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- 3 CHINESE ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA: THE CASE OF MOZAMBIQUE  
*David Alexander Robinson*

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# Chinese engagement with Africa: The case of Mozambique

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## Introduction

There is currently much debate in International Relations regarding the rise of China and the trajectory of its economic growth, military build-up, and strategic designs. China's state-capitalist economy, enormous population, and renewed international relationships are facilitating its emergence as a Great Power, and Africa's oil and natural resources have motivated China to deepen relations with the continent.<sup>1</sup> China's diplomatic success was demonstrated by its Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2006, which welcomed 48 African leaders to Beijing during 'China's Year of Africa'.<sup>2</sup> However, while many African countries welcome Chinese engagement as less intrusive than the conditionalities attached to relations with the West, commentators fear that China's 'non-interference' regarding governance and human rights will hamper campaigns for political and economic reform.<sup>3</sup> Mozambique is one of the countries embracing relations with China. After centuries of Portuguese colonialism and a post-independence civil war, Mozambique became a poster child for Western-backed democratization and economic reform; however, "[l]ife for most Mozambicans still tends to be characterized by poverty and hardship more than a decade and a half after the fighting ended".<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, Mozambique's political class used their positions to corruptly accumulate wealth and power, leaving many Mozambicans nostalgic for the solidarity and self-sacrifice of the nation's socialist period.<sup>5</sup> In this context, China has brought Mozambicans new infrastructure, consumer goods, and the promise of a 'Green Revolution' in agricultural production.<sup>6</sup>

This article examines China's growing relations with Mozambique, to derive insights for wider arguments regarding China's aims and impacts in Africa, and the trajectory of its growing global influence. It is argued that details of the China-Mozambique relationship support positions that: China's engagement with Africa is overwhelmingly economic and diplomatic, rather than military and strategic; that even in a non-oil producing country Chinese aid and investment is driven by acquisition of natural resources; but that, contrary to assertions China is not interested in Africa's long-term development, China is attempting to foster general economic growth and social stability, and to maintain a positive public image. Evidence supports concerns that Chinese activities lessen Western leverage to induce reforms, and may undermine elements of the host economy and cause

environmental degradation. However, China's presence remains popular because of its perceived social and economic benefits, in contrast to neoliberal structural adjustment's failure to significantly bolster social and economic progress. It is finally suggested that China's relations with Mozambique support the wider diagnosis of declining American hegemony, but that China is not yet assuming that mantle.

### **The China-Africa relationship**

Much of the literature on Chinese activities in Africa advances claims that, "China practices neocolonialism in Africa and promotes corruption ... [is] harmful to the environment ... [and conducts trade] that is damaging to African antipoverty efforts".<sup>7</sup> However, African opinion polls have been more positive about China, and view China's model of state-directed growth with greater esteem than the neoliberal 'Washington Consensus'.<sup>8</sup> Three major interpretations of China's role in Africa abound in the West: that of a development partner, whose operations are mutually beneficial; an economic competitor, whose success undermines African development; and a colonizer, whose long-term project is to displace Western influence and enforce geostrategic control.<sup>9</sup> The choice of interpretation is often highly ideological and based on the observer's interests. China's modern engagement with Africa emerged from the 1950s into the 1970s, forged heavily in the rhetoric of unity in anti-colonial struggle and solidarity between developing nations.<sup>10</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s China supported several African independence struggles, and assisted newly independent African nations with doctors, technical experts, and infrastructure.<sup>11</sup> In the 1980s China's activity on the continent declined as it focused on domestic reforms, and its trade with the continent shrank dramatically.<sup>12</sup> However, the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre was a turning point in the relationship as African governments declined to join the West in isolating China.<sup>13</sup> The rising importance of energy resources for China's foreign policy during the 1990s then led China to devote increasingly substantial resources towards the African continent.<sup>14</sup>

