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Jerker Hellström

# Blue Berets Under the Red Flag

China in the UN Peacekeeping System

Cover photo: UNAMID Chinese engineers arrive in Nyala, Sudan, July 2008.  
(UN Photo/Stuart Price)

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## Sammanfattning

Trots att Kina varit en av de fem permanenta medlemmarna i FN:s säkerhetsråd sedan 1971, är landet en relativt ny aktör i FN:s fredsbevarande insatser. Under sina första tio år som FN-medlemsland förhöll sig Kina skeptiskt till fredsoperationer och avstod från att delta omröstningar i Säkerhetsrådet om FN-insatser förrän på 1980-talet. Kina kom då att utveckla en mer pragmatisk och mindre ideologisk attityd gentemot FN, och började spela en alltmer aktiv roll i säkerhetsfrågor. De första kinesiska FN-observatörerna sändes ut i början av 1990-talet, men det är under de senaste åren som den stora förändringen har skett: mellan år 2000 och 2009 har antalet kinesiska deltagare i FN-styrkorna ökat från knappt 100 till över 2 000.

Denna studie belyser de politiska, strategiska och ekonomiska faktorer som ligger till grund för Kinas ökade stöd för FN:s fredsbevarande insatser samt undersöker hur dessa omständigheter kan komma att påverka den framtida utvecklingen.

Nyckelord: Kina, Afrika, USA, Förenta Nationerna, Taiwan, fredsbevarande insatser, suveränitets- och ickeinblandningsprinciper

## **Summary**

Despite the fact that China has been one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council since 1971, the country is a relatively new actor in UN peacekeeping operations. During its first ten years as a UN member, China held a sceptical attitude towards peace operations and refrained from voting on such resolutions until the 1980s. China eventually developed a more pragmatic and less ideological attitude towards the UN, and began to play an increasingly active role in security issues. Although the first Chinese UN observers were deployed already in the early 1990s, the major change in China's deployment pattern has taken place in the past decade. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of Chinese participants in UN forces increased from less than 100 to over 2,000.

This study illustrates the political, strategic and economic factors that form the basis of China's increasing support of UN peacekeeping operations. Moreover, it examines how these circumstances may influence developments in the future.

**Keywords:** China, Africa, USA, United Nations, Taiwan, peacekeeping operations, principles of sovereignty and non-interference

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## Programme manager's remarks

The Asia Security Studies programme at the *Swedish Defence Research Agency's (FOI) Department of Defence Analysis* conducts research and policy relevant analysis on defence- and security-related issues. Its primary focus is on East and South Asia as well as the Persian Gulf region. The programme strikes a balance between studying issues directly affecting Swedish foreign and defence policy as well as research on topics with wider regional and global implications. The Asia Security Studies programme is mainly financed by the Swedish Ministry of Defence but research is also conducted for other ministries and agencies in Sweden and abroad.

China's peace support operations (PSO) policy and practice has in recent years been given more attention also in Sweden. The Swedish defence policy focuses to an increasing degree on international operations, resulting in a presence of Swedish personnel in more UN-sanctioned missions. China's participation in PSO missions has surged significantly in the last few years. Chinese and Swedish personnel now encounter one another in UN missions. As a result, Beijing's policy on peace support operations is no longer of exclusive interest to foreign policy circles in Stockholm but to a wide range of decision-makers and personnel who participate in international missions to support peace.

This study is meant to be a background text and contextual support for those decision-makers who need to understand and analyse Chinese PSO activities and the modus operandi of Beijing's peacekeeping personnel. It is also a thorough guide to the evolution and formation of China's peace support policy as it stands today.

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## Executive summary

**China, a relative newcomer in the United Nations peacekeeping regime**, is rapidly boosting its support for UN peacekeeping operations. Active participation in UN missions is a way for Beijing to increase its status and comprehensive national power.<sup>1</sup> Since Beijing in the early 1980s chose economic development as the primary means to promote its national interests, it has become ever more important to be regarded as a responsible stakeholder.

**Meanwhile, globalisation** has led to ever-increasing mutual dependence between markets and between states, which forces China to interact more closely with the international community. Through generous contributions to blue-beret peacekeeping, Beijing can influence the UN process and be seen as a peaceful and responsible actor.

