

CHINA RISING IN AFRICA: WHITHER TAIWAN?

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Abstract

China's 'Year of Africa' in 2006 climaxed in November when 48 African leaders and governments delegations attended the China-Africa Cooperation Forum in Beijing. In September 2007, Taipei hosted its first Taiwan-Africa summit, attended by the 5 states that then still recognized Taiwan in Africa. The contrast in the two events symbolized the ascendancy of China and the decline of Taiwan in Africa. The fundamental exception to China's much vaunted 'no strings attached' approach in Africa remains public adherence by African governments to the one-China policy. However, recent debate on China Africa has so far conspicuously neglected to consider the position of Taiwan and the implications of the most recent Chinese African engagement for Taiwan. By engaging Taiwan's perspective on China's return to Africa and considering the ways in which Taipei is attempting to respond, we attempt to address this. This paper begins by contextualising China's latest engagement with Africa and how Taiwan has fared in this. Second, it considers the nature of Taiwan's current relations with Africa, including business engagement, diplomacy (including UN related) and policy changes under the DPP government. The loss of N'Djamena in August 2006 was a particular blow for Taipei: unlike Taiwan's other allies in Africa, Chad is a resource-rich state that Taiwan would have enjoyed beneficial relations with. Third, although Taiwan has essentially 'lost' its diplomatic struggle with China in Africa, Taipei has responded under new circumstances. We conclude by discussing the prospects for an evolved Taiwanese engagement in the continent beyond that dominated by political competition with China.

China Rising in Africa: Whither Taiwan?

Introduction

The expansion of mainland China's engagement with Africa is the most significant development in Africa's development and foreign relations since the end of the Cold War. It has also overshadowed the role of Taiwan in Africa, which looks to have been finally eclipsed by Beijing's pursuit of its One China Policy in Africa. China's 'Year of Africa' in 2006 saw its African relations attain an unusual degree of prominence following a number of high-level tours,¹ meetings of the regional forums that China engages with Africa,² and the third Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC or *Zhong Fei Luntan*) on the 4-5 November 2006. Attended by 48 African leaders, this showcased China's new 'strategic partnership' with Africa.³ Proclaiming 'Friendship, Peace, Cooperation and Development' (*youyi, heping, hezuo, fazhan*), this summit acted as a public declaration of China's arrival in Africa. Reaction from the US and Europe has been characterised by a combination of concern and protectiveness about a continent long seen as its backyard. Since then, there has been a veritable explosion of interest in China's role in Africa amongst not just African scholars but also as a comparatively new component of China's rise in international relations which is illustrated vividly in Africa. In September 2007, Taiwan hosted an Africa Summit of its own in Taipei that went largely unnoticed. The contrast between Taipei in

¹ In January 2006 the now-traditional New Year's tour of Africa by the Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, who visited Cape Verde, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria and Libya, was followed by the release of China's first Africa policy statement and tours by President Hu Jintao (Morocco, Nigeria and Kenya) in April and Premier Wen Jiabao (Egypt, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda) in June.

² The Macau Forum of Portuguese-speaking countries and the Conference of Sino-Arab Friendship.

³ After first in Beijing (2000) and the second in Addis Ababa (2003). See www.focac.org.

September 2007 and Beijing in November 2006 symbolized the ascendancy of China and the terminal decline of Taiwan in Africa.

Recent debate on China Africa has so far conspicuously neglected to consider the position of Taiwan and the implications of the most recent Chinese African engagement for Taiwan. However, the fundamental exception to China's much vaunted 'no strings attached' approach in Africa remains public adherence by African governments to the one-China policy. By engaging Taiwan's perspective on China's return to Africa and how considers the ways in which Taipei is attempting to change its foreign aid policy, we attempt to begin to address this. This paper first contextualises China's latest engagement with Africa and how Taiwan has fared in this. Second, it considers the nature of Taiwan's current relations with Africa, including business engagement, diplomacy and policy changes under the DPP government. Third, although Taiwan has essentially 'lost' its diplomatic struggle with China in Africa, Taipei has attempted to respond under new circumstances. We conclude by discussing the prospects for an evolved Taiwanese engagement in the continent beyond that dominated by political competition with China.

