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Between the CPA and Southern Independence: China's Post-Conflict Engagement in Sudan

Daniel Large

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Project leader and series editor: Dr Chris Alden, J.C.Alden@lse.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

As a defining Chinese engagement in Africa, much attention has been devoted to China's role over Darfur and Sudan's other conflicts. Much less has been paid to China's role in post-conflict reconstruction and development. The paper explores the main areas of China's engagement in Sudan during the North–South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between 2005 and 2011. It pays particular attention to the evolution of China's relations with Southern Sudan. China's diplomatic–political engagement in the latter stages of the CPA represented a notable evolution beyond a narrowly bilateral, predominantly economic engagement. China's engagement in Sudan during the CPA is essential to understanding Beijing's relations with the two Sudans, and the ongoing combination of political, economic and security challenges it faces and is caught up within.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Large is a research associate of the South African Institute of International Affairs' China in Africa programme. His publications include *Sudan Looks East: China, India and the Politics of Asian Alternatives* (Oxford: James Currey, 2011), co-edited with Luke Patey.[1]

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
ESRDF	Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
NCP	National Congress party
NIF	National Islamic Front
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UNMIS	UN Mission in Sudan
UNAMID	AU–UN Hybrid Mission in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

INTRODUCTION

China's engagement in Sudan following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which was signed between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) to end a war that started in 1983, flowed primarily from its existing relations with Khartoum and came to feature important new relations with the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) that the peace agreement had established.[2] Over this period, alongside the diversification of the Chinese economic engagement, Beijing came to pursue a more engaged diplomatic–political role, first over Darfur and then Sudan's North–South politics. Adaptively responding to political change, and proceeding in consultation with Sudanese political authorities, China's engagement was directed by its interpretation of Sudan's needs in conjunction with its own capabilities and interests. Aspects of China's role became more explicitly linked to post-conflict reconstruction objectives, alongside the growth of a more developed, explicit policy of supporting peace. In contrast to its strong bilateral relations with Khartoum, China developed a more, if qualified, multilateral engagement with Juba, as the implications of Southern secession designs became more clearly understood.

Sudan is a defining Chinese engagement in Africa. Much attention has been devoted to China's role in relation to Sudan's wars, especially Darfur. Much less has been paid to China's role in a broader spectrum of conflict-related areas in Africa, including post-conflict reconstruction. Overall, this is a comparatively new research and policy subject in China.[3] Likewise, those international agencies with a longer record of post-conflict operations now face a relatively new, emerging actor whose importance appears to be growing in more direct ways than what have hitherto been fully manifest.

The study sought a more grounded understanding of China's much commented on but less understood role in Sudan. Even so, this remains beset by a knowledge deficit. Whereas Chinese scholarship about Sudan has advanced in recent years,[4] in northern Sudan, there is a 'lack of good quality research'[5] about the Chinese role, mirrored in Southern Sudan (and extending to a 'vacuum of knowledge' concerning South Sudan in China).[6] Before 2011 analysis of the Chinese engagement in Sudan was overwhelmingly northern-centric, directed towards Beijing–Khartoum links. China's emergent role in Southern Sudan after 2005, however, is given particular attention here. Most directly affected by protracted conflict following Sudan's independence in 1956, not coincidentally Southern Sudan was also central to oil development.

The paper contextualises China's role in Sudan before delineating the main aspects of China's engagement after 2005, and the Chinese entry and expansion in Southern Sudan.7 Although the formal peace created by the CPA is considered here, clearly a pattern of multiple, interlocking civil wars continued after 2005, as it did in different ways after July 2011. The phrase 'post-conflict reconstruction' is thus generic shorthand, especially given that 'reconstruction' also implies that there were developed institutions, facilities and infrastructure to reconstruct in Southern Sudan when these were minimal. China's multifaceted engagement is complex, in nature as well as direct and less direct impacts. There are limits to approaching China's role using the conventional policy language about post-conflict interventions; it is not generally framed and rationalised in these terms, or predicated on any prior-defined normative blueprint, but rather has flowed mostly from within the terms of its own bilateral engagement.[8]

CONTEXTUALISING CHINA IN SUDAN

China's role in Sudan after 2005 continued an engagement there that had undergone a significant transition after the June 1989 military coup, when the National Islamic Front (NIF) seized power. Following the entry of the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) into Sudan in 1995, Beijing and Khartoum upgraded their relations from 'traditional' to 'strategic', to use the official description, for a shift away from the previous, largely symbolic relations towards the development of more substantive relations. Led by its oil companies, China became directly and more consequentially involved in Sudan, playing an instrumental role in helping Khartoum escape the impact of international sanctions and political isolation from the mid-1990s. China became Khartoum's most important alternative economic partner and international political patron. In turn, Sudan would become a more salient part of China's regional and international diplomacy. China's Sudan engagement over time came to become more complex and politically immersed, featuring important variation within Sudan and changes in China's political role.

China's status as northern Sudan's most important economic partner is well known. Powered by oil, China accounted for 72.6% of Sudan's exports (see Table 1) and 20.7% of imports in 2010 (see Table 2) as part of trade relations that have grown significantly since 1989. Crude oil represented around 90% of Sudan's total export value,[9] with China, nominally, the main consumer taking 82% of oil exports.[10] Oil made up 98% of the value of China's total imports from Sudan from 1999–2009.[11] Chinese economic relations with Sudan came to feature a comprehensive range of areas, firmly anchored in but diversifying away from oil. One effect of the creation of Sudan's oil export sector amidst international sanctions was an increase in the business opportunities for Chinese products and Chinese companies, particularly in northern Sudan.

Table 1: Sudan's exports to China by value and percentage of total trade, 2004–2010 ($ million)

Year	China		Total
	Value	%	Value
2004	2,527.0	66.9	3,777.8
2005	3,427.1	71.0	4,824.3
2006	4,244.0	75.0	5,656.6
2007	7,276.9	81.9	8,879.2
2008	8,755.2	75.0	11,670.5
2009	6,257.3	75.8	8,257.1
2010	8,265.3	72.6	11,404.3

Source: Central Bank of Sudan, *Annual Report*. Khartoum: Central Bank of Sudan, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010

Table 2: Imports from China to Sudan by value and percentage of total trade, 2004–2010 ($ million)

Year	China		Total
	Value	%	Value
2004	529.6	13.0	4,075.2
2005	1,383.0	20.5	6,756.8
2006	1,679.4	20.8	8,073.5
2007	2,436.2	27.8	8,775.5
2008	2,163.3	23.1	9,351.5
2009	1,926.9	19.9	9,690.9
2010	2,082.6	20.7	10,044.8

Source: Central Bank of Sudan, *Annual Report*. Khartoum: Central Bank of Sudan, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010

The Chinese imprint on Sudan's economic growth became more apparent after 2005, although it had been developing for years before. 'Co-development', the idea that economic relations can be mutually supportive and promote common ends, is a basic descriptive tenet and rationale of China's approach.[12] Having found a willing, well-resourced and able partner in Beijing, and benefiting from the tremendous injection of resources after oil exports started in 1999, the National Congress party (NCP) sought to pursue development co-operation with China. The results are most readily seen in numerous Chinese-implemented infrastructure projects. These are exemplified by the Merowe Dam in north Sudan, in which Chinese finance and Sinohydro, the world's leading dam builder, played an instrumental role to controversially fund and build a project later used as a symbol of NCP-delivered progress by President Omar al-Bashir in his 2010 election campaign. New Chinese dam projects in eastern Sudan, and ongoing efforts to promote an 'agricultural renaissance' for Sudan's post-secession, post-oil economy, demonstrate China's reformulated importance in the north. Chinese economic ties with Sudan, however, have been promoted more to deepen economic co-operation than to directly promote peace objectives per se.

