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Why There Is No Military Solution to the Problems of Peacekeeping

Dennis Jett

Introduction

The UN was not even three years old when it launched its first peacekeeping mission in 1948. For the past 70 years, the organization has been continuously involved in such operations—often with mixed results.

The results have been mixed, in part, because over that time peacekeeping and the wars to which it has been applied have changed. The challenges peacekeepers face have evolved from ones that were straightforward to tasks that were highly complex and multifaceted. The missions launched most recently represent a further evolution into a third phase. These missions, all in Africa, are ones where the peacekeepers are bound to fail because policy makers have given them goals incapable of being accomplished.

To say that these missions cannot succeed is not to say peacekeeping has never been successful. The UN has averaged one new peacekeeping mission a year over the 71 years the organization has existed. Some have ended well; others have not. When the UN has moved beyond keeping the peace, casualties have mounted. This history explains why, in each of the seven decades of UN peacekeeping, the number of peacekeepers who died on duty has increased. The total is now nearly 4,000 and rapidly growing.

To understand how peacekeeping has changed requires describing how it has evolved. There are currently 14 UN peacekeeping missions, employing nearly 100,000 soldiers, police, and civilians at an annual cost of almost USD 7 billion. These missions reflect the three stages of peacekeeping's evolution. The oldest among them, launched in response to wars between countries over territory, can be described as *classical peacekeeping*. The second stage involved *multidimensional operations*, in which peacekeepers took on a wide variety of tasks to help countries recover from civil wars. The most recently launched operations are the third stage, *protection and stabilization missions*, where policy makers have given peacekeepers a mandate to protect civilians and aid governments that are threatened by violent extremism. It is these protection and stabilization missions where peacekeepers are bound to fail, because there is no peace to keep and they lack the ability to impose one.

Classical Peacekeeping Operations

The six classical peacekeeping operations have logged a combined total of more than three centuries of peacekeeping efforts. Yet none of the six is going to end in the foreseeable future, mainly because their successful conclusion does not serve the interests of some of the five permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council (UNSC).

Western Sahara

The operation in the Western Sahara, which started in 1991, is supposed to help hold a referendum on independence for the region. Morocco, which claims the territory, will not permit a referendum that would result in independence. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (Polisario Front), the territory's preeminent Sahrawi rebel national liberation movement, will not agree to a referendum that does not include independence as an option, and the group seems unwilling to accept autonomy without independence. Even though Morocco restricts the movement of the peacekeepers, Rabat sees an advantage in their continued presence. Because France has a close relationship with Morocco, Paris will use its P5 status to ensure the mission does not end without Moroccan consent.

Cyprus

In Cyprus, the mission began in 1964, tasked with getting the Greek and Turkish Cypriots to live together in peace. Britain has military bases on Cyprus so the UK's interest is in preserving the status quo. They have little to fear, as the Turkish Cypriot leaders have no desire to be a minority in a united country. Instead, these leaders have declared their own independent state on the northern end of the island, even though Turkey is the only nation that recognizes it. With the permission of a country that only they recognize, the Turks have begun to explore for natural gas in the waters around Cyprus. That has prompted the condemnation of European Union (EU) and a cutoff of aid from the EU.[1] The Turkish government, no doubt supported by the Russians, who want to sell more weapons to Turkey, says it is going ahead with drilling for the gas despite the EU protests. While this confrontation has increased tensions in the region, it has also prompted Greek and Cypriot leaders to meet to discuss peace talks that were last held in 2017.

Kashmir

A small force of peacekeepers has operated in Kashmir for more than 70 years. Since this force is supposedly helping avoid a war between India and Pakistan, two countries with nuclear weapons, no one is ready to terminate that mission—even though what it is accomplishing is unclear. Steps taken recently by the Indian government have not made the peacekeepers' job any easier. In August 2019, New Delhi abolished the autonomy given Jammu & Kashmir under India's constitution. The government then flooded the area, the nation's only Muslim-majority state, with troops to suppress any negative reaction. These harsh measures are part of a policy of aggressive Hindu nationalism that will guarantee even more the unlikeliness of any peace with Pakistan or possible end of the peacekeeping mission.

The Levant

The remaining three classical peacekeeping operations are in and around Israel. They are the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Jerusalem, the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Syria, and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). There is also a fourth operation, the Multilateral Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai, which was created as a result of the Camp David Accords. It is not a UN effort, because Russia would have vetoed its establishment; so, the mission was set up independently.

UNTSO, the UN's first peacekeeping effort, began in 1948. It continues to this day but makes no visible contribution to peace. UNDOF was created in 1974 after the Yom Kippur War. Because the civil war in Syria has made it unsafe for the peacekeepers, UNDOF cannot carry out its functions. In addition, the Trump administration has proclaimed that "the United States recognizes that the Golan Heights are part of the State of Israel."[2] Since Israel is never going to withdraw from the Golan and Syria is never going to give up its demands to recover the area, the UNDOF peacekeepers will apparently never be able to go home.

UNIFIL was established in 1978, after fighting between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israeli military forces in southern Lebanon. While the mission's 10,000 peacekeepers from 40 different countries make dozens of patrols every day, they cannot do anything without the cooperation of the Lebanese government—a government that now includes Hezbollah, which controls southern Lebanon. The United States considers Hezbollah a terrorist organization, and the Israelis believe the group is stockpiling tens of thousands of rockets in population centers and digging tunnels under the border much as Hamas has done in Gaza. Yet, when the Israelis pointed out a brick factory that they believed was

being used to hide one of the tunnels, the Lebanese government refused to let the UN investigate because the factory was private property.

UNIFIL does facilitate communications between the two sides, which otherwise do not talk to each other, but such coordination does not require thousands of peacekeepers. Perhaps to calm tensions in the region, UNIFIL does have one accomplishment. It has organized yoga lessons.[3]

The MFO came into being in 1981 when Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula. Because of terrorism in the northern Sinai, the peacekeepers have now largely withdrawn to the south, far from the border. Meanwhile, the Egyptian and Israeli armies, which the MFO was set up to keep apart, are conducting joint combat operations together against the extremists.

In other words, none of these operations in the Middle East have an exit strategy. And, like Jared Kushner's peace plan, none of them is doing anything to encourage a political process that might resolve the conflicts that caused them. Israel likes having the peacekeepers, as their presence provides someone to blame when hostilities erupt. And since the current American administration seems to have no limit when it comes to things it can do for Israel, the United States will ensure none of these missions are brought to an end.

Since wars between countries over territory are today quite rare, a new classical peacekeeping operation being launched is unlikely. The irony is that, on one hand, such operations present the peacekeepers with manageable assignments, since it usually consists mainly of patrolling a demilitarized area between the armies of two countries. On the other hand, the classical peacekeeping operations currently underway do not seem to be in any danger of ending due to the interests of powerful nations.

Multidimensional Operations

The second type of peacekeeping, multidimensional operations, began as a result of civil wars over political power. Once a ceasefire was established in these conflicts, peacekeepers could be sent in. Decision makers gave peacekeepers a long list of goals to help the peace become permanent. The list could include demobilization of most of the former combatants and reintegrating them into civilian life, forming a new national army that was not loyal to only one side, aiding refugees to return to their homes, providing humanitarian aid and development assistance to restart the economy, and holding elections in a country with little-to-no democratic experience.

Given the cost of such operations—thousands of peacekeepers were required for such tasks—there was pressure to achieve all the objectives on a tight schedule. If the elections produced a government with a measure of legitimacy, the peace-

keepers could declare success and depart. They were able to do that in Mozambique in a little more than two years from 1992 to 1994.

While the UN has had mixed results in its multidimensional peacekeeping missions, they are, at least for the moment, largely a thing of the past. Of the current missions, only two are multidimensional. Actually, it would be more accurate to call them unidimensional because their objectives have been drastically reduced over the years. Today they are small operations limited to attempting to professionalize the police in Haiti and Kosovo.

Protection and Stabilization Missions

The remaining six current operations are all in sub-Saharan Africa. They represent the third stage of the evolution of UN peacekeeping—the protection and stabilization missions. These missions are the most dangerous and difficult ones, and they are where peacekeeping will inevitably fail because of problems with manpower, mandates, and motivation.

Manpower

The staff of a peacekeeping operation (PKO) can be composed of five groups: military observers, civilian expatriate staff, locally hired employees, police, and military contingents. The last group are the soldiers wearing the light blue helmets who are the image most people have of peacekeepers. Their task is to carry out military functions that a PKO requires like guarding facilities and bases and, in the case of the protection and stabilization missions in Africa, protecting civilians and helping the government extend its control over its own territory.

Challenges

The basic problem with the military contingents stems from the fact that the UN has no standing army. For each PKO, the UN must go, hat in hand, around the world to ask the member states to provide the troops required for the military contingents. The response to this request from rich countries has increasingly been "no," and that has left it to an increasing number of poorer countries to supply the manpower.

During the Cold War, peacekeeping was mainly confined to the classical variety, where the tasks assigned were straightforward. The countries participating in peacekeeping were often rich countries seeking to avoid a local conflict escalating into a confrontation between the super powers. That changed dramatically as peacekeeping evolved.

Prior to 1990, 33 countries had participated in three or more of the 18 PKOs initiated.[4] Of those, just over half were wealthy countries. By 1996 there were 70 countries contributing troops, of which only 22 had developed economies.[5] In mid-2018, however, there were 124 countries providing soldiers for peacekeeping. However, only seven percent of those soldiers came from 26 of the 31 countries the CIA Factbook lists as nations having developed economies. (The five countries with developed economies that contributed no troops to peacekeeping were Iceland, Israel, Luxembourg, South Korea, and Singapore.) In the operations in Africa, the demand by some political leaders that there be African solutions to African problems may have encouraged this trend.

With armies, one gets what one pays for. The troops from rich countries come with a great deal of equipment that they can bring with them. They are better equipped because their governments can afford to spend more on their armed forces. The armies of poor countries, on the other hand, are usually equipment deficient, especially in transportation assets. A visitor to the PKO in Mali in 2018, for instance, observed one contingent driving around in 1960s vintage vehicles.[6] Because the UN cannot afford to turn down troops when a country is willing to offer them, the limitations of those troops are unavoidable.

To put this situation in rough perspective, a crude measure of the amount of logistical and other support an army has is to divide the defense budget of a country by the number of soldiers it has. About 90 percent of peacekeepers come from countries where the defense budget per soldier was less than USD 50,000, with several of them falling below USD 2,000. Only four percent came from countries wealthy enough to spend more than USD 100,000 per soldier. The country with the highest ratio is the United States, where that figure is around half a million dollars a year (if reserve units are not included) and steadily climbing. The United States, however, only provides a handful of officers (26 in mid-2019) to peacekeeping missions, who serve as military observers and in staff functions. Washington refuses to provide any troops for the military contingents mainly because of congressional opposition to the idea of having American soldiers serving under a UN commander.[7]

Incentives

There is an incentive for countries that do not spend that much per soldier to participate in peacekeeping. Countries contributing troops to a PKO receive about USD 1,400 a month per soldier from the UN. That figure was negotiated and was the subject of considerable debate in 2014. The rich countries, which pay the most for peacekeeping, felt it was too high. The developing countries, which supply the vast majority of the troops, argued it was too low.[8] At the current level,

however, peacekeeping can be a profitable venture for any country spending less per soldier than what the UN reimburses it for its troops.

Discipline Issues

Another problem with peacekeeping troops, which is not limited to the ones from poor countries, arises for the UN's lack of authority to discipline those who serve in its name. The UN has to rely on the country that provided the soldiers to also provide the discipline and the punishment for any misdeeds. In the past, the UN often dealt with the problem by ignoring it. To publicly identify those responsible would risk embarrassing a member state, which the UN is reluctant to do and run the risk of losing that country's soldiers. With the expansion of the number of peacekeepers to today's level, the problem has also grown and has gotten to the point where it cannot be ignored.

It is not a new problem however. In 1995, the *International Herald Tribune* reported:

> Corruption among soldiers in the UN peacekeeping mission in the former Yugoslavia always has been a problem, and troops from the former Soviet Bloc nations are said by military and UN officials to be the most active in black marketeering, running prostitution rings and facilitating military maneuvers and resupply operations by the Serbs. UN efforts to stamp out the malfeasance have generally been ineffectual, partly because Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has hampered investigations and partly because the culture of the $1 billion-a-year UN operation in the Balkans has often turned a blind eye to the problem.[9]

Sexual exploitation and abuse is now the crime most frequently associated with peacekeepers. It is not a new problem either. In 2003, the UN recognized that it had a sexual abuse problem that involved civilians and police officers as well as the troops in a number of peacekeeping missions. In 2005, the UN said it was adopting a "zero tolerance" policy toward such abuse. Despite that, nearly 2,000 accusations of such conduct by peacekeepers were reported over the next dozen years.[10] A 2015 report by the internal oversight office of the UN found that from 2008 to 2014 there were an average of 76 such cases reported each year.[11]

Even those numbers may be a significant underestimate of the level of abuse. As one Australian diplomat who worked in peacekeeping missions explained in testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

> There are multiple barriers to reporting sexual abuse. Victims fear discrimination, stigmatization and retaliation if they report abuses by peacekeepers or civilian and military police. Victims also fear losing benefits and they know that there is

> a high likelihood they will not receive justice and the perpetrators will go unpunished. Many of the victims are minors, who are unaccompanied, separated or orphaned through the conflict. UN human rights officers located in the human rights components of peacekeeping missions are usually the first responders, and hence the internal "reporters" of the sexual abuse. They have their own fears, both about their physical safety as well as their own job security.[12]

Reform Efforts

Shortly after taking office in 2017, UN Secretary-General António Guterres declared another zero-tolerance effort and even suggested that the money paid to countries for supplying troops as peacekeepers be reduced and used to compensate victims if those countries failed to act to deal with the problem. According to one Australian newspaper, the reform plan was "met with scorn" and would get nowhere due to "a cultural cocktail of self-interest, intimidation and dysfunction—and by the UN's opaque legal framework."[13]

Guterres did at least call attention to the problem and created a voluntary agreement that he urged all the countries to sign.[14] By signing this compact, a country committed to helping the UN prevent sexual exploitation and abuse through a number of actions, including the following steps: providing support and assistance to victims, screening and training peacekeeping personnel, and ensuring accountability by enforcement of disciplinary and judicial decisions, providing DNA samples when necessary to carry out an investigation, and considering collecting DNA samples of all peacekeepers before they deployed.[15] As of October 2018, 100 countries had signed the compact.[16]

Whether Guterres' effort at reform will prove more effective than previous attempts to curb the abuse remains to be seen. Initially at least, it was a problem that continued to do grave damage to the reputation of the UN and the image of peacekeepers. The abuse cases were made even more shocking by the fact that many of the victims were children living in desperate poverty, including some who were not even teenagers. The PBS program *Frontline* dedicated an entire show in July 2018 to the "UN sex scandal."[17]

In the *Frontline* program, Isobel Coleman, who had been the US Ambassador to the UN for Management and Reform from 2014 to 2017, pointed out that the troop-contributing countries have to punish the offenders since the UN does not have the power to do so. She also explained why the urgency of the situation can work against efforts for accountability and reform:

> If you're in a crisis situation and you're, you, you think you've got genocide erupting in the Central African Republic and you're looking for troops to come and

> save tens, hundreds of thousands of lives, you know, maybe you're not asking so many questions about how they've been vetted and what their, you know, training has been on sexual exploitation and abuse. You want troops on the ground yesterday, you know, to save lives.[18]

Recruitment Issues

Another quality problem stems from a different trait of the countries that provide peacekeepers. The nongovernmental organization, Freedom House, ranks countries around the world and categorizes them as free, partial free, or not free. There were 71 countries that contributed troops to the military contingents in 2018. About 30 percent of those troops came from countries that are not free, 43 percent from countries that are only partially free, and 27 percent came from democracies. When it comes to those who contribute police officers, the vast majority come from countries that are not free (30 percent) and only partially free (39 percent). Only 31 percent come from countries that are rated as free.

In nondemocratic countries, the police and the armed forces are used mainly to protect the autocrat in power. They are not trained for, or particularly interested in, protecting common citizens. And they are not the kind of examples that a country emerging from conflict should be using to help set up an effective police force, a functioning judicial system, or civilian control of the armed forces. However, because the UN has neither its own army nor its own police force, the organization has to accept what it can get even though such personnel are clearly not well suited for the job.

Once again, the wealthier, more democratic countries could provide more personnel better suited to the task, but they lack the political will to do so. And so, to paraphrase former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's explanation for the multiple failures to control the situation after the US invasion of Iraq, the UN has to go to war with the army it has and not the army it needs.

Mandate

A more serious problem for the effectiveness of peacekeeping than the manpower issues is the mandate peacekeepers are given. At the risk of being tautological, peacekeepers are bound to fail if there is no peace to keep. When a ceasefire is negotiated, peacekeepers can do their work. Without one, peacekeepers are either ineffective or have to undertake a combat role. The latter requires the international community be willing to have peacekeepers inflict and take casualties.

Since the wealthy nations with the most-capable armies are unwilling to provide a significant number of troops for this type of peacekeeping, the responsibil-

ity is left largely to poorly equipped and trained soldiers from the armies of developing countries who are not going to defeat violent extremism. If the United States cannot prevail against violent extremists in Afghanistan after 18 years of trying, there is no chance that the peacekeepers can in Africa.

After the casualties suffered in Somalia portrayed in the book and movie *Blackhawk Down*, peacekeeping fell into a period of decline. It began a dramatic resurgence after 1997 as the memories of peacekeeping failures faded a bit and it once again became an instrument for intervention by the international community. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the conflicts in which the international community chose to intervene took another turn, one that is proving deadly for peacekeepers.

In the post–9/11 world, peacekeeping increasingly became part of the fight against terrorism, without giving much regard to who or what is being defended. The six protection and stabilization missions currently underway were begun after 9/11 largely in response to violent extremism. Including stabilization in the peacekeepers' mandate means they are tasked with helping the host government extend its control over its own territory. Having UN peacekeepers do this is, in effect, an extension of the so-called war on terrorism. However, when it comes to terrorism, there is little peacekeepers can do. In fact, there is no real role for peacekeeping whatsoever.

The terrorists are indistinguishable from noncombatants and will use any weapon available for their objective: to kill innocent people and call attention to their cause. In addition, phrases like the "war on terror" or "war on terrorism" are as misleading as they are ridiculous. Terror is an all-consuming fear, and terrorism is a tactic. There are no final victories over fear or tactics. Both will continue to be used as long as there are people willing to employ those methods.

It is hard to defeat terrorists, because it is often hard to define who they are. The government in power will tend to label any armed opposition as terrorists, and sometimes unarmed opponents as well. One way to make a distinction between insurgents and terrorists is whether the group in question attempts to take and hold territory. If they do, they can be considered insurgents. If not, the label of terrorist is more appropriate, assuming they are killing innocent people simply to make a political point.

The line between terrorists and insurgents is somewhat indistinct and can be easily crossed, depending on the military strength of the group. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had such success against an Iraqi army that would not stand and fight that it decided to establish a caliphate. It thus passed from being a group of terrorists to an insurgency. Once the Iraqi forces regrouped—with significant support, thanks to American firepower and Kurdish forces—ISIL

was routed and driven from the territory it held. It was forced to essentially revert to being a terrorist organization.

Definitions aside, without peace there is no chance for peacekeeping to succeed against violent extremism without the support of the local population. If peacekeepers have aligned themselves with a government that is seen as corrupt and repressive, even if the peacekeepers commit no abuses, they will not have the assistance of the people they are supposedly trying to protect. And they will become just another target for the terrorists to attack. In response, they are likely to go into a self-protective mode that limits their ability to take any action at all or provide protection anywhere outside the immediate vicinity of their bases. Yet sending in the peacekeepers is still the "something" that the international community often feels it must do, especially when no powerful nation has the interest to undertake a major effort or the willingness to put its own troops at risk.

Motivation

Besides inadequate manpower and unachievable mandates, there is the question of motivation. The UNSC can issue the orders, but it is the troops on the ground who must execute those orders. The problem of motivation arises from the fact that the five countries where these protection and stabilization missions are taking place—Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo—have governments that are among the most corrupt, repressive, and incompetent in the world. One need only look at the rankings by Freedom House, Transparency International, and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation to confirm that.

These countries are therefore not particularly interested in protecting their own citizens. Their armies and police exist mainly to protect the regime in power. How then are peacekeeping troops supposed to aggressively engage in combat operations to protect governments that are not concerned with the welfare of their own citizens?

Peacekeepers are not war fighters, and asking them to play that role only ensures they will fail. The fundamental problem is that there is no peace to keep, and UN forces are incapable of imposing one. Peacekeeping has simply become a way for rich countries to send the soldiers of poor countries to deal with conflicts the rich countries do not care about. It provides the rich countries a way to claim they have done something about a humanitarian disaster—and provides the opportunity to shift the blame for the result to the UN and the peacekeepers. Peacekeeping is a bandage and not a cure. At best, it can staunch the bleeding, but it cannot heal the wound. To use it any other way is to ensure its failure.

Solution

Neither peacekeepers nor the typical reaction of governments—more violence—will be able to prevent violent extremism. There is one approach that holds promise, but whether the international community has the will, attention span, and unity to take it is doubtful.

In 2017, the United Nations Development Program interviewed 495 young African men who had voluntarily joined violent extremist groups. The study found they were motivated by a sense of grievance toward, and a lack of confidence in, their governments. For them, the extremist ideologies were a way to escape a future with no possibility of positive change. The study concluded that improved public policy and governance was a far more effective response to violent extremism than military force.

However, governments—especially in the five countries where the protection and stabilization missions are taking place in Africa—will not lessen their corruption, repression, and incompetence simply because it is the right thing to do. These countries, being as underdeveloped politically as they are economically, have weak legislative and judicial branches of government and little in the way of civil society or press freedom. The incentive to govern better will have to come from within those countries but must be supported by outside forces.

Photo by SPC Angelica Gardner, US Army

Figure 1. African Land Forces Summit 2019. Maj Gen Roger L. Cloutier, commander, US Army Africa, attends a military demonstration during the AFLS 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana, 25 June 2019. ALFS is a four-day seminar that brings together land forces chief across Africa to discuss topics of common interest.

That incentive will not come from the military. At the Africa Land Forces Summit (ALFS) held in Botswana in June 2019, a high-ranking officer from the US Africa Command (USAFRICOM) talked about the command's strategic themes: diplomacy, development, and defense. Democracy apparently does not count.

Another speaker at ALFS 19 who serves in the European Union Training Mission in Mali mentioned the need to train the Malian army on basic humanitarian considerations, including the difference between criminal and legal conduct in a conflict zone. Such talk is reminiscent of the debate about the US Army School of the Americas (SOA), where the US military for many years trained their counterparts from Latin America. To meet criticism about SOA graduates returning home and committing human rights abuses, the US Army changed the schools name and introduced human rights training to the curriculum of all its courses.

The problem is that after training on how not to commit human rights abuses, soldiers have to return to the societies that they came from and follow the orders of leaders who have priorities other than respecting those rights. So, a few lectures from a foreign instructor are not going to instill that respect in soldiers. It will have to come from changes within their own countries and armed forces. Such changes need to be driven by respect for the rule of law and the rights of their fellow citizens arising from those changes. And that is something that foreign military assistance, by itself, will not only fail to bring about but will inhibit.

To ensure the necessary changes happen, the international community should apply substantial and consistent economic and political pressure and sanctions against all those responsible for the creation of these situations. The five African countries in question should be declared de facto failed states and international organizations put in charge of the governments' finances. Any aid to or trade with these countries should be made contingent on the attainment of better governance, human rights, and adherence to democratic norms.

To do that effectively, other countries and a wide range of organizations would have to make peace the top priority instead of placing their own vested interests first. That will require addressing the problem, not just dumping it in the lap of the UN and making the peacekeepers take the blame for failure because it is the easier thing to do.

Dr. Dennis Jett

Dr. Jett is a former American ambassador who joined the School of International Affairs after a career in the US Foreign Service that spanned 28 years and three continents. His experience and expertise focus on international relations, foreign aid administration, and American foreign policy. Immediately prior to joining Penn State, he was dean of the International Center at the University of Florida for eight years. He is a regular interviewee in major media outlets and a well-published author.

Professor Jett's career abroad began in 1973, when he was a political officer in the US Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He later spent several years in Africa, first as the deputy chief of mission in the US Embassy in Malawi, where he assisted in the response to an influx of more than 500,000 Mozambican refugees, and then as deputy chief of mission in the US Embassy in Liberia, where he was the second-ranking officer during the Liberian Civil War. For his service in Liberia during this tumultuous time, he received the Department of State's Distinguished Honor Award for "exceptional service, superb leadership, keen perception and adroitness in the formulation and execution of U.S. foreign policy."

Professor Jett then became special assistant to the president and senior director for African Affairs at the National Security Council, where he was responsible for Africa policy during the first six months of the Clinton administration. He went on to serve as the US ambassador to Mozambique (from 1993–1996) and Peru (from 1996–1999).

As ambassador to Mozambique, he helped bring about the successful conclusion of one of the world's largest peacekeeping operations, enabling the country to hold its first democratic elections. For his efforts, he received the American Foreign Service Association's Christian Herter Award. He was subsequently appointed US ambassador to Peru, where he managed the second-largest aid program in Latin America and helped to open Peru's markets to US companies.

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When Will "African Solutions to African Problems" Be Fully Realized?

Stephen F. Burgess

African states, regional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations have exhibited impressive foreign policy agency in the areas of parliamentary diplomacy, agenda setting, and program formulation, affecting the continent and the global system. African states and organizations have accumulated decades of experience in building cooperative linkages and acting within the international order, thereby innovating new ideas and initiatives. For example, 55 African states constitute a sizable voting bloc in the UN General Assembly and in other fora and have often worked together to promote an agenda that benefits Africa.

While acknowledging impressive African agency, this article takes account of countervailing structural factors within the framework of the agent-structure debate.[1] First, African regional and subregional structures consist of developing countries that will continue to be unable to fully implement foreign policy agency initiatives, particularly in the areas of collective security and economic cooperation. Second, structure helps determine whether program formulation within an African subregion is present or not. In the North African subregion, two relatively strong, rival states have created a bipolar structure, resulting in an absence of subregional agency in collective security, economic cooperation, and other areas. In contrast, most African subregional structures are not bipolar, and leaders and states have exhibited agency in forging organizations to promote economic cooperation and collective security, and some have made modest gains in implementation. The overarching question is when will African foreign policy agency overcome structural constraints and make the goal of "African solutions to African problems" a complete reality?

Introduction

Observers have noted the growing volume of agency in African foreign policies for decades.[2] More recently, Chris Alden and Amnon Aran point out that agency—as opposed to structure—is gaining increasing importance in the study of international relations, including Africa.[3] Among others, Sophie Harman and

William Brown argue that the mounting evidence of African foreign policy agency and innovation in a variety of areas (e.g., South–South relations, nonalignment, peace and security,[4] trade and investment,[5] climate change, and health) weigh against the exclusive use of mainstream international relations theory, including variants of realism, in analyzing foreign policy on the continent.[6] Jonathan Fisher argues that African foreign policy agency has led to the reshaping of international institutions, including the UN and World Bank. He also points out that agency extends beyond the state to civil society organizations that are active in international affairs.[7] Ronald Chapaike and Marutse H. Knowledge argue against Eurocentrism in international relations theory and point to African agency during the Cold War, which has only increased in the new millennium.[8]

In an edited volume, Harman, Brown, and others explore the implications of the engagement of old and new players and how these players are redefining Africa's political and socioeconomic transitions and changing patterns of region building. This includes African agency in the UN and World Trade Organization (WTO), negotiations over climate change and trade agreements with the European Union (EU), and regional diplomatic strategies.[9] There has also been African agency in the push by organizations and some states for corporate social responsibility. In a journal article, Harman and Brown demonstrate how scholars have altered their work over time, thereby acknowledging the growing importance of African agency; they point to Beth Whitaker's iterative work on "soft balancing" by African states.[10] They also highlight Danielle Beswick's chapter in their edited volume on "omni-balancing" and Rwanda as a leader in the African Union (AU), Davos (World Economic Forum), and other fora.[11]

Fridon Lala connects global "multipolarization" and the rise of the global South with the rise of African agency in the domains of peace, security, and climate change and in shaping the global normative framework. He analyzes the cases of the AU and South Africa as actors exercising agency regionally and globally. The AU has adopted "Agenda 2063" in promoting African interests globally, demanding greater representation in the WTO, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank, and using the New Partnership for African Development as a means to make African states more attractive to investors and lessen dependence on external donors and international financial institutions. Lala focuses on South African foreign policy agency during the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, who proclaimed the "African renaissance" and "African solutions to African problems." Mbeki's leadership helped lead to the AU and its constituent organizations and to robust AU peace operations and sanctions against countries with unconstitutional changes of government. Mbeki also led in securing South African membership of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) group that challenged US domi-

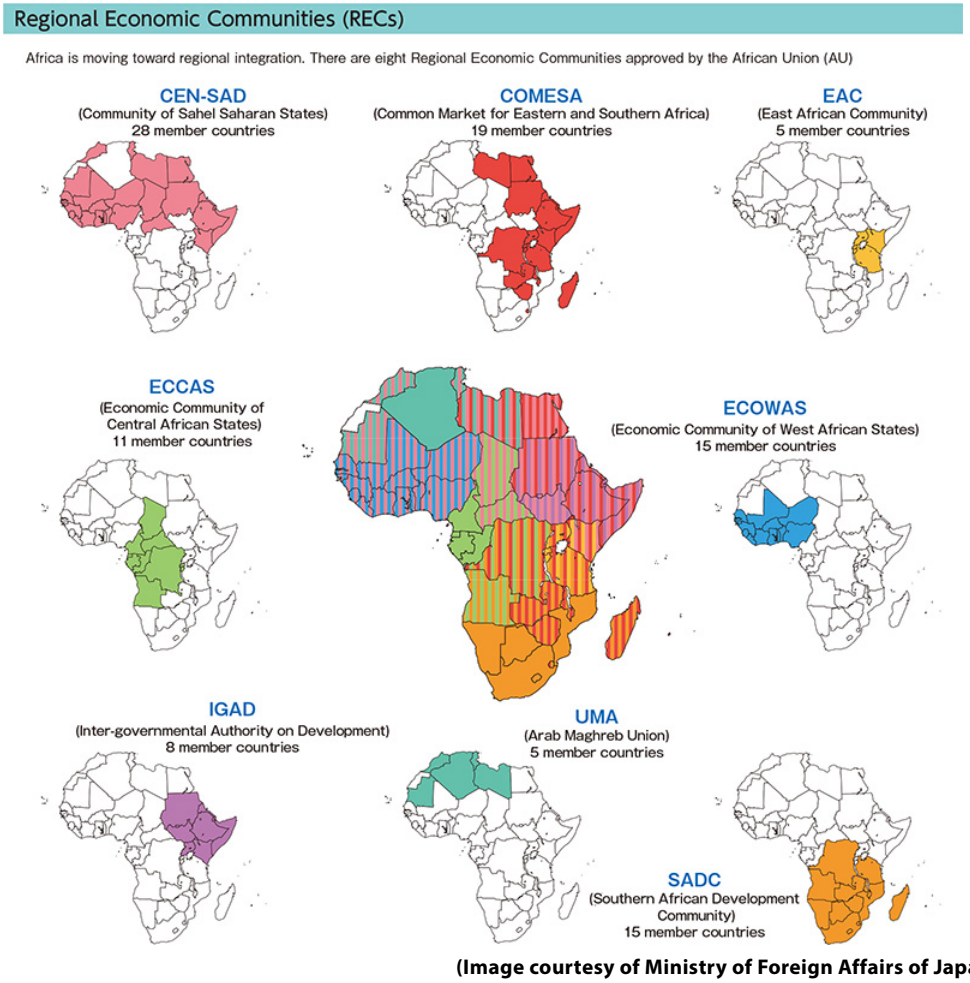
nance of the global economic system. Lala concludes that the structural organization of relevant institutions is crucial to the process of exercising agency.[12]

I agree that one must use various theoretical prisms and frameworks (e.g., not just variants of realism) in approaching the foreign policy agency strides that African states and organizations have made in a relatively short period as well as guard against the overuse of variants of realism and other conventional international relations theories in analyzing African foreign policy agency. In contrast to Europe, Africa has experienced few interstate wars due to the weakness of states created by European imperial colonizers.[13] Instead, African foreign policies have often focused on collective action to prevent regime collapse, state failure, and conflict spillover.[14] In recent decades, observers cannot explain solely the low level of interstate war in Africa by pointing to the inability of states to project power beyond their borders but rather must also blame regional organizations and other institutions created through African foreign policy agency to manage disputes and prevent conflict. Finally, most African states are not as weak as sometimes portrayed in the literature, and observers can no longer cast these states as primarily "victims" of outside powers.

