

Dining with the Dragon: Africa's Pick from the Table

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I. Introduction

Contemporary international order has had to contend with a 'rising China' as the question is no longer about if China is a great power or will rise but how China is rising and its attendant affects. This debate becomes even more interesting when we keep in mind a China that fits the cadre of developing nations, and how in just about half of a century, it can accelerate its pace in dominating the global economic forum.

Conversely, China critics and realist have attributed these huge economic gains to a robust Foreign Direct Investment tactics especially in Africa which is rich in natural resources that China needs to service its economy. This paper strives to put into perspective asymmetric Sino African relations amidst the watchful eye of the USA, and try to answer the question of Africa's pick from what her partners are offering. Should Africa take the Chinese 'chop sticks' or had rather returned to using the spoon and knife that the West continues to offer on this global dining table? To establish a sound hypothetical argument, the realist paradigm of economic interdependence will offer explanations of how cooperation is possible a Rising China relative to Africa, using soft power concept. These historic links will be useful in explaining the tactical approaches to Africa and Africa's perceptions and responses to these strategic approaches.

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II . Historic Link

Africa attracted China as early as the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 - 907): ninth century reports of the meat eating, ivory exporting people of Po pa li in the “southwestern sea” may refer to the inhabitants of what is now modern Kenya or Tanzania. By the eleventh or twelfth centuries, the city state dwellers from Pate to Kilwa along the eastern African coast appeared to have been shipping elephant tusks, rhinoceros horn, tortoise shell, aromatic woods, incense, and myrrh directly or indirectly to southern China. During the Sung dynasty (A.D. 1127 - 1279), Chinese shipping was common throughout the western reaches of the Indian Ocean. Chinese objects from this period of all kinds, including specie, have been found from today’s Somalia to Mozambique. Chinese references to *k’un lun*—slaves as “black as ink”—are also common since Sung times. But it is from the fifteenth century that we can date China’s first certain direct involvement with Africa. Between 1417 and 1431, the Ming emperors dispatched three large expeditions to eastern Africa to collect walking proof of the celestial approval of their virtuous and harmonious reigns. Only Africa could supply a confirmation of these blessings: the arrival of unicorns from distant lands would supply the propitious signs of heaven’s mandate, and only in Africa could unicorns—giraffe—be found. Hence, from Kenya or Tanzania several (and other animals) were strapped to the pitching decks of Chinese junks and transported across the sea to the imperial palace in distant Beijing.¹⁾

In recent times, historians have marked 1949 as the period of a resuscitated and sincere Sino - African relations, although this relationship has often been punctuated by China breaking off in pursuit of Western recognition. Strategically, this year remains so significant that it offers three important historic events in international relations: it marked the founding of the PRC that was struggling against the odds of Western dominant capitalist system, a period largely dominated by Cold War politics and on the African side a continent crippling to break off from colonial powers dominating in her socio economic and political affairs. With Cold war geo politics that was at its heightened peak, it became clear that there were two poles in the global order namely: capitalism personified by the USA, and communism with

1) Robert, Rotberg, “China into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence” Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2008.

the Soviet Union as its personifier. These two poles became the first and second worlds respectively leaving out the likes of Africa, the rest of the Asian continent etc out of the equation. It was this calculated ploy by the two blocks to isolate the rest of the world that urged Mao Zedong of China to perceive a China Africa, and the rest as members of the 'Third World' members. However, when coincidentally some resistant wars broke out in Africa with natives rising up against their colonial masters, China and Russia morally and physically supported these revolutionary movements with massive military assistance. The Chinese Foreign Policy by the time of the Cold war was focused on the principles of sovereignty, continuity of a state and the continuation of the communist party, but rather ironically, sovereign as they were, the USA, France, Britain, all refused to recognize and accept China in the United Nations Security Council in favour of Taiwan; and China's demand of recognizing Taiwan as part of the PRC. This diplomatic snobbery led China to revisit her foreign policy immediately after the Bandung Conference (1955):²⁾ China speedily increased her diplomatic, cultural and economic presence in Africa by adding Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The number increased again from 1958 to 1970s with many loans and aid, experts, and diplomatic delegation.

Economically, the founding of a 'Third World' alliance among China and Africa countries stems from the broad assumptions that globalization is rooted mainly on the economic strength and expansion of capital. As agreed by Bonaglia et al³⁾, globalization composes entirely of "the deepening of financial and trade integration associated with technological progress and multilateral liberalization. Without exaggeration, China's presence in Africa continue to enlarge drastically as between 1997 2006 for example, the worth of Sino African trade rose from US\$5.7billion in 1997 to US\$56 billion in 2006 and is expected to exceed in late 2010. China's presence in Africa has expanded dramatically in the last decade. Between 1997 and 2006 the value of China African trade rose ten fold from US\$ 5.7 billion in 1997 to US\$ 56 billion in 2006; this figure is expected to reach US\$100 billion by the end of this year (2010). China's investments in Africa have increased almost six fold from US\$56 million in 1996 to US\$ 370 million in 2006.