China's role entails a full spectrum of political, economic and military relations, as well as educational, cultural and social relations of the Chinese population in Sudan. The most manifest thrust of the Chinese role may be economic, but this has long been intertwined with multiple levels (central states, Chinese provinces or Sudanese states) and types (government, corporate and political party) of formal and informal political relations. The drivers of the Chinese government's policy engagement involve a fusion of central state political imperatives and economic interests, in Sudan and its neighbouring regions, as well as corporate oil diplomacy. The result, like that of other powers, is not always unified or coherent policy, let alone actual engagement.[13] Nor can China's role merely be reduced to narrow economic calculations.[14] The post-CPA period demonstrates well how the Chinese role became not just more geographically dispersed and diverse, but also the sum of multiple different actors: central government ministries, various state-

owned enterprises led by, but not confined to, the CNPC, and a plethora of small- or medium-sized businesses and more independent entrepreneurs.

Aspects of China's role thus, unsurprisingly, work at cross purposes. An obvious, but significant, case in point is China's longstanding 'military co-operation' with Khartoum, featuring exchanges between the People's Liberation Army and the Sudan Armed Forces, arms transfers, and sales by Chinese arms companies.[15] Such developed support for northern Sudan's NCP-run security state did not cohere comfortably with Beijing's professed support for peace, and has been defended in terms of sovereign state prerogatives. Such a glaring contradiction is hardly new or unique if compared to Sudan's other external partners across time. As past precedents show, however, besides their direct impact on military capability and civilian welfare, or influence in shaping popular Sudanese associations of China with robust support for Khartoum, arms transfers render Chinese interests in Sudan themselves indirectly vulnerable to unintended, often violent consequences of military blowback.[16] This is one aspect of a broader pattern whereby the Chinese engagement became more complex and, especially through oil investment, consequentially involved in Sudanese politics.

Chinese accounts foreground the oil industry's indirect role in achieving the CPA, while often underplaying how oil development was militarised and exacerbated conflict. Oil was one factor influencing the strategic calculus of the NCP and the SPLM/A, enhancing the economic incentives to end the war. Following 2005 the CPA's wealth-sharing mechanism underwrote political stability, providing a significant portion of the government of national unity's revenue and dominating GoSS revenue.[17] A linked theme is the positive correlation claimed between Sudan's petro-boom and peace,[18] which is problematic. Sudan did register impressive formal economic growth rates after 2000, but there was no 'development as such'.[19] Despite tangible new infrastructure benefits, mainly in parts of northern Sudan, there was little in the way of a meaningful, widespread 'trickle down' effect.[20] The nature and logic of oil-powered growth entailed new petro-politics of NCP rule through enhanced patronage capability, further social dislocation and conflict. It strengthened longstanding grievances about Khartoum's political and economic dominance. By the time the CPA was signed, the very success of oil, embodied by visible wealth in Khartoum and Sudan's economic heartlands, had helped deepen grievances about the economic and political marginalisation of Darfur (as well as in such regions as the east).[21] The credit Beijing seeks for the positive impact of oil is thus counter balanced by the political consequences of the oil industry in stabilising the NCP regime and reinforcing historic patterns of unbalanced development in Sudan.[22]

'PEACE AND STABILITY': CHINA AND THE CPA

Support for peace was central to China's public language on Sudan after the CPA. The Chinese government maintained that 'peace and stability is in the interests of all parties, domestically and internationally'.[23] The definitions of peace employed[24] and policy responses seem to take their lead from the CPA, and Sudan's other peace agreements. China's contribution was deemed to have been significant by Chinese observers: 'China has contributed a great deal to peace consolidation in Sudan.'[25] Alongside the Chinese government's professed desire to establish peace as soon as possible, Chinese observers

underlined the centrality of Sudanese agency in the political peace process, cautioning that 'solutions take time' and cannot be externally imposed overnight.[26]

China's contribution in relation to the CPA period at first flowed primarily from its bilateral economic engagement, and later a more involved diplomatic–political role, rather than being directed towards attaining post-war reconstruction goals per se, or proceeding from within the international structures established to support CPA implementation. The Chinese role developed in notable ways between 2005 and 2011, in conjunction first with the Darfur crisis and then the SPLM/A's goal for Southern Sudan to exercise its right to self-determination via a referendum on staying within or seceding from a united Sudan.

Beijing's rhetorical support for peace was tied closely to its support for political stability and relations with the NCP. Beijing supported the NCP throughout the Darfur crisis, opposing external pressure in various ways. As the Southern referendum approached, similar views to those aired over Darfur about the spectre of political fragmentation were expressed. Without Bashir, Sudan could face a 'Somalia scenario'; there would definitely be chaos.[27] Chinese views emphasised that the West should support Bashir and avoid 'opening a Pandora's Box.'[28] China's self-interest in Sudan undoubtedly informed such concerns and allied diplomacy. The emphasis on order and stability over justice, however, and relegation of concerns about impact, also reflected core tenets of Beijing's approach.

Blue-helmeted multilateralism: China's peacekeeping in Sudan

UN peacekeeping has been the most prominent aspect of China's multilateral role in Sudan. Before July 2011 this took the form of participation in the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), established to support the CPA, and the AU (African Union)–UN Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), established by UN Security Council Resolution 1769 (July 2007). Both involved multifunctional Chinese engineering units mainly providing logistical support services to the UN and local areas, with some other ancillary roles (like UN military police). After the deployment of the first Chinese troops from the Jinan Military Command in 2005, the Chinese peacekeepers were based in Wau, UNMIS Sector II headquarters, Southern Sudan. There, and in adjacent areas like Aweil or Rumbek, they helped to build UNMIS facilities, run an UNMIS hospital, and construct or repair infrastructure (from an airstrip to roads and waterworks). China provided financial support for AU peacekeeping in Darfur, a key part of its engagement prior to UNAMID's creation and the more direct Chinese role in UN operations there. China's 'friendly government' status and good relations with Khartoum meant a smooth deployment of its first UNAMID contingent. 'The Chinese were first in, and had the capacity to set up camps in Fasher, Nyala and el-Geneina.'[29] The fifth Chinese contingent was deployed in March 2011.[30]

China's UN peacekeeping in Sudan features prominently in its African peacekeeping and wider international politics. Formally geared towards supporting the UN, this also serves to embody and mobilise a positive image of a humanitarian China actively supporting peace. This can be directed outwards to Africa and the world,[31] as well as to legitimate and enhance domestic support in China for Chinese foreign policy in Sudan, or Africa more generally. Despite its prominence in Sudan, however, peacekeeping is comparatively straightforward; political challenges present far greater difficulties.

Bilateralism in command

China's relation to and participation within the CPA's multilateral support framework evolved between 2005 and 2011. Beijing's relations with Sudan in 2005 came to feature more engaged, though qualified and limited, multilateral participation, most evident in Juba towards the end of the CPA. This process, however, was accompanied by the important continuity of Beijing's predominantly bilateral relations with Khartoum, and later Juba. This was not a linear process, and partly reflected a wider shift in international policy from Darfur back to the CPA as Sudan's North–South politics, overshadowed by Darfur, belatedly received more attention. At the same time, it was indicative of China's navigation of Sudan's turbulent politics and the evolution of its more flexible, ad hoc and engaged role that came to feature a mostly discreet but nonetheless more involved diplomatic–political aspect.

