
China and The Conflict in South Sudan: Security and Engagement

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Abstract: This paper offers a case study of Beijing's involvement with South Sudan, illustrating the absence of Chinese presence at the community level. The mistrust of Chinese government and China's National Oil Companies stems from Beijing's longstanding and historic support of Khartoum government and tacit involvement in the second civil war that generated widespread grievances amongst local communities in South Sudan. Sino-Sudanese relations amongst other factors have been the drivers of the development of South Sudanese mistrust that became barriers for Beijing, impeding it from protecting its economic investments and political interests. Chinese engagement with non-governmental actors is critical to peace. If Beijing reaches out beyond governmental actors through more integration into South Sudan's indigenous societies, it can help bring competing groups together. Why China should be interested in getting involved in South Sudan and jeopardize its long-held non-intervention doctrine? This piece tries to answer this question under Beijing's current international image and competition with other rivalries in the area for securing oil and strategic energy resources in the African continent.

Key Words: Beijing, Oil companies, South Sudan, Sudan, local communities, mistrust, conflict, peace.

Introduction

This paper gives an insight of what is occurring now in South Sudan; the conflict between South Sudan leaders has evolved from a power struggle to a civil war. The war broke in 2013 just two years after South Sudan separated from Sudan and formed the newest nation on the globe. This conflict has deep rooted causes that connect outer parties such as Sudan and China. China, as the biggest investor in the country, is at cross-roads and may lose one of its major oil exploration projects that provide China with almost 5 % of its oil. Unless China plays a major role regardless of its foreign policies and the international community pressure, it would lose its economic and political interests in the country which will consequently have a negative impact on its relations with Africa in general. The historic friendly relations that China has with Sudan have begotten mistrust and grievances amongst South Sudanese who associate China's presence in their country with destruction and displacement. Chinese oil companies have through the years created a wall that separated them from the indigenous people. China has not yet worked on how to approach local people in order to develop the area as well as protect its citizens and installations. Chinese oil companies that

perceive locals as over demanding prefer to deal with official and ignore local committees. Chinese companies until the outbreak of civil war in 2013 regarded South Sudan as a great economic opportunity. Investment in the oil sector grew rapidly and led to a substantial rise in the number of Chinese nationals living and working there. After 2013, expectations were moderated and a largely stable situation had given investors hope that the situation could stabilise. By the beginning of 2016, before the most recent outbreak of violence, concerns about China's presence had already resulted in a downturn in relations. Chinese interests in South Sudan, and the necessity of navigating its complex politics have obliged China to directly get involved politically than it traditionally prefers, skirting China's principle of non-interference. Chinese efforts to have a positive picture throughout the spectrum of the South Sudanese society through aid, mediation and gifts have no effect on the mainstream notion of China in South Sudan. In truth, the domination of government-government exchanges has thus far limited any real change in perceptions among ordinary people in South Sudan. This paper seeks to examine two issues related to China's presence in South Sudan. First, what had led to the anti-Chinese sentiment in South Sudan? What drivers have been triggering this sentiment? To answer these questions, this paper will try to reflect how South Sudanese people think of China's presence in South Sudan. The second issue is the security of Chinese investment and people and how China can help bring the fighting parties to accept peaceful terms to end the current civil war through key lessons learned from dialogue and peace processes from Darfur, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the oil impasse between Sudan and South Sudan in which China had major roles since China was and still a major investor in both countries.

This paper will be divided into three main parts. The first part will address and shed light on the current and ongoing civil war in South Sudan, its causes, and the political power struggle between South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar which resulted in violent clashes between ethnic army factions and claimed the lives of thousands. The second part will briefly highlight Beijing's historic relationship with the government of Sudan after and before the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the civil war between North and South Sudan, Africa's longest. Correspondingly, I will display Beijing's relations with South Sudan and why this new nation matters to China. In the third part I will identify the factors that contributed to the mistrust of Chinese in South Sudan and how the locals perceive Chinese presence. Lastly, how and why trusting China is important for promoting peace in South Sudan. This paper explores China-South Sudan relations from a different perspective and goes beyond the current related works that concentrate on Beijing's relations with South Sudan's government and ignores the essential factor of the results of Chinese presence on local communities in South Sudan. It focuses on showing the accumulated grievances between Chinese oil companies and local communities and how

China is perceived in South Sudan. The scarcity of data and the novelty of the issue area made a case study approach the best option for this paper. Additionally, it provides a framework for understanding a usually single phenomenon at a deeper and more detailed level. Moreover, the exploratory nature of this study makes secondary data collection approach and case study methodology appropriate. Studying past documents assist researchers to achieve a better understanding of present practices and issues. Other documents collected online also included the most current, newspaper articles, research reports, journal articles, magazine articles and chapters. The author also conducted interviews in February 2017 with some South Sudanese officials at the Embassy of South Sudan in Khartoum – Sudan in order to understand how China is perceived from a governmental perspective since it was not safe to go to South Sudan at the time. Other interviews were conducted with Sudanese employees from China National Logging Cooperation company in Khartoum – Sudan.