Background: The Rise of China in Africa

Current relations between Taiwan, China and Africa continue a longer history of political involvement and competition in the continent framed against Cold War period cross-straits conflict.⁴ The PRC's engagement with Africa waxed and waned according to its domestic situation, Cold War politics and its dispute with the Soviet

⁴ George T Yu, 'Peking versus Taipei in the World Arena: Chinese Competition in Africa', *Asian Survey* 3, 9 (1963), pp. 439-453.

Union.⁵ China sought to use its relations with African states to enhance its position vis-à-vis Taiwan and the US, as it previously had done vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.⁶ After the PRC gained admission to the UN with the help of African votes, its ‘smiling diplomacy and silver-bullet policy on Africa’ was criticized by Taiwan, whose position in international politics had been significantly undermined.⁷ Coverage of Taiwan in Africa continued in the 1990s amidst a reinvigorated African engagement by Taipei in the aftermath of Tiananmen.⁸ The circumstances of Taiwan’s new democracy saw Taipei energise its policy of ‘checkbook diplomacy’ in order to win diplomatic recognition.⁹ Seven countries had re-established relations with Taiwan at the end of 1990, including Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Lesotho, and different African states would switch to Taipei and in many cases Beijing again as competition continued. Taipei’s economic power enabled it to win recognition from Sao Tome and

⁵ Emmanuel Hevi, *The Chinese Communists and Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1966); Bruce D. Larkin, *China and Africa 1949-1970: The Foreign Policy of the People’s Republic of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Alaba Ogunsanwo, *China’s Policy in Africa, 1958-71* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). George T. Yu, *China and Tanzania: A study in cooperative interaction* (Berkeley: University of California, 1970); Alan Hutchison, *China’s Africa Revolution* (London: Hutchinson, 1975).

⁶ Peter Van Ness, ‘China and the Third World: Patterns of Engagement and Indifference’, in Samuel S. Kim (ed), *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), p. 151.

⁷ Chang Ya-chun, *Chinese Communist Activities in Africa – Policies and Challenges* (World Anti-Communist League, China Chapter, Asian Peoples’ Anti-Communist League, Republic of China April 1981, pp. 9-10.

⁸ Deon Geldenhuys, ‘The Politics of South Africa’s “China Switch”’, *Issues and Studies* 33, 7 (1997), pp. 93-131; Payne, R and C Veney, ‘Taiwan and Africa: Taipei’s Continuing Search for International Recognition’, *African and Asian Studies*, 2001; Ian Taylor, ‘Africa’s place in the diplomatic competition between Beijing and Taipei’, *Issues and Studies*, 34, 3 (1998), pp. 126-143. Ian Taylor ‘Taiwan’s Foreign Policy and Africa: The Limitations of Dollar Diplomacy’, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 11, 30 (2002), pp. 125-140.

⁹ Ian Taylor, ‘China’s Foreign Policy Towards Africa in the 1990s,’ *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36, 3 (1998), pp. 443–60.

Principe (1997, a \$30 million loan), Niger (1992, \$50 million loan), and Chad in 1997 (a \$125 million loan). However, in general, political competition ensured Africa remained a zone wherein cross-straits rivalry continued to play itself out.¹⁰

The key factors propelling current Chinese engagement in Africa represent a combination of domestic Chinese dynamics, a desire to expand into new markets and international politics.¹¹ First, Africa is important as source of natural resources for China. Second, Africa is a market with strong commercial potential for Chinese business. The Chinese government, businesses, and entrepreneurs have regarded (or, for many businesses, financially encouraged to regard) Africa as a continent of economic potential and a consumer market. Finally, there are political factors operating as part of what Beijing styles ‘win-win cooperation’. Since helping China gain UN admission in 1971, African states have supported China in different multilateral settings. China in turn styles itself as leader of the global South and champion of a progressive international order as part of its emerging role in international affairs. It has highlighted its development efforts in Africa, with attendant claims to international status. China’s strategic competition with Japan is also manifest in Africa, particularly opposition to Japan’s UN Security Council