China's principle engagement channel during the CPA was bilateral, in keeping with its standard practices. In so far as it involved expanding economic ties, this was not directly involved in CPA implementation per se, although it could be post facto rationalised as being beneficial in broad economic terms. Bilateralism was regarded as more effective and cost-efficient, with China's assistance programme being informed by an effort to use 'limited money to do more things'. Lack of experience was cited as an additional factor behind its bilateral preference. China's predominant modality may have been bilateral, but in not wanting to be 'exclusive',[32] it remained, in principle, open to co-operating with third parties on development matters.

From 2005 China at first mounted a straight bilateral engagement mediated almost entirely by Khartoum. The Chinese government was not a signatory or formal guarantor of the CPA.[33] It did not participate in the major assessment exercises mounted before the CPA to plan for peace. Nor did it participate in the April 2005 Oslo donor conference convened to secure support for the peace deal. What engagement that came after this correlates with Beijing's political needs produced by internal pressures within Sudan compounded by regional and international attention, which produced a more exposed position. China's participation in the Sudan Consortium, a notable international donor forum involving the NCP and the SPLM, illustrates this evolution into a more involved role.[34] China's first contribution of note came in the third meeting, held in Oslo in May 2008, through a statement read on behalf of the Chinese foreign minister.[35] China did not, however, contribute much more than that; nor would it do so in other such pledging conferences, but such participation was indicative of China's more involved role.[36] The appointment of Beijing's special envoy for Darfur, Liu Guijin, in May 2007 enabled China's voice to be aired in international forums. China's participation in such forums from 2008, and the Sudan conferences it convened in Beijing, was linked to the international political pressure it was facing over Darfur that had crystallised over the Beijing Olympic Games. China became more engaged in multilateral forums, especially on Darfur. Even as the CPA became a policy priority, and Beijing was seeking to develop links with Juba, China's role in political negotiations seeking an agreement in Darfur continued, as did its representation at forums for involved agencies and governments involved in Darfur.

China's multilateral exposure in Khartoum during the CPA's final stages, when planning about the UN's future role was also taking place, was minimal. China was widely viewed within the international aid sector in Khartoum as being mostly outside and apart from

the multilateral system, reinforcing perceptions of its bilateral focus.[37] This was consistent with wider Chinese positioning towards multilateral forums. There was, however, limited select interaction with certain forums.[38] China's participation in UN processes continued outside Sudan. For example, China's UN ambassador, Wang Guangya, visited Sudan with the UN Security Council delegations in the CPA's latter stages. China supported the Southern referendum itself, expending political capital and providing a donation of $500,000 to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission in January 2011 as well as sending a team of observers. It was thus active in certain ways, despite not interacting with the office of the UN special representative.[39]

Political diplomacy: China's influence politics

Diplomatic–political engagement was a further aspect of China's role.[40] Later on in the CPA, Beijing's engagement appeared to outwardly be characterised by a quiet paradox: despite the high stakes for China's economic and political interests, and wider scrutiny in Africa and beyond, Beijing did not appear to publicly invest anything like the political will on the CPA as it had devoted to its pre-Olympic Darfur diplomacy. There were, of course, notable differences of circumstance. On key CPA flashpoints, however, China refrained from being involved in international mediation efforts, mostly concentrating political energy on its own bilateral exchanges with senior NCP and SPLM leaders. In the course of these, including the frequent exchanges between senior figures in Beijing and Khartoum in the months before the January 2011 referendum and leading up to July, Beijing appeared to privately emphasise stability and proceeding according to the CPA. On specific flashpoints, however, the Chinese government refrained from mounting any direct, public diplomatic–political role. Abyei exemplifies Beijing's apparent unwillingness to use its self-acknowledged leverage over the NCP to promote an agreement or join international efforts to broker a deal.[41] Instead, outside of its own dealings, and expressions of concern, Beijing played a minimal role in responding to the crisis, apparently averse to crossing the red line of non-interference through attempted forms of practical influence politics like those it had used over Darfur. In the face of internal pressures within Sudan, however, China had additional reasons to become more engaged in trying to help manage a stable CPA transition.

After observing the CPA signing on 9 January 2005, Beijing became a de facto CPA guarantor and it faced considerably elevated expectations about what its role could or should be in Sudan. The latter part of the CPA thus witnessed a significantly more involved Chinese role. Even so, China did not act the major external political player in the peace issues, especially in South Sudan. The US in particular, together with certain European countries, assumed prominent roles, backed up by African regional organisations and neighbouring states. In view of shared interests in a stable CPA transition, China sought to pursue common ground on Sudan in its US relations, and to maintain communications with other players like the EU, an interest reciprocated by both.[42]

Economic development: Towards lasting peace?

The Chinese government and other analysts adhere to a strong belief in the efficacy of a particular conception of economic development after war in advancing the prospects

for durable peace. Just as this orientation is, broadly, not exclusive to Beijing,[43] nor is the theme of 'peace through development' new in Sudanese politics. It could, however, be said to be the defining aspect of China's approach. The emphasis placed upon economic development might be said to be another way of seeking to legitimise the main form of Chinese engagement in Sudan. At the same time, in certain ways it partly reflects, adapts and externalises China's domestic experience in Sudan. 'Development' in this context does not carry overt political connotations (or normative preferences), although it is often ambivalent about or opposed to steps considered as potentially destabilising, like elections. It refers squarely to the process of economic development regarded as foundational to the type of modernisation deemed capable, with time, of overcoming more structural sources of conflict,[44] and avoids emphasis on aid or political conditionality, regarded as two extremes of Western post-war assistance.

The CPA represented – and was identified explicitly as – a strong opportunity for those Chinese businesses already in Sudan or new businesses wishing to enter, especially given continued sanctions and reputational concerns affecting American and European business in particular.[45] Rather than development needs assessments, like those conducted for the CPA or the Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006, Chinese businesses appraised the economic opportunities enabled by such agreements. Many business operations were linked to the availability of Chinese financing. Projects mounted on commercial terms could thus be said to assist efforts to support peace, with humanitarian and developmental benefits claimed from implemented projects that were simultaneously assisting the business objectives of Chinese companies. One example concerns China's work falling under support for the 2006 Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement, which established the Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund (ESRDF) mandated with an ambitious set of rehabilitation and development responsibilities 'to end the longstanding marginalisation of Eastern Sudan'.[46] Eastern Sudan would suffer, however, from a failure to realise a tangible peace dividend: 'people on the ground have not seen any benefits of the peace and they are asking themselves is this what we fought for?'[47] In 2009 the ESRDF allocated a concessionary Chinese government loan worth RMB[48] 300 million ($36 million) for assorted 'development projects'.[49] The proposed contracts were due to be implemented by Chinese contractors in 2010.[50] Such contractual stipulations privileging Chinese business attracts disquiet, compounded by the opaque nature of the deals involved.[51] However, they can be presented and rationalised as measures designed to promote economic development and enhance the prospects for peace in a particularly deprived region of Sudan.