**Active participation in the UN peacekeeping regime** is also a means for China to counterbalance what it perceives as the hegemony of the United States. Through such efforts, Beijing aims to create a multi-polar world order that is more in line with its preferences. As a result, China has started to show an increasingly accommodating attitude towards Security Council resolutions even when they do not fully conform to its strong principles on sovereignty and non-interference. Nevertheless, this still constitutes a balancing act for Beijing, which does not want to sell out core Chinese values.

**The rapid growth of the Chinese economy** and the expansion of its international influence in the 2000s has also made China interested in securing a peaceful global environment. China needs stable external markets to ensure economic growth and development, and it has thus become eager to cooperate with other stakeholders in this respect.

**Since 1990, China has sent more than 11,000 peacekeepers** to participate in 18 UN missions, according to its latest defence white paper.<sup>2</sup> In the last eight years, some 1,300 Chinese peacekeeping police have contributed to seven missions. The destinations include Africa (Burundi, D.R.Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Western Sahara), Asia (Cambodia, East Timor), Eurasia/ Europe (Georgia, Kosovo) as well as Haiti, Lebanon, and the Middle East.

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<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive National Power (zonghe guoli) is a concept used by Beijing to evaluate China's national standing in relation to other nations. CNP includes qualitative and quantitative measures of territory, natural resources, economic power, diplomatic influence, domestic government, military capability, and cultural influence.

<sup>2</sup> Including China's personnel contributions to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and peacebuilding missions, it has provided a total of 12,738 officials and other peacekeeping personnel to DPKO.

**The bulk of these peacekeepers were sent out between 2000 and 2009**, when China multiplied the number of military observers, civilian police and troops in UN missions. The number of Chinese peacekeepers deployed to UN missions has risen sharply to more than 2,000 at the end of 2008 from less than 100 in 2000. In effect, this means that China and France are now the biggest contributors of personnel to UN peacekeeping operations among the Security Council's permanent five members. However China still ranks far behind the major contributors to the UN, including Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. It is also one of the top-10 providers to the UN peacekeeping budget.

**But China had a slow start.** During its first ten years on the UN Security Council starting in 1971, Beijing steadfastly opposed peacekeeping operations (PKO) and refused to contribute money or resources to any operations. Furthermore, it chose not to participate in the voting on any Security Council resolutions that related to peacekeeping.

**Behind this initial refusal to cooperate** lay China's conviction that international intervention such as UN peacekeeping merely was a tool used by the US and Soviet superpowers to gain influence in developing nations. This view was in turn a result of negative international experiences such as the Korean War in the early 1950s, when China was branded as an aggressor in a resolution passed by the UN General Assembly.

**Slowly but surely** Beijing found that it had to play a more active role on peacekeeping. One reason was that China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, felt obliged to take the interests of the other Third World countries into account. Its non-participation stance could be interpreted as passive opposition as well as passive support for UN interventions, and it did not want to seem as it opposed mandates supported by fellow developing nations. Following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and Deng Xiaoping's subsequent return to power, China became more pragmatic and less guided by ideology in relation to UN peacekeeping operations. With Deng's open-door policy in the early 1980s, Beijing needed a stable and peaceful environment in order to achieve its goal of economic development and modernisation.

**Thus finally, in 1981**, China for the first time voted on peacekeeping in the Security Council. It cast a vote in favour of a resolution extending the ongoing UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus. At this point in time, China also began to contribute to UN peacekeeping expenditure, however on a relatively small scale. China voted in favour of all peacekeeping mandates between 1981 and 1990, which were all of the traditional type. But there was still great reluctance towards non-traditional peacekeeping operations mandated to use "all necessary means". Beijing feared that any weakening of its strong principles of non-interference could potentially invite international scrutiny into its own domestic affairs.

**China began to send personnel to UN peacekeeping missions** in October 1989, merely months after the crackdown on the Tiananmen student protests. The international isolation of Beijing which followed the so-called June 4<sup>th</sup> incident contributed to the decision to deploy peacekeepers – 20 civilian officials to Namibia. The following year, China also sent its first military observers. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) saw participation in UN peacekeeping as one of the means to restore its bonds with the Chinese people and regain trust internationally. China's entry into UNPKO took place amid a rapid increase in the UN's peacekeeping efforts – out of the 63 missions that the UN has initiated since 1948, just 15 were undertaken between 1948 and 1988. With the end of the Cold War, ideological rivalry and proxy wars no longer blocked the UNSC, which led to a substantial transformation of UNPKO and the considerable increase in the amount of missions conducted.

