

Review on China's Engagement in African Peace and Security

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Since the setup of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2000, cooperation for peace and security has become an important theme of Sino-African cooperation. Today, with the growth of China's interests in Africa and the deepening of Sino-African relationship, more African countries extended invitations to China to help with their security issues. As a result, Sino-African security cooperation has become an important part of the comprehensive new strategic partnership between China and Africa. Over the past decade, China's attitude towards Sino-African cooperation on peace and security has been getting increasingly positive, with the fields of cooperation expanding and processes of cooperation accelerated. This has undoubtedly cast important influences on the political, economic and social development of Africa. Despite the progresses made and influences won, the cooperative initiatives on African security are facing problems and challenges too, and they deserve our serious reflections. Summarizing processes of China's engagement in African peace and security, this article is an attempt to evaluate the influence, effect and problems of China's African policies so as to provide useful references for future policy considerations.

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I. Processes of China's Engagement in African Peace and Security

China's engagement in African peace and security is largely synchronous with the shift in China's foreign policies. With the adoption of the reform and opening-up policies in the early 1980s, China started the process of integrating into the international community. In this process, through regional and global mechanisms as the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN), China has not only joined the efforts of the international community to bring peace and security to Africa, but also became an important force for the construction of African peace and security.

1. Joining the UN and AU peace-keeping missions

China's efforts to bring peace and security to Africa are best reflected in the frequencies and scales of China's peace-keeping missions in Africa. It was in Africa that China first started its international peace-keeping mission. In 1989, China dispatched a team of 20 civilians to join the "UN Transition Assistance Group" in support of Namibian independence from South Africa. This was the first time that China joined a UN peace-keeping mission. Thereafter, in September 1991, the Chinese Government dispatched military observers to join the "UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara". As statistics show, since 1990 China has joined 9 UN peace-keeping missions in Africa, making up 56% of total Chinese overseas peace-keeping missions and involving more than 3,000 people, almost half of China's overseas peace-keeping staff. Currently, Chinese peace-keeping forces are stationed mostly in Africa, making China one of the most important peace-keeping forces in Africa. Countries in which Chinese peace-keeping missions are active include Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Congo (DRC),

Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, etc. As of June 2010, China was involved in 6 UN peace-keeping missions in Africa, and Chinese staff devoted to such missions accumulated to 1,622 persons (see Table 1 for details).

Table 1
Peace-keeping Missions in Africa with Chinese Participation
(as of June 30th, 2010)

<i>Missions</i>	<i>Military</i>	<i>Police</i>	<i>Military Observers</i>	<i>Total</i>
MINURSO			7	7
UNOCI			7	7
MONUC	218		16	234
UNMIL	564	18	2	584
UNMIS	443	11	12	466
UNAMID	322		2	324
Total	1547	29	46	1622

Based on data from UN websites on peace-keeping missions.

Source of Data: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2010/june10_1.pdf.

At the same time, China also supports Africa's independent peace-keeping initiatives and capabilities in form of financial aid. In recent years, China's donations to UN peace-keeping causes have grown steadily, with the ratio of Chinese donations to the aggregate donations rising from 0.9% in the 1990s to 1.5% in December 2000. By 2008, the ratio exceeded 3%. Currently, Chinese budget for peace-keeping ranks seventh worldwide, behind the US, Japan, UK, Germany, France and Italy. Each year, China contributes 300,000 US dollars to the African Union for its organizational construction. In 2005 and 2006, China contributed 400,000 US dollars respectively as special donations to the AU to help with its peace keeping mission in Darfur. In 2008, China contributed 300,000 US dollars to the AU's peace keeping mission in Somalia. And in August 2009, besides 400,000 US dollars donated directly to the AU for its

Somali mission, China contributed separately 5 million RMB in kind as logistic support to Uganda and Burundi – the two major countries of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMIMO) dispatching troops to Somalia. These financial and material supports have greatly promoted Africa's peace processes and contributed considerably to the enhancement of Africa's independent peace keeping capabilities.

