also incorporate the African interests and perceptions further into their strategy. The fact that the US has begun to realise the extent to which Chinese presence has increased in Africa, this signifies that the U.S. has competition. Western corporations and governments now face competition for there is now an alternative to the dictates of the international financial institutions and this can give African states more room for manoeuvre. Perhaps a little rivalry will help the U.S. re-examine its own strategy so that it can viably match Chinese endeavours, build back up to its image, and protect its interests. Especially through the framework of strategic competition,

the U.S. can even work with China to improve its relations with African states and provide them with the most effective and advantageous results for partnership. Most notably, the U.S. has the opportunity to conduct damage repair after colonization and exploitative practices on the African continent that have left a truly unfortunate memory. It can encourage faith in the African people and support them by trying new methods for promoting stability and sustainable development.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Chinese presence in Africa intensified during the period 2000 and 2010 and current indicators point to an increased Chinese engagement with Africa. This development comes against a background where the USA's role in Africa remains static and is more apt to decline than progress, unless the USA takes steps to re-evaluate its standing and approaches to diplomacy with African states. China has enjoyed a considerable level of success on the African continent, and the USA can learn from them. The USA must reinvigorate its own strategy if it intends to protect its interests in Africa as well as stay ahead of China in the realm of strategic competition. In the light of China's amplified activity on the African continent in both the economic and political realms, it is becoming more evident that China seeks to rise as a global power in the international arena. That China rises to international prominence is certain, but what needed to be established was how this process would interact with the status of other players in world order, especially the USA. The purpose of this study was therefore to explore the nature of Chinese engagement with Africa; examine how Chinese strategies differ from those of the USA; assess the impact of Chinese engagements with Africa on Sino-USA relations; and proffer recommendations on how Sino-USA relations could be bolstered to the benefit of both parties and Africa. This study was carried out on the premise that the potential strategic competition presented to the USA through Chinese engagement with Africa undermines traditional USA influence and creates an opportunity for mutual cooperation between China and the USA much to the benefit of African countries.

5.1 Conclusion

The study started by looking at the historical past of both Sino- Africa relations and USA- Africa relations. The idea was to trace consistence and major changes in these relations that would probably explain the set up of the said relations during the period under review. The Sino-USA relations were traced as from 1949 for the reason that it is the year the People's Republic of China (PRC) came into existence. It became evident that China's growing

demand for raw materials led it to closer involvement in Africa. However, China has not neglected the ideological component of its African policy and is stressing South-South cooperation and promotion of a new world order. China is turning much of its investment aid to Africa, and it comes with no political strings attached. Literally, China now offers African countries another economic and political alternative to the USA. In the contemporary, China is engaging Africa at a time when it has grown economically to be able to challenge the USA in response to its threatened interests. In fact China has become a strategic competitor to the USA in Africa.

The USA approach towards Africa is mainly informed by its interests. After analysing the different approaches employed by the USA in their engagement with Africa, one could conclude that the USA wishes to aid African states to develop economically and become more secure. However, in doing so, the USA considers good governance as key to the success of African states and this is something they demand African leaders to take responsibility for. Therefore, whatever aid is given to African states, it comes with some strings attached to it of which failure to comply would be met by punitive measures. The belief that USA security threats are at stake in Africa led to the establishment of the AFRICOM which to many African countries is viewed as a tool to threaten and deal with non-compliant countries in Africa. However, the approach does not resonate with African countries. On the contrary, China gives what it can in terms of financial aid and technical support in a bid to promote good relations with African states, but it does so without political strings attached other than affirmation of a 'one China' policy. In treating African states, China stresses the importance of "sincerity". In terms of development for African states, unlike the Americans who prescribe models, China stresses that there is no one-size-fits-all development model in the world. According to the Chinese, differences and varieties of world civilisations and development practices and orthodoxies ought to earn the respect of all. On the basis of that, even the current Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated that PRC shall continue to strongly assist Africa in expanding, improving and diversifying development paths that augur well with their own situations and buttress programmes that promote the exchange of notes between Asia and Africa in the areas of governance. In that regard, the Chinese approach appears to be in conflict with the USA one and it resonates with African countries, a situation which is likely to dilute the USA's tradition in its area of political and economic influence, Africa.

Some would argue that Africa does not necessitate an immediate need for the USA to respond, but China's advance into the continent down-plays the traditional USA influence in Africa and that does require USA attention. China has examined the Western successes and failures on the African continent for decades, and it has worked to set itself apart by incorporating the knowledge it has acquired into its strategies for cutting edge business and political engagement. It has a past with which other underdeveloped and marginalized nations can identify, and it facilitates a relationship that appeals to African states. Also, China is open to trying new methods of engagement with African countries, whereas often the US has preconceived notions of what will or will not succeed and does not re-evaluate its policies based on contradictory evidence. Nevertheless, the USA has the means to promote progress and development in Africa, as well as to counter China in strategic competition. Furthermore, it has the opportunity to coordinate with China for the benefit of all parties involved. As China appears to gain traction in Africa, its bid for global prominence could present a needed wake up call for the USA.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations border around the aspect of adopting certain strategies that would ensure the strengthening of beneficial relations amongst China, USA and Africa. As highlighted before, the Chinese engagement with Africa threatens the traditional influence of USA in the same continent which then brings about strategic competition between China and USA in Africa. Strategic competition increases the likelihood of a clash of Chinese and American policies. However, it would be recommended that the two sides force underlying tensions into cooperation by learning from each other, therefore benefitting Africa. China and the USA compete in Africa, they both come as cunning and predatory economic partners who are well conscious of their discerning national and business interests. In some cases Chinese are shrewder and tougher business negotiators than the Westerners. Nonetheless, Africa is not without bargaining power. Yes Africa needs both the USA and China but these two also need Africa. What is imperative is to create an equitable relationship where Africa benefit from both China and the USA. To do this, Africans must define the terms of reference and engagement with the Chinese and Americans. The Africans must leverage their strengths, negotiate better, box clever, and deploy innovative hard-nosed strategic and economic thinking. Africa has natural resources, the arable land, the climate, the human capital, and markets that both the USA and China need. Ideally, African states must put in place policies,

incentives, guidelines and directives which will encourage and compel the Americans and Chinese to set up processing and manufacturing plants on African soil, ensure employment of Africans, ensure transfer of skills, technology and knowledge to Africa. It is the conviction of the researcher that if the above recommendations are adopted, in the final analysis all the three parties will benefit from their relations.

5.3 Implications for Further Research

It is China's rapid expansion that is driving its state development forward, and the country's need for natural resources, viable export markets and political influence has led China to step up its engagement with Africa. The USA has realised the potential in China, hence the need to compete with China in Africa along the same interests. Another school of thought were answers need to be researched is that while China's trade with Africa has surged US\$10 billion in 2000 to US\$166 billion in 2011, this has mainly been in exchange of African minerals for Chinese manufactured goods. Chinese imports are undermining Africa's own manufacturing businesses. On the basis of that, what should African states do to get out of this near dependency syndrome?

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