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Study background

- Book mostly draws from joint-PhD research (KCL/HKU)
- Background in EU-China relations, interest in African affairs
- Nature of bilateral relationship: Cooperative vs. competitive patterns of behaviour (first book)
- Limitations of theoretical literature & desire to broaden remit to IR

Study context (I)

- China's 'reemergence' on the African continent = risk and reassessment for EU's approach
- Tentative EU approaches to foster dialogue/cooperation in 2000s, culminating in 2009 'Trilateral Communication'
- Few cases of actual cooperation, with exception of 'security' – China's increasing vulnerability + security threats = fertile ground

Study context (II)

- Senior PLA officer (2014): European militaries priority ‘target’ for cooperation even though not part of PLA’s top 10 “most frequent partners” (Allen et al., 2017, p. 45)

Table 3. The PLA’s Top 10 Most Frequent Military Diplomatic Partners, 2003–2016

Overall Rank	Countries	Geographic Region	Military Exercises	Naval Port Calls	Senior-Level Meetings	Grand Total
1	United States	North America	25	9	101	135
2	Russia	Russia	38	4	81	123
3	Pakistan	Asia	29	12	67	108
4	Thailand	Asia	21	9	54	84
5	Australia	Asia	16	8	59	83
6	Vietnam	Asia	2	4	54	60
7	New Zealand	Asia	6	7	43	56
8	Singapore	Asia	10	9	37	56
9	Indonesia	Asia	16	6	33	55
10	India	Asia	18	6	30	54

Source: Kenneth Allen, Phillip C. Saunders, and John Chen, *China’s Military Diplomacy, 2003-2016: Trends and Implications*, 2017, p. 45

Study context (II)

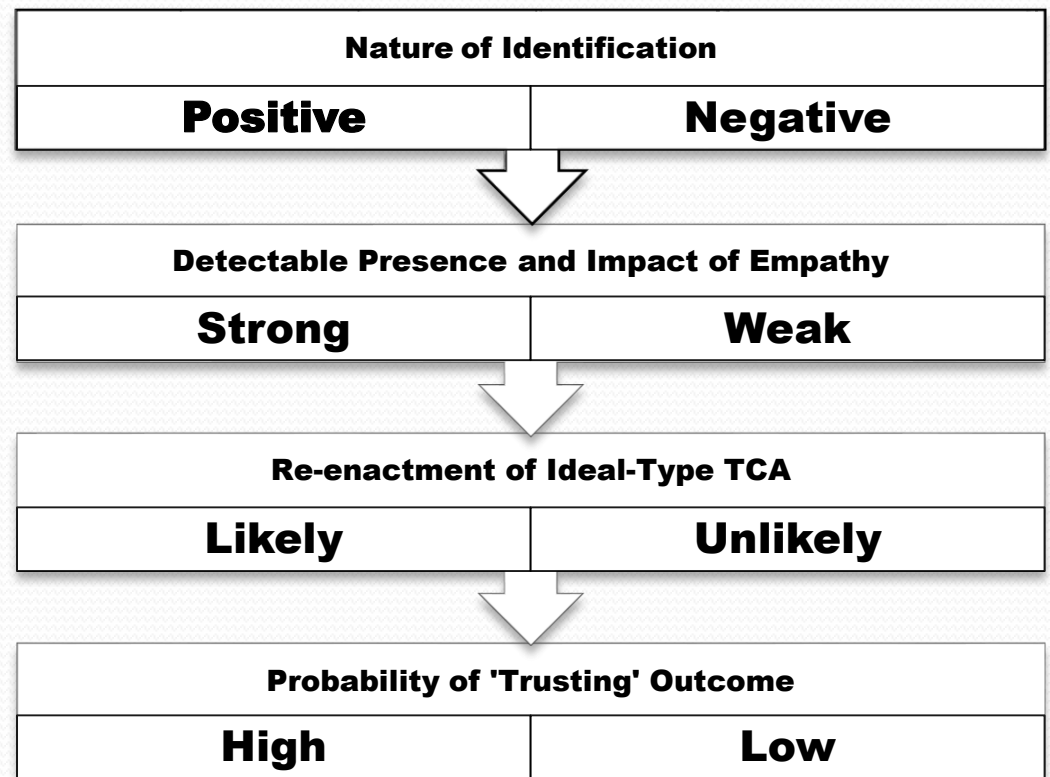
- Added intrigue: China's complex 'traditional' approach vs. EU's 'constricted activism'
 - China → Economic interests + image concerns + historical legacy + **demographic vulnerability (~1-2 million Chinese citizens in Africa)**
 - EU → Humanitarian ideal post-Rwandan genocide vs. Securitisation post 9/11. "Human security" (EGS 2016, p. 28)
 - Hierarchy of preferences: African ownership > multilateral options > EU/MS unilateral intervention

