

## The Long March from Bandung: The Ghost of the Bandung Spirit in Contemporary Relations between China and Africa

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### **Abstract**

When Chinese President Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) gave the opening address at the Jakarta reception of the Asian-African Business Summit (亚非商业峰会) in 2005, he characterized contemporary relations between China and various African states thusly “[In] the world today, economic globalization is further developing...[this] presents Asian and African countries with rare opportunities as well as severe challenges.... [We] must...develop a new type of strategic partnership between Asia and Africa...to carry on the Bandung spirit and contribute to the continuous progress in Asia and Africa”. The importance of the Bandung Conference in the Cold War era is beyond debate; what has been debated is its lasting relevance. This paper examines the global economic rise of post-Cold War China and its “new strategic partnerships” (新型战略 伙伴关系) with various African states and argues that the “partnerships”, which specifically promote pragmatic cooperation and mutual benefits between the two regions in trade, industry, investment, finance, embody the “Bandung Spirit” (万隆精神). It argues that what we are seeing now in China’s relationship with Africa is the culmination of a process begun by Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) at the Bandung Conference of 1955.

**Keywords:** China, Africa, new strategic partnerships.

### **Abstrak**

Ketika Presiden Tiongkok Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) memberikan sambutan pembuka pada Pertemuan Puncak Bisnis Asia-Afrika (亚非商业峰会) di Jakarta tahun 2005, ia menyampaikan beberapa karakteristik hubungan kontemporer antara Tiongkok dan beberapa negara Afrika dengan pernyataan “[Di] dunia masa kini, globalisasi ekonomi semakin berkembang pesat... [hal ini] memberikan kesempatan yang langka dan tantangan yang serius bagi negara-negara Asia dan Afrika... [Kita] harus... mengembangkan sebuah tipe baru kerjasama strategis antara Asia dan Afrika... untuk melanjutkan semangat Bandung dan berkontribusi pada pada kemajuan yang kontinyu di Asia dan Afrika”. Arti penting Konferensi Bandung di era Perang Dingin sudah tak perlu diperdebatkan lagi; apa yang perlu diperdebatkan adalah keberlanjutan relevansinya. Tulisan ini membahas kebangkitan ekonomi global Tiongkok pasca Perang Dingin dan “kerjasama strategis baru” (新型战略 伙伴关系) miliknya dengan beberapa negara Afrika dan berargumen bahwa “kerjasama”, yang secara spesifik mempromosikan kerjasama pragmatis dan saling menguntungkan antara dua kawasan di bidang perdagangan, industri, investasi, keuangan, mewujudkan “Semangat Bandung” (万隆精神). Tulisan ini berargumen bahwa apa yang sekarang ini kita lihat diantara hubungan Tiongkok dan Afrika adalah puncak dari sebuah proses yang dimulai oleh Perdana Menteri Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) di Konferensi Bandung 1955.

**Kata kunci:** Tiongkok, Afrika, kerjasama strategis baru.

...Aid projects to various African countries illustrate China's new approach to and focus in Africa. They anchor China's aspiration to change the traditional perception that China is only in African for its natural resources.... It should be pointed out that international and African scrutiny and criticism, to a large extent has contributed to China's changing perspective, as Beijing has been increasingly wary about the reputation risks associated with its approach toward Africa (Sun, 2014).

In all these years, China has firmly supported Africa in winning liberation and pursuing development. China has trained technical personnel and other professionals in various fields for Africa. It has built the Tanzara [Tanzam/Great Uhuru] Railway and other infrastructural projects and sent medical teams and peacekeepers to Africa.... We in China will not forget Africa's full support for restoring the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations. Nor will we forget the sincere and ardent wish of African countries and people for China to realize complete and peaceful reunification and achieve the goal of building a modern nation.... Today, China-Africa friendship is deeply rooted in the hearts of our two peoples, and our friendship has endured the test of time and changes in the world. This is because we have never strayed from the principle of enhancing friendship, treating

each other as equals, and extending mutual support and promoting common development in building our ties (FOCAC, 2009).

In July, 2014, the People's Republic of China's Office of the State Council finally issued a white paper on China's foreign aid policies. This was the highly anticipated second policy paper in three years. Not only did it publish charts quantifying and comparing the percentage of foreign assistance China would be giving to various geographical regions, it also listed the goals and objectives of this aid. As the Asia Foundation pointed out, it also described a shift in China's aid strategy, "...from hardware-focused infrastructure construction to the softer side of "capacity building..." (Taidong, 2014). This transition from infrastructure to capacity-building was a "...new approach to a focus in Africa...", according to Yun Sun of the Brookings Institute, author of the first quote above. She wrote that this approach grew out of global claims that China's interest in African was limited to exploiting the continent's natural resource base (Sun, 2014). To many critics, China's relationship with Africa revived the image of the Western colonialism/imperialism of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In response to those criticisms, China altered its aid strategies to avoid being labelled a racist and imperialist state.

This paper challenges these two assumptions. First, it challenges the idea that the description of Chinese aid to African states was different than earlier forms of aid. The new-ness of China's aid strategies was not really that new. I argue that both the guiding principles found in the white paper's preface section and the specifics of foreign aid delivery mechanisms, which have been characterized as the change to capacity-building, reiterated the "new strategic partnerships" concept of the early to mid-2000s. And that principle, the "new strategic partnerships", was a ghost of the "Bandung Spirit" (万隆精神).