In summary therefore, China's spending and presence in Africa has been described

2) Acharya, Amitav. "Lessons of Bandung, Then and Now." Financial Times 22 April 15, 2005.

3) Bonaglia, Federico, Nicolas Pinaud and Lucia Wegner, "Africa Needs Not Miss Out on the Benefits of Globalization" OECD Policy Insights, No 46, April 2007.

by many as the desire to satisfy the growing need for resources to ensure her growth. It has therefore been very difficult to design a connecting theory in Sino African relations simply because of these disparities in interests. Having suffered snobbery from her Western counterparts especially the USA, China after the Korean War in 1953, was engaged in a “peace offensive” to win international legitimacy. China and India then endorsed the five principles of peaceful coexistence (mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non aggression; mutual non interference in each other’s internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; peaceful coexistence) that became the core of the ten points agreed on at the 1955 Bandung Conference of non aligned nations and have been central tenets of Chinese foreign policy ever since.⁴⁾ Conversely, the USA opposed recognition or admission of China to the United Nations. Year after year, when the UN General Assembly took up the question of seating the PRC, the proportion of countries supporting China gradually grew (particularly after the admission to the UN of newly independent, ex colonial countries of Africa, beginning with Ghana in 1957), but the U.S. blocked admission by proposing not to put the question of China’s seating on the General Assembly’s agenda (1950 1960) and, failing that, by insisting it was an “important question” that required a two thirds super majority (1961 1970). China was finally admitted to the UN in 1971.

In recent years, Americans have become aware of the rise of China’s influence in the world. When a 2006 CCGA (*Chicago Council on Global Affairs*) survey asked respondents to rate (on a 0 10 scale) how much influence various countries had in the world, the average American gave China a substantial score (6.4%) that put China ahead of the EU (6.0%) and Russia (5.6%), and tied with Japan, but behind Great Britain (6.7%) and far behind the United States (8.5%). In terms of how much influence countries will have in the world ten years from now, however, China scored higher (6.8%) - closer to the U.S. (8.4%), and above Japan (6.6%), Britain (6.4%), the EU (6.1%) and everyone.⁵⁾ Just two years later, in the 2008 CCGA survey, Americans judged that some of that predicted change had already occurred.

4) Benjamin I. Page & Tao Xie “Living with the Dragon: Americans and the Rise of China” paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association 67th Annual National Conference, The Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL, New York, Columbia University Press, 2009. p. 5.

5) CCGA Survey 2006.

The United States was again rated as having the most world influence (9.5) but China now came in second (7.9), ahead of the EU (7.8), Britain (7.8), Japan (7.5) and other countries.

III. Theoretical Approach

This paper's main assumption will be limited to the realist paradigm by trying to present how realists present a rising China, especially in relating with Africa. Conventional argument posited by Hans Morgenthau emphasizes the significance of power politics as the basis and general requirement in inter state relations, which runs contrary to Stephen Krasner who advocates a socio economic approach in the relations between states. Krasner's main argument carefully carved from an economic approach by using high ratio and national income in empirical data form, to explain realism in an open world economy maintains that periods of openness in the world economy correlate with periods in which one state is clearly predominant. In the nineteenth century it was Great Britain, in the period 1945 - 60, it was the United States. Consequently, the degree of openness is itself dependant on the distribution of power between states. Economic 'interdependence' is subordinate to the political and economic balance of power between states, not the other way round"⁶⁾ From a purely macroeconomic lens, Krasner explains his realist concept to mean a powerful state, like China, technologically well placed over other smaller states in Africa, will without hesitation prefer an open market /trading system as it seeks new export markets and that such large and powerful states are less prone or exposed, less vulnerable to changes from overseas and the dynamics of international economy, thus lowering the question of cost on such great power. This interstate economic dynamics become even more volatile when power is evenly distributed between states as such big states will not support an open trading system, thus what eventually happens is that the "less economically developed states will try to avoid the political danger of becoming vulnerable to pressure from others, while states whose hegemony may be declining fear a loss of power to their rivals, and find it hard to resist domestic

6) Martin Griffiths, Steven C. Roach & M. Scott Solomon Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations" second edition: (2009), p. 44.

pressures for protection from cheap imports.”