2. Promoting international governance by fighting African terrorism and Somalia pirates

China has always been supportive of African countries' counter-terrorism efforts. In the 2006 Beijing Action Plan, China not only expressed explicit support to “the AU for its Convention on Preventing and Combating Terrorism and the launch of a Terrorism Studies and Research Center Africa”, but also “committed to study approaches of cooperation against terrorism together with African countries”. In the 2009 action plan, it was further agreed that “the two parties shall strengthen cooperation against terrorism, safeguard national security and promote the constant progresses of international cooperation against terrorism”. As for specific actions, China contributed to Africa's counter-terrorism endeavors primarily by means of material and financial supports to regional African counter-terrorism institutions. For example, China provided material supports to the AU Mission in Somalia for its crack-down on terrorist forces such as “Islamic Youth Movement”.

Engagement in the international governance on the Somali pirate issue is another important approach for China to promote African security. Since 2008, Somali pirates have become increasingly active, causing a major threat to the public security in the Gulf of Aden area. To safeguard public access at sea and ensure China's maritime safety, on December 26th, 2008, the Chinese Government dispatched navy ships to Gulf of Aden and Somali waters for the first time to escort

and protect commercial ships. The purpose of the mission was protecting Chinese ships and crews passing Gulf of Aden and Somali waters, ensuring the safety of shipment of humanitarian aids from international organizations such as World Food Program and providing safety coverage to foreign ships passing the waters. By December 2010, Chinese Navy has dispatched 7 teams to carry out the escort missions involving a total of 18 ships, 16 helicopters and 490 SCS members. Moreover, China participated actively in related international counter-piracy initiatives such as coordination meetings, multi-lateral and bilateral operations, etc. For example, on November 6th, 2009, to coordinate international forces for the fighting of Somali pirates and implement international conventions for the prevention and fighting of piracy, China called on an international meeting in Beijing on prevention and fighting of Somali pirates. In addition, China joined the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation and ratified the International Code for the Security of Ships and Port Facilities, in addition to making useful policy proposals for the fighting of Somali pirates. In November 2009, Liu Zhenmin, China's deputy permanent representative to the UN, proposed shared escort tasks among navies of different countries to patrol different escort zones of Gulf of Arden in a coordinated manner. This significant and substantial proposal was well received and applauded by all related parties of the international community.

3. Preventing weapon proliferation in Africa

To support Africa's denuclearization process and prevent Africa from the threat of nuclear weapons, China signed the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty in 1996. In the 2006 Beijing Action Plan, China re-stated its commitment to cooperating with Africa for the promotion of nuclear disarmament, prevention of nuclear weapon proliferation and creation of a nuclear-weapon-

free zone in Africa. When Namibia and South Africa gave up their pursuit of nuclear weapons, the denuclearization of Africa was finally achieved.

The proliferation of small arms has been deemed as an important cause of conflicts and humanitarian disasters in Africa. China not only expressed its opposition to proliferation of small arms, but also got concretely involved in mechanisms against such proliferations. For example, China supported the UN resolution on banning illicit trade of small arms and light weapons by truthfully executing the UN SAWP Action Plan, and the UN Instrument on Identifying and Tracing Illicit SALW signed in 2002. Especially worth noting are China's participation in the Kimberley Process to stop the spread of "Conflict Diamonds" in Africa and its effective supervision and control over the import and export of rough diamonds. Through these measures, China not only performed its international duties, but also curbed the illegal trade of "Conflict Diamonds" and contributed to the maintenance of developing countries' peace and stability. Although these actions are far from being enough, they demonstrate that China wants to do more to resolve Africa's internal conflicts.