Moreover, I argue that although the Communist Party of China (CPC) was responding to "...international and African scrutiny and criticism...." of their aid to Africa, any analysis of that relationship should take

history seriously. In that regard, the development of China's relationship with Africa, beginning with the Asian-African Conference (万隆举行的亚非会议) held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, offers an important counter-argument. None of China's critics looked at its long relationship with African states, like Algeria, Zambia or Tanzania, nor did they take Bandung seriously as a foundational moment in foreign relations. This leads to my second challenge. I will argue that those criticizing China foreign aid policies were not primarily motivated by true concern for the economic, political, and social future of African states and citizens but were engaged in reviving a polarizing political rhetoric of representation and images, reminiscent of the Cold War. They were engaged in a "soft power" duel.

#### **"Soft Power"**

Like Huntington's clashing civilizations, Harvard University Political Science professor, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., sought to suggest to the government of the United States a possible response to the post-bipolar, post-Cold War global order. Both Huntington and Nye believed that they were writing at a time when the hegemonic power of the United States seemed precarious. Nye believed that America's superpower status would remain unchanged in terms of traditional, "hard power", resources of military technology and capitalist economic markets. Despite this, the post-bipolar order meant a diffusion of power. This meant that it could become harder for the US to control the global environment and influence other states. So, in order to ensure a continuation of US global dominance, Nye coined the term "soft power" in *Bound to Lead* (1990), to describe what he considered to be a new form of constructive power. This kind of power, a "co-optive power", was the "...ability of a nation to structure a situation so that the other nations develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with one's own nation..." (Joseph S. Nye, 1990, p. 191). Elaborated further in both *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2005) and *The Future of Power* (2011), Nye's idea of "soft power" became an important theoretical formulation. Co-optive behavioral power, this

ability to get other states to want what your state wants and to act in concert to achieve a specific goal, was to be exercised through "soft power", the resources of cultural/civilizational attractions, political values and ideologies, diplomacy and institutions. "Soft power" emanated from a state's official discourse channeled through its media concerning its cultural values, defining what kind of state it is.

In the Chinese political landscape, there has been academic and official recognition of "soft power". As early as 1993, Fudan University professor, Wang Huning, published an article in the influential *Fudan Academic Journal* (*Fudan Xuebao* 复旦学报) that applied Nye's "soft power" to the Chinese politics. By 2004, readings on "soft power" were part of the preparatory materials for the CPC's Politburo 13<sup>th</sup> Group Study session. As Lai has pointed out, two of the readings from the Politburo meeting were then published in the official government weekly journal, *Outlook* (*Liaowang* 瞭望) (Hongyi, 2012, p. 11). Lai has noted that the term has been increasingly used in titles in articles found in Chinese academic journals. In 1994-2000, the term "soft power" occurred eight times; in 2005-2007, it appeared 314 times (Hongyi, 2012, p. 1). So, in China, "soft power" was more than just another Western academic theory. It became a substantial aspect of foreign policy. At the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, Chinese President Hu Jintao identified "soft power" as a significant aspect of China's globalizing foreign policy and vowed that China would invest more in its 'soft power' resources.

The basis for the association of Nye's "soft power" with Huntington's "clash of civilizations" was more than just temporal (both were diagnoses of the post-Cold War global order) or academic (both were Harvard professors). Both were also reactions to the increasingly popular "China Threat" thesis. A cursory search of Amazon.com, the online bookseller, showed no less than 7, 000 books published since the early 2000s that include the words "China" and "threat" in their titles. By the mid-2000s, Western media had begun to promote the idea that an economically developing China, a rising China, posed a profound threat to the global order and viewed

it as regionally destabilizing. China's embrace of "soft power" countered this perception. It dismissed the West's negative speculation about China's economic and military growth while ostensibly giving China a way to improve its global image. The CPC began to promote its culture and history. "Soft power" and China's President Hu Jintao's "Harmonious Society" (和谐社会 shehui) were policies that emphasized China's desire for peaceful development and the pursuit of a good neighbor foreign policy in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.

The states of the African continent have been important destinations for Communist China's "soft power" outreach initiatives. What has been forgotten in this present day assessment of China's Africa outreach is history. China's "soft power" outreach to Africa began at Bandung during the high-tide of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. In speeches published by the official news agency, Xinhua; the newspaper of the intelligentsia, Guangming Ribao; and the People's Daily; or broadcast on CCTV or on radio through the Central People's Broadcasting Station (CPBS), high-ranking CPC officials have frequently touched on the

importance of history for any real understanding contemporary politics. So, it was not unexpected that Chinese President Hu Jintao (1942- 胡锦涛) also acknowledged the weight of history in his opening address at the Heads of State Summit of the Third Forum for Sino-African Cooperation (Zhongfei Hezuo Luntan 中非合作论坛) in November of 2006.

In his speech that is the second quote at the opening of this article, he cited the history of China's Cold War era relations with African states and the development of the concept of the "Third World". Hu noted China's early support of the insurgent guerilla anti-colonial/anti-imperialist movements of nationalist liberation that took place throughout the African continent in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. He reminded his audience that China had come to know several of these African states at Bandung and had initiated official relations with some of these African states at the moment of their independence and some of them, notable Zambia, even prior to official independence. He reminded his audience about China's long history of infrastructure construction in Africa, the prime<sup>1</sup> example of this being the designing,

<sup>1</sup> The first state on the African continent to officially recognize Communist China was Egypt (埃及), nearly immediately prior to Nasser seizure of power in June, 1956. Zhou Enlai began his historic tour of Africa in Egypt in December, 1963. *The People's Daily* reported the "...enthusiastic welcome..." (热烈欢迎) and press support he received in Cairo (开罗). Zhou's speech at the Cairo airport was reported on the front page, along with two articles informing the readers of the paper that China and Kenya (肯尼亚)

had established diplomatic relations (建立邦交). Zhou's relationship with President Gamal Abdul Nasser (纳赛尔) was strong, deepened by their experience of Bandung where Zhou and Nasser, and, along with Nehru, had been called the "three champions of Afro-Asian independence..." His official welcome the 16<sup>th</sup> was described as respectful and "...solemn..." (隆重).

construction and financing of the 1060 mile Tanzam/Tanzara/Great Uhuru/Freedom Railway built from Zambia to Tanzania to the sea in 1968-1973. He spoke of the medical teams sent to Africa beginning in 1963 and the building, renovating, and expanding of hospitals and health clinics in states like Algeria, Gambia and Mali. And he thanked African states for spearheading the movement to recognize mainland China as the sole legal representative state of the Chinese people, a movement that was led by the representatives of Zambia and Tanzania. These actions demonstrated the "...mutual support and the promot[ion] of common development..." that characterized "friendship" (youyi 友谊) as a political category of foreign relations.