While dynamic, visionary leadership is essential for agency, leaders and states act within specific structural parameters.[15] Writing from a constructivist perspective, Walter Carlnaes points out that situational-structural conditions often constrain agents.[16] These conditions include the amount of power that states have, which helps define the structure of a particular region. Therefore, one must take into account structural factors in analyzing and assessing agency in African foreign policies and implementation. One cannot downplay the power of states and the level of cooperative action within organizations as essential elements determining the degree to which foreign policy initiatives are implemented nor the differences in implementation.[17] Leaders, states, and organizations may show agency in agendas and creating structures but not be able to follow through with substantive implementation.[18]

I analyze African foreign policy agency and structural constraints in the areas of economic cooperation—particularly regional economic communities (REC) and collective security, two of the most important areas of agency—and assess the importance of structure (especially the amount of resources and power) in weak implementation. First, I focus on RECs, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the East African Community (EAC). When these RECs were founded through African foreign policy agency, most policy makers had aspirations of generating European-style internal trade volumes and promoting rapid economic

development. However, due to the lack of intraregional trade, poor agrarian economies and infrastructure, and the weak capacity of states, the RECs have not significantly boosted intraregional trade or economic development. These economic communities contrast with successful ones, such as the EU, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) of South America.



(Image courtesy of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

Figure 1. African regional economic communities. Pictured are the eight African Union–approved RECs.

Second, I examine collective security agency initiatives under the umbrella of the AU, including the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Standby Force (ASF), and operations such as the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and analyze how structural factors constrain implementation. In ad-

dition, I examine the record of subregional organizations that have been able to generate collective security initiatives but have fallen short in implementation. These include AMISOM, which African states have failed to fund, as well as the ECOWAS and its failures to stabilize Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2004, and Mali, 2012–2013. The shortfalls in African agency contrast with the well-endowed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which led successful peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and engaged in stabilization in Afghanistan, as well as UN peacekeeping operations that are paid for mainly by annual contributions by the United States, China, United Kingdom, France, Russia, Germany, and Japan.

In the second part of the article, I analyze the absence of foreign policy agency (security and economic) on the part of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in the most economically advanced African subregion, which is partly explained by an intense rivalry of two moderately strong, middle income states, creating a bipolar structure. I contrast the structure of North Africa and AMU with that of other African subregions and their organizations, which mostly consist of states that do not have the capacity to threaten each other and, therefore, have demonstrated foreign policy agency in program formulation with weak implementation.

In conducting comparative analysis, I use examples of successful foreign policy agency implementation by collective security organizations—NATO and the UN—which benefited from member states with relatively high GDP per capita and defense budgets, as well as economic communities: the EU, ASEAN, and MERCOSUR. In determining the strength of subregional structure and projecting into the future, I use *African Futures 2050* by Jacobus Kamfer Cilliers, Barry Hughes, and Jonathan Moyer of the Institute of Security Studies, which provides four different scenarios for Africa in the next 30 years.[19] I use the best-case scenario in the development of GDP per capita in gauging prospects for collective security and economic cooperation implementation.[20] In assessing prospects for the RECs, I use the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and UN Conference on Trade and Development indices of intraregional trade.[21] Finally, I assess the prospects for the development of rivalries within the subregions, using structural realist and constructivist approaches, gauging how changing power dynamics and rivalries in a region shape behavior.[22]

Regions with high GDP per capita have governments with relatively more revenues to spend on foreign policy agency implementation (free trade areas [FTA], customs unions and monetary unions, and collective security structures and operations). Furthermore, regions with high GDP per capita usually have diversified economies (manufacturing, services, and agriculture) that provide the bases for successful economic communities with FTAs and common markets. Intraregional trade increasing over time provides evidence that an economic com-

munity is successful. African GDP per capita is currently below USD 2,000 and is projected to increase to USD 3,400 by 2030 and could increase to USD 12,000 by 2050 if all goes well in the global economy and African governance reform, which holds promise for Africa and especially some RECs.[23] There is variation according to subregion, with some developing middle classes and both formal and informal trade, while others lag behind.

The more the GDPs per capita of African regions grow, the more African actors will be able to pay for organizational institutions and collective security operations. Regions with low GDPs per capita mean that small government revenues must be spent on domestic services, such as education, health care, and civil service. In contrast, GDP merely means the size of population that can be mobilized for war. For example, Nigeria has the largest GDP in Africa but one of the lowest GDPs per capita, with the result that the government funds the military only enough so that units must remain focused on maintaining internal security and are excessively operational. Over time and in general, the longer that African states exist, the more nation-states, nationalism, and legitimacy grow—GDP per capita will become more important as a measure of state power replacing legitimacy.[24] One caveat is that regions with middle income GDPs per capita and intense rivalries (e.g., Morocco and Algeria) can cause the development of modern militaries that can fight interstate wars.

Regional Economic Communities

Since the 1960s, African leaders and states have demonstrated collective agency in founding RECs to promote trade and development through FTAs, customs unions, and common markets. Successful economic communities have had a relatively high GDP per capita, industrialization and trade in finished goods and services. For example, Western Europe was already industrialized with a relatively high GDP per capita after the World War II; the ending of the Franco-German rivalry opened the door to a common market and an eventual monetary union.[25] The defeat of Germany in 1945 enabled France to tie Germany's dominant economy to European cooperation, which placed constraints on the German economy. Today, trade among EU countries accounts for more than 40 percent of total EU trade.[26] Another success story that is more relevant to African RECs has been the ASEAN FTA, which has helped to boost intra-ASEAN trade since 2008 from 14 percent to 24 percent of total trade. ASEAN has a USD 14,000 GDP per capita, and members include several newly industrializing countries that have driven the jump in trade. MERCOSUR has been a moderately successful REC; from 1990 to 2000, intra-MERCOSUR trade jumped from USD 4 billion per year to more than USD 40 billion. However, due to protectionist barriers by Ar-

gentina, Uruguay, and Chile against Brazil's large economy and exports, intra-MERCOSUR trade was only 16 percent of total trade in 2010, where it has largely stayed until today.[27] MERCOSUR has a GDP per capita of more than USD 10,000—an indicator of an industrialized region, but one in which Brazil dwarfs other member states.

In addition, the EU advanced beyond a successful common market (with the elimination of tariffs and nontariff barriers and the free movement of labor) toward a monetary union with the introduction of the Euro in 1999. However, the EU's experience after the 2008 Great Recession demonstrates the perils of managing a monetary union as long as member states pursue different macroeconomic and budgetary policies. Given the European experience, African RECs should be cautious in attempting to develop monetary unions.

If Africa industrializes, the middle class grows, and GDP per capita rises according to the previously stated projections, economic cooperation will develop and help boost economic growth. Intraregional trade has grown in absolute terms since 2000, though the percentage of total trade has remained at 11 percent.[28] African RECs and FTAs have not significantly boosted intra-African trade.[29] Dependency on exports to Europe, Asia, and the Americas remains a structural barrier to intraregional trade, as does underdeveloped intraregional infrastructure, weak governance, and poor incentives for domestic industrial investment, and tariff and nontariff barriers. Far more manufactured goods and services continue to be traded in Europe and ASEAN in comparison to Africa. The continent produces many raw materials and food that do not bring much added value. These structural barriers must be overcome in order for the RECs to be successful.

The UNECA has ranked the RECs in order of integration with an index consisting of regional trade integration, "productive integration," financial and monetary integration, infrastructure, and free movement of people. UNECA ranks the EAC and SADC the highest, followed by ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), with COMESA and Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) at the bottom.[30] North Africa is the subregion that has the best chance of industrializing and reaching more than USD 12,000 GDP per capita by 2050, with Egypt having the best prospects for industrialization. However, the rivalry between Morocco and Algeria will continue to hamper regional economic integration. Another problem is that Algeria and Libya remain oil and gas exporters to Europe and other locations and are not oriented toward intraregional trade.

EAC member states—Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda—have developed and are implementing an FTA and customs union, which have significantly boosted intraregional trade over the past decade, even

though regional GDP per capita is only USD 1,000. The EAC was resurrected only in 1999 but has benefited from its previous existence from 1963–1977 and infrastructure that tied Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda together. As landlocked states, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi have the incentive to lower trade barriers with Kenya and Tanzania to export their goods to Europe and Asia, and Chinese investment is spurring on much of the integration-fostering infrastructure improvements that are taking place within the EAC, which is a prime example of external power involvement in REC development. . Furthermore, Kenya and Rwanda are two dynamic industrializing economies that help drive the region. However, the EAC has a long way to go toward high levels of intraregional trade and middle income economies.[31]

(US Army photo by 1LT Ian B. Shay)

Figure 2. Exercise Shared Accord 19. A "Women, Peace and Security Conflict" panel was conducted during the Shared Accord 2019, Gabiro, Rwanda, 16 August 2019. The panel was composed of female African partner servicemembers from Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. They discussed the importance of women in peacekeeping operations in Africa and the role they play in child protection. Shared Accord 2019 focuses on bringing together US and Rwandan forces, African partner militaries, allies, and international organizations to increase readiness, interoperability, and partnership building among participating nations for peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic.

The SADC—comprised of Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—has

prospects for becoming a successful REC, with intraregional trade already standing at 15 percent of total trade and constituting more than half Africa's total intraregional trade.[32] South Africa is already an industrial economy with a GDP per capita above USD 6,000 and a substantial middle class; however, economic growth has been sluggish in the past decade. The most-developed infrastructure (roads, railways, airways, and seaways) in Africa ties much of the region together. Total GDP per capita is above USD 4,000 per capita and is expected to grow to more than USD 6,000 by 2030. However, this does not guarantee successful regional integration in Southern Africa, especially since South Africa's economy dwarfs those of other member states and the SADC's unipolar structure has resulted in protectionist tendencies, as in the case of Brazil and MERCOSUR. South Africa has dominated the South African Customs Union since its inception in 1910 and the economies of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Eswatini,[33] which provides a negative example to other SADC member states and made the development of a wider SADC customs union difficult. In 2008, SADC member states agreed on an FTA but delayed implementation.

Instead of implementing the SADC FTA, the member states sought to become part of a larger FTA—COMESA and, in 2019, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). However, COMESA has fallen short of creating a customs union or common market and has failed to significantly boost intraregional trade in comparison with a smaller FTA, such as the EAC with its customs union.[34] Also, bilateral agreements with the EU provide a disincentive to the SADC FTA.[35] As a result, intra-SADC trade has remained at 15 percent of total trade, which is largely what it was in 2008.[36]

African leaders and technocrats created ECOWAS in 1975 with the goal of emulating the European Economic Community in promoting free trade and economic growth. However, ECOWAS struggled to promote such growth in subregional trade due to dependency on Europe, poor intraregional infrastructure, and a lack of trade in manufactured goods and services.[37] In 2019, intra-ECOWAS trade still consists mostly of staple foods.[38] While ECOWAS has created an FTA and customs union and has been successful in lowering tariff barriers, quotas, bans, and tariffs remain in place that stymie intraregional trade, especially affecting food products.[39] Part of the problem is that ECOWAS member states lack the capacity to implement regional commitments for trade liberalization. There is also a lack of knowledge on the part of officials and traders about ECOWAS rules, and there is a weak monitoring mechanism. On a more positive note, there has been increased trade in services, and a 2017 Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development and West Africa Club study of cross-border cooperation and

policy networks notes the growing potential for intraregional trade, especially with the mushrooming of informal cross-border marketing networks.[40]

ECOWAS has planned to introduce a common currency to facilitate intraregional trade and investment. However, some member states' leaders cannot afford to let go of the control of their currencies and allow the free flow of goods. Another disincentive has been the Communaute francaise d'Afrique (CFA) common currency used by eight West African countries, guaranteed by the French treasury and pegged to the Euro as well as the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA). Francophone states remain reluctant to abandon the financial stability provided by the CFA and UEMOA, even though they could gain greater monetary control with an ECOWAS currency. Similarly, the ECCAS suffers from a weak economic power structure (low GDP/capita and little interstate trade) and poor governance. ECCAS is centered on the Communauté *économique* et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (CEMAC), which like UEMOA in West Africa is a customs and monetary union imposed by the former colonial power (France) and continues to be influenced by France. Both CEMAC and UEMOA lack the autonomy of a successful FTA customs union that generates a much greater volume of trade and has complete autonomy. Finally, there are still barriers to cross-border trade within UEMOA and CEMAC.

In sum, African foreign policy agency in promoting regional economic cooperation has been impressive, but implementation has been weak. Most recently, African leaders and states have founded the AfCFTA, which came into effect in May 2019. Landry Signe and Colette van der Ven predict that AfCFTA could boost intra-African trade from less than 12 percent of total African trade to 25 percent.[41] However, regional political and economic structural weakness with poor infrastructure, agriculture-centered economies, and low intraregional trade will hamper the progress of AfCFTA and most of the RECs.[42] Also, bipolar rivalry in North Africa and unipolar dominance in Southern Africa are impediments to progress. However, the ASEAN FTA shows the way forward, with member states sublimating their differences through dialogue and compromise and taking advantage of industrialization to greatly expand intraregional trade and development.

Limited Implementation of African Foreign Policy Agency in Collective Security

In the area of collective security, African leaders and states have shown considerable agency at creating organizations, such as the AU-based African Peace Facility (APF), African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and ASF. These actors have made gains in moving toward "African solutions to African problems."

AMISOM has been Africa's greatest collective security accomplishment, rolling back al-Shabaab and enabling the establishment of a Somali government.[43] In addition, African collective security initiatives have led to brief peace support operations by the AU and subregional organizations that have given way to better-resourced UN missions.[44]

NATO—a collective security organization—does not depend on outside states or organizations for sustainment, peacekeeping, stabilization operations, or solving alliance problems. All member states have a high enough GDP per capita that enables them to fund the organization according to an agreed cost-sharing formula, even though many struggle to attain the required two percent of GDP per capita in defense spending. All member states that volunteer for peacekeeping or stabilization operations are able to pay their own way and provide their own equipment and training. In regard to the UN peacekeeping budget and peacekeeping operations, richer UN member states provide funding, and some developed countries provide their own troops for operations without reliance on the peacekeeping fund.[45]

In contrast to NATO, AU member states with low GDPs per capita and lack of resources have been unable to fully fund the AU Commission and APF. External donors pay more than 60 percent of the AU budget and fund more than 90 percent of AU peace operations. For example, the EU has provided more than USD 3 billion to the APF since 2004.[46] Recognizing that the EU and external actors expect African solutions, Pres. Paul Kagame of Rwanda proposed a .02-percent tax on African member states' eligible exports in order for Africa to pay for 25 percent of peace support operations; however, his proposal has lost momentum since he stepped down as AU chair in January 2019.[47]

The foreign policy agency of South Africa and other AU member states led to agreement in 2003 on the concept of an ASF as part of APSA, with full operational status planned for December 2015. The ambitious concept called for 15,000 troops in five subregional brigades with the ability to deploy to peace support operations and even intervene to stop genocide. However, there has been limited implementation, with the SADC brigade engaging in regular joint exercises and with part of the ASF undertaking two joint exercises. The problem has been a lack of resources (reflected in low GDP per capita) in maintaining forces from roughly 50 African militaries on standby. The EU has provided much of the funding for the ASF through the APF.[48] Given the slow development of the ASF and new and more challenging conflicts, such as efforts by violent extremist organizations (VEO) to seize control of Mali, South Africa and a dozen other African states created the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) in 2013, which was funded by the EU APF.[49] However, ACIRC has been as resource-

challenged as the ASF. In comparison, even NATO countries have had a difficult time with developing and maintaining rapid reaction and standby forces. In addition, sovereignty stymied AU intervention in conflicts to prevent genocide, specifically in Burundi in 2015 to stop Pres. Pierre Nkurunziza from carrying out ethnic cleansing against opponents of his efforts to defy constitutional term limits. AMISOM exemplifies a more realistic approach than the ASF and ACIRC, as the EU, US, and UN have provided the resources to fund, train, and equip African forces to be deployed to a specific mission and to sustain them.

While Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and other African countries have provided the troops and have fought al-Shabaab, AMISOM would have been impossible without external support. The EU has been paying AMISOM troops more than USD 1,000 per month since 2007.[50] The UN provides logistical support for AMISOM, 70 civilian personnel, the more than 10,000 strong Somalia National Army, and the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).[51] The United States has provided more than USD 1 billion to support AMISOM and troop contributors with equipment, logistics, advisory support, and training since 2007, and US Africa Command has provided multinational training for AMISOM troop contributors and other forces.[52] While the AU has been unable to pay for AMISOM, it proved superior to the Horn of Africa's Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which was unable to provide even basic financial and administrative support and faced opposition from the Somalia Transitional Federal Government.[53]

The EU also uses the APF to fund subregional collective security structures and operations, specifically those of ECOWAS and ECCAS.[54] In the 1990s, the Abacha military dictatorship in Nigeria was willing to spend billions of dollars and deploy large forces to lead ECOWAS in stopping civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone to demonstrate Nigerian power and seek international legitimacy. However, after Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, strong public opposition to high levels of spending on external operations and a large external debt compelled Abuja to cease undertaking large-scale peace operations. Also, While ECOWAS has scored successes in Gambia in 2016–2017 in installing a duly elected president and in Liberia in 2003 to remove Charles Taylor, the organization has lacked the resources and forces to tackle larger security challenges. For example, ECOWAS troops deployed to Côte d'Ivoire in 2003 but were dependent upon 4,000 French troops, were unable to sustain themselves, and became part of a UN force (UNOCI) in 2004. In 2013, ECOWAS deployed 1,400 African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) troops to Mali in 2013 to help stop the advance of a major VEO insurgency and again was dependent on French troops that defeated the VEOs. In 2013, the UN took control

of the peace support operation with MINUSMA subsuming AFISMA. In Central African Republic, ECCAS intervened in 2013 to stop a civil war but was dependent on French troops and gave way to the AU and finally to a UN operations (MINUSCA).

External funding and support has also been essential for the Multinational Joint Task Force–Lake Chad Region in which two Central African states—Chad and Cameroon—came to the aid of Nigeria, which had been unable to counter Boko Haram and Islamic State–West Africa in the northeast of the country. Also, the G5 Sahel force that is being developed to replace French counterterrorist troops and that includes ECOWAS (Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali), ECCAS (Chad), and AMU (Mauritania) countries is dependent on France and the United States.

African states and organizations have demonstrated foreign policy agency in creating structures and acting to resolve many of their security problems. However, they must seek substantial external assistance to deal with major internal conflicts and natural disasters. Similarly, African RECs have yet to fulfill their promise. It will be a decade or two before African states develop and industrialize to the point that they will have the resources to pay their own way for collective security and generate intraregional trade and development. The hard reality of poor and weak states limits African solutions to African problems.

Subregional Structure and Variation in Agency

The ending of regional power rivalry is a necessary condition for the emergence of cooperation. European cooperation only blossomed when the rivalry between Germany and France ended after World War II, leading to the EU. The end of military dictatorship in Argentina and Brazil ended their rivalry and opened the door to MERCOSUR. The establishment of ASEAN came after Indonesia and Malaysia overcame their rivalry and adhered to the principle of dialogue and the "ASEAN way," replacing confrontation. Similar transformation is necessary in each of the following African contexts.

North Africa

Morocco and Algeria are two of the strongest states in Africa. The former has a GDP per capita of more than USD 9,000 and the latter more than USD 16,000, and both have developed two of the strongest militaries in Africa, with relatively high defense spending due to strong military influence.[55] They also have legitimacy—Morocco as a longstanding kingdom and Algeria with the National Liberation Front, which liberated the country from French rule and became the basis for a strong military.[56] While there is the basis for considerable economic and

security cooperation, the two countries have confronted each other since the "Sand War" in 1963 and especially since 1975 over the status of Western Sahara, which has led to an intense bipolar rivalry that has prevented subregional cooperation and led to moribund subregional organization and an absence of foreign policy agency. International mediation brought a peace agreement on Western Sahara in 1989, and a UN peacekeeping mission (MINURSO) in 1992 brought a thaw in Morocco–Algeria relations and led the two countries plus Libya, Tunisia, and Mauritania to form the AMU in 1989 to promote free trade. With the founding of the AU and the ASF, the AMU was designated as the lead organization in developing the North African brigade of the ASF in 2004. However, by 1994, Morocco and Algeria were again at loggerheads, and Libyan leader Mu'ammar Gadhafi opined that the AMU deserved to "be in the freezer."[57] As a result of the Morocco–Algeria standoff, the AMU failed in the economic and security sectors.[58]

The explanation for the failure of the AMU is partly a constructivist one and originated in the countries' differing conceptions of the Maghreb.[59] The Moroccan empire once encompassed Western Sahara and much of present-day Algeria and Mauritania, whereas Algeria rejected imperialism and promoted revolutionary nation-states. These clashing conceptions culminated in the 1975 Western Sahara dispute. Rabat saw Algeria's efforts to support the Sahrawi Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro (POLISARIO) liberation movement in creating an independent Western Sahara as an assault on Moroccan sovereignty, while Algerian leaders viewed Morocco's seizure of Western Sahara in 1975 as thwarting a fraternal liberation movement and Saharawi national self-determination. In addition, the 1963 war and conflict of the late 1970s led both sides into a security dilemma in which they armed themselves with advanced weaponry to prepare for war. In addition, Colonel Gadhafi wanted to lead AMU and, when thwarted, abandoned the organization. During the 2011 Arab Spring, Algeria and Morocco cooperated to mitigate the spread of radicalism, but their rivalry soon resumed and endures today.[60]

Two competing conceptions of the nation-state and an intense bipolar rivalry of two industrializing countries with relatively strong militaries explain the failure of North African subregional cooperation. Whatever foreign policy agency the two states have exercised has been focused on trying to win over other African states to their respective positions. The North African subregional structure resembles the South Asian one, with the intense rivalry between India and Pakistan that has prevented the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and other forms of regional cooperation from developing. In contrast, MERCOCUR,

EU, and ASEAN have been able to overcome such rivalries and establish functioning regional cooperation structures.

Southern Africa

With a unipolar system and no serious rivals, South Africa provides foreign policy agency and resources (with bandwagoning by most states and occasional soft balancing by Zimbabwe and Angola) in SADC. South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) exercised foreign policy agency in leading resistance to apartheid South Africa from the 1950s to 1994, which established legitimacy once it assumed power in 1994. Also, liberation movements and "front line states" exhibited foreign policy agency in engaging with the Non-aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity, producing Pan-Africanist solidarity. After the democratic transition in 1994, South Africa did not face a major adversary in the subregion and was by far the largest economy in the region. Under the leadership of Pres. Thabo Mbeki, 1999–2008, South Africa led the way in promulgating the "African renaissance" and the AU.

South African leadership and soft power and the prospect of increased aid and investment were attractive to many African leaders and states. However, a number of leaders and states resisted South African leadership. Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe pushed back against Nelson Mandela's and Mbeki's attempts to assume a dominant role in SADC, against Mandela's disapproval of Zimbabwe's 1998 intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) "in the name of SADC," and against Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" to end the crisis that gripped Zimbabwe from 2000 onward. Angola's Eduardo dos Santos also resisted South African efforts to bring a negotiated end to his country's civil war in the 1990s and the 1998 intervention in the DRC. Resistance also came from autocratic leaders who were fearful of South Africa's promotion of free market democracy and the right to intervene to stop massive human rights abuses, as occurred in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In 2008, President Mbeki mediated in the conflict between the rising Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and declining President Mugabe and ZANU-PF. His reluctance to strongly negotiate with Mugabe led to massive human rights abuses by Mugabe's security forces and the blunting of MDC electoral victories. In the 2010s, South Africa, under Jacob Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa, became more internally focused and less assertive in SADC and the AU.

West Africa

West Africa features moderately weak states that have overcome rivalries to exercise foreign policy agency in ECOWAS. This subregion was important because of its closeness to the diaspora in the Americas and Europe. Foreign policy agency by Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah and others propelled the Pan-Africanist movement in the 1950s and early 1960s and sought to bring down French neocolonialism and create African unity. Nkrumah was the major agent of change and was able to use his base in Ghana to fight neocolonialism and attempt to create a United States of Africa. The rivalry between Ghana and Nigeria and former French colonies shaped foreign policies in the 1960s.

In the 1970s, the disintegration of the Pan-Africanist movement and Nigerian foreign policy agency and use of its oil wealth led to rapprochement with France and UEMOA states and the establishment of ECOWAS. While rivalries remained, francophone states did not feel threatened by a weak and fractured Nigeria and agency could flow. Gadhafi's threat to Chad in 1980 helped generate agency in the formation of an ECOWAS mutual defense pact in 1981. After the reestablishment of civilian rule in Nigeria in 1999, the country's role in leading ECOWAS increased. Nigeria's controversial leadership in peace operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s gave way to foreign policy agency in helping to institutionalize ECOWAS and its Peace and Security Council in the 2000s and participating in a successful peace support operation in Sierra Leone, from 2000–2003 and leading one in Liberia in 2003.

Eastern Africa

East Africa features a longstanding engagement with Egypt and the Arab world and a moderately weak, multipolar structure. Kenya and Ethiopia are somewhat contentious anchor states, and Rwanda has rivalries with Uganda and Burundi. The rivalry between Kenya and Ethiopia for regional leadership as well as negative foreign policy agency by Sudan and Eritrea have helped to limit IGAD and divide responsibility for leadership of the East African Brigade of the ASF between the two countries; however, the rivalry has remained confined to the diplomatic realm. In the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has dominated as one of the most legitimate nation-states in Africa, though its nine major nationalities also cause instability. Ethiopia and Kenya led in the development of IGAD, which is not a neocolonial organization but remains weak.[61] Kenyan foreign policy agency in IGAD led to peace settlements in Sudan in 2005 and Somalia in 2004.

An ideological and personal rivalry between the leaders of Kenya and Tanzania led to the collapse of the EAC in 1977; however, the organization reemerged in

1999. EAC member states have not invited Ethiopia to join, though they did invite South Sudan. However, the EAC was able to revive previous economic structures and overcome leadership differences in forging a fairly successful REC.

Central Africa

Central Africa features weak, personalist states with the lowest nation-state legitimacy and energy and mineral exporters suffering the "resource curse." French hegemony and weak states led by dictators helped produce more personalist, neocolonial foreign policies that have degenerated into "big man" solidarity and mechanisms for strong man survival under anarchy. As a result, there has been less foreign policy agency in Central Africa than in any other subregion and the development of weak subregional organizations (ECCAS and CEMAC). Feeble and degraded states in the DRC and Central African Republic have focused the attention of the other Central African states on stabilization, which prevents progress on economic cooperation and collective security initiatives, such as the ASF.

Conclusion

Africa will continue to exercise impressive foreign policy agency, but it will take decades before the vision of African solutions to African problems will be achieved. Structural realism and power provide part of the explanation for agency and its limitations in African foreign policies. Weak economic structures explain the inability of the RECs to produce ASEAN-level intraregional trade and economic development. A majority of states with low GDPs per capita are unable to fund collective security organizations, structures, and peace support operations. A bipolar rivalry between two relatively developed North African states has stymied regional foreign policy agency and the development of the AMU. Also, constructivism is significant in explaining the strong rivalry between a state based upon the remnants of empire and a new state based upon a revolution. A region with a unipolar economic structure has stymied the development of an FTA and customs union. In sum, Regional Security Complex Theory (which draws significantly from constructivism and neorealism) is a suitable lens through which to examine security dynamics in Africa. Strong African foreign policy agency with weak implementation leads to the question of whether African states and organizations overreach and waste resources in creating weak RECs and collective security structures and operations and standby forces. Some contend that Africa should not waste energy and resources on initiatives that require considerable external funding and that still perform in a suboptimal manner. Instead, African states should take an incremental approach in building their economies and cross-

border cooperation and training and equipping of troops to essential peace support operations that are not too taxing. The growth in the African service sector with mobile phone banking and the growing Internet availability hold out hope for accelerated economic growth. At least most regions do not have the problem that North Africa and the AMU have with two relatively strong and legitimate rival states that do not cooperate, leading to a moribund regional organization.

Dr. Stephen F. Burgess

Dr. Burgess has been a professor of international security studies at US Air War College since June 1999. He has published books and numerous articles, book chapters, and monographs on Asian and African security issues, peace and stability operations, and weapons of mass destruction. His books include *The United Nations under Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1992-97* and *South Africa's Weapons of Mass Destruction*. His recent journal articles include "Russia, South Asia, and the United States: A New Great Game?," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 3 (Fall 2019); "A Pathway toward Enhancing the US Air Force–Indian Air Force Partnership and Deterrence in the Indo-Pacific Region," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2019); "Multilateral Defense Cooperation in the Indo-Asia-Pacific Region: Tentative Steps toward a Regional NATO?" *Contemporary Security Policy* (December 2017); "Rising Bipolarity in the South China Sea: The Impact of the US Rebalance to Asia on China's Expansion," *Contemporary Security Policy* 37, no. 1 (April 2016); and "The US Pivot to Asia and Renewal of the US-India Strategic Partnership," *Comparative Strategy* 34, no. 44 (July 2015). He holds a doctorate from Michigan State University (1992) and has been on the faculty at the University of Zambia, University of Zimbabwe, Vanderbilt University, and Hofstra University.

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FEATURE

Two Distant Giants

China and Nigeria Perceive Each Other

Steven F. Jackson

Abstract

This article examines the relationship between the giant of Asia, China, and the giant of Africa, Nigeria, and the ways these two countries interact with each other. For much of the early period from 1960–2000, there was little relationship. Furthermore, this relationship does not follow the most common Western narrative of "China in Africa": that China is looking to Africa purely for natural resources, especially energy, and does not care about other aspects of Africa. In fact, Chinese oil imports from Nigeria are fairly modest, and Beijing's overall imports from Nigeria are only one-eighth of China's exports to Nigeria, which have been growing primarily in consumer goods. China has invested over USD 2.6 billion in Nigeria in recent years, and thousands of Chinese have gone there either as tourists, merchants, or construction engineers. It is also noteworthy that there is a large Nigerian migrant community in China, primarily in Guangzhou. Thus, both countries view each other as important; by examining public opinion surveys, popular media, newspaper accounts and editorials, this article will reveal that the relationship is much more complex than the simplistic idea of "resource diplomacy."

Introduction

Nigeria is an important country, the largest in Africa. China is an important country, the largest in Asia and the world. However, it is only recently that the two countries have begun to establish a significant relationship. Nigeria and China are two regional giants, yet distant. And their relationship has been less than one might expect for two large developing nations for a variety of reasons: history, missed opportunities, and rival relationships. That appears to be changing, but it remains to be seen whether the momentum of the ties currently being built will be sustained.