Study design (I)

- Political trust a 'bottom-up' discovery, but natural variable in determining cooperative/competitive outcome. Essential facet of everyday life
- Wide body of literature on role of political trust, creating opportunity to target IR audience
- Rationalist (game theory, neolib. instit.) & cognitivist studies of political trust

Study design (I)

- Key message: cooperation likelier when cognitive political trust detectable and vice versa
- Political trust likelier if positive identification + empathy & ICTA detectable



Study design (II)

- Empirical data drawn from qualitative sources/open-ended interviews (triangulation + limited number of focus interviews) and process tracing across comparative case studies
- Case studies: Darfur ('03-'10) vs. Counter-piracy ('08-'12)
 - Contrasting fortunes
 - Data availability
 - Overlapping chronology

Darfur (I)

- Violence broke out in 2003 between rebel groups and the Government of Sudan (GoS)
- EU's response to the crisis: priority on halting violence against – and ensuring better access to – “beleaguered civilians”
- Strong rhetoric against GoS from the off, but weak leverage: no CSDP operation just aid, non-existent economic and political leverage, bias as haven for jihadists
- EU reliance upon third parties (UN, AU, regional actors, China) to fulfil humanitarian aims and overall objectives on Darfur: implementing a peacekeeping operation and signing a lasting deal for peace

Darfur (II)

- China: Initial official apathy towards crisis and focus on absolving itself of wrongdoing or causality
- Inclination to side with central authority (GoS) and/or toe line taken by regional actors (AU, LAS, OIC). Preference for “internal” solution, political dialogue and status quo
- China countered Western-sponsored UN sanctions to weaken them, but never vetoed them (9/14, abstained on the other five). Concern at high-level sanctions and threat of international criminal tribunal

Darfur (III)

- At the time, Sudan a key oil market for CNPC (little competition + Chevron infrastructure). Briefly no. 1 oil exporter to China in 2002. Sudan a typical case of 'go out' strategy: infrastructure deal (Presidential Palace, etc.), cheap loans, debt cancelling, etc.
- Historical solidarity between Beijing and Khartoum dating back to support against coups in 1955, 1971 and isolation in 1990s

Darfur (IV)

- *AMIS II* undermined by flaws in design of operation, but GoS satisfied with AU-led operation. EU dissatisfied with *AMIS II*, pushed for idea of hybrid AU-UN operation, later *UNAMID*
- GoS obtusely opposed to idea. China initially supported GoS, but felt winds of change around July 2006 and started to pressure/defend GoS into change. Highest levels of government involved (Hu), exemplified by appointment of Special Envoy to Africa (Liu Guijin) + focus on civilian victims
- Shift seen by some authors as “paradigmatic”: Chinese leadership willing to revise stance in favour of Western aims

Darfur (V)

- Argument that shift may have appeared “paradigmatic” in relative terms but difficult to make same case in absolute terms (achievement of Western humanitarian objectives)
- Book argues that cooperation through coercion ≠ political trust, thus no effective cooperation
- Chinese government sought to avoid fallout-out over 2008 Beijing Olympics caused by lobbying and bad publicity generated by Western civil society groups (Eric Reeves, Save Darfur, etc.)
- Beijing became concerned when advocacy groups started to exert pressure and influence on European and US policy-makers

Darfur (VI)

