

Pre-Emptive Peace and Security Approach in Africa-China Security Cooperation

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Abstract

Africa is a continent that is perturbed by a series of endemic conflicts and insecurity. This precarious situation in Africa has captured the attention of not only Africa's traditional partners in the West but also the attention of emerging economies with China taking the lead. The People's Republic of China has geo-strategically begun to play a prominent role in the political and economic spheres of many African countries including the domain of security. Africa's security challenges are believed to have defiled extant solutions. This has led to the opinion that existing security and conflict approaches, theories and multilateral intervention programs in Africa have not given solace to Africa's perilous situations for two reasons. First, because most of these approaches, theories and security architecture were designed for resolving inter-state disputes. Second, with the emergence of new security challenges, the UN and other regional organisations remain woefully ill-equipped to address many of the 21st century challenges to international peace and security. However, this has called for alternative approaches and ways to prevent and resolve Africa's insecurity. It is in that vein that this article pivots its argument on the fact that the solution to Africa's security challenges does not lie only in liberal western approaches and theories, but in other alternatives such as the pre-emptive peace and security approach. The pre-emptive peace and security approach revolves around the anticipation of factors that could cause conflict and insecurity and putting in place necessary mechanisms that could forestall and resolve these conflicts even before the early warning signs show up and prevent them from escalation when they arise. In many ways, this alternative approach prioritises socio-economic means and human development as the rationale for answers and solutions to many of Africa's insecurity problems.

Keywords: Africa, China, Conflicts, Pre-emptive Peace, Security, Conflict Resolution.

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Introduction

The African continent has persistently faced insecurity and instability since the 1950s when the fight for independence for most of the African states began. The challenges of peace and security in Africa have raised great concerns and drawn attention at both the domestic levels of individual countries and globally. The continent has continued to be plagued by a multitude of challenges, ranging from old and emerging security threats like famine, civil wars, genocides, ethnic cleansing, coups, banditry, terrorism, militancy, insurgency, piracy, extreme poverty, economic woes, climate challenges, etc., such that today, some countries in Africa are on the precipice of failure.

More importantly, Africa's security challenges have defiled extant solutions. This precarious situation that Africa finds itself has captured the attention of the international community, with many advanced countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, etc. showing interest in remedying Africa's predicaments. Aside from Africa's traditional partners in the West, other emerging economies like Russia, India, and China have also geo-strategically begun to play some form of overt role, with China taking the lead in many African countries' political, economic, sociocultural, and security spheres.¹

China-African relations date back to the 1950s, an epoch when African states began breaking free from the bonds of colonialism. However, at that time, Maoist China's purpose in Africa was basically an ideological commitment to the spread of Chinese socialism in the colonized and exploited nations. Nonetheless, there has been a major shift from ideology to economic and geostrategic interests over the last few decades. This recent twist has conditioned China-Africa relations since the turn of the 21st century to such an extent that China is Africa's largest trade partner and Africa's fourth-biggest source of investment, not only that, but China is also becoming a more proactive player in Africa's peace and security

¹ Efem N. Ubi, "China's Expanding Interest in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities," A lecture being delivered to National Defense College Nigeria, Course 31, February 1, 2023.

matters.² The question is what kind of role is China playing in ameliorating the continent's insecurity and conflicts? Can China's anticipatory approach be the guarantor of Africa's peace and security? In the study of conflicts and security, many approaches, models, and theories have been constantly used to give understanding, explanation, and predictability of the subject with the goal of searching for answers and proffering solutions; however, these models, approaches, and even theories have not been able to give answers and succour to Africa's endemic insecurity.

Regardless of successful peacekeeping operations, Africa continues to be a continent where ceasefires are precarious and attempts at peace have fallen short in disarming and demobilizing combatants or reintegrating former ones. It is where societies emerging from conflict frequently revert to strife due to persistent challenges such as poverty, famine, and disease. Thus, if Africa is to mitigate the above challenges, then there is a need for an alternative approach to respond to violent conflict. More so, this approach should give impetus to the achievement of sustainable human development. Importantly, this approach should be done through the integrated application of security and developmental efforts.³

It is in search of these alternatives, that this article pivots its argument on the fact that the solution to Africa's security challenges may lie in a pre-emptive peace and security approach – an approach that pivots on the anticipation of indicators while putting in place factors that could forestall and resolve conflicts even before the early warning signs show and prevent these conflicts from escalation should they erupt.