According to Nye, "soft power" was especially persuasive in the post-Cold War information age. "The state with the best story wins..." he has written. But Nye also linked the evolution of "soft power" with technological developments. Such developments in the late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century have given governments new ways to handle both domestic and external state and non-state actors. The rise of contemporary cyber-security regimes in this new world order of influential state and non-state actors has meant that "soft power" can be both "good" and "bad". It can be constructed of stories of cultural/civilizational and political values and ideologies, diplomacy and institutions that are attractive and/or can urge the destruction and erasure of cultures/civilizations deemed to have "bad" values. "Soft power" presentations need not be

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In Sub-Saharan Africa the newly independent state of Guinea (几内亚) recognized Communist China in 1958 and the Republic of Sudan (苏丹) recognized it in 1959. As independence for Cameroon neared, Felix-Roland Moumie (穆米埃), leader of the Union of the Peoples' of the Cameroon (UPC), met with Mao in Beijing in 1959. Zambia (赞比亚) was also courted by

accurate representations; they can be propaganda. They only need to tell a compelling story.

Surprisingly, Nye does not look at older expressions of "soft power". In 1917, the US government, through the Committee on Public Information, used then-contemporary forms of media to promote a vision of American life and political culture that would domestically encourage its entrance into World War I by inculcating hatred towards Germans, derogatorily called "the Hun", and, internationally, to publicize its war aims. Its most famous product, James Montgomery Flagg's poster, known as "Uncle Sam Wants You", is well-recognized even today. We expect the promotion of cultural/civilizational values during wartime but the role of the media in creating, articulating, visualizing and promoting attractive cultural values during "hard power" conflict and war, but in Nye's work the routinized, non-wartime use of "soft power" as a political strategy of modern states, is under theorized.

This is especially relevant to the presentation of contested or contradictory cultural/civilizational and political values. In the West, the democratic values of equality, liberty and fraternity have been presented as basic fundamental values. Yet, the realpolitik of social and cultural values in situ, the real lived experience of racial and ethnic minorities and immigrants historically and contemporarily has contradicted these values. Media presentations of the West, the "soft power" of the West, nonetheless, emphasize equal opportunities and equal access for all, yet

China prior to its official independence. The Chinese Foreign Ministry contacted Zambia's first President, Kenneth Kaunda (卡翁达), three days before the official independence ceremony. The day after independence, October 23, 1964, China and Zambia officially announced the establishment of diplomatic relations. A Chinese embassy was opened in Lusaka in November.

it takes sustained social struggle for non-white or poor people or immigrants to realize these values. Even in liberal democracies of the West promote, “soft power” images do not have to be ontologically true.

### The Role of Media

Although Nye has written that centralized planning systems, like those of the Soviet Union and China, “...lack the flexibility needed for an information-based economy...”, the political category of “friendship”, a Maoist category, between China and various African states perfectly illustrated the complicated and contradictory nature of “soft power”. To illustrate how “soft power” imagery expressed the concept of the “Bandung Spirit” through its aid policies to build the governing capacity of African states, I have used two sources of Maoist era media - (1) print journalism, specifically focusing on articles from the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the CPC, the *People’s Daily* (*Renmin Ribao* 人民日报) and (2) China’s visual mass media, which includes feature films and documentaries, billboards, postcards, stamps and, especially, the ubiquitous wall posters (*zhaotiehua* 招贴画) to track China’s Maoist-era “soft power” presentations. These visual media have collectively been collectively referred to as “propaganda posters” (*xuanchuanhua* 宣传画) and their audience included those outside of China. Read as texts in the same manner as historians read archival documents, these two media sources were used as crucial political transmission belts, delivering articulations (newspapers) and visualizations (propaganda posters) of Mao Zedong Thought passed down to the masses of Chinese people, creating the “collective culture of the masses”.

In the Maoist era, the *People’s Daily* presented the official discourse on foreign policy for domestic consumption. Specifically, the *People’s Daily* constructed and presented a narrative about Africa, Africans, and African-Americans in such a way as to structure a trans-racial political “friendship” as the basis for aid. Beginning with the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, the paper

recounted the history of the Chinese relationship with Africa. Beginning with “The History of the Peace Friendship Between China and Africa (*Zhongguo tong Yazhou Geguo Heping Youhao de Lishi* 中国同亚洲各国和平友好的历史) on 4/21/55, to “A Discussion of Black People’s Contribution to the Cultures of the Americans (*Tantan Heiren dui Meizhou Wenhua de Gongxian* 谈谈黑人对美洲文化的贡献) and “The History of the Friendship between China and Africa (*Zhongguo he Feizhou de Youyi Lishi* 中国和非洲的友谊历史) on 12/16/63 and 12/17/63, respectively, the CPC, through the *People’s Daily* sought to promote the Party’s view on blackness, nationalism and self-determination. The *People’s Daily* published policy pronouncements and statements that criticized colonialism, imperialism and Western breaches of African state sovereignty.