¹⁰ Often in see-saw fashion. For example, four months after Qian Qichen visited Sao Tome and Principe, Sao Tome and Principe recognized Taipei. Qian signed an economic cooperation agreement in Chad in January 1996, Chad's president visited Beijing in July 1997, but Chad recognized Taipei in August 1997. Two months after PRC's vice premier Lee Lanqing's visit in November 1995, Senegal recognized the ROC.

¹¹ See Chris Alden, *China in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2007); Denis M. Tull, ‘China in Africa: scope, significance and consequences’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 44, 3 (2006), pp. 459-479.

aspirations in which African state votes would play a role.¹² A major foreign policy objective for China in Africa remains the One China principle, the fundamental exception to China's 'no-strings attached' policy. Beijing intended to use FOCAC 3 to marginalize Taiwan in Africa and by inviting Taiwan-recognizing African states to Beijing as observers, demonstrated a less rigid approach to winning over the remaining recalcitrant states than previously seen. One notable strategy employed by Beijing in its African diplomacy is to use Africa against Taiwan as a diplomatic weapon in its cross-straits relations. One dimension of the politics surrounding the Anti-Secession Law, passed during the 3rd meeting of the 10th National People's Congress on 14 March 2005, was the support for Beijing offered by African countries.¹³ Beijing's policy also features affirmations of support for the unification of mainland China and its territorial integrity, including from African countries experiencing conflict. During Taiwan's bid to join the UN in 2007, for example, the Sudanese government re-iterated 'that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is inalienable part of China'. Furthermore, 'The Sudanese government considers it as legitimate for the Chinese government to take any step and action to maintain the unity of the country and prevent any attempts of separation.'¹⁴

Taiwan's Current Relations with Africa

The DPP had cited Africa, together with Latin America, as one area to develop further 'bilateral and multilateral relationships' based on 'economic reciprocity, cultural

¹² Beijing's ability to marshal African support against Tokyo's aims was seen at the Asian African Summit in April 2005, where Chinese lobbying blocked an endorsement of a Japanese seat.

¹³ 'African Countries Supporting China on the Adoption of the Anti-Secession Law', 22 March 2005 <http://www.focac.org/eng/zt/asl/t188411.htm>

¹⁴ *Xinhua*, 'Sudan Opposes Taiwan's UN bid reaffirms one-China stance', 22 July 2007.

exchange, technological cooperation and humanitarian efforts.’¹⁵ However, it has struggled to combine its own politics in Taiwan with any successful pursuit of these goals in the face of concerted Chinese engagement in Africa in which the DPP’s cross-straits policy engagement has spurred Beijing’s efforts to deny political space to Taiwan in Africa.

The Chinese government’s aim to deny space to Taiwan in Africa has succeeded. Taiwan had diplomatic ties with ten counties in 1997, and lost Guinea-Bissau and Central African in 1998, Liberia in 2003, Senegal in 2005, and Chad in 2006 and Malawi in 2008. Today Taiwan’s political prospects in the continent are bleak and rest on a dwindling number of small, strategically insignificant states. Following Malawi’s switch to Beijing in January 2008, the ROC currently has diplomatic relations with just four African states: Burkina Faso, Gambia, Sao Tome and Principe and Kingdom of Swaziland. Apart from Sao Tome’s oil deposits, these are all strategically insignificant and serve to confirm Taiwan’s political marginalisation.

