

China's Evolving Role in the United Nations: Analysis of the People's Liberation Army's Engagement in UN Security Operations

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Abstract

Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has become a proactive participant in world affairs, showing a desire and an ability to contribute to global public goods. As a result, China's support for the United Nations has grown considerably. Today, China is the second largest financial contributor to the organization's overall budget, and the largest troop contributing country among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. This article examines China's engagement within the UN framework and, in particular, why the UN has been chosen by Beijing as one of the key venues through which to flex its diplomatic muscles and strengthen its influence abroad. To address this research question, this article adopts a case study approach that focuses on the deployment of People's Liberation Army (PLA) units for missions relating to counter-piracy and peacekeeping activities. Drawing on the literature on military diplomacy and the study of Chinese media, it provides a comprehensive assessment of Beijing's motivations in the pursuit of peace enforcement in international relations, and highlights the unique role played by the PLA in achieving this ambition.

Keywords: *China, United Nations, People's Liberation Army*

1. Introduction

China has had a long and storied history with the United Nations (UN). Although China endured great hardship and fought fearlessly against Japanese troops during World War II, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was not granted a representative seat at the UN as the legitimate government of China until 1971. Though the United Nations has been widely perceived by Chinese leaders as an instrument used by imperialist powers to promote their interests at the expense of the Third World governments and national liberation

movements, Beijing's attitude towards the global body kept oscillating between outright opposition and substantive passivism during most of the Cold War. It was not until the 1990s that China expanded its international profile by remarkably increasing its participation in various multilateral institutions. Adjusting to changing international and domestic conditions, China's initial distrust of the UN was gradually replaced by an engagement more in line with the prominent role it intended to play. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has become a proactive participant in world affairs, showing a desire and an ability to contribute to global public goods. As a result, China's support for the UN has grown considerably. Today, China is the second-largest financial contributor to the organization's overall budget and the largest troop contributing country among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. This article examines China's engagement within the UN framework and, in particular, why the UN has been chosen by Beijing as one of the key venues in which to flex its diplomatic muscles and strengthen its influence abroad. To address this research question, this article adopts a case study approach that focuses on the deployment of People's Liberation Army (PLA) units for missions relating to counter-piracy and peacekeeping activities. Drawing on the literature on military diplomacy and the study of Chinese media, it provides a comprehensive assessment of Beijing's motivations in the pursuit of peace enforcement in international relations, and highlights the unique role played by the PLA in achieving this ambition. This article is organized into three sections. The first section starts with a historical review of China's evolving behavioral pattern in the UN since that body's founding in 1945. The second section covers China's recent participation in counter-piracy and peacekeeping operations, including its contributions of both personnel and resources, and its efforts to improve the UN security engagement capabilities. The final section explores the motive behind involving the PLA in international missions and what potential gains China can expect to make of it. This article seeks to shed light on China's policy towards the UN and the importance conferred on the latter in China's overall foreign policy.

2. From Rejection to Engagement

The Republic of China (ROC) was the first country to enter what would become World War II when Japan began its full-scale invasion in 1937. As one of the major Allied powers, the ROC was naturally charged with the historic responsibility of forging a new post-war order. Together with the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia, the ROC, led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, participated in a series of important diplomatic meetings in Washington in the late summer and early fall of 1944.

At these meetings, officially known as the “Washington Conversations on International Organization, Dumbarton Oaks,” the four parties deliberated proposals for the future establishment of an international organization to maintain peace and security in the world. Almost one year after those meetings took place, the representatives of 50 countries were invited in San Francisco to officially sign the Charter of the United Nations. In recognition of the ROC’s long-standing fight against the Axis powers, Wellington Koo, head of the Chinese delegation, was accorded the honour of being the first to sign. While both the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party of China (CCP) supported the formation of the UN, disputes over representation broke out after the PRC was founded four years later.¹ In November 1949, the Central People’s Government requested that the UN immediately deprive the Nationalist delegation “of all rights to further represent the Chinese people in the United Nations” (Chai, 1970: 398). In subsequent years, the Soviet Union, along with other nations friendly to the PRC, introduced multiple proposals to formally replace the Nationalist delegates with a Communist delegation. However, the influence of the United States was such that it was able to assemble enough votes to block this resolution. The admission of newly independent developing countries gradually gave a greater voice to the non-Western world, changing the balance of power within the organization.² Increasing global support for Beijing at the expense of Taipei, combined with the diplomatic rapprochement between the Nixon administration and the CCP, sealed the fate of the Nationalists. On October 25, 1971, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 2758 which stated that the PRC is the only legitimate government of China. The resolution also replaced the ROC with the PRC as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Although the PRC’s support of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations remained largely unaffected, Beijing’s posture towards the organization was extremely critical from 1949 to 1969. This was particularly so at the time of the Korean War, and even more from the moment when the resolution condemning the PRC for aggression was passed in February 1951.³ Chinese leaders and Chinese media repeatedly denounced the UN as a puppet of the United States, which could manipulate it with its automatic voting majority to serve the interests of imperialism (Luard, 1971). The deterioration in relations between the PRC and the Soviet Union further reinforced the Chinese perception that the UN had degenerated into an exclusive tool for the two hegemonic superpowers to suppress the rise of Third World nations. Beijing considered that the international political and economic order, controlled by the United States and the Soviet Union, was set up in favour of exploiting developing countries, which meant it could not be fair and impartial. As a result, the PRC took a position where it not only

refused to recognize the validity of the UN but also strongly opposed such an international regime. At the 22nd session of the General Assembly, the communist delegation declared on December 8, 1967: “Speaking frankly, the Chinese people are not at all interested in sitting in the United Nations, a body manipulated by the United States, a place for playing power politics, a stock exchange for the United States and the Soviet Union to strike political bargains, and an organ to serve the US policies of aggression and war” (Kim, 1974: 301-302).