The growing relationship became incontrovertible following China's proclamation of 2006 as the 'Year of Africa', and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) welcoming 48 African leaders in Beijing.<sup>15</sup> African leaders were engaged with a discourse of common economic, political and cultural exchange, which confirmed that China was now serious about courting Africa, and within a year President Hu Jintao toured Africa again, visiting eight nations.<sup>16</sup> The Chinese government now highlights the economic complementarity of China and Africa: Africa needs Chinese capital and infrastructure investment, while China needs Africa's natural resources.<sup>17</sup> Over the past decade China's economic engagement with Africa accelerated greatly, as bi-lateral trade increased by ten times to over US\$100 billion annually<sup>18</sup> and China became Asia's leading importer of African products,<sup>19</sup> with oil constituting 80% of China's imports by value.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, Chinese investment in Africa grew by 300 times between 1990 and 2007 to around US\$14 billion.<sup>21</sup> The majority of Chinese investments in Africa have concentrated in the extractive industries.<sup>22</sup> In concert

with trade and investment, China has cancelled almost US\$3 billion in African debt,<sup>23</sup> and recently pledged US\$10 billion in concessional loans to African countries.<sup>24</sup> China also invests billions of dollars a year in funding roads, railways, dams and power projects across Africa, which have been neglected as unprofitable by Western aid agencies and business.<sup>25</sup> And unlike reluctant Westerners, more than 750,000 Chinese are now living in Africa.<sup>26</sup>

### **Perspectives on China in Africa**

China's expanding influence in Africa has raised concerns about its impact on democratization, human rights, and sustainable development.<sup>27</sup> China's relations with the governments of Sudan and Zimbabwe in particular have sustained the regimes and undermined Western sanctions.<sup>28</sup> In addition to supporting some of the worst human rights abusers, it is argued that China's financial alternatives for African states lessen Western leverage for democratic reform through donors and the international financial institutions.<sup>29</sup> There are also concerns raised about China's economic involvement in Africa, beginning with the contention that China is primarily motivated by resource extraction, and does not care about Africa's long-term economic prosperity.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, it is argued that China sees Africa as an opportunity to expand the market for Chinese products, and that major infrastructure projects in Africa are primarily to provide employment for Chinese labor.<sup>31</sup> Chinese aid projects may also require recipients to spend the money on goods or services from Chinese companies,<sup>32</sup> and use Chinese contractors for construction. When locals are hired, it is then suggested that Chinese companies are undermining labor standards. Chinese companies operating in Africa may also pose risks for the environment and sustainable development, as African regulations are poorly enforced and Chinese projects may either cause destruction incidentally by ignoring environment impacts, or directly through activities like predatory deforestation.<sup>33</sup> Defenders of Chinese involvement in Africa highlight important counterpoints, and actions by China to improve their conduct. For example, Harsh Pant writes that China, "played a crucial role in persuading the Sudanese government to allow an expanded United Nations presence in the Darfur region..."<sup>34</sup> In response to claims that Chinese aid undermines Western leverage, it can be also argued that conditions imposed by Western aid and financial institutions equally represent elite Western interests.<sup>35</sup> And that while authoritarian African regimes will use Chinese money to avoid genuine democratization, "there has been case after case where the IMF and other international financial institutions have found self-serving excuses for continuing to fund authoritarian regimes".<sup>36</sup> Economically, Chinese trade and investment in Africa *is* aiding development, "if for no other reason than that little investment is forthcoming from other sources".<sup>37</sup> And China's broad spectrum of engagement with Africa, including infrastructure, training, education and medical care, "strongly suggest a balanced and long-term approach to promoting African economic growth".<sup>38</sup>

Infrastructure expansion is a major part of co-operation with Africa, and internationally China has a comparative advantage in building that infrastructure.<sup>39</sup> While Chinese products and investors do compete with African producers, developmental benefits may accrue as Chinese investors in Africa create larger-scale operations than domestic firms, realize economies of scale, produce goods higher up the value chain, and help to better integrate economies internationally. These businesses then create significant domestic spillover effects, and China is meanwhile opening up its own markets to African commodities.<sup>40</sup> In terms of labor, while oil-fuelled construction booms in Angola and Algeria have involved Chinese companies importing much of their labor, Chinese companies in nations like Tanzania, Egypt and Zambia tend to hire 80% to 90% of their workforce locally.<sup>41</sup> Environmental standards are also rising, and as Chinese leaders become increasingly concerned with pollution, energy consumption and global warming these principles will be reflected in Chinese development finance.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, criticisms of the predatory nature of Chinese resource and timber companies often also apply to their Western competitors, and “China does not participate at all in the biopiracy in Africa carried on by Western pharmaceutical firms”.<sup>43</sup>