4. Military exchange and cooperation with African countries

The military relationship between China and Africa dates back to the period of Africa's national independence movements. At that time, China rendered large amounts of military support and assistance in both tangible and intangible forms to African countries. Since then, China and Africa have kept their military relations. As Sino-African military cooperation shows, China's military exchanges with other countries are in strict accordance with the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and the Principle of Non-Alignment, and they are conducted in ways that are non-confrontational and harmless to the interests of

any third party. In practice, four different forms of military cooperation between China and Africa exist, namely mutual visits, staff training, loan support and joint military exercises.

Table 2
Statistics of Military Visits between China and Africa

<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Chinese visits to Africa</i>	<i>African visits to China</i>
1999-2000	12	19
2001-2002	29	31
2003-2004	30	19
2005-2006	28	30
2007-2008	21	27

Source: previous China Defense White Papers.

Chinese military leaders have paid visits to many African countries since 2000, including Algeria, Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, etc. Similarly, dozens of high-level military delegations from African countries made visits to China too (see Table 2). In September 2010, Chinese hospital ship “Peace Arc” visited Africa for the first time, providing humanitarian aids and medical services to the people of Djibouti, Tanzania, Kenya, Seychelles, etc. At the same time, professional exchanges with African armies are also getting increasingly frequent and they cover many fields such as education, military training, telecommunication, logistics, equipment and technologies. For example, each year Angola dispatches 30 military staff to receive military training in China. And in May 2010, 15 high-level officers from 15 African countries attended a 12-day training course in China jointly undertaken by the Academy of Military Sciences and Chinese National Defense University. Meanwhile, the Chinese army dispatched a large number of military experts to African countries to perform tasks such as education, army training, equipment maintenance and medical services.

With regard to military assistances, China supplied 1 million US dollars worth of replacement military equipment to Nigeria in 2001. In 2005, China granted 600,000 US dollars to Liberia for military building. In April 2010, China granted 1.5 million US dollars to Mauritania for the purchase of military engineering equipment. In 2007, China Export-Import Bank granted loans to the Ghanaian government for procurement of military equipment and facilities. It is worth noting that many Chinese aids and assistances were more out of humanitarian than commercial motives. This is best proven by China's assistance to Africa with mine-sweeping in recent years. So far, China has provided mine-sweeping training courses to Angola, Mozambique, Chad, Burundi, Guinea Bissau, North Sudan and South Sudan. In addition, China donated mine sweeping equipments to the countries above and Egypt, besides funding mine sweeping operations in Ethiopia. In 2010, PLA Engineering and Command University provided a 6-week training course to the mine sweeping troops of Sudan. Although China is no signatory of the Ottawa Treaty (1997) prohibiting the use, deposit, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines, it has played a positive role in sweeping mines. Moreover, China launched joint military exercises with South Africa, Gabon and other African countries.

5. Active involvement in African countries' post-war reconstruction

Post-war reconstruction is not only very necessary to people's livelihood in the conflict regions but also very important to the long-term peace and stability of Africa. Therefore, China attaches great importance to the post-war reconstruction of African countries. That is why it was noted in the Action Plan of the 2009 Sino-African Cooperation Forum that China shall "strengthen cooperation with related countries within the framework of UN Peace Building Commission to support related countries'

post-war reconstruction”. In fact, China participated in the post-war reconstruction of many African countries, including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan, Angola, Congo (DRC), etc. The process involved Chinese government, China Development Bank, large-scaled SOEs at state and provincial levels as well as private businesses. These organizations together constitute a comprehensive and multi-level Africa reconstruction system covering many fields. Important approaches to engage in African countries’ reconstruction include exempting African countries’ debt, official aid, trade and investment, political engagement, etc. Take Sudan for example. During the period from the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 to the independence of southern Sudan, the Chinese efforts for the reconstruction of Sudan were best reflected in four aspects. Firstly, China participated in UN missions. China dispatched multi-functional engineering service teams to join both the UN Sudan Mission in 2005 and the AU-UN Joint Operation in Darfur in 2007, providing the missions with logistic support. Secondly, China supported Sudan’s humanitarian aid and development projects. In 2007, China not only agreed to exempt 80 million US dollars Sudanese debt, but also provided 13 million US dollars interest-free loans to the country for the development of its infrastructure. In addition, China supplied movable plank houses, vehicles, power stations, water pumps and other facilities for restoration of production and development to at least 120 schools in Sudan. Since 2004, China has not only helped Sudan setting up a new oil industry integrating oil exploration and development, oil pipeline transportation and oil refinement functions, but also trained a large number of oil industry technicians and managers for Sudan. It was these efforts of China that helped the oil industry of Sudan successfully embarking on a sustainable growth path. Thirdly, China provided cooperation opportunities beyond