CONFLICT DYNAMICS IN SOUTH SUDAN

In 2005, following growing international pressure for peace, a combination of a military stalemate and a potential oil bonanza, the second civil war of Sudan ended. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the political arm of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army granted South Sudan the right to political self-determination (Bradbury, 2013). The CPA established two governing entities as part of an interim period of six years: a Government of National Unity operating on a power sharing basis between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The CPA also granted South Sudanese a semi-autonomous regional Government of the South based in Juba, the new capital of South Sudan under control of SPLM and enabled the South to receive part of the oil profits. In the end, South Sudanese voted for independence from Sudan to become the newest nation on the globe (Large, 2009). South Sudan gained independence in 2011 however, the CPA, despite being applauded for ending the longest civil war in Africa, was unable to promote peace and reconciliation between the border communities. Tensions between the two countries escalated to open hostilities in Heglig an oil producing border which is strategically critical to Sudan as it is home to its largest remaining source of oil. Abyei area was also an issue that often stirred clashes although the Abyei protocol, which is part of the CPA, stated that at the end of the six-year interim period Abyei citizens would have their own referendum and they would have the right to vote whether to maintain their special administrative status in Sudan or to become part of South Sudan.

However, after independence other CPA issues, such as South Sudan's oil passage, overwhelmed the two sides (Jok, 2015).

The army of South Sudan was a collection of militia armed groups, not a professionalised, institutionalised army. Each of these militias was organised on the basis of personal loyalty to its commander in effect, ethnically based armed units. These armed groups that had fought against SPLA during the liberation war, as well as the northern rebels that had fought against Sudan were required as the CPA stated to join either the SPLA or Sudan Armed Forces. After the independence, South Sudan was given the prerogative to decide the fates of these armed groups and militia. These armed groups were peacefully persuaded to join the SPLA. South Sudan People Defence Forces (SSPDF) sponsored by the government of Sudan and led by Paulino Matip Nhial who had been one of the toughest anti-SPLA militia leaders since the beginning of the liberation war in the early 1980s was the most significant of these groups (Jok, 2015). Unlike Dr. John Garang De Mabior (the leader of Sudan People's Liberation Army during the Second Sudanese Civil War), who was a unionist who had planned after the CPA to use the state apparatus of the united Sudan for political reform, President Kiir's objective was the secession of South Sudan. Kiir feared the government of Khartoum would renege on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement commitment to self-determination right hence he spent immensely on the military payroll in order to make it very expensive for Sudanese security officers to rent southern militia. His approach for controlling SPLM and SPLA's factions leaders was the indulgence of their appetite for self-enrichment (Waal, 2014). This approach, as Jok stated, contributed to the creation of a monstrous and unwieldy army, undisciplined to maintain a coherent chain of command, and unwilling and unable of reform. Jok also argued that this in essence gave disgruntled politicians from the Nuer group, (the nation's largest second group that represents 60 % of the army), the sense that they had the capacity to overtake the current regime led by Dinka (the first largest group) using this over tribal army. In December 2013, South Sudan lapsed back into civil war and political tension amongst its leaders erupted in violence. President Kiir from the Dinka tribe accused his former vice president Riek Machar of plotting a coup d'état (Blanchard, 2016). Although the political conflict that caused the crisis was not based on an ethnic identity but it overlapped due to the preexisting ethnic and political grievances. At 10:00 p.m. 16 December 2013, there was a fight amongst the presidential guards in the capital of South Sudan, Juba. Unexpected change in the guard's deployment was believed to have ignited the fight between the groups that left nearly 20 dead. Machar and other SPLM officials were accused of attempting a coup against Kiir and several officials were arrested. Former vice president Machar escaped to Jonglei State. The following days, heavy fighting and targeted ethnic killings erupted in Juba (Koos and Gutschke, 2014). Both parties have shown little desire to reach a compromise during the first peace talks in spite the fact that more than 2.3

million people have been displaced since the beginning of the war in 2013 (Security Council, 2016). According to the United Nations Security Council data 3.9 million people are facing food insecurity. Humanitarian access is entirely blocked in parts of Unity, Upper Nile and Western Equatoria States. The causes of this conflict go beyond ethnicity differences but it can partly be explained by the personal motives of and the struggle for power between President Kiir and his former vice President Machar. There are other factors that have contributed to the conflict such as the dysfunctional South Sudanese political system that had failed to merge SPLA and SPLM fractions and armed groups under one governmental system. The South Sudanese leaders have repeatedly copied their counterparts in Khartoum in their approach and have been driven by their ethnic and tribal differences. The historical distrust between the two major tribes in the South has been another factor although they fought side by side against Khartoum during the liberation war. Many external political actors are trying to secure a cease fire and settle the conflict as the conflict's impact and instability is affecting the neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia (Koos and Gutschke, 2014).