Humanitarian and development assistance

China sponsored and undertook humanitarian and development assistance programmes blending 'pure government assistance' with that mounted on market terms.[52] These allowed Beijing to harness the language and performative practices of humanitarianism to legitimate its wider role in Sudan, respond to external critique and be seen to practically address identified needs. Despite being comparatively small in relation to other external humanitarian engagements, and to the overall scale of China's economic relations with Sudan, this nonetheless represents a notable area of activity. Beijing stressed the importance of coupling promises with delivery in its assistance programme.[53] Planned contributions were tied to tangible realisation (even if these appear to have prioritised

quantitative targets rather than qualitative impact). Besides providing assistance within China's capability, Beijing emphasised that aid can be necessary to address certain needs but is not sufficient to underpin post-war recovery.

China's assistance programme for Darfur was part of its Sudan engagement in the build-up to the August 2008 Beijing Games. China's aid to Darfur actually preceded its globalised, high-profile Genocide Olympics controversy, but was interrupted by the war. When resumed, it was accompanied by more public official expressions of Chinese concern at civilian suffering in Darfur.[54] China's assistance programme has been mainly bilateral[55] – although it considered co-operation with other parties[56] and considered the example of other initiatives, like the Arab League's 'model villages'.[57] It was closely aligned with the Government of Sudan's priorities and those of the AU.

China's humanitarian assistance to Darfur, narrowly defined, has been upstaged by its development-oriented projects. Chinese accounts tend to depoliticise conflict in Darfur, portraying the war that escalated after 2003 as a development problem compounded by environmental change. Economic development, therefore, is considered as the solution.[58] Beijing has funded development schemes involving Chinese loans for projects implemented by Chinese contractors[59] and channelled through the Government of Sudan (and, nominally at least while it formally existed, the Darfur Transitional Authority). Areas of support include education facilities,[60] energy generation,[61] medical assistance (hospitals), and provision of agricultural tools.

Two programme areas are worth noting. First, China's water projects have been supported by Chinese loans totalling some $500 million, including financing the digging of wells (26 in North Darfur and 20 in South Darfur). The flagship Nyala water supply project, intended to supply the capital of South Darfur and surrounding villages with water via an 85-km pipeline from Giraida, has been underway for more than three years but on a 'stop and go, stop and go' basis due to insecurity and continuing conflict.[62] Besides being prominent in China's assistance programme, this project exemplifies official NCP promises made about future, Chinese-delivered progress. In South Darfur, for instance, 'People keep hearing about the very ambitious development projects the government is saying China will be bring'.[63] Beijing's support for road building in Darfur is also noteworthy.[64] Sudan's tarred roads are concentrated in the northern Nile valley.[65] A road connecting Darfur with Khartoum and Sudan's central Nile valley was promised by the NIF regime after 1989 but, despite onerous taxation, never materialised; other roads within Darfur had been proposed but not delivered.[66] The lack of proper roads was one symbol of Darfur's neglect, feeding into wider Darfurian grievances against the ruling centre. With Chinese state funding, Chinese companies were building roads between Khartoum and Darfur's state capitals (El Fasher, Nyala, El Geneina) and the Chadian border.

China's development projects in Darfur meant that it was caught up in protracted debate about the appropriateness of 'early recovery' programmes amidst conflict, and when and how to move beyond a narrow humanitarian response.[67] Within Sudan and in Darfur, China is regarded as a firm supporter of Khartoum's priorities.[68] However, it is not only the NCP/Khartoum that backs early recovery in Darfur.[69] Others contend that infrastructure is a priority, necessary to support livelihoods and agriculture in Darfur: 'With no infrastructure, it is redundant to talk about development.'[70]

CHINA AND SOUTHERN SUDAN

Outside the oil sector, and in contrast with Beijing's far more established, influential role in northern Sudan, China's role in Southern Sudan after the CPA was relatively minor in comparison with other international engagements but would become more important as the January 2011 referendum approached. China's relations with the SPLM and GoSS progressed far in a relatively short amount of time: 'China came from nowhere'.[71] Having been 'very hands off [in Southern Sudan] in the first years of the CPA',[72] Beijing began to develop more serious relations with GoSS from mid-2007. Driven more by a political calculus linked to investment protection imperatives than any dedicated policy of promoting post-war recovery, this came to feature a more fully fledged engagement beyond oil. With some 75% of Sudan's known oil reserves located in the south, however, oil clearly remained very important and would see the CNPC conduct its own quiet corporate diplomacy with GoSS before and after the referendum.[73]

China's entry into Southern Sudan after the CPA was importantly influenced by sustained international aid involvement during the civil wars, much organised under the UN-led Operation Lifeline Sudan, and subsequent efforts by a multitude of international agencies to help establish and support the new, semi-autonomous GoSS and promote post-war recovery. Many evaluations of international engagement during the CPA point to discrepancies between ambitious aims and modest achievements, citing a lack of progress in delivering a peace dividend despite the large, sustained commitment.[74] Approached narrowly, the overall record of international post-conflict intervention and GoSS undoubtedly fell short of the high expectations vested in it. At the same time, any such evaluations need to be tempered by a more realistic political appraisal. GoSS was established from extremely limited foundations and, besides contested relations with the NCP, confronted chronic needs. At first, the peace dividend was 'primarily an expansion of the public sector'.[75] The record of post-CPA engagement cannot be assessed without factoring in these political realities and the SPLM's independence aspirations.

Politics in command

China's previous close wartime association with the NIF politicised perceptions of its post-CPA role in Southern Sudan,[76] compounded by discontent arising from the ongoing coexistence of a lucrative oil sector and the lack of civilian benefits in southern oil-producing areas.[77] China's military assistance to Khartoum after 1989, and the militarisation of oil development during the 1990s, meant that many in Southern Sudan still regard China's wartime role as a direct form of actively partisan interference. It followed that China's official claims that it maintained a strict policy of non-interference in Sudan's internal affairs were thus unsurprisingly rejected in categorical terms. China, as one refrain summarising a widely held view went, was 'not welcome in South Sudan'.[78] Until the CPA, China firmly sided with Khartoum but in time the agreement necessitated a radical reordering of its Sudan relations.

China's engagement in Southern Sudan after the CPA largely flowed from the evolution of its relations with GoSS, which involved a strategic recalibration of relations with the NCP -state in Khartoum. A sequence of phases saw China move from being a convinced supporter of the unity of Sudan to recognising the new Republic of South Sudan on 9 July

2011. At first, China firmly supported unity, on the basis of the CPA and its own political preference (being mindful of wider repercussions in Africa and, to an extent, China itself). China later hedged its bets, developing relations with GoSS within the CPA's 'one Sudan, two systems' framework. Finally, in the face of the strong momentum towards secession, Beijing began to prepare for and plan ahead to an independent state.

Beijing's relations with Juba were catalysed by a July 2007 state visit to China by Salva Kiir Mayardit, the first vice-president of Sudan and president of Southern Sudan. Prior to this, there had been minimal contact of significance between China and the SPLM.[79] Southern Sudan's leader had met the Chinese president in Khartoum in February 2007, but their July 2007 meeting in Beijing was far more consequential after two 'key messages' were conveyed: the geography of Sudan's oil industry (ie that the majority of the Chinese oil concessions were in Southern Sudan), and the CPA's provision for Southerners to exercise their right to self-determination (ie a referendum on secession would be conducted and Southerners were unlikely to endorse unity).[80]

The trip triggered a reorientation in Chinese policy and diplomacy, stimulating greater contact and expanding relations with Southern Sudan.[81] China's consulate in Juba was opened by the assistant foreign minister, Zhai Jun, in September 2008, falling under the Chinese embassy in Khartoum and the ministry of foreign affairs in Beijing. Its establishment was intended to send 'a positive message to the outside world that China wants to do more to improve people's lives in the south and support the peace process between the North and South'.[82] There were clearly also important political and economic reasons behind its creation. The consulate became a conduit in China's relations with GoSS,[83] helping to enhance bilateral relations between the two.[84] A pattern of triangular relations between Beijing, Khartoum and Juba came to replace the previously dominant Beijing–Khartoum partnership.