official multilateral post-war aid. China not only supported the development projects in Darfur and Eastern Sudan to nurture business relations, but also constructed transportation and energy infrastructures in northern Sudan. Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, southern Sudan has become a new territory for Chinese entrepreneurs. At the same time, China intensified its economic cooperation with Juba and provided financial supports to central Sudan. Fourthly, China participated in more and more multilateral forums for the solution of Darfur conflict and used its own influence to reach the goals set forth in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Currently, China is acting as the agreement's guarantor, an upgrade from its previous position as an observer.

II. Achievements and Influences

1. Creating African peace and security architecture and promoting Africa's independent peace-keeping capabilities

Due to lacks of capabilities on the part of African countries, the security governance structure of Africa has been largely characterized by a multi-tiered architecture consisting of global, continental, sub-regional, local and civil society levels. However, despite the multiple levels, building Africa's local security mechanism and capability is doubtlessly the key to Africa's peace and security processes. Since the founding of the African Union in 2002, security has been a dominant theme in the AU's agenda. Through years of efforts, an African peace and security architecture that integrates the AU Peace and Security Council, African Early Warning System, think tanks, special foundations and African Standby Force, finally took shape. The formation of this architecture symbolizes that Africa's independent peace-keeping capabilities have been greatly enhanced. China has always been supportive of the concept

of “Africa solving African problems”. Adhering to the principle of supporting Africa’s independent peace-keeping capabilities, China made effective efforts to support the AU and African sub-regional organizations in playing an important role in the African peace processes. By supporting the AU’s positions on security issues, providing it with financial support, launching strategic dialogues and intensifying cooperation with the AU’s sub-regional organizations, China has effectively supported the consolidation and development of Africa’s peace and security architecture, which greatly promoted Africa’s independent peace-keeping capabilities.

2. Constructing a peaceful and stable social environment for the growth and reconstruction of African countries

Chinese dispatches to African peace-keeping missions are largely focused on logistic purposes, such as engineering, medical services and transportation, etc. The duties of Chinese teams are mainly restricted to such operations as humanitarian aid and relief, assistance in organizing and supervising elections, assistance in maintaining social orders, etc. Missions most frequently engaged by the Chinese teams are “integrated peace-keeping missions” that link cease-fire closely with political resolutions, because these are very helpful to the ultimate resolution of conflicts. Take the “UN Operation in Mozambique” in 1993 and 1994 for example. Through the operation, a peace agreement was reached, civil order was restored, elections were successfully held and refugee problems were properly solved. The civil work undertaken by the Chinese peace keeping forces laid solid foundation for the post-conflict reconstruction of Africa. Since China joined UN missions, Chinese peace keeping forces have built or repaired more than 8,000 kilometers of roads and more than 200 bridges. They swept more than 8,700 mines and other explosives, transported more than 4.3 million tons of cargo and provided medical services to more than 60,000

people. Most of these tasks were performed in Africa. Through military exchange and cooperation, the skills and capabilities of African countries' troops were greatly increased, which greatly improved their abilities to protect their countries and prevent crises and conflicts.