CHINA'S QUEST FOR OIL AND SUDAN

Previous Chinese leaders pursued for decades a modernisation programme vastly based on traditional economic development models; labour and capital-intensive manufacturing industries, low-labour cost, export led growth and high environmental damage (Jiang, 2009). By pursuing such an approach however, its growth GDP came with heavy price tags on the environment, wages and political reform (Jiang, 2009). This explains Beijing's behaviour in its quest for a secure, reliable and sufficient source of oil to maintain its rapidly growing economy. Beijing's need for more and more energy due to its development model led to massive extractive activities inside and outside its territories (Kong, 2011). To meet this heavy need for raw material and energy, two major structural imperatives were born. The first is to find more energy and resources within the country. The other is the call by the government for Chinese companies to go abroad around the world to explore resources (Jiang, 2009). In the late 1990s, the People's Republic of China, through this going out policy, opened overseas investment to promote its economic development (Cissé, 2013). China's three biggest National Oil Companies NOCs are – China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China Petrochemical Corporation (Sinopec Group), China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). These companies are perceived to represent Beijing in its ambition to go out and acquire oil and invest in Africa (Kong, 2011). However, Western multinational oil majors' presence in the African continent dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. The sophisticated management experience, deep pockets and technological competency of these multinational giants have provided them with unmatched advantages in

the continent. Consequently, International Oil Companies had already taken quality oil assets and attractive reserves in the continent long before Beijing's NOCs entered Africa. Significant oil reserve was discovered in Sudan in the 1980s, but the civil war between the North and South made operations too risky for IOCs such as Chevron, which suspended all its operations after three of its employees were killed by rebel groups in the South in 1984 (Kong, 2011). All American oil companies were banned from participation in Sudan's oil industry which presented an opportunity for Beijing who viewed Sudan as an ally (Large, 2008).

Oil industry of Sudan is a network of state and businesses set to promote the northern dominance through the Southern-located oil reserves (Jok, 2007). The whole story began with oil production and the first involvement of Beijing in Sudan before the CPA. Sino-Sudanese relations were established in 1959 and the modern state of China has maintained good relations ever since. China's relations improved noticeably during President Numairi (1969-1985), particularly during the 1970s. China gained its favourable position due to the different reactions of the Soviet and China's government to the attempted coup against Numairi's regime in 1971. Once Numairi was reestablished in power, the Chinese communist party hurried to congratulate him. Moreover, Beijing's support of the execution of the coup's ringleaders won Numairi's favour for China. Beijing then supplied military equipment and offered to train Sudanese Armed Forces (Large, 2008). The development of the oil sector began in 1990s (Large, 2008). Sudan's National Islamic Front (now NCP) came to power in 1989, but the government's ideology led to international isolation and unilateral U.S. economic sanctions (Francis *et al.*, 2012). Since the NCP was cut off from the West, it looked for help elsewhere to develop its oil sector. Beijing was a willing partner despite the unstable investment climate on the ground that alliance with Sudan would mean having the exclusive access to a largely untapped oil market (Francis *et al.*, 2012). In 1995, President Omar Al-Bashir visited China and requested assistance with Sudan's oil industry (Kong, 2011). Jiang Zemin, then President of China, directed CNPC to look for investing opportunities in Africa (Kong, 2011). China's involvement in Sudan's oil industry is the most significant area where China impacts Sudan. China's strategic imperatives evolve around oil interests that have shaped Beijing's foreign policy towards Sudan (Bradbury, 2013). Sudan was a model site for China in Africa predating Beijing's relations with the continent after 2000s (Jakobson and Daojiong, 2006). Beijing invested billions of dollars to establish the oil industry and imported more than 60 per cent of the country's crude, supplying five per cent of China's oil needs by 2005 (Francis *et al.*, 2012). Relations were deepened with regard to facilitation of an economic in demand model directed by oil investment (Francis *et al.*, 2012). However, following the secession of the South, Beijing's key concern was to secure its oil assets, the vast majority of which now lie in the newly independent country (International Crisis Group, 2012). Beijing's focus was shifted to the South but they also tried to maintain commercial cooperation with Sudan. Beijing