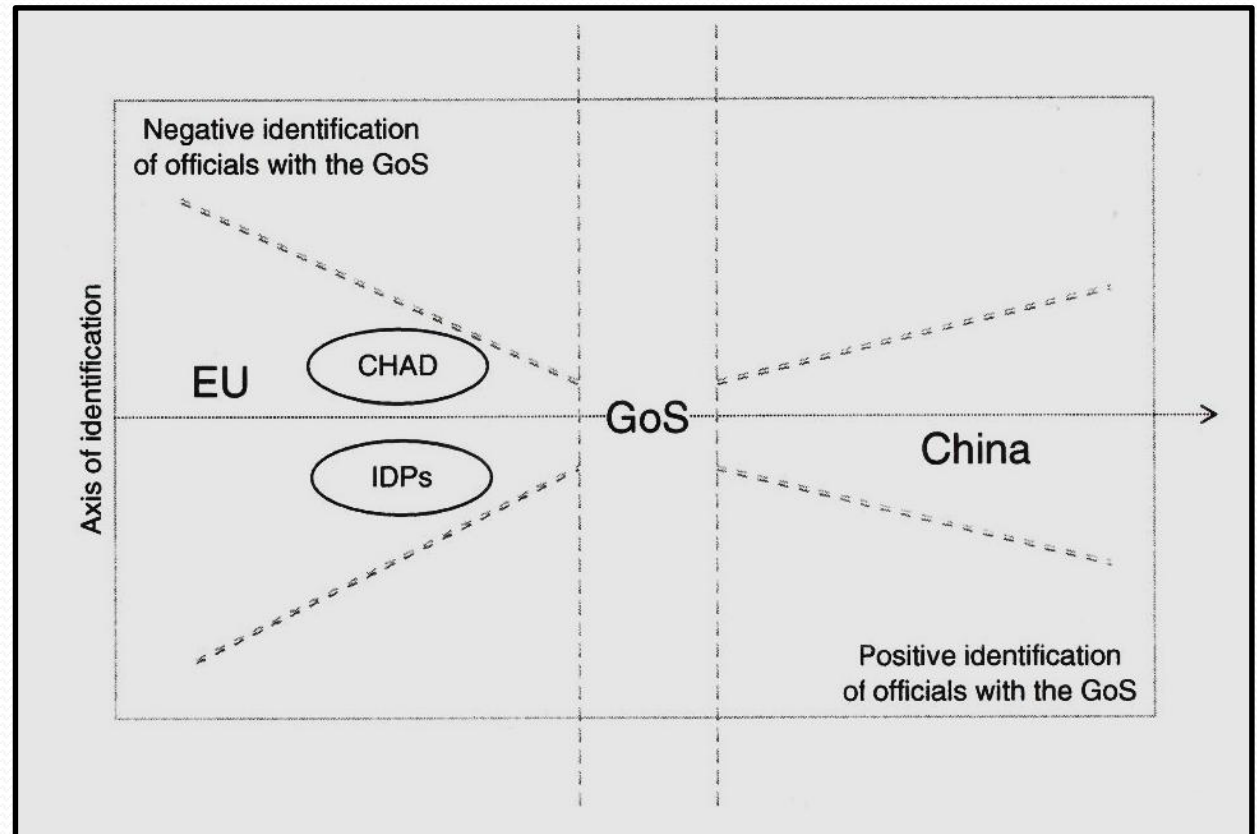
- From an 'absolute' perspective, although UNAMID did come into being largely thanks to Chinese activism, this did not provide the sustainable solution EU foreign policy was seeking
- To have been more effective, in this regard, the EU would have needed to develop political trust, which would have meant using China's leverage on the GoS to greater effect
- This remains hypothetical and was not to be because of lack of common source of political identification between European and Chinese actors on the ground
- Mistrust pervasive of social environment, rendering it difficult for European and Chinese diplomats to express empathy or develop ITCA

Darfur (VII)

- Process of identification

EU: Positive identification with conflict victims and negative identification with GoS + extremely negative view of abettors

China: Positive identification and solidarity with GoS + negative view of Western meddlers



Darfur (VIII)