3. Facilitating the economic and social development of African countries by supporting African post-war reconstruction

The Angola case fully exemplifies the influence of China in this respect. When the Angola civil war came to an end in 2002, the country began to stabilize, with people's livelihood gradually improving and its economic growth restoring. It was then that Chinese businesses such as China Export-Import Bank, China Civil Engineering, China Railway and CITIC began to get involved in the post-war reconstruction of Angola. In 2004, backed by sovereign guarantees, China signed a loan agreement with Angola for the country's infrastructure construction. In exchange, Angola committed to repay the Chinese loan with oil. At the end of 2007, Chinese engineering companies completed all infrastructure construction according to the agreement, bringing changes to almost every province and city of Angola. In September 2007, China and Angola signed another 2 billion US dollars loan agreement, facilitating even more Chinese capital and engineers to flow to Angola. As a result, Angola changed from a battle field into a large construction site in a very short period of time. The loan-based cooperation model developed by China Export-Import Bank in Angola was a great success. According to incomplete statistics, loans from China Export-Import Bank to Angola helped to create 56 schools for 150,000 people, 24 hospitals, 360 renovated residential communities for 950,000 residents, 10 water treatment plants for 1.02 million people, 1 TV station for more than 9 million people, 7,500 hectares of irrigation projects, 830 kilometers of roads built or

repaired, 3,200 kilometers of telecom cables, 14 transformer stations and 700 kilometers of transmission lines. In addition, the loans helped the Angola Government to procure 44 fishery patrol boats, 364 heavy-duty trucks and 15 locomotives. Despite the recent financial crises, China Export-Import Bank managed to provide sufficient support for the post-war reconstruction of Angola. By working closely with the Angola Government, the bank intends to focus on more good projects beneficial to both countries in the future.

III. Implications to and Impact on China

1. Promoting China's image as "a power with a great sense of responsibility"

China's efforts to construct its image as "a power with a great sense of responsibility" before the international community started in the wake of Asian financial crisis in the 1990s. Ever since then, China has made considerable contributions to international financial cooperation, global environmental protection and construction of regional peace and security mechanisms. The development of Sino-African relationship provided an important opportunity for China to promote and strengthen such an image. Through peace-keeping missions, counter-piracy operations and weapon proliferation prevention efforts in Africa, China not only contributed to Africa's peace and security processes, but also achieved "quite a success in public relations". Engagement in peace-keeping missions and escort operations not only publicized the glorious role of Chinese army, but also improved China's national image. In contrast with Western media's long-term criticism of China's African policy are the countless praises to China for its peace-keeping efforts. Both Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of UN, and Asha-Rose Migiro, the deputy Secretary-General of

UN, highly praised China for its contributions to UN's global peace keeping. Likewise, the US Department of State deemed China's participation "extremely important for the success of peace-keeping missions". Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Liberian President, also spoke highly of Chinese delegation's solidarity and professionalism. Compared with complex reactions to China's cooperation initiatives on developmental issues, China's peace-keeping and escort operations in the field of security not only eliminated China's negative image before the international community, but also considerably promoted and enhanced China's image as a "power with a great sense of responsibility". Moreover, China conducted active communication and dialogues with African countries on matters of peace and security through the conduit of its special representative for African Affairs. This also greatly contributed to the resolution of related peace and security problems.

2. Protecting developmental interests in Africa to satisfy growth needs

By the end of 2009, China's aggregate direct investment in Africa has accumulated to 9.33 billion US dollars. In 2010, the figure exceeded 10 billion US dollars. These Chinese investments were distributed across 49 African countries in fields such as mining, finance, manufacturing, construction, tourism, agriculture, forestry, husbandry and fishery. China made heavy investments in the energy and resource sectors of Angola, Sudan, Libya, Nigeria, Zambia, Algeria and Ethiopia. To establish 6 economic and trade zones in Zambia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Egypt and Ethiopia, China has invested 250 million US dollars into infrastructure construction in these countries. With the rapid growth of Chinese economy, Sino-African trade, investment and resource development, China's economic interests in Africa are continuously growing. However, due to the insecure situations in Africa, "China's economic interests

are exposed to threats from armed robberies, labor protests, civil rebellions and civil wars". As China conceives its national security as closely interwoven with its economic growth, it naturally regards protecting the developmental interests an intrinsic motive of its national security strategies. By engaging in peace and security projects in Africa to promote African peace and security, China not only contributes to Africa's development but also safeguards its own burgeoning interests in Africa.