Explaining Krasner's arguments therefore about a Sino African economic relationship where sovereign nations hardly privilege wealth over other goals, and that socio political stability and power are crucial which infers that although inter trade link does provide tangible gains for such states that engage in it, some states will inevitably gain more than others, hence relative gains from absolute gains argument, it will be deduced that China gain will remain high. Krasner tries to use the USA for example, where he puts into perspective the US's policy towards raw material investment abroad during the twentieth century. While agreeing that states are autonomous entities which seek to implement their national interests against both national as well as international actors, yet he criticizes the actions of both the US White House and State Department in their propaganda of improving the general welfare and showing a persistent rank ordering in time. His conclusion is that US scholars always paint a pro American national interest in the international commodity market which has three components namely: stimulating economic competition; ensuring security of supply; and promoting broader foreign policy goals. Consequently, smaller powers do not bother themselves, but rather concentrate on the sovereignty and political integrity of their narrow economic interests. If Krasner's realist arguments are anything to go by, how then can you exclude the unwritten 'interests' of China in Africa? What other descriptions can we offer for the heightened Sino US interests in Africa other than a typical realist mentality? However, departing from the economic argument at a much earlier period, Morgenthau, “along with E.H. Carr and George Kennan, are best remembered as those who tried to develop a comprehensive theory of 'power politics' on the philosophical basis of realist principles of human nature, the essence of politics, the balance of power and the role of ethics in foreign policy”⁷⁾. To Morgenthau, all politics is the struggle for power, and that the defining character of politics is the use of power to dominate others, thus relegating morality and reason as subordinate's virtues in politics.⁸⁾ Morgenthau, talking about the role of power between states and what such power struggle produces, argues that key to all foreign policies are that they tend to conform to, and reflect on, one of three patterns of

7) Ibid, p. 52.

8) Hans J. Morgenthau “Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace” Fifth Edition, Revised, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, pp. 4-15).

activity: maintaining the balance of power, imperialism and what he calls the politics of prestige (impressing other states with the extent of one's power)⁹⁾.

Taking a closer look at what the two leading realists say, what then could possibly be an apt explanation from a realist lens of a rising China especially as she relates with Africa? John Mearsheimer adds his voice to the debate by claiming that, in an anarchic global system, big powers are afraid of one another and compete to gain a position of dominant power to ensure their own survival.¹⁰⁾ They are "fated to clash" and are prone to go to war. Such realists generally tend to see rising power like China potentially dangerous, while other realists on the pessimist bench claim that China is acting like a status quo power, cautious, responsible, focuses on its internal problems and avoiding conflict. On its part, realism seems to have failed Africa because, it appears to be inconsistent with the political realities on the ground and that when I.R scholars try to apply such realist theory, and usually the wrong actors are studied. "The "right" actors for understanding these theories include not only the official states IR scholars traditionally analyze, but also all the autonomous political entities that control territory, have military resources, and struggle to survive under anarchy."¹¹⁾ Little wonder therefore why we see today an accelerated pace of interest from both western powers and those of the East.

Since the trust of this paper revolves around the asymmetry relationship among China and African states, Womack tries to explain a 'Rising China' as a sovereign nation whose national disparities have the likelihood of effecting regional and international affairs. Because of these varying disparities, a vicious circle of systemic misperceptions is bound to occur but that such tensions cannot alter international stability, as asymmetry itself can rarely be forced by the stronger side.¹²⁾ China has carefully used multipolar arguments in pursuing her asymmetry theory especially when clearly that bipolarity was all about two blocs: Soviet and USA during the Cold war, and unipolarity exclusively a USA domain. By multipolarity, China thinks durable peace, economic globalization, the growth of science and technology are

9) Ibid: p.52.

10) Mearsheimer, John. "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (New York: Norton, 2001).

11) Lemke Douglas. "Return to Realism: Power Politics and State Making in Africa Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association 48th Annual Convention, Hilton Chicago, February (2007).

12) Brantly Womack "Asymmetry Theory and China's Concept of Multipolarity" Journal of Contemporary China (2004), 13 (39), pp. 351-366.

fundamental world trends and that anything shorts of this will inhibits state autonomy hence the emphasis in the Chinese foreign policy. The Chinese notion of multipolarity is concerned with the assertion of autonomous influence, between several power centers with important influence on regional and world affairs'. To China, evidences of how the Southeast Asian region and China cope and developed economically without the USA, and that most multilateral organization are not under the USA but yet are contributing to shaping world economic capacities are strong evidences of why the world needn't reverse to a bipolar or unipolar order. However, over the years, China has come to realize the limitations of her multipolarity concept in international relations in favor of an asymmetric approach. Asymmetry do contend that multipolarity give way to disparities in differences and misperceptions especially between a more power and less powerful state which might lead to conflict, but that such misperceptions cannot lead to powerful countries imposing their will on the less powerful ones. There is instead a relatively stable matrix of international relationships in which exchanges may not be equal, but they are usually negotiated because of autonomy of both sides.¹³⁾ By asymmetry, China and Africa differ greatly in population, economy and military capabilities, therefore the opportunities and risks of their relationship will be unquestionably different for each side. Sino African asymmetry relationship therefore although it may lead to misperceptions, will not necessarily degenerate into conflict. It is very difficult for a bilateral asymmetry to degenerate into war except for the Indochina of the 1970s or Balkans of the 1980s.