- Mistrust characteristic of social environment:
 - Lack of centralised leadership & plethora of conflicting actors, interests and mediation platforms (5 different mediation platforms in which EU and Chinese diplomats represented; 8 major peace deals on Darfur in 8 years)
 - Quote: “when I asked a member of the Special Envoy’s office whether anything could be learnt from the Chinese approach, his mouth fell open” (British diplomat, 2014)
 - EU’s scattered approach to crisis and poor reading of China’s role: parachute diplomacy and weak mandates
 - Too little interaction on the ground between representatives on both sides

Counter-piracy (I)

- EU's NAVFOR Atalanta operation (Oct 2008) succeeded CMF & NATO deployments to the region
- Initial mandate to protect WFP deliveries, vulnerable vessels off Somali coast and deter acts of piracy
- Strong mandate, well-backed by MS with short chain of command to Brussels. Novelty value (*carte blanche*). Royal Navy in charge, Northwood HQ
- Oct 2008-May 2009: “independent deployers” (India, Iran, Japan, Russia, South Korea, etc.) dispatch vessels to area

Counter-piracy (II)

- China dispatched two destroyers and a supply ship in January 2009
- Protection of economic interests (e.g. 80% of EU-China trade passing through region), kidnapping of Chinese fishermen and desire for PLAN to partake in “historic missions” incited Beijing to get involved
- Explicit call from UNSC mandate + support from Mogadishu + presence of other navies reassured Beijing

Counter-piracy (III)

- Initial interaction displayed competitive edge: “Post-modern” (Till 2013) NAVFOR’s open and inclusive Group Transit System vs. “modern” PLAN’s box system of 54 Areas of Responsibility – no transgressing of ‘boxes’
- Initial interest for PLAN in protecting only Chinese-, Taiwanese-, or Hongkongese-registered vessels
- Tactical coordination/clearing undertaken under UNSC-like mechanism
- “Land footprint” and weariness towards NAVFOR & co’s approach made PLAN come across as “difficult partner”

Counter-piracy (IV)

- Sea change: by fall 2009, China fully integrated to international community's approach to the extent of taking "unprecedented" step of requesting co-chairmanship of SHADE mechanism
- "Historical achievement" given how PLA historically been a secretive and somewhat insular organisation hesitant to engage with foreign counterparts, especially on operational matters (Maj. Ma Dingshing, 2009)
- What caused this sudden change and contrasts with stance on Darfur?

Counter-piracy (V)

- Different causes:
 - Successful capture of MV De Xin Hai in October 2009 + ransom and realising that coordination with other navies may have prevented hijack
 - PLAN wired into heart of international effort due to technological asymmetry in gathering data on pirates in area when compared to NAVFOR & co (MSCHoA & Mercury 'chat' system)
 - Low risk social and political context favoured and facilitated move from periphery to centre, despite non-interference policy

Counter-piracy (VI)

- Book argues that in addition and most importantly, political trust built up in dealings between NAVFOR officers and PLAN counterparts gave China confidence in approach promoted by NAVFOR
- Bilateral political trust was the result of:
 - Positive identification between naval officers, on basis of shared material and non-material sources of negative identification
 - Conducive social environment, specifically designed to foster trust, allowing for expression of empathy and ITCA

Counter-piracy (VII)

- Process of identification

Common enemy

(Somali pirate)