3. Integrating China into international system with practical foreign policies

When dealing with African affairs, China is becoming increasingly inclined to adopt cooperative strategies. This is evidenced not only in its engagement in African peace-keeping missions and escort operations, but also in its participation in international regimes preventing weapon proliferation in Africa. Through integration and cooperation, China not only successfully supplies the African region and the international community with public goods in the field of security, but also realizes and protects its own growing national interests better. During the process of integration into the international community, China managed to strike a balance between upholding its own diplomatic traditions and absorbing new international norms, which effectively addressed new issues emerging in the process. On the matter of sovereignty, China usually adopts a multilateral standpoint to handle the relationship between sovereignty and the principle of non-interference into internal affairs, giving these concepts new connotations and forms. When selecting African peace-keeping missions to join, China adopts a careful and differentiating approach, withdrawing from engaging in bilateral operations and joining only missions with the UN or AU authorizations. China observes three principles in selecting a mission to participate in, namely, the mission must be "approved by the country concerned, must not resort to force

unless for self-defense purposes, must be supportive of the position of regional organizations". When evaluating the three standards in actual peace-keeping operations, China adopts a pragmatic approach in analyzing specific situations. At the same time, to facilitate the development of African regionalism, China chooses to incorporate African sub-regional organizations into its African cooperation agenda when engaging Sino-African cooperation on security. All these stances show that China's foreign policies are growing increasingly mature.

IV. Problems of and Challenges to China's African Security Policies

1. Insufficient coordination between China's African security policy and development policy

Security and development are not only two fundamental challenges to Africa but also two important components of external world's African policies. China's African policies are no exceptions either. In Africa, the correlation between development and security are so strong that almost any country has to consider this correlation when interacting with African countries. Based on the current situations, China's development policies and security policies towards Africa are largely unrelated or parallel, with neither consistency nor strategic coordination. According to statistics, more than half of China's peace-keeping operations in Africa were unrelated to China's energy security. China's investments in Africa were not linked directly with China's needs for energy and oil either. Although China joined peace-keeping missions and counter-pirate operations in Somali to fulfil its responsibility and satisfy its growth needs, it failed to relate its development policies to its security policies and make proactive and integrated strategic considerations. This has to change if China intends to keep

a mutually beneficial Sino-African relationship in the future, especially against the background of continuously deepening Sino-African relationship, increasing independence awareness on the part of African countries and fierce competition from other powers on African issues. Take China's peace-keeping in Africa for example. Due to complex internal decision-making processes, there exist differences in both opinions and degrees of enthusiasm towards the missions among different departments of Chinese peace-keeping forces. To play an even more important role in African peace keeping operations, however, it is imperative for the departments to minimize their differences and increase coordination and synergy among themselves.

2. Single-level involvement in African security cooperation

Factors such as fragility on the part of most of African countries, return of the right of security governance back to Africa, and security dependence on the external world caused the African security governance system to be multi-tiered in structure. It consists of six levels, namely global, continental, sub-regional, country, civil society and individual actor. In this multi-tiered security governance system, no governance body possesses state-like authorities. Although the AU attempted to create an African security and peace architecture centered on the AU's Peace and Security Council, it did not monopolize all decision and execution power on African peace, security and development matters. Instead, the AU shaped a non-hierarchical relationship based on division of labor with the UN, sub-regional organizations, international and African NGOs as well as private security firms. These organizations together formed a security governance network through official and unofficial channels. In comparison, when China engaged in African security matters, it only cared about the opinions of the UN, AU and African governments while neglecting the influences of opposition parties, NGOs, civil society and indivi-

dual actors. This created some problems for China in the African security processes. For example, if a country's government were changed, there could be a break in diplomatic relations and security cooperation impeding the sustainable development of Sino-African relations. Neglecting NGOs and civil society prevented China from understanding the needs of African people thoroughly when handling Africa's peace and security issues. It also prevented China from handling security issues such as internal conflicts effectively.