Although Yun Sun of the Brookings Institute and some Western politicians and scholars believe that China’s 2014 white paper on foreign aid policies reveals a new emphasis on helping to build state capacity, actually, this aspect of Sino-African “friendship” dates back to the Maoist era. Chinese President Hu noted this in his opening address. For example, he noted the medical teams sent to Algeria in 1963. In 2006, provincial-level authorities in Hubei, following the directives from Beijing, sent more than 3,000 medical personnel to Algeria and Lesotho. By 2009, 45 Chinese medical teams had been sent to 44 African states, placing about 900 medical team members in 100 hospitals or health centers. According to Chinese scholar of Africa, Li Anshan, China-African cooperation on this “soft power” issue included medication, facilities or hospitals, training of African medical specialists in China or Africa, humanitarian medical aid, and peace keeping with medical care. This is the subject of poster #1 (see below), which illustrated the supportive nature of medical aid. After the 2006 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit, Chinese aid continued along these lines, establishing anti-malaria centers in African countries (Anshan, 2011). So, China’s medical aid, along with other

forms of capacity-building assistance for agricultural and educational development, was sent to Africa as aid, just like older forms of Chinese aid. Both during the Maoist era and in the contemporary, post-Cold War era, such assistance helped these newly sovereign states increase their capacity to provide goods and services to their populations.

**Figure 1 Feelings of Friendship between the Peoples of China and Africa are Deep (1972)**



Source: IISH/Stefan R. Landsberger Collections  
(<http://chineseposters.net/gallery/e15-837.php>)

### 1955- Imaging Friendship

For president Hu, history mattered. At Bandung, China's first Foreign Minister and Premier, Zhou Enlai (周恩来), engaged in "whirlwind" (旋风) diplomatic efforts to make friends for China. The *People's Daily* reported on his historic speeches on April 19th and 23<sup>rd</sup> and discussed how Zhou announced at the Political committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> that China was willing to sit down and negotiate with the United States in order to quell tensions in East Asia, especially as they concerned Taiwan (Kimche, 1973; Jian, 2008). Despite the West's presentation of communist states as repressive, backward, and incomprehensible, China showed a willingness to engage in negotiations with liberal democratic states over sensitive strategic security issues.

Three themes emerged from the Bandung-era construction of China's national image about its political friendship with African states. These themes echo with both

China's 2006 "new strategic partnerships" and the 2014 white paper on foreign aid. The first of these is the similar historical economic foundation of African and Chinese civilizations. Crafted during Bandung, this theme explained that these two regions had a "...common history..." rooted in a common ancient agricultural origin. "In the dawn of mankind, our ancestors in these two vast lands engaged in the culture of sowing seeds and cultivating the land. Both Chinese and Africans had subjugated nature..." and faced common challenges. These common challenges lead to common solutions, demonstrating that these civilizations were capable of "...vigorous development..." (蓬勃发展) and achieved high level of technical accomplishments (RMRB Editor, 1955, p. 1). This, in turn, spilled over into artistic power and educational significance..." (Shen, 1955, p. 3). Reiterated in several articles, this agriculturally based traditional economy had generated a similar approach to problem solving, and a similar aesthetic sensibility. Similar cultures would lead to friendship and friendship would lead to a desire for peace (Shen, 1955, p. 3). The articles acknowledged the wars of "...feudal domination..." (fengjian tongzhi 封建统治) among and between different Asian states, like Japan's aggression wars against China and Korea at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and against Asia during the Pacific War. However, it pointed out that there had never been wars between any African state and China (Yiliang, 1955, p. 3).

The second theme of the *People's Daily* coverage emphasized their common recent history colonialism. The West had claimed special rights in both China and Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They had seized territory and using extraterritoriality, buttressed by a system of international law they had also created, extending their national legal jurisdiction to these holdings. Despite China's and Africa's "...common history...", colonialism had hindered the development of cultural exchanges and direct trade between them. This had had a detrimental impact on their development. Since the main goal of the colonialist imperialist states of the West was "...to expropriate and exploit..." Afro-Asia's

natural resources and labor power had been used to benefit the colonialists; the colonial holdings had been left deliberately underdeveloped. Therefore, both regions were now "...backward..." (luohou 落后), after having had an ancient history of vigorous development and progress (RMRB Editor, 1955, p. 1). Therefore, one of the goals of the representatives of Asia, especially China, and Africa should be to pursue policies that would increase economic and cultural interaction between the two regions. They should, "...inquire into and promote their mutual interests, establish and enhance friendly neighboring relations and expand or intensify...exchanges..." (Hong, 1955, p. 3). They should pursue policies that "...establish and develop economic cooperation and cultural communication..." As stated in the *People's Daily* article of April 20, 1955,

The important purpose of the Afro-Asian Conference is the promotion of goodwill and unity between these states in order to...promote common benefits and to establish and enhance relations of friendship...This is in accord with the wide ranging desires of the peoples of the regions.... Though the social structure and specific situation of each state in the regions differ greatly, relations between most of the states do not occur under regular circumstances but by...using these important problems, we can safeguard and strive for peace and independence as well as attain the common goal of improving our backward economic condition. We can all discuss our common concerns and, thereby, limit the foreign elements that are intending to strengthen apprehension and misunderstandings (RMRB Editor, 1955, p. 1).

The third theme concerned something the West did not and, some would argue, still cannot, acknowledge – racism and the impact

of racism to the establishment and global recognition of national sovereignty. According to Zhou, racism was one of the most important "...fettters of colonialism..." that had been imposed on both Africa and China. It was reported that he said he had seen for himself the effects of racism when he traveled by boat to France and England in 1920-1922 and had seen how racism was an essential component of colonialism. Therefore, racism and racial discrimination had to be repeatedly repudiated. According to Zhou, the formerly colonized states of Africa and Asia have increasingly "...cast off...the fettters of colonialism..." (baituole zhiminzhuyi de shufu 摆脱殖民主义的束缚) and cooperate in order to protect their respective nation's independence and sovereign rights (RMRB Editor, 1955, p. 1).