Common philosophy

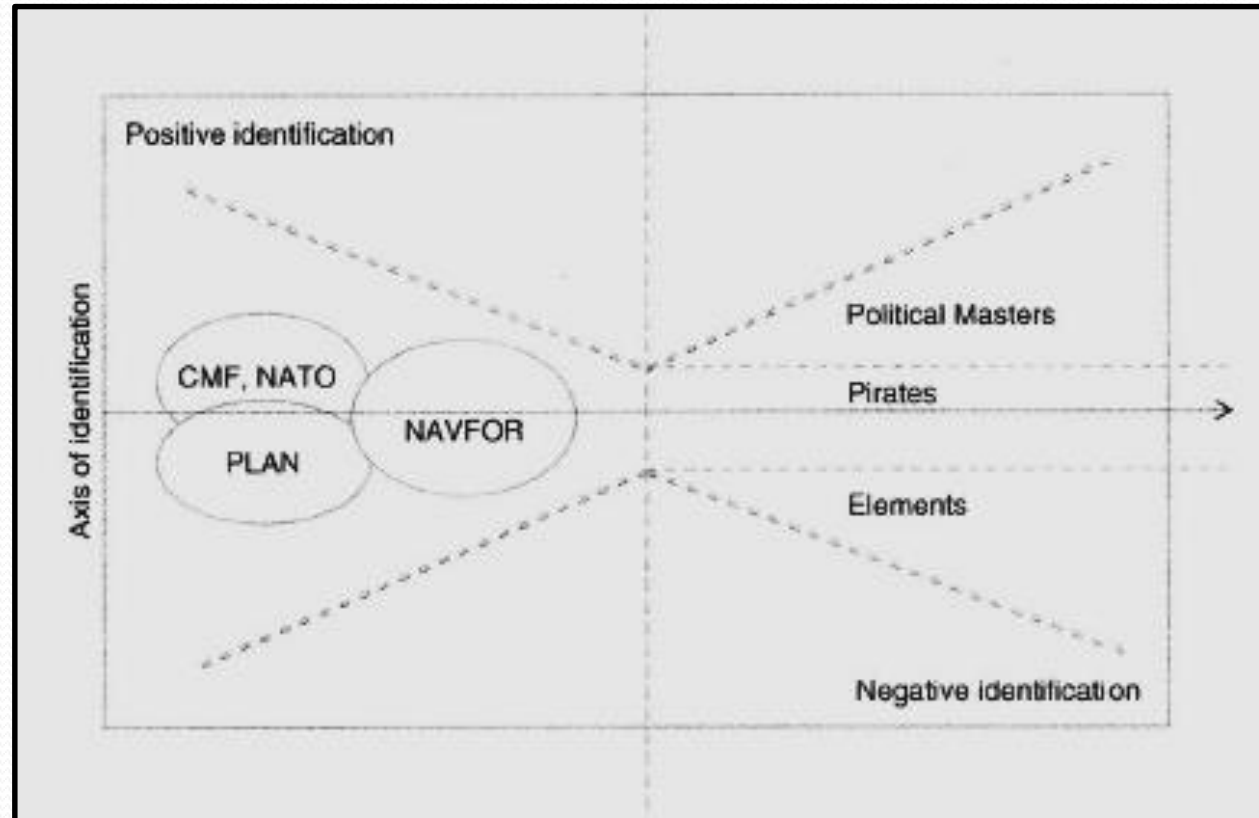
(freedom of the seas)

Common experience

(life at sea)

Political masters

(Outgroup for NAVFOR naval officers)



Counter-piracy (IX)

- SHADE mechanism designed by founders to create common language and strive for depoliticisation:
 - Captain-level meetings, no politics
 - Founders stepped 'out' from taking leadership to let 'participants' and not 'members' talk tactics
 - 'Transparency', 'voluntary', 'impartiality' as key words – if values flaunted by any participants or if founders could not get others to adhere to, mechanism would lack credibility

Counter-piracy (X)

- PLAN came to see SHADE as a “good example” of “confidence-building measure” and “effective communication mechanism” (Capt. Hu Gangfeng, 2009)
- PLAN bought into SHADE to extent of requesting co-chairmanship. Why PLAN and not others navies? NAVFOR singled out PLAN due to “game-changing” potential of pursuing a “long dialogue”
- Closer personal relations forged as a result, empathy expressed through solidarity with PLAN’s “nervousness” in initial deployment to region

Counter-piracy (XI)

- **Quote:** “I used to joke that I had spent far too much time in overheated rooms, talking a language of detail and compromise with my Chinese counterparts, but actually it was fascinating” (NAVFOR naval officer, May 2013)
- Fellow at Chinese Academy of Military Sciences acknowledged in 2014 that “much more” had been achieved between PLAN and NAVFOR than any other coalition
- Special treatment, expression of empathy and interaction along line of ITCA further encouraged PLAN to make an uncharacteristic u-turn

