Post-Independence African Security: Reflections on the Role of China and France

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Abstract: *Africa's political landscape is nearly unchanged from the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the majority of its nations gained independence. The two exceptions to this rule are Southern Sudan, which separated from Sudan in July 2011, and Eritrea, which separated from Ethiopia in 1993. The nations on the continent have faced numerous shared difficulties since the conclusion of the Cold War. The twenty-first century got off to a rough start. According to the 2005 Peace and Conflict Report, 31 out of 161 nations—17 of which were African— were at risk of a major conflict. Africa contains more U.N. peacekeeping personnel than any other continent; as of 2024, 75% of all U.N. peacekeepers were stationed there. Since the conclusion of the Cold War, the U.N. has carried out 19 major peace operations, ten of which have taken place in Africa. Africa was the site of seven of the fourteen major hostilities that occurred worldwide around the beginning of the century. Since 1960, at least one instance of non-separatist civil strife has occurred in at least thirty-two African nations. Most of the world's conflicts occur there. This paper concentrates on China's and France's contributions to African security despite the continent's security predicament in the twenty-first century. It discusses a song about "new security threats." These consist of terrorist threats, international organised crime, and poor government. These security risks have nothing to do with a state endangering another's ability to survive. These "new security threats" originate in part from the way the international order has changed since the end of the Cold War, particularly from the consequences of globalisation. They also result from nature and are made worse by it. This paper starts by examining the dynamics of the security issues facing Africa today from the standpoint of human security. The thesis here is that a far broader analytical lens that captures the larger, interwoven complexities of Africa's security concerns is necessary when analyzing these dilemmas, rather than a limited state-centric or regime-centric approach. It then examines regional and global initiatives and tactics that have addressed these issues. The main contention of this paper is that institutional and governmental weakness are the main causes of Africa's security problems. In spite of the continent's security issues, it focuses on explaining why and how China's involvement in peacekeeping in Africa has developed as well as the anticipated future paths this will follow. Over the last ten years or so, China has become a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping efforts, with Chinese peacekeepers sent to a variety of locations, including Sudan, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This is a significant advancement in African security as well as Sino-African ties. Chinese policy in this area is changing, despite the fact that China's position on peace operations is strongly linked to its views on state sovereignty, which restrict the kinds of interventions Beijing is willing to approve. This paper also looks at Franco-African relations, emphasizing how France has shaped, framed, adapted, and guided the defence and security framework of the continent in the past and how it continues to play a significant role in how Africa—and Francophone Africa in particular—addresses the security issues listed above. The core philosophical, political, and cultural tenets of that framework—that is, the idea that France and its former colonies are bound together by a unique relationship that calls for close cooperation and France's support and assistance due to historical and human ties as well as the shared use of the French language—remained constant. While new actors like China and the United States, which are no longer constrained by Cold War understandings, are undermining this argument, elites in France and African nations continue to support it. However, the defence and security structure itself has changed significantly during the past 50 years. A brief*

discussion of the changes in Franco-African relations is given, with an emphasis on the features of the current defence and security framework and how they have also been evolving to meet new realities. A few incidents that put President Sarkozy's determination to establish a more legitimate framework for France's relations with Africa to the test are briefly examined in order to assess the degree to which he changed the framework and its operations.

Keywords: Africa, China, France, Security, Conflict, Peacekeeping

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Introduction

The African state is more likely to be a weak state that does not fit the definition of a Weberian state rather than a unitary actor. Although the African state system is a part of the global system and is therefore influenced by the anarchical logic of international politics, such as during the Cold War, its security demands are shaped by a separate anarchical logic. The state system in Africa is distinct. As stated by Herbst:

the security dilemma – the notion that each state's effort to become more secure threatens another state – is rooted in a world where armies had to be massed on frontiers in order to protect territory. Thus Kenneth Waltz notes that, "contact generates conflict and at times issues in violence". Without having to compete for territory, Africans could devise rules by which all could become more secure (Herbst, 2018, p. 106).

A distinct kind of anarchy is reflected in the relationships between Sub-Saharan states. However, in a world with weak states, anarchy

has a different meaning. According to Alexander Wendt (2019), the problem is not what states define as anarchy, but rather that states need to define various types of anarchy.

It has been said that Africa is dependant and marginalised. A fundamental aspect of African studies is the influence of colonialism on Africa's development. Africa was largely negatively affected by the Cold War. Compared to the first fifty years of independence, Africa is now more significant to the world community. Additionally, it has continued to rely heavily on the international community, especially when it comes to security. For example, 98% of funding for AU peace support missions comes from donations (Ogunbanjo & Adewale, 2021).

Accepting and investigating African agency in determining its security situation is crucial. However, external impacts cannot be disregarded. Despite the growing popularity of the slogan "African solutions for Africa's problems," Africa's security issues are by no means entirely domestic. Furthermore, it is

unlikely that the problems that one may assign to particular African nations or areas will be completely contained. Africa's security is still heavily influenced by external actors, as Ogunbanjo and Adewale (2021) show.

Africa's post-independence security environment is full of wars and other security risks. African states saw high rates of intra-state disputes following the end of the Cold War, which led to multiple instances of state implosion. Unlike previous conventional civil wars, these internal conflicts, often known as "new wars," were marked by a blurring of the boundaries between organised crime, war, and widespread human rights violations (Kaldor, 2017). However, because of major efforts by African and international initiatives in conflict prevention, management, and settlement, there has been a decrease in armed conflicts in Africa in recent years. The state of security has evolved. "New and emerging security challenges—what could be called 'old' challenges—are being superimposed on armed conflicts, which have been the single most devastating security challenge for the African continent" (Ani, 2021a, p. 149).

Political violence, demographic shifts and the youth bulge, food insecurity, and the easy access to Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are the key causes of the ongoing intra- and inter-state violent conflicts, which

continue to be the old security problem (Ani, 2018). The expansion of interconnected trans-organized criminal activities, such as illegal drug trafficking, internet fraud, human trafficking, money laundering, the exploitation and smuggling of natural resources, and terrorist networks, are among the new challenges that have their roots in the old ones (Ani, 2017b).

It will be evident that Africa is in a seemingly never-ending state of security if we look beyond violent conflict to other crucial markers of insecurity, such as socioeconomic variables, population change, environmental degradation, and governance concerns. Africa's major international indices are ominous. For instance, 10 African nations (Guinea, Central Africa Republic, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Chad, Mozambique, Burundi, Niger, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)) were placed lowest in the 2021 Human Development Index (UNDP, 2021). On a similar vein, four African nations—Somalia, Chad, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo—took the top spot on the 2021 Failed States Index. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the least peaceful region, according to the 2020 and 2021 Global Peace Indexes. Sudan and Somalia rank 151 and 153, respectively, near the bottom of the index, which includes 40% of the world's least peaceful nations. More than ten years ago, analysts such as Mohammed Ayoob hinted at

this dilemma by connecting the processes of state-making in terms of territorial consolidation and institution-building with conflicts and insecurity in the developing world (Ayoob, 2015). The African security situation has been explained by other interconnected elements, such as colonialism's legacy (Adekeye, 2021). Undoubtedly, a variety of interconnected historical, political, economic, and sociocultural variables have contributed to Africa's security dilemma. But these security issues also stem from the weakness of the African state, which shows up as a lack of institutional capacity to address its many problems. According to Spears (2021); Bayart, Ellis & Hibou (2019); Chabal & Daloz (2018); Chabal, (2018); and others, the tendency towards violence or conflict in Africa is more related to the nature of the African state and the accompanying insecurities it creates than to the goodness or evilness of a particular actor or the pathological predispositions of a particular society or culture.

Over the last twenty years or more, China has become a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping efforts, with Chinese peacekeepers stationed in a variety of locations, including Sudan, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This is a significant advancement in African security as well as Sino-African ties. Chinese policy in this area is changing, despite the fact that China's

position on peace operations is strongly linked to its views on state sovereignty, which restrict the kinds of interventions Beijing is willing to approve. This paper explores the reasons behind China's involvement in African peacekeeping, how it has developed, and where it is likely to go in the future.

China has provided more than 7,000 peacekeepers to United Nations operations since 1990. These peacekeepers have been stationed in Sudan, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Actually, compared to other permanent members of the UN Security Council, China currently dispatches more peacekeeping forces overseas. China is "filling a vacuum left by the West," according to Wang Guangya, the country's ambassador to the UN. The main nations are stepping back from their responsibilities in maintaining peace. Small nations are increasingly taking on that role. China believed that the time had come for us to fill this void (Washington Post, 2016). China's "flurry of UN peacekeeping" activities in the post-Cold War era have been notable for their emphasis on the "domestic political scene" of the nations in which they participate in peace operations (James, 2016, p. 359).

A generation ago, an article's daring title seemed to have perfectly encapsulated what many lay Africans and scholars of Franco-

African relations found to be an incontrovertible puzzle: According to its author, "A certain Mystery: How Can France Do Everything That It Does in Africa and Get Away with It?" Then, as Tamar Golan persuasively demonstrated, France was in fact ubiquitous throughout its former colonies on the continent and seemed to always have its own way, just twenty years after it had awarded formal independence to the majority of its former colonial territories and during the height of the Cold War. As the saying goes, France was the unashamed gendarme de l'Afrique, or Africa's police force. Its presidents, who were essentially rulers over Francophone Africa, maintained dubious, even repugnant, relations with their African counterparts, and it conducted military incursions when it saw fit. France controlled so much of Francophone Africa that one of its prime ministers declared without hesitation that France could decide the continent's fate "with 500 men" (Marshall & Banégas, 2015, p. 6).

However, one could claim that was then. In the forty years since then, a lot is said to have changed, and it has. However, when former Ivoirian President Laurent Gbagbo, the first head of state to be arraigned by the International Criminal Court (ICC), described how he "was arrested under French bombs while his palace was surrounded by French tanks" on December 5, 2011, it is possible that many people—

certainly those who were open to his version of events—would be wondering the same confusing question Golan had once asked. It's possible that a large number of people who witnessed Colonel Kaddafi's dramatic demise and France's pivotal involvement in overthrowing his regime did. These two events illustrate the unmistakable fact that France continues to play a major role in Africa's security affairs.

Over the past few decades, a lot has changed in the complex connections between France and Africa, especially in the domain of defence and security, as various observers have remarked and appreciated in differing degrees (Dia, 2019; Chafer, 2012; Gregory, 2010; Ela, 2010). Naturally, the entire setting in which these relationships occurred underwent substantial alteration. The election of Nicolas Sarkozy as France's sixth Fifth Republic president in May 2007 and his promise to reform these relations were the most noteworthy of several events and reasons that were thought to bring about change. This pledge was most likely made in order to answer some of the common criticisms that underlie Golan's devastating question.

It will be necessary to comprehend these shifts, their manifestations, their origins and effects, and their effects on the defence and security aspects of Franco-African ties in order to document and analyse them. It will undoubtedly

involve looking at what has remained constant in these relations as well: France's resolve to stay relevant—indeed, to maintain control—in the security dynamics of the continent while African states and France both struggle to adjust to their rapidly shifting political, policy, and security environments. Through the African Union (AU) and its RECs (Regional Economic Communities), African governments are working individually or together to address new or worsening security issues that define this new security environment. These challenges compound Africa's chronic security crisis.

These include, but are not limited to: persistent praetorianism; growing terrorism and associated transnational crime and maritime piracy; proliferation of small arms and light weapons (and occasionally weapons of war); conflict over national resources; and attempts to reform dysfunctional security sectors, including redefining security itself in Africa's emerging democracies.

Despite the security dilemma facing the continent in the twenty-first century, this paper focuses on China's and France's contributions to African security. It talks about a song about "new security threats." These consist of terrorist threats, transnational organised crime, and poor governance. There is no connection between any of these security risks and a state endangering another's ability to survive. These

"new security threats" originate in part from the ways that the international order has changed since the conclusion of the Cold War, particularly from the consequences of globalisation. They are both a result of and made worse by nature. The first section of this paper examines the dynamics of Africa's current security issues from the standpoint of human security. The thesis here is that a much broader analytical lens that reflects the larger, interconnected intricacies of Africa's security concerns is necessary in order to change the focus of discussing these dilemmas from a narrow state-centric or regime-centric approach. It then examines regional and global initiatives and tactics that have addressed these issues. The main contention of this paper is that institutional and governmental weakness are the main causes of Africa's security problems.

Despite the continent's security challenges, the focus of this paper is on why and how China's engagement in peacekeeping in Africa has developed, as well as the potential future routes this will take. Over the last ten years or so, China has become a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping efforts, with Chinese peacekeepers sent to a variety of locations, including Sudan, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This is a significant advancement in African security as well as Sino-African ties. Chinese policy in this area is changing, despite the fact that China's

position on peace operations is strongly linked to its views on state sovereignty, which restrict the kinds of interventions Beijing is willing to approve. This paper also looks at Franco-African relations, emphasising how France has shaped, framed, adapted, and guided the defence and security framework of the continent in the past and how it continues to play a significant role in how Africa—and Francophone Africa in particular—addresses the security issues listed above. The core philosophical, political, and cultural tenets of that framework—that is, the idea that France and its former colonies are bound together by a unique relationship that calls for close cooperation and France's support and assistance due to historical and human ties as well as the shared use of the French language—remained constant. While new actors like China and the United States, which are no longer constrained by Cold War understandings, are undermining this argument, elites in France and African nations continue to support it. However, the defence and security structure itself has changed significantly during the past 50 years. A brief discussion of the changes in Franco-African relations is given, with an emphasis on the features of the current defence and security framework and how they have also been evolving to meet new realities. A few incidents that put President Sarkozy's determination to establish a more legitimate framework for

France's relations with Africa to the test are briefly examined in order to assess the degree to which he changed the framework and its mechanisms.