Condemning the power and influence of Washington and Moscow, the PRC’s interest in the UN declined in favour of a new and revolutionary foreign policy centred on rallying the support of the Third World. Convinced that the Third World had a formidable force at the global level, Beijing saw the need to cultivate closer relations with these countries partly for the purpose of challenging the dominance of both the United States and the Soviet Union and partly to win international legitimacy and recognition (Khadiagala, 1982). Thus, by the end of 1969, the PRC had diplomatic relations with 30 Third World nations. Of these 13 were African, 11 Asian, five Middle Eastern and one Caribbean. Between 1969 and 1971, the PRC established official relations with 22 African states (Ogunsanwo, 1974). Beijing’s engagement with the Third World was not limited to ideological dispositions but also included economic and technical assistance.⁴ Given the condition of the Chinese economy in the immediate post-Cultural Revolution period, this aid took a massive financial toll. Under the impetus of its Third World diplomacy, the PRC’s attitude towards the UN steadily shifted to a more conciliatory and flexible posture. Abandoning its former polemical indictments against the organization, Chinese leadership began to launch a charm offensive to join the family of nations (Kim, 1974). As such, Chinese ambassadors who had been recalled during the Cultural Revolution returned to their posts with the mission to restore normal and friendly relations with the host country. The objective to restore the PRC’s seat at the UN became a top priority. In 1970, Beijing came close to reaching its goal when the total number of votes supporting the PRC exceeded those against for the first time.⁵ The Chinese leadership had been expecting that this would happen, but not that it would happen so soon. Mao Zedong admitted that “the victory at the UN Assembly this time is out of my expectation” (Niu, 2011: 12). One year later, the UN General Assembly would vote to definitely admit the PRC and to expel the ROC.

After its entry into the UN as the legitimate representative of the people of mainland China, the government in Beijing continued to pursue its Third World diplomacy by supporting the economic, colonial, racial, nationalist and anti-imperialist issues which made up the core of the main concern from most

developing countries (Kim, 1974). Reflecting on its own historical experience with the West, China used the principles of national independence and sovereignty in championing the causes of Third World nations. Addressing the UN in 1972, the Chinese delegation proclaimed: “[We] have consistently maintained that all countries, big or small, should be equal and that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence should be taken as the principles guiding the relations between countries. The people of each country have the right to choose the social system of their own country according to their own will and to protect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their own country. No country has the right to subject another country to its aggression, subversion, control, interference or bullying” (Niu, 2011: 15). As the only developing country of the Security Council, China aimed to project itself as a new and different kind of superpower which would promote the demands of the Third World. Sadly for China, Beijing’s limited means and resources, in terms of financial contribution as well as foreign service personnel, forced it to adopt a cautious and low-profile posture in its diplomatic behaviour and style at the UN. Caught between the rhetorical militancy and the pursuit of realpolitik, China acted with prudence and pragmatism in advancing its foreign policy interests within the organization.

Once it settled in at the UN, China proved to be neither the operational wrecker as many of its detractors had feared, nor the structural reformer as some of its revolutionary supporters had hoped (Kim, 1974). On contentious issues like the war in Vietnam and UN peacekeeping operations – considered by Beijing as foreign interference in the internal affairs of countries – China chose not to stage an open confrontation, opting to remain silent or at least not to participate in voting. From 1971 to 1976, China refused to vote in 46 of 158 votes, the most of any Security Council permanent members (Niu, 2011). However, the most salient example of the ambivalent character of China’s UN diplomacy is to be found in its stand on the veto. On the one hand, Beijing never challenged the principle of the veto despite its previous attacks against its utilization by the hegemonic superpowers. China used to denounce the veto as an exclusive right of the great powers to abuse their privileges, ignoring the sovereignty and equality of nations. After its admission to the UN, China seldom attempted to clarify or rationalize its position on the veto and preferred instead to underscore its own international responsibilities for maintaining peace and security (Ogden, 1979). On the other hand, China exercised restraint in its use of the veto power, resorting to its usage only in situations or issues perceived to be affecting its vital national interests. Unlike Moscow, which used the veto 106 times between 1946 and 1965, thus paralyzing the normal functioning of the organization, Beijing cast its only veto of the Cold War period in 1972, when it barred Bangladesh from membership in the UN.⁶

While many in the West, especially in the US, had anticipated that China would emulate the Soviet Union's abuse of the veto, Beijing voluntarily refrained from using it, refusing to consider the veto power as a political tool during these early years.⁷

With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a new international system, China gradually abandoned its championing of the Third World and its traditional anti-imperialist stand against hegemonic superpowers. Beijing's attitude became more open and tolerant, showing a sincere desire to become involved in world affairs. The Chinese leadership sought to play a more prominent role in large-scale multilateral institutions, expressing its desire to be recognized as a great power and no longer as a developing country.⁸ China's participation in the UN became more participatory and more collaborative. This newly engaging behaviour was first and foremost motivated by two leading factors: the desire to end the unipolar world order, and the impact of globalization.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States became the only remaining superpower, functioning virtually unchecked. Although Beijing wanted to have a good relationship with Washington, it also believed that the US might wish to pursue a policy of containment against Chinese power (Liu, 2014). After the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, the United States, along with other Western countries, slapped economic sanctions against China, depriving it of precious advanced technologies. China's human rights abuses became the most visible and constant points criticized by the US. Threatened with isolation on the international scene, Beijing engaged in vigorous efforts to promote multipolarity in order to balance Washington's global influence. In addition, the irresistible trend of globalization led to greater integration in trade, financial flows, investment and technology in the political and military fields. The 1997 Asian financial crisis, for instance, which caused economic slowdowns or recessions in most Southeast and East Asian countries, illustrated the risks associated with the process of globalization. At the time, the Asian market accounted for almost 40% of China's total exports (Hai and Zhong, 1999). Anything which could even potentially circumscribe its economic development model is anathema to Beijing. China's involvement in multilateral diplomacy became one way through which Beijing sought to mitigate the adverse effects of globalization. The emergence of non-traditional issues such as financial crisis, epidemics, migration, natural disasters, drug trafficking, terrorism and piracy, showed that nation-states were affected indiscriminately and could only be effectively dealt with through international cooperation. Facing these new challenges, China turned into a true international stakeholder, actively contributing to UN activities, with the aim of realizing both its own interests and the interests it had in common with other countries.