**Beijing even supported the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia in 1991**, in spite of its reluctance to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states. It also sent 800 engineering troops accompanied by 49 military observers to the country over a two-year period. Until then, China had rejected all international interventions that threatened to violate its notions of peaceful co-existence. During the 1990s, China continued to vote in favour of all missions carrying out traditional peacekeeping tasks, as opposed to non-traditional operations.

**The main concern for Chinese policymakers** has been their traditional view of state sovereignty and non-interference which limits its support of some operations. Apart from the obvious that all missions should be authorised by the UN, they should also respect national sovereignty. Therefore, the UN should not launch a mission without first receiving an invitation from the target state. Finally, the use of force was to be limited and a very last option.

**These principles led China** to refuse to label the 1994 mass killings in Rwanda as genocide, as it feared that such a statement could be regarded as interference in the country's internal affairs. China also abstained from a vote on the authorisation, under Chapter VII, of a multinational force to use "all necessary means" in an intervention in Rwanda. Beijing argued that the operation lacked the consent of all Rwandan factions. Similarly, China in the early 1990s opposed the use of force in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Haiti. It also contested the establishment of safe havens in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991, as it considered that such an action would interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq.

**The diplomatic status of Taiwan**, seen by Beijing as a breakaway province, has also been a central factor affecting China's behaviour in the Security Council. In 1997, China vetoed a resolution to deploy ceasefire observers to Guatemala, which had diplomatic ties with the Taipei government. Two years later, a

Chinese veto prevented the extension of an observer mission to the Republic of Macedonia on the same grounds.

**China today signals** that it is eager to support the strengthening of the UN peacekeeping regime. It has contributed to every UN peacekeeping mission during the past ten years, while pragmatic policymakers have gradually moved away from the hard-line interpretation of state sovereignty, at least on a case-by-case basis. To be sure, allegations of human rights violations at home and abroad have made Beijing aware of the value of good international publicity. Beijing realises that a positive global image of the People's Republic as a peaceful superpower in, as Chinese President Hu Jintao puts it, a "harmonious world", serves its economic and political interests. This has also encouraged China to play a central role in diplomatic efforts to solve crises with multinational implications in states such as North Korea, Iran, Sudan, and Burma.

**At the same time**, China has gained foothold and valuable insight into the UN system through its contribution. It has learned that participation in peacekeeping provides valuable international experience and military training which can be useful to tackle a wide range of issues at home as well as abroad. While these factors are likely to motivate China to send more peacekeepers to UN missions going forward, China's participation to UNPKO may be concentrated in regions where Beijing has large economic and strategic interests.

#### **CHINESE PEACEKEEPING TODAY: QUICK FACTS**

- China has 2,146 UN peacekeepers deployed as of Dec. 31, 2008, corresponding to 2 percent of the UNPKO total of 91,712 police, military observers and troops.
- China is ranked 14 among the major contributors of current personnel to UNPKO.
- China's biggest contingents are currently UNMIL in Liberia (569), UNMIS in Sudan (474), UNIFIL in Lebanon (343) and UNAMID in the Darfur region of Sudan (321).
- China has so far sent a total 11,603 military personnel to participate in 18 UN peacekeeping missions and another 1,379 police to seven missions. Its biggest contingents during this time were in Liberia (4,059), Sudan (2,197), D.R. of Congo (2,063) and Lebanon (1,211).
- China was among the top-10 providers of assessed financial contributions to UN peacekeeping operations in 2007.
- Nine Chinese peacekeepers had died during UNPKO service up to Dec. 31, 2008.