Considering the Security Landscape in Africa

The 54 states that make up the vast continent of Africa face different security risks in different parts of the world. The local dynamics, strategies, and interests of the local actors typically influence the existence of these threats (Ayangafac & Cilliers 2021, p. 11). The traditional or state-centric understanding of security has given way to a more comprehensive understanding with the individual as the point of reference in the post-Cold War era. Human security within states has not been improved by the conventional notion of security, which is predicated on how governments employ force to counter threats to their autonomy, territorial integrity, and internal political order from other states (Bajpai, 2020, pp. 3–4). The militaristic conception of security that predominated during the Cold War is too limited to comprehend the security issues of today, according to the new security thinking (Buzan, 2019a). Threats to security in the post-Cold War era come from both the state and its citizens rather than from outside forces. A paradigm change from a state-centered militaristic framing to an individual or human

security framework has been brought about by the necessity to expand the term to include political, economic, social, and environmental risks. This framework of analysis emphasises freedom from fear and freedom from hunger while frequently integrating traditional security concerns with human development and other fundamental human needs (UNDP, 2021; King & Murray, 2020, pp. 592–593; Commission on Human Security, 2013).

In retrospect, the current state of human security in Africa paints a grim image. The biggest threat to the security of states and peoples on the continent, such as violent military conflicts and political violence, has been diminishing. However, in many African states, new security risks like poor socioeconomic conditions, frequent sectarian violence, climate change, food insecurity, and the spread of illicit SALW continue to be widespread (Ani & Bahl, 2019, p. 29). The spread of SALW in particular poses a serious threat to the pursuit of peace and stability since it is both a result and a cause of armed conflict in Africa. They have been dubbed the continent's weapons of mass destruction because their availability encourages armed conflict, violent crimes, and robberies. Africa is home to 100 million of the estimated 500 million small guns and light weapons in illegal circulation worldwide (African Union). Significant breaches of international

humanitarian law and human rights have been made possible by the ubiquitous availability of SALWs. Additionally, it has contributed to the emergence of a violent culture that threatens and, in many cases, has destroyed the social fabric of many African nations. Additionally, they have contributed to the emergence of the child soldier phenomenon. Thus, attempts at democratisation, good governance, and economic development have been hampered by SALW (Ogunbanjo & Adewale, 2021). More civilians have died directly and indirectly as a result of the use of SALW than due to weapons of mass destruction (Africa Recovery, 2021; Florquin & Berman, 2015).

The New Security Dilemma

The inadequate institutions of the African state are frequently unable to respond appropriately to both the old and new security challenges. This essay will critically analyse a few of the contemporary security issues, namely terrorism, transnational organised crime, and governance, all of which add to Africa's security dilemma in the twenty-first century.

The Governance Predicament

In Africa, the problem of good governance is nothing new. One of the most important facets of African governments' post-independence political histories has been governance—or poor governance. It has been the continent's

main source of instability. Political violence frequently results in military interventions and devastating intra-state conflicts due to a democratic deficit and a lack of transparent government (Ani & Bahl, 2019). In particular, poor governance, mental illness, poverty, group inequality, competition for resources, and weak and predatory institutions have all been blamed for conflicts and the ensuing humanitarian disasters (Duffield, 2021, pp. 15–16). In the face of a feeble civil society counterforce, discriminatory political arrangements and brittle, inefficient, and oppressive institutions are structural drivers of violence and conflict in Africa (Musah, 2020, p. 17). "Institutional corruption, ethnic/religious intolerance and extremism, manipulation of constitutions and electoral processes, organised crime, environmental degradation and food insecurity; demographic pressures, falling educational standards, and youth unemployment" are some examples of the structural causes that give rise to conflict triggers (Musah, 2020). Furthermore, the sub-regions' ongoing political instability is a result of the governance deficit, which includes both poor governance and oppressive policies as well as governments' inability to foresee conflicts and efficiently resolve them. Even where states are not involved directly in crisis situations, their responses to information on impending

conflicts have often been slow (Ani, Ado & Birikor, 2024).

Many African nations have successfully transitioned from full-blown military/civilian authoritarian rule to various forms of multiparty democracies, despite the constraints inherent in these transitions (Ukeje, 2018). It was anticipated that African nations would adopt good governance practices to establish the conditions necessary for stability and sustainable growth. These hopes were short-lived, though, as the majority of the continent's states and citizens have yet to reap the true benefits of democracy and sound governance. The majority of African governments are in different phases of institutionalising democracy and good governance, with the exception of a few nations like Mauritius, Cape Verde, Botswana, Seychelles, South Africa, Benin, and Ghana.

However, there is a mixed general trend in Africa. Both human development and sustainable economic opportunity have improved in some nations. The bulk of Africa's new administrations are mixed regimes with a tendency towards violence rather than full democracies, despite the reduction in military dictatorships and one-party systems. In order to advance emancipatory politics and stable security, Africa must undergo substantial political transformation. In other words, justice,

change, and people-based security (Williams, 2008). Democracy is more than just a remedy.

There have been instances in Guinea in 2021, Burkina Faso in 2022, Niger in 2023, Mali in 2021, and Guinea Bissau in 2023, despite the fact that military involvement is now less common in African politics. Attempts by incumbent leaders to tamper with constitutions and electoral laws in order to prolong their term in office are partially to blame for the resurgence of coups in the political landscape. Mass demonstrations by the public have occasionally resulted in violent outcomes due to confrontations between demonstrators and governmental security forces. For example, protests followed President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal's effort to run for a third term by amending the nation's electoral laws. Over a hundred people were hurt in altercations between demonstrators and police. As a result, tensions increased in a nation that had long been praised as a relative haven of peace in a volatile West African sub-region. Conflicts and tensions have resulted from elections that have not been free and fair in various African republics. In several African nations, election-related violence has resulted in thousands of deaths as well as the destruction of priceless assets and infrastructure. An estimated 3,000 people died as a result of the bloody post-election violence in Côte d'Ivoire, and more than a million were either internally displaced

or forced to escape as refugees to neighbouring countries. Human rights abuses and violations, including extrajudicial executions, mistreatment, arbitrary detention, excessive use of force, disappearances, and sexual violence, were also reported by both the state security forces and militias supporting either President Alassane Ouattara or former President Laurent Gbagbo (Amnesty International, 2018).

A fresh wave of political upheaval in North Africa known as the Arab Spring or Jasmine Revolution also caught Africa off guard. In several North African nations, including Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, mass uprisings against some of the longest-serving dictatorial dictators began in December 2010. Libya's Maumar Gaddafi responded violently to anti-government demonstrators and civilians, while Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali resigned during the demonstrations. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces were then authorised by a United Nations Security Council resolution (Resolution 1973) to employ all available means to defend civilians from Gaddafi's regime's systemic atrocities (United Nations, 2016). In the end, opposition fighters overthrew Gaddafi, caught him, and killed him.

The impacts of the Arab Spring have been twofold. On the one hand, they are noteworthy examples in the political history of the continent

of common people overthrowing dictatorships in order to remove their leaders, despite the clear legal issues (Sturman, 2019). However, the ensuing violence, particularly the fatal battles in Libya, led to widespread infrastructure devastation and civilian casualties (Okyere & Abdallah, 2019). Both casualties and flees were among the many victims who were civilians (International Crisis Group, 2019).

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has been clarified by the international community, especially as stated in Resolution 1973. In terms of safeguarding civilians, NATO's participation to implement the resolution is praiseworthy. But the quick switch from diplomacy to military force raises concerns about the mission's true purpose (Okyere & Abdallah, 2019). Additionally, the international community's attitude to violent repression in other non-African nations is very different from the strategy used in Libya. The question of whether this constitutes a new kind of interventionism in Africa is raised by this. The intervention in Libya appears to be a double standard if it is driven by the desire to shield vulnerable communities from violence (as the R2P norm promotes) or from the oppression of their own autocratic leaders (Okyere & Abdallah, 2019). In Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain, the international community has not reacted in a comparable manner.

Additionally, the Libyan crisis may have detrimental effects on Africa, West Africa, and the Sahel, including the spread of SALWs. According to reports, the Gaddafi dictatorship hired mercenaries from neighbouring African nations, including Niger, Mali, and Chad, and armed loyalists (Uppsala Conflict Database Programme, 2019). For example, the return of Gaddafi-trained and equipped Tuareg rebels to Niger raises grave worries about what new demands these groups might make of the precarious governments in Mali and Niger (De Kock & Snyman, 2019).

We know the answer in the instance of Mali, where the revolt in Northern Mali was reportedly rekindled by the return of hundreds of heavily armed Tuareg mercenaries who had fought for both Gaddafi and the National Transitional Council (NTC) rebels. The Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), whose members extend beyond Mali's borders into neighbouring Algeria and Niger, has been fighting for a distinct Islamic state in the north (Townsend, 2022). On March 22, 2012, mid-ranking military officials led by Captain Amadou Sonogo conducted a coup in response to a mutiny by certain army factions, which followed months of Tuareg insurgent attacks against the military and civilians. Just one month before the nation was scheduled to hold elections, there was a coup. President Amadou

Toumani Toure's administration, according to the coup makers in Mali, was not giving the army enough logistical support to put an end to the Tuareg insurgency. The country, which was undergoing a democratic transition, is now in a political crisis as a result of the separatist conflict and the coup, and it is more susceptible to security risks, particularly from terrorist organisations.

Since hostilities began, there has been little to no control over the Gaddafi arms depots (Townsend, 2022). Weapons under the control of opposition groups can end up in insurgent networks like al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) in the Sahel (De Kock & Snyman, 2019). For example, there is a good chance that al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has been responsible for insurgent activity in the region, even though the Tuareg insurgency has been blamed for the instability in Northern Mali (Hirsch, 2022).

Despite its flaws, the Arab Spring has resulted in several government changes in the aforementioned nations. How quickly the new or transitional governments in these nations can establish respectable institutions to guarantee seamless transitions to constitutional democracy is currently the crucial question. Rebuilding and developing Libya after the turmoil is difficult. Even once a constitutional government is established, the nation's

abundance of small guns and light weapons poses a serious challenge to establishing long-term peace and security. Insecurity and criminality are likely to persist since there are so many non-state actors and idle ex-combatants carrying weapons.

The Challenge of Transnational Organised Crimes

Drug trafficking, advanced-fee and internet fraud, human trafficking, diamond smuggling, forgery, cigarette smuggling, illegal firearms manufacturing, firearms trafficking, armed robbery and theft, piracy, money laundering, and oil smuggling are some of the various forms of transnational organised crime in Africa (Ani, 2018; 2021). Africa has become a duty-free port for organised crime as a result of these illicit economic transactions and the ensuing corruption (Le Sage, 2021). In terms of the drug trade, West Africa in particular has become a significant centre for transnational organised crime, including money laundering, oil bunkering, and drug trafficking. Every year, fifty tonnes of cocaine are transported via the sub-region, according to the UN Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) (UNODC, 2024). The sub-region has been the site of 99% of drug seizures on the continent since 2013. For example, Ghana, Cape Verde, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Guinea, and Senegal are among the West African maritime

states that have been identified as significant cocaine entry ports and have seen an increase in drug seizures (Winter, 2023). The coast of West Africa has become the main transit point for narcotics from Latin America into European markets as a result of the coordinated worldwide reaction against drug trafficking. This is due to the region's porous borders and inadequate state surveillance and law enforcement capabilities.

The growing activity of drug traffickers poses significant risks to human, national, and international security throughout West Africa and beyond, despite the fact that illicit economic activities, including the trafficking of drugs, are not new in Africa. According to Ani and Bahl, the drug problem should be viewed as a humanitarian issue since it is a strategic concern with long-term effects on not only the subregion but also Europe, the US, and Latin America (Ani & Bahl, 2019). The statement that "organised crime contributes to state weakness, impedes economic growth, fuels many civil wars, regularly undermines United Nations peace building efforts and provides financing mechanisms to terrorist groups" (United Nations, 2016, p. 27) is another succinct way that former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expresses this. Global social, economic, cultural, and democratic advancements are hampered by organised crime, which disproportionately affects

developing and vulnerable African nations. Due to the high number of fragile states that could act as breeding grounds for organised crime, organised crime poses a serious threat and presents significant challenges in Africa (Ani, 2021c). The true threat comes from the effects of drug money on public and private sectors as well as community institutions, even if drug-trafficking networks may be able to infiltrate and destroy the already precarious political, economic, and social systems throughout Africa, albeit to varied degrees. This mostly results from the interplay between pre-existing social, economic, and political weaknesses and the region's rising drug use and trafficking issues.

Furthermore, a conflictual relationship with the state is created by the degree to which external drug traffickers are able to form alliances with actors unrelated to the official state system, especially young challengers seeking social mobility in an exclusive system or former or current rebels (Felbab-Brown, 2020). This leads to political instability. There are numerous institutions in place in the majority of African nations that support the expansion of criminal organisations and their operations. Family, ethnic, cultural, and traditional aspects are among them. These systems, which are united by a shared cultural ethos, play a significant role in the persistence of criminal activity; in certain instances, this is due to the local community's

knowledge and unspoken support as well as the lack of vigorous law enforcement engagement (Vanda, 2021, pp. 155–156). In this illegal economy, certain state agents, politicians, and members of their families or local communities even play important roles (Jourde, 2021). Terrorist organisations, organised crime, and traffickers all have complex relationships and work together. Such cooperation frequently entails terrorist organisations and rebels offering traffickers safe passage. In exchange, the terrorists, rebel organisations, and criminals demand payment from the traffickers in the form of cash or in-kind taxes. The terrorist organisations then use the money collected from taxes to fund their operations (Ani, 2021b). Drug trafficking's destabilising consequences make it more difficult to achieve long-term peace and security on the continent and throughout the world (UNODC, 2024, p. 231).