² Efem N. Ubi, "China and Africa's Peace and Security: Examining China's Role in Nigeria's Insecurity," In, *China's New Role in African Politics: From Non-Intervention towards Stabilization?* Ed. C. Hartmann and N. Noesselt (Routledge, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429422393>.

³ Richard Gueli and Sybert Liebenberg, "The Concept of Developmental Peace Missions: Implications for the Military and Civilians," *Conflict Trends*, November 1, 2006, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/concept-developmental-peace-missions-implications-military-and-civilians>.

Africa Insecurity Quagmire: Where Does the Solution Lie?

The end of the Cold War witnessed the appearance of new and emerging conflicts, not only with great implications for the globe but with unprecedented intensity and impact on Africa. Since 1990s to the present day, Africa has witnessed more protracted violent confrontations and massive genocide. Among the sub-regions that the Africa Union (AU) is divided into, the Sahel, West and Central African regions are noted to be the hottest trouble spots in Africa because of the pace and spread of conflict in these regions. Some of these include but are not limited to terrorism, insurgencies, banditry, intrastate conflicts, etc. Some of these conflicts are considered new, because of their atypical, deadly, violent, and abnormally prolonged nature and more so are characterized by their low intensity and occur sporadically in both space and time.⁴

On one hand, the impact of these conflicts in terms of their deep humanitarian consequences is difficult to quantify and confined within specific borders. On the other hand, the insecurity with regard to the various conflicts, wars, and criminality ravaging Africa has proved resistant to the extant available and accepted tools of conflict resolution and management, thus, necessitating critical changes in the nature, organization, and delivery of peace and security. It is important to note here that insecurity and conflicts in Africa exhibit no regard for norms, conventions, or treaties relating to human rights and international humanitarian law.

After the end of the Cold War, there was hope that the United Nations (UN) would be instrumental in ending wars in Africa. Unfortunately, the UN's peacekeeping efforts were shown to be inadequate after the disasters in Somalia and Rwanda. The international community often waits until a conflict has become explosive before taking action to stabilize

⁴ OECD, "Human Security in West Africa: Challenges, Synergies and Action for a Regional Agenda," Workshop organized by Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD, March 28, 2006. <https://www.oecd.org/swac/about/events/38522284.pdf>.

the situation.⁵ This is because early warning signals are sometimes ignored or not clearly analysed. Instances of the UN's response to conflicts in countries such as Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic have been inadequate, highlighting a crisis in the organization's ability to maintain international peace and security. Unfortunately, the UN and the rest of the international community are facing significant challenges in their efforts to bring stability to conflict-ridden African states.

Concerns with Africa's predicaments, in 1994, the United States Government requested an investigation into the conflicts. The African Conflict Resolution Act of 1994 (HR4541)⁶ was based on the findings which clearly indicated that Africa had been affected by war more than any other continent since the 1960s. This alarming situation prompted a renewed need for Africans to find solutions to their problems by taking early action to prevent and de-escalate conflicts through timely intervention and early warning.⁷ Accordingly, during the first Assembly of the AU in Durban, South Africa in July 2002, African leaders established the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as a response to the need for peace, security, and stability in the continent. This was a crucial step towards adopting different conflict resolution mechanisms to help prevent the escalation of existing conflicts. In fact, the creation of the AU in 2002 marked significant progress in the search for peace and security in Africa.⁸

Since its creation, the African Union (AU) has introduced new flexible and adaptable mechanisms to address the subjective, complex, and deep-rooted issues and interests that

⁵ Henry Ayidoho, "Lessons Learned During Peace Keeping Operations in Africa," Monograph. No. 10 Conflict Management, Peace Keeping, April, 1997.

⁶ Gov track, H.R. 4541 (103rd): African Conflict Resolution Act. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/103/hr4541/text/eh>.