(Sources: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations; China 2008 Defence White Paper; Center on International Cooperation: Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2008, p. 163)

# 1 Introduction

The rapid expansion of China's economic and political clout, especially since the late 1990s, has given rise to vast and increasing interest in its overseas activities. Beijing's strategies to get access to commodities, mainly oil and minerals, and its quest for new markets are two of the issues that have come under intensified international scrutiny. Recently, the debate has focused to a large extent on China's relationship with African nations in general, and on Beijing's role regarding peace and stability on the continent in particular. Much effort has been spent on discussing China's responsibility for deteriorating security in countries including Sudan and Zimbabwe. However, its relatively new Great Leap into the UN peacekeeping regime, involving growing contingents of Chinese troops in Africa, has taken place without any significant trace in the international debate.

China has increased its presence in UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) substantially over the latest years. It now has over 2,000 military observers, civilian police and troops deployed to UN missions across the world, of which three-quarters are stationed in Africa. This can be compared with less than 100 Chinese peacekeepers at the end of 2000. The UNPKO total has grown significantly less in percentage terms the 2000s, nearly reaching 92,000 in December 2008, compared to almost 38,000 eight years earlier. China has so far sent a total of more than 11,000 peacekeepers to UN missions, according to its latest defence white paper<sup>3</sup> and is now one of the ten biggest financiers of UNPKO.

Beijing has also become more positive towards the idea of peacekeeping and has, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, significantly boosted its support for peacekeeping mandates in the last two decades. During the first stage of its UN membership, until 1981, China showed its opposition against UNPKO by abstaining from all related votes in the Security Council while it did not pay its dues for UNPKO until 1982.

China's newfound efforts to support peace operations coincide with a growing amount of conflicts across the globe and thus an increasing pressure on the United Nations. At the same time, UN members find it difficult to provide funds and troops to meet these demands. A shortage of contributions from UN member states is expected to weigh on the \$8 billion budget due to the current financial crisis.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *China's National Defense in 2008*, (2009),

<sup>4</sup> Charbonneau, Louis, (2009), *Demand for peacekeepers exceeds troops, funds: U.N.*, Reuters, Published: Jan 23, 2009

Consequently, expectations are high that China will play an increasingly active role in terms of safeguarding peace under the UN banner. While Beijing still is wary of interfering in issues that may be perceived as internal affairs of other states, it is undergoing a pragmatic reorientation of its political interests. China is ever more aware of the value of a global image as a responsible stakeholder and does not want to appear as a developing country bent on protecting state sovereignty at all costs. This understanding, combined with efforts to safeguard its economic interests by promoting stability in overseas markets, prompts China to make new compromises in order to safeguard world peace. Such compromises include a watering-down of Beijing's previously rigid opposition against interference in "internal affairs" of other countries and the use of force in peacekeeping.

## 1.1 Aim of the study and review of main sources

The underlying aim of this study is to describe the evolution of China's role in the UN peacekeeping regime, the factors behind this development and the most likely prospects for the future. The study is intended to provide a broad overview based on the differing views among observers regarding the most commonly mentioned factors which have impacted China's stance towards UN peacekeeping operations. It includes a historical background to Beijing's stance towards the UN peacekeeping regime and a review of the most obvious political, economic and strategic factors forming this position.

A number of previous studies on the subject have been compared and contrasted with official Chinese policy in order to assess differing views of China's interest in peacekeeping participation, as outlined below.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This report focuses on the following studies: Carlson, Allen (2004), 'Helping to Keep the Peace (Albeit Reluctantly): China's Recent Stance on Sovereignty and Multilateral Intervention', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 1; Gill, Bates, *et al.* (2007), 'Assessing China's Growing Influence in Africa', *China Security* Vol. 3 No. 3; Gill, Bates and Reilly, James (2000), 'Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping: The View from Beijing', *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 3; He, Yin (2007), *China's Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations*, Institute for Security and Development Policy, Silk Road paper, ; Pang, Zhongying (2005), 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 12, No. 1; Rogers, Philippe D. (2007a), 'China and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2; Rogers, Philippe D. (2007b), 'Dragon with a Heart of Darkness? Countering Chinese Influence in Africa', *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 47; Rogers, Philippe D., *et al.*, (2008), *China's Expanding Global Influence: Foreign Policy Goals, Practices, and Tools; Hearing before the U.S. - China Economic and Security Review Commission*, Last Accessed: March 18, 2008; Staehle, Stefan (2006), *China's Participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Regime*, The Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University, ; Taylor, Ian (2006), 'China's oil