The Threat of Terrorist Networks

The expanding operations of radical Islamists and terrorist organisations like AQIM, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and Boko Haram in Nigeria are closely related to or may be fuelled by transnational organised crime. Africa is becoming more concerned about the interrelated problems of political Islam and terrorism, as both have started to give conflict inside governments and within sub-regions new

dimensions. These days, political Islam is used as a vehicle for political mobilisation in a number of ways (Ani, 2017b). In particular, the violent criminal organisation AQIM, which is based in the Sahel-Saharan band (the Sahel-Saharan region extends from northwest Chad to Mauritania via Niger and Mali. This region is particularly vulnerable to terrorist infiltration, related destabilising forces like arms and human trafficking, and refugee flows from Sudan and Chad because it has the most porous borders in all of West Africa and is close to trouble spots in the Maghreb, including Algeria, Morocco, the Middle East, and the Persian Gulf), poses a serious threat to regional and international peace and security due to its primary activities, which include hostage-taking, bombings, and intimidating tourists and travellers (Ani, 2019; Ani, 2021b). AQIM is the only notable militia force that has survived Algeria's ten-year fight with Islamists in the 1990s. It was established in January 2007 after the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) swore allegiance to al-Qaeda's top leadership in the Arabian Peninsula. The organisation simultaneously bombed the Constitutional Court and the UN headquarters building in Algiers in December of that year (Le Sage, 2021). Concerns that AQIM is spreading throughout West and North Africa have been raised by the organization's persistent increase in kidnappings, attacks, and bombings in the

Sahel in recent years. In fact, it is now widely distributed over the Sahel (Goita, 2024). Their actions mostly consisted of opportunistic kidnappings of tourists and staff of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in major cities across the Sahel. However, AQIM's recent actions in the Sahel have increasingly combined low-level terrorism with criminal activity (Goita, 2024). These attacks have shown to be more sophisticated and capable of obtaining intelligence than in the past. For instance, it carried out midnight raids in Arlit, Niger, in September 2022 and abducted seven workers and their families from the Areva facility, a multinational nuclear services company based in France. This attack suggests a sophisticated information gathering network (Goita, 2024). AQIM is using Sahelian nations' incapacity to effectively govern their regions. It currently covers an area of many hundred thousand square km. More significantly, by integrating with local communities to progressively strengthen its foundation, expand its resource base, and build operational strength, AQIM can enhance its long-term strength and viability (Chikhi, 2023). According to Goita (2024, p. 2), AQIM's new Sahelian strategy may eventually lead to the creation of sanctuaries in the area, similar to Waziristan. Particularly in northern Mali, terrorist activity is growing in importance. Foreigners now steer clear of the area, which

was formerly a famous tourist attraction (Goita, 2024; Lohmann, 2023).

Security concerns include other terrorist organisations like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The actions of Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin, also known as Al-Shabaab, are the most recent terrorist threat in Eastern and Central Africa. The former Islamic Courts Union (al Itihaad al Islamiya), which ruled most of southern Somalia in the second half of 2016, gave rise to Al Shabaab. In the midst of decades of turmoil in Somalia, Al-Shabaab has gained popularity despite the Islamic Courts Union being driven out in a two-week conflict between December 2016 and January 2017 by the Somali government with the aid of Ethiopian forces. The gang is thought to be connected to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Since 2016, it has persisted in its violent insurgency against the Ethiopian allies of the transitional government in Somalia. Their goal is to establish Islamic Wahhabi governance in Somalia with the specific intention of spreading it throughout the Horn of Africa (National Counterterrorism Centre, 2020). By enlisting local sub-clans and their militias and employing terrorist tactics and guerrilla asymmetrical warfare against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia and its allies (African Union peacekeepers and nongovernmental aid organisations), the group has temporarily and

occasionally sustained control over key areas in southern and central Somalia (National Counterterrorism Centre, 2020). Al-Shabaab has drastically changed from a small, nationalistic youth militia that was primarily concerned with using conventional military tactics to expel Ethiopia to a hybrid movement that has embraced transnational terrorism and made an effort to present itself as a component of the al-Qaeda global jihad (Wise, 2021). For example, on July 24, 2019, during the first meeting of the AEWA Grey Crowned-crane International Working Group in Entebbe, Uganda, it took responsibility for the twin explosions that killed over forty persons. This was the organization's first significant assault outside of Somalia (Hanson, 2022). Kenya, Somalia's northeastern neighbour, requested support in October 2020 from the United Nations, member states of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Arab League, and other Islamic states to launch a military offensive in Somalia in order to combat Al-Shabaab, citing allegations of attacks on its security forces and the kidnapping and murder of tourists and aid workers within Kenya.

Africa's terrorist profile has expanded due to the growing threat posed by Boko Haram in Nigeria. Growing poverty, violent crimes, the ongoing conflict in the Niger Delta, and the frequent sectarian violence in the country's northern and central regions were Nigeria's biggest security concerns until recently. The increasing terrorist activity of Boko Haram and other affiliated groups has grown to be a significant security issue, even though these risks still exist. Islamic extremism has a long history in Nigeria, especially in the country's Muslim-majority north. For instance, Islamist militants from the Maitastine organisation gained prominence in Kano and other northern states throughout the 1980s, and they were at the epicentre of bloody conflicts with government troops (Institute for Strategic Studies, 2019). At various times, other organisations including the Muslim Brothers and the Muhajirin have carried out assaults. The Mahajirin group first attacked Maiduguri, the capital of the northeastern province of Borno, in 2003. They quickly started attacking police and government personnel, frequently taking guns and ammunition (IISS, 2019). These militant groups frequently united around shared issues, such as widespread corruption by the nation's leadership, injustice, worsening socioeconomic conditions (particularly in the north), high unemployment, and the rejection of Western values, which they believed had led society and some clerics to reject Islamic principles in favour of secularism (IISS, 2019). In northern Nigeria, Sharia was implemented in part in response to these requests.

Mohammed Yusuf led Boko Haram, which first appeared in Maiduguri in 2002 and was summarily executed in 2009 (IISS, 2019; Ani, 2022). The group's goal is to completely transform Nigeria into an Islamic state, which includes establishing Sharia courts all over the nation (Johnson, 2023). Since then, the group has mostly attacked security and government targets on a modest scale. It originally gained public attention in July 2009 when it began five days of fierce attacks on elites and westernised clergy in Maiduguri, killing over 700 people and driving out roughly 5,000. The magnitude of the bloodshed demonstrated that Boko Haram was more skilled and armed than government forces had anticipated and was able to organise thousands of people (Johnson, 2023). The bombing of the national police headquarters in Abuja in 2022, the burning down of a hotel in Maiduguri, and the suicide car-bombing of the UN facility in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, in August 2011 were among the other high-profile assaults for which it claimed responsibility. More than 100 people were killed in recent brutal attacks in the northeastern provinces of Borno and Yobe.

The external effects on the entire sub-region and the continent are important, even if the actions of Islamist organisations like Boko Haram are primarily driven by internal economic, political, and theological concerns. This is due to the possibility that expanding foreign assistance contributes to the sophistication of Boko Haram's attacks (Johnson, 2023). With a large network of roughly 1000 sympathisers, the group is currently estimated to have 300 combatants. Boko Haram may be connected to al-Qaeda, AQIM, and al-Shabaab (Johnson, 2023). In the face of inadequate surveillance measures, there is a risk that these organisations will band together to carry out widespread attacks throughout the area. Additionally, the organisation continues to pose a significant security risk in Nigeria, a regional power. Nigeria is already deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines. There is still a considerable risk of interethnic and religious conflict because about 25% of the population makes less than $1.25 per day. The north's high rates of unemployment and poverty, along with the region's growing population and the government's incapacity to properly handle non-state organisations, might make the northern states a perfect place for extremists to recruit and use as a launching pad to spread throughout the rest of the nation. The attacks in Abuja imply that this is already happening (Johnson, 2023).

Addressing the Governance Challenge in Africa's Security Situation

Promoting stability, security, and peace in Africa is primarily the responsibility of the

African Union (AU). The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in eastern Africa, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with which this is carried out. They are regarded collectively as a component of the African Peace and Security architecture (APSA). It is important to note, nevertheless, that while RECs, like as ECOWAS, are subsidiaries of the AU, their institutional capacity, internal organisation, and advantage in West Africa are frequently more advanced than those of the AU (Musah, 2020).

Good and democratic governance on the continent has been greatly aided by regional and sub-regional institutions as well as the international community. To promote the values of democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, and human security throughout the continent, the AU, for example, adopted a number of mechanisms, including the Constitutive Act (2002), the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance in Africa, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and the African Peer Review Mechanism. The problem of governance was acknowledged as a

fundamental component of other policy frameworks, such as the AU policy framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development. Simultaneously, RECs such as ECOWAS have built a number of comprehensive legal and normative tools to direct their efforts in addressing emerging threats to regional and human security on a more consistent and long-term basis (Musah, 2020, p. 17). The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, and the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security are noteworthy. Additionally, civil society has been recognised as a crucial ally in advancing security, stability, and peace throughout Africa.

A culture of zero tolerance for unlawful transfers of political power has been adopted by the AU and its RECs. Election monitoring and observation has been a major emphasis of the AU, RECs, UN, and the larger international community's efforts to promote good governance practices in both stable and post-conflict nations on the continent. These initiatives help to ensure the integrity of the processes and prevent violent aftermaths because of the tensions and occasionally violent nature of elections in Africa (African Union, 2019). The AU has also established a number of institutions, including the Peace and Security

Council and the Panel of the Wise, whose responsibilities include managing, preventing, and resolving conflicts, particularly those involving elections. In order to arbitrate and negotiate peaceful resolutions of post-election disputes, special missions have been sent to a number of nations. For example, the AU and ECOWAS launched a number of preventive diplomatic efforts to end the political impasse during the 2010 Côte d'Ivoire post-election conflict. The AU Peace and Security Council and the international community (particularly the UN and EU) later supported ECOWAS's unwavering position for Laurent Gbagbo to resign from office, which inevitably undermined Gbagbo's claim to the presidency even though these efforts yielded few concrete results. Gbagbo's will to maintain power was severely weakened by international financial sanctions, especially the freeze imposed by the West African Central Bank, which limited his ability to pay salaries to soldiers and public employees (McGovern, 2021; Ani & Salihus, 2022). Election-related violence in Africa has not entirely disappeared despite the continent's intense attention on elections, and other relevant governance issues like political violence, corruption, and the misuse of political incumbency still exist. Furthermore, peace and stability in the region are greatly impacted by the majority of African governments' failure to pursue sound socio-economic governance

through policies and initiatives that may result in real socio-economic growth for the continent's constantly expanding population, especially the youth. African institutions and leadership must focus especially on improving good governance on the continent in light of the destabilising impact of the youth bulge as well as other underlying economic, social, political, and structural concerns (Ani & Atta-Asamo, 2022).

Addressing the Danger of Transnational Organised Crime

At the national, sub-regional, and regional levels, numerous initiatives have been made to stop the spread of organised crime, particularly drug trafficking, throughout Africa. Because the West African coast is becoming a more significant actor in the global illicit drug trade, ECOWAS in particular has been crucial on this front. A statement titled "Community Flame Ceremony: The Fight against Drugs" was released by ECOWAS in 1998 during the 21st Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in Abuja. The Decision on Establishing the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (also known as GIABA, 1999) is one of ECOWAS's other initiatives (Ani, 2017a). Despite the existence of numerous institutional frameworks, there haven't been many real-world attempts to put them into practice. The

only exception is the operations undertaken by GIABA, which has been active in countering money laundering (ECOWAS Commission, 2008). The ECOWAS Commission has expressed increasing worry over the rise in drug trafficking and other related crimes, notwithstanding the absence of concrete results. In order to achieve this, the ECOWAS Commission was ordered to act immediately during the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government in June 2007. GIABA was then given permission to assess the scope of the issue and develop an ECOWAS approach. Two initiatives resulted from this preparatory work: the ECOWAS collaborative regional ministerial conference on drug trafficking and control was held in Praia, Cape Verde, in October 2008 (with assistance from UNODC, the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), and the EU), and a civil society meeting on drugs was held in Abuja, Nigeria, on October 16, 2008. "To accord drug control the priority it deserves and at the highest level of government as well as at the ECOWAS Commission" was promised in the conference's draft conclusion document (ECOWAS Commission, 2008). Additionally, the ECOWAS Commission was instructed to set up procedures to guarantee the declaration's operationalisation. The most crucial component of the new ECOWAS approach is that each state is responsible for addressing the drug

problem, even though this declaration has not yet been fully operationalised. As a result, national efforts will provide the regional solution. However, the problem lies in each member state's lack of devotion to their responsibilities within regional or continental organisations. The majority of regional and international decisions and resolutions result in very little practical action or successful policy implementation because of this low level of commitment. There are a number of reasons for this, including member states' lack of technological know-how to ensure state compliance. The absence of political will to act, however, is more unsettling. Translating such laws into local legislation takes time, even though the actual signature at the international level is typically completed swiftly (Ani, 2017a). The transnational cooperation that underpins these organisations is consequently undermined by the fact that both ECOWAS and AU initiatives have demonstrated that regional policy is essentially a reflection of national policies. Furthermore, there are no inspection or monitoring systems in place to impose penalties on governments that violate the law or engage in free-riding (Ani, 2017a).