In foreign policy analysis, it is a fairly straightforward process to explain poor bilateral relations; there are often a multitude of contributing factors. Explaining deep and warm relations also has multiple aspects that contribute to good ties and which prevent minor irritants from festering. Explaining nonrelations between two countries that are distant and small is not challenging either. However, explaining the relationship between China and Nigeria and why that relationship

has been so insignificant for so long is a challenge; there are a number of factors that would lead one to believe this ought to have been a much more significant relationship than it was for the first 50 years. This article will examine relations between the two countries from the perspective of diplomatic relations, security relations, economic relations, and social relations, and then see how Nigerian and Chinese media and popular opinion view the relationship.

Diplomatic Relations

Early Period

Nigeria and China share a national day: 1 October. For the first 11 years following Nigerian independence, this was about all that the two countries had in common, and in contrast to the relatively good relations China had with Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana, Mali, and Sudan in the 1960s, China's interactions with Nigeria did not start off well and remained chilly or indifferent for decades.

When Nigeria became independent on 1 October 1960, its prime minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was unlikely to be friendly to the communists in China, who were then in the eleventh year in power. Balewa and the Nigerian government were conservative, democratic, pro-Western, and somewhat hostile toward China's few diplomatic contacts in West Africa, such as Ghana's president Kwame Nkrumah and Guinea's Ahmed Sékou Touré.[1] A Nigerian economic delegation led by Federal Minister of Finance Festus Okotie-eboh visited Beijing in June 1961, but nothing came of the venture, which was rejected by the Nigerian side.[2]

Two simultaneous events would make the (non-) relationship of Beijing and Lagos even worse: the Nigerian Civil War (1967–70) and the Cultural Revolution in China (1966–76). China split ideologically from the Soviet Union in 1963 and began to increasingly support extreme leftist organizations around the world that opposed both the Soviets and the United States. In Africa, this meant backing a variety of small, marginal groups that opposed colonialism and supported Maoism.[3] In the case of Nigeria, once the Soviets announced their support for the Nigerian federal government in opposition to the secessionist Biafran Republic, China started to support the rebels, beginning in Autumn 1968.[4] Beijing did not officially recognize Biafra, even though two of China's closest East African partners—Tanzania and Zambia, for whom it was building the TAZARA railway—did recognize it, but the reasoning laid out in April 1968 by Tanzania's president Julius Nyerere had nothing to do with anti-Soviet sentiment but rather with the humanitarian crisis the Nigerian federal armed forces' siege of Biafra was creating.[5] After the Biafran rebellion was crushed in January 1970, however, the federal government endeavored to achieve reconciliation with countries that had backed

Biafra, including Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Tanzania, and Zambia.[6] Beijing's foreign policy also became more pragmatic, and in February 1971, the China and Nigeria officially recognized each other. In 1972, officials signed Nigerian–Chinese trade and economic cooperation agreements, and in a sign of improving relations, Nigerian head of state Yakubu Gowon visited Beijing in 1974, meeting with Mao Zedong.[7] This was a time when Nigeria was flush with oil money, had an active foreign policy in Africa, and even had a modest foreign aid program of its own.[8] In short, Nigeria did not need China's arms or aid in the way Zambia and Tanzania had in the 1960s. The establishment of diplomatic relations was polite and formal but was initiated by Beijing rather than Lagos.[9] The conciliation would not last long, however. A military coup let by Generals Murtala Muhammad and Olusegun Obasanjo overthrew Gowon in July 1975; the subsequent military junta firmly backed the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA, People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) in the Angolan Civil War—a group that was also receiving Soviet and Cuban aid. China, on the other hand, was backing two other factions, the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA, National Front for the Liberation of Angola) and União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), in that civil war. Once again, Beijing and Lagos found themselves on opposite sides of key African issues, but though the relationship was tested, it was not broken. There were official visits during this period, though none higher than vice-premier level on the Chinese side until 1996: Geng Biao in October 1978, Huang Hua in November 1981, Tian Jiyun in November 1984, and Wu Xueqian in March 1990.[10]

After Beijing began market-based reforms in 1978, China's attention to Africa waned, shifting attention to the West and its neighbors in East Asia. Similarly, the Nigerian Second Republic, under its president Shehu Shagari, stepped back from the foreign policy activism of the Mohammed–Obasanjo period.[11] Xinhua News Agency cut its Africa budget and the number of correspondents in the continent declined from 72 in 1979 to 48 in 1984.[12] China's trade with Nigeria did not exceed USD 100 million until 1993 and did not exceed USD 1 billion until 2001.

There were a few high-level visits in the late 1970s and some agricultural cooperation, but little else.[13] Lagos was mostly concerned with Nigeria's economic disaster of the 1980s when oil prices collapsed, and the nation was internationally isolated during the brutal regime of Gen Sani Abacha (1993–98). Ibrahim Babangida visited in September 1984, though this was before he took over control in Nigeria in August 1985. Abacha did visit China in October 1989 (shortly after the Tiananmen Square Massacre), though he was not yet in charge in Nigeria.

Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen visited Nigeria in January 1995 (though there is no mention of the event in his memoirs). State Councilor Luo Gan and Premier Li Peng visited in September 1996 and May 1997, respectively. The Abacha regime did hint that isolation and condemnation by the West for the 1995 execution of Ogani activist Ken Saro-Wiwa would force Nigeria to turn to other sources of trade and arms, including China, but little came of the threat, and Turkey and Iran were much more active in shielding the government in Abuja (the new seat of the Nigerian government) during this period than China.[14] And Beijing, in the aftermath of its diplomatic isolation following the June 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, had no incentive to align itself with other pariah regimes; the main focus of China's diplomatic initiative of the early 1990s was directed at East Asia in its "Good Neighbor Policy."

General Abacha's Defense Chief of Staff, Gen Abdulsalam Abubakar, visited China in August 1997, but this was one of the few official visits between the two countries. General Abubakar soon rose to greater heights in Nigeria, assuming the reins of government and quickly ushering in democratization in 1999 after the sudden death of General Abacha in 1998. Thus, in the four decades between Nigeria's independence in 1960 to 2000, these two giants managed only the bare minimum of relations. That would begin to change on the eve of the twenty-first century.

The Twenty-first Century

China's rapid growth of the 1980s and 1990s soon paled in comparison to its economic expansion in the twenty-first century, and with the increase of China's economic size came an increase in Beijing's diplomatic footprint around the world, and quite notably in Africa. The starting point was 2000, with the hosting of the first Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC, 中非合作论坛/ *Zhōng Fēi hézuò lùntán*), a triennial meeting held alternately in China and an African hosting nation. The third meeting in Beijing in November 2006 was particularly noteworthy, with 35 African heads of state and government in attendance, including Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo.[15] It was also a meeting that grabbed attention in the West regarding China's diplomatic initiatives in Africa.

Although Nigeria has actively participated in the FOCAC meetings, Abuja has increasingly seen high-level visits as a primary mechanism for relations with other major countries, including China.[16] President Obasanjo made the first state visit to China in 1999 (although China had treated Gowon's 1974 visit as such).[17] Obasanjo returned in 2001, Jiang Zemin visited Nigeria in April 2002 (China's first state visit there), Obasanjo returned to China in 2005, and Hu Jintao and Obasanjo both exchanged visits in 2006. Nigerian president Umaru Yar'Adua visited China in 2008. His successor, Goodluck Jonathan visited in 2013, and the

next president, Muhammadu Buhari, visited China in 2016 and again in 2018 as part of the FOCAC meeting. In contrast, three US presidents have visited Nigeria: Carter in April 1978, Clinton in August 2000, and George W. Bush in July 2003 (all three met with President Obasanjo). Nigerian presidents have made 19 visits to America, though many have been "working visits" or side visits at international summits.

South Africa as Competitor

Nigeria's sudden and welcome democratization in 1999 was the second piece of good news coming out of sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s that captured world attention. The final advent of majority rule in South Africa and the election of Nelson Mandela as president in 1994 was welcomed throughout Africa, and especially in Nigeria, which had promoted the elimination of white minority rule since the mid-1970s as an "honorary front-line state" in the fight against colonialism and apartheid.[18] Indeed, for much of the 1970s and 1980s, Nigeria saw itself, with its size and oil wealth, as the first among equals of African states and formally articulated a policy of "Continental Jurisdiction" not unlike the US Monroe Doctrine. As Olayiwola Abegunrin, professor of international relations, summarized, "Nigeria's belief in the philosophy of continental jurisdiction was intended to exclude any non-African nations from exercising influence on or interfering in the African continent."[19] However, once South Africa became democratic, Nigeria found itself with a competitor for the mantle of "Africa's leader," and the Abacha regime's execution of dissidents in 1995—against Nelson Mandela's public calls not to do so—meant that Nigeria's leadership capability was only reestablished in May 1999 when it, too, returned to democracy under the Fourth Republic and its president, Olusegun Obasanjo.

By the twenty-first century, Nigeria and South Africa had become rivals for prestige, influence, and primacy for sub-Saharan Africa, something of which Chinese analysts were acutely aware.[20] For China (and other external powers), this means a delicate balance of honoring both countries and trying to stay neutral when Pretoria and Abuja competed for the prestige of selection for major international bodies, such as the African Union. South Africa's Thabo Mbeki was the organization's first chair, Obasanjo the third, and South Africa will assume the chair again in 2020 under Cyril Ramaphosa. Time and again, Nigeria has lost to South Africa, such as when the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) decided to add an African member in late 2010, inviting South Africa to join in 2011.[21] China is arguably the major advocate for the BRICS and for South Africa's inclusion. As Bruce Jones states, "In global negotiations at the IMF [International Monetary Fund], in the UN climate process, and at the UN, the United

States and the West still have huge institutional advantages, so it is only together that members of the BRICS can challenge current governance arrangements," hence, China " . . . spends a great deal of diplomatic energy and finance shoring up the BRICS process."[22] China did, however, support the proposal for Nigeria to get a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2015, something Nigerians greatly appreciated and that cost China very little, since it has supported other large developing countries' inclusion in the UNSC as well.

Another key compliment China paid to the giant African country was designating Nigeria a "strategic partner." Most of China's strategic partners (战略伙伴关系/ *Zhànlüè huǒbàn guānxì*) are in Asia, where almost all China's neighbors (with the notable exception of Japan) are designated as partners of some sort. Nigeria was the first African state to be designated as a strategic partner, though earning such distinction took some time. The official yearbook of China's Foreign Ministry, *China's Foreign Relations*, stated in 2006 that Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing met with Nigerian Foreign Minister Oluyemi Adeniji and signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the establishment of a strategic partnership based on talks between Presidents Hu Jintao and Olusegun Obasanjo in the former's state visit to Nigeria in April.[23] Nigeria's next president appears to have been a bit hesitant in accepting this distinction, and although President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007–10) did make a state visit to China in early 2008, the joint communique from the meeting indicated only that the two sides "agreed to launch a strategic dialogue at an appropriate time."[24] The strategic partnership was not fully implemented until Goodluck Jonathan assumed office in early 2010, following a visit by Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.[25] Of course, South Africa became a strategic partner of China not long afterward, as Chinese diplomats tried to make sure the two most prominent states in Africa were kept on the same level. However, a hint of hierarchy can be found, when South African president Jacob Zuma visited Beijing in August 2010 for a state visit, Beijing elevated the South African strategic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership—one level up in China's partnership hierarchy. Furthermore, then–Vice President Xi Jinping (in effect, president-designate) visited South Africa in November 2010; now president, Xi has yet to visit Nigeria.[26]

Nigeria has also been supportive of China's policies. One of the standard issues that China brings up in its discussions with other countries is the "One China Policy" directed against Taiwanese independence.[27] Nigeria has consistently supported Beijing's position on this matter, and given the history of the Biafran efforts to secede from Nigeria in the late 1960s, the sentiment against separatism is probably sincere. Very recently, Nigeria joined 36 other countries in praising

China's "remarkable achievements in human rights" at a time when Western condemnation of Chinese policies toward Uighurs in Xinjiang has been mounting.[28]

If Nigeria has been well-placed at China's side on these international issues, the country's geographic placement initially left Nigeria out of one of China's biggest initiatives of the twenty-first century, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was grandly announced by Chinese president Xi Jinping in September 2013 in Astana, Kazakhstan. However, the initial idea laid out in the vaguely sweeping announcement saw the initiative connecting to Europe through the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and the Mediterranean port of Venice, Marco Polo's starting point and a romantic historical terminus.

West Africa was nowhere in sight in these plans. Once again, the distance between these two giants seemed substantial. There has in recent years been discussion of expanding the BRI elsewhere, and the acting Chinese Consul-General in Lagos said that "Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has a strategic role to play in the Belt and Road Initiative."[29] No details were given, however. Nevertheless, at the September 2018 FOCAC summit, President Buhari attended and witnessed his foreign minister sign (along with other African states) an MOU supporting the BRI. Subsequently, officials signed a number of agreements for economic assistance worth USD 60 billion for African countries, including Xi Jinping's personal support for the Mambilla hydropower project.[30] Xi's need to maintain the appearance of momentum for the BRI—a project very much identified with him personally—has meant that the initiative's geographical focus is dissipating and its promised infrastructure will go to whatever countries agree to take it and the loans to finance it. Nigeria is one of those countries.

Security Relations

Nigeria's security threats are purely internal but very substantial. Despite having a large army in terms of personnel (around 200,000), Nigeria has endured two very significant rebellions: a rebellion in the Niger River delta region and now, more ominously, the Boko Haram rebellion, most active in the northeast part of the country. Chinese analysts are well aware of Boko Haram (博科圣地/*Bókē shèngdì*), which began in 2002 in the northeastern state of Borno but has staged attacks throughout Nigeria, including the capital, Abuja.[31] Ethnic and local issues in the Niger River delta have cropped up since the 1990s. The area is the center of Nigeria's oil production, where the environmental consequences of drilling are most acute, but the revenues of oil exports are seldom reinvested in the region. Armed groups began in 2004, and kidnappings and seizures of foreign oil corporations' personnel and facilities began around 2006, along with piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. A presidential amnesty beginning in 2009 for rebels who turned them-

selves and their arms in brought the level of violence down for a while, but by 2016, a wide variety of groups had reemerged, launching fresh attacks on oil facilities.

Thus, Nigeria has been shopping for modern arms with which to fight these threats, and China has supplied some of them. In 2010, China sold 15 F-7NI fighter aircraft and trainers, along with air-to-air missiles, to Nigeria—a deal estimated to have been worth USD 251 million.[32] Beijing also sold Abuja armored personnel carriers and five CH-3 unmanned combat aerial vehicles to Nigeria. These sales are estimated in the range of USD 271 million from 2010 to 2016, representing about one-quarter of Nigerian foreign arms purchases, the largest of any single country, although sales from the United States, Italy, and Russia are also notable. The latter has supplied combat helicopters, one of the Nigerian government's primary needs for counterinsurgency operations. China also donated two P-18 1,800-ton patrol corvettes (PLAN Type 056; NATO designation *Jiangdao*) to the Nigerian Navy: the NNS *Centenary* (F91) and NNS *Unity* (F92). Given the recent rise of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, the need for such ships is substantial. During President Buhari's September 2018 visit to China and the FOCAC meeting, he held discussions with President Xi, leading to an MOU in June 2019 for Beijing to supply another USD 8.1 million in support for Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts.[33]

China's concerns for Nigeria's security are partially self-motivated. In 2007, 16 Chinese oil workers were kidnapped in the southern Niger Delta region, and the captain of a Chinese-owned (Panamanian-flagged) ship was killed in 2012, as were Chinese construction workers in Borno state, the center of the Boko Haram insurgency.[34] Four Chinese were kidnapped for ransom in 2018, and four killed in 2012–16.[35] China is also active in the broader region, contributing peacekeeping troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).[36]

Economic Relations

Trade

Nigerian trade with China has grown substantially in the twenty-first century, but such growth has not been even, equal, or as expected. Given Beijing's need for energy supplies to fuel China's economic growth, one would expect that petroleum exports from Nigeria to China would constitute the bulk of exchange between the two countries. Western reporters and scholars often reference Chinese petroleum purchases from Nigeria. Consider, for example, Chris Buckley's 2013 article, "China's New Leader Tries to Calm African Fears of His Country's Economic Power," which mentions trade with Africa in 2011, saying "Oil, ore and

other commodities from Angola, Nigeria and other resource-rich countries make up much of that trade."[37]

However, China gets very little of its oil from Nigeria. This is not to say that Beijing is uninterested in Nigerian oil, and a number of deals have been made. However, a variety of factors (discussed below) have meant that China's involvement in Nigeria has far less to do with energy development than sales of producer and especially consumer goods. These goods have fashioned a mixed legacy: for Nigerian consumers a far greater choice of goods at far cheaper prices than competitors made in Nigeria or Western countries—and for Nigerian traders, a much better volume of business.[38] However, as will be discussed below, this comes at some significant costs, which are negatives for Nigerians.

Table 1. Nigerian Foreign Trade, 2000–2018 (USD million)

Year	Imports from world	Exports to world	Imports from China	Imports from China as % world	Exports to China	Exports to China as % world
2000	$22,764	$8,183	$253	1.11%	$140	1.71%
2001	$20,854	$10,804	$527	2.53%	$127	1.18%
2002	$17,256	$12,019	$739	4.28%	$73	0.61%
2003	$25,327	$13,836	$1,067	4.21%	$123	0.89%
2004	$35,507	$15,915	$1,015	2.86%	$797	5.01%
2005	$47,590	$19,015	$1,398	2.94%	$908	4.77%
2006	$62,346	$22,143	$1,755	2.81%	$478	2.16%
2007	$71,244	$29,711	$2,349	3.30%	$926	3.12%
2008	$91,946	$42,758	$4,190	4.56%	$878	2.05%
2009	$55,088	$32,964	$3,400	6.17%	$1,547	4.69%
2010	$82,479	$36,895	$4,159	5.04%	$1,840	4.99%
2011	$114,316	$49,184	$5,717	5.00%	$2,722	5.53%
2012	$113,326	$44,366	$5,785	5.10%	$2,181	4.92%
2013	$101,795	$49,746	$7,487	7.35%	$2,658	5.34%
2014	$98,994	$53,314	$9,603	9.70%	$4,573	8.58%
2015	$55,342	$41,401	$8,483	15.33%	$2,131	5.15%
2016	$37,831	$32,066	$6,418	16.97%	$1,550	4.83%
2017	$47,788	$37,877	$7,623	15.95%	$2,782	7.35%
2018	$64,188	$43,630	$8,507	13.25%	$3,219	7.38%

Source: IMF DOTS, 2019.

The bilateral trade between China and Nigeria is heavily in China's favor, and beginning in 2013, such trade became a very substantial portion of Nigeria's overall foreign trade, with China becoming the top source of Nigerian imports.

In contrast, China's foreign trade is immense, and Nigeria plays only a tiny role in China's exports and no role whatsoever in its imports, as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Chinese foreign trade, 2000–2018 (USD million)

Year	Imports from world	Exports to world	Imports from Nigeria	Nigeria Imports as % world	Exports to Nigeria	Nigeria Exports as % world
2000	$404,119	$221,325	$293	0.07%	$564	0.25%
2001	$417,209	$227,797	$227	0.05%	$919	0.40%
2002	$486,789	$278,246	$134	0.03%	$1,047	0.38%
2003	$611,931	$386,197	$72	0.01%	$1,787	0.46%
2004	$799,118	$504,667	$463	0.06%	$1,719	0.34%
2005	$987,714	$603,624	$527	0.05%	$2,305	0.38%
2006	$1,195,410	$723,400	$278	0.02%	$2,856	0.39%
2007	$1,455,306	$859,452	$537	0.04%	$3,800	0.44%
2008	$1,674,596	$1,009,718	$510	0.03%	$6,758	0.67%
2009	$1,421,496	$914,776	$898	0.06%	$5,478	0.60%
2010	$1,810,129	$1,249,978	$1,068	0.06%	$6,695	0.54%
2011	$2,062,702	$1,528,895	$1,580	0.08%	$9,201	0.60%
2012	$2,152,993	$1,559,409	$1,266	0.06%	$9,308	0.60%
2013	$2,236,576	$1,651,145	$1,543	0.07%	$12,045	0.73%
2014	$2,373,208	$1,647,823	$2,655	0.11%	$15,449	0.94%
2015	$2,312,298	$1,442,952	$1,237	0.05%	$13,648	0.95%
2016	$2,246,791	$1,383,678	$900	0.04%	$10,326	0.75%
2017	$2,436,584	$1,663,024	$1,615	0.07%	$12,264	0.74%
2018	$2,630,278	$1,877,436	$1,869	0.07%	$13,687	0.73%

Source: IMF DOTS, 2019.

Figure 1 shows these trade data compared to Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP), calculated in constant 2010 US dollars. In effect, this is what we might expect: China's trade with any country to roughly correlate with the size of that country's economy. Thus, the scale is the percentage of China's exports to Nigeria, its imports from Nigeria as a percentage of China's worldwide trade, and the comparison (bar chart) is with Nigeria's percentage of the world's economy, which roughly peaked at 0.61 percent in 2014 and 2015 before the 2016–2017 economic

crash in Nigeria due to the drop in oil prices.[39] In looking at China's imports from Nigeria, there is a significant underperformance from what we might expect: imports from Nigeria never amounted to more than 0.11 percent of total Chinese imports, and usually quite a bit less (the mean percentage is 0.055). Exports, on the other hand, are a different story. From 2000 to 2012, exports roughly tracked the Nigerian GDP percentage: the correlation is 0.81. Beginning in 2013, however, Chinese exports to Nigeria have grown beyond the expected value, and in 2015, such exports were 0.94 percent of China's total exports. To be sure, this is not a great percentage of China's trade, and it is only in the last few years that China's exports have begun to exceed the expected value.

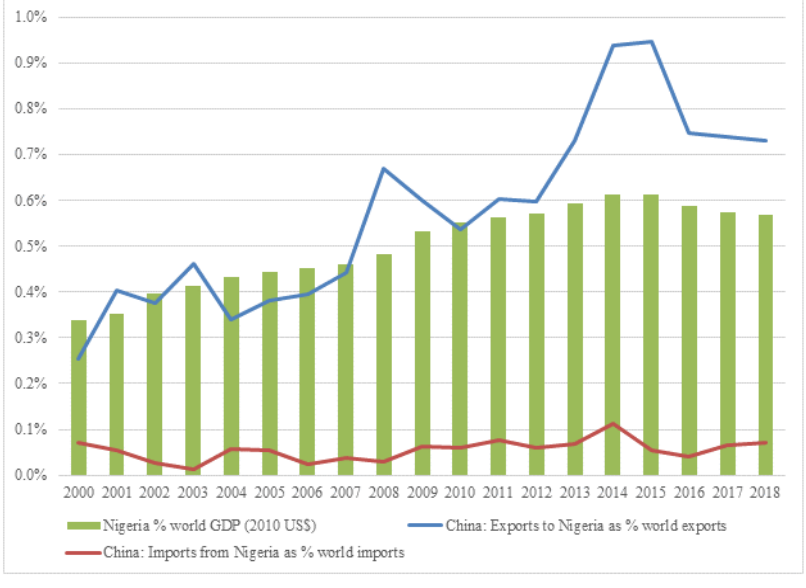

Figure 1. China: Trade with Nigeria Compared to Nigerian GDP, 2000–2018. (Source: GDP: World Bank World Development Indicators 2019; Trade: IMF DOTS 2019.)

One recent development may have a significant effect on Nigeria's foreign trade, namely the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which was negotiated beginning in 2015 and concluded in March 2018. Once 44 countries ratified the pact, it came into effect, but there were several holdouts—most notably South Africa and Nigeria. President Buhari was explicitly protectionist in his announcement: "We will not agree to anything that will undermine local manufacturers and entrepreneurs, or that may lead to Nigeria becoming a dumping ground for finished goods."[40] But by July 2019, Buhari had been persuaded to sign the pact, along with neighboring Benin.[41] Chinese commentators hailed the agreement and saw opportunities for Chinese companies. One article in the *Global Times* noted that "the AfCFTA has also created new development oppor-

tunities for Chinese companies to participate in the China–Africa economic and trade cooperation. . . . Chinese companies may consider increasing investment in such fields as manufacturing, e-commerce, and transportation infrastructure."[42]

China has become a major investor in Nigeria, but primary sector for such investment is transportation rather than petroleum. A variety of investment agreements were signed during Hu Jintao's 2006 visit to Nigeria, and during later visits, covering oil and gas, power generation, telecommunications, railways, agriculture, manufacturing, and finance.[43]

Some of the projects negotiated by Hu Jintao were curtailed by Obasanjo's successor, Pres. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, but President Jonathan negotiated others, as has his successor President Buhari. Thus, China is also building several high profile projects, many financed by China's ExIm Bank. Upgrades and a second runway at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport will be the capital city's new airport, a USD 200 million project negotiated in 2012, though delayed. The Ajaokuta–Kaduna–Kano gas pipeline is being built in cooperation with Nigerian companies, with a preliminary deal signed in late 2018. The Sagamu Independent Power Plant will be a 400-megawatt gas-fueled powerplant to be built in Ogun state, near Lagos, that could increase Nigeria's electricity by 10 percent for the cost of USD 550 million, as contracted in February 2018. And the Lekki Port will be a deepwater container port facility that will increase the Lagos area's shipping capacity and be located at the Lekki Free Trade Zone (see below).[44]

China has an advantage in infrastructure contracting in these areas, given the immense investment in domestic infrastructure in recent years and the stark contrast between China's gleaming new urban subways, airports, and train stations with the aging equivalents in the United States.[45] At the same time, there are challenges for Chinese engineering firms, as Li Wentao and Sun Hong point out:

> The international contracting market in Africa is becoming saturated as well. African countries under mounting pressure, like Nigeria, Ethiopia and Angola, have imposed more rigorous market access conditions for foreign investors. . . . Chinese companies felt a certain degree of discomfort in the face of these new circumstances. Take the engineering contract sector for example. Chinese companies have to shift from the conventional EPC (Engineering Procurement and Construction) model to BOT (Build, Operate, Transfer) or PPP (Public-Private Partnership) models. However, this transformation requires higher capabilities to deal with market risks, localization, etc. which so happen to be the weaker points of Chinese companies.[46]

The biggest Chinese projects in Nigeria are railroads—to be built in stages—that will replace some of the old, poorly maintained colonial-era narrow-gauge routes with faster, higher-capacity, standard-gauge railways. The idea of new rail-

ways in Nigeria dates to 2002, when President Obasanjo undertook a 25-year strategic vision, which was revised in 2012.[47] The main contractor is China Civil and Engineering Construction Company (CCECC), a business affiliated with China's railway ministry. The first project was to have been the Lagos–Kano route, contracted in 2006 but revised due to Nigerian finance difficulties. The Chinese firm was then contracted to the single-line Abuja–Kaduna route, which broke ground in 2011 and was completed in 2014 at a cost of USD 1.2 billion. The next project is the Lagos–Ibadan segment, a project awarded in 2014. Connecting Kano to Kaduna would be next, though the project is still under negotiation.[48] Another major standard-gauge project would be an east–west linkage from Calabar to Lagos. This USD 3.5 billion project will start at the Calabar to Port Harcourt segment, though financing is apparently still uncertain.[49]

The CCECC has also completed an urban light rail transit system, Abuja Metro, the first in West Africa. President Buhari formally opened the system in July 2018. The project was initially contracted in 2007 but delayed multiple times. The Lagos Metropolitan Area Transit Authority system is still developing slowly, with multiple changes of plans and contractors—one of them the CCECC for the Blue Line.

Petroleum is naturally where observers would expect to see a high level of Chinese involvement in Nigeria in the 1990s and 2000s. Figure 2 shows both the difficulty of Nigeria's oil production and the rise of a new petroleum giant in West Africa: Angola.

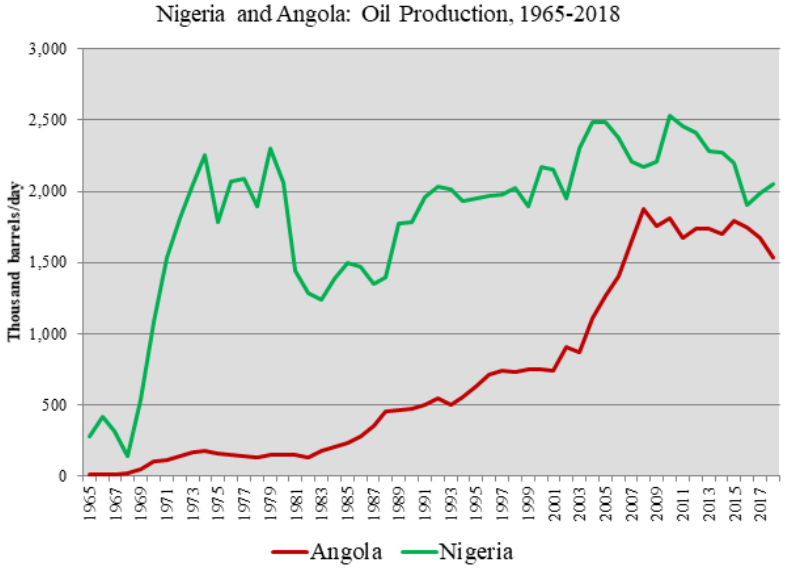

Figure 2. Nigerian and Angolan petroleum production, 1965–2018 (Source: BP 2019.)

Nigeria's oil sector already had substantial foreign investment in the early twenty-first century when China became involved, meaning that Beijing was largely shut out by firms such as Royal Dutch Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, Total, and Eni. However, in 2005, China's PetroChina (part of China National Petroleum Corporation [CNPC]), signed a USD 800 million contract for the supply of 30,000 barrels/day,[50] although that was a small fraction of Nigeria's 2005 production of 2.5 million barrels/day.[51] Subsequent deals in 2006 involved China receiving exploration and development rights in exchange for repairing the Nigerian government's refinery at Kaduna.[52] Some of these contracts were minority ownership, such as with South African Petroleum. Several of these deals, moreover, have not come to fruition, and unrest in the Niger Delta region has made investment and work there problematic.[53]

Table 3 shows China's imports of Nigerian petroleum, with Angola as a comparison. The table illustrates the inconsistent flow of petroleum from Nigeria to China and the remarkable growth of Angolan exports to China. Overall, West Africa provided China with about 15 percent of its total oil imports in 2014—mostly from Angola.

Table 3. China: Imports of Nigerian, Angolan Petroleum, 1999–2015 (100 thousand tons)

Year	Nigeria	Angola
1999	13.692	28.760
2000	11.866	86.366
2001	7.725	37.989
2002	4.879	57.051
2003	1.220	101.015
2004	14.890	162.082
2005	13.102	174.628
2006	4.519	234.520
2007	8.951	249.966
2008	3.504	298.939
2009	13.932	321.725
2010	12.910	N/A
2011	10.658	N/A
2012	9.365	N/A
2013	10.524	N/A
2014	19.964	N/A
2015	6.586	N/A

Source: Liu Mingde and Wang Meng 2017, 71; Wang Feng 2010, 9.