Counter-piracy (XII)

- Impressive since: “most PLA interlocutors are not empowered to negotiate or share their real views, which makes it difficult to build strong personal or institutional ties with foreign counterparts” (Allen et al. 2017: 59-60)
- EEAS (June 2016), *Elements for a new EU strategy on China*, p. 15-6: “Africa in particular offers significant potential for the EU to cooperate with China where interests are shared, including extending the successful EU-China offshore cooperation on counter-piracy to peacekeeping and capacity-building onshore. Coordination on counter-piracy under the auspices of the SHADE mechanism has helped to **foster cooperation instincts** while burden-sharing in escorting WPF shipments has shown added-value of such cooperation.”

Case study findings

	Darfur	<i>Sources of proof</i>	Counter piracy	<i>Sources of proof</i>
Comparative contextual intensity	More politically intense	Evolving nature of conflict	Less politically intense	Evolving nature of conflict
Cognitive empathy	Undetectable	Published rhetoric + interviews	Detectable	Interviews + set-up of SHADE mechanism
Ideal-type communicative action	Far from the ideal-type	Interviews + EU mandate + social environment + literature corroboration	Close to the ideal-type	Interviews + mandate + social environment
Platforms for social interaction	Multiple	Weak leadership + multiplicity of mechanisms	Few	Strong leadership + SHADE mechanism
Regularity of social interaction	Inconsistent	Interviews	Consistent	Interviews

Case study findings (II)

Table 7.1 Variables for cognitive-based political trust

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Cases</i>	
	<i>Darfur</i>	<i>Counter-piracy</i>
Common positive sources of identification	No	Yes
Principle source(s) of identification	Foreign	Foreign, domestic and immaterial
“Guilty by association?”	Yes	No
Flexibility of cultural programme	Less flexible	More flexible
Comparative contextual intensity	More politically intense	Less politically intense
Cognitive empathy	Undetectable	Detectable
Ideal-type communicative action	Far from the ideal-type	Close to the ideal-type
Platforms for social interaction	Multiple	Few
Regularity of social interaction	Inconsistent	Consistent
Mechanism for institutionalising trust	Inexistent	Existent
Centre of leadership	Poorly demarcated	Clearly demarcated
Decision-maker expertise	Mostly unproven	Mostly proven
EU mandate for collective action	Weak	Strong
Concept of sovereignty	More problematic	Less problematic
Implication in the crisis	Indirect	Direct
Common rational interests	Weak	Strong
Level of cognitive-based trust	Untrusting	Trusting
Outcome of bilateral interaction	Uncooperative	Cooperative

Institutionalisation of trust (I)

- Have both sides been able to build upon the success of counter-piracy cooperation?
- Have bilateral mechanisms made a difference by helping to transfer consolidated trust across cases?
- Have the conditions been permissive for the transfer of trust?
- Evidence is dubious at best, despite existence biennial meetings between EU's CMPD with interlocutors from Chinese Ministry of National Defense + High Level Strategic Dialogue

Institutionalisation of trust (II)

- No cooperation for tackling root of problem on land with *EUCAP NESTOR* or *EUTM Somalia*. Japan far more of an ally here (on-land naval diplomacy efforts, initiation of Djibouti Code of Conduct multidonor trust fund, donations towards capacity-building mechanism)
- On Libya: despite PRC's vote in favour of UNSCR 1970, NATO bombing campaign in support of rebels to overthrow Gaddafi caused schism with damaging repercussions (Syria). No trust
- On Mali: PRC initially vocal critic of French intervention, but came around in light of local support + terrorist threat to Malian government. Pos identification, but trust?

Institutionalisation of trust (III)

- EEAS, *Elements for a new EU strategy on China*, p. 16: “Building on the outcome of successive EU-China Security & Defense consultations, the EU should engage with relevant Chinese actors on the ground (for example, Chinese embassies and peacekeeping contingents in countries such as Mali and Somalia) **to explore practical cooperation**, and support Chinese efforts to fund APSA. Other areas of potential shared interest include cooperation on the police dimension of peacekeeping operations, and arrangements for the protection and evacuation of EU and Chinese nationals.”