Similarly, through actions and policies, the AU has adopted a continent-wide strategy to mitigate the possible detrimental impacts of transnational organised crime in Africa. The issue of organised crime was a top priority for

the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which preceded the African Union (AU) and enacted the OAU Plan of Action on Drug Control in 1996 (OAU, 1996; Ani, 2017c). However, the Plan of Action could not be carried out due to political instability in nations and regions, a lack of political will, a lack of follow-up, monitoring, and mobilisation systems, and insufficient institutional capacity. It was then updated during the 2002 AU Ministerial Conference on Drug Control. The updated Action Plan was intended to be in effect from 2002 to 2007. The development of institutions and policies; information, research, and networking; legal systems and law enforcement; integrated drug-demand reduction; national law enforcement and control capabilities; regional law enforcement and control measures; and international cooperation were determined to be the main areas of focus. An additional Action Plan for the years 2007–2012 was approved in 2007. The core objective of the plan of action is to reverse the current trends of drug abuse, trafficking, organised crime, corruption, terrorism and related challenges to socio-economic development and human security, and to achieve tangible improvement in the social and personal well-being of the people of Africa and the communities (African Union, 2019).

Response to Terrorist Networks

Despite their lack of success, governments and regional organisations throughout the region have responded to the emergence of terrorist networks in a number of ways. The international community frequently helps with this. For example, governments in the Sahel region have responded to AQIM in certain ways despite their operational and institutional limitations, but they have not been able to come up with a plan to combat AQIM's growing complexity and locally ingrained tactics (Goita, 2024; Ewig & Ani, 2023). Furthermore, some regional authorities have been reluctant to admit the growing danger. Decisions are frequently taken with minimal consideration for long-term effects in favour of immediate rewards. In nations like Mali, counterterrorism initiatives have been uneven and frequently involve excessively direct security measures. Though tensions and difficulties still exist, cooperation between neighbouring nations is improving significantly (Goita, 2024). Similar to this, the Nigerian government's efforts to pass comprehensive anti-terrorism laws since 2006 have encountered significant obstacles (Sampson & Onuoha, 2019). The government is currently heavily involved in military efforts to combat the Boko Haram scourge. For the extremely weak Somali state, the battle against Al-Shabaab seems difficult.

Combating terrorism has a lengthy history at the continental level. In 1992, the OAU issued

resolution AHG/Res. 213 (XXVIII) during its 28th Ordinary Summit in Dakar, Senegal, with the goal of strengthening member state coordination and collaboration in the fight against extremism. In a similar vein, the OAU Assembly adopted the declaration AHG/Decl. 2 (XXX) on the Code of Conduct for Inter-African Relations at its 30th Ordinary Summit in Tunis, Tunisia, in 1994. This declaration categorically condemned fanaticism and extremism as well as the use of religion to carry out violent acts, including terrorist acts (African Union, 2019). In order to prevent and combat terrorism, a number of high-level meetings and protocols have been adopted since 9/11. In an effort to combat terrorist activity on the continent, both the AU and the RECs have grown more involved. To harmonise policies, institutionalise information exchange, and facilitate cross-border judicial collaboration, these organisations will need to exercise greater leadership (Vanda, 2021). In order to reorganise and enhance security forces and livelihoods in the region, the international community—including the UN, US, EU, and other donors—is obviously needed in the form of communications capacity and training. Therefore, combating the growing transnational criminal businesses also requires cooperation with international governments.

The Development of China's Participation in Peace Operations

Beijing's attitude towards peace operations has evolved through four stages, according to He Yin (2018). The first stage, which lasted from 1971 to 1980, was marked by a lack of interest in these missions, if not outright hostility. From 1981 to 1987, the second phase showed a slow shift in mindset. In the third, which took place between 1988 and 1989, Chinese cooperation in some UN peace operations was accompanied by a number of challenges directed at others. The fourth period, which began in 1999, is characterised by an increasing amount of Chinese involvement in operations, even though there are still some concerns about specific matters.

China refrained from participating in UN peacekeeping operations during the first phase and did not even cover their expenses. But it's important to keep in mind that the Security Council approved the first US-led enforcement operation against China in 1951. Beijing then perceived all UN interventions as superpower ploys directed at weaker nations in the international system. This suspicion persisted long after Mao's time and was exacerbated by memories of the Korean War. In reality, Qian Qichen, the Foreign Minister at the time, claimed in 1990 that "the Chinese people still clearly remember that the Korean War was launched in the name of the United Nations," which is why Beijing was reluctant to back the enforcement mission in Iraq (cited in Kim,

2015, p. 423). According to Wang (2017, p. 70), "the majority of such UN actions were perceived as interference in countries' internal affairs and as the undesirable result of US-Soviet hegemonic power competition." Furthermore, concerns about China's diplomatic ability within the UN system cannot be understated because the PRC was just emerging from the Cultural Revolution at the time.

On the other hand, China was frequently accused of taking advantage of the international community and evading its obligations as a permanent member of the Security Council once it joined the UN. According to Kim (2015), China was accused of being a group of one that did not want to contribute to the global order but instead benefited from it. Beijing's general perspective on the UN didn't start to change until the 1980s. It's interesting to note, though, that when China did start to take a more active role, some in the West feared that it would stand in for the more traditional, conservative opposition to those who supported the more aggressive, evolving style of peacekeeping that involved possible meddling in recipient countries' domestic affairs.

After the Brahimi Report, traditional peacekeeping, which China initially supported, would still be useful in situations like the Ethiopian-Eritrean border war, but it would not be effective in modern civil wars, such as Darfur. Beijing's growing readiness to actively participate in peacekeeping operations is noteworthy because Chinese foreign policy has long been based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which includes a strong normative commitment to non-interference. It has undoubtedly started to influence a facet of China's Africa policy that most analysts had previously overlooked.

When China first joined the UN in 1971, it remained adamantly opposed to all peacekeeping efforts, declining to participate in Security Council votes on resolutions related to peace operations and even refusing to make the annual peacekeeping contributions required of it as a Security Council member. According to Mao's doctrine of just war, China saw peacekeeping as an act of superpower "power politics," a pretext used to justify US or Soviet meddling in the affairs of tiny states, therefore sending troops to peace operations was definitely out of the question (Fravel, 2016, p. 1104).

In 1981, as China's modernisation drive continued at a rapid pace, it voted in favour of such peacekeeping resolutions as an extension of the UN mission in Cyprus and started to disburse its yearly peacekeeping contribution. This is a more detailed example of how Chinese views evolved. From 1981 until 1990, it

endorsed every resolution pertaining to UN peace operations (Morphet, 2020). This shift in policy resulted from the CPC's adoption of a "independent foreign policy of peace" (duli zizhu de heping waijiao zhengce), which was incorporated into the PRC's amended constitution at the Twelfth National Congress in 1982. It was a reflection of policymakers' recognition that China needed a stable and peaceful world in order to carry out its plans for modernisation and economic development:

"Peace" mean[t] that China began to formulate its foreign policy from the viewpoint of whether it [was] beneficial to international and regional peace instead of [to the pursuit of] military superiority, while "independence" mean[t] that China began to formulate its foreign policy according to its national interests and the common interests of peoples of all the countries in the world (Xia Liping, 2020, p. 18).

This included keeping "equidistant" ties with both the US and the USSR and generally adopting a "more positive [attitude towards] UN affairs" (Pang Zhongying, 2021, p. 90).

In the name of the developing world, where peace operations were most likely to occur, the doctrine also enabled China to act as a counterbalance to the superpowers. Beijing was yet "stak[ing] out a particularly narrow interpretation of the international community's

right to intervene . . . predicated upon an interpretation of sovereignty as a virtually sacred right of states" (Carlson, 2022, p. 221).

However, as the 1990s progressed, Beijing reluctantly started to acknowledge the emergence of global political trends that worked against this rigid position. China changed course for three main reasons, according to a May 29, 2007, China Daily article by Wu Miaofa of the China Institute of International Studies. Beijing first realised that while "many of the long-standing conflicts [could not] be permanently resolved by peacekeeping efforts alone . . . peacekeeping [could] alleviate crises and provide strong support for developing countries suffering from a lack of allies as well as their own weaknesses," UN peacekeeping operations were "an important means of maintaining international peace and security." Wu also mentioned that a Chinese study of peacekeeping efforts "conducted between 1948 and 2000 revealed that a total of 54 missions concerning 52 countries mostly involved developing nations." According to Wu, China's self-image as the de facto leader of the developing world drove it to alter its policy because "quite a few commanders of peacekeeping troops were from developing countries" and "some developing countries also joined peacekeeping operations, including seven African, six Asian, and six Latin

American nations." Ultimately, China reevaluated its place in the global system as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and came to the conclusion that, "despite undesirable aspects, the current international order [could] drive the growth of productivity; it remain[ed] a long-term task to build a new international political and economic order; [and thus] China should join other developing countries in pushing the international political and economic order in a more sensible direction." Using the UN peacekeeping mechanism was part of this (ibid.).

Chinese leaders are becoming more confident as China's economic and political influence grows, allowing them to commit to selective engagement in foreign affairs. This also applies to peacekeeping.

Participating in the UN's peace operations is another way that the Chinese want to gather experience (He Yin, 2018). Actually, China gains a number of significant advantages from participating in UN peace operations, according to Drew Thompson (2022). First, involvement increases Beijing's power not only in areas where Chinese peacekeepers are stationed but also on the UNSC and among other UN voting members, including those representing Africa, who are therefore more likely to continue offering helpful assistance during trying times. Second, as "the most self-conscious rising

power in history . . . and is desperate to be seen as a benign force," China's participation in peace operations enhances its standing as a responsible global power (Christian Science Monitor, June 27, 2017). Third, China strengthens its strategic position in areas, especially in Africa, whose resources can be essential for supplying China's energy demands by taking part in peace operations. Additionally, as was previously mentioned, China is also filling a big void left by Western UNSC members who support peace operations financially but often avoid sending sizable numbers of troops. As noted by Bonny Ling (2017, p. 48), "This has unquestionably improved China's strategic positioning at the UN, especially since peacekeeping is the single most prominent aspect of any UN activities on the ground."

Shortly after UN peacekeeping troops won the Nobel Peace Prize, China joined the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (UNSCPO) and participated in its first UNPKO in 1988 (Staehle, 2016). In 1990, it dispatched five military observers to join the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in the Middle East after sending non-military officials to watch Namibia's general elections the year before. Beijing later approved the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1993, sending in a military battalion in addition to funding a significant

portion of the operation. According to Wang (2017), p. 76, these actions marked a "significant departure from [China's] past behaviour in multilateral diplomacy for collective security purposes." As a means of escaping the brief diplomatic isolation experienced following Tiananmen Square in 1989 (Roy, 2022, pp. 147–148), "since the early 1990s, the Chinese . . . [have] consistently finessed the meaning of these principles [regarding sovereignty] in order to create a rhetorical space for [their] acquiescence in various 'Western'-sponsored UN operations" (Carlson, 2022, p. 218).

China, however, continued to exercise caution when it came to peacekeeping, reiterating its opposition to using force whenever a state's sovereignty was violated. Beginning in the mid-1990s, "Beijing saw problems as the lines between peacekeeping and peacemaking became fuzzier; as expansion was accompanied by civilian missions concerned with human rights, refuges, and inspections; and as these missions had less-than-complete support from host nations" (Gill, 2020, p. 116). According to a Western scholar, it "seemed that an era might be dawning in which Western governments, freed from the constraints of the Cold War, and would use their armies to save strangers in remote locations" (Wheeler, 2020, p. 172). Consequently, China's involvement in UNTAC was not repeated in subsequent missions. This

was partly due to [its] attitude toward the principles of state sovereignty and its concern about the use of force in peacekeeping operations. These issues only served to highlight the emerging contradictions and ambiguities with regard to China's position on the nature of peace operations (Pang Zhongying, 2021, p. 91).

As a result, China abstained from the Security Council resolutions authorising or expanding the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Yugoslavia, Operation Provide Comfort in Iraqi Kurdistan, Operation Turquoise in Rwanda, and Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti (Carlson, 2022, p. 224). China was obviously supporting traditional peacekeeping efforts while engaging in a rearguard struggle against modern peace operations that required military enforcement. In essence, it was an opposition to "mission creep," which China saw as "the United Nations becoming an instrument of 'hegemonism'" (Gill 2020, p. 116).

Beijing supported Chapter VII resolutions pertaining to Iraq prior to the first Gulf War (1990–1991), although it put a lot of effort into removing proposals that called for the use of military action (Staehle, 2016). China abstained when the UN did pass Resolution 678, which called for the use of all available tools, including military force. Nonetheless, Beijing persisted in supporting conventional

peacekeeping operations like the 1994 UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), which it perceived as proving the effectiveness of conventional peacekeeping, as part of its attempt to restore its reputation abroad after 1989; as a Chinese analyst put it:

The experience of ONUMOZ has proved that as long as the two parties to the conflict are sincere about resolving their problems through negotiations and unswervingly implement the agreements reached by the parties, it is highly possible for them, with the help of the international community, to end yesterday's suffering and open up a new vista (quoted in Choedon, 2018, p. 43).

But when those parties opposed the implementation of peace agreements, China found it more difficult to decide what to do. China has generally opposed deviations from both Chapter I (which forbids the use of force "against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state") and Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which stipulates that peacekeeping operations must be impartial, have the consent of all parties involved in the conflict, use peacekeeping methods other than force, and have a prior ceasefire agreement between the parties. These continue to be the legal foundation for China's backing of peacekeeping efforts, and their violation

naturally serves as the foundation for Chinese resistance (Carlson, 2022).