Nigeria has the largest reserves of petroleum in Africa, and most of the quality of that petroleum is exceptionally high, low-sulfur light crude—ideal for gasoline refining. Given that China is now the largest automobile market in the world, why is Beijing not importing from and investing in Nigeria's petroleum sector? Again, several factors are at work. As mentioned earlier, China was late to the petroleum game in Nigeria, and as two Chinese analysts have stated, "The energy companies in Europe and the United States have basically monopolized the oil industry in Nigeria . . . which has squeezed the share of China's oil imports and caused more intense competition in energy projects than before."[54] Chinese oil majors (Sinopec, CNOOC, CNPC/中石化、中海油、中石油) only secured production rights in 2002 and obtained rights to fields in 2004 (Sinopec), and in 2006, CNOOC invested USD 2.7 billion in a 45-percent stake in the ML130 field (along with South African Petroleum). Also in 2006, Sinopec invested USD 2 billion for a 51-percent stake in the Kaduna refinery and various oil fields and blocks.[55] Production in those Chinese-linked fields varied substantially, however, and as table 3 shows, as China's overall crude petroleum imports from Nigeria varied as well. And compared to other purchasers of Nigerian crude, such as the United States (40 percent), India (11 percent), Brazil (10 percent), and Indonesia (7 percent), China's position in the market was still very small. In addition, Western oil majors quickly contracted the newly developing offshore blocks, leaving little for Chinese development.[56]

The year 2009 was a difficult one for Nigeria (and much of the world) due to the global financial crisis. Ethnic and social issues in the Niger River delta region also made it very difficult for the oil corporations working there, with kidnappings of foreign petroleum personnel and a variety of rebel groups attacking facilities.[57] Chinese oil corporations continued investing, however, and Sinopec cut a 2009 deal to acquire the Canadian firm Addax Petroleum. A further deal for natural gas and the repair and management of another oil refinery was tentatively signed in June 2016.[58]

The security situation in the Niger River delta improved for a brief while after a presidential pardon from Yar'Adua to the Niger Delta rebels groups in 2009, but attacks by other groups and gangs have led many Western oil corporations to withdraw personnel and investments in Nigeria. At first glance this might appear to be an opportunity for Beijing to increase China's share of Nigerian petroleum production/exports. However, Liu Mingde and Wang Meng point out that the same security issues that have caused Western companies to rethink their presence in Nigeria have posed of similar concern to Beijing. The authors conclude that all China can do is "look at the oil and sigh."[59]

In addition, India has rapidly become Nigeria's number one customer for petroleum and indeed is now Nigeria's top export market, at over 45 percent of Nigeria's 2018 total of USD 43.6 billion. The United States remains second, and China is eighth with about 7.4 percent of Nigeria's exports.[60] Thus, China has a new competitor for influence in Nigeria, and Liu and Wang note that there is an inevitable element of competition for access to petroleum there, as well as a strategic competition, including India pushing for a permanent seat on the UNSC for Nigeria.[61]

Other forms of energy have seen periodic interest, but as with much business in Nigeria, keeping projects moving can be a challenge. A hydroelectric plant at Mambilla, on the Donga River (a tributary of the Benue River) has been in negotiations for years now among China Gezhouba Group, Sinohydro, and others. First interest was announced in April 2007, a contract signed in 2012, then canceled in 2013, and then construction announced in 2017 by China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation. That project—if it ever comes to fruition—would cost USD 5.9 billion (to be lent by China's ExIm Bank) but could increase Nigeria's electrical capacity by some 60 percent.[62]

The total amount of Chinese investment in Nigeria, however, is difficult to determine precisely. Announcements, commitments, and contracts are often publicized, but capitalization can take years, if ever, to occur. Table 4 shows the calculation of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies' China–Africa Research Initiative (SAIS–CARI), and the contrast with Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) in South Africa:

Table 4. China: FDI Stocks in Nigeria and South Africa, 2003–2017

Year	Total Stock: Nigeria (USD million)	Total Stock: South Africa (USD million)
2003	$32	$44.77
2004	$76	$58.87
2005	$94	$112.28
2006	$216	$167.62
2007	$630	$702.37
2008	$796	$3,048.62
2009	$1,026	$2,306.86
2010	$1,211	$4,152.98
2011	$1,416	$4,059.73
2012	$1,950	$4,775.07
2013	$2,146	$4,400.40
2014	$2,323	$5,954.02
2015	$2,377	$4,722.97
2016	$2,542	$6,500.84
2017	$2,862	$7,472.77

Source: SAIS-CARI 2019.

The data in table 4 show a modest level of investment in Nigeria from 2003 to 2009, then growth to more than USD 2.8 billion in 2017, which is appreciable though not dramatic. The contrast with China's investment in South Africa is noteworthy: China had an FDI position in South Africa over USD 7 billion in 2017, and Beijing's stock in South Africa has been higher than in Nigeria every year except 2006.[63] To be sure, South Africa had the larger economy until 2012, but even by the more conservative market exchange rate valuation of the World Bank World Development Indicators, China's FDI position in Nigeria does not match Nigeria's GDP position. Beijing also has FDI positions in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo greater than China's investments in Nigeria, even though these economies are much smaller than that of Nigeria. It is also worth noting that the IMF Coordinated Direct Investment Survey calculates that India has a greater FDI position in Nigeria than does China—USD 3.19 billion in 2017.

One reason that Chinese investment in Nigeria appears to be leveling out in recent years is the tightening control that the Central Bank of Nigeria has imposed during the sharp economic downturn in Nigeria in 2016. The effects on Chinese investors was summarized by Li Wentao and Sun Hong:

> In the past two years, as a result of stagnating crude oil price and frequent rebel group attacks on oi production bases in the Niger River delta region, Nigerian oil output hit a record low and its foreign exchange reserves shrunk drastically to $23.95 billion as of October 2016. The central bank fought back by strengthening regulations on capital outflows and on the foreign exchange market. The Nigerian naira lost nearly 50% of its value….Consequently, all this made it much more difficult and costly for Chinese companies to exchange its [sic] revenue from local currency to more steady ones.[64]

Free Trade Zones

Nigeria has hopes that free trade zones (FTZ) and special economic zones similar to those in Shenzhen, China, might jump start the manufacturing sector, as a Nigerian official involved in one of the zones announced hopefully "China owes its massive industrialisation to free trade zones scattered all over the country . . . more than a hundred zones of various kinds were established through China, which . . . are largely responsible for the remarkable growth of China over the years . . . there have been strong interests by many countries to emulate the model by adopting the Free Trade Zone as an economic policy."[65] China is involved in two such zones, the Lekki FTZ and the Ogun-Guangdong FTZ, both situated near Lagos. The former was announced in 2006 and the latter in 2011 (though discussions dated back to 2007).[66] China's Lekki announcement included a pledge to invest USD 267 million.[67] It is unclear how much investment has been sunk

into these ventures, but as of the time of this writing (July 2019), Nigerians still seemed keen on the idea.[68]

Yunnan Chen and her teammates' research on the subject is perhaps the best examination of China's activities in these FTZs, based upon 2014–15 interviews. As might be expected, the progress in these zones has been mixed. Some Chinese businesses in these zones have thrived; others lasted only a few months. The Ogun-Guangdong zone has been growing faster than the Lekki zone, which has been plagued by "problems with land ownership around the zone [that] appeared to be an ongoing issue that has yet to be resolved by the Lagos government."[69] Note that the "Lagos government" refers to Lagos state, not the federal government in Abuja. Still, there is an ongoing Chinese presence in these two FTZs and the Calabar FTZ as well. The motives for Chinese investors are diverse: "Chinese firms decide to invest in Nigeria for a variety of reasons, including lower costs, lower competition, and the country's large domestic market."[70] Lack of competition seems particularly important, and many of the Chinese companies that begin operations in these FTZs have little or no background in the products they are making; they went into the line because there were no other products, making a seemingly profitable opportunity.[71]

Economic Relations: Nigerian Issues.

Given the trade and investment relationship between China and Nigeria, it is no surprise that there are a number of issues that have arisen. Thanks to the open media in Nigeria, such matters are often discussed. Industrial displacement, poor labor conditions, the shoddy quality of Chinese consumer goods, and intellectual property rights are the top four concerns.

Industrial Displacement

Nigeria has long practiced a high degree of protectionism, employing an assortment of mechanisms, such as tariffs, import licensing, customs procedures, and prohibitions.[72] The World Trade Organization replaced the Multi-Fibre Arrangement of 1994, governing the world trade in textiles and garments, with the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing in 2004. This change led to a surge of foreign textile imports beginning in 2005 in particular and has contributed to the virtual disappearance of Nigeria's domestic textile industry. Some of these new imports are secondhand garments from Europe, but many are Chinese in origin. As of early 2005, Nigerian business leaders claimed 65 Nigerian textile mills had closed and 150,000 workers had lost their jobs.[73] In Kaduna and Kano, where modern textile manufacture began before independence, factories closed shop, and by

2012, most of the cloth in the Kantin Kwari textile market in Kano was Chinese.[74] In fact, Chinese and Nigerian traders smuggled some of these imports into Nigeria, along with other goods.[75] The Nigerian government had previously banned textile imports but lifted the prohibition in 2010.[76]

The reaction to this industrial displacement in Nigeria has been mixed. Textile companies and workers naturally resent the development. As Elisha Renee recounts, "Not surprisingly, textile union leaders and retrenched textile workers are unhappy with mill closures in Kaduna and Kano, which they partly attribute to Nigerian textiles being undersold by the illegal importation of cheap, poor quality Chinese textiles through Nigeria's porous borders even if they recognize the collusion of Nigerian traders in this process." Yet, Nigerian cloth traders are happy with the situation, since they have cheaper goods and faster turnaround time for orders, despite the merchandise coming all the way from China.[77]

Labor Practices

Labor practices are another source of complaint, especially the perception that Chinese construction firms use Chinese workers and not locally hired labor.[78] There is some research, however, that indicates that Chinese firms in Nigeria hire more than 84 percent of the local labor, though few of these employees are technical or managerial staff.[79] Conditions in Chinese-owned factories are also a source of complaint: "Chinese companies in Nigeria have been criticized for being 'closed' due to perceived low levels of employing local experts. There was even a submission that they sometimes maltreat their workers. According to some reports, the conditions of employment of Nigerians in certain Chinese firms conform neither to the Nigerian Labour Laws nor to that of the International Labour Organisation. This was highlighted when a number of Nigerian workers died after being trapped inside a locked Chinese-owned factory that caught fire in 2002."[80]

Shoddy Chinese Goods

Nigerian complaints of shoddy Chinese goods are one of the most common criticisms seen in Nigerian news media.[81] The issue was serious enough in to be raised in bilateral talks in Beijing. According to the Nigerian account of the meeting, "Director General of the Standards Organization of Nigeria, John Akanya [said] it is worrisome to see sub-standard industrial goods being imported to Nigeria from China given the common knowledge that very high quality goods are being exported from China to other parts of the world including the United States and Europe….an average Nigerian believed every sub-standard product in Nigeria was from China."[82] And the Nigerian ambassador to China, Alhaji Aminu

Bashir Wali, told a Nigerian newspaper, "Responding to the influx of China's inferior goods into the Nigerian market, Wali said this was another sad development facilitated by Nigerian businessmen, who came to China to make specifications for such inferior but profitable goods in the Nigerian market than the high quality Chinese products, that were in great demand in Europe, Asia and America."[83] Chinese diplomats in 2015 had clearly heard the complaint frequently, and the Chinese Consul in Lagos noted, "I have worked in Nigeria for one year and answered the questions on quality issues from local media for several times." The issue continued to be mentioned in the Nigerian media in 2015, and one particular passage from *This Day* about a meeting concerning UN Millennium Development Goals is worth quoting at length:

> As regards quality of Chinese products, everyone admitted that China has the capacity to produce very qualitative goods. Mention was made of several Chinese exports of high quality products to many parts of Europe and America and questions were therefore raised as to why Nigeria should be the destination of inferior quality of goods. . . . The point was even made that Nigerians travel to China and collaborate with the Chinese to produce on the basis of some specifications. Thus it is more of collaboration of Nigeria's criminals collaborating with their Chinese counterparts.[84]

The quote is interesting because it holds that somehow Nigerians are getting worse quality Chinese products than the United States or Europe, not that Chinese goods are poor quality everywhere.[85] It also lays blame on Nigerian "criminals" traveling to China to obtain questionable goods. There is also informal trading (read as *smuggling*) across the borders with Nigeria's neighbors, such as Benin and Cameroon. Exactly how much of this illicit trafficking is occurring is difficult to determine, but Kate Meagher estimates that if purely intra-African trade amounts to about 6 percent of total West African trade, then informal trade is about 4–5 percent.[86]

Intellectual Property Rights

Finally, the issue of intellectual property rights comes up frequently. Nigerian textile traders often send their designs via smartphone camera to prospective manufacturing partners in China to solicit bids, only to find these unique designs show up elsewhere without approval.[87] This is noted in some of the Nigerian partners of Chinese companies in the FTZs and in a variety of other manufacturing ventures.[88]

Economic Relations: Chinese Issues

Since the state and Communist Party tightly control Chinese media, the amount of complaints about business in Nigeria are carefully phrased and few. Most of the published complaints are the same that Nigerian businesses and government leaders discuss as the challenges of Nigeria: poor infrastructure, unreliable electricity, poor transportation, and an unstable security situation. Some additional issues that are unlikely to be noted in the official Chinese media are the cultural differences that make investment in Nigeria challenging. Interviews by Chen and her team summarize these issues:

> Language and cultural differences remain barriers for this form of interpersonal skills transfer between Chinese and Nigerian staff. Many firms expressed frustration with the low education level of Nigerian workers, which made training a slow process. Many of the Chinese firms we interviewed also cited cultural differences in attitudes toward work as a challenge, namely the stark contrast between Chinese work culture and the relaxed attitude and time-management among local Nigerians, Lack of trust of Nigerian staff, and fear of losing sensitive business knowledge were also noted as obstacles to skills transfer.[89]

Social Relations

Education

Beijing has placed great emphasis on the role of Confucius Institutes in China's outreach to foreign publics—its "soft power." These are cooperative ventures with local colleges and universities that provide low-cost Chinese language and cultural instruction. Two have been founded in Nigeria: one at the University of Lagos and a second at Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka (near Onitsha), both founded in 2009. In contrast, there are six Confucius Institutes in South Africa, and 59 total across Africa.

Nigerians in China

As noted in the introduction, the presence of a large community of Nigerians in China, particularly in Guangzhou, is an unusual aspect of Sino–Nigerian relations. The issue was mentioned in the Nigerian media as recently as 2017, when the chair of the Nigerian House Committee on Nigeria–China relations, Yusuf Buba, said, "As lawmakers, we make sure that the interest of our businessmen who go to China to trade is protected and that we try to see how we will encourage the technology transfer from China to Nigeria so that . . . we will also become indus-

trialised as the Chinese people have become."[90] The presence of a large Nigerian community in Guangzhou prompted pressure on the governments in Abuja and Beijing to open a consulate-general in that city.[91] Speaking in 2014, one Nigerian businessman in China said, "Before the establishment of the consulate in Guangzhou there was a long gap between Nigerians in China and their home country. The connectivity between Guangzhou and Beijing, where the Nigeria embassy was first situated was a herculean experience. In many situations, we would commute about 21 hours journey by train from Guangzhou to Beijing . . . just to get embassy authorities consents for cases ranging from business registrations to minor consular services."[92] Complaints about the treatment of Nigerians in China were among the articles in Nigerian media. "As the presence of Nigerian immigrants continue to grow in the People's Republic of China, many Nigerians have begun to demonstrate utmost displeasure towards the country's public display of cultural barriers. Their major concern has been that the cultural barriers have in many diverse ways, contributed in dampening business relations between them and the Chinese."[93]

The Nigerian Consul-General of Guangzhou, Wale Oloko, noted a variety of complaints in 2018 during a meeting with the Nigerian community in Guangzhou. Currently, Chinese authorities charge a hefty fine for Nigerians living illegally in the country (USD 1,500) when they exit, thus discouraging them from leaving. Other complaints include targeted checks by the security bureau, refusal of hotels to accommodate Nigerians, freezing of bank accounts, residential prohibitions, and so forth.[94]

The issue of Nigerians in China, however, has had a more complex treatment in the Nigerian media. The role of "Nigerian criminals" in importing counterfeit and shoddy goods was mentioned above. The Nigerian ambassador to China, Shola Onadipe, in 2014 and was quite critical of some Nigerians living in China:

> . . . what you do you see in China, Nigerians, those who have overstayed for three, four, five six years, go and open shops, buying and selling. Most of them are not paying tax, most of them use fraudulent means to run the shops, and they say they don't do retail, that they are only selling to their customers in Nigeria but that is not true…. A lot of them are notorious for nefarious activities with hard drugs….There are many of them there [in Guangzhou] and with that notoriety about Nigerians, and you know they are very loud, they will be smoking marijuana openly in another man's country, that is ridiculous. They drink heavily, they are notorious in that area.[95]

The ambassador then differentiated the behavior of these Nigerians from other Africans in Guangzhou: "The Cote'Ivoire [sic] people, the Ghanaians, Camerou-

nians, the French speaking countries, they have their own sector [in Guangzhou], the police don't go there to harass them."[96]

One is struck by this statement; ambassadors are usually diplomatic and even-handed in their advocacy for their own citizens. Of course, this could simply be an ambassador (who was scheduled to retire) who had simply had his fill of frustrating citizens' consular problems and misbehaving nationals. The other possibility is an unspoken differentiation between various Nigerians. The ambassador's name would indicate he comes from southwest Nigeria. Many of the Nigerians who live in China and elsewhere are part of the broader Igbo diaspora from eastern Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon.[97] Igbo speakers comprise the largest linguistic group among the Africans in Guangzhou.[98] It is impossible to know whether this is a factor prompting the ambassador's reaction, but ethnic tensions were the primary cause of the Nigerian civil war (1966–69) and a neo-Biafran independence movement that began in the twenty-first century has led to recent military action by the Nigerian government.[99] In November 2018, the Nigerian Consul General in Guangzhou "called on the Nigerians in China to remain law abiding and shun acts that would have negative impact of the Nigeria of Nigeria" and the president of the association of the Nigerian Community in China "admitted that some members of the community are on the other side of the law and urged them to retrace their steps before it is too late as the Chinese authorities have zero tolerance for criminal activities, especially drug trafficking."[100]

Beginning in 2014, the Guangzhou Public Security Bureau (police) began to crack down on foreigners' misbehavior in general and Nigerians in particular, at least in the view of many Nigerian residents in Guangzhou. One Chinese estimate of the number of Africans in Guangzhou at the beginning of the year was 15,000 to 20,000.[101] Some estimates of the number remaining at the end of the year are around 4,000. The police crackdown was directed against foreigners engaged in the "three illegals"—三非/*san fei*—illegal residence, illegal employment, and illegally overstaying visas. Technically, this could be enforced against any foreigner in China, but Africans feel they are particularly targeted in this drive.[102]

It is interesting to note that a slight easing of visa restrictions on Nigerians coming to China may be coming following an announcement by Chu Maoming, Consul General of China in Lagos, who said that "within the framework of the agreement on the Belt and Road Initiative signed between Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Xi Jinping, there would be more business and trade transaction between China and Nigeria. 'We do know that more Nigerians would be traveling to China, and more of Chinese businesses and investments coming to Nigeria. We therefore know that the need to provide more Nigerians with visas is very important. What we want Nigerians to know is that the process for applying for

the Chinese visas is one of the fastest and most convenient.'"[103] The implication is that since Nigeria publicly signed on to the BRI, it would get more visas.

Chinese in Nigeria

The flip side of the equation—Chinese in Nigeria—is more difficult to assess. Different sources estimate the number of such individuals between 5,000 and 11,000 or more. The number of contract workers on various projects is listed in 2017 as a bit over 10,000.[104] Renne notes calculations of 50,000 Chinese traders in Nigeria, with 30,000 resident in Lagos.[105] Very little systematic research has been done on Chinese in Nigeria, for a variety of reasons such as language barriers and the reluctance of Chinese to be interviewed. An extremely small sampling did reveal that both communities [Chinese and Nigerians] have overall positive impressions of each other. The Chinese sample, although small, showed six out of seven respondents had positive relations with the Nigerian community in Lagos, and positive to neutral relationships with Nigerian business people . . . with their Nigerian customers. . . . Not surprisingly, Chinese businesspeople complained about the same infrastructural and security problems that irritate Nigerians . . . electrical power supplies, transportation woes, including traffic jams."[106]

China-in-Africa: Views from Nigeria

Given all this history of interactions, how do Nigerians feel about China? Here we are fortunate, because public opinion polling has been tracking this issue for several years. Table 5 shows the results:

Table 5. Nigerian public opinion of China, 2006–2018

Year	Pew Positive	Pew Negative	BBC Positive	BBC Negative	Gallup Positive	Gallup Negative	AfroBarometer Positive	AfroBarometer Negative
2006			68%	-11%				
2007	75%	-18%						
2008	79%	-14%					86%	-14%
2009	85%	-10%	72%	-15%				
2010	76%	-15%						
2011			85%	-9%	64%	-17%		
2012			89%	-7%	66%	-14%		
2013	76%	-11%	85%	-10%				
2014	70%	-14%					67%	-7%
2015	70%	-14%						
2016	63%	-18%						
2017	72%	-13%	83%	-9%				
2018	61%	-17%						

Sources: Pew Global Indicators Database 2019; BBC 2006–2017; Clifton (Gallup) 2011, 2012; and Gadzala and Hanusch 2010 (AfroBarometer 2008).[107]

Pew and the *BBC* are the most frequent in their surveys, and Gallup and AfroBarometer much less so. Nevertheless, with four different sources (and different questions), the results are remarkably similar: China is very popular in Nigerian public opinion. There is variation, higher in 2009 but lower in 2016, but the numbers are still remarkably high throughout.

The Pew and *BBC* surveys have the advantage of frequency, with the former conducted in 10 out of the last 13 years. The *BBC* did so in six out of 13 years, so we can venture statements about the longer-term impression that China has left on Nigeria. Of course, there is variation over time: the 2008 Beijing Olympics does appear to have a noticeable improvement in China's image in Nigeria in 2009. In 2016 and 2018 in the Pew survey, China's approval dropped below 70 percent for the first time. *BBC* surveying is less frequent but does show more consistency since 2011. Naturally, we look for comparative context for this question, and the numbers for other foreign subjects and the parallel number for other West African states are suggestive. First, Nigerian positivity about China is not unique; survey numbers out of Pew and the *BBC* show Nigerians also like the United States. For Americans (and to an extent Pew analysts) there is a sense of a zero-sum popularity game between Washington and Beijing, but there is no necessary link between the two. In 2018, for example, Nigerians gave the United States a 62-percent approval rating, statistically no different from the Chinese rating, and high ratings in 2016, 2014, and especially in 2010.[108] And lest we assume that Nigerians simply like everyone, the Pew survey has included questions about favorability toward Russia, and these show substantially lower numbers in the low 40s and high 30s range.

The *BBC* surveys cover fewer years but more subject countries. These number largely reinforce the impression found in the Pew data that China is popular among Nigerians, and generally with even higher favorables and fewer unfavorables toward China than the Pew data indicates, admittedly with a different question. Nigerian views of Russia is almost exactly the same as reported in Pew, and views of Pakistan and Iran for example, being very negative. Views of India, an increasingly important economic partner for Nigeria—and competitor for China—score lower in Nigeria than China by almost 40 points, with only 47 percent perceiving India as a "mainly positive influence in the world" versus 83 percent for China. The Gallup polls have had limited work in Africa regarding China, and few of their data are publicly available. The two years available do correlate somewhat with Pew data, though the polls were taken in different years.

All these surveys reveal a fairly consistent message: Nigerians have generally favorable opinions of China. However, these surveys do not reveal *why* Nigerians hold those opinions. This is where the last survey research unit noted in table 6,

the AfroBarometer, is most useful. This is an academic initiative, and far more questions are asked of respondents. The 2014/15 Survey asked specifically what made for a positive image of China among African respondents, in this case Nigeria. Table 6 shows the results:

Table 6. AfroBarometer Reasons for Positive Image of China in Nigeria, 2014/15

Reason	Percentage
None of these	1.20%
China's support for the country in international affairs	10.10%
Non-interference in the internal affairs of African countries	5.90%
China's investment in infrastructure in the country	18.50%
China's business investment	28.20%
The quality or cost of Chinese products	21.70%
An appreciation of the Chinese people, culture and language	1.60%
Some other factor	0.50%
Don't know	12.30%

Source: AfroBarometer, 2014/15 Survey.

The data indicate that the commercial relationship is clearly the top reason for Nigerians' high regard for China. It also shows that China's investment in cultural exchanges has very little effect. In short, the findings confirm what some Western critics—including Joseph Nye, the inventor of the term—have said: China is weak on *soft power*.[109] Investment, infrastructure, and inexpensive products are why Nigerians have positive feelings toward China.

Similarly, the AfroBarometer asked about the reasons for Nigerians' negative views of China. Table 7 shows these results:

Table 7. AfroBarometer Reasons for Negative Image of China in Nigeria, 2014/15

Reason	Percentage
None of these	5.90%
China's extraction of resources from Africa	9.50%
Land grabbing by Chinese individuals or businesses	4.60%
China's willingness to cooperate with undemocratic rulers	8.40%
Taking jobs or business from the locals	10.50%
The quality of Chinese products	37.30%
The behavior of Chinese citizens in the country	4.80%
Some other factor	1.40%
Don't know	17.70%

Source: AfroBarometer, 2014/15 Survey.

The leading issue for negative images of China is one already discussed: the quality of Chinese goods; this represents the flip side of their low cost, and reminds us that the foremost ambassador of China in Nigeria are products, not people.

Nigerian Media

The Nigerian media are diverse, and their treatment of China's involvement in Nigeria is difficult to characterize simply. Nigeria has a vibrant media sector, characterized by a large number of newspapers easily available to researchers and a willingness to be criticize the government and its policies, which stretches back to the periods of military rule (1966–79 and 1983–99).[110] It would be fair to say that as with most newspapers around the world, Nigerian publishers are always looking for copy, and a fair number of articles are lightly edited transcripts of official Chinese statements from visiting officials, diplomats, or consuls in Abuja or Lagos or from Nigerian diplomats in Beijing or their consulates-general in Guangzhou and Shanghai. Not surprisingly, these statements are very diplomatic, such as the statement by the newly appointed Nigerian ambassador to China: "China today is our most important partner and has been supporting Nigeria and indeed Africa in our development stride."[111] The Chinese ambassador to Nigeria, Gu Xiaojie, wrote in anticipation of President Buhari's visit to China the usual sort of praise for bilateral relations, which was published as an opinion piece in many Nigerian papers: "Distance cannot separate true friends who feel so close even when they are thousands of miles apart. The China–Nigeria friendship has stood the test of time and became stronger and more vigorous despite the vast oceans between the two countries."[112]

The Nigerian press new also critically examined the Chinese-built African Union headquarters in Ethiopia. Nigerians seemed to hold conflicting positions about the project, as spelled out by *Vanguard*:

> The $200 Million New Headquarters of the African Union a gift from China—is another confirmation of the continent's inability to get things done by itself. Almost 50 years after the formation of the Organisation of African Unity, OAU, the AU's forebear, the continent could not afford the AU's new edifice that has cast a permanent role for China in Africa. . . . Critics of the project, mostly from the West, warn Africa of the consequences of permitting so much Chinese influence in the continent, but they could be jealous of losing their rights to exploit Africa, the same accusation they make against China. . . . None of those critics could build that structure without killing conditions attached to it.[113]

Conclusion: Sino–Nigeria Relations—Why So Little So Late?

What, then, can we make of relations between Nigeria and China? Until the 2010s, the relationship was good and growing, but less than one might expect given the size and importance of the two actors—like two giants watching each other from a distance with the occasional friendly wave but not much more. Why was this relationship stalled for so long, and why has the last decade changed so much?

One fundamental factor that is unalterable is the geography. Though both are in the northern hemisphere, these two countries are nearly antipodes, and that truth eliminates the normal bases for long-term relations, namely neighboring and proximity. Neighboring countries have deep and complex relationships, long histories of amity and enmity, and traditional border trade going back centuries. There are traditional rivalries between states that make for alliances and partnerships, such as between China and Pakistan—a case prompted by their common rival, India.

China and Nigeria have none of that geographic advantage, so it is not surprising that their relationship started at a disadvantage. However, unlike Tanzania and Zambia, which established a solid and enduring relationship with China beginning in the 1960s, Nigeria's and China's stances on the Nigerian and Angolan civil wars soured their relations and left them formalistic until the 1980s. Furthermore, neither country particularly needed the other for much of the 1960s-1990s; China was self-sufficient in petroleum, and Nigeria hoped to develop its own light industrial products which China could export during the period. To be sure, both voted in line with the G-77 at the United Nations and had diplomatic relations, but not much of a relationship beyond that.

The Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989 in China and the execution of writer, producer, and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 in Nigeria made both countries anathema to the international community. In Africa, South Africa, under Nelson Mandela, became the star in 1994, and Pretoria established informal ties with Beijing and, in late 1996, announced it would recognize Beijing in 1998, further isolating Nigeria. After the democratization of Nigeria in 1999, the diplomatic relations began to gel between Abuja and Beijing. Presidents Obasanjo and Hu exchanged visits and a number of agreements were reached in 2006. Once again, however, circumstances conspired to set the relationship back. Newly elected President Yar'Adua was much more skeptical of the grandiose plans reached, and many projects were canceled or delayed. Yar'Adua's illness and the ambiguity of who was in charge in Nigeria between November 2009 and May 2010 further stalled Nigerian foreign relations in general. After Goodluck Jonathan assumed the full powers of the presidency in May 2010, relations between Nigeria and

China gained momentum again. However, many fundamental problems remained; Boko Haram was expanding in the north, and the government in Abuja showed little concern. The Niger Delta rebellions did receive more attention, but peace remained elusive. Additionally, China remained shut out of Nigeria's fluctuating oil production, and turned to Angola for petroleum instead. Another rival—South Africa—continued to receive more attention from China and the world.

It was in the 2010s that Sino–Nigerian relations began to blossom, especially in trade and construction. However, the relationship continues to experience starts and stops. Some of this is the result of frequent changes in administrations in Nigeria, with the Obasanjo, Jonathan, and Buhari administrations having demonstrated much more interest in cooperation than the Yar'Adua administration. The intense recession in Nigeria in 2016 also slowed down progress in large-scale deals between Abuja and Beijing. By 2018, however, the Buhari administration seemed committed to working with Beijing on China's grandiose BRI. Alternatives from the West have been lacking. In early 2018, the Trump administration made it clear that sub-Saharan African countries do not factor highly in America's current foreign policy calculus. As a result, China may be the only partner left for Nigeria.

Dr. Steven F. Jackson

Dr. Jackson is a professor of political science at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. After receiving his bachelor's degree in international relations from Stanford University in 1981, he taught English in Xi'an China from 1981–83. He received his PhD from the University of Michigan and joined the faculty at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1994. He is the author of *China's Regional Relations in Comparative Perspective: From Harmonious Neighbors to Strategic Partners* (Routledge, 2018) and "China's Third World Foreign Policy: The Case of Angola and Mozambique, 1961–1993," *China Quarterly* (June 1995).

Notes

1. Adekeye Adebajo, "Hegemony on a Shoestring: Nigeria's Post–Cold War Foreign Policy," in Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the Cold War, ed. Adekeye Adebajo and Abdul Raufu Mustapha (Scottsville, South Africa: University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal Press, 2008), 7; Ibrahim A. Gambari, "From Balewa to Obasanjo: The Theory and Practice of Nigeria's Foreign Policy," in *Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, ed. Adekeye Adebajo and Abdul Raufu Mustapha (Scottsville, South Africa: University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal Press, 2008), 58; and Alaba Ogunsanwo, *China's Policy in Africa, 1958–1971* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 80.

2. Ogunsanwo, *China's Policy in Africa*, 86; and Ogunsanwo, "A Tale of Two Giants: Nigeria and China," in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon? Africa and China*, ed. Kweku Ampiah and Sanusha Naidu (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 204.

3. Bruce D. Larkin, *China and Africa, 1949–1970: The Foreign Policy of the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) 124–47.

4. Oye Ogunbadejo, "Nigeria and the Great Powers: The Impact of the Civil War on Nigerian Foreign Relations," *African Affairs* 75, no. 298 (1976), 27.

5. Zambia followed Tanzania's lead in recognizing Biafra. Two Francophone states—Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon—also recognized Biafra but largely to follow the French foreign policy of informally backing the rebels.