China's fledgling relations with GoSS rested upon mutual need. Aware of the Chinese oil role, long suspicious of China's close military and economic–political relations with the NCP, and wary of Beijing's potential UN Security Council veto of Southern Sudan's independence aspirations, GoSS recognised the political imperative of securing China's support. Cultivating more independent and direct relations with China also represented a notable strategic political coup for the SPLM in its relations with the NCP, being empowered by its growing friendship with the power seen by many as the best friend of its enemy. Beijing faced the prospect of a new, resource-rich African state in which the majority of its oil concessions were located and with whom, on top of a wartime history of support for Juba's enemy, it had minimal political ties. A process widely seen as the 'Chinese charm offensive in Southern Sudan'[85] was thus initially more of a hard-edged, two-way political process in so far as it involved government relations and the negotiation of material interests. Mutual ignorance on behalf of both governments about the other was addressed, with GoSS making efforts to educate Chinese government representatives about Southern Sudan, and vice versa.

Between 2005 and 2011, there was thus a marked progression in China's engagement: a convinced supporter of Sudan's unity, China nonetheless came to champion peaceful, CPA-mandated political transition. What started as a relatively marginal aspect of China's overall Sudan relations – a policy engagement substantially overshadowed by Darfur, and Beijing's support for a united Sudan – mainstreamed in a process that saw China become a notable supporter of a stable transition to two Sudans. Beijing's bottom line was a smooth

CPA transition, a 'peaceful, credible referendum' and future stability.[86] This reflected China's development of an all-Sudan policy framework. Having first hedged its bets about the referendum's outcome, Beijing – like the CNPC – then began preparing more actively for an independent South Sudan. As January 2011 approached, Beijing became more fully cognisant of the SPLM's independence drive. Further initiatives to enhance political relations were made. China officially continued to support the CPA's principle of 'making unity attractive', and refused to overtly prejudge the referendum's outcome. However, it stated its willingness to accept the result: 'of course we will respect the choice or option of the people of Sudan.'[87]

Economic relations beyond oil

Despite GoSS emphasis on attracting external investment after 2005, and openness to engaging China, Beijing became more actively engaged with promoting its economic relations with Southern Sudan only as a result of these political developments. After 2005 GoSS 'did not hold grudges' about the war.[88] Some Southern political leaders harboured anti-Chinese sentiments as a result of the war. The prevailing attitude, based on overwhelming need, was a pragmatic acceptance of external investment. Southern Sudan, in other words, was 'open for business and investors are welcome'.[89]

Entrepreneurs, not diplomats, were the pioneers of the Chinese engagement in Southern Sudan after the CPA. The CPA opened up the south as an attractive new economic frontier, an undeveloped market with minimal competition, a new capital likely to grow and the prospect of international post-war investment and myriad opportunities to profit from the new peace.[90] The first Chinese entrepreneurs scouted options before the CPA.[91] After the deal was signed, the Chinese business community in Juba became more established and diverse, starting relatively slowly but then expanding as the CPA advanced. Chinese companies became active in the construction sector, renovating government buildings, including the Legislative Assembly and the Juba Teaching Hospital, and expanding operations as demand grew in Juba and state capitals. Certain private Chinese investments in mining and mineral exploration were delayed. A Chinese service sector developed to feature restaurants, hotels, supermarkets and private medical clinics in Juba alone, many carrying out micro-hedging strategies of their own in relation to the politics of the CPA. Improved roads after 2005 also stimulated Southern Sudan's regional trade, in which Chinese products were prominent, albeit mostly at first mediated by Kenyan, Ugandan or Sudanese businesses operating trade networks of their own with China.

An important pillar of China's official relations with GoSS was initiating and enhancing economic relations. In February 2010 the Chinese consulate organised a Juba workshop for GoSS officials about economic co-operation with China. It was intended to educate GoSS about the working practices of the Chinese government in economic affairs and practical methods of economic partnerships, with a view to enhancing commercial relations between China and Southern Sudan.[92] At the time, this workshop was poorly attended and did not have the intended effect; the Chinese side understood, rightly, that prior to the referendum, GoSS was mostly, although not entirely, subordinating economic questions to the overriding political goal of achieving independence.

China's development assistance to Southern Sudan

China formulated and began to deliver a programme of development assistance to Southern Sudan in tandem with creating its Juba consulate. Formally presented as part of its efforts to support the CPA, this also had an apparent subtext of being geared towards enhancing relations with GoSS and promoting its wider standing in Southern Sudan. China stepped up its bilateral assistance, following consulate and embassy activity and government delegation visits to conduct needs assessments. The result was a multi-stranded programme of assistance 'expressing the Chinese government's strong hope to see peace continue'.[93] This featured assistance for education (54 prefabricated primary schools); water wells; health (including support for building hospitals in southern state capitals, and some 30 mobile medical cars); support for agricultural production; and financial support for demining training (RMB 20 million).[94] The CNPC also sought to provide visibly branded assistance, establishing a computer science laboratory at the University of Juba.

China became more involved with multilateral forums in Juba than Khartoum, albeit not always formally. Its Juba consulate was not only more active vis-à-vis GoSS or the UN, but also in such international bodies as the Donor Coordination Forum.[95] Some pointed to open, co-operative interaction between Chinese consulate officials and counterparts in UNMIS or the World Bank.[96] In early 2011 China had discussions with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) about supporting the UN Work Plan.[97] China's more involved role in Juba placed its policy engagement more within a multilateral context, enabling Beijing to minimise its past Khartoum orientation there, at the same time as continuing close bilateral ties with Khartoum. Such positioning in Juba also appeared to reflect a desire not to be singled out, a position that would carry more risk, but rather to be a more – albeit partially and selectively – integrated part of the multilateral system. This also applied to China's assistance programme, which was formulated in part through consultations with GoSS and UN officials as well, and devised with at least an awareness of the need to avoid duplication.[98] China's assistance, in other words, was not designed in a vacuum but in relation to GoSS priorities and the programmes of its other international partners.[99]

China's budget support for GoSS appeared to be an important nascent area of intergovernmental relations. Almost totally dependent on wealth-sharing and oil revenue, GoSS was hostage to oil price fluctuations and suffered from an oil price collapse in 2009. GoSS had presented a number of projects to the Chinese government it wanted financed through Chinese loans (concessional, commercial, or grant-in-aid) during Salva Kiir's 2007 China visit. It seems Beijing provided GoSS with limited budget support.[100] As independence approached, GoSS and China were in the process of negotiating a substantial Chinese loan.[101]