However, it should be mentioned that China supported the United Task Force (UNITAF) and its UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) as one of its initial peacekeeping missions in Africa. UNOSOM was sent up to keep an eye on the ceasefire between warlords, even though they continued to employ violence and their militias were abusing and robbing humanitarian aid. The UNITAF mission was approved under Chapter VII as a result of the interception of humanitarian aid. China backed UNITAF but made it apparent that it saw the situation as unique since chaos was raging in Mogadishu due to the lack of a government—a crucial factor from its perspective. Beijing's stance was shaped by the fact that it "did not want to be perceived as obstructionist by casting vetoes on UNSC resolutions related to Somalia and hindering humanitarian assistance." This was particularly true because, after the Tiananmen event in 1989, it already had a negative reputation overseas, particularly in the West (He Wenping, 2019, p. 29).

Beijing once more backed UNOSOM II under Chapter VII after UNITAF had finished its duty, arguing that Somalia was a transitory exception and that regular peacekeeping operations were to be restarted as quickly as feasible. But China reversed course as violence

broke out between UN forces and Somali militias, culminating in the notorious Black Hawk Down event. "The torturous experience in Somalia has taught the lesson that peacekeeping must be limited to peacekeeping," for example, according to the Beijing Review. Only the citizens of a nation are capable of resolving its internal problems. The international community's actions can only be supplemental or beneficial (cited in Fravel, 2016, p. 1114). Li Zhaoxing, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, also declared that "peaceful means are the fundamental and effective way to settle the Somali question." Coercive military action will only make things more difficult (Fravel, 2016, pp. 1113–1114).

Importantly, the Mogadishu fiasco led to Washington's de facto refusal to participate in attempts to halt the Rwandan slaughter of 1994. China, which was similarly reluctant to get involved, has received less criticism than the United States and other Western nations, who have been (rightly) chastised for refusing calls to intervene. 3. The French actually began deploying before the Resolution was ratified, but it wasn't until June 1994 that a multinational force was approved under Chapter VII to stabilise the situation. It was considerably later that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) attained the necessary military strength for deployment. Despite the fact that the resolution authorising the Chapter

VII mandate highlighted the mission's temporary and unique nature, China abstained from the vote on the grounds that the mission did not have the consent of all parties involved in the fighting, giving the genocidaires an implicit veto on the vote to halt their butchering.

China consented in principle to support the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in May 1997. That same year, however, it actively warned against interfering in African nations' internal affairs under the pretence of peace operations. It supported the creation of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA), but voiced concern that the mission's military component might become entangled in matters that, by rights, belong to other UN departments. China's UNSC representative, Wang Xue Xian, said at the time that "China had reservations on certain elements of the draft resolution and on aspects of the observer mission's mandate" and that "as a principle, the Security Council should not get involved in those activities which fall under the terms of reference of other United Nations bodies" (quoted in United Nations Security Council, 1997).

The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), which sought to stabilise and reorganise the republic's armed forces, raised comparable issues for China. China's UNSC representative, Lin Chengxun,

voted in favour of extending MINURCA's term but noted that although the mission had played a great role and . . . demonstrated that the Security Council could do concrete work for African countries and people . . . reforms, especially the restructuring of the armed forces, [are] the internal affairs of a country. Therefore, the Council should not intervene too much in that area (quoted in United Nations Security Council, 1999).

Beijing was especially concerned about the events in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999 because NATO's air campaign alerted Chinese policymakers to the risks of non-UN-mandated meddling in domestic affairs. Beijing viewed the NATO effort as extremely difficult, if not dangerous, and was vehemently opposed to it. Indeed, angry, anti-Western nationalism proved hard to control when NATO missiles struck the Chinese embassy in Belgrade on May 7, 1999. China's capital held the opinion that the United States, the coalition's primary organiser and contributor, was determined to impose its ideal of a proper global order on the rest of the globe, even if doing so necessitated using force (Dreyer, 2017, p. 3).

However, given that "the shock of [it] and especially the embassy bombing compelled Chinese strategists to seek new ways to ensure Chinese influence over the methods and processes of international intervention," the Kosovo campaign may have been a beneficial catalyst for policy changes in China (Gill & Reilly, 2020, p. 48). This change clarifies China's endorsement of a 1999 mandate for the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to assist elections, carry out a Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) program, and facilitate the delivery of aid to the nation (Staehle, 2016, p. 41). While acknowledging the rights and obligations of the Sierra Leonean government, which in turn fully supported the mission, UNAMSIL was authorised under Chapter VII to protect civilians and secure the safety of its soldiers. China was therefore more than happy to assist it. China's position on peacekeeping was obviously compatible with safeguarding the distribution of humanitarian aid and patrolling key areas in Sierra Leone.

As we shall see, China participated in peace-support operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, and Sudan in later missions because they all specifically restricted the use of military force to the protection of UN personnel and civilians in imminent danger, and "interference" in domestic affairs was not a problem. In summary, as long as they were strictly limited, China consented to peace-support missions that included aspects of peace enforcement.

However, China's attitude has grown more nuanced as the UNSC has embraced a broader definition of what qualifies as a threat under Chapter VII. 4. Beijing continues to insist on obtaining the host nation's approval before approving activities based on violations of human rights. The UN Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which was established with Kinshasa's consent following the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999, was thus unquestionably supported by China. In North and South Kivu as well as the Ituri district, where the UNSC has found grave violations of human rights, MONUC is authorised by Chapter VII to take the appropriate steps to enhance security. Regardless of how practically restricted MONUC's reach may have been in the relevant areas, the Congolese government was a willing host nation because it was a major signatory to the initial agreement for the cessation of hostilities in the DRC, which is significant for China. China's stance was based on the literal definition of "host nation" (dangshi guo), which is defined as "the state that is a party" in its Defence White Paper of 2002 (a modification of the 1998 White Paper) (Information Office of the State Council, 2002). According to this definition, "where state authority is either highly disputed or effectively nonexistent," as in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is not absolutely necessary for all parties to consent to UN intervention (Gill & Reilly, 2020, p. 44).

The situation in Darfur stands in sharp contrast, since Beijing first blocked attempts to include foreigners in enhancing security circumstances. Therefore, while the UN team in Sudan (UNMIS) had been operating in southern Sudan since early 2005, sending a team to operate in Darfur required significant efforts, frequently in the face of Chinese opposition. At first, Khartoum only permitted a mediocre effort by the African Union, while Beijing consistently supported Sudan's refusal to permit a more invasive and totally multinational operation. Beijing insisted that it would only support peace-support activities with an invitation from the host nation, and this persisted even when it became evident that the African Union's capacity to defend Darfurians was minimal (McGovern, 2021).

But since late 2006, Beijing has shown a greater openness to discuss Darfur with the international community and has begun to put pressure on Khartoum to change its ways and participate in a political process for a peaceful end to the conflict. The primary causes of Beijing's policy shift were the intense worldwide condemnation of China's involvement in Sudan and the growing damage to Beijing's reputation as a result of its tight ties to Khartoum. Beijing then supported UNSC

Resolution 1769, which established UNAMID, a hybrid United Nations African Mission in Darfur. Although China occasionally supported the Sudanese government's resistance to its full implementation, Hu Jintao urged Sudan to cooperate in permitting the deployment of peacekeeping forces into Darfur as part of UNAMID by mid-June 2008, making it abundantly evident that Chinese patience had run out. In fact, it was reported that Hu used unusually direct language when urging Khartoum to make a greater effort to resolve the Darfur war during a meeting with Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha, the vice president of Sudan. Due mostly to Khartoum's intransigence, little more than half of the 26,000 troops who were scheduled to be stationed in Darfur had actually arrived by the middle of 2008. According to one report:

Hu's comments and their prominent publication . . . are part of an increasingly open Chinese diplomatic campaign to persuade Sudanese leaders to cooperate more with international efforts to end the fighting in Darfur. . . . China has come under criticism from human rights activists for failing to pressure Khartoum forcefully enough [and] the official portrayal of [the] meeting was seen as a departure from China's usual style of quiet diplomacy and ritual proclamations of friendship (Washington Post, 2018).

As a result, China's stance on peacekeeping missions has clearly changed, moving away from the strict protection of sovereignty and non-interference that is typically seen as defining Chinese foreign policy (Carlson, 2022).

Incongruity but Also Development

Even when sanctioned by the UN, China has historically been cautious about becoming involved in other nations' affairs and continues to have doubts that the UNSC approves Chapter VII mandates too easily. However, Beijing has been forced to reverse course in several areas of its foreign policy as it has grown into an economic behemoth. One such change is a constant commitment to supporting peace operations, as opposed to an absolute refusal to do so in any situation. Nowadays, China contributes significantly to the UN's peacekeeping efforts, the majority of which are in Africa (three-quarters of all Chinese forces deployed under the UN serve in Africa). Additionally, it keeps up two training centres for peacekeepers, one in Langfang, Hebei, and one in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. Major-General Zhao Jingmin became the first Chinese national to lead a UN mission when it was reported in August 2007 that he would be appointed force commander for MINURSO (Xinhua, 2007).

Beijing has been pressured by world leadership in numerous ways. Expectations that Beijing would (and should) play a bigger role in international relations have become practically universal as China's economy has grown tremendously and its trade profile has grown globally. Additionally, when it comes to domestic security issues, "China has gradually realised that peacekeeping missions can help to secure a peaceful international environment, which works in China's national interest as the country begins to build a sound external environment for its long term economic growth and social development" (Pang Zhongying, 2021, p. 97).

Beijing's foreign policy officials are trying to respond to criticism of China's growing prominence, especially in Africa, which has included accusations of neo-colonialism. China is participating in peace operations as a means of projecting a more benign and even favourable image since it is acutely aware of its reputation around the world. "Wherever they go or whatever they do, [Chinese peacekeepers] always bear in mind that they are messengers of peace, representing China," stated Dai Shao'an, vice-director of the Ministry of Defense's Peacekeeping Affairs Office. Our peacekeepers are devoting their own hearts and minds to

winning hearts and minds (China Daily, 2017).

A scholar from China concurs that:

active participation [in peace operations] is a demonstration of China's commitment to the UN and its security functions as mandated by the UN Charter. It is not only useful for serving China's moral cause or fulfilling its international responsibility in the post–Cold War era. It also provides an arena in which China can learn to interact with the international community in ways commensurate with its status as a rising power (Pang Zhongying, 2021, p. 87).

According to Elizabeth Economy of the Council on Foreign Relations, China's involvement in Africa is especially crucial since it aims to reassure the world that it is not driven only by its need for resources: There are several hazards to its reputation. According to the Washington Post (2018), "being seen as a force for peace and security is an important and good first step."

Even while its actual contributions to various peace operations are minimal, Beijing is already gradually building a reputation for being at the forefront of conflict resolution in Africa. In fact, a number of African pundits have praised China for its comparatively good diplomatic image in relation to peace efforts in Africa. For example, Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf said

that "Liberians will never forget the friendship of Chinese peacekeeping soldiers" and praised China for helping Liberia maintain peace (People's Daily, 2017).

It is interesting to note that during a UNSC mission to Addis Ababa in June 2006, the Chinese were the ones who pushed for the deployment of peacekeepers to Somalia; this was "the first time [China] had taken the lead in the fifteen nation council in promoting foreign intervention to resolve a conflict thousands of miles from its own borders" (Washington Post, 2018). Chinese reports claim that African governments put pressure on China to bring up the matter with the Council. But according to Princeton Lyman, a former US ambassador with knowledge of Sino-African relations, China is trying to gain diplomatic points by backing important regional allies like Ethiopia, which sent thousands of troops to Somalia to defend the official interim government (Washington Post, 2018).

The Fundamental Structure of Post-Colonial Defence and Security

In order to pacify regions of the continent where more or less organised resistance to colonial dominance had to be militarily suppressed (and the ambitions of its major rivals at the time, notably Great Britain, checked), France's involvement in and, to some extent, its shaping

of Africa's security environment can be said to have begun with its colonial enterprise centuries ago. This engagement persisted throughout the colonial era, when maintaining the subjection of resistant colonial subjects and enforcing the colonial rule required the deployment of military, frequently violent force. According to Young (2019, pp. 33–34), the postcolonial state's character and interactions with the governed were largely shaped by the colonial authorities' unfettered use of force as a tool of government and their philosophy of doing so. However, France was instrumental in creating the framework that would define (Francophone) Africa's defence and security framework for the majority of the last sixty years during the independence era, beginning in the 1960s, when the colonial system proved unsustainable.

Given the backdrop of a raging Cold War, France set out to reshape its connections with its former colonies in all spheres as the end of the colonial relationship seemed unavoidable, particularly in the domain of security and defence. However, in order to protect and maintain France's geopolitical and strategic interests on the continent, the soon-to-be independent colonial territories were viewed as only junior participants in a larger security strategy. "The French government's objective in creating African national armies at the time of independence was to build up units that could

work closely with French units and effectively serve as branches of the French army overseas," according to a renowned expert on Franco-African relations (Martin, 2022, p. 178).