The loss of Chad in August 2006 was a marked setback for Taiwan in Africa as, in contrast to Taiwan’s other African allies, it represented strong potential in terms of resources. Chad's switch to Beijing on 6 August 2006, the same day that the Taiwanese premier was due to visit N’jdamera, happened as a result of the internal pressure upon President Deby who felt particularly threatened by Khartoum-backed rebels in part supported by China via the government of Sudan. President Deby reportedly explained to President Chen Shuibian that because of the seriousness of the civil unrest caused by the rebels, he had to make compromises with the Chinese

¹⁵ DPP, ‘White Paper on Foreign Policy for the 21st Century’, 28 November 1999, at 7.

government 'for the survival' of Chad.¹⁶ Chad's relations with Beijing subsequently thickened and featured a military cooperation and assistance programme from Beijing. China has now moved into Chad in a more serious manner and Chad now complies with anti-Taiwan one-China policy.¹⁷ During his state visit to Beijing in late September 2007, President Deby met President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, and expressed his opposition to successionist activities by Taiwan and support for the one-China policy as part of solemn vows to maintain a longer-term relationship with the mainland. Taiwan's national oil company Chinese Petroleum Corp (CPC) signed several exploration blocks with Chad through its unit the Overseas Petroleum and Investment Corp. CPC had been due to invest US\$30m in a 4 year deal to explore for oil and gas.¹⁸

Africa remains a comparatively important arena for Taiwan as a potential support base for its foreign policy objectives, although in practice concrete options have dwindled to the point of being rendered little more than symbolic value. Nonetheless Taipei has continued to attempt to use the support of its African allies in the international diplomatic arena. This is seen in Taiwan's annual bid to join the UN. In July 2007, for example, Foreign Affairs Minister James Huang Chih-fang toured Swaziland, Malawi, Sao Tomè and Príncipe, Gambia, Chad and Burkina Faso in an attempt to promote the UN bid that again would fail to progress at the UN. Africa has also continued to be on regional engagement pursued in a similar way to Taipei's

¹⁶ *Taipei Times*, 'Taiwan Foreign Minister Regrets Diplomatic Break With Chad', 7 August 2006.

¹⁷ CNPC has discovered oil. CNPC Service and Engineering Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of CNPC, signed an agreement involving undisclosed amount with the Chadian government to jointly invest in a refinery company to the north of N'Djamena. China will also provide humanitarian aid and anti-malaria medicines and build an anti-malaria center.

¹⁸ *Africa Oil and Gas* Vol. 9, issue 2 27 January 2006 p. 5

other regional relations, including Taiwan's cooperation with the annual Mixed Commission Conference of Central American Nations with Taiwan, the ROC-Central American Summit, as well as the first Taiwan-Pacific Allies Summit in September 2006.

The political area where Taipei can expect to benefit more, in limited ways, from current circumstances is where African states and opposition political forces can use Taiwan to exert leverage in their negotiations with China. Taiwan remains a sensitive and easily politicised dynamic in African political relations with China. For China-supporting states, mere association with China can mean trouble.¹⁹ The most vivid recent illustration of Taiwan being mobilised as part of a politically-motivated electoral strategy came in late 2006 during the Zambian elections when opposition leader Michael Sata played 'China card'. Besides calling for 'unnecessary' Indians, Lebanese and Chinese to be removed, in order to create employment for Zambians, he also crossed a red political line when he referred to Taiwan a 'sovereign state' during the presidential elections of September 2006. This prompted Li Baodong, China's Ambassador to Zambia, to publicly denounce his interference in China's sovereignty: 'We shall have nothing to do with Zambia if Sata wins the elections and goes ahead to recognise Taiwan'.²⁰ While standardly cited as an example of China breaking its principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of an African state ally, this episode arguably illustrated a case of China's 'internal' politics with Taiwan. As such, rather than non-interference, this was actually consistent with China's One China

¹⁹ In the case of Liberia, which has a history of switching between Beijing and Taipei, its former parliamentary speaker, Edwin Snowe, found himself in trouble in part because of his reported meeting with Taiwanese officials in the Gambia.