formally recognised the separate government of South Sudan in 2005, accelerated its courtship in Juba and established formal diplomatic relations (Bradbury, 2013). Subsequent formal meetings continued between SPLM and Chinese leader such as Hu Jintao throughout 2006 and 2007. In 2007, SPLA leader Kiir visited China and assured Beijing that its oil investment was secure. South Sudan voted for full independence and Beijing welcomed the result of the referendum. Oil contracts signed with Sudan were brought in line with new realities as the terms now belonged to the resources of the new South Sudan (Bradbury, 2013).

A MATTER OF DISTRUST

In its attempt to mediate peace talks between the two warring parties in South Sudan and bring a positive conclusion as I will illustrate later in this paper, Beijing is facing many challenges. Firstly, I will start by what is said by Henry Odwar, the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee of Energy, Mining, Commerce and Industry who thought it was time to clear the air with oil companies in South Sudan in 2012. Henry Odwar frankly said: 'There is a new thinking in South Sudan that we are open for business, but we will never forget our history', he recalled telling the men. 'And, you, the oil companies, if you have polluted before, you will not pollute again. If you have displaced people before, you will have to pay'. Many South Sudanese blame oil companies, especially Chinese companies, for providing Sudan with money used to crush South Sudan's rebellion and wipe out villages during the Sudanese civil war (Alexander, 2012). Widespread community grievances express general frustration towards oil companies and request from the former compensations for the wartime impact on civilians of oil development (Large, 2009). Due to Beijing's longstanding relations with Sudan and tacit involvement in the second civil war, South Sudanese associate China with social devastation, human rights violations, displacement and unrestricted environmental damage. In February 2011, Liu Yingcai, head of the CNPC-headed Petrodar oil consortium, was expelled by South Sudan on the ground of non-cooperation (Sudan Tribune, 2012). Juba also investigated GNPOC's role in December 2011 oil diversion and warned to terminate the contracts. In January 2011, rebels belonging to South Sudan kidnapped 29 Chinese and released them in February (Francis *et al.*, 2012). Beijing's historic support of Khartoum government and the growing mistrust at the governmental and community level deeply affected China's relationship with South Sudan. Prior to independence, Beijing found itself in a crucial situation where it had to balance its traditional support for Sudan and its desire to maintain and engage the South Sudan government. The Government of South Sudan remained in a sceptical position of Beijing's non-interference policies in which it claims a non-intervention stance in any country's internal affairs (Francis *et al.*, 2012). Chinese presence has grown on the African continent and so has the exposure to political risk. There have been incidents in many parts of Africa that involved Chinese citizens where they have faced

dangerous situations. In Nigeria for example, in 2006, the Nigerian Group known as MEND threatened to launch attacks against Chinese workers and their infrastructure projects (Anthony and Hengkun, 2015). In April 2007, Ogaden Liberation Front (ONLF) killed nine Chinese and sixty-five Ethiopian oil engineers in Ethiopia. In Zambia, Michael Sata who called for anti-Chinese rhetoric during his presidential campaign, after which the Chinese faced hostilities in confrontations in copper mining region which led to riots and several deaths (Anthony and Hengkun, 2015). In October 2007, in the context of Darfur conflict, Chinese interests were openly targeted when the Darfurian rebel Justice and Equality Movement attacked Chinese oil operations in Defra, Kordofan and asked China to leave Sudan within one week. Another incident took place in October 2008; five were killed by force under a commander who claimed affiliation with the Justice and Equality Movement. He asserted that “China supports Khartoum government military and helps it marginalise our region. But our case is with the government in Khartoum” (Large, 2009). In April 2012, in South Kordofan’s region Heglig, claimed by South Sudan and held by Sudan, was captured by South Sudanese Army, Chinese oil investments were subject to instability. In 2013, officials of CNPC spoke of how SPLA soldiers forced them to shut down their operations which damaged expensive equipment. China’s involvement in South Sudan lacks the direct and sustained contact between Chinese representatives and local communities. Some South Sudanese government officials stated in interviews that Chinese companies would prefer South Sudan officials to work as liaison between themselves and South Sudanese communities (Anthony and Hengkun, 2015). Beijing’s foreign policy is experiencing serious changes as a result of the deterioration of security situation in the country. In July 2016, two Chinese peacekeepers were killed and several others wounded in an attack outside Juba (BBC, 2016). Chinese Embassy staff and several civilians were immediately evacuated (South China Morning Post, 2016). Due to social tensions and economic downturn, Chinese embassy had frequently issued warnings to Chinese citizen in South Sudan (BBC, 2016). In the country there are indications that neither Chinese companies nor forces are welcomed (Vasselier, 2016).