Geo-strategically, some see China and the US as being engaged in a new ‘Scramble for Africa’ focused on oil and strategic resources. The US has expanded its strategic presence via the US Africa Command under the pretence of fighting terrorism,<sup>44</sup> but those who suspect China of nefarious designs cannot point to military intervention beyond arms sales and deployment of Chinese Navy warships to fight piracy.<sup>45</sup> China’s military presence in Africa is thus portrayed as an inevitable *future* manifestation.<sup>46</sup> Unable to point to threatening Chinese deployment in Africa analysts instead castigate China for the opposite, being “a ‘free-rider’ in the international system, taking advantage of the order and stability being maintained by other great powers”.<sup>47</sup> In reality, China currently seems to have little enthusiasm for unilateral intervention in Africa, and American and Chinese interests converge in Africa being a stable and secure environment for trade and economic development.<sup>48</sup> While competition will continue for access to Africa’s economic resources, China’s diplomatic and ideological mobilization of African states is also important at a global level. China has already made severing ties with Taiwan a pre-requisite for relations.<sup>49</sup> Thus China is mobilizing African states in institutional alliances, attracting “[y]oung, intelligent, well-educated Africans ... to the Chinese model ... [instead of the] ‘neo-liberal overdose of deregulation, cutting social expenditure, privatizing everything ... and jettisoning the public good’”.<sup>50</sup>

### **China and Mozambique**

Most analysts agree that, “China’s [recent] involvement with Mozambique can be described as just short of meteoric”.<sup>51</sup> Throughout the 1960s China supplied training, equipment and money to various Mozambican liberation organizations, including the eventually ascendant FRELIMO party,<sup>52</sup> though FRELIMO’s leadership balanced Chinese

and Soviet support to ensure autonomy.<sup>53</sup> China was among the first countries to recognize independent Mozambique in 1975, but Sino-Mozambican relations soon cooled due to political differences on various international issues.<sup>54</sup> Relations with China again improved in the early 1980s, and a low-level relationship of trade and aid thus continued into the 1990s.<sup>55</sup>

The China-Mozambique relationship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has flourished since the 1997 establishment of a US\$20 million incentive fund for Chinese companies, and the 2001 creation of a Joint Economic and Trade Commission.<sup>56</sup> Mozambique is still not in the top ten African nations for Chinese trade and investment, but it has one of the fastest growth rates of trade with China experienced by any nation.<sup>57</sup> While Mozambique is marginal to China's global interests, for Mozambique, "China is fast emerging as the most important economic and diplomatic player ... bringing billions of dollars in investments and asking no questions".<sup>58</sup> Mozambican politicians welcome Chinese interest, with President Armando Guebuza making clear he is, "very satisfied with the support offered by China",<sup>59</sup> and that China is "a partner and not a colonizer".<sup>60</sup> Some analysts suggest that average Mozambicans believe the Chinese are "looking only after their own interests".<sup>61</sup> However, independent surveys have concluded that Mozambicans generally welcome the Chinese, despite some mistakes they made early in the relationship.<sup>62</sup> The relationship has emerged as mutually beneficial, and China's strong focus on building infrastructure has made it a particularly appealing partner for a nation devastated by war.<sup>63</sup>

### **Economic relations**

A major share of economic input from China is in the form of aid. This encompasses Chinese grants for public projects, cheap loans, and programmes of social, cultural, technical, and humanitarian cooperation. Education assistance includes hundreds of scholarships for Mozambicans to pursue higher education in China;<sup>64</sup> training for 500 Mozambican professionals in China; the building of rural schools;<sup>65</sup> and funding for long-distance learning.<sup>66</sup> Medical assistance has included free medical supplies<sup>67</sup> and teams of Chinese doctors to work in Mozambican hospitals.<sup>68</sup> China provided US\$22 million of debt forgiveness in 2001<sup>69</sup> and another US\$20 million in 2007, clearing Mozambican debt accumulated since the 1980s.<sup>70</sup>

Many concessional Chinese loans fund infrastructure, which have beneficial flow-through effects for Mozambicans and high-visibility for political returns. Including "roads, bridges, military installations and hospitals",<sup>71</sup> infrastructure funded by the Chinese is prolific, varied, and includes many high-profile projects. Chinese companies have carried out a third of all recent road construction, including "important transportation link[s] between the north and south of the country", with funding being sought for roads linking with neighboring countries.<sup>72</sup> This has provided Chinese companies with a long-term physical presence along these key arteries, and a central role in national rehabilitation;<sup>73</sup> and Chinese funding for major railway projects connecting industry to important ports is

being arranged. In the capital Maputo, proposed projects include a bridge across Maputo Bay, a road to Mozambique's southern tip, and schemes to decongest city traffic.<sup>74</sup> China has invested more than US\$65 million in modernizing Maputo International Airport,<sup>75</sup> and begun expanding the Vilanculos aerodrome – a key tourist gateway.<sup>76</sup> Direct flights between Mozambique and China are soon expected, with optimistic companies hoping to attract a million Chinese tourists over the next decade.<sup>77</sup>