²⁰ *AFP*, 'PRC Envoy Says China To Sever Ties With Zambia if Pro-Taiwan Leader Wins Polls', 5 September 2006.

principle. A succession of senior Zambian politicians lined up to apologise and support China.²¹ Furthermore, responding to Zambian grievances about the employment practices and environmental impact of Chinese businesses operating in Zambia, President Hu Jintao paid an unusually long visit to Zambia in February 2007 (3 days). The Zambia-China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone was launched and the Chinese President pledged some \$800 million of investments,²² and promised to build schools, and provide agricultural training and loans for road-construction equipment. Such responses from Beijing may have been driven in part by the Taiwan spectre but there were also more immediate reasons pertaining to anti-Chinese sentiment that necessitated effective response by Beijing.

Economic Relations

Taiwan's economic relations with Africa are formally channelled through the Africa Taiwan Economic Forum (ATEF). This is made up of representation from Burkina Faso, the Republic of The Gambia, the Republic of Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, the Kingdom of Swaziland. It also features the Nigeria Trade Office in Taiwan and the Liaison Office of South Africa. Founded in 2003, ATEF aims to promote and advance trade and investment relations, encourage cooperation in the field of science and technology, cultivating and promoting a favourable and positive image for Africa as well as cultural and academic exchange, promoting Africa as a tourist destination, and entrenching bilateral relations with Taiwan.

²¹ *Xinhua*, 'Former Zambian VP Urges Appreciation of China's Aid to Zambia', 31 August 2006. *Lusaka Times*, 'Mwanawasa Apologizes to China for Patriotic Front Leader Sata's Remarks', 1 September 2006.

²² Angela Chishimba, 'Zambia: Chinese trade cooperation deal signed', *Zambia Daily Mail*, 3 February 2007.

Table 1: Africa-Taiwan Trade (2000-2005)

	Trade With Taiwan (US\$m)	Total Trade (2000-2005) (US\$m)	% of Taiwan total trade
The Gambia	7	1,154	0.58%
Benin	60	7,321	0.81%
Sudan	233	36,613	0.64%
Togo	126	6,062	2.08%
Congo	4,437	26,028	17.05%
Angola	3,975	96,921	4.10%
Ghana	123	12,847	0.96%
Ethiopia	28	6,160	0.46%
Equatorial Guinea	1,229	26,067	4.71%
Gabon	117	25,031	0.47%
Tanzania	70	18,501	0.38%
Egypt	1,389	121,253	1.15%
Madagascar	120	11,397	1.05%
Burkina Faso	55	6,368	0.87%
Zimbabwe	175	20,932	0.84%
Sierra Leone	11	2,010	0.55%
Zambia	293	16,694	1.76%
South Africa	8,269	467,501	1.77%
Guinea-Bissau	1**	871	0.07%
Cameroon	718	24,698	2.91%
Nigeria	2,390	226,493	1.06%
Kenya	217	38,148	0.57%
Mali	73	11,812	0.61%
Rwanda	1	2,099	0.07%
Chad	93	11,685	0.79%
Morocco	575	138,496	0.42%
Burundi	1	953	0.06%
Mauritius	195	25,540	0.76%
Congo, DRC	3**	16,706	0.02%
Mozambique	30	16,220	0.19%
Cote d'Ivoire	228	52,799	0.43%
Uganda	46	13,020	0.35%
Senegal	45	21,160	0.21%
Central African Republic	9	1,626	0.57%
Namibia	70	20,099	0.35%
Lesotho	359	9,085	3.95%
Algeria	239	240,541	0.10%
Libya	89	129,407	0.07%
Niger	6	5,587	0.11%
Tunisia	204	112,074	0.18%
Cape Verde	1**	2,001	0.05%
Malawi	60	7,344	0.82%
Swaziland	115	17,504	0.66%
Botswana	18	33,804	0.05%
Seychelles	22	4,369	0.51%

Note: no or incomplete for Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Sao Tome & Principe, Somalia, Western Sahara.