Food for thought

- Cognitive-based political trust likelier in case of common sources of identification
- Cognitive-based political trust likelier in social environment conducive to expression of empathy and ideal-type communicative action

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- Likelier in environments characterised by clear centres of defined leadership
 - Likelier when officials are 'experts'
 - Likelier when the EU trusts itself and is trusted by others (traditional allies)

2. China's evolving approach to security management in Africa

- Peacekeeping
- Military cooperation
 - Support for endogenous security capacity/training
 - Counter-terrorism cooperation
 - Non-traditional security concerns
 - Arms sales
- **Naval power projection**
- **Diplomatic engagement in conflict resolution efforts**

Naval power projection

- In 2012, Xi made official intention to become a “great maritime power”. The 2015 *Military Strategy Paper* outline that oceans, open sea lane protection and **offshore defense** are a “critical security domain”: “near seas defense, **far seas protection**”
- Concrete implementation – Djibouti facility (below)
- Rumoured implementation - Walvis Bay (Namibia):
 - June 2014: joint naval drills
 - West African port calls (Angola, Cameroon, CI, Nigeria)
 - Namibian government commissioned Chinese-built vessels. PLAN donated two submarine chasers and trained crew members.
 - Access to Atlantic coast + GoG piracy threat
 - China Harbour Engineering Company building commercial port

Naval power projection – Djibouti base (I)

- 2014: Minister of Defense, Chang Wanquan, signed 10-year lease with Djibouti. Construction acknowledged in November 2016
- Second 'base' after space monitoring facility in Argentina
- Decision made after power system of Type-052B destroyer Guangzhou broke down in GoA in May 2010, when China & Djibouti had no official military ties. 2009: 124 days at sea with conducting a port visit. As part of anti-piracy operation, Chinese vessels visited on average 4x/year
- Evacuation of Chinese nationals from Libya (35K) had to rely on Chinese Def Attachés coordinating regional logistical support in ad hoc manner from place such as Khartoum & Oman (CNA, 2017)

Naval power projection – Djibouti base (II)

- 2012: PLAN required to cut short a port visit to make room for an incoming Japanese ship
- 2015: 800 Chinese citizens evacuated from Yemen were taken by frigate to Djibouti
- Increasing economic ties: Chinese firms built Presidential Palace, National Bank HQ, Foreign Ministry HQ, etc.
- May 2017: Doraleh Multipurpose Port opened (China Merchant Port Holdings). June 2017: Tadjourah Port becomes operational (link to Ethiopia)

Naval power projection – Djibouti base (III)

- Plans include creation of new warehouses and office space in Djibout Free Trade Zone, international airport (on hold). China Telecom has chosen Djibouti as site for high-speed internet exchange
- Djibouti mentioned in “vision for Maritime Cooperation under” Belt and Road Initiative. Not in original plans, but Djibouti-Ethiopia railway stand out example
- Sales of military equipment: MA60 transporter aircraft (2013), 5x NORINCO-made WMA-301 armoured fire support vehicles (2015)
- Chinese Ambassador to the AU, Kuang Weilin, recently offered for China to mediate Eritrea-Djibouti ownership dispute of Dumei Mountains & Islands. Mediation initiatives have taken place via AU. Need agreement by both sides

Naval power projection – Djibouti base (IV)

- 400-1,000 personnel expected at “logistics support facility” and not “logistics support base”
- Facility can house a “few thousand” troops, berth six ships (incl. semi-submersible ships, Type-901 supply ship, destroyers, frigates)
- Pre-position supplies: fuel, weapons, equipment, maintenance facilities (military & commercial)
- Troops set sail for Djibouti in July. Facility opened in August. First drill held in September
- “Rent” = US\$ 20 million/year

- Six berths in total, one exclusively for PLAN
- Quayline: 1,200 meters in length to accommodate all but two of the largest PLAN ships



Source: CNA 2017, p. 25

Naval power projection – Djibouti base (VI)