⁷ Efem N. Ubi, "African Conflicts and the African Standby Force as a Desideratum," In *Organisation of African Union at 50: Challenges and Prospects of Self Reliance in Africa* (Volume One), ed. Bola A. Akinterinwa. (Lagos: Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, 2013).

⁸ Brian-Vincent Ikejiaku and Jubril Dauda, "African Union, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of the Recent Kenya and Zimbabwe Conflicts," *International Journal of Development and Conflict* 1, no. 1 (2011): 61–83.

cause conflicts in Africa. Different mechanisms like negotiations, mediation, arbitration, and peacekeeping have been used by various bodies such as local communities, the governments of the conflicting states, regional organizations, the African Union, and the United Nations to bring peace and stability to the continent. While diplomacy is a useful tool for conflict de-escalation, it is important to note that conflicts in Africa remain persistent, indicating either the failure of the United Nations to guarantee peace and stability, its disregard for responsibilities, or a result of absence of appropriate measures or tools to resolve conflicts and safeguard peace. The African Union, on the other hand, may also lack the political commitment, mandate, or resources required to intervene as and when necessary.

Meanwhile, the lack of an astute solution to Africa's insecurity has engendered new thinking and mechanisms, which require that regional organizations intervene in conflicts in their respective regions within the framework of increased and well-coordinated multilateral cooperation.⁹ It is in the above spirit that the AU on 11, July 2000 adopted the Constitutive Act which observed that Africa's security problems are caused by a lack of political will to promote good governance. In turn it also noted that "the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and there is a need to promote peace, security, and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of Africa's development and integration agenda."¹⁰

In its various means aimed at advancing and safeguarding human rights, augmenting democratic institutions, strengthening cultural values, and upholding rule of law and good governance, the Act in Article 3, Objectives (f), (g), (h), and Article 4, Principles (e), (f), (h), (m), (o), describes various methods for achieving regional peace, and stability. Article 4 (h) is of specific importance as it empowers the Union to directly interfere in a Member State's

⁹ Amaniafrica, "The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security 1999," <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Protocol-Relating-to-the-Mechanism-for-Conflict-Prevention-Management-Resolution-Peace-Keeping-and-Security-1999.pdf>.

¹⁰ Africa Union, "Constitutive Act of The African Union," https://au.int/sites/default/files/pages/34873-file-constitutivact_en.pdf.

internal affairs during acute law & order situations involving crimes against humanity. This intervention, however, is based upon Assembly's decision.

In other words, the Act introduced the concept of humanitarian intervention, which is based on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) - a principle for safeguarding humanity from gross human rights violations. With dedication towards achieving peace and security in Africa, a protocol to enhance peace and security on the continent was created at the Third Meeting of African Chiefs of Defence Staff. This meeting was organized on 15-16 May 2003 in Addis Ababa. Central to this protocol was the Peace and Security Council (PSC). PSC's fundamental task is the promotion of peace and stability in the continent of Africa. It is also meant to ensure safety and conservation of human life and property.¹¹

The Protocol also included provisions for the establishment of a Military Staff Committee, the African Standby Force (ASF), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the Panel of the Wise, and the Peace Fund to give teeth to the AU to perform its responsibilities of the preservation of regional peace and security, deployment of peacekeeping missions and intervention under the provisions of the AU Constitutive Act.¹² Notably, Africa's regional security framework is strengthened by Chapter VIII, Articles 52 and 53 of the UN Charter, which highlights the crucial responsibility of regional organizations in preventing, managing, and resolving disputes.¹³

This implies two possible solutions to Africa's security challenges. The first is a demonstration that regional conflicts will require swift and timely interventions through the use of military forces placed at the disposal of these continental organizations, with the authorization of the UN Security Council before such action is taken, and with a force that

¹¹ African Union, "Policy Framework for the Establishment of the African Standby Force and the Military Staff Committee (PART I): Document adopted by the Third Meeting of African Chiefs of Defense Staff," 15-16 May 2003, <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/asf-policy-framework-en.pdf>.

¹² Efem N. Ubi, "African Conflicts and the African Standby Force as a Desideratum," In *Organisation of African Union at 50: Challenges and Prospects of Self Reliance in Africa* (Volume One), ed. Bola A. Akinterinwa. (Lagos: Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, 2013).