Source: UNSTATS dataset; Bureau of International Trade of Ministry of Economic Affair

Taiwan's economic relations with Africa, like those of mainland China, represent a proportionally very small amount of its foreign trade. In 2006 Taiwan conducted the most business with Angola, China's top oil supplier in Africa, which ranked as Taiwan's 27th highest trade partner (US\$2.15 billion or 0.46% of total trade) and came above South Africa, which was ranked 28th (US\$2.06 billion or 0.44%). Swaziland was the highest-ranking Taiwan recognising state with a total trade volume of US\$30.2 million (0.007% of total trade). Overall trade with Taiwan's African allies amounted to just over \$56 million in 2006.

Taipei Eclipsed: Taiwan's Response

Although Taiwan has essentially 'lost' its diplomatic struggle with China in Africa, Taipei has attempted to respond under new circumstances. First, political efforts to engage Africa have continued. Africa Day 2007 was celebrated in Taipei when President Chen Shui-bian spoke of his thanks for their support in Taiwan's bid to join the WTO and World Health Assembly. Looking forward to the September Africa summit in Taipei, he hoped that 'a new chapter may begin in our effort to work as partners and realize sustained development.'²³ The first Taiwan-Africa Heads of State Summit was held in Taipei on 9 September 2007. There were rumours that would-be delegates had been prevented from attending but in the end President Chen Shui-bian was joined by King Mswati III of Swaziland, President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, President Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, President Bingu wa Mutharika of the Republic of Malawi; and Vice-President Isatou Njie-Saidy of the Republic of The Gambia.

The Taipei Declaration declared the 'great historical significance' of this 'new chapter in the history of Taiwan-Africa diplomatic relations'. Five core areas were singled out as priorities: information and communications technologies, economic development; medical assistance, the environment; peace and security (with Darfur explicitly cited as an example of where UN resolutions need to be implemented). The Summit Declaration also affirmed that 'as a sovereign country, Taiwan should not be deprived of its right to participate in the United Nations', and other international

²³ Erika Wang, 'Taipei celebrates Africa Day', *The China Post* 26 May 2007.

organizations such as the WTO. Like FOCAC, the summit produced an Action Plan and established a Follow-up Committee for its implementation. Shortly afterwards, an assortment of politicians, academics and NGO representatives gathered for the 2007 Taiwan-Africa Progressive Partnership Forum on 10 September.

Taiwan's first Africa summit may have been geared toward promoting genuine aims but in effect was an exercise in symbolic politics not matched by substantive content toward Africa development. The government of Taiwan sought to downplay suggestions that it was launching a rival to FOCAC but inevitably such comparisons were made. Given that FOCAC 3 in Beijing in November 2006 might be said to eclipse the efforts of most if not all other countries on Africa, and to have contrasted favourably with the European Union Africa Summit in December 2007 and indeed India's April 2008 Africa summit, Taiwan was never realistically going to begin to rival Beijing's key African forum. Instead, one aspect of the Summit appeared to relate more to its role in President Chen's domestic political campaign than any considered African policy of substance. Staged political theatre involving small number of remaining African allies, unavoidably echoing Beijing's robust success, also served to paradoxically convey the impression that Taiwan lacks a coherent overall Africa strategy, in keeping with Taiwan's uncertain, difficult international position and the disconnect between economic links and diplomatic ties.