Secondly, another significant issue related to oil companies and indigenous hostilities against them is environmental degradation and pollution of the eco-system in areas where oil has being extracted. Continuous oil exploration and extraction projects fuelled mistrust amongst local communities of these oil companies. Not much has been done about the expansion of oil activities that include uncompensated dispossession of land and pollution of the environment with dangerous substances. Locals on several occasions seized vehicles and disrupted oil activities in order to force oil companies to meet their demands (Nelson, Apuruot and Mekalilie, 2010). Despite the fact that Beijing’s investment in Africa contributes to the continent’s growth and welfare, there are issues regarding environmental and social impacts. China’s

investments in the oil sector, copper, coal and mining within Africa happen in environmentally sensitive areas (Cissé, 2013). The oil sector development negative consequences have been triggering deep resentment to oil companies in many parts of South Sudan. Local people in any area where oil activities going on complain about the poor management of polluted water. This polluted water is seen as the source of mysterious deaths of animals and strange and unknown human ailments. Additionally, oil exploration and extraction infrastructure are commonly blamed for disrupting the means of livelihood and destruction of property (Nelson, Apuruot and Mekalilie, 2010). Oil companies take locals as over demanding, so they prefer to deal with local leaders. Leben argues here that the relation between oil companies and locals is a result of the bitter legacy of the war years. During these years, many people were abused by security forces that were provided to protect these companies. The most significant cause as he adds is the idea that these oil companies do not care about what is good for local people. Oil companies are viewed as being concerned with taking and not giving back in return (Nelson, Apuruot and Mekalilie, 2010). Threats posed to local people, such as pollution led oil companies to militate against better relation with the locals. However, the lack or inadequate compensation is another grievance against oil companies. This resentment against oil companies resulted in many demonstrations. In 2006, a demonstration led by local people from Anthony boma against oil companies. They stopped the movement of vehicles and demanded social services like schools, clinic and water services. Police arrested six people who were brought to Pariang police post, and spent a week in gaol (Nelson, Apuruot and Mekalilie, 2010). Other impacts of China's involvement is the quality of its unsustainable construction projects in many parts of Africa such as hydropower dams that were built to provide water and power generations to millions of Africans. Some of these dams however, caused the displacement of many local people in Botswana, Ghana, and Sudan (Cissé, 2013). Someone might say that African leaders are to blame also for this. It's true because Beijing in many parts of Africa is offering aid without preconditions. China presents attractive alternatives to conditional western states due to its non-intervention policy which have proven to be mutually advantageous for China and African elites (Tull, 2006). African countries should take advantage of China's presence and aid so that Chinese investments contribute to job creation and technology transfer. China's investment projects create job opportunities for Chinese overseas (Cissé, 2013). However, Chinese enterprises are now pursuing new attitudes toward local employees but change usually takes long time. In an interview done by the author in Khartoum, Sudan with Araiah Abdelgadir, HR – TC manager at China National Logging Cooperation (CNLC) a technical services company, said that things had changed greatly form how they were five years ago. He emphasised that the company is now training and transferring skills and technology to Sudanese staff so they acquire high job positions in CNPC and GNPOC.

Recent migration of Chinese to Africa is also considered problematic and if not tackled well could have a negative impact on China's current engagement in Africa. There are three types of Chinese migrants to Africa: temporary migrants labourers, this category consists of migrants who are linked to public building works and large infrastructure development projects controlled by Chinese enterprises, secondly comes small-time entrepreneurs and the third group is known as transit migrants (Park, 2009). Chinese migrants enter into retail trades and take jobs away from the locals because they bring their own labour (Abdulai, 2017). The negative consequences of the growing anti-Chinese sentiment are due to several common reasons. Some Africans view that China is importing a large number of Chinese labour. Another reason for the rising of this anti-Chinese feeling is that some Africans think that Chinese are taken over their jobs because of high rate of unemployment in these countries. Some also argue that Chinese migrants are invading their markets with cheap goods, killing their industries (Abdulai, 2017). Rather than entering the wage labour market, Chinese migrants in retail or wholesale trade sell Chinese-made goods because of reasons that include low capital required, lack of fluency in local languages and linkages to Chinese manufacturers (Park, 2009).