The Chinese funded the construction of Mozambique's new Parliament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, High Court, and national Conference Centre;<sup>78</sup> and Chinese companies refurbished the Polana Hotel – the most luxurious in Maputo.<sup>79</sup> The new Zimpeto national soccer stadium was another prestige project for the Chinese, who funded and built the FIFA-approved 42,000 seat venue.<sup>80</sup> Chinese construction companies have built urban water supplies,<sup>81</sup> cement factories,<sup>82</sup> cotton processing plants,<sup>83</sup> and vehicle assembly workshops.<sup>84</sup> Recently construction began on a Chinese-funded US\$439 million housing project outside Maputo, building a 5,000-house middle-class suburb.<sup>85</sup> Meanwhile, the current Chinese-funded 'mega-project' is the US\$2.3 billion Mphanda Nkuwa dam in central Mozambique,<sup>86</sup> a hydro-electric dam on the Zambezi River that aims to service both Mozambique and regional markets.<sup>87</sup>

Agriculture is another sector vital for Mozambique, and China recently built a US\$6 million agricultural research centre to facilitate scientific research, training, and technology development.<sup>88</sup> The Chinese hope to increase Mozambican rice production from 100,000 to 500,000 tonnes a year – ultimately aiming to import surpluses into Chinese markets.<sup>89</sup> There is hope that new crop types, farming techniques and technology might initiate a 'Green Revolution' in Mozambique,<sup>90</sup> of particular significance for the over 80% of Mozambicans who work in agriculture.<sup>91</sup> Biofuels are another major area of interest, with estimates that Mozambique could produce the equivalent of 3 million barrels of oil daily. After domestic markets were filled, China would again envisage importing excess supplies.<sup>92</sup>

Bilateral trade between Mozambique and China has increased dramatically over the last five years, from US\$120 million in 2006<sup>93</sup> to US\$690 million in 2010.<sup>94</sup> Thus far Mozambique's main exports to China have been minerals, and natural resources like wood, oil seeds, cotton, vegetables, and seafood.<sup>95</sup> Wood is the main non-mineral export, with more than 90% of Mozambican timber exports going to China.<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, there is a massive expansion in mining operations, with the Brazilian company Vale Moçambique aiming to produce one million tonnes of iron concentrate annually – mostly to sell to China;<sup>97</sup> along with steel and coal projects by Australian-listed Riversdale Mining, and China's Wuhan Iron and Steel Corp.<sup>98</sup> Mozambique's imports from China "are dominated by vehicles and parts, electrical appliances and iron and steel articles, construction materials and related machinery, manufactured goods, like footwear, bags, electronic products, [and] textiles...."<sup>99</sup>

Chinese investment in Mozambique has also multiplied by at least six times over the last decade to make it Mozambique's second largest investor by 2008 – after South Africa.



Dozens of Chinese companies are registered by Mozambique's Investment Promotion Centre,<sup>100</sup> and Chinese businesses have signaled plans to invest more than US\$13 billion over the next 10 years in Mozambican infrastructure, mining, agriculture and tourism. China's single largest investment has been US\$1 billion in coal mining by Wuhan Iron and Steel; while the Chinese company Kingho plans to invest US\$5 billion in the industry.<sup>101</sup> The coal sector will thus be one of the biggest drivers of Mozambican economic growth.<sup>102</sup> There is promise of related infrastructure development, through projects such as the modernization of Beira harbor – a potential export gateway for Chinese companies in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.<sup>103</sup> In line with Chinese tourism plans, investors are building new five-star hotels around Maputo, worth more than US\$230 million,<sup>104</sup> and businessmen from Macau are planning a casino.<sup>105</sup>