Numerous bilateral defence and security agreements were formed with each newly independent state within this worldwide political framework and unwavering resolve. France and the majority of its former colonies signed three dozen accords between 1960 and 2020; Zimbabwe, a former British colony, was added much later (Renou, 2024, p. 40). Naturally, the agreements were customised to each country's relative geopolitical importance, but they all included some of the following, frequently in combination: military cooperation, including the presence of French military advisors and technical assistants; a commitment from France to the country's defence and internal stability; and, in certain instances, the stationing of French troops on African soil. African nations were also required by these agreements to purchase French military hardware and weapons as well as to sell France strategic materials either exclusively or with priority. The economic component of these agreements is sometimes disregarded, but as Guy Martin has repeatedly shown, France was highly motivated by its economic interests and its access to the strategically important mineral resources of African nations on very favourable terms (Martin, 2023). In a twisted way, this

privileged access to Africa's important minerals led to France becoming extremely, possibly dangerously, dependent on these strategic minerals (varying from 100% on uranium, 90% on bauxite, to 31% on iron ore) (Martin, 2023, p. 171).

Secret sections in some of these accords were seen as committing France to both the personal protection of heads of state and the survival of regimes (Chaigneau, 2020; Chipman, 2019, 2020; Luckman, 2017; Crocker, 2016). In a few unique instances, French presidents reaffirmed their commitment to intervene militarily if French interests so required, whether or not an African head of state requested it. This was in addition to overt clauses that commit France to intervening to repel external aggression and restore political order when threatened by domestic opposition, whether armed or not. Eventually, it was discovered that undated, signed demands for French assistance were frequently stored in the safe of the French embassy to be handled as needed. Naturally, France had the last word on whether or not to grant the request (Chaigneau, 2020). In fact, France frequently took action to defend or preserve favourable governments, as well as to overthrow (or allow to overthrow) administrations that lost favour.

In his February 2008 speech in Cape Town, President Nicolas Paul Sarkozy, the 23rd President of France, made explicit reference to these ambiguous clauses and their impact on the majority of critics' perceptions of Franco-African relations. The speech was framed as an expression of France's will to write a new page of its relations with the continent (more on this below). The prevailing relationship was one in which France had complete control over a network of permanent military outposts, known as dispositif, located in Djibouti, Gabon, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire. These sites allowed France to intervene anywhere in Africa for reasons that only it could decide. Although they had decreased from their peak of 30,000 in the 1960s, there were only 15,000 personnel in the late 1980s during the height of French military action on the continent (French White Paper, 2008). Combat planes, helicopters, troop transport, and electronic surveillance assets are among the pre-positioned weapons and equipment that accompany these troops to facilitate force projection.

For the military installations in Dakar and Côte d'Ivoire, the circumstances have changed recently. At the request of the Senegalese government, France and Senegal negotiated the closure of the Ouakam facility near Dakar, symbolically to commemorate Senegal's 60th anniversary, albeit with some unspoken tensions. Only Gabon and Djibouti remained

permanent military sites for France. Beyond the dispositif, France may also rely on its external operations capabilities, which it has periodically deployed and utilised in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), Rwanda, and its former colonies on the continent (Hébert, 2022). Throughout the four final decades of the twentieth century, France was able to make significant contributions to security-related events on the continent because to these agreements with its former colonies. France did, in fact, do whatever it pleased "and [did] get away with it," as Golan would put it, whether it was in 1964 in Gabon to restore power to President Leon M'Ba, who had been the victim of a coup d'état, or in 1979 to launch a military operation to overthrow an embarrassing emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa of the CAR, or carrying out Operation Turquoise during the Rwandan genocide. In certain places, like Zaire and the Comoros, France was content to leave the work to mercenaries.

Despite Golan's opinion, Xavier Renou made a strong case that France may have overreached in its actions in central Africa after taking full advantage of its former colonies. It was specifically accused of supporting the Habyarimana administration in Rwanda to the extent of aiding and abetting the 1994 genocide. Renou claims that this led to catastrophic results in the region, including widespread human

suffering, institutional collapse, and a strong backlash both domestically and on the continent. As a result, France was forced to adapt to these sentiments, emerging financial constraints, harsh realities on the ground, and new developments in the international system (Renou, 2024).

The Unpredictability of the Security and Defence System

There is widespread agreement among observers of France's relations with Africa in general and Francophone Africa in particular that France's influence on the defence and security agenda on the continent did change beginning in the 1990s due to the convergence of all the factors Renou mentions. Naturally, the end of the Cold War in 1989 was the first major cause. Franco-African ties were significantly impacted by the ideological struggle between the Soviet Union and the West. It did, in fact, justify France's unwavering support of some of the most cruel and oppressive governments. The most prominent was Mobutu, for whom France had to repeatedly intervene militarily. However, in order to stop communism from spreading throughout Africa and to maintain a sizable voting bloc firmly on the side of the West in the UN, France also provided diplomatic, political, and military support to authoritarian regimes in Burkina Faso (Compaoré), Togo (Eyadema), Côte d'Ivoire (Houphouet Boigny), and Gabon (Bongo).

Before winning the election, the socialists vehemently condemned the dubious ties that came to characterise Franco-African defence and security relations, beginning with General Charles de Gaulle and ending with President Valery Giscard d'Estaing's scandals involving diamonds from Central Africa in exchange for political support for Emperor Bokassa. The Gaullist regime's shadowy, personalised relationships with almost all African conservative regimes, which were developed over the years from the Africa cell in the Élysée Palace by Jacques Foccart, an eminent Gaullist president, were particularly despised by the socialists. Despite President François Mitterrand's designation of his own son, Jean Christophe Mitterrand, as "Mr. Africa," the same intimate relationships and interactions persisted. Senior advisor for "African Affairs" is a role that should only be filled by members of the president's close inner circle and involves handling sensitive matters that are best kept under wraps. In the end, these affairs were about high state-to-state security issues, including regime maintenance in a generally coup-prone climate, even though some of them entailed dubious activities, such recycling illegal money, as was later discovered.

Beginning with the La Baule summit in June 1990, France started to rhetorically admit the connection between France's connections to African regimes and (poor) governance in African nations as the Cold War logic faded. President François Mitterrand's announcement that France will henceforth attach its financial assistance to the democratisation initiatives to be carried out in African nations was a stark break from earlier, long-standing practices. Evidently, the security and defence architecture that ensured the stability and, in certain cases, the survival of numerous francophone African regimes was at risk, going beyond simple financial assistance.

Most Franco-African summit-going heads of state, who had long depended on France's unshakeable support, were surprised by the speech and were forced to consider the new realities brought about by the fall of the Soviet Union. The defence and security framework that had been in place for the previous thirty years would be altered by what was to be called "La Baule Doctrine." The most established authoritarian governments were forced to quickly adapt to the new French decree due to the psychological impact, but France itself began to realise the consequences of the new policy in the emerging geopolitical landscape of the early 1990s.

The language imposed by the "democracy" and "good governance" discourse of the 1990s took on a life of its own and impacted the expectations and views of both Africans and French people, especially the impatient and disappointed African civil society. In reality, however, what was lacking was the political will of both sides' policymakers to truly establish the conditions for drastically changing their defence and security compact and to genuinely adapt it to the democratic imperatives in the relationship itself, in domestic institutions, and in the actions of the security sector actors involved.

According to Pascal Chaigneau (2020, p. 51), neither France nor its African allies truly envisioned a complete makeover, and even after the La Baule statements, neither felt the need to deliberately challenge the foundations of their security arrangements. The security setup developed thirty years prior would not be significantly altered by the new democratic age. This encapsulates the essential paradox inherent in that configuration.

However, things were made more difficult by the fact that several crises began to emerge in Francophone Africa right after the conclusion of the Cold War (such as the Tuareg uprisings in Mali and Niger, as well as instability and widespread violence in the Great Lakes regions). Conversely, it contributed to the swift

postponement of the pursuit of good governance in general and more democratically minded defence and security ties in particular. The French administration made it clear that it was prepared to abandon the La Baule Doctrine during the Libreville and Bearitz Francophone summits, which serves as an example of this reversal. Then, African heads of state were advised by socialist Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy that if they had to choose between democratisation, development, and security, they should prioritise security (which is undoubtedly defined as regime or state security), then economic development, and finally democratisation (Glaser & Smith, 2022, p. 102). In 1990, Gaullist Jacques Chirac, who would be elected president of France in 1995, declared without hesitation that Africa was not ready for democracy. Clearly, realpolitik and the realistic reassessment of what was in the strategic and political interest of France and its partner governments quickly replaced the La Baule attitude. In this instance, adhering to the La Baule Doctrine might have been too unstable to support France's postcolonial agreements with its African allies. This merely serves to highlight "the perennial tension between continuity and change in Franco–African relations," as Guy Martin has concluded, as France was able to preserve a skilful "creative ambiguity" in its declarations and actions about African policy (Martin, 2023, p. 182).

Thanks in part to French assistance, Togo's President Gnassingbe Eyadema managed to remain in office in the middle of the 1990s despite EU sanctions. French bureaucracy underwent institutional readjustments as a result of the post-Cold War era's new political and economic realities, as well as factors specific to the French political system itself, such as a redesign of France's security posture (merger of the Ministry of International Cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Although Chafer points out that between 1994 and 2014, French financial assistance fell by 13.2 billion Francs, or 27%, both in real terms and as a percentage of GDP, these bureaucratic changes were expected to have an impact on the structure and content of Franco-African relations (Tony, 2020, p. 352). However, it should be mentioned that France is still the largest investor in Africa, having invested close to US$6.5 billion in 2020. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to receive the largest share of French aid to the developing world, despite a decline in its share from 59% in 2017 to 43% in 2021 (Barrios 2023, pp. 3-4). Although France's security measures are inevitably impacted by these economic factors, authorities also have to take other political factors into account.

The "Neither, nor" Interlude

Ironically, the proliferation and intensification of Africa's many security crises as well as the quickly evolving and more difficult global environment worked together to prevent a fundamental change in the Franco-African defence and security framework, at least not to the detriment of France's interests. These two factors also prompted France to come up with innovative ways to "Africanize" and "multilateralize" efforts to deal with the growing number of crises in Africa while adjusting to a new financial strictness imposed by its own challenging economic circumstances and the responsibilities of its European leadership. Additionally, the framework was affected differently by the French political phenomena of cohabitation in the late 1990s, when right-wing Gaullist President Jacques Chirac and socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin shared power. As previously mentioned, French elites on both sides of the political spectrum generally hold different opinions about the military interventions that have been a regular feature of French policy in Africa since the 1960s, despite their agreement on the necessity of advancing French interests and dominance in the continent. The Socialists' strategy was essentially a "neither interference, nor indifference" (or "neither, nor" proposition) when a crisis arises, even though they did not give up the right to intervene in Africa (Martin, 2022, p. 95). The warning was that France shouldn't step in only to protect a (usually conservative) political regime that was under threat from armed or non-armed political opposition.

President Chirac declared in 1996 that the era of military interventions was over after taking office, undoubtedly realising that Franco-African relations could no longer be maintained. However, he acknowledged that France still had obligations to an Africa that was still experiencing security crises. In order to understand this statement, it is important to remember that, as Martin notes, France intervened militarily no fewer than fifteen times between 1986 and 2016 to save some of its most steadfast allies that were in danger of being overthrown by resurgent opponents, at significant financial expense (Martin, 2022, p. 181).

The 1999 military takeover of Côte d'Ivoire was one of the test instances of this coexistence in international affairs and the declared policy of the French president. For instance, Côte d'Ivoire has the second-highest population of French citizens and French capital, which accounts for 60% of foreign investments, making it one of the most important nations in the former French colonies (the Î-carré) (Bagayoko-Penone, 2021, p. 604). In fact, French presidents were open about their intention to get involved in Côte d'Ivoire if necessary (Gaillard, 2022, p. 288).

When a rebellion escalated into a full-fledged coup d'état on Christmas Eve 1999, the partners' divergent strategies ultimately paralysed the French establishment and contributed to the revolution's success. The Franco-African defence and security compact's logic, which would have resulted in a French military intervention to save President Henri Konan Bédié's regime (as President Chirac would have desired), was not applied in this instance, and no intervention took place. In actuality, the French political system's impasse actually determined Côte d'Ivoire's fate. Naturally, this coup had disastrous long-term repercussions for both the nation and French engagement in security situations in Africa (see below).

The "New Interventionism" and Chirac

When the right won the election in 2002 and gained complete control over the state apparatus, the cohabitation came to an end. As previously stated, President Chirac remained eager to reassert the traditional powers of the Elysée Palace's "Africa cell" (indeed, its lock) on African affairs, insisting that France still had obligations to and responsibilities towards Africa and that the continent was still susceptible to security crises. He "re-engaged" Africa, as Pierre Pascallon puts it, quietly and even subtly. "Once again militarily involved in Africa . . . France seem[ed] to wish to take up the challenge of becoming the leader of the

planet's most [crisis-prone] continent" (Pascallon, 2024), a sort of "new-interventionism" following the mid-to-late 1990s, when the previous form demonstrated its limitations.

When a coup attempt developed into an uprising on September 19, 2002, Côte d'Ivoire quickly put this new strategy to the test. Despite President Chirac's refusal to support Ivoirian President Laurent Gbagbo's request to intervene against the rebels (likely due to Gbagbo's "socialist" inclinations), France was soon drawn into a conflict that it attempted to handle as best it could, keeping in mind its significant economic interests in this strategically important nation and the safety of its nearly 20,000 citizens. France's only engagement was to stop the rebels from overpowering loyalist soldiers and advancing on Abidjan, the capital.

Early in November 2004, the French military was compelled to make another military intervention in Côte d'Ivoire as the country's post-2002 security policy was being rationalised and improved. After nine of its soldiers were slain in a governmental forces raid on Bouaké, it first annihilated the small air force. Soon after, the military had to protect Abidjan's streets from throngs of people. This gruelling drill only served to highlight how outdated and completely disastrous French military actions had become. Under the new

Chiraquian strategy, the French military once more intervened in the Central African Republic in 2006 from their military station in Boali to support François Bozizé in his fight against a low-intensity but extremely destabilising armed uprising. France discovered a strategy to protect its interests in the CAR and Chad given the connections between their security situations (preventing potentially hostile rebellions in countries that are not only strategically situated but also the repositories of important strategic minerals, namely oil and uranium).