In China, since the people have made themselves the masters of the country, we have been attempting to eliminate the long-term backwardness handed down to us as a semi-colonial society.... We believe...that sovereign and territorial rights of nations should be respected and should not be violated. Moreover, all national subsidiary ethnic peoples should enjoy the right of self-determination. They should not have to suffer persecution or be abused. Each ethnic group should enjoy fundamental human rights without distinction based on race or skin color, nor should they suffer any ill-treatment or discrimination...Now we say that we oppose racial discrimination and demand basic human rights; we oppose colonialism and demand ethnic autonomy; we resolutely protect the right to complete national sovereignty and territorial sovereignty...these are the common demands of a newly awakened Asian-African



nations and peoples (RMRB Editor, 1955, p. 1).

To that end, China's participation in Bandung would lead to increased cultural exchanges and economic trade between African states and China. The goal would be to strengthen "...the inseparable triumvirate of culture, friendship and peace...revealing the truth that racial discrimination is colonialist propaganda..." (Hong, 1955, p. 3)

**2006- "...Respecting Africa is Respecting China, and Can Promote World Harmony..." (Qing, 2006)**

Now, when we turn to 2006, we hear the echoes of the ghost of Bandung. In China, 2006 was the Year of Africa and "soft power" initiatives.

The year began with the release of the governmental white paper, "China's African Policy" (Zhongguo dui Feizhou Zhengce Wenjian 中国对非洲政策文件). This official document outlined China's foreign policy objectives in Africa. The focus of this white paper was the "...promot[ion of] the steady growth of China-Africa relations in the long-term [to] bring the mutually-beneficial cooperation to a new stage...". China's 2006 Africa white paper reiterated the Bandung discourse in the opening section, calling for "...peace and development...", recalling "...China and Africa's traditionally friendly relations..." and citing the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" (Heping Gongchu Wuxiang Yuanze 和平共处五项原则), as the basis of Sino-Africa cooperation. After outlining its bilateral relations with African states and noting their shared experience which allowed mutual sympathy and support, it stated its policy goals that included "...sincere friendship (zhencheng youhao 真诚友好) ...mutual benefits (hulihuhui 互利互惠) ...mutual support (xianghu zhichi 相互支持) and ...learning from each other and seeking common development (xianghu xuexi gongmou fazhan 相互学习 共谋发展)...". All of this would be accomplished through visits of high-ranking government officials; exchanges

between political parties and local governmental officials; and cultural exchanges. Stated policy goals also included increasing trade, investment in businesses and infrastructure, cooperation over resources, agriculture and financial institutions, and science and technological development and transfer, medical personal and information and media (RMRB Editor, 2006).

Year 2006 ended with the Beijing Summit of the Forum for China and Africa Cooperation (Zhongfei Hezuo Luntan 中非合作论坛, aka "the FOCAC Summit") where President Hu gave the speech quoted at the beginning of this paper. This was the third meeting of a series that started in Beijing on October 10-12, 2000. The *People's Daily* article about the opening of that first Forum meeting noted that the "...largest developing state..."—China—and the "...largest developing continent..."—Africa—were meeting to "...provide opportunities to face-to-face exchanges..." to cement their long-term political relationship of friendship. While both Chinese and African leaders and ambassadors gave "...thanks for a half a century of China's selfless aid to Africa...", both groups also praised the first generation of sovereign leaders who pioneered African liberation movements and who promoted the "...common creation of Afro-Sino friendly relations..." (Jingning, 2000). This first FOCAC meeting had several important issues on its agenda. The participants wanted to develop a "...a rational new program for promoting national political economy..." for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that would prove to be mutually beneficial (Zequan, et al., 2000). They wanted to advance and strengthen Sino-African cooperation in commerce and trade.

This third Summit, the one cited at the beginning of this paper, returned to Beijing in 2006 and was composed of a series of meetings between high-level governmental officials, the heads of international organizations and 1300 "public figures...from industry and commerce...". It has been described as "...the largest international summit ever held in the Chinese capital" and a "...mini-United Nations session..." 41 African Heads of State and governmental officials from 48 nations participated. They were hosted by 80 Ministers

and officials of the Chinese government. The goal of the 2006 summit was “...to strengthen mutual cooperation...”. It generated two documents, “The Beijing Action Plan, 2007-2009” (Zhongfei Hezuo Luntan Beijing Xingdong Jihua 中非合作论坛北京行动计划), and “The Declaration of the Forum for Sino-African Cooperation” (Zhongfei Hezuo Luntan Beijing Fenghui Xuanyan 中非合作论坛北京峰会宣言), which outlined eight measures for something called a “new strategic partnership” (xinxing zhanlue huoban guanxi 新型战略伙伴关系) between China and Africa which was to be implemented over the following three years.

“The Declaration of the Forum for Sino-African Cooperation” (Zhongfei Hezuo Luntan Beijing Fenghui Xuanyan 中非合作论坛北京峰会宣言) that came out of the Third FOCAC Summit in 2006 outlined several measures for the focus of China’s foreign aid and, like China’s Maoist era aid, emphasized capacity-building as a delivery mechanism. Called the “new strategic partnership” (xinxing zhanlue huoban guanxi 新型战略伙伴关系) with African states, these measures called for the promotion of pragmatic cooperation and mutual benefits between the two regions in the areas of trade, industry, investment, finance, tourism, information and communication technology, energy, health, transportation, agriculture, water resources and fishery.

