



China's strategy is focused on routes for moving African natural resources toward the Indian Ocean.

People's Republic of China (PRC) officials are becoming increasingly apprehensive about the rise in the use of the westward corridor to export oil, diamonds, and rare minerals out of South Sudan and the Central African Republic via Cameroon.

In other words, this creates a flow to Atlantic sea and air transportation routes, rather than routes eastward to Indian Ocean trade routes.

The geopolitics of African resources: China plotting to tap them in new, 'de-Americanized world'

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Beijing is also concerned over the growing tension between Sudan and its neighbors — particularly South Sudan — because of the impact this might have on the PRC's long-term designs to dominate Africa's resources trade.

A key component of the Chinese long-term strategy has long been to converge all the flow of oil, gas, and minerals to a single export point on the shores of the Indian Ocean; that is, in the direction of China.

This vision is getting closer to realization given the progress made toward beginning construction of the maritime complex in Lamu on the northern Kenyan shores of the Indian Ocean.

The Lamu mega-port and adjacent industrial and transportation complexes are a major element of the Kenyan Government's Vision 2030 initiative.

Lamu is the key to the long-needed modernization of Kenya's deteriorating infrastructure and boosting of economic output.

Although Nairobi keeps insisting that there will be international tenders for each and every phase of the Lamu project, the overall design in fact follows Beijing's proposal, and Nairobi acknowledges that no international consortium has so far been able to remotely compete with the financial guarantees offered by official Beijing in support for proposals presented by Chinese entrants.

This is because Beijing considers the Lamu mega-port and transportation complex to be the key to the PRC's long term domination over African trade and resources.

The initial costs of the first phase of the Lamu project are estimated at \$25.5 billion.

The name of this first phase — the Lamu Port and New Transport Corridor Development to

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Southern Sudan and Ethiopia (LAPSSET) — points to the initial objectives.

Significantly, the term used is “Southern Sudan” and not the state of South Sudan.

When completed, the first phase of the Lamu complex will include a 32-berth port, three international airports, and a 1,500km railway line.

As well, the Chinese plan oil pipelines from Juba in South Sudan, and from Addis Ababa via Moyale, Kenya, to converge into Kenya's Eastern Province and end in a new huge oil refinery in Bargoni, near Lamu.

The entire construction and pipelines will be supported by a 1,730km road network.

In the longer term, the trans-African pipelines the Chinese plan on building from both Nigeria in the west and south-western Africa (most likely Angola) will also feed into the Lamu complex, thus giving the PRC effective control over the main hydrocarbon exports of Africa.

The strategic cooperation between Beijing and Khartoum constitutes the key to the Chinese confidence that their Sudanese allies will be able to contain their Somali jihadist proxies so that the risk of terrorist attacks is minimal.

Beijing is cognizant that in the long term the Lamu project would constitute a devastating economic setback for their proxy, Sudan.

Sudan would lose most of the oil income currently derived from transit fees for transporting South Sudanese oil.

Moreover, Khartoum considers its control over the oil export venues its primary leverage over

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Juba on any political issue, including the issue of dispute Abyei, the border demarcation, and the popular uprisings throughout Sudan.

Hence it will be very difficult for Khartoum to accept the oil leverage being taken away, particularly by their Chinese allies.

Beijing is already trying to mollify Khartoum.

For example, using the term Southern Sudan — as the region that is now the Republic of South Sudan was known when under the yoke of Khartoum — is a way for Beijing to allude to Khartoum's hope they will get Beijing's support for the reunification of Sudan.

Meanwhile, given the ongoing tension between South Sudan and Sudan, the Chinese anticipate that South Sudan will be eager to export its oil through Lamu, Kenya, thus avoiding the port and oil refineries of Port Sudan.

In the meantime, China is making efforts to increase South Sudan's dependence on export via the Sudanese pipeline to Port Sudan.

Beijing's objective is to convince Juba not to look for alternate venues of oil exports — such as via Cameroon — until the Lamu pipeline is completed.

Toward this end, Beijing is eager to mediate between Juba and Khartoum and assist in reducing tensions and resolving misunderstandings.

In practical terms, Beijing works hard in order to ensnare both Khartoum and Juba in a web of Chinese-brokered agreements which would outlive the opening of the Lamu complex and the ensuing demise of Port Sudan.

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“China stands ready to help improve the relationship between Sudan and South Sudan,” Luo Xiaoguang, the PRC Ambassador to Khartoum, announced on October , 2013.

“China appreciates the two parties’ adherence to the option of peace and urges them to find solutions to the outstanding issues between them through dialogue. ... We reiterate China’s readiness to play a vital role in enhancing the relations between the two countries.”

Simply put, Beijing is ready to do anything just to ensure the flow of oil eastwards rather than westwards.

Nevertheless, the PRC might lose control and influence over Sudan and President Omar al-Bashir (or his successor).