- Out of the studies examined in this paper, Stefan Staehle's (2006) is arguably the most extensive. Staehle gives a broad overview of China's voting behaviour in the UNSC and its contribution of peacekeepers, also aiming to fill a gap by analysing how the UN peacekeeping reforms have affected Beijing's position. His argument is that previous studies on the subject have lacked this component as they have focused almost entirely on China's foreign and security policy.<sup>6</sup> In regard to Chinese-language studies on the subject, Staehle notes that the available literature merely tends to examine the development of UN peacekeeping per se, rather than China's role in the UN peacekeeping regime.
- One example from the Chinese discourse has been examined in this study, a lecture by Xu Weidi, Senior Colonel and Senior Research fellow at China's National Defense University. Xu participated in the UN mission to Western Sahara (MINURSO) in 1992-93. In the lecture, held at Wuhan's Huazhong University of Science and Technology in 2007, Xu provided an overview of China's engagement in UNPKO.
- US Lieutenant Colonel Philippe D. Rogers has examined China's interest in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa (2007) in terms of strategic, operational and tactical values. The paper includes a case study of China's participation in MINURSO in Western Sahara.
- Associate Professor Allen Carlson at Cornell University has studied the dynamics of Beijing's principles of sovereignty and non-interference since the early 1990s (2004). Carlson's aim is to provide an overview of the Chinese position on sovereignty and intervention during the 1990s, and to analyse to what extent this stance changed during the course of the NATO air campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999 as well as in the subsequent period.
- Yin He<sup>7</sup>, Associate Professor at the China Peacekeeping CIVPOL Training Center (CPCTC), has focused on the rationale behind China's policy towards

diplomacy in Africa', *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 5; Taylor, Ian (2008), 'The Future of China's Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', *Jamestown Foundation China Brief*, Vol. vol. 8, No. 6; Thompson, Drew (2005), *Beijing's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations*, The Jamestown Foundation, May 10, 2005, China Brief, ; Xu Weidi, (2007), *Lianheguo weihe xingdong yu Zhongguo [U.N. peacekeeping operations and China]*, Published: June 11, 2007  
Last Accessed: Nov. 12, 2008

<sup>6</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 4

<sup>7</sup> Yin He has used a Western form of his name, i.e. putting his family name (He) after his name (Yin). Where other Chinese names are referred to in this study, the Chinese form (i.e. with the family name first, e.g. Xu Weidi) is used.



UNPKO (2007). He's study examines the reasons for Beijing's active UNPKO policy after 1999, as well as the barriers to a more active policy, and prospects for the 21st century.

- Drew Thompson's article (2005) is a brief overview of the factors that have contributed to China's changing outlook in terms of UNPKO and what China has to gain from participation in UNPKO. Thompson is Director of China Studies at The Nixon Center in Washington.
- Bates Gill and James Reilly (2000) looked at theoretical and material hurdles limiting Beijing's role in peacekeeping and the possibilities for a more extensive Chinese participation in UNPKO. Gill and Reilly found signs of a new Chinese flexibility at the end of 1999. Gill is currently the Director of SIPRI; Reilly assisted Dr Gill at the Brookings Institution in 1999-2001 and is now a Post-Doctoral Research Associate with the History Faculty and with the Department of Politics and International Relations at Oxford University.
- Pang Zhongying, Professor of International Studies at China's Nankai University, (2005) has analysed China's changing attitude to UN peacekeeping. Pang's findings include the fact that policymakers in Beijing view the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference with more flexibility than ever before. An important reason, according to the study, is that China wants to increase its role in maintaining international peace and stability. This view is also reflected in official Chinese statements.
- Ian Taylor, Professor in International Relations at Scotland's University of St Andrews, looked at the future of China's peacekeeping operations (2008). Taylor's article gives a brief background to China's role in UNPKO, noting that its definition of sovereignty might be a key element forming its stance towards UN intervention.
- The earliest analysis used in this study was authored by M. Taylor Fravel, Associate Professor of Political Science at MIT, in 1996. Fravel studied China's attitude towards UNPKO starting in 1989, and found that the prospects for Chinese participation in inter-governmental organisations such as the UN were 'lukewarm'. Fravel was affiliated with the London School of Economics at the time of authoring the report.