Most importantly, the Declaration outlining the “new strategic partnerships” revived the Maoist-era Bandung discourse by incorporating the final communiqué of Bandung’s 10-point “Declaration on the Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation” into the Declaration, itself. All of these steps were designed to increase the ability of African leaders to “deliver the goods” to their citizens.

<sup>2</sup> The Bandung communiqué incorporated principles adopted in the United Nations charter.

<sup>3</sup> These principles were (1) mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual non-aggression, (3) mutual non-

In this way, the Sino-African “new strategic partnerships” promoted the establishment of just, democratic, transparent and harmonious responsible societies, as well as reviving and promoting the “Bandung Spirit” (万隆精神).<sup>2</sup> So, the Bandung Spirit, the ghost of Bandung, had become a discursive and policy resource for the new strategic partnership policies of the 2000s, worked into the very language of the official declaration.

The “soft power” of Bandung produced discursive and visual images that were reiterated in mid- 2006. Images of Africa and Africans were all over Beijing. The *People’s Daily* published a lengthy editorial commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Bandung. This editorial reminded the reading audience of the discourse of a long-standing relationship of mutual respect and equality between China and various African states. The editorial praised “...South-South cooperation...(南南合作)” and the political solidarity that arose from a shared experience of “...opposition to imperialism and colonialism...and racial segregation...”. Calling Bandung the beginning of “...the monolithic solidarity of the people of various Asian and African countries...”, it noted that the Conference’s “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” (Heping Gongchu Wuxiang Yuanze 和平共处五项原则) were said to lay the foundation for China’s foreign policy initiatives during the Maoist era.<sup>3</sup>

### **Post-2006: Is China the New Colonialist in Africa?**

After the 2006 FOCAC Summit and the inauguration of the “new strategic partnership”, Chinese investments in Africa grew and diversified (See Badkar, 2012). Some of China’s investments were done by Chinese companies that have followed the CPC’s “go

interference in each other’s internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful co-existence.

global” (zouchuqu 走出去) strategy, with the decentralized relationship with the Chinese state that accompanied it; some are aid as officially defined by the OECD Development Assistant Committee; some are focused on natural resources, 20% are oil and natural gas; and some on infrastructure and civil construction (9.5%), like roads, in what the New Scientist Tech website described as a “...road-building frenzy...destined to transform the continent...”, stadiums, bridges and the new African Union headquarters building in Addis Ababa, airports and ports.<sup>4</sup> Currently, the fastest growing investment sector for China in Africa fell into another category – food security (nongyong gengdi anquan 农用耕地安全) or (liangshi anquan 粮食安全). In 2000, a Chinese economist published an article on investment possibilities in Africa, he stressed that the main goal of such investment should be African food security (Brautigam, 2009, pp. 256-257). But unlike the era of Western colonialism/imperialism, this farmland has been leased to Chinese investors for agricultural development by host governments in Sudan, Mozambique and Ethiopia; it was not taken, settled, and owned, backed by the “hard power” of the international legal regime (Litovsky, 2012). Despite the warning of the Chinese economist, China’s own food security has driven this kind of investment in Africa. African land has been used in biofuels development, as China’s deal with the government of the Congo to grow palm oil illustrated (Vidal, 2010). In the realm of education and culture, Confucian Institutes, state-sponsored centers that teach Chinese language and culture to African students, were earmarked for an additional \$4 million dollars US for the 21 Confucian Institutes (plus 4

<sup>4</sup> According to the OECD, “development assistance” is defined as “funds and technical assistance, given on a strictly limited concessional terms, primarily to promote economic development and welfare in developing countries that fall below a threshold income level”. See Debrorah Brautigam (2009) *The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*.

Confucian classrooms) in Africa. All of these aspects of the “soft power” offensive were designed to make China and Chinese culture attractive to the people of Africa. Has it worked? Lamido Sansi, governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, believed that the Chinese “soft power” strategy has, in fact, worked on Africans. He has stated that, “...a romantic view of China is quite common among the African imagination...this African love of China is founded on a vision of the country as a savior, a partner, a model...” and a friend (Moss, 2013).

### China vs. the West: The “Soft Power” Duel

Reflecting the Cold War dynamic, the reaction of the Western media and politicians to the 2006 FOCAC Summit and the new strategic partnership was less than supportive. In 1994 in an article about US President Bill Clinton’s participation in an economic summit of Asian-Pacific states taking place in Bogor, Indonesia, the *New York Times* recalled Bandung derisively and wrote that the resuscitation its discourse as a hollow fantasy. It dismissed the discourse of an earlier generation of world leaders, writing that

The fraternal third world these founders envisioned is dead. The agenda for Bogor, where the heirs of the Bandung generation plan to talk mostly about economic liberalization, competition for foreign investment and free trade is its obituary. The hollowness of the dream of Afro-Asian commonality is never so starkly evident as when Pacific Rim countries get together, a

(Oxford University Press: Oxford): 162-188; Andy Coghlan (1/10/14 “Africa’s Road Building Frenzy Will Transform the Continent”. *New Scientist Tech*, <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22129512.800-africas-roadbuilding-frenzy-will-transform-continent.html#.VRV-IWcYFE4>, accessed 2/17/15.

number of them boasting higher living standards than some European nations. Nehru's India is barely on the horizon of this world; Nkrumah's Africa isn't even in the picture (Crossette, 1994).

A *New York Times* reporter wrote that "...the event here, like most big political affairs in China, promises to be long on ceremony and propaganda and short on substance." The Bandung reference was met with disdain, seen as another empty gesture, replete with selective views of history and vacuous flatteries of visiting dignitaries (Kahn, 2006). Some have even questioned whether China's relationship with Africa was considered important. As Senior Fellow at the Council of Foreign Relations, Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, has written:

At the outset this history of Sino-African connections appears to exaggerate the importance of anti-Western bonds between two highly unlikely Third World cultures. As it moves forward, however, the account accurately and richly represents what is for both China and Africa a pretty marginal relationship, through a wealth of painstakingly researched new detail. Mixing mutual fascination and incomprehension, the Chinese-African encounter has the charm of an occasional and gentle minuet.