6. Olayiwola Abegunrin, *Nigerian Foreign Policy under Military Rule, 1966–1999* (New York: Praeger, 2003), 36; and Adebajo, "Hegemony on a Shoestring," 64.

7. Ogunbadejo, "Nigeria and the Great Powers," 28.

8. Abegunrin, *Nigerian Foreign Policy under Military Rule*, 40.

9. The government of Nigeria shifted its capital to Abuja in December 1991; the metonyms used in this paper are chronological.

10. Onome Amawhe, "Diplomat with the Health of the Sino-Nigerian Relations at Heart," *Vanguard*, 8 August 2010, https://allafrica.com/stories/201008090816.html.

11. Abegunrin, *Nigerian Foreign Policy under Military Rule*, 100.

12. Shubo Li, *Mediatized China-Africa Relations: How Media Discourses Negotiate the Shifting of Global Order* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan 2017), 81.

13. Ogunsanwo, "A Tale of Two Giants," 193–94.

14. "Nigeria: Transition or Travesty?; Nigeria's Endless Process of Return to Civilian Rule," *Human Rights Watch* 9, no. 6 (October 1997), https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1997/nigeria/Nigeria-10.htm#P608_159172.

15. *China's Foreign Relations* (annual report, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China, 2007), 303.

16. Alaba Ogunsanwo goes further, writing that "it is because of this tendency to gang up against Nigeria that the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation . . . as promising as it sounds, offers little to Nigeria, at least not as a replacement for bilateralism," Ogunsanwo, "A Tale of Two Giants," 207 fn23. The *Vanguard*, in recounting President Buhari's presence at the 2018 Beijing FOCAC Forum stated that "Nigeria, with few African countries, were preferentially treated to bilateral meetings. The Chinese and Nigerian government met exclusively to discuss matters of mutual benefits," "News Insight: Buhari's $10billion Harvest from China," *Vanguard News*, 8 September 2018, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/09/news-insight-buharis-10billion-harvest-from-china/.

17. China is particularly attentive to the ceremonial details of high-level visits. A *state visit* is by a head of state and is received by the Chinese president; an *official visit* is made by the head of government and received by the Chinese premier. General Gowon was the head of the Supreme Military Council of Nigeria from 1966 to his overthrow in 1975. A state visit is also expected to be reciprocated within a reasonable period.

18. Abegunrin, *Nigerian Foreign Policy under Military Rule*, 61.

19. Ibid., 69.

20. See especially, Zhou Yuyuan, "Nanfei yu Niriliya guanxi: cong hezuo dao jingzheng" [From cooperation to competition: understanding the relationship between South Africa and Nigeria], *Xiya Feizhou*, 2015, 107–27.

21. *China's Foreign Relations* (annual report, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China, 2011), 296.

22. Bruce Jones, *Still Ours to Lead: America, Rising Powers, and the Tension between Rivalry and Restraint* (Washington DC: Brookings, 2014), 66.

23. *China's Foreign Relations* (annual report, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China, 2007), 303–04.

24. *China's Foreign Relations* (annual report, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China, 2009), 249.

25. *China's Foreign Relations* (annual report, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China, 2011), 259.

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FEATURE

Footing the Bill

Russian and Iranian Investment and American Withdrawal in Syria

Jay Mens

The Assad regime's impending victory and the Trump administration's pending plan to withdraw from Syria makes the question of Syrian reconstruction more pressing than ever. This is especially the case as Russia and Iran—the two main allies of the Assad regime—vie to consolidate their economic and strategic gains in the country. Examining the economic groundwork that both countries have laid in Syria helps clarify the Russian and Iranian strategic visions for the country, providing pointers as to how the United States and its allies can remain influential even after a troop withdrawal.

Syria's civil war is, by far, the longest and most lethal winter to follow the Arab Spring. After more than six and a half years, casualties total between 400,000 and 500,000 dead and two million wounded, and of a population of 13.5 million, more than 11 million are estimated as being dispersed at home or abroad. In addition to the vast human cost, the country's economy has been assessed as being in worse condition than was the German economy in the immediate aftermath of the World War II.[1] The United Nations has estimated that reconstruction costs will amount to approximately USD 250 billion; the Assad regime estimates a figure almost double that at USD 400 billion.[2] As the war draws to a close, how the hefty bill for Syria's reconstruction will be footed and how an America poised for withdrawal and its weary allies fit into that picture are both questions that loom large.

The United States, the European Union, and the Gulf States have, over the past three years, conditioned their support for the reconstruction process on "a genuine political transition that can be supported by a majority of the Syrian people" as per UNSC Resolution 2254.[3] The bloc's provisional largesse is, in this view, a carrot in a situation where sticks have decidedly been ruled out; in the words of erstwhile British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, Western funds for Syria represent a "big card left to play in a pretty poor hand" and a long-shot way by which to move the country "away from Assad."[4] Assad, for his part, "banned" Western donors in the summer of 2017, claiming "we don't need the West. . . . The West is not honest at all, they don't give, they only take"[5]; on another occasion, he rebuffed the cash-for-transition idea as a rouse by which his enemies would try to "accomplish through politics what they failed to accomplish on the battlefield and through terrorism."[6]

President Donald Trump has long been skeptical of US involvement in the Syrian Civil War, tweeting before the rise of ISIS in 2013 that the United States "should stay the hell out of Syria," warning his followers "WHAT WILL WE GET FOR OUR LIVES AND $ BILLIONS? ZERO."[7] During the Trump campaign, the departure of Assad was never discussed, and candidate Trump even expressed a willingness to work with the regime against the infamous terror group.[8] While at the time of writing, the US withdrawal is the subject of much confusion and indeed, contention within the Trump administration itself,[9] given the priority given to ISIS during the campaign and with the would-be caliphate dramatically diminished in strength, it is reasonable to believe that Trump's intentions are serious. The contention is how the return of American troops might square with the administration's new primary goal in Syria, that being, in the phrasing of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, to "expel every last Iranian boot" from the country.[10]

(US Army photo by SSGT Raymond Boyington)

Figure 1. Normalcy in Syrian territory under US coalition control. A group of children and parents await a bus to get to school in Ayn Issa, Syria, 31 December 2018. Coalition Forces continue to train, assist, and advise partner forces to maintain regional stability.

This is a sensible course of action for several reasons. An entrenched Iranian presence in Syria would mean that the country continues to be a focal node in a brewing regional cold war, threatening American credibility with its Gulf part-

ners and Syria's long-term stability.[11] This is in addition to the fact that Iranian grand strategy hinges on the mobilization and exacerbation of sectarian divides, further threatening Syria's internal cohesion. Israel's concerns for its northern border are yet another consideration: should Iran gain too considerable a foothold in Syria, the risk of a war between Israel and Hezbollah rises considerably, further endangering regional stability. As the conclusion of the civil war seems in sight, the pressing question is how to disrupt Iranian influence even in the event of an American withdrawal. It is here that the question of reconstruction funding is most relevant.

Examining the developing economic dimension of Russian and Iranian involvement in Syria adds perspective to the strategic interests of both countries, the extent of their entrenchment, and also the degree to which their long-term interests conflict. This article hopes to show, through examining their calculated investments in postwar Syria, both Russia and Iran have attempted to translate their contribution to the Assad regime's war effort into enduring strategic gains after the civil war's end and even if their military contingents are evacuated or significantly downsized. Following this examination, the article will consider ways in which the United States can leverage the conflicts of Iranian and Russian interests, which constitute an opportunity for the United States and its partners to gain something from the civil war's conclusion, even after the withdrawal of American boots from the ground.

Iran's Reconstruction Investments

Tehran's support for its "closest ally"[12] endured throughout the height of the international sanctions regime on Iran's nuclear program; an undisclosed Arab intelligence agency alleged that annual Iranian aid to the Syrian regime lies between USD 7 billion and USD 8 billion a year.[13] This is in addition to contributing several thousand troops in combat and advisory roles and sponsoring both more than 1,200 fighters from the Lebanese paramilitary group Hezbollah and a "40,000-strong" Shi'a Foreign Legion.[14] Official Iranian sources reported losses of over 2,000 troops from the start of the war to March 2018, the Shi'a legions enduring hundreds more.[15] In January 2018, a senior assistant to the Iranian foreign minister stated that "once [the Iranian forces'] job is finished . . . they will withdraw from the Syrian territory."[16] Notwithstanding the question of how high the bar for "a job finished" is,[17] even if Iran were to withdraw, Tehran is, along with Moscow, one of the few dependable partners available to Syria for its reconstruction and has used that position to economically and strategically vindicate Iranian intervention.

Senior Iranian officers have been vocal about the importance of their long-term presence. The Iranian chief of staff claimed that Iran's acquisition of naval bases in

Syria is "more than ten times [the importance] of . . . nuclear technology,"[18] and the intelligence director of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commented in 2013 that Syria is "Iran's 35th Province."[19] A consolidated Iranian presence in Syria after the civil war would be conducive to a number of Iranian geostrategic aims, namely the creation of a contiguous "landline" through predominantly Shi'a and Kurdish lands. Such a corridor would stretch from Iran, through Iraq, ending at the Mediterranean, and would be especially valuable as a way to reroute goods and troops from the US Fifth Fleet in the Persian Gulf.[20] The Iranian military used this route for the first time in December 2017,[21] and in April 2018, Iranian sources reported an agreement among Iraq, Syria, and Iran to build a highway over the next two years to transport goods among Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.[22] This geographic contiguity would also make it harder for Israel to thwart Iran's efforts to upgrade Hezbollah's stockpile of long-range surface-to-surface (SSM) and surface-to-air (SAM) missiles,[23] an effort that has triggered hundreds of Israeli strikes on weapons convoys over the course of the war.[24] Examining Iran's biggest investments in Syria and this strategic context strongly implies a long-term strategy of locking in gains in hard-fought areas and presents an economic dimension to the notion of an Iranian corridor.

There is, firstly, the geopolitical dimension of Iranian investment. Tehran has invested in the northern cities of Homs and Aleppo, which Iranian forces played considerable roles in reconquering over the last two years.[25] In 2017, the Iranian Students News Agency reported that Iranian and Venezuelan companies will build an oil refinery facility near Homs at an estimated cost of USD 1 billion, which represents a potential avenue by which Iran could skirt sanctions on its oil exports.[26] Iranian companies have also extended their reach into real estate and property development. In August 2018, the Syrian Ministry of Public Works and Housing agreed with an Iranian economic delegation on the construction of 30,000 housing units in Aleppo and Homs, as well as Damascus.[27] In July 2012, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between the Iranian and Syrian Energy Ministries detailing Syria's desire to "purchase electricity from Iran, [to be transferred] through Iraqi territory and transferred to Lebanon in two phases,"[28] with 1000MW being distributed to Iraq, 500MW to Syria, and 100MW to Lebanon.[29] In 2017, Iran declared its intention to create the "largest electricity supply network in the Islamic world," connecting the electricity grids of the entire "Shi'a crescent."[30] This is in addition to reports detailing how land and property in former opposition-controlled areas have been confiscated by the Assad regime and reallocated to private and state-owned Iranian companies,[31] adding further to the speculation that Iran is pressing for demographic swaps between rebel fighters' families and "Shi'a fighters" to cohere a "Shi'a space" in Syria.[32]

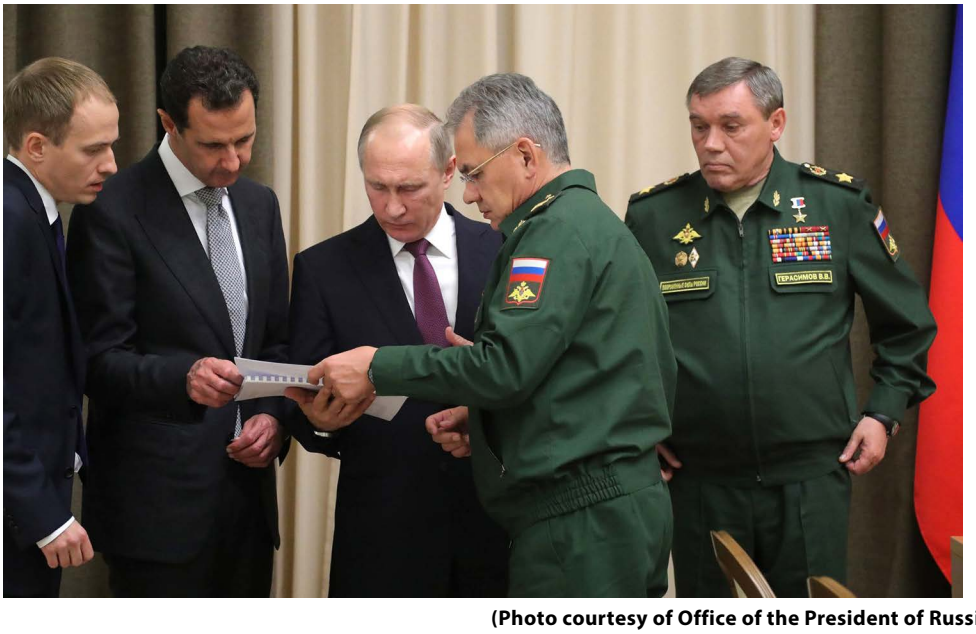
The prominent role taken in reconstruction by the IRGC should also be noted. Firstly, numerous companies linked to and owned by the IRGC have added "lucrative contracts" to their portfolio "on a no-bidding basis," the Corps today represents the bulk of Iran's contingent in Syria and is a highly influential political and economic force within Iran. Recent analysis suggests that the paramilitary group has accrued a larger share of reconstruction bids than other private or state companies.[33] The breadth of these investments is impressive. IRGC-linked and IRGC-owned[34] firms have secured contracts to rebuild Syria's destroyed telecommunications networks and to become the country's third mobile operator.[35] The IRGC's Khatam al-Anbia Construction Company[36] has signed several MOUs with the Assad regime to undertake various reconstruction projects.[37] The IRGC-linked[38] Mapna Group secured a EUR 130 million project to build five gas--powered power plants in the Aleppo region.[39] In addition to the clear strategic logic behind Iranian investment, the involvement of the IRGC is another way by which Iran can entrench itself in Syria in the long term. With that, Tehran's contracts in Syria have raised Iran's stakes in the country even higher, reconstruction shaping up to be the second stage of the realization of a greater Iranian strategy of which the civil war itself was stage one. A parallel might be drawn here between Iran's postconflict investment in Lebanon following the Second Lebanon War of 2006, the end of the Syrian occupation and pressing need for investment creating the necessary conditions for Iran to sign some five major agreements and MOUs on economic cooperation and investment.[40]

Russia's Reconstruction Investments

Official Russian estimates place the country's spending on the civil war at USD 4 billion (33 million rubles),[41] and as of 2018, the Russian Defense Ministry estimates that 63,000 Russian troops have fought in Syria[42] and nearly a hundred Russian soldiers have died since the beginning of the Russian intervention.[43] The Russian decision to intervene in Syria came in the midst of sinking oil prices, the aftermath of the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya, and a raft of sanctions passed against Russia during the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. As early as 2008, Russia has considered an expanded presence in Syria as a means of countering Western strategic advances, as tensions rose with the West over Bush administration plans to place antiballistic missiles (ABM) in Poland and continued NATO expansion.[44] The eruption of the Syrian Civil War and Obama administration's vacillation over the meaning of its "red lines" provided an opportunity for Russia to counter America's strategic gains and sanctions, while parrying perceived American interventionism.[45]

Early on in the Russian intervention, observers speculated that Mocow joined the fray anticipating a "grand bargain" with Western powers, exchanging Assad's

head for a settlement in Crimea.[46] As the tide of the war turned in Assad's favor, Moscow's strategy came to take a more long-term view of Russia's presence in Syria, adjusting to its status as a key interlocutor and player in the Middle East. Today, Russia holds frequent discussions about Syria with virtually all the region's main players and has engineered a close relationship with Turkey, while relations between the West and the Erdogan government in Istanbul continue to deteriorate across numerous different issues.[47] Moreover, Syria's continued lease to Russia of a naval base at tartus today serves to complement Russia's Black Sea Fleet, supporting Russian power projection into the Mediterranean as the second base of Russia's Fifth Operational Squadron, formed in 2013. Another deal was signed in 2017, allowing Russia to maintain its leased air base in Hmeimem and keep 11 ships at the Tartus Naval Facility[48] for some 50 years, with automatic 25-year renewals.[49]



(Photo courtesy of Office of the President of Russia)

Figure 2. Russo–Syrian agreements. Syrian president Bashar Assad and Russian president Vladimir Putin, Russian meet 21 November 2017 in Sochi, Russia, to discuss the closing phases of Russian support for operations in Syria.

In addition to these military prerogatives, Russian contractors have also received priority status in reconstruction projects, and Syria has made clear its hopes to integrate itself into Moscow-run economic forums, most notably the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). In July 2015, Syrian prime minister Wael al-Halqi expressed interest in joining the EEU,[50] with negotiations slated to begin after the war's end.[51] It has also been reported that Syria hopes to negotiate the creation of a free trade zone with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.[52] The influence of domes-

tic Russian politics can also be seen in the lead role assumed by the Russian constituent republic of Chechnya in the reconstruction of several prestige buildings in Syria. The Chechen government financed the reconstruction of the destroyed Ummayad Mosque, for USD 15 million, and a foundation chaired by the head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, further funded the reconstruction of the Khalid Ibn Walid Mosque in Homs.[53]

Moscow has concentrated the bulk of Russia's investment in Syria in the energy sector. Russian experts have speculated that the country's powerful energy companies have wielded considerable influence in determining the course of Russian policy and investment in Syria.[54] These companies have also played a role on the ground by enlisting private military companies to aid the Assad regime in regaining ground in exchange for long-term contracts. The executive director of the Russian Union of Gas and Oil Industrialists stated in July 2015 that projects with a value of "at least $1.6 billion" left unimplemented as a consequence of the civil war would be resumed after the conflict is resolved.[55] In December 2016, the Syrian government awarded 25 percent of Syria's oil and gas production to the Russian energy firms Evro Polis and Stroytransgaz.[56] In addition to this, a road map was announced in February 2018 confirming that only Russian companies will work on reconstruction projects pertaining to oil and gas.[57] The resumption of these contracts, in addition to this lion's share in the Syrian energy industry, secures Russia's long-term influence in the country.

In July 2018, the Russian Energy Ministry further announced that several Russian companies are exploring possibilities in the development of geothermal power plants, in addition to the construction and restoration of oil and gas fields, refineries, and other infrastructure.[58] The Assad regime has invited Lukoil and Gazprom Neft to help rebuild infrastructure destroyed in the conflict,[59] with "Stroytransgaz, Tatneft, Soyuzneftegaz and Uralmash" being mentioned elsewhere as candidates for reconstruction contracts in Syria's energy sector.[60] The Syrian General Establishment of Geology and the Russian engineering company Stroytransgaz signed a 50-year agreement with the Syrian government in March 2018, acquiring a 70-percent share of the production of phosphate from the al-Sharqiya mines near Palmyra, which have "an annual production of about 2.2 million tons and a geological reserve of 105 million tons."[61] This agreement was described by *Al-Watan* as taking place in part "in exchange for [Russia's] support for Damascus in its war against the opposition."[62]

There is also the intrigue of the arrangement between Russian companies and the Syrian government, whereby the former use mercenary companies to capture territory for the latter. In June 2017, the Associated Press reported on a 47-page contract leaked to the news agency the preceding December corroborating this

and detailing how Russian energy company Evro Polis would receive "25 percent of the proceeds from oil and gas production at fields its contractors [from the Wagner Group, a Russian paramilitary organization] capture and secure from Islamic State militants."[63] These contractors have clashed repeatedly with American forces, including a three-hour long firefight last February that saw nearly 300 Russian casualties.[64] Mercenaries constitute the overwhelming majority of Russian casualties, working for between USD 4,000 and USD 5,000 a month.[65] This arrangement has served to limit the number of official Russian casualties and some of the Russian intervention's political exposure, further consolidating Moscow's long-term gains across the Syrian market. Russia's dominance in the Syrian energy market entrenches Moscow in a sector often touted as a crossroads for Iranian or Gulf pipelines to the Mediterranean. If implemented, such pipelines would diminish Russian dominance in the European energy market.[66] Moreover, with these developments, just as in the Iranian case, major players in Russian domestic politics have made significant, long-term gains in Syria that compound the geopolitical significance of Russia's successful intervention.

The Future of the Axis

Having outlined the scale and scope of Russian and Iranian investment in Syria's reconstruction so far, the situational nature of the Iran–Russia alliance in Syria is clear. For Iran, Syria is a key node in connecting Tehran to the Mediterranean and a point of leverage over its regional rivals; securing this node is an aim that Iran, and the IRGC especially, has expended much to achieve. It is exactly this which makes Iran a liability for Russia's own strategic and economic gains in Syria. Iran's antagonism toward many of the region's power players, particularly Israel, dramatically risks the stability of the postwar Assad regime. This risk, and the reticence of the United States and its allies to help reconstruct a Syria saturated by Iranian influence,[67] pose barriers to the true consummation of Russia's victory. In addition, there is also the notion that Tehran and Moscow have divergent visions of how a postwar Syrian state would look. As one analyst succinctly stated, "Russia is interested in the unity and sovereignty of Syria, whereas Iran seeks to create a state within a state."[68] For Iran, marshaling of sectarian division in Syria and elsewhere would serve best to maximize its influence in the region; for Russia, a strong Syrian state, free from insurrection and sectarianism, would better guarantee Moscow's new influence in the Middle East.[69]

Russian efforts to reconsolidate the Syrian state would seem to corroborate this narrative. Twice last year, Pres. Vladimir Putin insisted that "foreign forces" exit Syria as soon as possible.[70] Russia has, too, worked to place the various Shi'a militias operating in Syria under the rubric of the Assad regime's Syrian National

Defence Forces,[71] a move that would at once diminish the influence of Iran and Hezbollah on the ground and serve to centralize Assad's military power. Russia has also worked to undermine Iran's efforts at long-term military entrenchment. In March 2018, Israeli sources reported that Russia stepped in to forestall Iranian plans for a naval base in Tartus.[72] Assad similarly rebuffed an Iranian request in 2016 to move SAM and SSM batteries into Syria and another request from Tehran to set up permanent bases.[73] In addition, Russia's frequent coordination with Israel and increasingly close relationship with Turkey further place Russia in a commanding interlocutory position between the two regional powers, leading Moscow to occasionally accommodate Israel and Turkey in a way that has compromised the full fruition of Iran's Syria strategy. Russia's benign stance toward Israel has enabled frequent strikes on Iranian positions, and a desire to prevent escalation allegedly led Moscow to press for Iranian forces to leave southern Syria in June 2018.[74] Moreover, Russia has frequently stalled a planned Syrian–Iranian offensive on the last rebel stronghold in Idlib, leading to the subsequent creation of a jointly patrolled buffer zone between Aleppo and the port city of Latakia.[75]

Russia seems to enjoy a favored position in the reconstruction race, so much so that Moscow has in fact managed to wrestle contracts away from Iran. In June 2017, the Syrian government signed contracts with Iran earlier in the year giving that country the rights to "the exploration, extraction and investment of phosphate" in mines in Sawana and Khunayfis in the country's northwest, "the most important phosphate extraction areas in Syria."[76] However, in March 2018, it was reported that Stroytransgaz started maintenance of the al-Sharqiya and Khunayfis mines, the Syrian People's Assembly having reallocated investment and extraction rights for the Palmyra mines to Stroytransgaz.[77] According to the Russian news service *RBC*, "a source close to Syrian government told RBC that the contract for the restoration of the Damascus mines was really going to be given to Iran, but in the end, the choice was made in favor of Russia."[78] Iranian officials have taken note of such instances, and the Iranian media has expressed its consternation at Russia's seniority in the partnership.

Several official Iranian outlets have aired criticism of and consternation about Russian policy in Syria for a number of reasons, among them Russia's benign attitude toward Israeli policy in Syria[79] and an increasing premonition that Russia would throw Iran "under the bus" in exchange for economic and political concessions from the West.[80] Some outlets have reached into the store of history to invoke the historical specters of the Treaty of Turkmenchay and the joint Anglo–Soviet invasion of Iran in 1941 as a means by which to emphasize the contingency of the alliance in Syria.[81] Another narrative gaining currency in right-leaning Iranian media is that Assad is secretly cooperating with Russia to the detriment

of Iran's interests. The website Baztab, founded by a conservative IRGC general, complained that "Iran . . . [is] sidelined from reconstruction" and that "should Iran desire to participate . . . it must negotiate with Russia!"[82] Another website associated with the general purported that a secret agreement about the reconstruction process "between Moscow and Damascus" was "messing Iran over," denying the country full access to investment "despite the high costs incurred by Iran."[83]

This narrative, it would seem, has diffused, one newspaper linked to Iranian president Hassan Rouhani colorfully attacking Assad as an "ungrateful, selfish, cowardly and pansy person" for his ostensible preference for Russia.[84] Iranian officials have also echoed this sentiment, with a senior military advisor to the Iranian Supreme Leader, who in September 2016 revealed his fears about a Syrian agreement being signed between Russia and the United States, stating, "[T]hat does not take Iran's share into account."[85] Moreover, in the almost immediate wake of senior American officials' speculation about Russian abandonment last year, Iran signed an agreement with Syria in August to ensure Iran's continued "presence, participation and assistance" in the country, Iran's defense minister using the occasion to underscore that "no third party can affect the presence of Iranian advisers in Syria."[86] Following the recent American withdrawal announcement, some Iranian commentators assessed that Russian preeminence in Syria will drastically undermine Iran's position.[87]

Future Directions

Upon examining the investments made by Russian and Iranian state-affiliated companies and how those investments match both countries' long-term strategies for Syria, it would seem that both countries are pursuing similar, increasingly competitive strategies of investment in key sectors of the Syrian economy to translate their military contributions into long-term influence in Syria. It is important to take a sober view of competition between Iran and Russia even that, as has been pointed out, exaggerating a "rift" between the two would be to ignore the two countries' extensive economic and military cooperation outside the Syrian question.[88] Nonetheless, as has been shown, the shift in focus from short-term victory to long-term accommodation has led to incipient friction between the two countries, something that increasingly implies a divergence of interests. This is in addition to the fact that, given the poor state of the Russian and Iranian economies, their joint investment nonetheless leaves the reconstruction puzzle incomplete. It is at this juncture that the United States and its allies can bring their influence to bear.

In addition to removing Iranian boots from Syrian ground, undermining Iranian investment in the country should also be taken into consideration. The re-

construction contracts awarded to Iran prime the country for leverage over the Assad regime in the future, and the investment portfolio of the IRGC has been bolstered—its planned refineries on Syria's Mediterranean coast would open up options for the circumvention of sanctions, and its investments further lay an economic framework for the realization of a Shi'a corridor. A multilateral approach would be able to apply enough pressure on the Assad regime and its Russian ally, both of which are anxious to translate their military victory into a political one, to take steps to diminish Iranian influence across the board. The United States, the European Union, and the Gulf States should make investment in Syrian reconstruction contingent on a full Iranian military withdrawal from Syria and the reallocation of contracts, at least from IRGC-owned and affiliated Iranian companies. This is a pragmatic strategy that would at once address three major questions that must be answered if the Syrian crisis is to end once and for all: the reconstruction of Syria, the return of refugees to their homes, and, to a significant extent, the question of regional stability.

Earlier in January, the US Special Representative for Syria Engagement stated that the United States is withholding reconstruction aid until Iran withdraws;[89] this is an important step and represents a considerable carrot with which to tempt the Assad regime. Developing this approach into a multilateral strategy, arraying America's European and Gulf allies around the same goal, would help create the pressure necessary to force the Assad regime to reconsider its options. Within the European bloc, recent developments suggest that France would be the most influential and vocal ally of this strategy. Numerous European states, particularly Germany, are anxious to reach a full resolution to the conflict as soon as possible, given the political pressures of the refugee crisis, with Italy openly mulling reopening its embassy[90] and the United Kingdom allegedly preparing to renovate its embassy in Damascus.[91] France, however, has consistently and forcefully backed the demand that Iranian forces leave Syria,[92] French premier Emmanuel Macron appealing to President Trump on more than one occasion to keep America's contingent in Syria's northeast to prevent the consolidation of Iranian forces there.[93] The European Union has a significant stake in the resolution of the Syrian conflict due to the refugee crisis, although it has so far refused to commence reconstruction before the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2254, stipulating a full ceasefire followed by free and fair elections. The European Union should, in addition to this stipulation and along with the United States and the Gulf allies, make the radical diminution of Iranian influence in Syria another condition on Europe's contribution to Syrian reconstruction.

Even more than the European states, the Gulf States have an interest in dislodging Iran from Syria. While Qatar remains a committed opponent of the

Assad regime's rehabilitation,[94] the other Gulf States have poised themselves to take a more pragmatic approach. The Arab League is likely to vote to readmit Syria as a member at a March summit in Tunisia, with several Gulf States playing a leading role in this development,[95] and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain reopened their Damascus embassies in late December 2018.[96] These three states doubtless conferred with Saudi Arabia before taking these steps, and given the regional context, it is likely the move was taken with diluting Iranian influence in mind. While Assad has insisted that the Gulf will play no role in Syria's reconstruction, given the massive cost of such an undertaking and the Gulf States' significant economic and diplomatic strength, it is questionable whether the Syrian government could withstand a generous, albeit conditional offer of aid, particularly a multilaterally coordinated one.

A final word about Russia. Moscow has successfully locked Russia into Syria, making itself diplomatically and militarily indispensable while scoring several lucrative contracts in key sectors of the Syrian economy. As illustrated, the extent of Russia's entrenchment in Syria and indispensability to the Assad regime is such that any Russian military withdrawal from Syria would be superficial. Russia's interest in locking in its gains once and for all should be leveraged to achieve an Iranian withdrawal from Syria, giving the Assad regime the necessary political support to demand both the evacuation of Iranian troops and proxies from the country. The formal conclusion of the war, the rehabilitation of the Assad regime as the legitimate Syrian government, and the financing of Syria's reconstruction are the last three hurdles to the completion of Russia's mission in Syria. The withdrawal of American troops from Syria is conducive to the former, although the latter remains a crucial point of leverage that can and should be used by the United States and its allies. One of the reasons Russian investment in Syria was highlighted in this article is to underscore that, even if Russia were to withdraw its troops, the extent of Russian influence in Syria is such that the withdrawal of Russian troops would be superficial and should no longer be seen as a trading chip as per Moscow's original aim. At the Helsinki Summit in July 2018, Syria was brought up alongside other issues in US–Russia relations, among them Crimea, American ABM sites in Poland, and Russian natural gas exports to Germany.[97] While of considerable importance, significant Russian influence in Syria is now a given, and reconstruction funding is a missing piece of the puzzle that only the United States and its allies can provide; as such, concessions should not be made elsewhere, especially in Europe, which has a far higher place in the Russian order of priorities.

The northeastern region of Syria, currently occupied by the United States and its local allies, contains 90 percent of Syria's oil and gas fields, major water re-

sources, dams, and some of Syria's most important agricultural land;[98] America's withdrawal from this area permits the subsequent reconquest of that region by the Assad regime and Russian forces, allowing for the conclusion of this long, painful chapter of Syrian history. While events on the ground change on a daily basis, examining Russian and Iranian investments is a useful way to glean insight into the two countries' long-term plans for, and key interests in, Syria, in addition to clarifying some of the domestic political motivations for continued intervention in the country's civil war. It is also a prism through which to observe the mounting friction between the two countries' long-term visions and through which to consider how this discord might be navigated to a settlement in Syria that will best serve the interests of the United States and its allies in the region.