Despite the intervention in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2004, France's strategy for defending its security interests has shifted to multilateralizing its military operations on the continent in order to methodically justify them. This has required formal approval from African continental or regional organisations like the African Union or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as sanctions from international organisations like the United Nations or the European Union. According to Shaun Gregory, multilateralism and the "Africanization" of regional security have been the main innovations in French strategy since 2000 (Gregory, 2000, p. 442).

Africanizing and "Multilateralizing" the Security Agenda of France

The United States' strategy (beginning with the Clinton administration) of developing African skills so that African states can handle their own security concerns, particularly effectively responding to crises, was partially responsible for this French approach. The United States established programs like ACRI (African Crisis Response Initiative) and later ACOTA (Africa Contingency Operations Training) to achieve this. In a similar manner, France has to adjust to the growing number of crises in Africa. In order to address this issue, RECAMP (Renforcement de Capacção Africaines de Maintien de la Paix) was established in 1997. This initiative aims to develop Africa's own peacekeeping capabilities by providing funds, equipment, and training for African forces as well as, if necessary, joint interventions with them. In order to prevent violence, protect its interests, and safeguard its citizens, France will no longer need to unilaterally deploy its forces and possibly bleed their blood.

ECOWAS, the South African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) are just a few of the African regional organisations that participate in RECAMP, which was approved by the Franco-African summit of heads of state in 1998. For instance, a peacekeeping force composed of contingents from several ECOWAS member

nations was dispatched in 1999 to stabilise a crisis situation in Guinea Bissau and again in 2002 in Côte d'Ivoire under the RECAMP concept. Regardless of its track record since its launch, it is indisputable that RECAMP was a step forward in comparison to the earlier French strategy. But as has been said elsewhere:

RECAMP may improve the operational capacity of African militaries and even help crystallize the notion of common African responses to future crises, indeed the African Union has somewhat endorsed it. However, it certainly does not contribute to the elimination of dependency of African states, Francophone Africa in particular, nor does it do anything to eliminate the dysfunctions in the security sector that are the root of (or exacerbate) most of those crises (Dia, 2019, pp. 22–23).

The Artémis Operation, which was launched in the DRC's Ituri province in 2003 at the request of Kofi Anan, the UN Secretary-General at the time, marked the beginning of the Europeanization of French involvement in African security problems. This plea to the French government was obviously an awareness of France's experience, ongoing interests, and history of interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. France skilfully took use of the UN Security Council Resolution 1484's mission to include its European partners and demonstrate leadership.

"Artémis was more a French operation with an EU cover, than an EU operation led by the French," Kees Homan concludes his critical analysis of the operation. The EU operation would not have occurred without French leadership (Homan, 2020, p. 3). Years later, when France spearheaded Operation European Union Force (EUFOR) Chad/CAR—a more riskier and more decisive intervention for its interests in its former colonies in Central Africa—that leadership would pay off. While the European Union considered its own global security strategy, EU members participated in EUFOR with far greater fervour than Artemis (see below). Without a doubt, this multilateralization benefited the economy by reducing the financial burden that France previously had to bear on its own in order to pursue its security objectives in Africa.

Dennis Tull concludes that the new approach to its (security) relations with the continent, discussed above, suggests that France intends to change its strategies and instruments in its Africa policy while maintaining for the time being the same goals as before, or at least not subjecting them to fundamental revision. In other words, the French government, at least under president Chirac, [pursued] a multilateral course that [enabled] it to take the leadership role within EU in relations with Africa, even as he concedes that reform oriented forces within

the French administration [were] on the rise (Tull, 2020, p. 4).

This conclusion was kept in mind as Chirac's successor faced a fifty-year special Franco African relations legacy which he vowed to transform.

Accepting Françafrique's Security Agreement

Nicholas Sarkozy inherited all of his predecessors' colonial baggage when he was elected in May 2007, especially when it came to defence and security. He frequently reiterates that he is a member of a generation of French politicians who were born at the end of colonialism and were untarnished by personal ties and questionable interactions with long-reigning African leaders of state. But as his Dakar address demonstrated, Macron is not exempt from the unsettling prejudices and patronising assumptions that the typical Frenchman has about Africa and Africans (Renou, 2024, pp. 8–9). In addition, he inherited a system of relationships and dynamics as well as political and security conditions that were not his own creation, just like all of his predecessors. His policies could not avoid these realities as the head of state of a nation where, according to Denis Tull, "[s]ince the establishment of the Fifth Republic, Francophone Africa is no less important to France's national self-perception and its

position in international politics than the possession of the nuclear weapon" (Tull, 2020, p. 1).

He outlined his vision for Franco-African cooperation, especially in the defence and security sector, in his speech in Cape Town in February 2008 (which has already been mentioned). He wasn't unclear. First of all, his visit to South Africa demonstrated President Sarkozy's desire to maintain France's influence on the continent and form strategic alliances with a major player in African affairs like South Africa, which is notably a non-Francophone nation. It was also a chance to debate the urgent problem of French military operations in African crises (despite the above-discussed adaptation), which was exemplified only three weeks prior by the French forces' involvement in Operation Épervier in the civil war in Chad.

He openly admitted that the 1960 agreements were out of date in his speech to the South African parliament, saying that "it was no longer conceivable, for example, that [France] be dragged into internal conflicts." Africa is not the same as it was in 1960. He continued by outlining four recommendations for the future of defence and security agreements between African nations and France: (1) they should be updated to reflect both parties' current and future strategic interests; (2) they should be transparent and, in contrast to previous

practices, should not contain any secret clauses; (3) French military presence on the continent should support Africa's collective security architecture rather than be seen as permanent; and (4) France wants to establish a security partnership between Europe and Africa.

Once more, President Sarkozy's stated disdain for and readiness to advance Franco-African relations beyond Francoafrique has been one of his bona fides. Like many others before him, Renou has described these ties as "Mafia-like relationships between heads of state," which lead to "the corruption of most of the institutional and para-institutional actors" engaged (Renou, 2023, pp. 8–9). The Cooperation Minister's pledge to give the "death certificate" of the Françafrique served as a symbol of President Sarkozy's apparent will to end this legacy.

In comparison to earlier times, what has changed in this framework? How much has it been just a continuation of essentially the same methods? These questions can be addressed by examining what France has done under his leadership in a few cases when policy declarations and declared objectives clashed with practical realities in defence and security issues (as well as economic interests) in several African nations.

As was to be expected, certain circumstances arose shortly after his election and throughout his presidency to put his resolve to the test. These include the military takeover of Mauritania's first democratically elected president, the escalation of terrorist threats in the Sahel, including Mauritania (particularly against French citizens and interests), the crisis in Chad that threatened to overthrow the government of a significant ally, and the worsening of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. These show how much President Sarkozy changed Franco-African security relations as he had pledged in his Cape Town speech, even though they can only be briefly discussed.

The Chadian Crisis

Despite its claims, France actively intervened in August 2008 to prevent Göby's rule from collapsing as rebels drew in on N'Djamena, not only by providing weapons and intelligence but also by directly intervening with its jet planes (Tull, 2020, p. 2). By establishing EUFOR under UN authority (September 25, UNSR 1778), France had vigorously lobbied for EU engagement. In EUFOR, France "has been willing to use the EU instrumentally when it suits its interests, such as during military interventions in Africa under the convenient EU label of multilateralism prestige," according to Cristina Barrios (Barrios, 2023, p. 5). It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the old

logic of Franco-African relations prevailed in this instance rather than the stated goal of ceasing military operations in internal African conflicts in order to preserve a favourable administration. The Ivoirian crisis served as another test case for President Sarkozy's strategy.

The Ivoirian Crisis

Although the Ivoirian crisis began long before he came to power, it reached a breaking point under President Sarkozy's leadership following the post-election turmoil of 2010–2011. President Gbagbo's refusal to concede his defeat in the second round and the UN's certification of Alassane Dramane Ouattara's election as Gbagbo's opponent caused the situation to deteriorate. President Sarkozy's ultimatum to Gbagbo did not go ignored, despite the international community's unified appeal for him to cede control. President Sarkozy used France's influence in the UN Security Council to draft yet another resolution requiring its Licorne force to use force to protect civilians and prevent the use of heavy weapons as the situation deteriorated into a shooting war between the main players in the post-election crisis, with civilians caught in the middle.

This gave President Sarkozy the cover he needed to put significant pressure on President-

elect Ouattara. As French troops watched, President Gbagbo was arrested and the presidential compound was shelled. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that France used traditional methods to impose its will in this instance, even though it was done under the UN's auspices, as President Chirac had already initiated.

As things returned to normal, observers noticed that Presidents Ouattara and Sarkozy had signed a new defence agreement to replace the one from 1961, which guaranteed the French troops' continued presence in Côte d'Ivoire and included provisions for Ivoirian troops' training and equipment (Radio France International).

Despite having the UN's approval, France's engagement in the post-election situation in Côte d'Ivoire does not appear to be all that different from the earlier intervention that President Chirac had requested at the start of the crisis. Another issue that would test President Sarkozy's strategy was the 2008 coup that overthrew Mauritania's democratically elected president.

The Crisis of Democracy in Mauritania

The president was deposed on August 6, 2008, by General Ould Abdel Aziz, who had undermined him by manipulating his political opposition in parliament and implying that he was an Islamist. France was expected to

denounce the coup given its professed position on democracy, and it did. Together with the world community, France formally welcomed Messaoud Ould Boulkheir, the speaker of Mauritania's National Assembly, who was leading the country's unprecedented resistance to the coup, and demanded the return of the overthrown president.

But as the security situation worsened and the putsch leader felt pressure from both the international community and his own domestic opposition, he sought the assistance of notorious lawyer Robert Bourgi, a well-known go-between in French circles and President Sarkozy's unofficial advisor, to alter France's position. President Sarkozy himself jumped in to assist while on a visit to Niger, ostensibly to advance democracy and transparency in Franco-African relations. He shamefully twisted the story of the coup in Mauritania, according to Cedric Mathiot (Mathiot, 2019). He shocked everyone by claiming that there was a consensus in Mauritania in favour of the coup, despite evidence to the contrary (of which he must have been aware). It found out that negotiations were underway with General Ould Abdel Aziz to obtain concessions for oil exploration rights for TOTAL, the French oil giant, and for the presence of French troops in the country's north, even as France was purportedly applying pressure to him and his junta. In this instance, it is indisputable that

France's security concerns and commercial interests in Mauritania triumphed over President Sarkozy's declared resolve to end Françafrique's practices.

France and the Sahelian Terrorist Threat

The terrorist threat in Africa especially that posed by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its affiliates in Northwest Africa, has certainly had an impact on France's relations with the continent. Six French nationals are still being held captive by different terrorist organisations as of the end of this chapter, and their release is contingent upon the French government either making a political or security-related decision or paying a substantial ransom. Every state in the Sahel region, which is the centre of the terrorist threat, was once a French colony, and the French have a significant presence there through their armed forces, thousands of inhabitants, and companies (Bouygues, Total, Bolloré, Areva, Orange Telecom, to mention a few). The extraction of uranium in Niger is the most prominent example of France's significant commercial interests throughout the region. Additionally, France has kept a number of military advisors and instructors in the majority of the Sahel states (Hufnung & Lazard, 2022, p. 3). However, it wasn't until General Ould Abdel Aziz took office that France's military presence

in the region and counterterrorism operations and activities significantly grew.

With Mauritania serving as a crucial conduit, France was able to implement what appears to be an antiterrorist strategy in the Sahel within a few months. It is often thought that Ould Adel Aziz's French mentors ordered his dictatorship to take a hard stance against terrorism and to launch many military battles against AQIM on Malian soil. France needed the willingness that Mauritania's new government showed given its approach in the Sahel, which is to project military might while maintaining little exposure. There is little doubt that France will remain in the Sahel even though it is reluctant to play an overt role, especially as the security situation deteriorates due to the Libyan crisis (the revival of the Tuareg revolt and kidnappings in Mali are two examples). It will still require friends in the local areas, and this fact will probably take precedence over other factors.

Terrorism and cross-border criminal activity are closely linked to the availability of weapons and the increase in their circulation in the Sahel and elsewhere. There has been little change in France's long-standing policy regarding the proliferation of weapons. While claiming to support West African efforts to stop the importation of small arms, France has continued to sell or provide its African partners with large quantities of weapons its own soldiers no longer use in the form of military aid, as Niagalé Bagayoko Penone noted years ago, adopting a narrow conceptualisation of arms transfer as pertaining only to "illegal" arms trafficking (Bagayoko Penone, 2023). This strategy is unlikely to contribute to a decrease in terrorism or armed conflict.

Keeping Up with Emerging Ideas: Security Sector Governance and Reform

One of the most significant changes to Africa's interactions with foreign powers in recent years has been the push to restructure the continent's security institutions. After considerable hesitation, France publicly joined the SSR bandwagon in October 2007 and released a statement pledging to pursue SSR as a means of preventing and resolving conflicts as well as consolidating democracy throughout the continent. France acknowledged that the SSR was crucial for Africa due to the weakness of the majority of its states and stated:

SSR activities are a key component of France's strategic action to promote or restore international stability within a bilateral, European and multilateral framework. As an EU Member State, France has taken a particularly active part in SSR missions, especially in French-speaking African countries (Bagayoko Penone, 2023).