IV. China's Strategic Approach to Africa

Nye coined the phrase 'soft power'; although other historic data do contend that the idea of attractions as a form of power did not originate with Nye or Lukes, but dates back to ancient Chinese philosophers such as Laozi in the 7th Century BC. Soft power involves indirect influence and ability to shape the preferences of others by attraction. The attraction stems from "a country's culture, political ideals, and policies Nye.¹⁴⁾ Yet soft power requires more sophisticated skills and political

13) Brantly Womack "Asymmetry Theory and China's Concept of Multipolarity" Journal of Contemporary China (2004), p.360.

maneuvers than hard power, because the target and nature of soft power is not fixed but relative and dynamic thereby making it difficult to predict its effect. Soft power can be exercised not just by sovereign states, but by all actors in international politics, such as NGOs, or international institutions. For Nye, the essence of soft power lies in values — “in our culture and in the way we handle ourselves internationally”. It’s about creating a sense of legitimacy for a nation’s international aims. Notwithstanding the Nye advocacy on soft power, what could soft power epitomize to the Beijing government? Glaser and Murphy assert that, “China’s soft power policy emphasizes culture that is largely ad hoc and primarily reactive aiming to combat the perception internationally that China poses a threat. As China expands its national power and presumes a bigger role on the international economic stage, it is possible that Beijing will promote Chinese socialist values as an alternative to Western values and seek to promote the China development model assertively.”¹⁵⁾ On the other hand, Wang Huning the Chinese scholar accredited for having published China’s first article on the concept of ‘Soft Power’ sharply contrasts Nye’s main assumptions of soft power regarding the sources of power: culture, political ideas and values, foreign policies, etc, but instead focuses squarely on culture as the main source of a state’s soft power: ‘if a country has an admirable culture and ideological system, other countries will tend to follow it.’¹⁶⁾ It does not have to use its hard power which is expensive and less efficient”¹⁷⁾. Soft power has become a popular and acceptable concept between Chinese political and historians because Nye’s theory resonates with traditional Chinese concepts: for e.g. Confucianism extols a King who relies on moral power, not physical use of force, believing that the Kingly way (王道 *wangdao*) will triumph over the hegemon’s (霸道 *badao*).¹⁸⁾ Between contemporary Chinese CPC leadership, and even up to the last days of

14) Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics (Chapter 4 Wielding Soft Power)” Published by Public Affairs, New York, 2004. pp.191

15) Bonnie .S. Glaser & Melisa. E. Murphy: “Soft Power with Chinese characteristics The ongoing Debate” in works edited by Carola McGiffert in Chinese soft power and its implications for the United States.March.2009

16) Wang Huning, “Culture as a National Soft Power: Soft Power”, Journal of Fudan University, March 1993.

17) Li Mingjiang, “China Debates Soft Power” Chinese Journal of International Politics, Vol. 2, 2008, 287 - 308. doi:10.1093/cjip/pon011, First published online: October 28, 2008.

18) Shaohua Hu, “Confucianism and Contemporary Chinese Politics.” Politics & Policy, Volume 35, Issue 1, pages 136 - 153, March 2007.

Mao Zedong, these leaders actually needed very little or no persuasion in persuading them about the core values of culture in soft power. They see culture as the hidden hand in the international wrestling contest for economic power. To speak plainly, some powerful foreign nations wish to use culture as a weapon against other nations, and therefore, we must work hard to raise our country's soft power. The CPC's official version and core role of culture were clinched when the term was included in President Hu Jintao's work report to the 17th CPC Congress in October 2007. He noted "Culture has increasingly become an important source of national cohesion and creativity and an important factor in the competition for overall national strength", and added that China must "enhance the country's soft power" (软实力 *ruanquanli*).¹⁹⁾ What however differentiates or contrasts China's soft power is that while Nye views soft power as primarily a means of improving international standings of the USA, the Chinese approach to soft power is holistic: the domestic and foreign policy aspects of soft power development are conceived as an organic whole. What we see characterizing Chinese soft power is the foreign policy tools that China is using China's systematic and long standing opposition to the use of force, preservation of state's sovereignty, and territorial integrity, non interference in the internal affairs of nation states, and her no nonsense opposition to economic sanctions as well as her new concept of building a harmonious world resonates with many nations thus increasing the score sheet for China. These views were made clear in a recent UN study on balance of power which is drastically shifting from a USA dominated and European Union led, to "China and Russia which defends national sovereignty and non intervention in sovereign states. Over the past decade, support for Chinese and Russian stances on human rights issue has soared from less than 50% to 74% in the UN General Assembly²⁰⁾.

In Africa, according to Kenneth King China has invested this far in the following countries²¹⁾: Below is a table of Chinese investment in Africa.

19) Full text of Hu Jintao's Report to the 17th CPC Congress, Xinhua, October 24, 2007.

20) Ian Travnor . Hemorrhaging of Western influences at UN wrecks attempts to Push Human Rights Agenda. The Guardian, September 18th 2008. Original Source:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/sep/18/unitednations.china..>

21) Kenneth King, 'Aid within the Wider China Africa Partnership: A View from Beijing. University of Hong Kong & University of Edinburgh. Paper to Workshop on China Africa Links, 11 12 November 2006.