Beijing is now mediating peace talks between warring parties President Kiir and Former president Riek Machar in an offer to bring stability to the country which in return would secure China's interests. Beijing's political engagement was required by South Sudanese thinkers and politicians who recognise Beijing's interests in the country. A member of South Sudan's civil society said: 'Chinese interests would not be secured during the war so only talking to the government would work. Thus, engaging with all parties to reach peace was the best way to proceed' (Vasselier, 2016). Beijing, in order to enhance and advance its relations with Africa in general and South Sudan in particular, needs to work side by side with different actors at the governmental level and community level. This paper argues that Chinese engagement with South Sudan must take a different approach in order to help the growing of the development for the country and the welfare of its citizens that will bring stability and loosen the tight tension between the warring parties. Thus, this paper offers a platform that can be a foundation for new methods that should be taken by the Chinese side to approach local people to gain their trust. To do so, Beijing will then have to address the issue of anti-Chinese presence seriously by engaging in local communities and resolve with the help of public organisations and governmental actors the disputes over land and compensations questions related to local people. Beijing is aware of all these issues but its lack of experience as a new comer in the African scene has been hindering it from overcoming them. Another reason however is the inadequate and unorganised structural chain in South Sudan management system. In May 2014, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in his visit to Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Angola, was swamped with a barrage of criticisms (Gumede, 2014). Former

Nigerian central bank Governor Lamido Sanusi said: 'China takes primary goods and sells us manufactured products. This was also the essence of colonialism' (Gumede, 2014). This was rightly said on the ground that partnership between Chinese investors and local African companies are very rare. Transfer of new technology, efficiency and management from Chinese companies to African ones is much rarer. Transferring of skills and technology to Africa would allow it to set up new companies. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said that China is looking forward to tackling these issues because the arising disputes over Chinese investments in Africa were just growing pains. He assured African leaders that China is willing to sit down with African leaders to resolve any issues over Chinese investment projects. Since the beginning of its role as a mediator in peace talks in South Sudan's civil war, China has already taken new political postures besides mediating between parties such as deploying a battalion of Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers as part of a UN mission, supporting the International Monetary Fund (IMF) requests and engaging on a multi-lateral level on peace process (Vasselier, 2016).

Beijing can address the problem of anti-Chinese presence and the general resentment against oil companies in South Sudan and help fighting sides to realise a peaceful end to this crisis on a basis of two approaches; firstly, China has been playing a major role in the oil sector in South Sudan. Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) is the largest shareholder in three consortia in South Sudan with 40 % stake in GNPOC's blocks one, two and four in South Kordofan and Unity state. CNPC also has a 41 % stake in Petrodar, the country's largest oil producer and pipelines operator (Large, 2009). South Sudan has no chance to ask for help and assistance but from Beijing. Many South Sudanese politicians have expressed desire to start new partnerships with the West and U.S. in particular and consolidate historical alignment. But aid from Western countries and the U.S. comes with red tape, pace, conditionality and risk aversion that frequently associated with this partnership. Partnerships with the West seems no match to what Beijing could offer. Beijing offers efficiency, value, speed and a no-string-attached model (International Crisis Group, 2012). Beijing could use this position and influence to push both parties to peace as it did with Sudan when President Hu Jintao made a critical visit to Khartoum in February 2007 which brought about Khartoum's acceptance of a hybrid United Nations African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur (Shinn, 2009). Beijing then was in a difficult position vis-à-vis Sudan government, international community and the contradiction of its own non-interference policy. Beijing again played a major role in the supporting and realisation of the CPA through its approach 'peace through development' (Large, 2005). Although the separation was in contradiction of China's position of the three evils of terrorism, separatism, and extremism, Beijing's goal was directed towards political stability. Consequently, Beijing managed to work with one Sudan different systems during the period of 2005-2011 (Bradbury, 2013). Once more, Beijing's relations were challenged again after

the secession of Sudan when an oil impasse occurred between Sudan and the newly independent South Sudan in 2011. Due to a dispute over pipelines fees, Sudan shut down South Sudan's oil production. South Sudan receives 98 per cent of oil revenues but Sudan owns the entire pipelines through which the oil is exported to China (Francis *et al.*, 2012). This impasse affected all parties and as Beijing imports the majority of Sudan's oil, it has an interest of getting the oil flowing again. Due to its policy of engagement, Beijing's envoy for African affairs, Liu Guijin, was dispatched to help resolve the problem. Liu warned that if the two parties fail to come to a solution to the problem, the 'whole region would be affected; the repercussions would be very serious' (Beth, 2012). Beijing was pushed then to mediate South Sudan and Sudan to ensure oil production continues and the same scenario is taking place again but this time the conflict is within South Sudan. Beijing depending on its influence and its relevant experience in the region could help bring the opposing sides to the negotiation table to determine peaceful terms to end this war.