Second, Taiwan has continued its aid and development programme for Africa, calibrated to maximise on Taiwan's advantages. This follows a long interest in transferring development expertise and lessons from Taiwan to Africa and the history of Taiwan as a development actor in Africa.²⁴ One area where Taiwan has pursued is aid programme has been in public health and combating AIDs in Africa, including in Malawi from July 2004 when Taiwan's medical mission at Malawi's Mzuzu Central Hospital established the Rainbow Clinic to treat people with HIV/AIDS (how this will be affected by Malawi's turn to Beijing in early 2008 remains to be seen.) Taiwan now emphasises its advanced information technology and public health resources to assist African countries achieve its millennium development goals. It offers a menu of digitization, health and welfare, economic sustainability - in sum, 'a partnership of

²⁴ See Deborah Brautigam, 'What can Africa Learn From Taiwan? Political Economy, Industrial Policy, and Adjustment', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 32, 1 (1994), pp. 111-138.

progress, development, and peace.²⁵ Taiwan's NGOs held a Taiwan-Africa Progressive Partnership Forum in 2007 to which political and business leaders were invited to participate.

Table 2: Foreign Aid Authorized by Taiwan's International Cooperation and Development Fund to African countries

	1997	1998	1999	2002	2003	2005	2006
Senegal	1,250	--	4,000	--	8,000	--	--
Bukina Faso	--	2,500	--	--	--	--	--
Gambia	--	396,800	--	1,000	1,000	--	--
Swaziland	41,000	--	--	5,000	--	--	--
Malawi	--	--	--	--	1,000	1,000	--

Note: "--" means no foreign aid offered in these countries

Third, aligning itself to prevailing Western standards in Africa and OECD standards of aid, Taipei under its DPP administration appears to have positioned itself as a force promoting liberal democracy values in Africa, even though the bottom line has continued to be diplomatic recognition by African states. Part of this might be taken as a form of representational politics since a critique of Beijing is often juxtaposed against what is presented as Taiwan's more responsible position and the effect is the transplant cross-straits relations into a limited African theatre. Taiwan's models itself as pro-democracy and human rights in Africa, and in turn criticises China's conduct. This was seen in the Taiwan-Africa Progressive Partnership Forum on 10 September 2007 that affirmed support, amongst other things, for 'sustainable development', the UN Millennium Development Goals and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). While China supports NEPAD in its official declarations, in practice governance has been the most controversial aspect of its current African relations and NEPAD codifies a progressive democratic vision for Africa. The Declaration also called for deepened Taiwanese economic involvement in Africa and, in contrast to China's position and African grievances against Chinese commercial practices, to promote 'economic growth in Africa, which will in turn create jobs and reduce poverty, social inequality and injustice.'²⁶ Taiwan's comparative advantage in

²⁵ Jhy-wey Shieh, 'Taiwan and Africa's Development', *Korea Times*, 13 September 2007.

²⁶ 2007 Taiwan-Africa Progressive Partnership Forum Declaration', Tzu-Pao Yang', Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

technology and knowledge plus genuine altruistic motivation and adherence to good governance is at times contrasted against what is presented as China's mercantilist motivation blind to political consequences. China's support for Sudan, for example, is cited as one example of a broader pattern of 'China's indifference to human rights violations' with negative repercussions for international security.²⁷ This echoes many Western critiques of Chinese conduct in Africa, in an apparent effort to delegitimize China. Beijing's illiberal conduct in Africa is also represented as indicative of its wider foreign relations, including China's bellicose relations with Taiwan.

Conclusion: Prospects for Taiwan in Africa

At the turn of the 1990s, Segal suggested that it was 'hard to make a case that Africa matters very much to China': 'Trade and aid are tiny, and neither Chinese nor Africans sense that the other is very important in the overall scheme of their foreign policy.'²⁸ Segal's infamous article may have got it wrong on PRC-Africa relations however applied to Taiwan today this seems an appropriate characterization of Taiwan's position with regard to Africa. Taipei will most likely look to its African allies for the next UN membership bid and has scheduled its second African Heads of State summit 'in Africa in 2009'. However, given Taiwan's political position in Africa, what are the prospects for continuing engagement beyond that hitherto domination by political competition with China?