Jay Mens

Mr. Mens is executive director of the Cambridge Middle East and North Africa Forum and an M.Phil. candidate at the Faculty of History at the University of Cambridge, where he earned his BA with double first-class honors in politics and international relations. He is a proficient speaker of nine languages, including Arabic, Persian, and Russian.

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FEATURE

The *Contract* Broken, and Restored

Air Rescue in Operation Inherent Resolve, 2014–2017 (Part 1 of 2)

Forrest L. Marion

In every major conflict since Korea in the early 1950s, the prospect of a US Air Force helicopter crew prepared to put it all on the line to pick up a US or coalition Airman downed behind enemy lines, denied areas, or in potentially hostile waters has proven, again and again, an incalculable morale boost to friendly aircrews. That assurance has also provided the tangible benefit of returning combatants to their units to continue the fight.[1] Moreover, the rescue crews themselves shared in the morale factor. One Sikorsky H-5 helicopter pilot during 1950–1951 in Korea recalled, "After a successful rescue mission, morale would be sky high—from the rescue crew right down to the administrative clerk—they had all had a part in it."[2] Although the doctrinal lesson seemed to be forgotten for several years around 1960, the Korean conflict established the concept of air rescue "as an integral part of U.S. fighting forces."[3]

The mission of rescuing downed Airmen from the harsh terrain and freezing waters of Korea, the steamy jungles of Southeast Asia, and, more recently, from the sometimes even harsher terrain and climate of Afghanistan and Iraq has garnered wide recognition, numerous awards for valor, and heartfelt appreciation for the air rescue community and those special operations and sister service rotary-wing aircrews who have also performed combat rescues. Since 2014, however, in the ongoing US–coalition operation against the Islamic State (ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh) known as Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), the fact that friendly forces have lost no more than two manned aircraft over ISIS-controlled or denied territory—and none to date since providing a dedicated and realistic rescue capability for the Iraq–Syria theater of operations in 2015—has meant the value of the Combat Search and Rescue/Personnel Recovery (CSAR/PR) capability has been strictly *moral* (boosting aircrew morale) rather than *material* (returning downed Airmen) in nature. Although a 100-percent rate of returning downed Airmen home has been a rarity in military history, it is exactly in line with US–coalition wishes. Sometimes the goal has been achieved. In the 1999 NATO air campaign against the Milošević regime in Serbia, the United States lost two aircraft, an F-117 and an F-16. In both cases, US special operations rotary-wing forces rescued the pilot. There were no other coalition losses of manned aircraft over enemy territory.[4]

The Rise of ISIS and the Tepid US Response[5]

A recent, acclaimed study observes that the "uniquely abhorrent jihadist movement" ISIS arose by 2012 out of the turmoil of the Syrian Civil War and, not long after—taking advantage of the vacuum created by the Obama administration's complete withdrawal of US forces from Iraq at the end of 2011—expanded the organization's brutal reach to encompass sizable portions of Iraq and Syria. After capturing Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, in June 2014, the group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared the so-called Islamic State a caliphate, with its capital at Raqqa, Syria. Within two months, flush with captured US weapons, Humvees, and M1 Abrams tanks, ISIS threatened the lives of tens of thousands of Kurds in northern Syria. Faced with an impending catastrophe and likely genocide against the Kurds, the Obama administration committed US air assets to protect, as the president stated, US personnel in the area and to provide humanitarian relief to thousands of civilians "trapped on a mountain without food and water."[6] Only months earlier, the president had famously referred to the now-rampaging ISIS as "a jayvee team" in comparison with its predecessor, al-Qaeda in Iraq.[7] The air strikes that followed the president's decision were the "first American use of kinetic airpower in Iraq" (relating to strikes by ordnance as opposed to nonkinetic airpower such as intelligence-gathering) in the almost three years since the US withdrawal.[8]

Statements such as "ISIL is not 'Islamic'" revealed the administration's reluctance to face the unpleasant realities on the ground.[9] It took the Pentagon until 15 October—two months from the start of combat operations—to announce the designation "Operation Inherent Resolve" for what included a pinprick air campaign averaging less than 10 sorties a day. Noted military strategist Anthony Cordesman deemed the US–coalition air effort in the fall of 2014 as "little more than military tokenism" and "simply too small and unfocused."[10] Another defense analyst viewed the effort as applying "the least amount of force possible while still claiming credit for doing something about the Islamic State."[11] John R. Bolton, who in 2018 became Pres. Donald Trump's national security advisor, had written four years earlier that Obama's policies "have been haphazard and confused, especially the halting, timid decision to intervene militarily."[12] Although the US-coalition eventually increased its strike sortie rate and began targeting the source of the vast majority of ISIS's revenues—oil and its financial infrastructure—in early 2016 John Andreas Olsen's *Airpower Applied* characterized Inherent Resolve as oxymoronic due to its continued "manifest *absence* of any such resolve."[13] (emphasis added)

The Failure to Establish *Dedicated* CSAR/PR in OIR, 2014

The USAF, the Pentagon, and US Central Command (USCENTCOM) senior leadership exhibited an absence of resolve in two ways: 1), a *hard* fail, not adhering to joint personnel recovery doctrine during OIR's first month (August–September 2014); and, 2), a *soft* fail, not meeting the traditional, historically based expectations for *dedicated* CSAR/PR with a realistic chance of recovering USAF and other aviators for the next five months (September 2014–February 2015). The Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group arrived in the US Fifth Fleet area of operations on 12 September 2014. Shortly thereafter, a Marine MV-22 element was made available to the Commander Joint Task Force (CJTF)–OIR for PR duty; but between 8 August and early September there had been no PR force suitable for recovering a downed Airman.[14]

Consistent with the traditional expectations of Airmen, in 2001 Pres. George W. Bush—a former fighter pilot—directed that personnel recovery forces were to be in place *before* the start of combat operations in Afghanistan. Accordingly, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Gen Richard Myers, USAF, acknowledged to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, "Of course, we couldn't start anything until CSAR was in place, so let's talk about getting the CSAR in place." They did so. But in 2014—amid an admittedly messy situation that required balancing insufficient dwell rates and assets and fluctuating administrative processes including those for requesting forces—the leadership failed to get PR (of any service capable of recovering a downed Airman) in place, much less the preferred PR mechanism of Air Force CSAR.[15]

That potentially consequential failure was the bottom line for some, perhaps many, Airmen, and it created angst among individuals up and down the chain of command who realized that the most-capable PR methodology was not being provided to Airmen operating over Iraq–Syria, with a despicable enemy on the ground below them.

PR Policy Background

A recent, authoritative study by three Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) experts began its policy discussion with reference to National Security Presidential Directive 12, *United States Citizens Taken Hostage Abroad*. The 2002 presidential directive stated, "The policy of the United States is to work diligently to free US citizens held hostage abroad, unharmed." That was one of several foundations for PR, though the preferred scenario obviously was one that precluded personnel ever becoming a hostage. When the JPRA study was published in 2012, the most recent PR policy directive, DOD Directive (DODD) 3002.01E, *Personnel Recov-*

ery in the Department of Defense (2009) stated, "Preserving the lives and well-being of U.S. military, DoD civilians, and DoD contractor personnel authorized to accompany the U.S. Armed Forces who are in danger of becoming . . . [isolated] while participating in U.S.-sponsored activities or missions, is one of the highest priorities of the Department of Defense." The JPRA authors pointed out that each service "has developed distinct tactics and techniques to perform PR, based upon doctrinal guidance in JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*, republished on 20 December 2011." The above joint publication included an Air Force annex that stated, "CSAR is the operational capability that enables USAF rescue forces to respond effectively across the range of military operations. It is normally accomplished with a mix of *dedicated* and augmenting assets." (emphasis added) Another passage stated simply, "CSAR is the primary USAF recovery method."[16]

Air Force doctrine called for CSAR/PR to be in place prior to the start of hostilities. In Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 3-50, *Personnel Recovery Operations* (*PRO*], published in 2005 and updated on 1 November 2011, the service's position was that "the Air Force has always been committed to the recovery of *any* isolated personnel," even though previous doctrine "*overly* focused on the rescue of aircrews." One of its foundational doctrine statements was, "[CSAR] is how the Air Force accomplishes the PR recovery task." (emphasis added) However, in 2014, the plan for dedicated PR for the recovery of isolated personnel during the first six months of OIR was decidedly suboptimal, and the joint task force lacked a dedicated Air Force CSAR capability for the benefit of any downed aircrew during the same period. If only senior leaders could have been accused of being "overly focused" on the rescue of aircrews, as AFDD 3-50 confessed had been the case in earlier conflicts.[17]

The doctrine contained in *PRO* envisioned a different scenario, and it harkened back to General Myers and Operation Enduring Freedom:

> PRO forces should deploy in theater *prior to the start of hostilities* and be prepared to provide *immediate PRO mission capability* with minimal support airlift. . . . The initial deployment of PR forces in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) represents a perfect example of the significant emphasis that combatant commanders and Service chiefs put on PR. Military commanders delayed decisive operations until the [joint force commander] established an adequate PR capability. Another way to look at this, *OEF demonstrated the need to have PR forces in place prior to commencement of combat operations*.[18] (emphasis added)

Historically, Airmen understood that "an adequate PR capability" for those conducting flight operations over hostile territory meant CSAR.

As the president had directed and CJCS Myers indicated, "getting the CSAR in place" was the full expectation of USAF, if not also Naval, aviators. That was

despite the fact that the terms *dedicated* and *CSAR* did not appear in the (above) excerpt from *PRO*. These terms appeared at least half a dozen times in the short *PRO* document. In its most detailed passage, the *PRO* doctrine writers stated, "*Dedicated* forces include rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft, specially trained 'battlefield Airmen,' and specific duty positions crucial in the [personnel recovery operations] execution." The doctrine document referred to "*dedicated* ground or airborne alert posture," "*dedicated* PRO forces," and "*dedicated* Air Force assets that organize, train, and perform personnel recovery operations."[19] (emphases added)

The key term was *dedicated*, an adjective meaning "given over to a particular purpose." In an Air Force doctrine context, for decades that purpose was understood to mean the combat rescue of Airmen (or special operators) downed in enemy-held or denied territory. A standard judicial doctrine of statutory interpretation presumes that legislators include certain words because they have significance. If a similar approach may be permitted in the case of a doctrinal document, the repeated inclusion of the term *dedicated* must be understood as having significance. That significance was to convey that rescue assets (aircraft, personnel, organizations, and equipment) were "given over" to the sole purpose of combat rescue/personnel recovery. Otherwise, the word would not have been used or was used without meaning.[20]

Since CSAR was the Air Force's mechanism, methodology, or "how the Air Force accomplishes the PR recovery task," were Airmen at fault for anticipating that the joint force commander would provide CSAR when they operated over hostile territory? Moreover, when it came to bringing back a downed Airman from enemy territory, it was inarguable that no other PR methodology topped CSAR. That was to be expected, as no other service had assets tasked solely with PR. Was not a dedicated CSAR team the implied *contract* the country had led its Airmen to expect since the Korea–to–Southeast Asia era, validated (albeit with some failures along the way) in every conflict in the half-century since? If perhaps that was asking too much, joint and service doctrine called for *some* service's methodology of PR before the commencement of combat operations. Gen James Jones, USMC, the former commander of European Command, expressed it this way, albeit more broadly: "The military must have a 'social contract' with the troops and must never see them as expendable." However, in OIR such support was nowhere to be found for the first month. And for the following five months, did a PR force based approximately 600 miles away and close to three-hours' flight time from the target area meet the intent?[21]

From Zero to TRAP, But No Air Force CSAR in 2014

In terms of CSAR/PR, the OEF experience became a lesson unlearned during the early part of OIR. Perhaps even more important during OIR's first six months, however, the limited CSAR/PR capability stressed planners, fliers, and tactical commanders alike. One PR planner, who in 2014 worked at the JPRA and later at the US Air Forces Central Command (USAFCENT) headquarters at Shaw AFB, South Carolina, Dr. Erick W. Nason, put the matter bluntly: "One of the biggest concerns that came up was Personnel Recovery: *there was none*. . . . When this crisis began, there was *no capability within the theater* to support anything [in terms of PR] in Iraq," despite the fact that USCENTCOM required a four-hour response as the command's planning base line.[22] (emphasis added)

Even a four-hour response was "not serious" in the view of noted airpower and air rescue historian Darrel Whitcomb, and it reflected "an expectation of a low probability of an isolating event." Whitcomb pointed out that "such an elongated response time did not fit historical norms for our recovery forces established in Southeast Asia, Desert Storm, or [Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom], where as a general principle, increased response time to an isolating event was related to a lower probability of recovery." For perhaps the first time since the summer of 1950 when USAF aircrews were expected to "walk out" if downed over North Korea, amazingly in 2014 the initial PR plan was "self-recovery," recalled Nason, a former US Army Ranger who finished his military career as a PR planner, retiring in 2005. Initially for OIR, isolated personnel were to try to make their own way to the US embassy in Baghdad. Worse still, isolated personnel could not expect the assistance of friendly local nationals, according to Nason, because the Iraqi evasion network "didn't exist" after 2011. When OIR began, perhaps adding to their chagrin, US aircrews received none of the gold coins their predecessors in Korea had enjoyed in case they had to buy their way home. For a time, they were truly on their own. In 2014, in a de facto sense the *contract* was broken, a disgrace that remained largely hidden only by the fact that no US Airman was burned alive before viewers worldwide.[23]

The embassy in Baghdad might have helped more than a safe house, but USAFCENT PR planners were told the three MH-60 helicopters attached to the embassy were unavailable for personnel recovery. While the embassy maintained a PR cell, local force protection issues overwhelmed the responsible individual, leaving no time for PR planning. Nason recalled that with the initial deployment of special operations teams to Baghdad, "our biggest concern [was] that we were on our own." Given the Obama administration's concern for limiting the number of boots on the ground, it took until September or October to get a Special Op-

erations Command Central (SOCCENT) PR planner/coordinator into Iraq to support the SOCCENT teams that, by then, had been on the ground for weeks, if not a month or longer.[24]

Col Dustin P. Smith, at different times in 2014 the USAFCENT chief of staff and operations director, remarked four years later that OIR had "hit at an inconvenient time for the Air Force," which was battling manpower cuts and sequestration. Airframes were in short supply as well, and he recalled USAFCENT was "constantly doing this shuffle . . . of resources around the [area of responsibility]," in part because for years Air Force HH-60Gs had been performing so many casualty evacuation missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, the rules for requesting forces in the operational theater were changing, adding to the challenge of meeting a legitimate requirement such as dedicated CSAR/PR. Smith's bottom line was that it was "a capacity issue . . . the Air Force just didn't have it," he said. In one individual-level case that illustrated the USAF's internal turmoil, a recently promoted colonel who had completed a doctorate paid for by the Air Force less than two years earlier was forced to retire in 2014, the shortsighted decision of a selective early retirement board. Another factor may have been the Obama administration's Asia-Pacific "pivot," which, in the view of the USAFCENT chief of PR in 2014, Maj Aaron B. Griffith, added to USCENTCOM's reluctance to send PR forces back into Iraq.[25]

In September, a US Marine Corps element consisting of MV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft—detached temporarily from its amphibious ready group—was "chopped" to the joint task force and appeared regularly on the air tasking order for OIR PR duty. The MV-22s were more or less dedicated PR assets for the next five months. While the Marines' MV-22 capability was welcomed, the USMC tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel (TRAP) team was far from optimal for OIR's conditions. First, the aircraft were based in Kuwait, about 600 miles from the area of operations. Response times depended on several factors, including the location of any isolated personnel, TRAP team alert status, threat, and weather conditions, but under the best of circumstances PR planners expected about a 2.5-hour flight time from launch (which might take up to an hour from notification) to being overhead of a survivor in northern Iraq–Syria. The historical record of successful rescues in prior conflicts made that length of time problematic, and any downed Airman was placed at high risk to capture and exploitation. In 2015, former special operator and combat veteran Nolan Peterson, writing for *The Daily Signal*, reported the TRAP team's transit time from its then-undisclosed location "is too long to give downed pilots a realistic chance to evade the enemy."[26]

(US Marine Corps photo by LCpl Skyler E. Treverrow)

Figure 1. Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel rehearsal. US Marines with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force–Crisis Response–Central Command (SPMAGTF-CR-CC), conduct a security patrol during a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel rehearsal drill in the US Central Command area of operations, 25 October 2014. The Marines and Sailors of SPMAGTF–CR–CC serve as an expeditionary, crisis-response force tasked with supporting operations, contingencies, and security cooperation in Marine Corps Forces Central Command and USCENTCOM.

Second, the TRAP teams were not particularly well trained for CSAR/PR, at least initially. Because TRAP was an additional capability and not a primary mission, the teams could hardly have been expected to be as capable as those Air Force units for which rescue was their bread and butter. Col Gregory A. Roberts, the 1st Expeditionary Rescue Group's (1ERQG) commander when it activated in 2015, recalled that his pararescuemen (the enlisted were known as PJs, for parajumpers) and PJ support personnel worked with both the Marines' TRAP in Kuwait and, later, the Navy's MH-60S element at Erbil, Iraq, starting with the basics of "communication for picking up a guy with a PRC90 or PRC112 [survival] radio. . . . And we worked with them on *very basic* [tactics, techniques, and procedures] to ingress and egress *an uncontested zone*. We never got to contested zones, at least in 2016." (emphasis added) In one training exercise held at the Udari Range in Kuwait in March 2016, the Marine MV-22 element participated with USAF HC-130 and pararescue members. In 2019, former PR chief, now–Lt Col Aaron Griffith, felt the TRAP team's training had brought them "signifi-

cantly closer in capability to that of CSAR forces." Still, the bottom line expressed by one A-10C Sandy-1 (CSAR flight lead) pilot, Maj Michael R. Dumas, was simply, "TRAP is not CSAR, it's TRAP." His point was beyond dispute: the term itself—Tactical Recovery of *Aircraft* and Personnel—demonstrated a divided purpose, clearly at odds with the sole purpose of Air Force CSAR/PR, which was the rescue or recovery of the downed *personnel*.[27] (emphasis added)

Perhaps the Operation Odyssey Dawn, March 2011, recovery in eastern Libya of a downed F-15E Strike Eagle pilot, call sign Bolar-34, by an MV-22 may have encouraged OIR's personnel recovery planners three years later. The rescue was successful and was executed quickly and in a chaotic environment. The recovery itself was uncontested, but, unfortunately, was marred by a US helicopter's strafing of (friendly) Libyan rebel forces who were attempting to assist the pilot (rebel forces had recovered the Strike Eagle's weapon systems officer, or WSO). After the WSO had been rescued, the villagers "had a celebration for him," stated one of them. However, at the time the TRAP team was unaware of all that and so rightly protected the downed Airman from the unknown elements approaching his position.[28]

But, third, in Roberts' view the MV-22 did not hover well, especially in the desert, and it was very difficult to land well in the fine powdery sand. Moreover, "the crews don't typically train to the brown-out landings [as] the AF rescue helos do, or the [Air Force] AFSOC CV-22 crews," wrote Colonel Roberts two years after finishing his second command tour in a USCENTCOM combat theater.[29]

It was only after 1st Lt Moaz Youssef al-Kasasbeh of the Jordanian Air Force (call sign Blade-11) was downed in late December, and then gruesomely burned to death by ISIS a week or two later, that US leadership awakened to the CSAR/PR situation and quickly moved to deploy dedicated helicopters to Iraq. And if anyone in US leadership still required convincing, coalition members demanded the Americans increase their personnel recovery posture if they expected partner air forces to fly combat sorties over ISIS-held territory.[30]

Blade-11 had landed in the water and was quickly rolled-up by ISIS forces in the vicinity. In Colonel Roberts's view, there had been virtually no chance of rescuing him without an immediately ready CSAR aircraft operating within perhaps 20 miles of the downed pilot's location. One former official at USAFCENT headquarters stated, "When that Jordanian pilot was [downed] we really did not have a way to rapidly go get that guy [even] if we had the opportunity." From his perspective as a former PR chief, Lieutenant Colonel Griffith added that, unfortunately, Blade-11 had been "completely incapable and untrained to effect his own evasion and recovery," which highlighted the lack of some coalition partners' training in personnel recovery.[31]

Others expressed similar concerns. Lt Col James E. Brunner, an HC-130 instructor pilot who deployed to Ali Al Salem AB, Kuwait, commanded, first, the 26th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron within the 1ERQG in 2015, and, later, the 79th Rescue Squadron. He recalled that the lack of CSAR/PR at the outset of OIR made him "very uncomfortable." He went on to express his perspective, one traditionally shared by the rescue community, "We are the first in, we get there before anything even starts to happen, and we're the last out, when the last bomb has been dropped. . . . That was always my expectation."[32]

By September 2014, the PR reality—an MV-22 perhaps three hours away—was not what Airmen had come to expect, even if personnel recovery doctrine was arguably met. In an interview four years later, Colonel Roberts described the recovery capability during the early months of OIR in late 2014 as "a patchwork of non-dedicated [CSAR/PR] assets that the Joint Personnel Recovery Center [JPRC at] Al Udeid could have put together on behalf of the CENTCOM commander to effect a combat search and rescue recovery." Any mission in the first six months of OIR to retrieve isolated personnel would have been ad hoc. Moreover, the MV-22s were not "optimized" for personnel recovery in the operational area, he added, perhaps referring mainly to the lengthy flight time required to reach an isolated member in northern Iraq–Syria. In 2015, an Erbil-based pararescueman was not wide of the mark when he stated, "If a pilot goes down, we're their only chance," surely an implicit acknowledgment that an MV-22 based in Kuwait several months earlier had been considered unlikely to arrive in time to make a difference. An Erbil-based Pave Hawk pilot who also deployed in 2015 described what his team's rotary-wing assets had brought to the table. Several years later, Maj Thaddeus L. Ronnau, recalled, "We were the only dedicated CSAR platform with the reaction time, defensive systems, and the 'legs' to effectively cover the most-targeted areas." Roberts was among several USAFCENT field-grade leaders who considered Blade-11's downing and horrific death "a watershed moment," wake-up call, or catalyst for USAFCENT's forming the 1st Expeditionary Rescue Group.[33]

The Cultural Chasm of the Opposing Sides

One, perhaps telling, aspect to the establishment of a rescue organization to support OIR concerned the cultural or moral differences of the opposing sides. On one hand, for many decades US Air Force air rescue forces—*specifically* designated for that mission—have been viewed as the guys in "white hats," willing to go to great personal risk to pluck a downed Airman from the enemy's grasp. In his *Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia, 1961–1975*, noted airpower historian Earl H. Tilford, Jr. addressed three basic reasons for the American devotion of significant military resources for the purpose of rescuing downed Airmen: (1) the traditional,

which was to say, Judeo-Christian, "belief in the sanctity of human life"; (2) the high cost of training military pilots who might need to be replaced if not for a rescue capability; and, (3) the knowledge that fliers "performed their duties more efficiently knowing that every effort would be made to rescue them if they were shot down." The last of these, the morale factor, has been highlighted many times from Korea to the post–9/11 global war.[34]

On the other hand, ISIS appeared as the very embodiment of evil. In some cases, its fighters not only butchered but reveled in their butchery—not only of enemy fighters but even civilian captives, including women and children. Unfortunately, there was precedent during the 1820s for ISIS's behavior in a region not far from the Levant. At a meeting held in New York City for the relief of the Greeks, Luther Bradish, Esq., who between 1819 and 1825 served as an envoy of Pres. John Quincy Adams—and in 1827 as the literary agent for novelist James Fenimore Cooper—reported his observations of the suffering Greeks in their quest for independence from the Turks:

> I tell you that which I have myself seen. . . . I have seen the smoking ruins of her towns, and her villages—the devastation of her fields and her flocks. I have seen her peaceful inhabitants, men and women, murdered in cold blood. I have seen her daughters carried into slavery. I have seen them sold in the markets of Asia to furnish out the harems of her brutal oppressors. Nay, more, sir, I have seen the bleeding heads of her heroes, her patriots, and her venerable sages, exposed upon the gates of the seraglio, to the scoffs and insults of a ferocious fanatic, and infuriated mob. Each returning evening has brought new victims, and each succeeding morning renewed this horrid spectacle.[35]

Bradish recounted that while traveling through Turkey on horseback he often encountered government couriers headed to Constantinople, their horses loaded with sacks. When he asked what the sacks contained, the cold reply was, "'O nothing but Greek heads and ears.'" "This was not a circumstance that occurred rarely," said Bradish, but it was almost a daily occurrence or even several times a day. Given ISIS's disturbingly similar treatment of its victims two centuries later—those it killed, as well as the women and girls it enslaved—was not the impartial observer hard pressed to imagine a wider gulf between OIR's belligerents in terms of culture and morality on the battlefield? Simply put, one side, particularly its rescue force, embraced a culture of life; the other, ISIS, a culture of death. Although Pres. George W. Bush a decade earlier had described al-Qaeda in an address, not ISIS, he came close to acknowledging the same cultural chasm when he summed up the enemy's creed as "a mindset that rejoices in suicide, incites murder, and celebrates every death we mourn." In contrast, Bush continued,

"We do love life, the life given to us and to all. We believe in the values that uphold the dignity of life."[36]

Dr. Forrest L. Marion

Dr. Marion (VMI; MA, University of Alabama; PhD, University of Tennessee) has been a staff historian and oral historian since 1998 at the Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, Alabama. He retired as a colonel from the US Air Force Reserve in 2010 with 16 years of active duty. His most recent publication *is Flight Risk: The Coalition's Air Advisory Mission in Afghanistan, 2005–2015* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2018).

Notes

1. In Korea, fixed-wing SA-16 amphibians also conducted combat rescues from inland and coastal waters, and from several offshore islands, north of the front lines; *see* Forrest L. Marion, "'The Dumbo's Will Get Us in No Time,': Air Force SA-16 Combat Operations in the Korean War Theater, 1950–1953," *Air Power History* 46, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 16–29. That fixed-wing combat rescue role was seen in a few cases during the Southeast Asia conflict a decade later and more recently with the MV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft.

2. Richard McVay, 3rd Air Rescue Squadron Operations Officer, conversations with the author, June 1992.

3. Forrest L. Marion, *That Others May Live: USAF Air Rescue in Korea* (Washington: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2004), 7, 47–48; Ed Timperlake, "The TRAP Mission over Libya: Highlighting a Strategic Opportunity," *SLDinfo.com*, 17 August 2011. Although the relevant Air Force doctrine documents neglected any mention of the Korean experience in terms of CSAR/PR, it was in Korea where US–coalition Airmen first came to expect that air rescue forces would go to great risks to recover them; *Combat Search and Rescue, Air Force Doctrine Document 2-1.6* (15 July 2000), i, 2; *Personnel Recovery Operations, Air Force Doctrine Document 3-50* (1 June 2005) (incorporating interim change 2, 1 November 2011), 2–3; and *Annex 3-50 Personnel Recovery, Introduction to Personnel Recovery*, Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, Maxwell AFB, AL, 23 October 2017.

4. Darrel D. Whitcomb, *On a Steel Horse I Ride: A History of the MH-53 Pave Low Helicopters in War and Peace* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2012), 448–58; and Darrel D. Whitcomb and Forrest L. Marion, "Team Sport, Combat Search and Rescue Over Serbia, 1999," *Air Power History* 61, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 28–37.

5. While several designations have been used for the radical Sunni terrorist group, this essay will use the currently favored term in US military circles, *ISIS*. One alternate designation, ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), by definition includes the territory of the State of Israel (part of the Levant or land areas touching the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea), making the term itself a misnomer because Israel, thankfully, retains its independence. *See* Christopher Woolf and Nina Porzucki, "Why Are We Having Such a Hard Time Coming Up with a Name for ISIS? (ISIL? Daesh?)," *PRI*, 8 January 2014 (updated 17 November 2015), https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-01-08/you-say-levant-i-say-sham-lets-call-whole-thing-greater-syria.

6. Barack Obama, "President Obama Makes a Statement on Iraq," *YouTube*, 7 August 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=ax4a6cH1Wjs.

7. Quoted in David Remnick, "Going the Distance: On and Off the Road with Barack Obama," *New Yorker*, 19 January 2014, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/27/going-the-distance-david-remnick.

8. John Andreas Olsen, ed., *Airpower Applied: U.S., NATO, and Israeli Combat Experience* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017), 180–84; and Anthony N. Celso, "Zarqawi's Legacy: Al Qaeda's ISIS 'Renegade,'" *Mediterranean Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (June 2015), 27.

9. Quoted in Aaron Blake, "Obama Says the Islamic State 'Is Not Islamic,' Americans Disagree," *Washington Post*, 11 September 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/09/11/obama-says-the-islamic-state-is-not-islamic-americans-are-inclined-to-disagree/.

10. Quoted in David Welna, "Critics Say 'Inherent Resolve' Mission Against ISIS Is Underwhelming," *NPR*, 15 October 2014, https://www.npr.org/2014/10/15/356451133/critics-say-inherent-resolve-mission-against-isis-is-underwhelming.

11. Mark Gunzinger and John Stillion, "The Unserious Air War Against ISIS," *Wall Street Journal*, 14 October 2014, https://www.wsj.com/articles/mark-gunzinger-and-john-stillion-the-unserious-air-war-against-isis-1413327871.

12. John R. Bolton, "Destroy the 'Islamic State'," *National Review*, 8 September 2014, https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2014/09/08/destroy-islamic-state/.

13. Barack Obama, "On ISIL, Our Objective Is Clear," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 10 September 2014; Jennifer Hlad, "Marine Corporal Is Reclassified as 1st to Die in Operation Inherent Resolve," *Stars and Stripes*, 28 October 2014; Olsen, ed., *Airpower Applied*, 185–88 ["manifest *absence*" quote, emphasis in original]; Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Imploding U.S. Strategy in the Islamic State War?," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 23 October 2014; and Bolton, "Destroy the 'Islamic State.'" As late as June 2015, 10 months from the start of OIR, USAFCENT aircraft released less than 1,700 weapons during the month, barely 50 per day over Iraq–Syria; *see* Slide, "Combined Forces Air Component Commander, 2011–2016 Airpower Statistics," United States Air Forces Central Command, Combined Air and Space Operations Center, *USAFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs*, 31 December 2016 (copy at AFHRA).

14. "DOD: Marine's Death 1st in Iraq, 2nd since Start of US Campaign against Islamic State," *Stars and Stripes*, 25 October 2014; and Christopher Lindahl, "Amphibious Squadron Five/11th MEU Transits from U.S. 5th Fleet to U.S. 7th Fleet," *Amphibious Squadron Five Public Affairs*, 11 January 2015. The authority/responsibility for PR operations resided with the commander, USCENTCOM; *see* Briefing, "USCENTCOM Personnel Recovery," Maj Aaron B. Griffith, USAFCENT/A3XR, 20 March 2014, version 2.0, slide 3 (CD entitled "CSAR files," by USAFCENT/HO, 9 October 2018, copy at AFHRA). A document search at the Office of the Secretary of Defense Executive Archive for unclassified documentation (during 2014) concerning dedicated CSAR/PR assets for OIR produced negative results. If perhaps the USCENTCOM commander had requested additional CSAR/PR assets from the CJCS or the Secretary of Defense, such a request was not discovered or was not releasable.

15. *Personnel Recovery Operations*, 17; and Lee Pera, Paul D. Miller, and Darrel Whitcomb, "Personnel Recovery: Strategic Importance and Impact," *Air & Space Power Journal* 26, no. 6 (November–December 2012), 102.

16. Pera, Miller, and Whitcomb, "Personnel Recovery," 86–87 (quotes 1-3 quoted by Pera, Miller, and Whitcomb); Joint Publication 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*, 20 Dec. 2011, F-1, F-3 (emphasis added); and William J. Rowell, "Whole of Government Approach to Personnel Recovery," Strategy Research Project, United States Army War College, Class of 2012, 6, 8, 17. Since its

formation in 1999, the JPRA has been the DOD's office of primary responsibility for PR (Pera, Miller, and Whitcomb, 101).