Secondly, Beijing's engagement at the community level is critical to peace as it will help stabilise the country, settle disputes and grievances with local people and most importantly ensure the safety of Chinese citizens and their installations in the region. Beijing's model of economic involvement within South Sudan, the view of development aspect towards peace, is of great importance primarily because it has contributed toward massive poverty alleviation within China itself. Concerning the last point, as its presence continues within South Sudan, China needs to increasingly integrate with local people and develop policies to promote this integration. As illustrated above, Beijing has become more active in recent years in securing and ensuring the safety of its citizens abroad. Chinese oil companies, its personnel and workers have to adopt a more integrating method into local communities. In a change with its earlier involvement, CNPC for instance, has been within recent years paying greater attention to what is known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Anthony and Hengkun, 2015). CNPC has sponsored students from Sudan to attend University of Petroleum in Beijing. CNPC established medical facilities, paid 1.6 million for a sewage treatment plant amongst other infrastructure projects that include the reconstruction of Juba's airport (Anthony and Hengkun, 2015). The lack of transparency between local authorities, oil companies and communities and as all these projects usually come through governmental channels, communities do not recognise CNPC's efforts. Governmental authorities and oil companies should put more resources into local development activities under the supervision of public civil society organisations, committees from oil companies and local communities own form of organisation. Local community organisations such as Oil Task Forces which consists of about seven members of local community, including chiefs, elders, women and youth was formed to encourage dialogues amongst local communities, oil companies and the government (Sudan Tribune, 2011). Local committees in charge should be more transparent in managing compensations provided by oil companies so as to minimise

suspicion and mistrust. Local staff should be appointed by oil companies to deal with grievances and engage in discussion. They should also provide job opportunities and target for skilled and non-skilled position to increase the number of South Sudanese employees. However, two issues involving the government of Sudan should be addressed; first, the government should hold oil companies accountable for environmental damages and set clear, social, environmental, and quality standards in accordance with the international standards. Second, regional and national organisations like pressure groups, trade unions, and business associations should put pressure on the government to make sure Chinese migrants are effectively managed in order to ensure a win-win outcome for locals and Chinese migrants. Additionally, the government should reconcile the differences in its national laws which handle this problem without disregarding international laws.

South Sudan is a country that has long been torn by conflicts and a full engagement with local people could go beyond the ordinary infrastructure projects, with aid being more than loans and funds. But why China is South Sudan's best HOPE and why should it get INVOLVED in this conflict? As Beijing is heavily invested in the country, it has long had significant economic ties. Ma Qiang, China's ambassador said in an interview in 2014 with Reuters: 'We have huge interests in South Sudan so we have to make a greater effort to persuade the two sides to stop fighting and agree to a ceasefire'. Beijing has to persuade the warring parties to end the current conflict if not for the sake of South Sudan's people then for its own people, companies and installations. Whether Beijing is trying to fit in and find its place a major power, or whether it is to secure its people and interests in the country, South Sudan is a serious challenge to Beijing's foreign policy towards Africa in particular. In an attempt to balance its presence and save, Beijing stopped all arms deliveries to South Sudan in September 2014. It is now documented that Beijing provided South Sudan since its independence with large volume of weapons and ammunition along with other countries like South Africa and Canada. For example, the China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO), a Chinese state-owned defence manufacturing company, provided ammunition to South Sudan from 2011 to July 2014. A transfer of weapons in 2014 was worth more than USD 30 million which transited through Mombasa, Kenya included 27 million rounds of small calibre ammunition, 40,000 rounds of 40 mm Type-69 HEAT rockets for RPG launchers, 20,000 rounds of 40 mm BGL2 anti-personnel grenades, 1,200 Type HJ-73D anti-tank missiles, more than 9,500 Type 56 (AK-pattern) 7.62 x 39 mm assault rifles, 2,394 add-on 40 mm under barrel grenade launchers, as well as smaller quantities of NP42 9 mm pistols, Type 80 general-purpose machine-guns, and other military equipment (AAT Monitor, 2015).