African ruling elites have learned to play Beijing against Taipei. The first working example of a two-China principle in Africa came between 1993-1997 when Beijing and Taipei ran embassies in Monrovia. However, China's economic and political ascendancy in Africa and the world today is such that it would no longer countenance anything other than a zero-sum position in regard to diplomatic relations with Africa. This was seen importantly in Beijing's flat rejection of dual-recognition of South Africa during debates of the 1990s and given the political capital China has invested in the One China principle in its African relations to date, no compromise is to be the

²⁷ Taipei Times, 'Editorial: Beijing's deadly trade policy', 12 February 2008.

²⁸ Gerald Segal, 'China and Africa', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 519, January 1992, pp.116, 125

expected rule. As such, even when it comes to leverage politics, this are unlikely to be more than tactical political gambits to service short-term goals.

Countering the attractiveness of Taiwan as a source of leverage, China also represents a potential patron of the political objectives of certain African states most especially in relation to the West. In the example of Senegal, transferring recognition from Taiwan to the PRC appears to have been motivated in part by the desire for Beijing's potential support for Senegal's ambitions to join an enlarged UN Security Council. While there remains potential for leverage politics to be mobilised using Taiwan, few African states are likely to want to offend Beijing and know which way the wind is blowing. Thus any such leverage politics is likely to be promoted as a political tactic rather than linked to any strategic recognition of Taiwan, which is politically impossible in the UN, and is likely to be more attractive to opposition political parties in Africa rather than conservative incumbent regimes who have beneficial ties with China; the important, consequential new leverage politics concern the weight that China brings to African relations with the West.

Finally, Africa remains a market for Taiwanese business operating in the global economy. The role of Taiwanese industrialists in South Africa has been documented before China's more recent surge in the continent and testifies to a prominent business role that would feed into and assist the operations of mainland Chinese enterprises. Taiwanese industrialists in South Africa adapted to and exerted transformative influence in South Africa.²⁹ These also involved functional cooperation with mainland enterprises. Taiwan's position in Africa realistically demands that it's government promote longer-term economic relations and this entails developing non-political trade links with a continent now recognising Beijing. This would entail the creation of an institutional apparatus able to coordinate economic investment opportunities and mechanisms. Commercial cooperation between businesses would likely also prove beneficial in economic terms. However, the ATEF model is more viable and beneficial to Taiwan than the dollar diplomacy of the past.

²⁹ Gillian Hart, *Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), p. 54

It remains to be seen what the implications of Taiwan's new post-election politics will be for the future of its African political engagement. Ma Ying-jeou's stress on making 'no attempt to pursue de jure independence' in Taiwan's wider foreign policy and his critique of campaigns to 'join the UN under the name Taiwan' will have ramifications for Taiwan's African diplomacy.³⁰ In turn, how Beijing responds to a new KMT government will affect Taiwan's Africa engagement. While there are grounds for thinking that China will allow a degree more latitude for the new government, it is most unlikely not to renew its push to win over the remaining Taiwan-recognising allies in Africa when the fourth FOCAC happens in Cairo in 2009.

The most likely future for Taiwan in Africa is that of a politically marginalised actor with a minor political presence confined to pursuing economic interests with potential for the occasional role in African relations with Beijing and a token aid programme. While such statements have been aired before, notably by Larkin in 1971 when he asserted that: 'Certainly the future significance of Taiwan for Africa will be limited to modest amounts of trade and aid.'³¹ If Taiwan is serious about its attempt to project itself in Africa as an embodiment of democratic values and successful development, this will necessitate recognising political reality and the need to engage with states that support Beijing. However, this is unlikely to prove viable in practice given the seriousness and absolute nature of the One China principle in Africa, which Beijing is not going to dilute or likely to be accommodating unless it has secured primary diplomatic recognition from all 53 Africa states.

³⁰ Ma Ying-jeou, 'A SMART Strategy for National Security', A Speech before the Association for the Promotion of National Security, Republic of China, 26 February 2008.

³¹ Bruce D. Larkin, *China and Africa 1949-1970: The Foreign Policy of the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 8-9