17. *Personnel Recovery Operations*, iii, viii.

18. Ibid., 21.

19. Ibid., viii, 8, 11, 13, 17.

20. Forrest L. Marion and Jon T. Hoffman, *Forging a Total Force: The Evolution of the Guard and Reserve* (Washington: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2018), 130.

21. *Personnel Recovery Operations*, iii, viii, 3, 10, 11, 17; and Jones quoted by Pera, Miller, and Whitcomb, "Personnel Recovery," 86. The air distance from Kuwait to Syria was at least 600 nautical miles; Kuwait to Mosul, Iraq, was 550 nm.

22. Oral History Interview (OHI), Dr. Erick W. Nason, USAFCENT PR Plans, by author, Shaw AFB, SC, 5 September 2018 (audio-only, AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL, call no. K239.0512-2790); and Central Command Regulation [CCR] 525-33, *Personnel Recovery Procedures*, 17 November 2015, 9. Documentation from 2014 also stated the four-hour response time.

23. Darrel D. Whitcomb, to author, e-mail, "Re: 2014 PR req't," 25 January 2019; Darrel D. Whitcomb, to author, e-mail, "Fwd: rewrite of para. Comments," 29 January 2019; Forrest L. Marion, "Sabre Pilot Pickup: Unconventional Contributions to Air Superiority in Korea," *Air Power History* 49, no. 1 (2002), 23–24; Nason interview; and Dr. Erick W. Nason, to author, e-mail, "RE: interview follow-up," 4 October 2018.

24. Nason interview; and Nason e-mail.

25. OHI, Col Dustin P. Smith (USAF, Ret.), by author, Shaw AFB, SC, 6 September 2018 (audio-only, AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL, call no. K239.0512-2792); Debbie Gildea, "AF to Convene Enhanced Selective Early Retirement Board in June," *Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs*, 3 January 2014; Col Edwin H. Redman (USAF, Ret.), with author, conversation, Prattville, AL, 19 October 2018; and Lt Col Aaron B. Griffith (USAF), with author, telephone conversation, 22 October 2018.

26. Nason interview; Col Gregory A. Roberts (USAF), to author, e-mail, "RE: draft para's," 9 October 2018; Lt Col Aaron B. Griffith (USAF), to author, e-mail, "RE: MV-22s in Sep. 2014," 17 January and 22 January 2019; and Nolan Peterson, "What 'Boots on the Ground' in Iraq Looks Like," *Daily Signal*, 22 September 2015, https://www.dailysignal.com/2015/09/22/what-boots-on-the-ground-in-iraq-looks-like/.

27. Roberts e-mails, [emphasis added]; Griffith e-mails; and OHI, Maj Michael R. Dumas (USAF), by author, Maxwell AFB, AL, 8 August 2018 (audio-only, AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL, call no. K239.0512-2778).

28. Anna Mulrine, "How an MV-22 Osprey Rescued a Downed US Pilot in Libya," *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 March 2011; Ewen MacAskill, Tom Kington, and Chris McGreal, "Libya: Six Injured as US Team Botches Rescue of Downed Airmen," *Guardian*, 22 March 2011; Josh Phillips, "The Rescue of Bolar 34," *Naval Aviation News*, 15 December 2011; Pera, Miller, and Whitcomb, "Personnel Recovery," 83, 104; and Otto Kreisher, "Strike Eagle Rescue," *Air Force Magazine*, March 2013, 48–49.

29. Roberts e-mail. The author enjoyed the privilege of working with then–Lieutenant Colonel Roberts during his 2010–2011 command of the 438th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron in Kabul, Afghanistan.

30. Nason interview.

31. OHI, DATA MASKED (USAF), September 2018; Roberts e-mail; and Griffith e-mail.

32. OHI, Lt Col James E. Brunner (USAF), by author, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 11 September 2018 (audio-only, AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL, call no. K239.0512-2793); Col Gregory A. Roberts (USAF), to author, e-mail, "RE: status of CSAR paper," 24 January 2019.

33. OHI, Col Gregory A. Roberts (USAF), by author, Randolph AFB, TX, 24 August 2018 (audio-only, AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL, call no. K239.0512-2783); OHI, Col Dustin P. Smith (USAF, Ret.), 6 September 2018; Fred Shepherd, "Up in the Air," *Armada International*, April 2015, 8–13; Peterson, "What 'Boots on the Ground' in Iraq Looks Like"; and Maj Thaddeus L. Ronnau (USAF), with author, telephone conversation, 8 January 2019. On 6 December 2014, US Navy SEALs and Yemeni forces attempted to rescue a hostage held by al-Qaeda in southern Yemen. Note: This may be the other of the two known attempted hostage/PR missions in the August 2014–August 2015 time period (in addition to the Jordanian pilot); *see* Andy Oppenheimer, "Back to Iraq: Military Operations in the Middle East," *Military Technology* 39, no. 2 (February 2015), 63; Racheal E. Watson, "There Is Always a First: The 1st Expeditionary Rescue Group Activation," 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs, 3 September 2015; and "CSAR Unit Activates for Iraq and Syria," *airforcemag.com* archive, 8 September 2015. Fred Shepherd's article (above) mentioned US Navy MH-60R/S Seahawk helicopters in support of OIR, presumably in late 2014 or early 2015. No OIR participant I have interviewed has shed light on this matter. Almost certainly, the helicopters remained under the tactical and operational control of the deployed carrier task force to which they belonged; probably they were loosely considered to be available assets for CSAR/PR missions given the necessary coordination with the Navy. Basically, this was another element of CSAR/PR ad hockery of which OIR witnessed more than its share.

34. Ioannis Koskinas, *Black Hats and White Hats: The Effect of Organizational Culture and Institutional Identity on the Twenty-third Air Force* (CADRE Paper No. 24) (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, December 2006); and Earl H. Tilford, Jr., *Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia, 1961–1975* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1980), 2–3.

35. "Turkish Barbarity," *Charleston Observer* (South Carolina), 3 March 1827. Richard E. Bennett referred to Bradish as "a lawyer, linguist, diplomat, and statesman"; Bradish served as a New York State assemblyman from 1827 to 1830. He was known as "a man of integrity": see Bennett, "'A Very Particular Friend'—Luther Bradish," included in *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, edited by Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 63–82, https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/approaching-antiquity-joseph-smith-and-ancient-world/very-particular-friend-luther-bradish.

36. "Turkish Barbarity"; *Personnel Recovery Operations*, 1; Holly Young, "Kidnapped by Isis at 15: 'I Never Thought I'd See the Day When I Was Free,'" *Guardian*, 17 March 2016; and "Slaves of ISIS: The Long Walk of the Yazidi Women," *Guardian*, 25 July 2017. Arguably, for a time the US–coalition operated under rules of engagement so restrictive as to negate much of the cost, however defined, of employing deadly force against ISIS.

VIEW

Ideologizing and Fundamentalism in Iranian Foreign Policy under the Hassan Rouhani Presidency

Przemyslaw Osiewicz*

This article provides a theoretical and empirical study of the co-occurrence of ideologizing and fundamentalism in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran under Pres. Hassan Rouhani. Without any doubt, it is essential to understand the foundations of the Iranian political system to analyze Iran's foreign policy objectives as well as actions undertaken by Iranian authorities.

Iran's post-revolutionary history is often presented as a continuous struggle between idealists and pragmatists.[1] The first group of Iranian decision makers, often referred to as the *principlists*, focuses mainly on the ideological determinants and attempts to comply with them even when forced to sacrifice political or economic interests. The second group, namely the *reformists*, is ready to give up on selected ideological factors to achieve the set objectives and safeguard national interests. The 2015 nuclear negotiations could serve as the best example of such a political cleavage. Yet, the question is if the abovementioned observations are always valid and noticeable.

The main research objective is to identify the level of co-occurence of ideologizing and fundamentalism in the foreign policy of Iran under the Hassan Rouhani presidency. The main hypothesis is as follows: the level of ideologizing in the current Iranian foreign policy is probably not convergent with the level of fundamentalism. Do ideological principles form the basis for the final political decisions and actions of the Iranian authorities or are they nothing more than good-sounding declarations for the voters?

The selected research method is source analysis, and the research technique is qualitative content analysis. Among primary sources are relevant speeches, declarations, and official documents approved by key Iranian state bodies. Secondary sources include selected monographs, reports, and academic articles.

The empirical part of the article includes a study of elements that have constituted the core of the official state ideology since 1979 as well as an analysis of their implementation in Iranian foreign policy during the Rouhani presidency.

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On this basis, one should be able to determine the level of co-occurence of ideologizing and fundamentalism, defined as "strict adherence to the basic principles,"[2] in the current foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Theoretical Background: Shi'ism and Khomeinism

"In Shi'ism, specifically mainstream Twelver Shi'ism, the imams are without sin, and possess an infallible understanding of the Qur'an and sunna, granted to them through their unique relationship with God."[3] Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini exploited this concept when he devised his interpretation of *velayat-e faqih* (guardianship of the Islamic jurist). This ideological assumption was to become the core of the first-ever Islamic democracy.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a theocratic state, and its political system is based on the main values and principles of Shi'ism. Ayatollah Khomeini and his aides clarified and interpreted these principles soon after the victory of their revolutionary forces in 1979. Without any doubt, Shia Islam always played a key role in Iranian political life. Yet, this role had never been central before 1979. The revolution provided Iranian society with the dominant ideology that is noticeable in all spheres of public and political life. For this reason, it is impossible to analyze Iranian foreign policy only in terms of economic and political interests, excluding the foundations of the system. The dominant ideology provides Iranian decision makers with serious limitations. Yet, the question is if these decision makers always abide by the official rules and never take any pragmatic positions or, to put it more precisely, if the ideology always prevails over tangible benefits.

Before answering the above question, it is important to analyze briefly the Shia provisions and the key assumptions of Khomeinism that affect policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iranian society is overwhelmingly Shia, which is what makes it exceptional in the Muslim world. Hamid Dabashi, professor of Iranian studies at Columbia University, defines Shi'ism as a religion of protest.[4] This protest dynamic constitutes an integral part of the Iranian social and political systems. This factor is also noticeable in Iranian foreign policy. For example, Iranian authorities offer their assistance to various "oppressed" groups in the Middle East or openly criticize global powers, especially the United States, to manifest their opposition to unilateralism in international relations and to challenge the dominant position of the West. Shi'ism is also based on the concept of martyrdom. During the Iran–Iraq War, young Iranians were often encouraged to fight unarmed against Iraqi soldiers. They were to protect their homeland and suffer death for a just cause. Iran's proxies, such as Hezbollah, have also exploited this concept. Nowadays, some analysts claim that Iran and its allies have abandoned this emphasis on martyrdom.[5] If true, one could say that the current Iranian authorities are much

more pragmatic than their predecessors. Yet, such pragmatism does not change the fact that Shia values and provisions still constitute the core of Iranian politics.

Khomeinism is a doctrine steeped in Shia ideology. The main sources of Khomeinism are political thought and legacy of the Grand Ayatollah and the first Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini. During the rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Iran's last shah, Khomeini claimed, "Islam is primarily concerned with the whole of society, not just rituals for individuals and its rules are meant not just to be taught but implemented. In the absence of the *Imam*, those who are qualified to do this are the *ulama*, either one or a group of them."[6] Once Khomeini came to power in Iran, he applied the concept of *velayat-e faqih* in the making of the Iranian foreign policy. According to Imay Salamey and Zanaoubia Othman, the basis of this concept rests upon "ideological considerations, as inspired by the Shias' past and collective memory, and the visionary role of the leader expand the scope of foreign policy objectives beyond the basic requirement of state survival rationalism."[7] In the opinion of Ori Goldberg, "against the absolutist monarchies of twentieth-century Iran, Khomeini's doctrine of *velayat-e faqih*, demanding unprecedented political authority for the Shi'i clerics, was based on the notion that the most able interpreters were the most capable political leaders."[8] As a consequence, the supreme leader is the most important political *and* religious figure in Iran. He controls not only domestic affairs but also foreign affairs. The only question is if he focuses more on ideological aspects or represents a more pragmatic attitude toward the international system.

According to Ahmad Sadeghi, ideological aspects and universalism have prevailed over national and state interests in Iranian foreign policy since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.[9] However, certain decisions made and actions undertaken by the current Iranian administration cast doubt on the correctness of such claims. This article will analyze such assertions detail.

The Level of Ideologizing of Iranian Foreign Policy

Soon after the victory of his revolutionary forces, Ayatollah Khomeini presented the main elements of foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- cooperation with other international actors based on the principles of partnership and mutual dialogue;
- a strong objection to any form of violence and cruelty;
- pacifism;
- nonalignment;
- justice; and
- unity among Muslims.[10]

All these elements derived from negative past experiences and observations made by the shah's opponents. In their opinion, the Imperial State of Iran was not independent and its authorities sided with the Americans during the Cold War. In addition, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his aides did not do anything to restore unity among Muslims. For these reasons Khomeini was determined to modify Iranian foreign affairs entirely.

Khomeini's guidelines resulted in more specific ideological assumptions. On the basis of Khomeinism, Ashgar Eftechari distinguished the key ideological provisions underlying the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- the primacy of the Shiite values;
- promotion of Islam in the world;
- antiglobalism;[11]
- persuasion instead of imposing Islamic values;
- pacifism;
- nonalignment and independence;
- preservation of a national dignity;
- international justice based on the fundamental Islamic principles;
- the restoration of unity among Muslims (*ummah*); and
- avoidance of disinformation and ambiguities in the foreign policy implementation, because such actions do not comply with Islamic values.[12]

There are other typologies. Yvette Hovsepian-Bearce, for example, pointed to the key themes of Khomeini's successor Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's legacy. These are Iran's attitude toward the United States, unity among Muslims, religious democracy, freedom, and Iranian youth.[13] Yet only two out of five of the abovementioned elements are explicitly connected with foreign policy making. For this reason, Eftechari's concept is more academic, as it is more expansive and includes a wide range of ideological factors. On this basis one can analyze the current foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to find out if the referenced ideological elements have been taken into account or not.

Fundamentalism in Iranian Foreign Policy under President Rouhani

The electoral victory of Hassan Rouhani in the presidential elections in 2013 was perceived as a precursor of significant changes in Iran, both internally and externally. Rouhani was presented as a reformist politician who would not attach much importance to ideological limitations. In addition, Rouhani himself did his best to cultivate such an image.[14] The newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Javad Zarif, presented the key external objectives of President Rouhani's

cabinet in the Iranian Consultative Assembly (*Majles*). Later, he wrote an article for *Foreign Affairs* in which he summarized his speech. On the basis of Zarif's article, one can point to the following elements underpinning the current foreign policy of Iran:

- multilateralism;
- opposition to American dominance on the international stage;
- tackling sources of conflict in the Middle East region;
- combating violence and extremism;
- combating negative political and social changes in the Arab world, which destabilize the region;
- combating Islamophobia and Iranophobia, which are promoted by the West;
- a wise critique of the previous administration's conduct of foreign relations;
- a restoration of Iran's relations with selected states, including European powers;
- political and economic independence;
- promotion of Persian culture, language, Islamic democracy, and other Shiite values;
- support for the cause of oppressed people across the world, especially in Palestine; and
- reaching an agreement on "Iran's peaceful nuclear program" and ending "the unjust sanctions that have been imposed by outside powers."[15]

From the Iranian point of view, the new diplomatic opening on the initiative of Iran was to be met with the same actions on the Western side. In 2013 Javad Zarif clearly stated, "The election of Mr. Rouhani shows that the people have decided to have constructive interaction with the world and, through his speeches and choices, Mr. Rouhani has also displayed his political determination to do so. Now, what is important is for the same determination to be formed on the other side."[16] The message was clear. Iran was ready for pragmatic concessions in return for similar actions from other international actors. It also proved that ideological elements can be less important than tangible material benefits.

Taking the aforementioned objectives into account, one can select those that arise from the underlying ideological assumptions and were included in the previously mentioned list by Eftekhari. Zarif referred to six out of the 10 ideological elements, including the primacy of the Shiite values, promotion of Islam in the world, antiglobalism, nonalignment and independence, multilateralism, and pacifism. However, even within these six points one can observe inconsistencies between declarations and actions or a very flexible approach of the current Iranian government.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the President of Russia

Figure 1. Rouhani on the international stage. Iranian president Hassan Rouhani discusses issues with his peers during a signing ceremony following the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council meeting, 1 October 2019, in Yerevan, Armenia.

The Primacy of the Shiite Values

Ayatollah Khomeini often presented the sectarian divide in the Islamic world as an example of the Western powers' interference in regional affairs. The Iranian authorities underlined the fact that all Muslims are equal and should remain united to oppose enemies of Islam. In the opinion of Khomeini, "those who want to cause disunion are neither Sunnis nor Shiites. They are the followers of the superpowers and they are serving them. Those who try to create disunity between our Sunni brothers and our Shiite brothers are enemies of Islam. They want to help the enemies of Islam to overcome the Muslims."[17] Not much has changed since the 1980s.

Both President Rouhani and Supreme Leader Khamenei still confirm the validity and importance of the unity among all Muslims. In June 2018, Rouhani clearly stated, "We can witness more unity and solidarity among Muslims in the fight against violence and extremism, showing their unity and integrity against greedy powers and the unfaithfulness and unilateralism of domination seekers, as well as establishment of peace and stability throughout the world."[18] Such comments only prove that the Iranian authorities still tend to present the current sectarian division within the Muslim community as an outcome of external interference.

Promotion of Islam in the World

Khomeini claimed that "Islam cares for the whole world, that is, Iraq, or by the name of Islam aims at making human beings, all the human beings. It has no kinship with any group, neither with the East, West, North or South, nor with any particular nation. It is a divine religion, and Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, is the God for all, not only for the Westerners, Muslims, Christians or Jews."[19] His successor, Ali Khamenei, also referred to the important role of Islam and its modern-day mission. During a speech in August 2019, the Supreme Leader stated, "The elite of the Muslim world, some of whom are now present at Hajj from different countries, have a crucial and important duty. These lessons must be transferred to all nations and the public through their efforts and ingenuity, and moral exchange of ideas, motivations, experience, and knowledge must be realized by them."[20]

In practice, however, the current Iranian government still promotes Islamic values worldwide and focuses mainly on their Shia interpretations. For this reason, Tehran's efforts are in direct competition with actions undertaken by the leading Sunni actors like Saudi Arabia.[21] From a geopolitical point of view, Iran has to maintain a land connection with the Mediterranean. As a consequence, Iranian politicians, military officers, and businessmen are very active in such states as Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. They promote Shia values and finance various local initiatives for Iranian entrepreneurs and intergovernmental ventures at the same time. In all these states, however, they have to compete with Sunni groups supported by wealthy Arab states from the Persian Gulf region. Although Tehran professes no intention to export its revolutionary ideas anymore, its activities in the Middle East are perceived as sources of threat to the regional order and security. Even if Iranian politicians ensure the international community of their good intentions, local residents often remain suspicious and tend to perceive Iran's actions as a projection of power.

Antiglobalism

Antiglobalism is still noticeable in Iranian foreign policy. The Iranian authorities perceive globalism as a tool used by global powers for interference in internal affairs of small- and middle-sized states. They refer mainly to the United States and its policy toward the Middle East. A long-standing policy of opposing Washington has become a hallmark of the Iranian diplomacy. Tehran opposes the US administration at almost every opportunity. At the same time, Iranian authorities are much less critical in the case of the Russian Federation or the People's Republic of China. Global aspirations of Moscow and Beijing do not bother Iran, although in practice some of their actions are not convergent with the Iranian in-

terests in the region. In this case the current Iranian antiglobalism is very selective. For instance, the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) could be used to subordinate the Middle Eastern states to China in the future. Tehran supports the idea and declares Iran's participation in the BRI officially, but at the same time, Iranian authorities must pay attention to the nation's close economic links with India. In addition, some Chinese actions are already providing detrimental to Iran, for example, the further expansion of the Pakistani port in Gwadar, which competes with the Iranian port of Chabahar.

Nonalignment and independence

Khomeini's concept of "Neither East nor West" (*nah sharq nah gharb*) constituted an important element of Iranian foreign policy in the last phases of the Cold War rivalry. According to Rouhollah K. Ramazani, in the 1980s Khomeini believed that a conflict between superpowers and the Islamic Republic of Iran was inevitable, claiming the would-be hegemons had "arrogated all the worldly power (*qudrat*) to themselves at the expense of the exploited, dispossessed masses of the people everywhere."[22] Nonalignment was to guarantee security for Iran and enable the revolutionary authorities to implement all Khomeini's political and religious ideas.

In the early twenty-first century, Iranian authorities still underline the importance of independence and Iran's special mission in the world. Tehran tries to play a global role irrespective of whether global powers accept Iran's actions or not.[23] The current tensions in US–Iran relations could serve as the best example. The more pressure the US administration exerts on Iran, the more inflexible the Iranian position and its attitude toward regional affairs become. Although it is unlikely that the Iranians are set on a military confrontation, they do not intend to modify their foreign policy objectives. During the official celebrations marking the 30th anniversary of Khomeini's death, President Rouhani declared, "Nothing can harm our system until the time it relies on people's vote. 30 years after the passing of Imam Khomeini, the system he founded has not only been safe against wind and rain, but today, Iran has displayed its power and greatness in [the] sensitive Middle East region."[24]

At the same time, economic sanctions imposed by the United States force Iran to maintain closer relations with Russia and China. Dina Esfandiary and Ariane Tabatabai describe this phenomenon quite rightly. In their opinion, "The ties between Tehran and Moscow and Tehran and Beijing are not traditional alliances. They are pragmatic relationships, based on mutual interests and necessities. This comes with both advantages and disadvantages for Iran."[25] These three states do not share any ideological concepts, but they cooperate on many issues. In addition,

the same could be said about the current Turkish–Iranian relations. Iran, Russia, and Turkey, for example, initiated the so-called "Astana process" with the aim to resolve the ongoing Syrian Civil War. This political threesome serves as a counterweight to the Geneva process supported by the majority of the international community, including Western powers. Although Iran, Russia, and Turkey have not formed any formal alliance, the three states act as long-term allies.

Pacifism

Javad Zarif clearly declared that "Iran has no interest in nuclear weapons and is convinced that such weapons would not enhance its security." In addition, the minister also emphasized the fact that "even a perception that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons is detrimental to the country's security and to its regional role, since attempts by Iran to gain strategic superiority in the Persian Gulf would inevitably provoke responses that would diminish Iran's conventional military advantage."[26] This statement matches the official position of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially the views of Supreme Leader Khamenei. Iran was always very critical of weapons of mass destruction, not only in political declarations.

The main question is, however, if the current official declarations against the use of weapons of mass destruction are underpinned by the facts. According to some sources, the Islamic Republic of Iran intends to acquire nuclear weapons.[27] Other analysts, for example, Shaul Mishal and Ori Goldberg, claim that "Iran uses the controversy around its nuclear prospects to further engage with different countries. It is the nuclear agenda, placing Iran at odds with the United States, that allowed it to develop close ties with Venezuela. Observed differently, it is the nuclear agenda that allows Iran to convey different messages to different international parties."[28] In the opinion of Michael Axworthy, "the real intention of the Iranian regime was to acquire the capability to produce a nuclear weapon, without actually manufacturing the weapon itself. . . . This capability would in itself act as a deterrent to aggression—a lesser degree of deterrent than that provided by a real weapon perhaps, but nonetheless significant and better than nothing."[29]

In addition, Zarif was seeking a rapprochement in Iran's relations with the Arab states in the Persian Gulf region. Such action was to prove the pacifist approach of the new president and his administration. However, it soon became clear that the task would remain a difficult undertaking. The new wave of regional tensions and the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia in 2016 resulted in a new crisis. In addition, Iranians reinforced their positions in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Although in Syria and Iraq members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iran-backed Shiite militias officially fought against the so-called Islamic State and other radical groups, their presence

bred suspicions and mistrust not only in the West but also in most of the Arab states. Tehran's opponents claimed that such interventions represented Iran's attempt to project power and enlarge its sphere of influence in the region. Iranian authorities deny all such accusations; however, this issue became one of the arguments put forward by Pres. Donald Trump when he announced that the United States would reinstate sanctions on Iran that had been lifted during the closing days of the Obama administration. On 18 May 2018 the US president openly declared, "The Iranian regime is the leading state sponsor of terror. It exports dangerous missiles, fuels conflicts across the Middle East, and supports terrorist proxies and militias such as Hezbollah, Hamas, the Taliban, and al Qaeda."[30] In response to such arguments, the Iranian authorities accuse leaders of Western powers of interfering in Middle Eastern affairs. In April 2018, for instance, President Rouhani called Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan and said, "Some major Western powers think that they have to intervene in Syria in any way. It is a very ugly shift in state of affairs of international relations that some powerful and bullying countries attack a country whenever they wish."[31]

Multilateralism

The 2015 nuclear negotiations serve as the best example of a multilateral approach within Iran's foreign policy. Since 1979 Iranian authorities have avoided any bilateral talks with US administrations not only for political reasons and the lack of diplomatic relations. They are still concerned Iran could become dominated and marginalized. In addition, Iranian leaders are convinced that other partners also share their position. In the opinion of Foreign Minister Zarif, "even major world powers have learned the hard way that they can no longer pursue their interests or achieve their particular goals unilaterally."[32] Without any doubt, it was a clear reference to the United States. For this reason, decision makers in Tehran are convinced that multilateral international negotiations safeguard Iranian interests best. Nevertheless, Iranian leaders like President Rouhani suggest that Iran could also engage in "respectful negotiations" with the United States to end the ongoing crisis in the Persian Gulf and revive the nuclear deal.[33] The first step toward a new opening took place on 18 July 2019, when Zarif met US senator Rand Paul in New York—although the senator was not an official US envoy.[34] The meeting was still a clear indication that Iranian authorities could be ready to waive one of the key ideological principles, make some concessions, and this way ease sanctions imposed on Iran by the Trump administration. If any bilateral talks between Iran and the United States take place, it would be a very significant adjustment for both sides.

Conclusion

The current Iranian foreign policy is not fundamental if one takes into account all key ideological assumptions deriving from Shiism and Khomeinism, which have held sway in Iran since 1979. This does not change the fact that ideology still plays a very important role in initiation, formulation, and implementation of Iranian foreign policy objectives. However, ideology is not as dominant as it was in the 1980s and 1990s.

President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif's vision of foreign policy is more pragmatic than ideologically based. Even after the reinstatement of sanctions by the US administration in 2018, the Iranian authorities did not raise the level of ideologizing of policy as had previously been the case. Most revolutionary elements are not observed anymore or are observed to a lesser extent. The level of co-occurence of ideologizing and fundamentalism in the current foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is therefore low.

Contrary to the popular belief in the West, Iranian authorities are more pragmatic and their external actions are less and less based on the key ideological assumptions, despite official rhetoric and declarations. Ideology is still useful, but rather within internal affairs and for Iranian voters. Such circumstances create a possibility to engage Iran in a constructive dialogue that could ease tensions in the Persian Gulf region and/or even lead to reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran. The P5+1 negotiations[35] and the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action proved that Iran is ready to sacrifice ideological provisions for tangible benefits. Iran and the international community can only benefit from such developments. The only obstacle to this process is a lack of goodwill.

Przemyslaw Osiewicz

Dr. Osiewicz is an associate professor at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, specializing in EU policy toward the MENA region, Iran, and Turkey. He was a Fulbright Senior Award Visiting Scholar at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, from 2016–2017. Additionally, he authored and coauthored four monographs and over 70 book chapters and articles in political science.

Previously, Dr. Osiewicz served as secretary of the Research Committee RC-18 of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) and served as board member of the International Studies Association (ISA), the Polish International Relations Association (Poznan), and the Asia & Pacific Association. Alongside these roles, he served as scholar and visiting lecturer at the following universities: Eastern Mediterranean University (North Cyprus), Chinese Culture University (Taiwan, 2008), National Taipei University (Taiwan, 2009), Selçuk Üniversitesi (Turkey, 2010), Linneaus Univerisity (Sweden, 2011), Konya Üniversitesi (Turkey, 2011), Hogeschool Ghent (Belgium, 2012), the Ministry of Interior (Cyprus, 2012), the Institute for Political and International Studies (Iran, 2013), the University of Nicosia (Cyprus, 2014), University of Nevada, Reno (USA, 2016), Cleveland State University (USA, 2016), Texas State University (USA, 2017), Georgetown University, Washington, DC (USA, 2015, 2016–17), and National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad (Pakistan, 2019).

Notes

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9. Ahmad Sadeghi, "Genealogy of Iranian Foreign Policy: Identity, Culture and History," *Iranian Journal of International Affairs* 20, no. 4 (2008), 30.

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11. *Globalism* is perceived in Iran as a tool used by global powers for interference in the internal affairs of other states.

12. Eftekhari, "The Fixed Principles of the Foreign Policy," 27–43.

13. Yvette Hovsepian-Bearce, *The Political Ideology of Ayatollah Khamenei: Out of the Mouth of the Supreme Leader of Iran* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 279–352.

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31. "President in a Phone Call with His Turkish Counterpart," President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 17 April 2018, http://www.president.ir/en/103925.

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35. The P5+1 refers to the UN Security Council's five permanent members (the P5); namely China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; plus Germany.

VIEW

The Case of Israel's Technology Transfers as Tools of Diplomacy in East Asia

David Tooch

For decades, Israel has grappled with efforts by adversaries to keep it politically isolated in the international arena. To expand the Jewish state's diplomatic reach, Israeli leaders undertook to share specialized knowledge with other nations. The technologies offered were initially devised to contend with Israel's distinctive security and developmental struggles. In the early years of the sharing initiative, technology transfers were mostly confined to fields related to agriculture and the military. In more recent years, the rise and success of Israel's hi-tech industry has attracted attention from governmental and private interests at major technology sectors across Asia. Israel's technology boom has created opportunities for Israeli policy makers to shape new and expanded international partnerships. The article explores the usefulness of know-how sharing in the making and boosting of Israel's ties in East Asia. It examines Israel's technology transfers as tools of diplomacy in terms of propping up trade ties, cultivating robust bilateral exchanges, and, at times, softening the policies of pivotal Asian nations like China toward Israel in the context of the conflict with the Palestinians. The article also looks at how specialized knowledge sharing might reveal subtexts in ties between the technology sender (Israel) and the technology consumer (recipient partner nation).

Technology Transfer Receiver Motivations

One of the main motivations behind initiating technology transfers is the desire by the technology seeker, like the People's Republic of China (PRC), to boost the pace of its development, which would otherwise not likely materialize organically. The technology transfer can offset technological gaps that can obstruct economic growth. Leong Chan and Tugrul U. Daim correctly describe technology transfers as "shortcut" pathways for countries like the PRC to speed up the pace of their technological development capabilities.[1]

Israel and China

The PRC can offer much in the way of strategic, economic, and diplomatic clout to other countries through bilateral partnerships. Such opportunities are of pronounced significance in the case of small nations like Israel, which seek to broaden international ties Yet despite China's decades of refusing formal ties with Israel, the Israelis and Chinese established robust bilateral relations. The realized tighter Sino-Israeli ties partially can be attributed to the sharing of specialized knowledge. From the absence of formal ties to billions of dollars in trade, this article traces a reversal of fortune in Israel's diplomatic reach in East Asia, mainly with China.

Toward Formal Ties

Since the late 1970s, China has experienced significant socioeconomic changes with a transformation into a "mixed" market economy that includes both state- and nonstate-owned enterprises. Policy shifts in the PRC in 1970s meant longstanding communist dogmas were discarded, and China increased its openness to the outside world. This meant policy makers in Beijing could consider a broader range of external sources of technologies with which to tackle some of the PRC's most pressing issues.[2] The PRC's wave of changes aimed at undertaking modernization in four distinct areas: industry, agriculture, science/technology, and defense.