Table 1. China's Investment in Africa

Investment	Country	Funds (US\$, in millions)
Debt relief, preferential loan of \$2 billion	Angola	4,077
Stadium, government office building, construction of conference center, hospital	Benin	30
Conference building, hydroelectric power station, hospital	Cameroon	23
Government office building, conference hall, cement factory	Cape Verde	7
Agric technological station, radio station, training center, clinics	Central African Republic	4
Stadium, hydroelectric power station, broadcasting station, hospital	Congo	171
Stadium, trade center, people's palace, factories	Democratic Republic of Congo	124
Government office building, water supply project, people's palace	Comoros	1
Stadium, government office building, people's palace, housing project	Djibouti	10
Humanitarian assistance, hospital	Eritrea	4
Hydroelectric power station, radio station, highway	Equatorial Guinea	206
Highway, veterinary center, Takazze hydropower station, water supply project	Ethiopia	873
Healthcare center, primary school, assembly building, railway, hydroelectric plant	Gabon	63
National theatre, irrigation project, vocational training center, hospital	Ghana	264
People's palace, hydroelectric power station, cinema, presidential palace	Guinea	94
Housing project, power generating equipment	Guinea Bissau	29
Theatre, water conservation project	Ivory Coast	49
Vegetable planting, convention center, industrial park	Lesotho	10
Sugar mill, rice project, sports stadium, hospital renovation, office building	Liberia	12
Stadium, conference building, textile mill, sugar refinery, leather process factory, pharmacy	Mali	208
Stadium, bridge, airport terminal building	Mauritius	38
Textile mill, passenger cargo vessel, water supply project, shoe factory, parliament building, housing project	Mozambique	71
Water supply project, civil housing project	Namibia	68
Water supply project, textile mills, housing project	Niger	64
Railway upgrade, highway maintenance, launch of communication satellite, Rwanda Highway, cement factory, veterinary school	Nigeria	9,614
Stadium, water conservation project, Seychelles Swimming pool, housing project, school	Senegal	247
Road, bridge, stadium, sugar complex, office building, hydroelectric power station, civil housing, beachside tourist complex	Sierra Leone	24
Railway, textile mill, rice project, sugar cane factory, coal mine	Tanzania	149
Conference building, sugar refinery, stadium, hospital, irrigation project	Togo	7
Stadium, rice project, factory	Uganda	44
Tanzania Zambia railway, road, factory, textile mill, water supply project	Zambia	283
Stadium, hospital, dam, factory	Zimbabwe	176

China Statistical Yearbook, 2007 summarizes in monetary terms the amount of money spent so far by China in Africa.

V. China's Soft Power in Africa

If it is true from the China threat pessimists that step we take to improve ourselves and relationship with others are often interpreted as threat by others, then the Sino African romance will be the greatest threat to Africa's former colonial masters. After centuries of dinning with the West, has the African continent graduated from her under developed status? Is the continent not more indebted than it were before colonial contacts? Ironically, instead of dinning to feed, the reverse is the case where as Africa eats from the Western table, the bill piles up, and is tagged by conditionalities like good governance, transparency and accountability, human rights, etc. Because of this steady pace in retrogressive development, Africa was faced with a new demeaning proposal. When the dragon re approached Africa, critics described the dragon as fearful and spiting fire, but a decade of romance was enough to de mystified such claim, because the dragon proves to be humane. Her soft power goal for Africa put emphasis on reconciling both domestic African advocacy for some autonomy and that of international 'distractions'. Consistently, China maintains that her approach in Africa revolves around the strength of its economy and economic management. Africa needn't use a macroeconomic lens to lend credence to Chinese gestures, but that the large trade and infrastructural investment with individual countries and the monopoly in African markets offer renewed hope for Africa's future as oppose to western offers which are tagged through humanitarian /relief gestures, governance, human rights, security etc. These offers are more pragmatic, demand driven and inline with African priorities, unlike Western supply driven investments.

These conceptual explanations of soft power lead us in understanding China's strategic approach to Africa from a realist perspective. The most obvious manifestation of the "soft power" of China in Africa has been the enormous growth in trade and investment among the two. Compared to the U.S. foreign engagement, Asian countries have unique patterns of foreign engagement. Historically, regional actors give preference to China as the regional hegemon, considering her inevitable cultural influence in the region, namely "cultural soft power". China's soft power goal especially in Africa has been through the area of aid and assistance. China is an important provider of aid, financial assistance, preferential/soft loans and debt

cancellation. For example, China has cancelled more than \$1 billion in debt to 31 heavily indebted poor African countries since FOCAC was created: provided assistance for the construction of over 720 investment facilities.²²⁾ Which justifications can we therefore offer for these huge investments in Africa? As mentioned earlier, this is not the first time China is going to Africa. In the late 1970s, China retreated from the continent, and adopted a new course based on capitalist reforms and reinsertion into the world economy. It was only in 1989 that China rediscovered a new importance of Africa, when the latter defended China at the UN at the Tiananmen Square demonstration. In some China Africa publications, pro China scholars have often defended China's return to Africa after Western snobbery, as a just cause and out of the desire that both continents share socio cultural ties and a history of Western occupation, thus dismissing economic/resource based voraciousness as the sole reason. That was why in the immediate post Cold War era, China funded the Tazara Railway project linking Tanzania and Zambia, and helped Zambia in her independence struggle especially on trade routes to the sea via white minority ruled Rhodesia.