Soon after, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), which is primarily composed of African states, did the same. Unquestionably, these actions represent a step in the right direction for France and Africa's security cooperation. They aid in filling a gap in France's strategy for establishing a new structure for this collaboration. If they are to change the connection and relationship, they will undoubtedly need to be properly planned and maintained.

How should Africans value President Sarkozy's execution of his Africa policy in light of the aforementioned data and analysis? In his appraisal and recommendations to Africans, one expert is harsh and even cynical:

They should take Sarkozy's deceptive and insensitive talk of a rupture (departure) in France's Africa policy only as the same wine in a different bottle, in fact just as a pathetic façade for a hasty and self-interested redecoration of neo-colonialism. In the words of a former French diplomat with long experience of African affairs articulated during an informal tête-à-tête with the author of this commentary: how foolishly could any French president implement a genuine policy that would get France's relations incestueuses (incestuous relations) with Africa on a sounder footing, and, by default, risk losing a chasse gardée which was built by the sweat of de Gaulle and Foccart,

and which still is both a psychological source of grandeur and a time-tested prize with immeasurable political, military, financial and economic benefits (Mesfin, 2024, p. 118).

This opinion is disputed, though, as others have found clear indicators that some African leaders, whose nations have historically been part of the French pre-carré, are prepared to turn to the Anglophone world and break their exclusive ties with France.

Conclusion

Africa has faced evolving security challenges over the years. New threats are emerging as long-standing threats to security, like violent armed conflict, are on the decline. This essay contends that state weakness is Africa's biggest security threat. Even with the relative advancements over time, the African state is still vulnerable. New security issues having grave implications for human security keep emerging as a result of inadequate institutions, poor governance, and development. To address the issues, a number of state, regional, and global initiatives and endeavours are being undertaken. Peace-building initiatives on the continent are nevertheless hampered by limitations resulting from a lack of political will, institutional capacity, resource-financial, technical, logistical, and operational capacity. Therefore, in order to effectively handle the

increasing nontraditional challenges to security, the continent must continue to create democratic governance systems and robust institutions that can react quickly.

It seems that peacekeeping is becoming a more significant component of China's African policy. It's still unclear where it will go. China and many Western nations have a problematic lack of strategic trust when it comes to military engagement, including peacekeeping, throughout the world, not least in Africa. China rightly disapproves of US leadership at the UN and/or US interpretation of international affairs, and it is highly suspicious of the reasons behind much Western participation in peace operations. China has consistently framed its worries in terms of hegemony, and there is no indication that this will change in the future. In fact, one Chinese pundit claimed that "Hegemonism and power politics are still developing, and there will be no peace under heaven in the twenty-first century" after NATO launched military operations against Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999 (Liaowang, 2019). In a paper titled "Global Democratization—Camouflage of US Hegemony," Wang Jincun, a senior scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, made similar claims that what deserves more attention is that the United States, not yet satisfied with its Cold War achievements, seeks to gain more advances through military

means.The military interference by the United States in Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia Herzegovina, the bombing against Sudan and Afghanistan, and especially the air strikes against Yugoslavia serve as prominent examples (Xinhua, 2008).

China will not consent to peace operations, let alone participate in them, without the consent of the sovereign host government, regardless of how feeble its control may be. China is steadfast in its opposition to activities it views as meddling in the domestic affairs of other governments. According to Tony Saich (2020, p. 275), "China is essentially an empire with a Westphalian notion of the nation-state attempting to function in an increasingly multilateral world." It could be argued that this conception of sovereignty has frequently overshadowed China's understanding of its obligations as a world power. Additionally, it has made China vulnerable to accusations of hypocrisy regarding non-interference. For example, because Macedonia, the host nation, had just established diplomatic ties with Taiwan, China used its veto power in February 1999 to stop the UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) from continuing. However, Beijing sent a sizable police force to the US Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in 2004, which also had formal relations to Taiwan. These inconsistencies

could be indicators of how Chinese foreign policy is developing.

The Chinese share the widespread mistrust among developing nations about the intentions of possible foreign interventions, particularly those of the United States and former colonial powers. As a result, they frequently adopt the stance that "the interveners themselves were concerned about [was] not humanitarianism per se but their own interests in interventions carried out in the name of 'humanitarianism'" (Qin Xiaocheng, 2017, p. 168). It's interesting to note that they are echoing Peter Baehr's assertion that "humanitarian intervention" is a misnomer. The term "use of military force for (allegedly) humanitarian purposes" would be significantly more appropriate (Baehr, 2019, p. 34). However, these analyses—whether by Western or Chinese commentators—fail to shed light on the reasoning for any particular initiative. In every instance, the allegations that led to the intervention must be investigated, and the endorsement of so-called humanitarianism must be carefully examined. Sadly, both are deficient.

Beijing's fundamental tenet regarding peacekeeping is that it should always adhere to "the principles of respect for state sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, fairness and neutrality, [and] non-use of force except for self-defence [as well as obtain] prior consent from parties concerned," according to a Chinese source that quotes former deputy permanent representative to the UN, Shen Guofang (Mesfin, 2024). At the 2006 Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations Session, Ambassador Zhang Yishan reaffirmed that any UN mission must "strictly preserve neutrality and fully respect the views of the parties concerned" (Mesfin, 2024). Recall that the Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations was formerly defined by the Chinese government as an effort to establish "a US-controlled headquarters of international gendarmes to suppress and stamp out the revolutionary struggles of the world's people" (cited in Foot, 2021, p. 239). Beijing continues to harbour the idea that Washington wants to use the UN as a platform to reflect its interests and policies, even though such language has become less prevalent since the year 2000. This suspicion is echoed in many African capitals.

Of course, the Chinese military receives material benefits for participating in peacekeeping missions:

The PLA and PAP [People's Armed Police] . . . directly benefit from involvement in UN peacekeeping operations. First, participation enhances training and skills that promote the modernization of the PLA and PAP. Second, deployment provides the opportunity to field-test equipment and methods, gain firsthand

experience in the field, and assess the capabilities of other nations deploying or supporting the mission. Third, as China's gross domestic product rises, [its] share of UN contributions increases, arguing for greater involvement in operations and greater reimbursement for deployments from UN coffers (Thompson, 2023, p. 9).

In fact, Major-General Zhang Qinsheng, deputy chief of the PLA's general staff, disclosed the following during the closing ceremony of the four-day PLA Peacekeeping Work Conference in Beijing in June 2007:

active participation in the UN peacekeeping operations is . . . an important measure to display China's image of being a peace-loving and responsible big country and likewise an important avenue to get adapted to the needs of the revolution in military affairs in the world and enhance the quality construction of the army (PLA Daily, 2007).

As a result, it gladly satisfies a crucial requirement for Chinese political engagement with Africa, which is that China is regarded as a friend of the continent. As a result, China's prominence in African peace initiatives is only likely to increase. In conclusion, China's views on state sovereignty and peace operations are closely related, albeit they have both changed over time (Sutter, 2018, pp.117–118):

China's attitudinal change to peacekeeping can be seen as part of the process of state socialization. . . . [P]articipation is an important learning or socializing process [for any] member of an international community. As this learning process continues, we should see a less passive and more active China that needs to craft its own strategies for participation in international affairs in the future (Pang Zhongying, 2021, p. 98).

This process, aptly named "norms diffusion," "led to the emergence within China of more open, flexible interpretations of sovereignty's role in international politics," according to Allen Carlson (2022, p. 218). Beijing's flexibility is constrained, though:

Although China can be flexible in normative principles like state sovereignty and non-intervention. . . . [it] is aware that its flexibility regarding these norms may be a "double-edged sword". On the one hand, when properly used, flexibility can provide Beijing with more diplomatic options for dealing with international affairs, prevent unnecessary conflicts with other powers, and yield a favourable environment for its development strategy. On the other hand, when overexploited, it [does] not only jeopardize China's strategic interests regarding state sovereignty (especially the Taiwan Question) but also damages its image as a peace-loving

power, especially in the eyes of the developing world (He Yin, 2018, p. 57).

Ironically, Beijing senses pressures that need to be controlled as it grows more involved in international affairs. In reality, it may be claimed that Beijing's changing appraisal of the state of international security in regard to its national interests and new perspectives on sovereignty have a major role in determining Chinese stance towards UN peace operations:

China's enhanced national strength and its improved status within the international environment provide [the] . . . resources and political currency that enable it to adopt an active policy on [UN peace operations]. The aims of such a policy are to sustain its core national interests—including the maintenance of its role as a responsible power, strengthening the UN regime, and sharing common concerns regarding peace and security (He Yin, 2018, p. 14).

In a similar vein, we might contend that deeper shifts in China's political economy are indicated by Beijing's growing embrace of international responsibility as defined by transnational actors such as the UN and as reflected in Beijing's burgeoning standing as a contributor to peace operations. The CPC is able to find new, albeit indirect, sources of political legitimacy as the Chinese economy is increasingly incorporated

into and impacted by the global capitalist system. A "domestic hunger in China for global linkages [that has] brought down institutional impediments to transnational relations and weakened the state's control over its citizens, resources, and sovereignty" has been sparked by this tendency (Zweig, 2024, p. 268).

In this sense, a peaceful global environment is appealing. Hu Jintao's idea of hexie shijie (China Daily, 2021) is based on the understanding that China's peaceful growth requires an interdependent, "harmonious world" (see Yee, 2024). "Such thinking serves as a guideline for China's active participation in international efforts and contribution to international peace and security," including UNPKOs (He Yin, 2018, p. 54). This new understanding of the international milieu, which is based on flexible definitions of state liability and legitimacy, reflects not only the transformation in Beijing's international relations (Zhao Quansheng, 2024) but also that of the Chinese state itself. Although they are still wary of intervention, the Chinese increasingly recognise it as a necessary component of the post-Cold War global order. In this regard, "China is no longer so much of an outlier when compared with other states in the international system" (Carlson, 2022, p. 234). But Beijing's "cautious acceptance and

incremental evolution" towards UNPKOs (Carlson, 2022, p. 224) is a result of Chinese authorities' attempts to regulate the conditions of intervention, no matter how ambiguous they may be. Because of this, it is especially crucial to examine Chinese contributions to peace initiatives on the continent.

Beijing opposes processes whose notions of sovereignty are beyond of its control, especially when Western forces are influencing them. As Foot has noted:

The nature of the international regime in question, especially its level of intrusiveness and the extent to which it might erode strategic independence, threaten political control, or actually enhance China's power, has influenced Beijing's compliance and involvement for reasons that have become familiar in studies of Chinese foreign policy behavior (Foot, 2021, p. 14). To put it succinctly, Beijing is accommodating on sovereignty as long as it can contribute to the definition of the debate's parameters, but not as long as they are determined by Washington or a General Assembly decision that it is unable to reject. Regarding the Darfur issue, this position was unambiguous.

Put otherwise, the PRC is adamantly opposed to the creation of new standards pertaining to these matters. Regarding international humanitarian

law, "China uses whatever methods at its disposal to resist intrusion into its domestic arena, but complies as best it can when it is in its interest to do so" (Lee, 2024, p. 452). According to Peerenboom (2023, p. 18), "whether China is significantly different... from other countries is doubtful."

The fact of Chinese self-interest has significant ramifications for both China's participation in peace initiatives in Africa and, regrettably, for African peoples—Darfurians being the most recent and striking example. China's position on intervention and, consequently, peacekeeping continues to depend on controlling the parameters of the sovereignty argument in ways that safeguard Chinese interests. Therefore, China still demands the express consent of the recipient state or host government even if it has shifted from an outright rejection of peace operations to a more responsible stance that permits limited peace operations. Such persistence is extremely problematic given the instability of many African regimes, and in Sudan, it undoubtedly postponed the deployment of peacekeepers to Darfur until much later.

However, Africa bears more of the blame for its internal problems than China does, which could have an intriguing effect on how China develops its policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Beijing will be drawn into

conflicts and post-conflict scenarios as a result of China's involvement in dangerous regions for peacekeeping, and it will be compelled to develop a cogent policy addressing how and why such conflicts arise. This will unavoidably affect Beijing's perception of the composition of African states.

According to Carlson (2022), p. 230, "the contribution of personnel [to UNPKOs] is more of a routine action . . . than an exceptional policy move," indicating that China's approach towards peace operations has fully normalised. Observers of African security will be very interested in how Beijing negotiates the African environment as its involvement in peace operations in Africa grows.

This paper has also made an effort to look at the complex relationship between France, a significant global force, and African nations, many of which were once its colonies. These relationships, which began during the colonial era, were characterised in the post-colonial era by France's resolve to continue playing a significant role on the continent and to openly pursue its interests and rayonnement as its colonial empire came to an end. This decision was supported by a series of defence and security-related agreements with the majority of its former colonies, which also offered a foundation for how the relationship developed. In exchange for French security and assurances,

these agreements permitted the deployment of French troops in some African states and other benefits.

This strategy was no longer viable or affordable due to the end of the Cold War, other significant changes in the international system, budgetary concerns, and Africa's own problems. As a result, successive French presidents, who had complete control over African affairs, were forced to abandon the most blatantly interventionist policies and modify their ties with Africa to reflect the new circumstances. French new strategy was essentially to multilateralize and Africanize French interventions in African conflicts, according to academics studying Franco-African relations.

President Sarkozy has undoubtedly gone the furthest in his pledge to end post-colonial Franco-African relations, especially in the defence and security sector, represented by Françafrique, the target of the harshest criticisms, since his 2008 Cape Town statements. The information gathered from a few incidents indicates that his goal has undoubtedly not been accomplished. The question Golan posed in his puzzlement appears to still be pertinent a few years later, based on the evidence from recent cases.

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