3. Counter-piracy and Peacekeeping Operations

One notable sign that China viewed its participation in world affairs as increasingly important after the Cold War was that Chinese leaders began to attend high-level UN conferences and deliver prominent speeches. Before the end of the Cold War, this had occurred only once, when Deng Xiaoping, then the vice-premier of China, attended the Sixth Special Meeting of the UN General Assembly in 1974. In the 1990s, Chinese leaders such as Premier Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin both participated in UN meetings and events. In September 2000, Jiang Zemin delivered a well-received speech at the UN New Millennium Summit, emphasizing that “the positive functions of the UN should be enhanced instead of weakened, and the authority of the UN should be maintained instead of harmed” (Niu, 2011: 25). However, it was China’s commitment to UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) and attitude towards peace enforcement carried out by pivotal states that represented the most fundamental change in China’s international behaviour. After decades of opposition to the principle of military intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign countries, China was now willing to endorse the use of force in the name of the United Nations. In the immediate post-Cold War era, China not only voted in favor of UNPKO but also decided to contribute personnel to its missions. In 1990, China sent five military observers to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East.⁹ From April 1992 to September 1993, China deployed 800 PLA engineering troops in two batches to the United Nations Transitional Administration in Cambodia (UNTAC), marking the first time China contributed formal military units to a UN peacekeeping operation (He, 2007).¹⁰

In the face of the new international security landscape, China came to realize the necessity to make more substantial efforts in order to avoid the intensification of violent conflicts and seek peaceful solutions through the UN. New concepts such as “common security” and “globalized cooperation” made regular features in Chinese foreign policy discourse, which was reflected in Jiang Zemin’s analysis in 2002: “As countries increase their interdependency and common ground on security, it has become difficult for any single country to realize its security objective by itself alone. Only by strengthening international cooperation can we effectively deal with the security challenge worldwide and realize universal and sustained security” (Wu, 2011: 160). Whereas China was once closed to the outside world, Chinese interests had by then become linked to crises abroad. As a direct consequence of Beijing’s adoption of a more collective security approach, the size of China’s peacekeeping force had, by the turn of the century, grown markedly in absolute terms. The total number of Chinese troops involved in UN peacekeeping operations increased from 49 in 1999 to 1,013 in 2005. As

a result, China ranked as the fifteenth largest UNPKO contributor worldwide (Staehele, 2006). Chinese military contingents, as well as police officers, were sent to conflict zones such as East Timor, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Liberia, Sudan and Haiti. Along with its contribution to peacekeeping personnel, China also greatly increased its financial responsibility. While the country's annual contribution to the UN's budget remained less than 1% throughout the 1990s, it rose rapidly in the early 2000s. China moved up on the list of the organization's largest contributors from 13th position in 2001 (1.5%) to ninth in 2004 (2.1%).¹¹

Following its rise as an economic power, China strengthened its role and influence in the UN framework. Under the leadership of President Hu Jintao, China adjusted its diplomatic strategy by making the United Nations the most important arena for its diplomacy, through which China could be better engaged in multilateral institutions and international regimes. Beijing progressively pushed for Chinese diplomats to be nominated to high-level positions within the UN's administration. On October 24, 2005, Zhang Xinheng, Vice-Minister of Education of China, was elected President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). On November 9, 2006, Margaret Chan, Director of the Hong Kong Department of Health, became the seventh Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO). The day after the appointment of Margaret Chan, another Chinese national, Zhao Houlin, was elected Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). On February 4, 2008, it was a Chinese economist, Justin Lin, who was appointed the Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist of the World Bank, making him the first citizen from a developing country to be appointed to this position (Niu, 2011). Ironically, while China's increasing voice and weight in world affairs suggested a desire to adopt a more responsible approach and to meet international demands for China to become a more fully engaged partner and global "responsible stakeholder", concerns over China's true motivations behind its international engagement began to emerge, especially in the United States and its allies.¹²

China's continuous economic success and growing international status attracted appreciation but also unease from the outside world, as reflected in the heated "China threat" debate. On the one hand, the international community, including the United Nations, expected a rising China to shoulder more responsibility and do more for international peace and security. On the other hand, a rising China sparked fear, especially in Western countries, that Beijing would pursue a hegemonic path and seek to disrupt the existing international order, as most rising powers have done in history (He, 2007). To assure the world of China's good will and benign intentions, Chinese leadership began to implement its "harmonious world-oriented" diplomacy.

In September 2005, Hu Jintao made a speech at the summit on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, titled “Making Great Efforts to Build a Harmonious World with Long-Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity”. In front of an audience that included the heads of state of more than 170 countries, the Chinese President reiterated his country’s commitment to adhering to the purpose and principles of the UN Charter and to supporting international efforts to settle disputes or conflicts through peaceful means and strengthen global cooperation.¹³ Such thinking served as a guideline for China’s contributions to UN activities, particularly those addressing matters related to peace and security.

In this regard, the mobilization of the international community to combat piracy off the Horn of Africa provided China with an opportunity to convert words into actions. In 2008, piracy in the Gulf of Aden became rampant and subsequently gained the attention of the media and policymakers around the world.¹⁴ Acting under chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions (UN Resolutions 1816, 1838, 1846 and 1851) that called upon states with sufficient capacity to take active part in counter-piracy operations (Kaufman, 2009). On December 18, 2008, the Chinese government announced its decision to deploy two guided missile destroyers and a supply ship of the PLA Navy to join the international naval flotilla. This deployment marked the first time in modern history that China’s navy engaged in an operational mission outside of its claimed waters (Erickson and Strange, 2015). From the outset, China vowed to cooperate closely with its international partners. At the time of the first deployment, commander Admiral Du Jingcheng stated that, while the PLA Navy would “not accept the command of other countries or regional organizations”, it was eager “to facilitate exchanges of information with escort naval vessels from other countries” (Erickson and Strange, 2015: 83). Beijing went to great lengths to promote a positive and constructive image abroad. The PLA established a regularly updated English language website, distributing copious details on its counter-piracy operations. The site even outlined tactics and procedures used by Chinese naval forces in conducting their missions. Additionally, the PLA Navy embedded journalists from various news organizations, including representatives from non-state media, on board the ships (MIT, 2009).