For decades the PRC was dogged by a collection of challenges in food production, national security, and other areas. Understanding such adversities is pertinent in grasping the significance of technical cooperation in the making of Sino-Israeli relations.

China's rapid growth, coupled with Israel's zeal to extend its diplomatic reach, offered opportunities with which to initiate and advance bilateral dialogues between the two countries—albeit quietly at first. Israel's record of overcoming developmental and security issues drew Chinese decision makers to take interest in the technical exploits of the Jewish state.

China's Developmental Challenges

Food Production

China's territory is vast, but it includes large swaths of rugged, arid, and semi-arid landscapes. These physical realities, together with population growth, have diminished the PRC's ability to output suitable quantities of foodstuffs. In separate works, Gregory Veeck and L. Jin & W. Young point out some key problems in the PRC's agriculture sector are not confined only to food supply concerns but also touch on socioeconomic settings that include income stagnation (especially

in grain-dependent farming areas).[3] Dry land conditions are but one in a set of problematic dynamics that faced many subsistence farmers in China, who endeavored to produce more-desirable fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, and grain. Additional impeding factors include ineffective management issues. Thus, the introduction of more effective management methods and new technologies to overcome water scarcity was an essential part of efforts to increase food production potential in China. This could also help boost farmer revenues that could by extension alleviate poverty and advance overall rural development in China. Veeck points out that advances in farming techniques in the PRC have helped achieve improvements in the agriculture sector, which in turn raised overall living conditions in less developed rural areas.[4] This underscores the profound significance of agriculture in the economic well-being of millions of Chinese citizens.

National Security

Beijing's multifaceted national security quandary posed tough questions for China given the number of regional disputes facing the PRC. China has a history of disagreements with neighboring countries, extending decades, if not longer. One such stark example is the political rift that emerged between Beijing and Moscow in the 1960s, which spurred border tensions. Besides frictions on the Soviet frontier, China was also a party to an assortment of territorial spats, some of which remain unresolved in present times. Concerns about security matters have helped create opportunities for Sino-Israeli military contacts.

The Central Intelligence Agency notes a wide-ranging roster of territorial quarrels that have direct associations to the PRC. These include political differences with neighboring India over territory in the Himalayas and nuclear proliferation issues. Also, China's southwestern Yunnan province has experienced smuggling border breaches from Burma (Myanmar) stemming from drug-trafficking activities. Furthermore, the PRC asserts rights to islands in the South China Sea, but these claims have been challenged by Taiwan, Vietnam, and Japan. There are also territorial disagreements between China and North Korea over border rivers such as the Yalu and Tumen. Additionally, Beijing must cope with domestic unrest mostly in western regions of the country.

Against a backdrop of perils faced by the PRC and steps toward wider contacts with the international community, China and Israel began to renew contacts, which were previously dormant, or at best erratic, for decades. The advent of more flexible foreign policies perhaps played a part in the PRC's interest in the Israeli pavilion at the Paris Airshow in 1975, which featured mostly military hardware. The Chinese delegation's visit to Israel's display set the stage for a string of future contacts in the form of quiet military and technology centered dialogues.

In the 1980s, contacts intensified between the two countries as they moved closer to the start of full formal ties. It is interesting to note that the first face-to-face high-level encounter between officials from Israel and China was distinctly technology related. In 1985, the science ministers of China and Israel met at a conference in the United States. Such an informal interaction was perhaps a stepping stone in a series of technical themed meetings that followed from the mid-1980s onward. This included, for example, a then secret visit to Israel by a Chinese delegation in 1985 to discuss prospects of technical joint ventures. But even as such quiet but constructive exchanges took place between the two countries, Chinese officials and state media routinely continued to describe Israel and its policies in punitive terms. Similar tones by China toward Israel extended to international forums like the United Nations, where also in 1985 the Chinese ambassador, Li Luye, speaking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict said, "The policy of aggression and expansion pursued by the Israeli authorities has brought untold sufferings to the Palestinian and other Arab peoples and has created long-term tension and turbulence in the Middle East, thus posing a grave threat to world peace."[5]

As contact between Israel and China advanced, perhaps the opening of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities office in Beijing just before the launch of formal diplomatic ties best exemplified the significance of technical cooperation in driving Sino-Israeli ties.

Diplomatic Relations (Formal Ties)

After full diplomatic relations became a reality, technical cooperation between China and Israel significantly increased. The first decade of formal ties, starting in the early 1990s and stretching into the early 2000s, saw considerable growth in military and agricultural ties. In 1993, just a year after the exchange of embassy openings, the first in a series Sino-Israeli demonstration farms opened. This and other similar farms featured agricultural techniques practiced in Israel. Relations between the two countries have blossomed through a combination of government-to-government and other forms of interactions, as technology and knowledge sharing have emerged as noteworthy components of bilateral dialogues. Dan Levin suggests Israeli statesmen were quietly hopeful that sharing Israel's experiences and technologies would help garner some Chinese government support for the Jewish state in international arenas.[6] Nevertheless, whether with or without open political support, China's willingness to do business with Israel was a particularly attractive prospect, especially against the background of successive efforts by adversaries to delegitimize and isolate Israel.

Generally, bilateral ties experienced growth—but not without limitations and questions raised about Israel's capacity to fulfill already sealed arms deals with the

PRC. Furthermore, Israel's relationship with China was the source of contentious exchanges between American and Israeli officials. American concerns about the extent of the Sino-Israeli relationship continue to resonate today. While Sino-Israeli relations have suffered setbacks from time to time, they were not permanently damaged because of any one specific issue.

However, as June Teufel-Dreyer points out, China was susceptible to minority separatism in autonomous regions like Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia.[7] After the 9/11 attacks against the United States, groups associated with radical Islam became the center of China's antiterror security attention—mostly in Xinjiang, where millions of ethnic Muslim Uighurs reside. Degang Sun suggests groups with ties to international jihadist organizations have challenged the legitimacy of Beijing's authority in Xinjiang and, thus, are posing security threats in western China.[8] Paul J. Smith asserts the 9/11 attacks drew the United States and China closer to cooperate on common counterterrorism interests.[9] Nevertheless, China's cooperation in combating terrorism also extends to other international partners (like Israel), who in the eyes of Beijing can deliver helpful combat knowledge and experiences. On that point, Liang Pingan notes China's efforts to fight extremist groups go beyond immediate security itself and extend to collaboration in utilizing tools like technology, intelligence, and training techniques to mitigate threats.[10] Degang Sun notes that China has engaged in bilateral antiterror cooperation with India and Israel, ranging from tactical cooperation, extradition, and academic exchanges to antiterror equipment sales.[11] However, in 2011 relations between China and Israel gained new significance with the outbreak of the Arab Spring. Outbursts of unrest created worrisome political and military instability across the Middle East and North Africa. The uprisings placed Chinese interests in the region at risk. The troubles prompted reassessment in Beijing about China's ties in the region and specifically with Israel. By this time, strains in Sino-Israeli relations over canceled arms deals diminished, and Chinese policy makers sought to learn whatever possible about the changing dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa and considered improved ties with Israel to be helpful in this endeavor.

In the same year (2011), bilateral exchanges rose as the Arab Spring created mounting uncertainties about China's interests in the Middle East. Of particular note in that year was the first ever visit of a Chinese military chief to Israel. People's Liberation Army general Chen Bingde's visit to discuss defense cooperation was not necessarily in contradiction with a change in Israeli policy about the cessation of technology transfers to the Chinese military. This is the case as discussions could center on collaborations that excluded the export of defense hardware but included the sharing of other forms of knowledge—like training tactics

Beyond 2011, Beijing's renewed interest in Israel strengthened bilateral relations between Israel and China in the form of joint academic and nontechnology ventures. In 2013, the Israel Institute of Technology (Technion) opened the first Israeli university campus (the Guangdong Technion–Israel Institute of Technology) in Shantou, in the Guangdong province of southeastern China. The newly formed university is a collaboration between the Technion and Shantou University.

This helped to refresh the tough-to-build ties between Israel and China that were blemished but not permanently damaged as a consequence of cancelled arms deals in response to American pressure. Cooperation in areas like agriculture and other nonmilitary areas tended to strengthen. Conversely, Israeli exports to China generally increased as revealed in figure 2. There were also notable increases in the amount of bilateral exchanges as shown in figure 4. Additionally, Chinese officials at the UN have exhibited a softer policy toward Israel as indicated in figure 1. What follows is an analysis of Sino-Israeli relations that seeks to highlight how Israel's technical relations with China may have yielded noticeable gains in areas of trade, bilateral exchanges, and perhaps even minor yet salient policy shifts with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in recent years.

Sino-Israeli Relations Advance

To gain a better and methodical understanding of Sino-Israeli ties, one must explore the role of technical ties as tools of diplomacy. To that end, the author assessed tens of thousands of documents to determine if there could be any linkage, however loose, between the growth of technical ties and identifiable change in China's Israel policy with regard to the conflict with the Palestinians. The author has examined, with help of content analysis software (NVivo), every publicly available statement by Chinese officials at the UN on the Palestinian issue in the period 1989–2014.[12] The survey found a multitude of frequently used language employed by Chinese diplomats to characterize Israeli policies in either "negative" or "positive/neutral" terms. In instances of positive/neutral language usage, Chinese representatives at the UN tended to denote the participants in the conflict (Israelis and Palestinians) on equal footing, thus avoiding exclusively assigning blame to any one party. In particular, such positive language tends to be used for the purpose of suggesting steps toward a peaceful resolution to the conflict and, in doing so, avoids criticizing Israel outright. Frequently positive/neutral used words in debates about the conflict were found to be *peace*, *coexistence*, *parties*, *constructive*, *process*, and *negotiations*. In contrast, negative language, which mostly framed Israel as the perpetrator of aggressive policies, were found to be *occupied*, *abuse*, *rights*, *activities*, *brutal*, and *aggression*. Figure 1 displays a side-by-side comparison of total positive versus

total negative words, identified by accessing the archives of the United Nations Informational System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL).

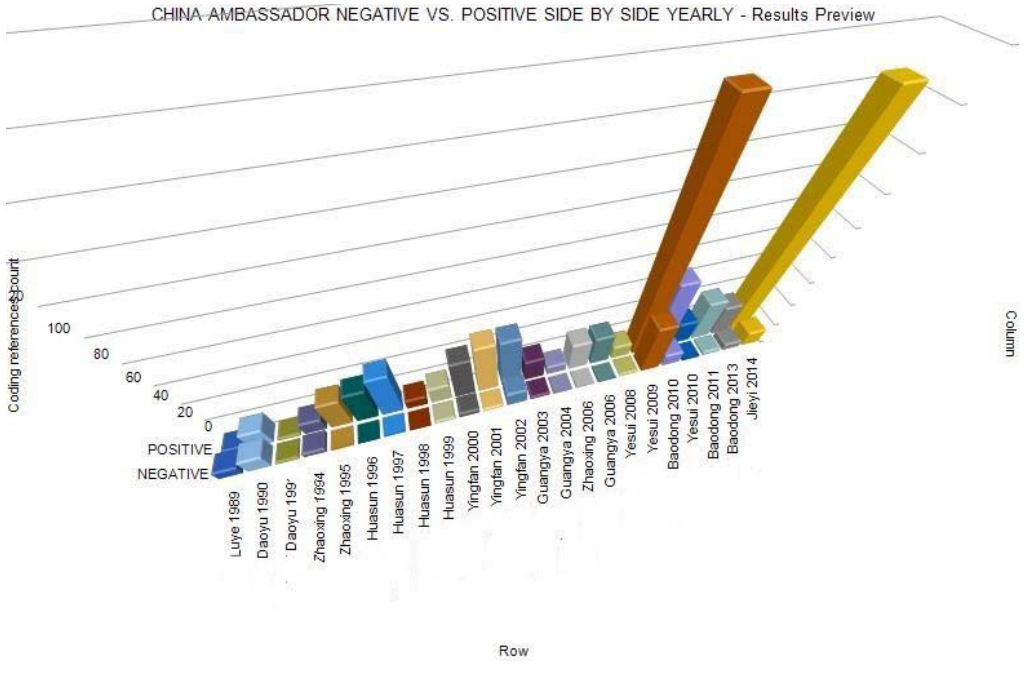

Figure 1. Chinese ambassadors' negative versus positive word frequencies, 1989–2014

Figure 1 illustrates that the usage of negative *and* positive words increased in more recent times. However, interestingly, positive word usage has grown significantly more than usage of negative category words. Put differently, this further enforces a suggestion that in more recent times there has been an overall trend of increased balanced (neutral language) approach by Chinese officials at the UN toward Israel in the context of the conflict with the Palestinians as Sino-Israeli ties experience growth.

China's Political Approach toward Israel and the Middle East

It is important to note that UN voting patterns on Middle Eastern conflict issues and Israel cannot and should not be taken as full testimonies accurately gauging Israel's diplomatic defeats and triumphs. Certainly, the nature of votes in the world body pertaining to Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict say something about attitudes toward Israel, but such votes offer only a partial picture in the case of Israeli relations with China. More importantly, given Israel's record of quiet or backdoor diplomacy, what may matter more goes beyond the number of votes at the UN for or against the Jewish state. It is the moderated rhetoric and

the behind-the-scenes dynamics that are contributing factors in the building and maintaining of resilient bilateral relations. Diplomatic gains may be tacit in the form of quiet joint collaborations. As Rowan Callick notes, Israel gained ground in gradually building relationships with Asian countries, even as a trend of hostile votes against it in international arenas persisted.[13] As tech cooperation increased, this trend maintained (but to a lesser extent) in 2006 in the immediate aftermath of Israel's Harpy drone deal withdrawal, when the volume of both positive (neutral) and negative (critical) words used by Chinese official at the UN were at lower levels than in more recent years.

Trade Indicator: Israeli Exports to China

One of the palpable central indicators of the robustness of Sino-Israeli ties is the flow of Israeli products to the PRC. Figure 2 shows a year-by-year progression of Israeli exports to China as reported by Comtrade (United Nations).

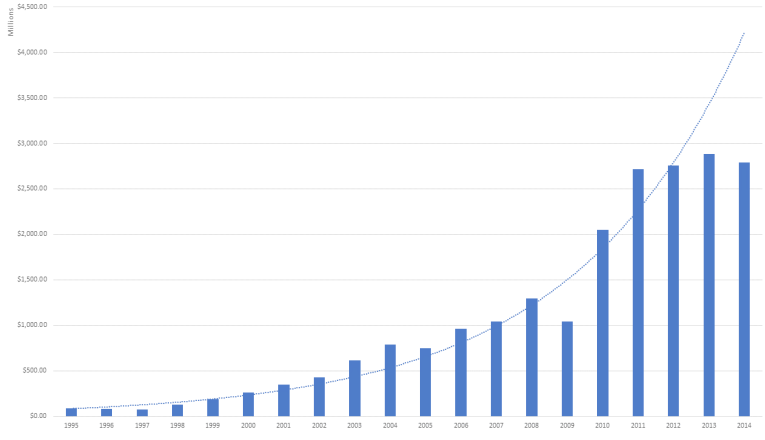

Figure 2. Israeli exports to China, 1995–2014
Source: Comtrade (United Nations)

Figure 2 generally demonstrates a strong growth in Israeli exports to China. Growth is slow in the early years of formal (diplomatic) relations but dramatically picks up pace in more recent years. This upward trend indicates a firming of ties and contrasts previous decades dominated by hidden and/or informal interactions and the absence of formal trade. In the mid-1990s, Israeli technology transfers to the PRC expanded to include aviation-specific military technology. As Israeli tech transfers increase, volumes of Israeli commercial exports to China generally also echoed a tendency of gains (fig. 2).

However, there are also noticeable dotted declines in Israeli exports to China in 1997, 2005, and 2009 in otherwise noteworthy periods of growth in exports. It is unclear why there was a minor drop in 1997. Though, an International Monetary

Fund report points to an overall downturn in the global economy in 1996, which it attributes to a financial slowdown in Asia. Also, in the previous year, China and the United States were at odds over large-scale Chinese military exercises in the Strait of Taiwan, and this may have indirectly curtailed Israeli exports to the PRC. It should be noted that Israeli foreign relations can be subject to quiet political pressures from Washington. In 2005, Israeli exports to China declined as Sino-Israeli relations experienced tensions and political fallout when Israel quit a crucial arms agreement with China. It was widely reported that US pressure was a significant factor in the cancellation of the deal.

Trade volumes shown in figure 2 are likely significantly higher than indicated by the graphic illustration. This can happen because Comtrade figures are based on self-reporting by member states, which typically excludes military transactions/products. States tend to quietly handle arms technology exports. International military deals have been notoriously clandestine undertakings as part of undisclosed partnerships. However, while exports shown in figure 2 do not include armaments, the aborted arms deal may have unintentionally negatively impacted the flow of commercial technologies from Israel to the PRC. This is conceivable because some commercial commodities may be considered "dual-use," meaning they can be converted to military use.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which tracks international arms transfers, suggests an overall lack of transparency by states in the reporting of arms imports and exports. SIPRI asserts some countries have a history of concealing (not publishing) reports about their international arms transactions. However, SIPRI has published independent statistics about Israeli military export volumes to China. The chart below shows arms export volumes from Israel to China (fig. 3). It is based on SIPRI statistical assessments. The diagram shows the start of exports from 1990 onward because this is the first year data was available on Israeli military transfers to China. The chart clearly shows an abrupt end to Israeli military exports to China after 2001. This reflects Israel's policy change regarding arms transfers to China in the wake of staunch US opposition.

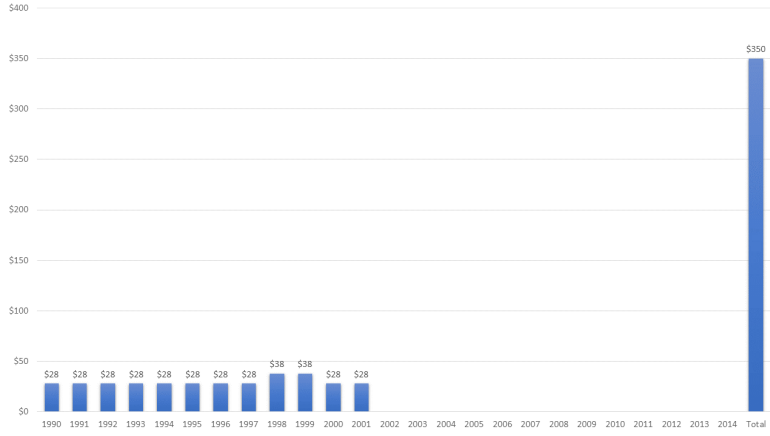

Figure 3. Israeli arms transfers to China, 1990–2014 (in millions of US dollars)

Source: SIPRI

Sino-Israeli Bilateral Exchanges

Bilateral exchanges are another metric utilized to gauge the robustness of diplomatic ties. For the purpose of this study, *bilateral exchanges* are defined as the combined number of mutual visits by officials to each other's countries and the sum of signed bilateral treaties from year to year. Figure 4 shows the number of Sino-Israeli bilateral exchanges.

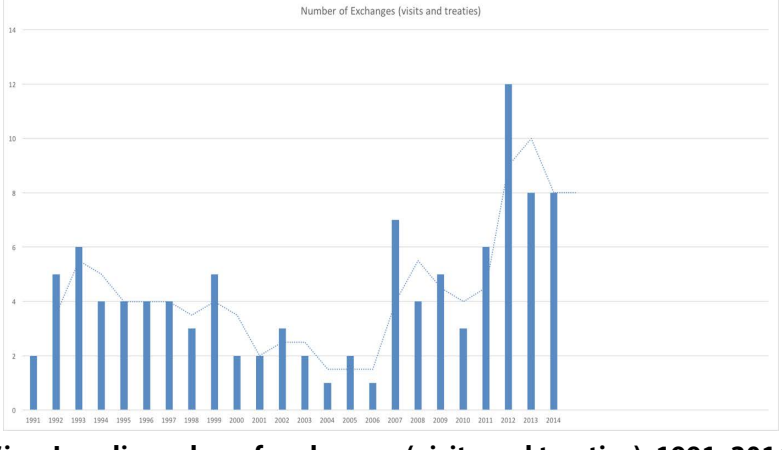

Figure 4. Sino-Israeli number of exchanges (visits and treaties), 1991–2014

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs People's Republic of China and Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Figure 4 illustrates the extent of the annual fluctuations in the number of exchanges, but overall it also points to the increase of interactions after the start of formal relations in 1992. Initially there is an upsurge in the number of bilateral

exchanges and also notable decreases in contacts during and after the year 2000. At this time, the United States demanded that Israel stop the sale of the Phalcon Airborne Early Warning System to China, and Israel complied.

The cancellation supposedly damaged Israel's credibility in the eyes of China's policy makers. In 2005, the drone deal pullout unfolded as Israel complied with Washington's fervent opposition. Yet, in 2007, the number of bilateral exchanges surged. Interestingly, the increase of exchanges coincides with Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert's visit to Beijing in a bid to repair bilateral ties and redirect the trajectory of Sino-Israeli ties away from military technology transfers to civilian-centered technology relations.

During the period from 2012–2014, Israeli exports to the PRC demonstrated a steady upward trend, as shown in figure 2. The number of bilateral exchanges in this time frame is significantly higher in comparison to previous periods in Sino-Israeli relations (shown by figure 4)—which coincides with an increase in technical cooperation.

Also, in this period, as indicated in figure 1, China's language at the UN about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict maintains a higher frequency of positive terms (softer tone on Israel) than negative/critical terms overall.

Summary and Conclusions

China's geography, politico-economic systems, and national vulnerabilities tie in directly and indirectly to the development and growth of Sino-Israeli relations. Following the death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, China embarked on political and economic reforms. At that time the PRC moved away from orthodox communist principles, gradually shifting from a centralized to a mixed market economy and efforts to modernize key sectors in areas of agriculture, military, and science/technology research. The changes aimed to help advance China's competitiveness in the emerging global economy and boost standards of living. As the PRC's development accelerated, policy makers in Beijing pursued ways to improve China's technological capabilities and grapple with how to increase food production volumes and update an aging military. To that end, China opened itself to wider international engagement, and decision makers began to look outward to the international community for new technologies and know-how. At the same time, Israeli leaders endeavored to establish new contacts beyond traditional allies in the West and turned eastward to East Asia.

Israel's ongoing campaign to minimize its political isolation, coupled with Chinese interest in Israeli technologies in specialized areas like agriculture and military affairs, created a pathway to bring the two countries closer—in a sense creating a convergence of interests. Initially, technical cooperation was a part of

clandestine contacts, which eventually transformed into open dialogues and then advanced to full formal ties. Since the opening of embassies in Beijing and Tel Aviv, there has been significant growth in terms of bilateral exchanges, trade, and cooperation in important sectors. However, hiccups in Sino-Israeli relations in the form of political tussles over aborted arms deals under US pressure created doubt in China about Israel's ability to keep future commitments without Washington's approval. Overall, long-term relations were not harmed, as exports in military hardware were cut and civilian commerce increased. Israel is a relatively small trading partner for China. However, the PRC offered Israel some access to China's mammoth marketplace and new sources of capital for Israeli hi-tech firms and institutions. Israel's robust technical cooperation with Beijing has not significantly impacted the PRC's support for the Palestinian cause in international arenas like the UN, but Israel enjoys strong broad collaboration with China independent of issues related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. It would be difficult to deny that technical engagement with China has not produced tangible worthy gains for Israel. Technology transfer engagements have helped create settings that promote bilateral dialogue, collaboration and increased commerce—in essence driving the initiation, maintenance and growth of Sino-Israeli relations.

Dr. David Tooch

Dr. Tooch is a visiting professor at Pusan National University (South Korea), where he teaches international relations (IR). His research interests include technology in IR, diplomacy, security studies, and Israeli foreign relations. He obtained his PhD at Florida International University (FIU) and presents his work at annual meetings of the International Studies Association (ISA) and American Association of Geographers Annual (AAG). He earned an MA in geography at Georgia State University and a BA in TV/film and political science at Tel Aviv University. Before studying and teaching at FIU International University, he held various technical and editorial positions at media organizations like CNN International, Worldwide Television News (now known as Associated Press Television News) and NBC 6 Miami. His hobbies include jogging, bicycle riding, and photography of coastal environments.

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BOOK REVIEW

Brothers in Berets: The Evolution of Air Force Special Tactics, 1953–2003 by Forrest L. Marion. Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2018.

Forrest Marion has produced a very useful picture of the development of Air Force Special Tactics, especially from the invasion of Panama through 2003. His book is entitled *Brothers in Berets: The Evolution of Air Force Special Tactics, 1953–2003*. The narrative is organized chronologically, beginning with the American airborne operations in the Mediterranean in 1943 and concluding in May of 2003. The first chapter, coauthored with Jeff Sahaida, deals with the beginnings of the combat control concept with the Airborne Pathfinders in operations in the Mediterranean, Operation Overlord, and Operation Market Garden. The rest of the chapter deals with Army–Air Force efforts to come to mutually acceptable concepts of drop zone control and defense, creation of the Air Force combat control (CC) concept; the creation and training of combat control teams (CCT); and biographical sketches of CC pioneers.

The next three chapters deal with the development of CC in the decade before deep involvement of US forces in Southeast Asia (SEA), CC in SEA to 1975 (with biographies), and developments in CC in the post–SEA development of US counterterrorism forces to 1981. The next chapters deal with Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada and the beginnings of Air Force Special Tactics (AFST), Operation Just Cause in Panama, the evolution of AFST and deployments to Southwest Asia (including Operation Eagle Claw); and AFST in Somalia. Chapter nine deals with AFST in the period 1993–99, including Operation Deliberate Force, and chapter 10 focuses on the period 1999–2003. The last chapter is an epilogue, extending to 2007.

Dr. Marion is the oral historian at the Air Force's archive, the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. His work is based largely on AFHRA's holdings that include an extensive oral history collection. He has also relied on the archival holdings of the Air Force Special Operations Command history office and those of the United States Special Operations Command—both of which include oral histories. He has also used official Army sources. His choices of secondary sources are for the very large part exemplary, including oral and memoir materials. The choices of source materials make *Brothers in Berets* very special and an important part of the history of US Special Operations history.

The very bright parts of chapter four include the fact that it adds to the record of the story of Eagle Claw–Desert One and most especially to the story of Air Force–Marine Corps interoperations. The chapter provides an insightful depiction of career-field developments as well. Chapter five describes career-field progression issues for "snake eaters." Chapter six is where Dr. Marion's narrative takes off and adds to the record. Chapter seven begins to describe the new ST mission: "airfield seizure and counterterrorist operations." He discusses career progression and jointness, explains the merger of pararescue with CC, and documents the drawdown of combat rescue. Other issues dealt with include Operation Desert Storm, jointness, combat search and rescue, the Scud hunt, and Operation Provide Comfort. The very best is chapter 8, which deals with Somalia. Dr. Marion includes a shrewd introduction that explains the history of and contradictory nature of Somali–Sufi anti-imperialism. The rest of the narrative is one of the best descriptions of Special Operations, particularly in Mogadishu, which includes participants' firsthand narratives. The other things that stand out in the narrative are the explanations of the creation, development, and training of Air Force Special Operators. This material provides insight into how the Air Force produced the remarkable Airmen with the high degrees of competence and trustworthiness required in special operations with their Army, Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard counterparts.

There are complaints, however. Chapter one is particularly faulty. The experiences in Husky, Overlord, and Market-Garden nearly brought the whole idea of airborne operations to an end. Airborne was saved by its successes in the China–Burma–India (CBI) and Southwest Pacific theaters. The 187th and 303rd Airborne Infantry Regiments are notable in this regard—active in the Southwest Pacific in World War II and Korea. The Pathfinder concept was not explained. Path-

finder was a "precision" bombing technology developed by the British and adopted by the Army Air Forces. It centered on navigation. Pathfinder navigators and bombardiers would "find and mark" targets. Later developments included radio beacons and then radar. In the troop carrier context, pathfinders were airborne soldiers who were to "find and mark" drop zones (DZ) with lights or radio beacons and set up the primary defense of the DZ. The connection to later CCs is clear, but not in this work—CC function and mission should have been established here. Also, there is a dearth of discussion of contemporary (to World War II) airborne doctrine. What were the control systems for German *Fallschirmjäger* drop zones, how about British Commonwealth airbourne divisions and their Special Air Service, or the incipient Soviet or Japanese airborne forces?

Chapter two is notable in a similar regard for omitting the failure of CC in the loss of five and injury of 137 paratroopers and near loss of the 101st Airborne Division' commanding general, William Westmoreland, to high winds on the ground (this writer was present, but not for long). This event is what led to the combat weather (CW) specialties. Another omission is the developments in US Navy–Marine Corps tactical air control squadrons that had progressed from World War II. A lack of attention to the development of forward air control (FAC) in CBI in World War II weakens chapter three.

Chapter four is also notable for a lack of depth in the discussion of Army–Air Force friction with the development of Army Special Forces, Rangers, and especially Delta Force. It could have been noted that with the end of the conflict in SEA, the interservice rivalry in the US military was at its peak. Because of the interdependence between the Army and the Air Force, the conflict between them over command and control (C2) was especially piquant. The Air Force insisted on absolute C2 over anything to do with air, and the Army mistrusted because of experience. There was a missed opportunity in chapter four. The establishment of trust and common experience between Air Force CCTs and Army Rangers coincided with the AirLand Battle concept. The 1981 publication of the Army FM100-5 put the Soviets on notice that the Army and the Air Force would confront them with an integrated AirLand Battle at the Fulda Gap. Chapter five deals with the period 1981–87, including Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, the emergence of US Special Operations Command, USAF ST, and the incorporation of PJs into CCTs.

Chapter six is the beginning of Dr. Marion's real story; he deals with Operation Just Cause in Panama 1989–90. Chapter seven covers the period 1986–92, including the end of the Cold War. The narrative begins to take off, discussing "airfield seizures and counterterrorist operations," career progression, and jointness. Marion explains the merger of PJs with CC and the drawdown of combat rescue. CC, ST, and PJ missions become established. The discussions of Desert Storm, jointness, CSAR, and Scud hunts are based largely on interview material. The Provide Comfort material is illuminating. Chapter eight, ST in Somalia, 1993, is quite good, again for the interview material that Dr. Marion provides but also for a very useful summary of Somali history. The chapter concludes with more about the fusion of PJs with CCTs.

Chapter nine covers 1993–99. The story of AFSOC consolidation is here. Elevation of PJ skills and their importance and relative equivalence to Army SF 18-deltas. There are problems here—the extended discussion of SEA pararescue seems to be out of place, and that of CW should have begun in chapter four and carried through the narrative. Flashbacks would be useful if the narrative were better ordered and thematic. Descriptions of the Vega-31 and Hammer-34 rescues are included.

Chapter 10 deals with the personnel pipeline, especially Advanced Skills Training and the Combat Rescue Officer specialty training. This chapter also discusses unmanned aerial vehicles, the debacle of 9/11, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and in the Philippines, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The last chapter includes a brief description of the exploits of the "in lieu of" combat Airmen embedded within Army battalions defending supply convoys throughout Iraq—think "gun trucks" and improvised explosive devices—and Air Force Security Forces. A

large part of the chapter is devoted to the preparation of Air Force Battlefield Airmen (BA) for the "long war." The chapter ends with a testament to the valor of individual BA.

Appendices are included to document specific events in Air Force Special Tactics history and to chronologize significant events. The bibliography is particularly useful, but particular attention should be paid to Dr. Marion's citations. This is an ambitious work that probably should have covered several volumes.

James Howard
Editor, Air University Press, retired

JEMEAA

600 Chennault Circle
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6010
USA
Fax: 1 (334) 953-4298
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