By the 1990s, China resumed full engagement with Africa, but purely on economic relations, though at a much lower level than that of the multilateral institutions in the West which by the end of the Cold War gained exclusive influence geographically over the African continent. Our argument is that with all these geopolitical Western influences, China could still bulldozed her way with a gradual and steady economic growth using resources from Africa. Why is Africa so important to China? Which side of history are we to follow: the geopolitical (imperialism) or mutual economic interest? Africa has a population of over 850 million people. During the Cold War, Africa's significance to China was to help China gain support internationally, weigh down the Taiwan bid for UN Security Council membership and the desire to spread Communism overseas; but by the end of the Cold War, there was a dramatic change to that of energy and raw material needs. Africa constitutes an immense market for Chinese manufactured goods as well as providing a production platform for Chinese companies. Invariably, China needs African markets to maintain her economic growth and expansion and the maintenance of her

22) Shelton Garth, "China and Africa: Building an economic partnership," *South African Journal of international Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Winter, 2001.

international status is vital: thus, they need Africa in this equation, as Africa constitutes half of the non aligned nations and a member of the developing nations of United Nations membership. China therefore needs the support of these countries to maintain its international status and opposition to US hegemony²³⁾.”

The resource qualities of Africa listed here no doubt sees the heightened interest from China in Africa. Africa owe about 8% of the world's oil reserves: 11% of world oil production: 85% of the world's new oil reserves in 2001-2004 found in west/central Africa,²⁴⁾: in 2005, China announced it will invest \$2.3 billion in the oil and gas production in Nigeria: 30% of China's oil comes from Africa (Angola, Sudan, The Congo etc.): 88% of the world's platinum group metal: 80% of the world manganese: 21% of the world's gold production: 26% of the world's non OPEC oil: 80% of the world's diamonds: Africa is home to some of the world's largest deposits of chrome, bauxite, copper, and uranium: the forests of Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, the Central Africa Republic (CAR) and Liberia provide timber to China: China is investing in fisheries and related secondary production in Sierra Leone, Gabon, Tanzania and Zimbabwe²⁵⁾.

If the African continent is that much important in terms of resource riches especially to developed economies, the question that arises is whether the natives themselves are aware of their resource potentials, and if the answer is yes, then what do they perceive of these foreign soft powers or olive branches offered by China? Searching for a single voice to represent about 50 countries appears to be absurd, as there are varied opinions of such. To the Africans, especially various African governments, they have welcomed Chinese economic engagement, because of the high potential of improving trade, 'unconditional' aid, debt relief, infrastructural developments etc. Any attempt to criticize China in their presence will meet a stiff resistance, because China has actually put Africa on the global spotlight. Unlike her Western counterparts, Africans see Chinese Aid as an alternative to Western international financial organizations, who are representatives of western interests.

23) He Wenping, "The Balancing Act of China's Africa policy." *China Security*, vol.3 No. 3 Summer 2007, pp. 23-40.

24) Sautman, Barry V. "Friends and Interests: China's distinctive links with Africa." Working paper 12, Center on China's Transnational Relations, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. (2006)

25) Judith van de Looy, "Africa and China: A strategic partnership?" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 30, No. 3, Jul Sep 2006.

However, since the trust of this article is to put into perspective Africa's eventual choice from the gestures of China if it is to attain some form of economic autonomy, this paper seek to explore the challenges a rising China in Africa would have on her relationship with her supposed rival, the USA. An appreciable point of agreement on the China Africa romance is that barely after a decade of Post Cold War era, and as a result of strong ties among the two, another world order emerged, i.e., the Third World order. China's strategy of economically embracing Africa prove to be worrying the West, and Africa too, hit by the pressures of globalization and frustration following centuries of unrewarding ties with the West has been more than enthusiastic in courting with China. This Sino African alliance is at the core of the "developing world order" which China is today leading. The full weight of this alliance is conjured in the words of William Wallis: "The contours of a new order is still being drawn, but China's growing stake in Africa has already shaken up an old and fraying one dominated by cautious Western donors and former colonial powers"²⁶).

Unlike the dragon which is known as one of the leading advocates of Nye's soft power concept, the United States of America is more prone to use hard power in her foreign policy issues, but does hard power simply infer the opposite of soft power? Concisely put, hard power includes force, coercion, and direct manifestation to others to achieve the power holder's goal. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the USA has had to use hard power, although it's been greatly challenged. The effectiveness of U.S. soft power depends on world geopolitical events and relations among two countries and the target country's perception. Ideally, the United States think a soft power approach in the foreign policy of a state could be too 'soft' in achieving a desired goal, therefore at a Senate hearing for confirmation as the Secretary of State for the Obama administration in 2009, Hillary Rodham Clinton underlined the importance and wise use of power for U.S. foreign policies, so called "smart power". Smart power, a concept developed by Nye epitomizes effective leadership that seeks a blend of soft and hard power skills. Would putting these thoughts into strategic perspectives enable us to understand how a pro hard power USA would think of soft power China especially in her relationship with Africa? How does Americans perceive such high influence and growth? Do they view China as a great power rival, bound