¹³ United Nations, "United Nations Charter, Chapter VIII: Regional Arrangements (Articles 52-54)," <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-8>.

should be constitutionally backed by Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This reiterates the entire essence for which the Africa Standby Force was established in the five regions of Africa (West Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, North Africa, and Central Africa).¹⁴ However, several factors such as funding, political will, and logistics have been hindering the full operationalization of nearly all the regional standby forces except the ECOWAS Standby Force. Nevertheless, the AU security framework has improved the means for achieving a more comprehensive role in maintaining African peace and stability.

Secondly, there is no gainsaying that in the quest for solutions to insecurity in Africa, the security architecture of the AU and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) focused more on conventional mechanisms such as early warnings and prevention mechanisms. Thus, over the years the quest for solutions to Africa's insecurity has excluded other methods. Even though there remains disagreement on the type, capacity, and structure of conflict resolution framework, this disagreement has led to the need for clarification of critical issues. By doing so it has also led to the application of innovative thought process for analysing and solving existential issues and hedging against emergence of new issues.¹⁵ It has engendered a renewed need and drive by Africans themselves to proffer solutions to imminent problems confronting them by not only intervening timely to forestall the escalation of conflict through early warning and preventive action but also by anticipating the necessary guarantees that will safeguard peace and security.

However, it is important to note here that on the contrary, waiting for early warning signs and subsequent prevention might be way too costly in itself, as cases of interventions and prevention have shown. It therefore becomes necessary to forestall and resolve them even before the early warning signs begin to show up. If intensive diplomacy at the sub-regional and regional levels, as well as at the level of the UN could establish when to

¹⁴ UN Department of Public Information, "Basic Fact About the United Nations," March 31, 1995.

¹⁵ Ikejiaku, Brian-Vincent and Dauda, Jubril, "African Union, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of the Recent Kenya and Zimbabwe Conflicts," *International Journal of Development and Conflict* 1, no. 1 (2011): 61–83.

intervene, peace missions may be unnecessary. These are all good endeavours toward achieving peace, but the real problem is the question of whether the Africa Union with Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) can succeed in guaranteeing Africa's peace and security where the UN has failed. Being cognizant of contradictions in the prevailing African situation, can it succeed with the challenges of preventing or intervening in conflicts and the inherent limitations of peace operations in Africa?¹⁶

The Utility of Pre-Emptive Peace and Security Approach (PPSA) In Africa's Insecurity

In 2008, Efem N. Ubi proposed the concept of the "Pre-emptive Peace and Security Approach (PPSA)." This approach was initially developed to study the "Challenges of Human Security in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," with grant support from the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.¹⁷ The PPSA although "still in the works" is a unique approach to peace and security that deviates from conventional approaches and methods of conflict resolution. Instead of relying on early warning/signs and preventive interventions such as peace missions, humanitarian interventions, and the responsibility to protect, the PPSA is primarily shaped by the anticipation and defence of the future with a great focus and priority given to socio-politico-economic issues. This approach to peace is different from the conventional ways we have over the years tried to resolve the challenges of insecurity, particularly Africa's insecurity problem. However, it is important to note here that discourses

¹⁶ Efem N. Ubi, "African Conflicts and the African Standby Force as a Desideratum," In *Organisation of African Union at 50: Challenges and Prospects of Self Reliance in Africa (Volume One)*, ed. Bola A. Akinterinwa (Lagos: Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, 2013).

¹⁷ This approach was initially developed though in a different way to study the developmental challenges and Human security in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Part of the discourse could be seen in, Efem Nkam Ubi. "Nigeria and The Challenges of Human Security: A Case Study Of The Niger-Delta Region" Being a study carried out with a Grant from the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, for the Division of Security and Strategic Studies, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, Nigeria, 2008, Unpublished.

on the developmental-peace approach and security-development nexus were of great value to enriching the discourses on PPSA.