- Purpose to:
 - Provide support for China's escort, protection, humanitarian and peacekeeping ops
 - Implement military cooperation activities
 - Conduct combined exercises and training, non-combattant evacuation ops and emergency rescue
 - Carry out the protection of strategic sea lanes
- Strategic location connecting Bab el-Mandeb, GoA, Red Sea and Mediterranean

Naval power projection – Djibouti base (VII)

Country	Stationed troops (approx.)	Comment
France	1,500-2,000	Extensive intelligence and logistical cooperation with the US
US	4,000	Military, Special Ops and civilians base at Camp Lemmonier. Drone surveillance and attacks.
Japan	180-200	Lease for additional land expected to be finalised imminently. Construction only in next fiscal year. No docking facilities, but direct access to a joint civilian/military-use airport. Set up for anti-piracy, peacekeeping ops in S Sudan and emergency evacuations

- Germany, Spain and Italy station forces in Djibouti. Saudi Arabia is currently negotiating a berth.



Source: CNA 2017, p. 27

Naval power projection – Djibouti base (VIII)

- M.E. Walsh (Johns Hopkins): US officials view PLAN as an opposing force with whom US military has to share operating space
- US looking for ways to increase cooperation but little progress to date, because: “Chinese military officials have been too aggressive with their US counterparts”
- Number of meetings at Camp Lemmonier. Chinese military officials responsible for a number of unspecified “probing attempts”, especially since live-fire drill

Naval power projection – Djibouti base (IX)

- September 2017: PLA Marine Corps drills, message to local militants “not to harass” PLA troops (SCMP, 25/9/2017)



Naval power projection – Djibouti base (X)

- A Chinese Special Ops soldier single-handedly saves locals and Chinese expatriates in an unspecified African country in the throes of conflict
- Top grossing movie of all time in China: 3.4 bn RMB since 27 July release
- Tagline: “Whoever offends China will be hunted down **no matter how far away**”



Diplomatic Engagement in conflict resolution (South Sudan) (I)

- Strong and relatively long-standing presence in Sudan (oil industry) prior to cessation. Consulate open in Juba in 2008
- China involved in CPA negotiations and particularly talks on division of oil revenues
- S Sudan represents 2.5% of China's annual energy imports, while in 2013, 100 Chinese companies were registered in S Sudan. Bilateral trade = US\$ 534 million, despite stop in oil production
- Need for more proactive stance result of evacuation of Chinese citizens as a result of conflict in Libya

Diplomatic Engagement in conflict resolution (South Sudan) (II)

- China supported IGAD mediation leadership initiative and lead negotiator, Seyoum Mesfin (former Ethiopian ambassador to China): output to support ‘African ownership’ rhetoric
- IGAD requested Chinese engagement. Special Envoy Zhong Jianhua consistently involved up until signing of peace agreement in August 2015 and in direct talks with rebels: Contrast to Darfur
- January 2015, Foreign Minister Wang Yi convened a “special consultation meeting” in Khartoum: China secured commitment to oil infrastructure security + Khartoum to exercise restraint in S Sudan

Diplomatic Engagement in conflict resolution (South Sudan) (III)

- China hedged between S Sudan gov and rebels with aim to keep oil flowing. ‘Quiet diplomacy’ efforts mollifying government & rebels
- July 2015: China tempered US sanctions: voted in favour on condition senior officials off the list. ‘Quiet diplomacy’ mollifying int’ community & S Sudan
- “Table setter”: leveraging political and economic influence to bring parties together (in-kind donation covering transportation and accommodation for negotiation party)
- ‘Neutral’ + softer tone than West + no longer passive to shaping regional position = trust among negotiating party

Diplomatic Engagement in conflict resolution (South Sudan) (IV)

- 2014, Chinese government halted multi-year arms contract between S Sudan & NORINCO
- 2013 China deployed an infantry battalion to UNMISS
- Humanitarian aid: US\$ 49 million (1/5 via WFP) since outbreak of civil war
- Involvement “beyond imagination” from just a few years back (ICG, *China’s Foreign Policy Experiment in South Sudan*, 10/07/2017)