### **Political and strategic relations**

Unlike the Cold War period, when Chinese-Mozambican relations were dominated by ideology and geo-politics, contemporary political relations are dominated by economics. China's political interest in Mozambique was signaled by President Hu Jintao's 2007 visit, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi's 2009 visit, and a steady stream of lower officials.<sup>106</sup> In recent years the Mozambican President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have travelled to China annually for meetings with their Chinese counterparts.<sup>107</sup> This is within the context of Chinese efforts to forge wider relations with the Lusophone world, with annual multilateral conferences held in Macau.<sup>108</sup> Militarily, a very low-level relationship between China and Mozambique over the last five years has involved: ministerial-level meetings;<sup>109</sup> technical, logistical and infrastructure assistance in the form of vehicles, computers, uniforms and houses;<sup>110</sup> and funding for non-lethal equipment that rose to US\$3 million annually in the year 2011.<sup>111</sup> This can be compared to relations with the US military, who are actively training Mozambican forces for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.<sup>112</sup>

While the Mozambican government is quite active in ensuring proper regulation of Chinese enterprises, and is watched closely by the media and civil society,<sup>113</sup> overall the political establishment has great enthusiasm for growing relations with China.<sup>114</sup> So the exhortations of high-level politicians are of no surprise – President Guebuza saying those who criticize China “are delirious”.<sup>115</sup> A former Mozambican foreign minister noted that, “[i]n the end it's up to us, the Chinese like anyone else have their interests and will plunder us to the extent that we let them”;<sup>116</sup> and for the foreseeable future the Mozambican government is advancing with that in mind.

### **Assessing China-Mozambique relations**

Economics remains central to China's growing relationship with Mozambique. A large part of China's activity in Mozambique is building infrastructure, often undertaken by Chinese companies and paid for by a mixture of Chinese and other donor funding. Trade with

Mozambique has also increased, however neither of these areas is particularly profitable for China, especially compared to investments such as the US\$2.3 billion Mphanda Nkuwa dam.<sup>117</sup> Chinese interest thus seems to be more in imports from Mozambique. Over the next decade Chinese businesses intend to invest in Mozambique's extractive industries – mining, forestry and agriculture – along with tourism. The largest private Chinese investments have been in the coal industry.<sup>118</sup> Mozambique produces minerals such as gold, tantalum, and bauxite – and the Mozal aluminum smelter is Africa's second largest producer of aluminum. Deposits of other minerals such as copper, iron ore, manganese, and titanium have also been identified.<sup>119</sup> Mozambique has three relatively large coal deposits, with reserves estimated at about 2.4 billion tonnes, and mines likely to last 35 years. Detected natural gas accumulations are estimated to hold 3.5 trillion cubic feet of gas,<sup>120</sup> and oil has been discovered in Mozambique's north, though not necessarily in commercial quantities.<sup>121</sup>

In agriculture, Mozambique has lightly-exploited land, favorable climatic conditions and abundant labor, which give it great growth potential.<sup>122</sup> The modernization of agriculture aims to create export surpluses, thus Chinese assistance is additionally motivated by Chinese food security interests.<sup>123</sup> Biofuels are another area of potential. As an oil importer Mozambique has motivation to seek domestic alternatives, and it is a promising region for biofuel production. China is driven by its need to secure energy resources, and diversification into biofuels could be a productive investment.<sup>124</sup> However, all sides seem keenly aware that, as Mozambican food prices sparked recent riots, domestic food consumption will have to increase in tandem with other usage of those supplies.<sup>125</sup>

China is thus clearly attracted by Mozambique's fuel and non-fuel minerals, timber, biofuels and food production. In addition, Mozambique's transport infrastructure is logistically important for other regions of Chinese investment. China's presence is growing rapidly in neighboring Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe, all of which are landlocked with their closest exit to sea via Mozambique.<sup>126</sup> The ports at Maputo, Beira and Nacala are all of great potential in servicing the region, while the deep harbor at Pemba could be regionally-important once developed. Several projects are thus looking to base regional offices in Maputo, but Mozambican harbors, roads and railways will need upgrading to facilitate this vision – thus helping to explain China's infrastructure assistance.<sup>127</sup>

Diplomatically, Mozambique does not have great influence or importance on the world stage, but it does belong to larger associations of interest to China. China is interested in building alliances of states in global institutions, which will defend Chinese interests. This is already displayed in the United Nations, where China's soft alliances can influence votes regarding China.<sup>128</sup> Mozambique is also part of a number of regional and cultural groupings that China seeks to influence. In Africa, it belongs to the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, and culturally it is a member of the Lusophone world. The Chinese government has identified the Portuguese-speaking countries as a strategic

group for investment and cooperation, as this community of 230 million people is linked by language and culture to Europe, Latin American, Africa and Asia. Regular meetings in Macau are cultivating these connections, and embracing the Lusophone world as a whole creates a stronger network of cooperation than piecemeal arrangements.<sup>129</sup>