However, it will be worthwhile to differentiate the developmental-peace approach and security-development nexus for lucidness. To begin with, the developmental-peace approach which prioritizes economic development poses a question – Can economic developments yield sustainable peace in regions where conflicts are recently resolved and risks of instability are still present? Conventionalization of developmental peace missions indicates that security and development directly complement each other. It is different from the liberal peace approach, which overemphasizes institution-building and places too little emphasis on development.

In contrast, developmental peace focuses more on the economic drivers of conflict than on efforts to build institutions.¹⁸ On the flip side, the relationship between security and development highlights how political and economic factors in developing countries can lead to ongoing cycles of insecurity. When security and development are both present, they work together to create peace and prosperity. However, if either of these conditions is lacking, it can lead to conflict.

Just like in developmental peace, the security-development nexus also expounds the direct relationship which security and development share with each other. The product of security and development, in general, is peace and prosperity. However, when either of these conditions is not met, conflict looms.¹⁹ According to Paul Collier, poverty creates economic incentives for war as a result of low and declining wages. More so, according to him, following a period of conflict, a nation encounters a regression in economic growth,

¹⁸ Yin He, “A Tale of two Peaces: Liberal Peace, Developmental Peace, and Peacebuilding,” In *Yin He, New Paths and Policies towards Conflict Prevention* 1st Edition (Routledge, 2021), 45-56.

¹⁹ Jelte Schievels, “Examining and Critiquing the Security–Development Nexus,” *E-International Relations*, 2019, <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/07/15/examining-and-critiquing-the-security-development-nexus/#:~:text=Understanding%20the%20nexus%20is%20hailed,are%20not%20met%2C%20conflict%20looks>.

increasing the risks of further escalation and triggering of more future conflicts.²⁰ For example, in a study, a repentant Boko Haram terrorist in Nigeria opined “When we killed people, we were paid. We were paid more when we killed people, took their money, and brought back the loot. As a foot soldier of Boko Haram, if the money I brought back was much, I was given 100,000 Naira.”²¹ Some of the repentant terrorists also said that they were lured with a price of 500,000 Naira to be enlisted.

Notwithstanding, the connection between security and development is grounded in academic theories like the ‘new wars’ thesis, as notably presented by Mary Kaldor, and the greed thesis proposed by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. These theories depart from conventional explanations for the initiation of civil wars and underscore the economic dimension of warfare.²² On the contrary, the pre-emptive peace and security approach is a method of prevention and protection from threats to the fundamental human rights of the individual, including his/her existence, be it physical, psychological, social, economic and political. It also includes protection from insecurity, by anticipating what might cause these security threats/conflicts even before they occur and further prevent them when they transpire.

Unlike the West, whose approach to security contribution is narrowly linked only with military intervention, although, very necessary, for China, the problems and the root cause of insecurity in Africa and elsewhere stems from the undermining of inalienable rights of humans and the lack of access to basic amenities of life, which include, poverty, and economic issues, etc. Thus, China prefers that security issues anywhere should be addressed

²⁰ Paul Collier; V. L. Elliott; Håvard Hegre; Anke Hoeffler; Marta Reynal-Querol; Nicholas Sambanis, “*Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*,” *A World Bank Policy Research Report*,” (Washington DC: Oxford University Press, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/13938> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

²¹ In Efem N. Ubi and Sharkdam Wapmuk, “Nationhood Crisis and Violent Extremism as a Poverty Issue: What 800 Sahelians Have to Say,” Nigeria National Report, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2015.

²² Jelte Schievels, “Examining and Critiquing the Security–Development Nexus,” *E-International Relations*, 2019, <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/07/15/examining-and-critiquing-the-security-development-nexus/#:~:text=Understanding%20the%20nexus%20is%20hailed,are%20not%20met%2C%20conflict%20looms>.

by broad means, which pivots on not only individual development but also on the development of society as a whole, and through the use of diplomatic means.

Deducing from the above, therefore, anticipating threat and security scenarios will first, take into consideration short-medium to long-term planning that would lay the foundation to forestall any conflicts. This could be by putting in place necessary anticipatory measures, socially, politically, culturally and measures for the nation's economic growth and development. Second, whatever measures are put in place, they must have a precipitation effect on the individual's development as a unit of analysis.