<sup>5</sup> Despite the many references to the content of Straw's speech and his comparison of China's relationship with Africa to 19<sup>th</sup> century British colonialism in Africa, Straw actually does not make

The American media's cynicism about Bandung viewed the ghost as an apparition and "friendship" as an unrealizable and unrealistic political category. America's "friend", the United Kingdom, has agreed. London's *The Guardian* newspaper reported that President Hu was no longer advocating "...revolutionary solidarity..." in this Bandung commemoration year. China, they reported, was now in a post-imperial/post-colonial mood and this was the correct approach for the China in the new millennium. "Its message to Africa was all business: economic self-interest and development, trade pacts, investment, bilateral aid....". The current era has been viewed as a time when China was "...now free to pursue more unashamedly its own national interests without reference to ideological considerations..." (Tisdall, 2005). The language of Bandung solidarity was out; the neoliberal language of profitable trade, not considered ideological, was in. China's interest in Africa was applauded as being solely commercial.

The part of President Hu's speech that explicitly referenced the Bandung spirit as a non-commercial discourse, calling for "...mutual trust in politics, mutual success and cooperation in economics, and mutual recognition in the realm of cultural exchanges..." fell upon deaf or unbelieving ears. Nevertheless, several politicians and scholars in both the West and Africa have criticized the "new strategic partnership" as a reiteration of colonialism. In his 2006 lecture given in Nigeria, Former British Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, stated that China's relationship to Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century reiterated Britain's relationship to Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century "Scramble for Africa".<sup>5</sup> When he addressed what he considered to be Africa's ten

this specific charge. See Giles Mohan and Marcus Power (2008) "New African Choices? The Politics of

“...major challenges...” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the first three of them involved Africa’s relationship with China and curiously echoed “...traditional...” Western criticisms about the weaknesses of African states. According to Straw, China presented a new challenge to Africa, one dressed in old clothing. The problem, he said, rested in “...the manner of China’s engagement with Africa.” He then stated that China’s engagement should support the agenda set by African leaders and the African Union and listed a range of goals that Africa should demand of China that were right out of the Western neoliberal “rights-based” development discourse – “...support for democratic and accountable governance, for transparent business processes, for economic growth and effective poverty reduction, for human rights and the rule of law...” (Straw, 2006; Best, 2010). Even the United States, which played a much smaller role than Britain in dividing up Africa but a much larger role in the neoliberal development regime of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, demanded Euro-American neoliberal goals for China in Africa, ignoring the rapacious impact of IMF/World bank neoliberalism on Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. United States Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton warned the Zambian government to be cautious about China’s overtures to Africa. In her speech given at the 10<sup>th</sup> Forum on African Growth and Opportunity Act, held in Lusaka in June, 2011, she warned that,

We don’t want to see a new colonialism in Africa. When people come to Africa to make

investments, we want them to do well but we also want them to do good. We don’t want them to undermine good governance in Africa.....  
..... (Wasamunu, 2011)

But it was not just Western politicians like Straw and Clinton who have viewed China’s “new strategic partnership” as a repeat of the history of Euro-American predatory colonialism of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even in Zambia, attributions of colonialism and Chinese anti-black racism threatened to undermine one of China’s longest relationships on the African continent and brought to the surface deep ambiguities about China’s role in Africa. The accusation of China’s neo-colonialism in Africa was the central theme of the 2006 and 2011 presidential campaigns of Michael “King Cobra” Sata (1937- 2014), leader of the Patriotic Front Party. In 2006, Sata’s campaign was directly racist and anti-Asian and had on its platform a promise to end Zambia’s relationship with China.<sup>6</sup> Using the same language that the founding generation of Pan-African anti-colonial nationalists had used against the West, Sata accused the Chinese government of exploiting the Zambian people. “They ill-treat our people and that is unacceptable. We are not going to condone exploiting investors because this country belongs to Zambians” (Shacinda, 2006). In the 2006 election, Sata nearly unseated Zambia’s third President, Levy Mwanawasa, who won

Chinese Engagement”. *Review of African Political Economy*. 115: 23-42, 23. See also, Jian Junbo. “China in Africa: From Capitalism to Colonialism?” *Asia Times Online*, accessed at <http://www.cesfd.org.cn/magzine/ch/China%20in%20Africa.pdf>, on 9/13/12. This mistaken impression of the content of Straw’s Nigerian lecture was also repeated in Ning Er’s interview with Peking University’s Sino-African expert, Li Anshan. See Ning Er ( 宁 二 ). 10/28/10 “China is Not

Neocolonialist in Africa (Zhongguo Meizai Feizhou Gao ‘Xinzhiminzhu’ ‘中国没在非洲搞“新殖民主义”’) *Chinadialogue* (Zhongwai Duihua 中外对话 ) accessed at [www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/ch/3908--it-s-not-colonialism-1-2-](http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/ch/3908--it-s-not-colonialism-1-2-) on 11/9/2010.

<sup>6</sup> In order to avoid accusations of racism, by mid-campaign Sata had added the granting Taiwan official Zambian recognition to his platform.