Strategically, Mozambique's significance lies in its position on the Mozambique Channel through which 30% of world oil passes, including en route to China.<sup>130</sup> With China's potential Great Power-rival India developing relations with East African states, and upgrading its navy with "state-of-the-art aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, and other surface combatants", China has strategic reasons to establish relations with states throughout the region.<sup>131</sup> If military rivalry does begin to develop in the Indian Ocean, the importance of East Africa will greatly increase.<sup>132</sup> Additionally, a growing piracy threat to shipping along the Mozambican coast may require greater regional cooperation to combat.<sup>133</sup>

### **Conclusion: Mozambique and debates on China in Africa**

How does this state of affairs reflect on debates regarding China's aims and impacts in Africa? In relation to the argument that China's financial alternatives for African states lessen Western leverage for democratic reform,<sup>134</sup> while the continuing presence of Western donors and the international financial institutions in Mozambique, and Mozambique's strong civil society, mean that this is still far from a reality – it is certainly the desire of the Mozambican state. However, this must be understood in the context of those corrupt elites being an outcome of Western reform policies in the first place. China has not created the corruption, but may help to perpetuate it. The argument has also been raised that China's economic involvement in Africa is primarily motivated by resource extraction, and thus it does not care about Africa's long-term economic prosperity.<sup>135</sup> This would seem to be correct in the first claim, but incorrect in the second. The Mozambican case shows a clear tendency towards extractive industries being the primary driver of engagement – but the diversified strategy of the Chinese government to build infrastructure, improve agriculture, and win the political approval of both elites and the populace seems to point, as Todd Hofstedt argues, to "a balanced and long-term approach to promoting African economic growth".<sup>136</sup>

On specific claims that China will undermine domestic labor conditions, violations of labor laws by unfair dismissal, physical assault, excessive workload, racial discrimination, and below-minimum wages have been recorded,<sup>137</sup> and there are examples of worksites dominated by Chinese workers.<sup>138</sup> Counter to this there have been some government actions to reprimand poor employers,<sup>139</sup> and new labor laws do set local hiring quotas,<sup>140</sup> but it is still to be seen how effectively these laws are implemented. On the question of Chinese companies posing additional risks for the environment and sustainable development,<sup>141</sup> the Mozambican example confirms that Chinese companies are causing damage directly through predatory exploitation of natural resources such as timber and fisheries,<sup>142</sup> and

incidentally through projects such as the Mphanda Nkuwa dam, which critics say may cause ecosystem destruction as well as social dislocation for local subsistence farmers and fishermen.<sup>143</sup> But again, the Mozambican case also demonstrates that Chinese trade and investment is helping with economic growth, because they are funding projects and undertaking development that few other investors have been willing to back, and are providing results in a cheap and timely manner.<sup>144</sup>

Geo-strategically, the Mozambican case confirms that any military engagement by China is very low-level, developing elementary relationships and keeping open communications. But diplomatically, Mozambique has certainly emerged as an advocate for Chinese causes, supporting international multilateralism, and defending Chinese influence on the continent. This is also in step with Mozambique's Lusophone sister-states, who are all being courted by Beijing as a cultural bloc.<sup>145</sup> Thus the Mozambican case would seem to support assertions by those on both sides of the China debate.

While this situation may change in the future, for the present this generally confirms the assertion of some analysts that, "China's global strategy, including its Africa strategy, has been to avoid antagonizing the US politically and militarily but in the meantime, to present itself as an alternative and benign power with a global reach through soft diplomacy and economic means".<sup>146</sup>

For Africa, this presents both dangers and opportunities, but certainly a chance to find assistance for development far more effective than forthcoming under previous regimes of Western aid and economic reform. On this broader scale then, does the Mozambican case provide any insight into the question of China's global systemic challenge to American hegemony? The Mozambican people have lived through the developmental stagnation of neoliberal structural adjustment, and are happy for a change; and the Mozambican elites pay lip-service to 'Western values', but will only remain loyal as long as aid money is forthcoming – and this situation abides in a nation held up as a poster child of US hegemonic ideals. The Mozambican case will no doubt be replicated across the globe. The United States will remain the world's dominant military power for some time, but gradually its power in international institutions will reduce, as will its overwhelming global military and economic preponderance.<sup>147</sup> As Giovanni Arrighi notes, "US hegemony, as opposed to sheer domination, in all likelihood has already ended".<sup>148</sup>

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