## **1.2 Note on "traditional" vs. "non-traditional" peacekeeping**

This study differentiates between "traditional peacekeeping" and "non-traditional peacekeeping". As a clear distinction between the two is of utmost importance

for the correct understanding of China's stance towards UN peacekeeping operations, a definition of the principles is provided here.<sup>8</sup>

"Traditional peacekeeping" is authorised under Chapter VI of the UN Charter and refers to four guidelines:

- 1) the impartiality of the force and its commander
- 2) the consent of the host country or belligerent parties
- 3) the non-use of force except in cases of self-defence
- 4) establishment only after the conclusion of a cease-fire agreement.

"Non-traditional peacekeeping", which is authorised under Chapter VII, refers to those operations established under any of the following circumstances:

- 1) in the absence of a political settlement
- 2) without the consent of all parties to the conflict
- 3) with the authorisation to use force
- 4) under national (not UN) command.

### 1.3 Limitations

This study is intended to provide an overview of China's role in UNPKO and is therefore of a descriptive nature. It aims to give some insight into the debate among international observers, rather than providing any ground-breaking analysis.

While this study examines Beijing's changing stance towards UN peacekeeping, it does not analyse how Beijing has contributed to the evolution of the peacekeeping regime. Nor does it discuss the likely prospects for a transformation of UNPKO driven by China, which has called for greater presence of developing nations in the Security Council.

As merely a few studies by Asian scholars have been available, the majority of the sources used in this study are of Western origin.

### 1.4 Acknowledgements

The author would like to express his sincere gratitude to the people who have provided their help and support during the process of compiling this study. First

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<sup>8</sup> The definitions provided are found in Fravel, M. Taylor (1996), 'China's Attitude Towards U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Since 1989', *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 11, pp. 1105-1106

and foremost, the author would like to thank John Rydqvist, Programme Manager of the Asia Security Studies Programme at FOI, and Sofia K. Ledberg at the Department of Eurasian Studies of Uppsala University, who reviewed the report, for their kind and valuable assistance.

## 2 China's participation in UN peacekeeping: chronology

1945	The Republic of China (with its seat in Nanjing) is one of the founding members of the UN
1948	UN establishes its first peacekeeping mission: deployment of military observers to the Middle East (UNTSO)
1949	Kuomintang government flees to Taiwan, but keeps seat as China representative in UN
1951	Troops from the Chinese People's Volunteer Army fight US-led UN troops in Korea
1955	Republic of China (Taipei) casts its one and only veto, blocking Mongolian People's Republic membership application (which Taipei regarded as a part of China)
1962	China-India border war, Western powers support India
1966	Chinese leaders launch the 10-year long Cultural Revolution
1971	Beijing replaces Taipei in the UN
1972	China casts two vetoes (to block Bangladeshi membership application, Middle East ceasefire)
1981	China's first vote in the UNSC on UNPKO: in favour of extension of UNFICYP (Cyprus); China contributes financially to UNDOF (UN Disengagement Observer Force) and UNIFIL (Lebanon)
1982	China begins to pay dues for UNPKO
1984	China outlines policy on UNPKO
1988	China joins the UNSC Special Committee on Peacekeeping; UN peacekeeping forces are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
1989	Tiananmen crackdown; China deploys peacekeepers for the first time: officials to Namibia (UNTAG)
1990	China deploys military observers for the first time to the Middle East (UNTSO); China abstains from voting on the use of force against Iraq
1991	China votes in favour of UNTAC (Cambodia); participates in UN Iraq-Kuwait observer mission
1992	China sends formed military units, for the first time, to Cambodia; votes in favour of UNPROFOR, UNOSOM, UNITAF ("exceptional

