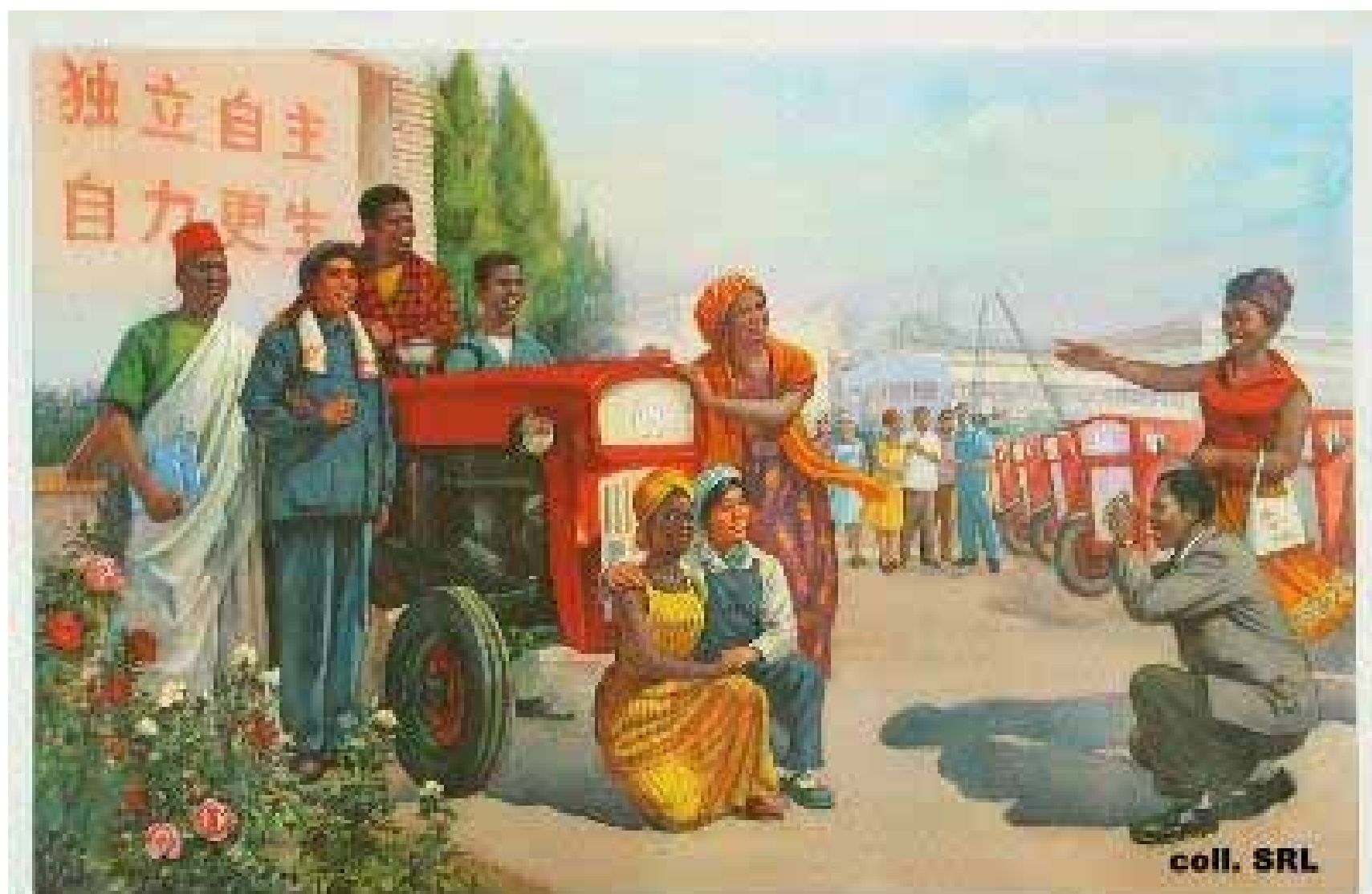


Africa's Geo-Political & Geo-Economic Significance for China

Dr Chris Alden

South African Institute of
International Affairs/LSE



革命友谊深如海

Africa matters to China

- Rooted in shared historical position within the international system
- Shared ambivalence about Cold War and effort to find a 'third way' for developing countries
- Longstanding technical co-operation and aid
- But....past as prologue...

Africa's contemporary geopolitical significance for China

- Africa is a partner in global affairs, whose steadfast support have paved way for Beijing assumption of UN Security Council seat
- African votes crucial in a variety of multilateral settings to China (Human Rights Council, UNSC, etc)
- Partner in reforming inequitable structures of global governance

Africa's contemporary geo-economic significance for China

- Africa is critical to China's ability to maintain its economic momentum
 - Energy security (30% oil imports from Africa)
 - Food security potential
- New markets and investment opportunities
 - SOEs to expand operations overseas ('going global')
 - Platform to demonstrate ability to operate at global level (CNPC in Sudan)

Africa's geo-economic significance cont.

- Insofar as Chinese financing provides incentives to invest in Africa, an opportunity to expand into unknown market
- Africa provides new markets for Chinese exports, both locally and to third countries

Africa's Impact on China

- Africa's influence on Chinese FP
 - Sudan/Darfur issue appears to have contributed to innovations to traditional Chinese positions on sovereignty
 - Support of domestic intervention in form of AU PKO and subsequent hybrid force; position on International Criminal Court and Sudanese perpetrators of crimes

Africa's Impact on China

- The triangulization of China's Africa policy
 - Pre-2004, Chinese foreign policy in Africa conducted without reference to other key foreign states
 - Now featured in China-EU and China-US dialogues
 - Introduced possible constraints on Chinese actions but possibly opportunities for constructive collaboration (Africa-China-EU trilateralism)

Making Partnerships Work

China's relations with Africa moving beyond the 'heroic' age to the prosaic

- What will the Chinese experience mean to Africa?
 - Is China serving as the catalyst for a new phase of African development?
 - Instead of a model, a process driven set of lessons in which the role of context and institutional actors crucial

Making Partnerships Work

- Can Africa move away from its reductionist view of external partnerships as 'exploitative' to one which recognises opportunities presented by China?
 - Can partnership be sustained when one partner is divided into 53 states, many characterised by weak institutions?
 - Capacity building as a necessity
- Chinese 'exceptionalism' and Africa
 - Emerging powers and the identity question
 - Will it converge w/ West & become an 'ordinary' power in Africa or retain special ties?

Conclusion:

Charting Africa's Chinese Future

- China-Africa partnership is being built on solid pillars
 - Based on equality
 - Shaped by dialogue
 - Sustained by mutual interests