26) William Wallis "China Africa Trade. Drawing Contours of a new World Order." Financial Times, 08 January, 2008. p.1.

to conflict with or see China emerging as a strong friend in a harmonious world? Page and Xie asserts that 'It turns out that most Americans are well aware of the rise of China. Some are apprehensive about that rise, chiefly for national security (rather than economic) reasons and many favors a degree of off shore "balancing" of the sort that realism recommend, although Naughton notes that 'few Americans, want to work actively to limit the rise of China. Very few favor the use of troops to defend Taiwan.'²⁷⁾

VI. Conclusion: Africa's Pick from the Table

Having what the dragon is offering under the watchful eye of the Eagle (USA), it's now up to Africa to select her pick from the Chinese dishes rather cautiously. What does Africa want...an end to aid or aid conditionalities? Since empirical data shows the rich resource base in Africa, does this warrant Africa's divorce from Western economic romance? Can the Brandt commission (1980s) report, which suggests that Africa still needs Western advice in her economic growth and development, be an option for a bouncing, competitive and autonomous economic base? The report of the commission for Africa (CFA)²⁸⁾ titled 'Our common interest' remains Africa's latest development blue print. At the launch of the CFA report, then British Prime Minister Tony Blair noted that there was a clear need for the world to help bring economic changes in Africa, because Africa '...was a scar on the conscience of the world but that if the world as a community focused on it, we would heal it.' Based on evidences from an interview by Blair, a commentator has suggested that part of the reason for his concern over Africa is explained by his religious beliefs. This rather bleak and dull future of Africa was further painted by Claphman²⁹⁾ when he recently commented that 'Africa once again became a 'dark continent', calling for the attentions of a new generation of missionaries. (The

27) Benjamin I. Page & Tao Xie "Living with the Dragon: Americans and the Rise of China as a World Power" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association 67th Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, 2009, p 5.

28) Commission for Africa (CFA) annual Report, 2005.

29) Claphman Christopher, Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 340.

underlying assumption of the report is that Africa lacks good governance and economic base, and therefore the only solution is a combination of increased levels of foreign aid and greater investment by the private and foreign sector and large scale integration into the global political economy. While the report accepts that Africa's problems are partly linked to the structures of world trade, global finance and the institutions of multilateralism, this paper would question whether the proposed solutions focuses sufficiently on addressing these structural elements. Keet ends that it is neither well meaning palliatives nor better 'integration' of Africa into the global system but the nature and terms of African participation in the global economy that is most significant.

The conclusion to this paper rests on the proviso therefore that either of these gestures can actually solve Africa's socio economic and under developed problems. Unquestionably, taking the Western path might even be more catastrophic because the continent is getting fed up with liberal conditionalities tied to their investments. Western agitation for the operation of liberal tenets, have so far not offered any clue to Africa's economic emancipation regardless of its attendant resources. What has western advocacy and campaign yielded Africa? Is corruption not very much rampant in the West? Which lesson does the recent economic/financial crisis teach the developing nations in Africa? Corrupt, undemocratic, and illiberal as China may be, does it not ring a bell that her accelerated rise to a competing status with the declining US hegemon, now as second largest economy in the world, is a better explanation of international relations and which order to follow? Conversely, even though China seems to be enjoying 'grass root', elites, political and media support, and been highly rated over some of her western counterparts, it still does not answer her socio economic problems. Africa needs to be a bit revolutionary in dinning with China regardless of the diplomatic courtesies from China especially when she continues to use her exploitative mechanism of extraction benefiting only a small cabal of state leaders and cluster of countries which remain vulnerable to the onslaught of the 'Dutch Disease' (a phenomena in which the revenues of natural resource extraction have an unintended corrosive effect on the political economy of the exporting country)³⁰). Our leaders in Africa should not be led in believing hook

30) Sanusha Naidu and Martyn Davie, "China Fuels Its Future with Africa's Riches" Volume 13, No. 2, Winter/Spring, 2006.

line and sinker that Chinese interests in the various states are exclusively for economic reasons but as Eisenman and Kurlantzick puts it, 'China's foray into the continent is as much political as it is economic... Africa is central to Beijing's global strategy.' They note that 'China's growing industries demand new energy and raw material suppliers; its exporters want markets; its diplomats require support in international organizations; and its propaganda still seeks support from allies to advance Chinese interests and, when necessary, to counter the United States.'³¹⁾

What the Chinese aid can best offer to Africa is a temporary measure to be actualized only when Africans realize that no form of foreign romance can dust off our staggering economic base. China has and is doing well to make the economies of sovereign states enviable and competitive but our African leaders need to be selfless in dinning with China. They should not be voracious in satisfying the hunger arising from the quest to satisfy their political manifesto. A return to a full blown Western pattern could increase Africa's debts, rather Africa needs to take advantage of what it is learning from China in socio economic and technological terms to guide her design an independent African economic development model with African characteristics. Using the political economy and development model of China is worth emulating such as using the export led growth approach and/or FDI, but can Africa learns from China's past and spuriousness to regain a bouncing economy? The answers for these questions can be attributed to some political actions needed by various African leaders or collectively. Collectively, contemporary moves to institutionalize local initiatives like the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) 2001, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) 2000, and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2008, if properly managed without over reliance on Western guidelines, can offer appreciable alternatives in achieving a growth model.