On December 26, 2018, China celebrated the 10th anniversary of its participation in counter-piracy operations. Over that period, the PLA Navy sent 31 convoy fleets, 100 ships, 67 shipboard helicopters, and more than 26,000 officers and soldiers to escort 6,595 ships. They successfully rescued, protected or assisted more than 70 Chinese and foreign ships in distress (Guo, 2019). In recent months, China has announced the deployment of its new generation of main combat ships in the Gulf of Aden, including its

latest guided missile destroyer, *Xian*, and its first domestically developed frigate, *Anyang*.¹⁵ While the number of piracy attacks within the region has dramatically fallen since 2009, the UN Security Council has nevertheless repeatedly renewed its authorization for international naval forces to join in the fight against piracy.¹⁶ The Council recognizes that piracy and armed robbery at sea continue to jeopardize regional stability and urges states that are able to do so to “deploy naval vessels, arms, and military aircraft; provide basing and logistical support for counter-piracy forces; and seize and dispose of boats, vessels, arms and other related equipment used in the commission of piracy-related crimes.”¹⁷ China’s commitment to combat contemporary maritime piracy remains a priority and is likely to persist for the foreseeable future. China’s *2019 Defense White Paper* mentions piracy several times throughout the various sections, indicating that countering piracy is important to many aspects of Beijing’s diplomatic strategy. It also reiterates the PLA Navy’s support for exchange and cooperation “with multiple naval forces in the area to safeguard the security of sea lines of communication (SLOCs).”¹⁸ The inauguration in 2017 of the PLA’s first overseas military base in Djibouti further reflects China’s commitment to maritime security engagement. Located on the tip of the Horn of Africa, the Djibouti logistics support base, as it is officially known, has been described by Chinese authorities as a logistics facility to serve UN-authorized counter-piracy missions. Dedicated to nonmilitary activities, it will be used by the PLA Navy to “get more efficient and timely replenishment, maintain equipment, and allow the crew to rest” (Guo, 2019).

China’s participation in UN peace and security actions has risen to a new level since Xi Jinping came to power. On June 19, 2013, in his first meeting with UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, President Xi stressed that: “China attaches importance to the UN and will firmly support it. Being a permanent member of the UN Security Council confers certain duties on China, and the country has demonstrated the capability to assume those duties. China will step up its efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of international disputes.”¹⁹ The following year, the deployment of combat troops to UN peacekeeping operations represented a significant departure from China’s previous practice of providing enabling units only (i.e. police, logistics, engineering and medical units). The matter of sending Chinese combat troops to UNPKO had been under discussion since 2006, when Beijing offered to deploy armed forces to Lebanon, but did not follow through on the decision (Foot, 2014). The subsequent deployment of Chinese combat troops in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) coincided with the adoption of a more pragmatic position in relation to China’s traditionally staunch adherence to the principles of state

sovereignty and non-intervention. Over time, Beijing has softened its non-interference policy and gradually acknowledged the necessity to protect civilian populations from gross human rights violations. For instance, China has been surprisingly receptive to the development of the UN's Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. While China refuses the doctrine to become the grounds for regime change, it accepts the principle that the international community, with the authorization of the UN Security Council, may intervene across borders to end the worst forms of violence and persecution.²⁰

Over the past decade, China has significantly upped its personnel and financial contributions to UN peacekeeping initiatives. In 2010, China had 2,039 military personnel deployed to UNPKO, making it the largest contributor among the permanent members of the UN Security Council (Niu, 2011). In 2015, this number surged to 3,084 peacekeepers deployed in 10 missions worldwide (CSIS, 2019).²¹ China's contribution to UNPKO has earned applause and respect from the United Nations, as well as from national governments. In Mali, Chinese officers received praise from mission commander Jean-Paul Deconinck for their "excellent professional qualities" (Pauley, 2018). In 2019, all 395 members of the 6th Chinese peacekeeping force of the MINUSMA were recognized with the Peace Medal of Honor, the preeminent award given by the UN for contributions to peace. In South Sudan, it is the country's defense minister, Malek Reuben Riak, who expressed his gratitude: "At this juncture, I would like to register a special thanks to UNMISS in general and the Chinese and all the other peacekeepers for their specific roles in renovating and constructing South Sudan's infrastructure" (Oyet, 2019). China has also bolstered its financial support to the UN peacekeeping budget. In 2016, the Chinese government pledged US\$1 billion to help fund UN peace, security and development activities, while in 2018 China supplied 10.3% of the organization's peacekeeping budget, up from 3.9% in 2012 (Moynihan and Muller, 2019). China's increased participation in UN peacekeeping efforts stand in sharp contrast to the United States' recent cutbacks in both personnel and financial contributions. Since the election of President Donald Trump, the US government has openly complained that the United States was shouldering an unfair burden of the cost of UN peacekeeping operations.²² The approved budget for UNPKO for the 2020 fiscal year is US\$6.5 billion, representing an average of 1.9% reduction from the approved budget from the previous year. Of that amount, the United States and China account for 27.9% and 15.2%, respectively.²³

As the United States is pushing to reduce spending, China is stepping up its investments in peacekeeping. To comprehensively implement the commitments made by Xi Jinping to further support UN peacekeeping operations, China has established a permanent peacekeeping force of 8,000 troops.²⁴ The force includes members from 28 divisions and 10 fields, ranging

from infantry battalions and quick-response forces to helicopter and drone crews. China has also trained more than 2,000 peacekeepers from other countries and provided demining equipment to Cambodia, Laos, Egypt and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (Xiao, 2019). As a major contributor to both troops and financing, Beijing is uniquely positioned to act as a bridge between the perspectives of troop contributing developing countries and of richer donor industrialized countries, thereby lending more legitimacy to UNPKO (Fang, Li and Sun, 2018). China has become the pillar of UN peacekeeping, strengthening its engagement at a time when other UN members have raised doubts about the very relevance of UN peacekeeping missions, questioning whether the latter still match the current complex political realities. As with its participation in counter-piracy operations, China's involvement in UNPKO will continue. According to Major General Shao Yuanming, deputy chief of the Joint Staff Department of China's Central Military Commission, "China stands ready to work with all parties to enable UN peacekeeping operations to progress with times and play a bigger role in peace and security sector" (Xiao, 2019). In 2020, China will be hosting a joint exercise and training event for peacekeeping standby forces.