43% of the vote. Sata “...overwhelmingly...” won the majority of the votes in two strategically important provinces – the capital, Lusaka, and the copper mining region of the Copperbelt. China had just allocated US\$800 million in investments to Zambia for a trade and economic cooperation zone in the Chambishi (Shacinda, 2006). Li Baodong, China’s Ambassador to Zambia, reacted to the contentious campaign swiftly, promising to end all investments in Zambia if Sata won. Ambassador Li was quoted in the state-owned *Zambian Daily Mail* as having said, “...Chinese investors in mining, construction, and tourism have put on hold further investments in Zambia until the uncertainty surrounding our bilateral relationship with Zambia is cleared” (Shacinda, 2006). Some Africans, especially some Zambians, have agreed with some Western reporters and politicians that the “new strategic partnership” wore a neo-colonialist’s mask.

Sata has openly described this relationship as neo-colonialism, a situation wherein the state is nominally independent and “...has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty...” but has its economic development and political policy “...directed from outside...” (Blair, 2007) He was quoted as having said that “...the Chinese are for sure [winning]...their interest is exploiting in us, just like everyone who came before...they have simply come to take the place of the West as the new colonizers of Africa” (Blair, 2007). Many remember Sata’s description of China’s relationship with Zambia. He stated that “It is a partnership of horse and rider where Africa is the horse and China is the rider” (Walsh, 2007).

Yet, when Michael Sata was elected as Zambia’s fifth president in September, 2011, he did not end Zambia’s relationship with China, despite his populism and reputation for “...dominating his government...” (LUSAKA, 2013). If any one politician had the popular support to engage in such a move, it was President Sata. When he died in October of 2014, Zambia’s average GDP growth rate had been averaging 6% per year for the past decade and downtown Lusaka has just opened another large shopping mall with Chinese assistance.

That level of growth is why many African leaders have expressed their support for the new strategic partnership and welcome Chinese investment and aid. Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, stated that “...in the new century, China and the African countries should enhance their traditional friendship and expand mutually beneficial co-operation to achieve common development and prosperity.” As far back as 2006, the then-Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak stated “...we hold that the establishment of a new type of strategic partnership is both the shared and desired independent choice of China and Africa, [it] serves our common interests, and will help enhance solidarity and mutual support...” For these leaders, China offers a countering bulwark to the Euro-American development regime, exemplified by the IMF and the World Bank. After a disastrous 1980s and 1990s, when their pursuit of neoliberalism lead to negative growth, destabilizing many African states, China looks good. Prolonged GDP growth like Zambia’s is attainable. Additionally, African gets the projects it needs, as it defines its priorities. Francis Njubi Nesbitt, a professor at San Diego State University, wrote an analysis for the Hong Kong-based *Asia Times Online* website that “...the United States and Europe seem stuck in neocolonial perspectives that continue to paint Africa as an impoverished backwater that at most deserves sympathy and at worst contempt...”, China directly negotiates with African governments on projects desired by those states. He continued, writing that “...China has also funded infrastructure and industrialization projects that the West has refused to fund since the days of colonialism. It is to be hoped that these projects will finally help Africa modernize - a dream that seems attainable for the first time since independence...” (Nesbitt, 2011).

Zambian economist and former World Bank consultant, Dambisa Moyo, agreed. There were more favorable views of China and its investments in Africa in Africa than there were negative reviews and more people in Africa viewed China’s influence as more positive than the West’s, specifically the US’s, influence (Moyo, 2009). Although she believed too much has been made of the history of

colonialism in Africa, part of China's attractiveness to many older Africans had been its historical engagement with various African states during the anti-colonial/anti-imperialist period of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Says one Zambian of that generation, "...the Chinese explained to us why the West treated us so badly. It was racism" (Moyo, 2009).

With all the current media attention on China's development of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a multilateral IMF-style development bank, to promote infrastructure construction in developing states, China's long-standing historical relationship with African states recedes from view and analysis. This relationship was seen as being both discursively and materially formed. As President Hu noted, both regions—China and Africa—were underdeveloped and faced similar opportunities and challenges in the post-Cold War globalizing economic order. Their relationship was rooted in a history and this history included Bandung.

### **Conclusion**

The ghost of Bandung is an apparition found in Chinese foreign aid policies in Africa. "Soft power" ideas like "...the monolithic solidarity of the people of various Asian and African countries..." appeared in the flagship newspaper of the Communist Party of China (CPC), *the People's Daily (Renmin Ribao)* in reports during Bandung and were repeated periodically, even up to the present day of new strategic partnerships. In that way, Bandung became an important moment in the CPC's historiography, occurring as it did during the high-tide of Mao Zedong thought from 1949-1976. By becoming part of the official narrative of Sino-African relations, it informed the Party's visual political advertising in the collective culture of the masses, including the so-called propaganda posters. In the representations of the Bandung Conference, the CPC was telling a story about itself to both a domestic and global audience, simultaneously. This story structured and continues to influence China's foreign relations and foreign aid to Africa. The 2014 white paper on China's foreign aid regime and the "new strategic partnerships" of 2006 were both capacity-building foreign aid projects, meant

to assist the then-newly independent sovereign states of Africa into "delivering the goods" to their citizen populations. The themes and representations that expressed, promoted, and structured political solidarities between China and various African states gave meaning to the Chinese Communist state and defined what it meant to be "revolutionary", as opposed to "revisionist" (the USSR) or "imperialist" (the United States and the West) both internally to its masses and externally to its global audience. These themes attempted to highlight similarities between China and Africa in order to inculcate a sense of identification and mutual recognition.

The "soft power" duel over foreign aid policies and economic, political, and social future of African states and citizens between China and the West grew out of these historical echoes. The West, needing to overcome its history of colonialism/imperialism and neoliberalism, warned African states about Chinese predatory aid. The West did not see similarities between itself and Africa, but continuously pointed out differences and, in criticizing China's motivations in Africa, made many Africans think more strategically, playing China off against the West. In this way, as the West replayed the Cold War bipolar game, the leaders of African states remembered the Maoist era, and looked back to China.

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