Independently, notwithstanding the collective actions by various African governments seeking amicable solutions to Africa's economic growth and development, and in relating with China, it is alleged that the various leaders in Africa have not been holistically sincere in their handling of the supposed 'mutual benefit and cooperation' between China and their respective countries. Core in the Chinese

31) Eisenman .J & J Kurlantzick, 'China's Africa Strategy, Current History, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. May 2006, pp.219-226.

economic development model is the export led growth and/or the foreign direct investment, but over the years, our leaders have refused to see beyond the immediate economic and political benefits they (government) make out of the China approach for bilateral trade. It requires no exaggeration that every politician especially African presidents want a booming economy to fulfill their manifesto demands and probably increase their chances of re election but again common sense and patriotism demands that such leaders look a bit beyond the immediate benefit and enter a more domestically owned type of agreement with the bulk of the masses benefiting the most. Ideally, what happen is that most of these soft power gifts are on a short term basis demanding immediate action, and our leaders in want of fulfilling their presidential pledges without due introspection, signs such agreements. In very specific terms, since China has different approaches to various sovereign African states, our respective African presidents should muster the courage enough and say NO to China where it should be no, and instead direct the pace at which Chinese investment should be done locally. Bilateral agreements should graduate from mere diplomatic protocols of investment and declarations, to concrete and practicable actions like insisting that China sets up processing plants in their countries, which encourages domestic production and enhances employment and the transfer of technology. If China has to continue enjoying domestic African support, it should be aware that exporting Chinese labour to complement Chinese investments and infrastructural projects may delay skills transfer, indigenous employment and increase the chances of resentment from the local people. The award of scholarship should be technologically based so that young Africans can be trained the technologies of modern Chinese machinery. If Africa as a continent is now condemning the West for having done very little or nothing to set her economic machinery going, then such caution should also guide her relationship with China. Our leaders should not be cowed into flamboyant offers but try to see if the relative gains from absolute gains concept can be actualized. This however does not presuppose or consent to Western criticisms that China is dumping cheap goods into Africa and milking away her natural resources, but rather suggests that we can use the China lesson punctuated by the centuries of Western occupation and isolation to a competing status in the global economic trend. By far, a major difference among Western dominance in African economies and that of China in Africa today is that ,China's economic

engagement is accompanied with investment in and upgrading of infrastructure and transport facilities, which are central to Africa's development trajectory while western engagement were and are been tied to liberal credentials and conditionalities.

China needs to multiply investment options like in Sudan by establishing oil refinery and other processing investment areas if it is to dwarf Western criticism of her soft power approach as being voracious and another form of economic imperialism. The Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and its resolutions need to move away from mere principles and declarations like her Washington Consensus counterpart into a more practicable entity. The dragon's presence is no doubt highly felt in Africa but much need to be done on the part of China for ordinary African natives to better their lives. The 'licking of the elbow' should not be limited to respective heads of states of governments alone because it will never filter down to the ordinary masses. Strategically, China is using her growing economic power to translate it into political influence over the foreign agenda of sister sovereign states that she engages bilaterally. Like Scott and Kastner notes, nearly all economic and high level visits by individual leaderships of the various African states have often boiled down to that African state reshaping her market to favor China and also influence public perceptions in favor of China.³²⁾ The fear exists that notwithstanding the high influence China continue to have in the continent, if more visible steps are not taken to show a domestically owned and led investment programs, Western propaganda of injecting doze of anti China export led development model might triumph again, and China will begin to see strong domestic resistance. Africa too which has been used to dinning with the West by using the knife, stickers and spoon should be careful in using the Chinese chop sticks before the dining table gets messier.

32) Kastner, Scott. "Buying influence? The Political Effects of China's International Economic Ties." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA's 50th Annual Convention "Exploring the Past, Anticipating The Future." New York, February 15, 2009.

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《Abstract》

Dining with the Dragon: Africa's Pick from the Table

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The debate on Sino-African relations remains a contentious topic especially when there has not been much breakthrough as to which generally acceptable theoretical perspective, can such a dissimilar relationship offer. Interdependent as they may be, yet the disparities among them from asymmetric view point has led to the diverse differences in perspective between a more powerful China and less powerful Africa, hence the strong presence of misperception and misunderstanding that may lead to conflict of interest. Consequently however, China adopts a soft power approach with a continent that have had centuries of engagement with Western powers, to an extent of been preferred over her Western counterparts. This work therefore analysis a mutually beneficial relationship with a rising China and Africa's cautious path to follow.

Key Words: Sino-African relations, Soft power, Infrastructural investments

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