4. Motivations Behind the Involvement of the PLA in Overseas Missions

The realist paradigm argues that the pursuit of national interests remains the main reason for countries to involve themselves in international relations. Such national interests are subject to change over time, leading to adjustments in countries' foreign policy. Rising powers, in particular, are considered with enormous apprehension as they are perceived as potential sources of instability. While realists attribute most conflicts to a clash of interests, they fear that the self-definition of rising powers' interests will invariably expand along with their increasing capabilities (Kirshner, 2010). Determined by grand ambitions, rising powers are poised to act energetically, and even aggressively, to secure greater influence and thus maximize the prospects of their very survival. One cannot deny that changes in Beijing's interests have led to changes in China's foreign policy. It is, therefore, only logical to assume that China's activism in the United Nations is the result of a reactive response to the promotion of those interests. The analysis of China's recent contributions to UN activities reveals that Beijing's engagement is largely driven by a range of motivations that can be categorized as either defensively- or offensively-oriented.

Motivations that are defensively-oriented emphasize the need for a government to respond to external pressure. Through obligations, recommendations, or social learning, an independent government may feel obligated to modify its position and proceed to a change of policy. In the case of China,

its international engagement has been shaped by its desire to present itself as a global actor that is valued and can be trusted. In 1999, Prime Minister Zhu Rongji coined the phrase “responsible power”, which aimed to portray China not only as a responsible economic player but also as a political one in maintaining peace and security. Greater participation in UN affairs was one way in which this goal was to be achieved (Niu, 2011). The decision of the Chinese leadership to become more involved in the international system came after China was accused of being mostly inactive and acting as a “free rider”. From Robert Kaplan to US President Barack Obama, a chorus of voices has claimed that China is “free riding” on cooperation undertaken by the United States and other countries that provide benefits to the wider international community.²⁵ The allegation that China enjoys the advantages of collective action without actually contributing is not something new but dates back to the early 1990s, when Beijing modernized its nuclear forces at the same time that the United States and Russia were downsizing their arsenals and working towards arms control agreements (Kennedy, 2015). Whether the issue is preventing nuclear proliferation, fighting terrorism, or improving maritime security, China has been criticized for not doing enough to support international cooperation.²⁶ The deployment of the PLA in counter-piracy and peacekeeping operations enables Beijing to address those criticisms directly. By providing more global public goods, China seeks to demonstrate its genuine intention to shoulder more international responsibilities. China has come to realize that, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, it is expected to behave in a way that is more commensurate with its status as a great power.

China’s growing commitment to the United Nations is also motivated by the need to portray itself as a benevolent actor that is willing to engage peacefully with the international community. China’s rapid economic growth and military modernization have long been a source of open concern in Western countries, as well as in the nations adjacent to China. Beijing’s increasing influence on the world stage has caused uncertainty and anxiety to the extent that China has been identified by some scholars and statesmen as a revanchist power, looking to change the balance of power to its advantage.²⁷ Whether the “China threat” is a valid perception or not, one thing is certain: China suffers from an image deficit. According to the 2019 Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Survey, the perception of China among the populace in almost all its major trade and diplomatic partners (with the exception of Russia) and all developed economies and free democracies was on balance negative.²⁸ Most respondents in Western Europe had unfavourable views of China, ranging from 53% in Spain to 70% in Sweden. Negative views of China predominated in both the United States and Canada, where 60% and 67% respectively perceived the country unfavourably. China’s Asian

neighbours also had dim views of it. There was a disapproval rate of 85% in Japan, 63% in South Korea, 57% in Australia, and 54% in the Philippines. In most of these countries, the approval rates were at or near their historic lows.²⁹ Moreover, China appears to be losing ground in its battle for global and regional influence. Between the United States and China, 73% of Asian respondents favored Washington, versus 12% for Beijing. Worldwide, 76% of respondents declared that they had no confidence in President Xi Jinping (Huang, 2019). The Chinese government finds itself under intense pressure to enhance China's international image. Beijing knows that if it wants China to gain the international recognition it deserves; it must convince international public opinion that a rising China will be a constructive force for global governance and not a conspicuously disruptive one that threatens world peace and security.

Motivations that are offensively-oriented encourage a government to take proactive actions to secure international gains. The objective is to act with determination and opportunism to create more favourable conditions that will advance national strength. Driven by the ambition to protect and promote its overseas economic and political interests, China has made a considerable effort to expand its international profile. In the Indian Ocean, for instance, China has gone from essentially zero presence around a decade ago to the permanent presence of a sizeable fleet, which includes surface vessels and nuclear submarines (Brewster, 2019). The deployment of the PLA Navy in the region aims to prevent any attempt to limit or block China's vital access to energy resources and raw materials. Beijing attaches significant importance to the safeguarding of SLOCs, as the country's economic growth is highly dependent on seaborne trade.³⁰ Another mission of the Chinese military is to support and protect Chinese citizens living, working and travelling abroad. As Chinese businesses have increased their presence around the world, a growing number of Chinese citizens are now residing outside of China. Those citizens expect their government to offer them protection from overseas perils, such as maritime piracy, terrorism, insurgencies, and the disorder and violence that arise from weak governance or civil wars (Heath, 2018). In 2011, the PLA Navy and Air Force in Libya initiated China's first large-scale evacuation of Chinese citizens from a foreign country, safely repatriating more than 35,000 people. After that experience, China's military purchased more airlift and amphibious capability to facilitate the future evacuation of Chinese citizens from dangerous situations. In 2015, several Chinese naval frigates, carrying out anti-piracy patrols off the coast of Somalia, were diverted to Yemen to participate in the rescue of 908 people, of which 289 were non-Chinese citizens. The operation not only demonstrated Beijing's commitment to protect its overseas citizens, but also contributed to bolstering China's image abroad.³¹ The Chinese leadership recognizes that upholding international stability is

crucial to the country's economic interests. By deploying the PLA in counter-piracy and peacekeeping operations, China seeks to prevent certain regions of the world from sliding into chaos. The protection of national assets and the Chinese diaspora, particularly in distant countries in Africa and the Middle East, has become a national priority.³² China's involvement in UN activities also provides an opportunity for Beijing to exert greater diplomatic influence. Unlike in developed countries, populations in developing countries have a more favourable view of China.³³ China's strategic attention to the developing world dates back to the Cold War, when it identified itself as a developing country offering vocal and substantive support to the Third World. Today, China's ideological emphasis is gone, but its desire to lead in promoting the collective interests of developing countries has endured (Mitchell, 2006). It is Beijing's ambition to build a less Western-dominated international system, one that is more equitable, pluralistic and undoubtedly more reflective of China's ascendancy. To do so, China needs to secure the cooperation of a global network of partners, starting with the developing world.