This is because development, especially even development, in a broad sense, is an integral part of the process of peace and security. It should be stated lucidly that economic deprivation is an indicator of state failure and countries with low income per capita are at increased risk of great chaos. While economic growth and stability are correlated under the PPSA approach, economic woes like weak economic foundation, lack of equity in resource allocation, insufficient development, and absence of significant economic and social factors, such as high unemployment rates, declining wages, and reduced welfare and services, etc, coupled with limited freedom fuel popular uprisings against corrupt governments.²³

But the challenge with the PPSA is that, while the anticipatory provision of economic and development initiatives could go a long way to forestall conflicts or resolve ongoing conflicts, it is important to understand that, not all conflicts are the result of economic factors or poverty as is often speculated. Many conflicts in Africa are the result of a complex mix of interests such as resource allocation, religion, ethnicity, and dissatisfaction with many countries extant domestic political situations. Therefore, as divergent are the causes of conflicts in Africa, so too are the different methods of dispute settlement. Some conflicts might require a mix of methods to be resolved. It is important to note that a specific method of conflict resolution cannot be an end in itself, including the PPSA.

²³ Efem N. Ubi and Vincent Ibonye, "Is Liberal Democracy Failing in Africa or Is Africa Failing under Liberal Democracy?" *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (2019): 137-164.

China's Alternate Solution to Insecurity in Africa

There is no gainsaying that political instability and security vulnerability of African countries is a known reality of contemporary world. Therefore, out of necessity, the international community, governments of African nation, institutions, and scholars are at the forefront of new security thinking. In fact, the fundamental conceptualization of security and its interaction with modern society are being innovatively analysed in order to effectively mitigate looming insecurity in Africa. Little wonder, Africa has gradually transformed into a testing ground for evaluating the validity of new strategic approaches.²⁴

In recent times, the People's Republic of China has begun to play an unprecedented role in Africa's peace and security, by injecting new thinking and strategies for peace and security that require breaking away from historical and Western security constructs. However, what sets China apart from the other external actors in its dealings with the African continent is its approach to relationships with countries in Africa. China's relationships with African nations are mainly guided by the principle of non-interference and intervention in the internal matters of other countries.

However, China's approaches to resolving certain conflicts in Africa are pre-emptive in approach and diplomatic in means.²⁵ This approach to resolving Africa's insecurity problems suggests that China is constructing a new paradigm for peace intervention in Africa, pivoted on what Ubi has described earlier as the "Pre-emptive Peace and Security Approach (PPSA)."²⁶ With regard to China-Africa peace and security cooperation, two issues have remained paramount since the conception of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and the adoption of the new strategic partnership.

²⁴ Hussein Solomon, "African Solutions to Africa's Problems? African Approaches to Peace, Security and Stability. *Scientia Militaria, South African*," *Journal of Military Studies* 43, no. 1 (2015): 45–76. Doi: 10.5787/43-1-1109.

²⁵ Ubi, "China and Africa's Peace and Security,"

²⁶ Ibid.

The first is that, beginning with the second FOCAC in 2003, outcomes and Action Plans of FOCAC have given some credence and priority to China–Africa peace and security cooperation. And, second, all FOCAC documents have also consistently agreed that regional conflict, insecurity, terrorism, and non-traditional security issues are both a threat to international peace and security as well as a major problem to Africa – and therefore must be eliminated through close and effective cooperation at the international level.

China is doing this in a variety of ways that range from doling out aid, loans, and infrastructural development in many African countries, to sending peace missions to conflict-ridden countries in Africa, for example in Mali, South Sudan, etc.²⁷ More so, China donated USD 1.2 million to support the AU Peace Fund on January 8, 2015, in Addis Ababa.²⁸ In parallel, China also provided donation of USD 100 million to United Nations to enhance its anti-terrorism efforts in African continent.²⁹ Further, China has also donated non-lethal military equipment worth USD 5 million to the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) to assist in its peacekeeping operations.³⁰

With its acceptance to send peace missions to Africa, it shows that China intends to fully engage the continent in an enduring manner and further shows, the value of peace and security in China-Africa relations. In parallel, China has taken proactive measures to guarantee Africa’s peace and security, by setting up a series of other initiatives. One measure has been the “China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security” established in July 2012. This was followed by ‘China-Africa Peace and Security Forum,’ whose first meeting was held in Beijing in 2019. In attendance were the representatives of the Chinese

²⁷ Huang Jingjing, “Keeping Peace in the Sahara: Chinese Soldiers Earn Respect after a UN Mission to Mali,” *Global Times*, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/891479.shtml>.

