

# CHINA IN AFRICA

## What are the implications of China's growing security role in Africa?

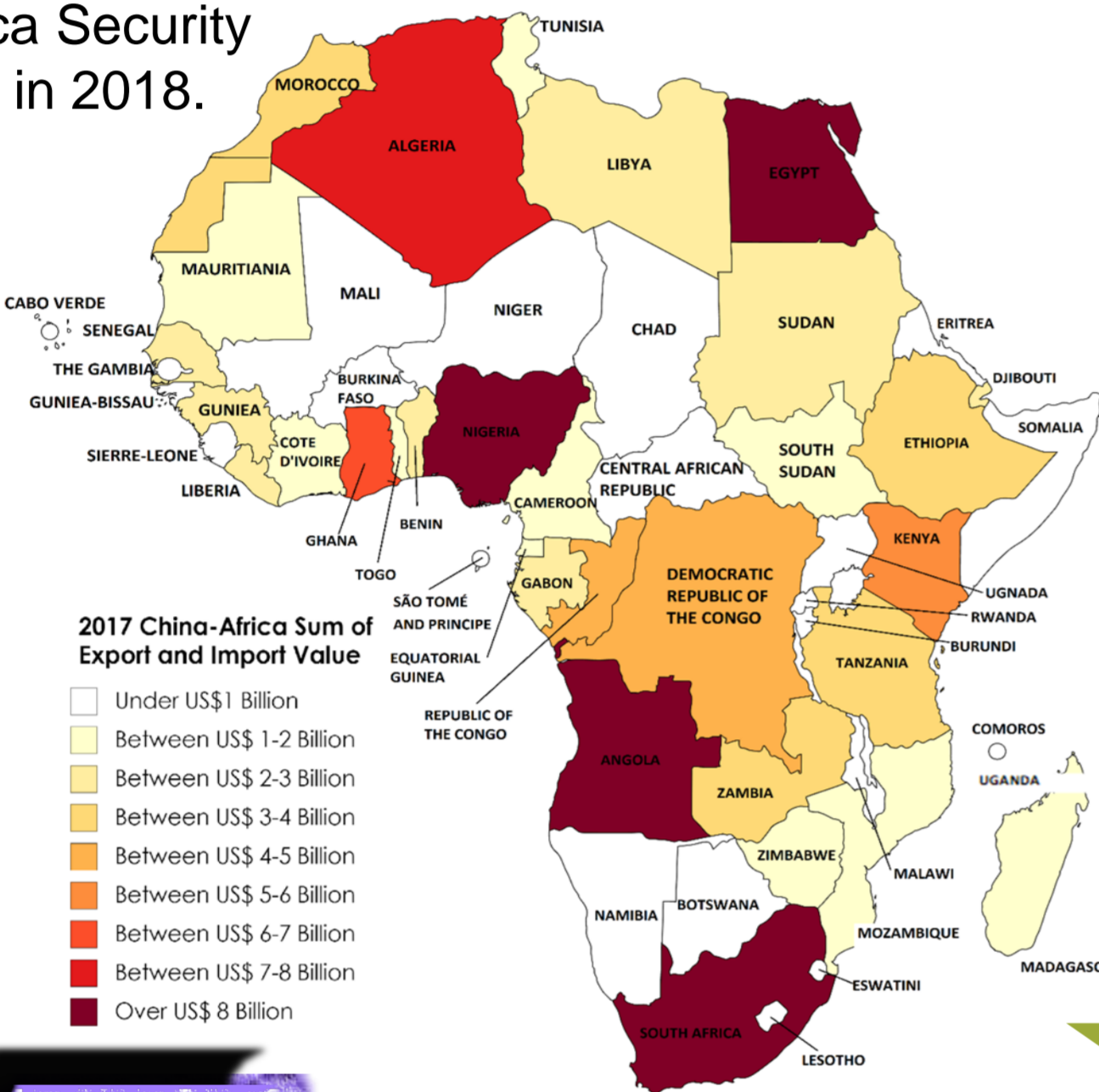
Alexandre Lopez, BA (Hons) International Relations and Politics

### 1 Context

- Modern China-Africa relations stem from the 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference.
- The rise of the Communist Party left Chinese foreign policy with a practice of non-interference (Mao Zedong) and a focus on economic liberalisation (Deng Xiaoping).
- Africa has always been important in Chinese foreign policy, especially since the establishment of China's infamous 'Belt and Road Initiative'.
- More recently, under Xi Jinping, relations have focused more on defence and security; Beijing was host to the first ever 'China-Africa Security and Defence Forum' in 2018.

"Numerous grains of earth make a mountain, numerous drops of water form an ocean"

(Xi, 2013: in reference to China-Africa relations)



### 2 Aims

- Investigate the role Africa plays in China's geopolitical security
- Discuss how Africa may be benefiting China strategically, rather than its more commonly discussed economic gains.

### 3 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

- Theory:** neorealist approach with underlying neo-colonial assumptions
- Focus on 'seapower' and the 'south-south cooperation' narrative spun by China
- Methods:** Inductive
- Analysis of Wider literature
- Objective approach
- Visualising investigation through original diagrams

### 4 Topic Justification

- Most research regarding China-Africa relations have focussed upon their economic ties, but the security implications are becoming more and more relevant
- China has established its first (and only) overseas military base in Africa
- Why is China increasing its security ties with the continent? What implications will this have for global geopolitics? These are important questions that have global geopolitical effects.

### 5 Results

#### I. A new role for China in the Indian Ocean.

#### Implications

Having a Naval base on the continent has provided China with strategic access, increasing its ability to project power over global trade routes.

#### II. A new maritime dimension to China-India relations

China and India's relationship has been characterised by the land border. With a new role in the Indian Ocean, their relationship will evolve.

#### III. Ever-increasing importance of Africa in China's global security.

- China already has multiple institutional methods of holding discussions with African leaders, whether bilaterally or multilaterally. The fact a new body had to be created for Sino-African relations is indicative that their relationship is evolving to one where security and defence is more prominent.

- Certainly if Sino-African security ties had not been increasing, then there would have been no navy base contracted in Djibouti. China have gained strategic access to the Indian Ocean:

"Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia" (Mahan in Ashraf, 2017: p.171).

- In response regional powers have sought to contain China, leading to increased military efforts amongst and between the U.S., Japan, India and Australia

#### References and sources used for poster:

Ashraf, J. (2017) 'String of Pearls and China's Emerging Strategic Culture', *Strategic Studies*, 37(4), pp.166-181.

Mapchart.net (n.d.) Available at: <https://mapchart.net/> (Accessed 29th December 2018).

Openclipart (n.d.) Available at: <https://openclipart.org/> (Accessed: 05 April 2019).

Xi, J. (2013) "President Xi Jinping Gives Joint Interview To Media from BRICS Countries", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 19 March, Available at: [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zjyh\\_665391/t1023070.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zjyh_665391/t1023070.shtml) (Accessed: 15 March 2019).

#### Takeaway Message

China has in recent history focussed on its economic relationship with Africa. Since Xi Jinping became President in 2013, China has focussed on developing the security and defence dimension to its relation with African countries. This research theories 3 important implications this has, including giving China an enhanced role in the Indian Ocean.