One strand of GoSS–China diplomacy before the referendum looked forward to potential co-operation after the CPA. Before January 2011 Chinese officials and academics emphasised that 'China will actively participate in South Sudan to contribute to build a new country if the referendum gives it independence.'[102] The participation by the GoSS minister of agriculture and SPLM deputy secretary-general, Ann Itto, in the August 2010 China–Africa Agriculture Cooperation Forum in Beijing was one notable step forward for GoSS–China relations, but provoked strong opposition from the NCP's conference

delegation. In September 2010 a GoSS delegation led by the GoSS minister of labour and public service, Awut Deng Acuil, and featuring officials from five ministries and three elected state governors, visited China in a 'post-referendum development preparation' visit. Not long afterwards, a senior Chinese government delegation visited Juba. There was mounting interest within GoSS and other Southern Sudanese circles in expanded co-operation with China, including such things as reviving China's former programme of medical assistance as a positive counterweight to what is widely held to be an otherwise narrow extractive role.[103]

Before July 2011 the need for China and Southern Sudan to strengthen relations and build 'mutual trust' was widely cited.[104] The way in which GoSS created ties with Beijing demonstrates the power of pragmatic politics driven by mutual need. Amidst a combination of continuing popular discontent with the legacy of the war as well as the new Chinese role, however, some cited a need by China to recognise its wartime role as a step towards wider, popular acceptance in the South. 'We have no problem with China to come and invest in South Sudan but you cannot just start from here without addressing the past.'[105] GoSS appeared to prioritise relations with the US and other European states. Before July 2011 it was 'striking how limited the GoSS uptake [on China] has been' to date.[106]

China and the Republic of South Sudan: Towards future co-operation

Overall, at the time of its independence in July 2011, China's role in South Sudan remained emergent but, with evident energy being directed by the Chinese government to its relations with Juba, looked set to expand. From Southern Sudan's perspective, a China engagement had emerged over a relatively short space of time as a potentially important part of its development strategy. Besides the possibility of financial assistance, and outside the oil industry whose future was subject to some uncertainty, China offered a potentially significant means to finance and deliver rapid infrastructural benefits, thereby advancing practical steps to overcome Southern Sudan's severe infrastructural challenges. A related aspect of emerging, if still relatively new, relations appeared to be greater GoSS/SPLM appreciation of China's political approach to its relations with Juba. The very principle of non-interference that had been so strongly rejected by the SPLM/A during the war looked likely to be received much more positively as a principle governing interstate relations between China and the new Republic of South Sudan.

With the basis of relations established by July 2011, and a quickening momentum of Chinese business interest in motion, China's major contribution in South Sudan outside of the oil sector could be yet to come. There were widespread expectations to this effect: 'China will be an incredibly important partner for South Sudan'.[107] Besides political needs for the Chinese government or the CNPC in particular, there were business opportunities for Chinese enterprises. Following South Sudan's independence on 9 July 2011, the anticipation of a more involved Chinese role in the new state outside oil was set to be acted on. The question had become not whether but how China could best contribute in the newly independent state.

CONCLUSION

China's engagement in Sudan between the CPA and the independence of South Sudan on 9 July 2011 is essential to understanding Beijing's emerging relations with the two Sudans. Now that the Republic of South Sudan formally exists, the question of its development following protracted war has become central to the prospects of the new state, even amidst new fighting in Sudan.

China faced a changed, fluid set of political circumstances as it sought to conduct a managed transition to a two Sudans engagement, while maintaining a policy of treating both as interdependent equals. Its importance for North Sudan increased at a time of mounting economic difficulty and uncertain political negotiations with South Sudan about post-secession arrangements, as well as with other powers, notably the US, over normalisation of relations.[108] South Sudan's independence looked set to reconfigure the politics of conflict in Sudan's transitional areas, the 'New South'. Conflict in Darfur continued. Eastern Sudan remained beset by the unaddressed challenges of longstanding neglect. Meanwhile, in South Sudan, the euphoria over the successful referendum and 9 July 2011 was being tempered by internal conflict, the challenges of newly achieved independence and lack of a final deal between Juba and Khartoum.

China's relations with South Sudan formally changed with the establishment of diplomatic relations. Statebuilding and the economic future of South Sudan, in the face of interest in how to extend or delay declining oil production and promote post-oil development, was closely related.[109] Establishing a new state in South Sudan, an oil-dominated economy governed by a single party, and enhancing its development prospects in the face of a huge infrastructure deficit, prolonged neglect and ongoing conflicts, had become a core challenge. China's strong interest in supporting the establishment of a well-functioning state dovetails with the state-building priority of the newly independent government and its international partners. Following the reputational damage sustained in China's Darfur experience, and its previous role in the North–South conflict, South Sudan represented new opportunities for a more positive Chinese engagement to support practical development and a more sustained peace.

For over three decades, Sudan has been 'a laboratory of humanitarian practice' for the predominantly Western aid agencies dominating the landscape of emergency relief and development assistance. Formerly a laboratory for overseas Chinese oil development, only more recently has the Chinese government come to respond more actively to conflict challenges in Sudan. Despite being subordinate to economic relations, and remaining by and large within China's bilateral relations, Sudan nonetheless is a notable case of an evolving Chinese role. Beijing has demonstrated flexible adaptation to need, and of being positioned to continue to attempt to contribute to stability and peaceful transition in the new Sudans, while fulfilling China's policy goals. How these are reconciled, and whether Beijing can indeed maintain good relations with both Khartoum and Juba as it seeks to, remains to be seen. It became more apparent after July 2011 that Beijing could no longer pursue a mostly hands-off attitude towards the North–South negotiations about final status on everything from borders to the oil sector, and could be compelled to step in as a necessary part of efforts to broker a final agreement.

Within the Sudans, and in other parts of Africa, how China will engage in post-conflict contexts and practically operationalise its longstanding rhetorical commitment

to peace and security has become an important question. It looks set to become even more important in China's growing African role, as Beijing further negotiates the interface between development and security, and confronts more pressing challenges posed by armed conflict to expanding and sustaining its economic engagement and growing political interests. Sudan during the CPA shows the limits of approaching China's role within the conventional parameters of post-conflict reconstruction or the discourse of liberal peacebuilding; the Chinese engagement has not been framed and rationalised in these terms, or predicated on any prior-defined normative blueprint of change. This has, however, played an important, if not always overt, role as demonstrated by its move beyond a strong economic role and into the more politicised process of the CPA. This looks certain to continue in the context of the fractious relations between the new Sudans, where China would have the most developed vested economic – and to an extent political – interests, with concomitant reasons to necessarily become involved in trying to achieve a viable post-secession framework of interstate relations between Khartoum and Juba.

ENDNOTES

1 The author's email address is danlarge@soas.ac.uk.

2 The paper uses lower-case spelling to distinguish geographical areas, like northern, western or eastern Sudan, from political units, like Southern Sudan, which was a formal entity from 1972–1983 and 2005–2011.

3 Interview, Chinese Academy of Social Science, Beijing, 16 December 2010. In China, there is relatively little literature on this theme focused on Africa, though the Chinese government has participated in related UN discussion and, since 2006, incorporated post-war reconstruction (or rebuilding, '*zhanhou cheng jian*') into its Forum on China–Africa Cooperation declarations.

4 The lack of sustained experience in Sudan remains a recognised constraint. Various discussions, including at the Chinese Academy of Social Science, Beijing University, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, and Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, in 2010 and March 2011.