²⁸ African Union, “Press Release: China Donates USD 1.2 Million to AU Peace Fund - Commissioner Chergui Expresses AU Appreciation for China’s Continuous Support,” January 08, 2015.

²⁹ Big News Network, “China Pledges New Aid for UN Peacekeeping, Development”, <http://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/237145021/china-pledges-new-aid-for-un-peacekeeping-development>.

³⁰ Dailytrust, “West Africa: China Donates U.S.\$5 million Military Equipment to Ecowas Troops,” Updated April 1, 2016, <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/china-donates-5m-military-equipment-to-ecowas-troops/139855.html>.

military as well as nearly 100 representatives from 50 African countries and the African Union, including 15 defence ministers and chiefs of staff.³¹ After the first meeting, a series of others have been held to look at how to mitigate and resolve deep-rooted causes of African insecurity.

However, the latest of these initiatives is the Global Security Initiative (GSI) established by the pronouncement of President Xi Jinping in April 2022. Although not yet clearly elaborated, the GSI is believed to serve as an overarching program by coordinating a variety of development projects, funding grants, and forums in developing countries. Moreover, its objective is to proactively address the underlying factors of international conflicts, enhance global security governance, foster collaborative international initiatives to ensure greater stability in a dynamic and evolving era, and advocate for lasting peace and development worldwide.³² In a nutshell, according to Gabriel Wildau, just like the BRI, the focus of engagement for GSI is the developing world, which Beijing sees as being more receptive to closer relations.³³

The BRI, established in 2013, by China's President Xi Jinping is the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which can now be subsumed within China's Global Development Initiatives (GDI), and stretches from East Asia to Europe and Africa along six corridors.³⁴ BRI's objective is to establish an intricate trade network and develop related essential infrastructure for all involved countries, especially of the developing world. The BRI thus, focuses on five priority domain including; mutual

³¹ Xinhua, "1st China-Africa Peace, Security Forum opens in Beijing. Xinhua," July 7, 2019, http://www.focac.org/eng/zfgx_4/hpaq/201907/t20190716_8091075.htm.

³² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "The Global Security Initiative Concept Paper," https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230221_11028348.html2023-02-21.

³³ Gabriel Wildau, "China's Global Security Initiative (GSI) Aims to Build a Diplomatic and Security Architecture to Rival the US-led System of Multilateral Treaties, Alliances, and Institutions," October 03, 2023, <https://www.teneo.com/china-what-is-the-global-security-initiative/>.

³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, National Development and Reform Commission, "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road," March 2015, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics_665678/2015zt/xjpcxbayzlt2015nnh/201503/t20150328_705553.html.

coordination in policies; connectivity of infrastructure; unrestricted trade; financial integration; and connecting people, all in an endeavour to lay the foundation for economic growth and development to countries that are part of it. China's BRI has resulted in investments and development aid being spread across more than 155 countries. Despite traditionally claiming a foreign policy guided by non-interference, China is increasingly implementing BRI infrastructural projects in countries with high levels of conflict and insecurity. As a result, Beijing has become more involved in peace and security activities abroad.³⁵

One of the basic principles of the GSI that resonates well with Africa is the Chinese vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security (3Cs & S) which was initiated by President Xi Jinping in Shanghai in 2014. This new concept of security which pivots on the second China-Africa policy (2015), gives impetus to the PPSA in maintaining and promoting peace and security based on China's own holistic and inclusive characteristics. This involves engaging constructively with African countries and regional organizations through dialogue and consultation to pursue African security using the principles of peace through development. The aim is to achieve common, cooperative, comprehensive, and sustainable security (3Cs & S).