There is finally a military interest for China to participate in counter-piracy and peacekeeping operations. While the quality of the PLA has improved dramatically, its ability to fight and win wars remains questionable. China has not been in a major conflict since its 1979 war with Vietnam, and has not been involved in sustained combat for over sixty years, since the Korean War. Former director of the PLA General Armaments Department, Zhang Youxia, was quoted as saying: "Forgetting war will certainly bring about dangers. Only by getting ready for war fighting will one be able to fight and win.... Always maintain strategic alertness, resolutely overcome peacetime inertia and bad habits" (Chase et al., 2015: 76). China's participation in overseas operations represents an important stepping-stone in the PLA's transition to a modern and sophisticated force. From an exclusive focus on homeland defense and social stability missions, the responsibilities of the PLA have shifted outwards to support the country's expanding array of global economic and political interests. The PLA has used its deployment in counter-piracy and peacekeeping operations to train its personnel to operate in volatile and remote places, to increase decision-making and leadership skills under pressure, to improve logistical and intelligence support, to gain experience working along foreign contingents, and to test new military equipment. The PLA Navy and Air Force are both working toward achieving a power projection capability. The development of such capability will not only contribute to expand the reach of Chinese forces far from the mainland's shores but will also better prepare them to face contingencies in China's immediate neighbourhood. While the need to protect China's overseas interests has grown in importance, the issue of Taiwan and the maritime territorial disputes in which China is embroiled remain Beijing's principal

preoccupation. The Chinese leadership relies on the supremacy of the PLA to enforce its sovereignty claims over the island-nation, as well as over the East and South China seas.

China clearly sees the United Nations as “the best venue to practice multilateralism, and an effective platform for collective actions to cope with various threats and challenges.”³⁴ From a Chinese perspective, the UN is an inclusive multilateral organization in which China enjoys significant decision-making power. Unlike any other UN member, China has the advantage both of holding veto power in the Security Council and of being an influential participant in the Group of 77 (G77).³⁵ This unique position allows China to benefit from the same prestige and privileges as the United States, and other great powers, while simultaneously being able to draw upon skeptical developing countries to counter the liberal agendas advocated by Washington and its allies. Moreover, there exists a strong congruence between China’s norms and principles and those embodied within the UN itself (Foot, 2014). For instance, the solid attachment to the Westphalian vision of state sovereignty and the sovereign equality of nations reflected in the organization accords closely with Beijing’s preferences. In the area of peacekeeping, China emphasizes the need for host-state consent and the host state’s primary responsibilities to protect its citizens. When host-state consent is not obtainable, the Security Council is the only body able to authorize the deployment of international peacekeepers. Invoking chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, China strictly opposes peacekeeping missions that bypass the Security Council (Zurcher, 2019).

Despite the significance of the UN resolution as a core principle of peacekeeping, China’s security engagement in overseas operations is not without pitfalls. First, China runs the risk of becoming embroiled in crises and places which are unfamiliar to its military forces. With Beijing’s commitment to UNPKO, including in regions locked in civil wars, Chinese personnel are increasingly being placed in harm’s way. On 1 June, 2016, terrorists attacked the barracks of the Chinese peacekeeping security unit located in Gao, Mali with a vehicle bomb, leading to the death of one Chinese peacekeeper and four injuries. A few weeks later, on 10 July, another two Chinese peacekeepers were killed and five more injured in a mortar exchange between the government forces and the rebel army in Juba, South Sudan (He, 2019). A total of 18 Chinese peacekeepers have lost their lives since China sent its first military observers to UNTSO in 1990.³⁶ The practice of UN peacekeeping has become more complex and more ambitious, resulting in more intrusive and more assertive missions. While China’s participation in UNPKO enjoys domestic public support, it is not certain that this support will continue as Chinese troops increasingly find themselves in dangerous situations (Lanteigne, 2018).

Second, China's involvement in peace operations runs the risk of raising tensions with host governments. The resolution or management of civil conflicts requires the kind of intervention that may be perceived by the recipient states as colliding with law enforcement and sovereignty. Typically, those states consider that mission activities related to the monitoring and investigations of human rights violations interfere in their internal affairs and undermine their international standing. The challenge for China is to continue to expand its role in peacekeeping operations, while at the same time making sure to avoid damaging its bilateral relations with countries where it has strong economic and political interests.

Third, it will be difficult for China to escape the criticisms that come with greater external exposure. In recent years, there has been a series of scandals involving UN peacekeepers in African countries and Haiti.³⁷ Chinese personnel has never been accused of any inappropriate behaviour, but the growing participation of Chinese troops in UNPKO increases the risk of potential misconduct. Beijing views the PLA as a powerful instrument of statecraft whose proficiency is decisive in achieving its diplomatic ambitions. As such, it expects the PLA to successfully carry out its overseas missions, performing to the highest standards that are required of a world-class military. The problem for Beijing is that any poor performance or controversial behaviour by the PLA will be exploited by China's international competitors to discredit its engagement, whereas at the domestic level, any shortcomings will be interpreted as an embarrassment, thereby jeopardizing the credibility of Chinese leadership. No matter whether the motivations behind China's contributions to UN peacekeeping activities are defensively- or offensively-oriented, Beijing must be on guard not to commit the grave error of assuming that such involvement is entirely free of risk.