5 Personal interview, Sudanese academic, Khartoum, 27 January 2010.

6 Personal interview, SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) official, Juba, 20 September 2010.

7 How China's role proceeded in relation to others is not the primary concern here. See Large D & L Patey (eds), *Sudan Looks East: China, India and the Politics of Asian Engagement*. Oxford: James Currey, 2011.

8 Official Chinese framings of Sudan also depart from familiar depictions, tending to portray it as a land of hope, opportunity and untapped potential. Although by no means ignoring problems of armed conflict in recent years, Sudan has been and still remains often portrayed as a 'land of stability and investment potential', as it was, for example, at the 2010 Shanghai World Exposition.

9 IMF (International Monetary Fund), *Sudan,Country Report No. 08/174*. Washington, DC: IMF, 2008; IMF, *Sudan, Country Report No. 09/218*. Washington, DC: IMF, 2009.

10 US Energy Information Administration, 'Country analysis brief: Sudan', November 2010, hhttp://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Sudan/Oil.html, accessed 30 November 2010.

11 According to Chinese statistics and UN Statistical Division, Commodity Trade Statistics

Database, http://comtrade.un.org/db, accessed 27 November 2010. Although a notable source of Chinese oil imports, Sudan first and foremost is a key investment destination for the CNPC. The commercial rewards of oil investment stand out, rather than Sudan merely being a source of direct supplies for China's burgeoning oil import needs.

12 Wang Meng, '*Cong Sudan gean kan Zhongguo waijiao zhi cheng zhang*' ['The Maturing of China's Arabian Diplomacy: A Case of Sudan'], *Alabo Shijie* [*The Arab World*], March 2010, 2, p. 20.

13 Relations between institutions of the central Chinese state and the CNPC are more complex than the straight mercantilism emanating from China's energy security strategy of popular perception. See Bo Kong, *China's International Petroleum Policy*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010.

14 Chinese oil interests within Sudan appear, for example, partly linked to the political fortunes of key Chinese leaders with backgrounds in the oil sector and longstanding Sudan links, producing less visible but nonetheless important incentives in Beijing to promote stable transition in Sudan.

15 The UN Panel of Experts established by UN Security Council Resolution 1591 (2005) documented the 'prominence of Chinese manufactured arms and ammunition' in Darfur, citing the role of companies such as China North Industries Corporation. See *Report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan*. S/2009/562 of 29 October 2009, p. 83.

16 This was evident in the Sudan–Chad proxy wars before the rapprochement between Khartoum and N'Djamena in early 2010, as well as the military targeting of Chinese oil facilities in Sudan by Darfur rebel groups and allied Misseriya groups in South Kordofan.

17 Personal interview, senior Chinese official, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

18 Oil is held to have, variously, stimulated industrialisation, improved infrastructure, provided employment, and even promoted national reconciliation. Chen Mo, 'China's oil supply strategy: The Case of Saudi-Arabia and Sudan', in Parvizi Amineh M & Yang Guang (eds), *The Globalization of Energy: China and the European Union*. Leiden: Brill, 2010, p. 196.

19 Personal interview, Sudanese professor, University of Khartoum, 27 January 2010.

20 Personal interview, Sudanese academics, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

21 See *The Black Book* for a systematic critique. See also De Waal A (ed.), *War in Darfur and the Search for Peace*. London: Justice Africa, 2007.

22 Personal interview, Sudanese academics, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

23 Personal interview, senior Chinese official, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

24 In the main, these approach peace in a negative sense as the politically negotiated absence of war.

25 Personal interview, Chinese Academy of Social Science, Beijing, 14 December 2010.

26 Personal interview, senior Chinese official, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

27 Or '*kending luan*'. Personal interview, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing, 20 December 2010.

28 Personal interview, Beijing University professor, Beijing, 20 December 2010.

29 Personal interview, local respondent, Nyala, January 2011.

30 China's first batch of 315 engineering peacekeepers in Darfur completed a 14-month mission in January 2009, having constructed facilities and over 6 250 km of roads.

31 The awards received by Chinese peacekeepers in Sudan are highlighted. See *Lankui xia de Zhongguo miankong* [Blue Helmets from China]. Beijing: *Waijiao Chubanshi* [Foreign Langauges Press], 2010.

32 Personal interview, senior Chinese official, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

33 The Chinese assistant foreign minister and special envoy, Lu Guozeng, did, however, attend the CPA signing ceremony in Nairobi on 9 January 2005.

34 The Sudan Consortium grew out of the April 2005 Oslo conference. It held meetings in March 2006, March 2007 and May 2008, which featured discussions between Sudan's main external partners, the NCP and the SPLM.

35 China did not play any noteworthy role in the first two Sudan Consortium meetings. Its head of delegation to the first (Paris, 9–10 March 2006) was listed as a third secretary of the Chinese Embassy in France; the US delegation, by contrast, was led by Robert Zoellick, deputy secretary of state, and joined by a number of European government ministers. China was not listed as sending representatives or having participated in the second meeting in 2007.

36 At the December 2010 International Donors and Investors Conference for East Sudan, held in Kuwait, China donated some $23 million (RMB 254 million) 'for irrigation and bridge projects', as part of total conference pledges of $3.547 billion.

37 'They are not absent but are extremely discrete.' Personal interview, UN official, Khartoum, 27 January 2011. China was not part of the Donor Coordination Group, nor did it participate in the International Partners Forum co-chaired by UNMIS and the EU. Interview, EU official, Khartoum, 31 January 2011.

38 Chinese representatives did, for example, attend some UNMIS monthly briefings to the diplomatic corps in Khartoum. One UN official, however, said that 'sometimes they don't even come'. Khartoum, 27 January 2011.

39 As of February 2011.

40 Political role is understood broadly in a restricted, often informal sense, as its involvement in Sudan's peace processes via interaction with political authorities and other actors, rather than an overt political agenda it openly pursued. Despite some assertions by Chinese government officials that they do not engage in politics, Sudan shows an important case to the contrary, a trend which only continued after July 2011.

41 Personal interview, senior former US official, Juba, September 2010. In 2011 China's foreign minister did, however, offer to mediate in NCP–SPLM talks about Abyei.

42 Interview, EU special envoy, Brussels, May 2010. As the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, remarked, 'We're working very closely together and the Chinese have been very helpful in providing influence and pressures not only to work the Darfur issue with the proxy war, but also working in the South.' Secretary of State Clinton, 'New administration outlines policy on Sudan', *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, 20, 1, March 2010, pp. 98–117.

43 Other donors in Sudan also support economic growth and work to this end, albeit with a different ethos. Interview, USAID official, Juba, September 2010.

44 As one academic noted: 'The central goal is to improve economic performance. Using this economic base, you can resolve other security social and political challenges'. Shanghai, 26 March 2011.

45 Jing Sangchu, '*Sudan zhanhou tou zi he cheng bao shichang*' [Investment and the market of contracted projects in post-war Sudan], *Guoji shichang* [*International Market*], 4, 2004, pp. 43–45.

46 See article 22, 'Economic, Social and Cultural Policies for Reconstruction and Development of Eastern Sudan', Eastern Peace Agreement, at 74, p. 19.

47 Personal interview, AU (African Union) official, Khartoum, 26 January 2011.

48 RMB is the three-letter currency code for the Chinese *renminbi*.

49 Listed projects included a 'specialist hospital, vocational training centers and two bridges on Atbara River besides water grid and fishery project in the Read Sea'), *Sudan Vision*, 'China grants $36 m loan for development projects in Eastern Sudan', 25 July 2009.