While the demand for energy resources exponentially continues to grow, the actual existence of known reserves is shrinking rapidly and so the question of who controls both the existing resources as well as

the new resources is crucial to the world economy. China and the United States are engaged in a battle to tighten their grip on control over Africa's oil and resources. This new scramble for Africa is not only because of profits but also about the controlling of strategic energy resources where the U.S is anxious with intimidations to its hegemony in the region. The defense and expansion of that hegemony has through the years spilled over military intervention which is sometimes justified under the rubric of fighting terrorist regimes in the region. The reliance on energy resources of developed nations from developing nations is rising and fueling competition between these major powers. This scramble for Africa's resources is not new, however, what is new on the continent is the intensified competition over energy resources between the U.S and its major rivals particularly China for strategic control. The international Energy Agency, the developed world's sectoral watchdog, predicts that 90 per cent of the new supplies will come from developing countries in the next 40 years. This marks a big shift, as the report states, from the past 30 years, when 40 per cent⁶ of new production came from industrialized nations, most of it controlled by listed western energy groups. Thus, this competition for Africa's energy resources is a fight between major powers for control of new energy. China is a major player in this competition as its energy needs and oil consumption have doubled in the past decades. As a response to China's presence in Africa, the U.S is anxious that African countries depending on Chinese deals will be able to free themselves from the punitive conditions of International Monetary Fund – World Bank loans and many other sorts of financial dependences on Western powers including the United States itself. In a game of wits, the United States pushed and squeezed the government of Sudan to reach a resolution and sign the CPA that ended the war between the North and South in 2011. The United States had the government of Sudan under economic sanctions since 1998 and promised if Sudan showed positive attitudes towards addressing certain issues among which South Sudan's civil war is a significant chapter, it would ease or lift the sanctions which has not happened until now. In this race for oil and energy, the U.S. was hoping to have control over South Sudan's natural resources since its attempts to enter Sudan through the case of Darfur had failed. The U.S. administration had in mind the good bilateral relations that bind Sudan with China and acted to limit China's presence in Sudan by separating the country and since most of the oil field are in the South part of the country, China would not stand a chance against the U.S. in the eyes of the South who sees China as a friend of its enemy. But then, Beijing saw it coming and wickedly responded when former President Hu Jintao invited President Salva Kiir in February 2007 who was then the Sudanese Vice President and affirmed China's support to the peace process and the CPA. South Sudan for Beijing is a challenge that could if handled well help it navigate through many other problems facing it in the African continent. However, China's foreign diplomacy and affairs are still immature in terms of how it manages its foreign polices specially in Africa where it has been facing many challenges related to

internal conflicts. China's diplomatic, geopolitical and financial interests confront serious risk in South Sudan. Where this is going for Beijing as its engagement presents a challenge to its long-held doctrine of non-interference? Where does all the diplomatic, military and political direction going for China in South Sudan?

NOTES

1. During a visit to Sudan in February 2017, the author conducted an interview with Araiah Abdelgadir, HR-TC Manager, CNLC, alraiah@cnlc.cn. This interview was conducted to show the change of Chinese companies' strategies in the past five years in terms of technology and skills transfer in Sudan in particular and Africa in general.
2. Athony Boma is situated about 24 kilometres to the west of Pariang, one of the nine counties of Unity State, South Sudan.
3. The author has been to Sudan in February 2017. The number of South Sudanese is considerable and is on the rise. Most of those whom he met are living in huts made of cartons and plastic sacks. They are mostly women who do marginal daily jobs to support their families. The situation is worsening now since famine has been officially declared in South Sudan.

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الملخص: تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً لوجود الصين في جنوب السودان، مظهرة غياب الوجود الصيني على مستوى المجتمع. إنَّ عدم الثقة عند كثير من شعب جنوب السودان تجاه الصين وشركات النفط الوطنية الصينية نابعٌ من دعم بكين التاريخي لحكومة الخرطوم والمشاركة الضمنية في الحرب الأهلية الثانية التي ولدت مظالم واسعة النطاق بين المجتمعات المحلية في جنوب السودان. كانت علاقات الصين بحكومة الخرطوم من بين عوامل أخرى هي الدافع وراء عدم الثقة في جنوب السودان التي بنت حواجز أمام بكين تعيقها من حماية استثماراتها الاقتصادية ومصالحها السياسية. عليه فإنَّ المشاركة الصينية مع الجهات الفاعلة غير الحكومية أمر بالغ الأهمية لتحقيق السلام. تشير فرضية هذه الورقة بأنَّ انخراط الصين مع المجتمعات المحلية في جنوب السودان قد يلعب دوراً مهماً في جمع القوى المتناحرة والوصول إلى حلول سلمية. إنَّ الصين كانت وما تزال تتمسك بسياستها في عدم التدخل في شئون الدول الأخرى لذلك تقدم هذه الورقة تفسيراً يؤكد حاجة الصين للتدخل نظراً لوضعها الحالي عالمياً وما يقدمه هذا التدخل من تأمين النفط والموارد الطاقة الاستراتيجية في القارة الإفريقية

الكلمات المفتاحية : بكين، شركات النفط الصينية، جنوب السودان، المجتمعات المحلية، عدم الثقة، السلام