5. Conclusion

A comprehensive review of China's policy towards the United Nations reveals that, since the end of the Cold War, Beijing has actively supported the UN framework and contributed to global security. China's engagement in overseas military missions has been shaped by its new identity as a rising power. Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, this engagement has significantly increased in terms of both personnel and financial contributions. The United Nations provides China with considerable social status, both institutionally, through the Security Council, as well as through the praise that Beijing has garnered with reference to its peacekeeping duties (Foot, 2014). China has fundamentally changed its approach to UN-sponsored security operations. From an opponent to what it formerly considered a thinly veiled disguise for imperialist interventions, China has become a leader in UNPKO. The reason for this

remarkable evolution is to be explained by the fact that China has emerged as a state with global interests. It is, therefore, necessary for Beijing to be prepared to protect those interests by getting involved in issues that directly affect them. To achieve its ambitions and expand its international profile, China has come to rely on the expertise and power projection capabilities of its modernized armed forces. The participation of Chinese troops in counter-piracy and peacekeeping operations highlights the advancing role played by the PLA in China's foreign policy. Over the past decade, the PLA has undergone significant changes in its structuring and technological developments to make it into a leaner and more efficient force. This transformation has been accompanied by a series of drastic measures ordered by President Xi Jinping to strengthen the loyalty and discipline of the military. Those measures have included organizational reforms, curtailing the PLA's corporate interests, and a widespread purge carried out in the name of anti-corruption. Confident in its authority and control over the military, the Zhongnanhai has been more willing to assign broader responsibilities to the PLA. However, the growing presence of Chinese troops abroad has not gone unnoticed, and it is raising questions about Beijing's true ambitions on the world stage. The involvement of the PLA in overseas missions is increasingly perceived not only by the United States and its allies but also by many within the international community as a vehicle for China to expand its political and security interests and influence. It is now time for Beijing to allay these feelings of mistrust and suspicion and develop a coherent strategy that will present its security engagement within the UN in a positive light. A failure to do so will only add troubles to the already risky deployment of the PLA in potentially hostile environments.

Notes

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1. *Ta Kung Pao*, a pro-Communist independent daily, wrote that the opening session at the San Francisco UN Conference on April 25, 1945 was "the day of liberation for entire mankind." The *Central Daily News*, the Nationalist Party official newspaper, hailed the Conference as "a milestone in the all-out efforts of the anti-aggression nation to end war and to change the strength for war into a guardian for international peace" (Chai, 1970: 397).
 2. In 1946, there were 35 member states in the UN. As the newly independent nations of the Third World joined the organization, by 1970 membership had swelled to 127. Retrieved from <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa> (accessed September 9, 2019).
 3. By a vote of 44 in favour, to 7 opposed, with 9 abstentions, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 498, condemning the communist government of

- China for committing acts of aggression in Korea and engaging in hostilities against UN forces. It was the first time since its foundation that the UN had condemned a nation as an aggressor. Retrieved from <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v07p1/d120> (accessed September 10, 2019).
4. The 1970 aid diplomacy by the PRC represented 64.5% of the total Communist aid for the year; more significantly, it represented 42.8% of all PRC aid pledges since 1956 (Kim, 1974).
 5. The votes were 51 in favour of the PRC and 49 (including US vote) against, with 25 abstentions (Chiang, 2018).
 6. China vetoed Bangladesh's application for UN membership due to its concern over the legal status of Taiwan and its position that the parent's state consent was essential to a territory attaining independence and statehood. China also drew attention to "acts of the Soviet social-imperialism" and "their sinister designs to use others as counters or stakes to maintain and aggravate tension on the South Asia sub-continent." After Pakistan acknowledged Bangladesh's independence in 1974, China no longer blocked Bangladesh's application (Chan, 2015: 257-258).
 7. Numerically, China's record compares favourably with those of the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, who exercised 10, 69, 24 and 14 vetoes, respectively during the period 1971-1991. Retrieved from <https://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick> (accessed September 21, 2019).
 8. Over the years, China has increasingly engaged in multilateral diplomacy. It became involved in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994, established the Shanghai Cooperation Council (SCO) in 1996, joined the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) in 1997, and became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 after a lengthy process of negotiation.
 9. Set up in May 1948, UNTSO was the first-ever peacekeeping operation established by the UN. Since then, UNTSO military observers have remained in the Middle East to monitor ceasefires, supervise armistice agreements, prevent isolated incidents from escalating and assist other UN peacekeeping operations in the region to fulfill their respective mandates. Retrieved from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/untso> (accessed September 14, 2019).
 10. As one of the largest and most complex UNPKO at the time, UNTAC was established to ensure the implementation of the Agreements on the Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, signed in Paris on October 23, 1991. The mandate included aspects relating to human rights, the organization and conduct of elections, military arrangements, civil administration, maintenance of law and order, repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, and rehabilitation of Cambodian infrastructure. Retrieved from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/untacbackgr2.html> (accessed September 14, 2019).
 11. From 1990 to 1999, China's financial contribution slowly increased from US\$6,247,866 (0.7% of the total UN budget) to US\$10,110,351 (0.9%). In the following years, China's financial contribution increased to US\$15,328,088 (1.5%) in 2001, surpassing the contribution of its fellow UN Security Council member, Russia (US\$12,411,407); US\$17,156,324 (1.5%) in 2002; US\$20,683,922 (1.5%) in 2003; and US\$29,481,755 (2.1%) in 2004 (Browne & Blanchfield, 2013).