50 The proposed projects for Gedaref State were a children's hospital, vocational training centre, youth training centre, and two new bridges over the River Atbara; a vocational training centre, a youth training centre, a doctor's rest house, and water and mechanical equipment were proposed for Kassala State; Red Sea State was due to receive fishing projects, equipment for clearing bore holes and rubbish, water equipment and networks.

51 '… There are no documents to tell you about the conditionalities, but they impose it under the table.' Interview, Sudanese academics, Khartoum, 25 January 2011. Other strands of Chinese interest in the east include a programme of support for agricultural vocational training in Gedaref, and mining interests. The Sudan Railways Corporation and a Chinese company were due to upgrade the region's railway network.

52 The CNPC (China National Petroleum Corporation) also makes a point of affirming its own humanitarian assistance activities in Sudan. See CNPC, *Review of 15 Years of Sino–Sudanese Petroleum Cooperation*. Beijing: CNPC, 2010, p. 31.

53 Personal interview, senior Chinese official, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

54 President Hu Jintao announced during his state visit to Khartoum in February 2008: '[I]t is imperative to improve the situation in Darfur and living conditions of the people.'

55 In June 2009, China and Sudan signed two agreements allowing for RMB 40 million of further humanitarian assistance.

56 One example of attempted 'trilateral co-operation' was discussion between the Chinese and British governments about co-operating on water projects in Darfur. China's position was open but rested upon Sudan's consent, which was not forthcoming. Interview, UK Department for International Development official, Beijing, April 2010.

57 Personal interview, Ambassador Salah Halimah, Arab League Special Envoy for Sudan, Khartoum, 29 January 2011.

58 Zhai Jun, '*Zhongguo ji Ji Tui Dong jiejue Daerfufr wenti*' [China actively pushed the resolving of the Darfur problem], *Qiushi Zazhi*, 11, 2007, pp. 61–63.

59 Personal interview, senior official, ministry of foreign affairs, Beijing, 2 June 2010. There have been some corporate efforts by Chinese companies to this effect too.

60 One of the 54 primary schools China donated to South Darfur, built by Chinese peacekeeping engineers, was opened by the Chinese ambassador and the state's deputy governor in September 2009.

61 Chinese assistance has also helped to build 20 small power stations in Darfur (*Xinhua*, 'Darfuri IDPs feel tangible benefits from Chinese assistance', 26 February 2008).

62 Personal interview, senior Chinese official, Khartoum January 2011; personal interview, analyst, Nyala, 13 January 2011.

63 Personal interview, analyst, Nyala, 13 January 2011.

64 Personal interview, senior Chinese official, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

65 See Thomas E, *The Kafia Kingi Enclave*. London: Rift Valley Institute, 2010, pp. 94–101.

66 See Basheir AbElgadir Ahmed El Kdaro, 'Road Network in Sudan', in report on the National Engineering Conference on Roads', Khartoum, 5–8 November, 2001, p. 23.

67 Personal interview, former EU Special Envoy on Sudan, Brussels, May 2010.

68 'The government would love for early recovery to occur as early as yesterday ... The Chinese are on the side of the government and will do everything to support it.' Personal interview, AU official, Khartoum, 26 January 2011.

69 In advocating a 'comprehensive security strategy' for Darfur, the Mbeki panel called for 'an international assistance strategy that moves beyond a strictly humanitarian response into programmes for restoring and developing livelihoods, extending services, and rehabilitating the natural environment.' See 'Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in the Sudan and on the Activities of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan', AU Peace and Security Council, Tripoli, 30 November 2010 (PSC/AHG/3(CCL)), p. 4, at 17.

70 As one Darfurian commented: 'The start should be infrastructure and donors should consider this, not soft projects. There can be recovery projects and these should not be linked to a final peace agreement, in fact these can support a final peace agreement.' Personal interview, Khartoum, 27 January 2010.

71 Personal interview, senior UN official, Khartoum, 31 January 2011.

72 Personal interview, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) official, Juba, 2 February 2011.

73 Personal interview, GoSS (Government of Southern Sudan) official, September 2010.

74 Personal interview, Sudan analyst, London, November 2010.

75 Personal interview, political analyst, Khartoum, 30 January 2011.

76 Personal interview, GoSS official, Juba, September 2010.

77 Personal interview, Southern civil society representative, Juba, September 2010.

78 Various interviews, Juba, Rumbek and Wau, June and September 2010.

79 In early, 2005, Salva Kiir visited Beijing with an SPLM delegation not long after the CPA was signed, and when John Garang was still alive, but this was a low-level visit.

80 Salva Kiir Mayardit's speech, opening of the second session of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, Juba, 10 September 2007.

81 A follow-up visit by China's ambassador to Sudan to Juba came prior to a visit by a Chinese government technical team to Juba shortly afterwards, which also went to Yei and Nimule. China's aid to Southern Sudan was increased following an official needs assessment mission to Juba in mid-2007.

82 Personal interview, senior Chinese official, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.

83 The first Chinese consul general in Juba is credited with playing a positive role in facilitating opportunities for Southern participation in Sudan's exchanges with China. The political fissures between Khartoum and Juba appear to have affected its operations; many, for example, cited NCP (National Congress party) opposition to the creation of the consulate and resistance to relations between Juba and Beijing.

84 Various interviews, Juba, June and September 2010.

85 Personal interview, Sudan analyst, Khartoum, 27 January 2011.

86 Personal interview, senior official, ministry of foreign affairs, Beijing, 2 June 2010.

87 *Ibid*.

88 Personal interview, senior UN official, Khartoum, 31 January 2011.

89 'Government Policy Statement delivered by the president of the Government of Southern Sudan', opening of the second session of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, 10 April 2006.

90 Personal interview, Chinese businessman, Juba, September 2010.

91 Some came from other parts of Africa, like South Africa and Uganda; a few came directly from China.
92 Personal interview, Chinese official, Juba, September 2010.
93 Personal interview, senior official, Chinese Embassy, Khartoum, 25 January 2011.
94 Personal interview, senior official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, 2 June 2010.
95 Established by OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), this involved neighbouring states, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the US, Norway and the AU. One UN official noted that the Chinese 'attend briefings but keep quiet'. Interview, senior UN official, Khartoum, 31 January 2011; Interview, international official, 23 September 2010, Juba.
96 Various interviews, September 2010, January and February 2011.
97 Personal interview, OCHA official, Juba, 4 February 2011.
98 Personal interview, Chinese official, Juba, 2 June 2011.
99 *Ibid.*
100 It is not clear how much Beijing provided, or on what terms.
101 Personal interview, Chinese official, Juba, 2 June 2011.
102 Discussion, Beijing University, Beijing, 20 December 2010.
103 Various conversations, Rumbek, Juba and Wau, 2010.
104 Personal interview, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing, 20 December 2010.
105 Personal interview, GoSS official, Juba, 25 September 2010.
106 Personal interview, Juba, February 2011.
107 Personal interview, UNDP official, Juba, 2 February 2011.
108 Personal interview, Sudanese political analyst, Khartoum, 17 January 2011.
109 Personal interview, Sudan analyst, Khartoum, 27 January 2011.

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South African Institute of International Affairs
Jan Smuts House, East Campus, University of the Witwatersrand
PO Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)11 339-2021 • Fax +27 (0)11 339-2154
www.saiia.org.za • info@saiia.org.za

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