In Efem Ubi's (2019) analysis, President Xi believes that common security is essential because interests and security are closely intertwined. Insecurity in any country can affect others in a direct or indirect way. Therefore, it is necessary to respect and ensure the security of every country around the globe. Comprehensive security aims to provide security from both traditional and non-traditional perspectives by adopting a holistic approach while enhancing regional coordinated security governance. According to this Chinese viewpoint, we should address potential security threats pre-emptively and avoid short-term and narrow sighted solutions which do not resolve the core issues.

³⁵ Prio, "Funding for Project on China's 'Developmental Peace' Approach," <https://www.prio.org/news/2955>.

Thus, for China, ‘Cooperative security’ will mean utilizing dialogue and mutual cooperation in order to support security and prosperity of not only individual nations, but the entire region, without ignoring endogenic solutions from within each country. However, dispute settlement should be through peaceful means and not arbitrary use or threat of force. And finally, for “Sustainable Security” insecurity should be addressed by focusing on both economic and development means to make security durable. This can be achieved by narrowing down the wealth gap to address inequality and disparity. This is the reason why China’s foreign policy towards countries in Africa has been focused on economic growth and development, infrastructure development, foreign aid, and regional integration because for China, a nation’s development is a critical criterion for peace and security.³⁶ Hence, sustainable security can only be ensured when it is established by morality, justice, and right ideas.

There is no gainsaying the fact that in terms of policy pronouncement, China has shown great concern for Africa’s insecurity. For over six decades, China has been one of the most involved countries in Africa. However, the difference between China and the West in Africa is that China distinguishes itself in a way that its relationship with Africa signals a different power dynamic that is less overtly predatory,³⁷ even though, there has been much debate about China’s influx, influence, and actions in Africa and in specific sense about their roles, actions and inactions in conflict-endemic nations.³⁸ Taking into consideration the role of China in Africa’s peace and security, it is believed that the Chinese culture values more than anything else, a nation’s unity, stability, and integrity. In fact, for China, a nation’s stability and economic development are deeply interconnected.³⁹ That is why in some African countries where there are conflicts, China has been providing development assistance as part

³⁶ Ubi, “China and Africa’s Peace and Security,”

³⁷ Dorina A. Bekoe, “Africa Symposium. Advancing Africa’s Peace, Security, and Governance—Major Themes. Institute for Defense Analyses,” <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25238>.

³⁸ Ubi, “China and Africa’s Peace and Security,”

³⁹ New Era, “Political Stability vs Economic Development” <http://www.newera.com.na/2015/03/13/political-stability-economic-development/>.

of its efforts to extend security to those countries and its overseas population and investments.⁴⁰ In that sense, there is no gainsaying that China's foreign policy towards Africa is targeted at ensuring that it lays the foundation for Africa's economic growth and development as the solution to Africa's insecurity problems as its largess is visibly seen in many parts of Africa, especially in infrastructural development.

Conclusion

Scholars are of the opinion that the United Nations (UN) multilateral intervention in Africa has remained a failure for two reasons. First is that much of its architecture was designed for resolving inter-state disputes. Secondly, with the emergence of new security challenges, the UN remains woefully ill-equipped to address the 21st century challenges to international peace and security. This may also be because of the lacklustre attitude of the international community towards these conflicts, delays in reacting to these conflicts, and/or the poor and inadequate manner in which these conflicts are often handled. This definitely highlights the need for alternative approaches to prevent and resolve these conflicts.

In certain ways, this alternative approach must be cognizant of socio-economic means and development as a priority for answers and solutions to Africa's insecurity challenges. An analysis of China's foreign policy statements and documents brings to light a multifaceted modus operandi approach to African peace and security. China is developing a distinct approach, one that is predicated strictly on economic growth and development initiatives the lack of which, according to Chinese officials is a major instigator of conflict in Africa. Thus, today, China's interest in Africa and its role in Africa's insecurity and conflict resolution appear unavoidable irrespective of its policy of non-interference and non-intervention.

⁴⁰ Francis Tazoacha, "China's Security Concerns in Africa: Another Imperialistic 'mise en valeur' 2016," <http://www.friendsofeurope.org/security-europe/chinas-security-concerns-africa-another-imperialistic-mise-en-valeur/>.

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