3. New challenges from non-traditional security issues

For a long period of time, violence inside African countries caused by tribal rivalry and competition for power constituted the major threat to African countries' security. In recent years, violence in Africa experienced some abatement. In 2006, there were conflicts in only 7 countries; in comparison, at the end of the 1990s the number was 14. Therefore, the general security situations in Africa are improving. Nevertheless, non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, piracy, foodstuff shortage, proliferation of light weapons, the spread of AIDS and climate change continue to emerge. These problems which previously emerged in the field of development are now becoming critical factors that threaten the African people and cause conflicts, and are turning into security issues. Many African countries regard climate change and the spread of diseases as threats to their key security interests. These non-traditional security challenges are casting more and more influence on African peace, development and stability. As a result, they are receiving more consideration from African countries and listed as major concerns by the US and EU when formulating their African strategies. If China failed to follow up with the new trends by formulating its own proposals and policies on these non-traditional security issues such as climate change and AIDS, it would be put into a very passive and awkward situation.

4. Competition and criticism from the West

Although China's active engagement in African peace and security is winning applauses from the international community, especially from African countries, the West represented by Europe and America remains suspicious over China's role in reality, because the peace-keeping and peace-building models of China are different from theirs. In the process of African peace building, China adheres to two principles: first, respecting African countries' national sovereignty; second, insisting on economic growth as a precondition for peace and security, namely, only through economic development can sustainable peace and security be achieved. In comparison, the West's peace building model in Africa is largely characterized by negligence or restriction of sovereignty that is regarded as next to human rights. With respect to the precondition for realization of peace, the West believes that liberty and democracy are the preconditions for sustainable peace. This situation means that although both China and the West are dedicated to the building of peace and security in Africa, there are differences in their policies and conceptions. Although China, the West and Africa are reaching more consensus on new concepts and norms such as "responsibility to protect" and "responsible sovereignty", when it comes to the interpretation and execution of specific actions, there still exist competition and conflict between the Chinese and Western models. The truth is Western-style external supports play only a very limited role in the reconstruction of African countries. In comparison, the Chinese peace keeping model characterized by "respecting the sovereignty of African countries" and "economic growth preceding political reform" seems to be more popular in Africa. This would probably lend motives to the West to resort to their discursive hegemony and scold China on matters such as human rights, transparency and the principle of non-interference into internal affairs, putting

China into the predicament of constant misunderstanding and criticism.

V. Conclusions

Active Chinese engagement in African peace and security reflects a certain shift in Sino-African relations. Sino-African relations have evolved to a new stage, causing China to consider its security policies towards Africa from a strategic perspective. China's responsibilities as a big power, China's overseas interests as well as the need to protect Chinese citizens overseas all urge China to give more considerations to and get involved in more depth in African security issues. In doing so, China needs to bring all factors into consideration and strike a balance between its growth policies and security policies. As the current engagement of China in African security issues shows, China's traditional conception of "sovereignty" and the connotation and forms of the principle of non-interference into internal affairs both underwent some changes. This means China's foreign policies are getting increasingly pragmatic. Although China's policies on matters such as Darfur, Zimbabwe, weapon export to Africa are still misunderstood, suspected or criticized, China is undeniably playing an increasingly important and positive role in Africa's peace and security processes. With the further development of Sino-African relations, further growth of China's interests in Africa and more Chinese interactions with Africa, the Western and other emerging powers, China will play a larger role in promoting African peace and security. Consequently, Sino-African relations will experience even more dynamic growth in the future. 