12. In a 2005 speech, US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick used the term “responsible stakeholder” to address how China should wield its growing power and influence. The European Commission called upon China to engage with the international community in a 2006 policy paper, entitled “EU-China: Closer Partners and Growing Responsibilities.” Japan, for its part, demanded that China paid higher UN membership fees. All these countries advocated for China to become deeper involved in the international system (Xu, 2018).
13. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, “Hu Jintao delivers an important speech at the UN Summit.” Retrieved from https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/dslbj_665832/t212614.shtml (accessed September 18, 2019).
14. In 2008, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) recorded 111 incidents related to Somali pirates, a trend that continued in 2009. At the end of 2009, the IMB had recorded 217 attacks on vessels with 47 successfully seized. Retrieved from <http://piracy-studies.org/somali-piracy-and-the-international-response-trends-in-2009-and-prospects-for-2010> (accessed September 23, 2019).
15. China’s 32nd convoy fleet to the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters set sail from a military port in Zhoushan on April 4, 2019. Retrieved from https://economic.times.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-deploys-new-missile-destroyer-frigate-in-its-anti-piracy-fleet/articleshow/68724333.cms?from=mdr&utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst (accessed September 30, 2019).
16. There were no pirate attacks reported in the Western Indian Ocean in 2018, including Somalia, the Gulf of Aden, or the Red Sea, in spite of pirate groups retaining the capabilities (Joubert, 2019).
17. UN Resolution 2442 (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13566.doc.htm> (accessed September 30, 2019).
18. The State Council of the PRC, “China’s national defense in the new era.” Retrieved from <http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper> (accessed September 30, 2019).
19. Embassy of the PRC in the Republic of Kenya, “President Xi Jinping meets with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.” Retrieved from <http://ke.chineseembassy.org/eng/zgyw/t1052186.htm> (accessed October 7, 2019).
20. The R2P doctrine includes protection from acts of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other human rights abuses. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml> (accessed October 7, 2019).
21. As of 31 December 2018, China had 2,506 peacekeepers serving in seven UN missions. Retrieved from <http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper> (accessed October 9, 2019).
22. In 2018, US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, said at a Security Council debate on peacekeeping reform that “Peacekeeping is a shared responsibility. With shared responsibility comes shared burdens and shared costs. One country should not shoulder more than one quarter of the UN peacekeeping budget, and we look forward to a more equitable distribution of the budget among Member States.” Retrieved from <https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-a-un-security-council-open-debate-on-peacekeeping> (accessed October 8, 2019).

23. United Nations Peacekeeping, "How we are funded." Retrieved from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded> (accessed October 8, 2019).
24. In 2015, Xi Jinping told the 70th session of the UN General Assembly that China would create a reserve force of 8,000 troops. The Chinese President also pledged US\$1 billion to a 10-year joint China-UN peace and development fund and US\$100 million in military assistance for African Union peacekeeping missions to fight terrorism on the continent (Zhang, 2017).
25. Kaplan, R. (2009, 6 October). Beijing's Afghan gamble, *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/07/opinion/07kaplan.html?mtrref=www.google.co.uk&gwh=F5B985D8FEDF5B985D8FEDE09FD6FBADABD97240EE0&gwt=pay&assetType=REGIWALL>; Feng, B. (2013, 13 August). Obama's 'free rider' comment draws Chinese criticism, *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/08/13/obamas-free-rider-comment-draws-chinese-criticism>.
26. The number of articles containing both of the terms "China" and "free rider" in the Factiva database, for instance, increased from an average of 39 per year from 2005 to 2009 to 75 per year from 2010 to 2013 (Kennedy, 2015).
27. Richard Bernstein and Ross Murrow argue that "driven by nationalist sentiment, a yearning to redeem the humiliations of the past, and the simple urge for international power, China is seeking to replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia." According to Robert Kagan, China, "like all rising powers of the past, including the United States, wants to reshape the international system to suit its own purpose" (Haque, 2013: 112).
28. The 2019 Pew Research Center Survey was conducted among 34,904 people in 32 countries from May 13 to August 29. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/30/people-around-the-globe-are-divided-in-their-opinions-of-china> (accessed 22 October, 2019).
29. By comparison, opinions of China were largely positive in 2002. Then, the country's approval rates were 55% in Japan, 66% in South Korea, 52% in Australia, and 63% in the Philippines.
30. China has emerged as the most important trading partner of the Indian Ocean region, accounting for 16.1% of its total goods trade in 2017, up from 4.8% in 2000. China has become the world's top importer of both crude oil and natural gas since 2018, importing two-thirds of the energy it consumes. Almost half, 44% of China's oil imports come from the Middle East, while Africa accounts for more than 25% of the total oil and gas imported to China. Retrieved from <https://www.offshore-technology.com/comment/chinese-investment-in-africa-oil-gas> (accessed 28 October, 2019)
31. This marked the first time that the PLA helped other countries evacuate their people during an international crisis. A spokeswoman for Germany's foreign ministry confirmed that China had evacuated three Germans to Djibouti, adding that Berlin was "very thankful to the Chinese government for its support." Retrieved from <http://ir-ia.com/news/china-rescues-225-foreign-nationals-from-war-torn-yemen> (accessed 28 October, 2019).
32. This was spelled out in China's 2015 *Defense White Paper*: "With the growth of China's national interests [...] the security of overseas interests concerning

- energy and resources, strategic sea lines of communication (SLOCs), as well as institutions, personnel and assets abroad, has become an imminent issue.” Retrieved from http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2015-05/26/content_4586805.htm (accessed 29 October, 2019).
33. According to the 2019 Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Survey, the perception of China in Africa was positive, with the four countries surveyed (i.e. Tunisia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa) averaging 62% favourability. In Latin America, more Mexicans, Brazilians and Argentinians had favourable than unfavourable views of China. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/10/01/international-publics-divided-on-china> (accessed 29 October, 2019).
 34. Position Paper of the PRC on the United Nations Reforms issued on June 7, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/zzhgg/t199101.htm> (accessed 4 November, 2019).
 35. Originally consisting of 77 countries, the coalition called “the Group 77 and China” has expanded to 134 countries today, making for a majority of almost 70% of the UN’s membership. The primary goals of the G77 are to maintain the independence and sovereignty of all developing countries, to defend the economic interests of member countries by insisting on equal standing with developed countries in the global marketplace, to establish a united front on issues of common concern, and to strengthen ties between member countries.
 36. United Nations Peacekeeping, “Total fatalities since 1948.” Retrieved from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/fatalities> (accessed 6 November, 2019).
 37. According to the Associated Press, between 2004 and 2016 the United Nations received almost 2,000 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (including rape and child prostitution) against its peacekeepers. Retrieved from <https://apnews.com/8d69431aa41f4392b629f1db2c6211ff> (accessed 11 November, 2019).

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