Khartoum is already cracking as a result of unstoppable economic collapse and building social unrest.

The iron fist used by the security forces has so far failed to quell the spreading unrest and grassroots violence.

To survive in the next few years, Khartoum might feel compelled to adopt drastic measures, including engaging in a populist war against South Sudan.

To build the case for such a war, Sudan is already setting the stage for a “war of attrition” in the border area that is below a major war but will nevertheless tax the fragile economy of South Sudan and arrest development and reforms.

Khartoum is using the dispute over the referendum in Abyei, as well as the escalating popular revolts in Sudan’s own Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan regions, in order to build political and military pressure on South Sudan.

Khartoum will then be able to capitalize on the “war of attrition” along the disputed borderline as an excuse for an escalation to a major war.

The growing hostility and uncertainty along South Sudan’s northern border only increases the incentive for Juba to seek alternatives to exporting its oil via Sudan.

Juba is cognizant of both the economic lure of the Chinese projects and the political-strategic ramifications of a Chinese-dominated oil export.

President Salva Kiir is cognizant of the growing regional complexities.

The emerging trends guide his policy of looking in both directions — west and east — and not ensnaring South Sudan in anybody’s political and economic stifling embrace.

Kiir’s Juba is convinced that the region’s states, and not outside powers, should be the dominant forces leading and driving the regional development.

The expertise, technologies, and investments of foreign friends and partners are sought after in the context of regionally-dominated undertakings.

Juba has already embarked on the search for a practical solution by convening a two-day investment conference scheduled for early December 2013.

One of main issues on the agenda of the Government of South Sudan and the development partners is furthering the regional economic integration and growth of South Sudan.

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Juba's quest for regional undertakings will be one of the main messages to be conveyed by the December conference.

Juba has already found a most interested party in President Michel Djotodia's Central African Republic (CAR). Bangui is cognizant that only major economic build-up and development projects will serve as the engine for the education and employment of the country's populace; thus taking them away from the current fratricidal violence.

As well, successful development projects would guarantee long-term income for the Government.

Hence, such undertakings, rather than humanitarian aid from Western states, are the key to the long-term development and well-being of the CAR.

However, this policy is also a major obstacle to China's grand designs.

Back in mid-2013, Beijing had high hopes that Khartoum would deliver the Djotodia Administration in Bangui so as to paralyze and stall the westward option of South Sudan.

But this is not working as President Djotodia is reaching out to the West, seeking partnerships for major development projects, including regional initiatives.

Hence, Beijing started to increase pressure on Bangui, first via the UN Security Council.

In the name of alleviating the humanitarian catastrophe in the CAR, the PRC actively supports the French-U.S. initiative which urged the UN to impose solution in the CAR which could include "regime change".

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Meanwhile, the official Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (Beijing) also warned of the serious security and humanitarian situation on the ground in the CAR and stressed the need for urgent international intervention independent of the policies and positions of official Bangui.

Beijing expressed interest in joining and contributing to such an initiative.

Ultimately, the significance of the Chinese long-term grand design for Africa can be best comprehended in the context of historic transformation in the grand strategy and polity of the PRC.

Beijing has been arguing since the fall of the Soviet Union that the decline of the United States was also inevitable and that China was destined to rise as the global hegemon.

Presently, Beijing is convinced that the time is ripe for delivering the coup de grace.

On Oct. 13, 2013, the official Xinhua news agency published an official commentary stating that "it is perhaps a good time for the befuddled world to start considering building a de-Americanized world".

The commentary surveyed the "abuse" the entire world had suffered under U.S. hegemony since World War II.

The situation had only aggravated since the end of the Cold War, Xinhua argued.

"Instead of honoring its duties as a responsible leading power, a self-serving Washington has abused its superpower status and introduced even more chaos into the world by shifting financial risks overseas."

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To further its own unbridled ambitions, the U.S. stoked “regional tensions amid territorial disputes, and fighting unwarranted wars under the cover of outright lies”, Xinhua explained.

The Xinhua commentary warned that with U.S. society and economy collapsing, Washington was now tempted to intensify the abuse of the rest of the world in order to save the U.S.

“Such alarming days when the destinies of others are in the hands of a hypocritical nation have to be terminated. A new world order should be put in place, according to which all nations, big or small, poor or rich, can have their key interests respected and protected on an equal footing.”

Xinhua concluded by suggesting that the PRC, being inherently a developing country, is the rising power best suited to lead this global transformation and de-Americanization.

Beijing has long recognized that any confrontation with the U.S. would inevitably lead to major economic crises, a series of conflicts world-wide and possibly a global war against the U.S.

To sustain this global conflict, the PRC would need huge quantities of hydrocarbons, rare metals, other natural resources and even agricultural products; and these could only be secured for it as a result of a China-dominated Africa.