	action”) and UNOSOM II (“based on the needs of the unique situation in Somalia” – not to be seen as a precedent) mandates
1993	China supports ONUMOZ (Mozambique)
1994	China says UNAMIR (Rwanda) mandate should not be to interfere in civil war; China abstains on Haiti vote due to opposition of use of force
1997	China casts veto regarding MINUGUA (Guatemala), relating to Taiwan
1997-98	Asian financial crisis
1998	China participates in UNOMSIL (Sierra Leone)
1999	China casts veto regarding draft resolution to extend UNPREDEP (Macedonia), relating to Taiwan; NATO bombing of Chinese embassy in Belgrade
2001	China sends special envoy to the Middle East, takes on a larger role in the rebuilding of Afghanistan, sends police officers to Bosnia and Herzegovina
2002	China joins UN Standby Arrangement for the rapid deployment of peacekeepers; sends civilian police to UNPKO for the first time, to East Timor
2003	China sends military units to UNPKO in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) and Liberia (UNMIL).
2004	China sends police contingents to UN missions in Kosovo (UNMIK) and Haiti (MINUSTAH).
2006	China sends military logistics troops to Lebanon (UNIFIL)
2007	China agrees to send 315-member engineering unit to Darfur (UNAMID); first deployment of 142 Chinese troops to Darfur in November; China votes in favour of the extension of MINUSTAH in Haiti

## 3 Historical Background

### 3.1 China represented by the Kuomintang in the UN: 1945-1971

The Republic of China became one of the five veto-wielding permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) when the UN came into existence in 1945. China, then represented by the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) government in Nanjing, had fought imperial Japan in World War II and thereby contributed to the Allied victory.<sup>9</sup> The US-supported Kuomintang government continued to represent China in the UN after having fled to Taipei, when the Chinese Communist Party took power in mainland China in 1949.

Since the major Western powers recognised the regime in Taipei as the legitimate representative of China, the People's Republic remained largely isolated from multilateral diplomacy during the years of its UN exclusion. Beijing viewed UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) as a pretext to justify interventions by the United States or the Soviet Union in the affairs of small states, and kept this hostile attitude towards UNPKO after it was allowed into the UN in 1971.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.2 Beijing replaces Taipei on the Security Council; The inactive period: 1971-1981

Beijing's attitude towards the United Nations and UNPKO in the first stage of its UN membership was significantly impacted by the events of the Korean War (1950-53). During the war, China was branded as an aggressor in a resolution passed by the UN General Assembly and became the target of the first US-led peace enforcement mission authorised by the UN in 1951.<sup>11</sup>

When Beijing assumed its seat on the UNSC as Resolution 2758 was passed by the General Assembly on October 25, 1971, it adopted an inactive policy toward UNPKO which it kept until 1981. China's representative in the UNSC declared that he would not participate in the votes on UNPKO since "China has always been opposed to the dispatch of the so-called 'peacekeeping forces'. [...] Such a

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<sup>9</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 16

<sup>10</sup> Fravel, 'China's Attitude Towards U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Since 1989', , p. 1104. Staehle *China's Participation in...* p. 26

<sup>11</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...* , p. 25

practice can only pave the way for further international intervention and control with the superpowers as the behind-the-scenes bosses".<sup>12</sup>

China, however, did not use its veto in the UNSC to obstruct any UNPKO. It did not want to support resolutions which might serve the interests of either superpower, nor did it want to be regarded as 'obstructionist' or displease Third World allies.<sup>13</sup> Hence, Beijing chose a neutral path of non-participation.

China's advocacy of traditional norms of state sovereignty and non-intervention was an important reason for its inactive stance in the UNSC. This concept, often referred to as the Westphalian norm of sovereignty, is based on the understanding that the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states is crucial for maintaining international peace.<sup>14</sup>

Beijing feared that UNPKO could be used to interfere in its domestic affairs, including issues regarding Taiwan's sovereignty. During this time, China also faced a security threat from the Soviet Union and was engaged in border disputes with a number of states.<sup>15</sup>

Yin He argues that China, as a newcomer, lacked knowledge of the complex UN system, including its structures, procedures, customs and political environment. This might also have limited its interest in actively participating in the UNSC decision-making process.

China did not contribute financially to the peacekeeping missions, nor did it supply personnel to ongoing operations during the first decade of its UN membership. This was also linked to its belief that UNPKO merely was a tool for the superpowers to achieve their interests.<sup>16</sup> In fact, during the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union on many occasions attempted to use the UN as a platform for ideological struggles. Since both superpowers held UN vetoes, the Security Council could not act without their joint permission.<sup>17</sup>

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), China lacked both the human and material resources required to be able to participate in UNPKO. Its limited assets were instead spent on defence capabilities in order to guard itself against a

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 26. Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', ; *U.N. Security Council Official Records: S/PV.1750, Oct. 25, 1973, (1973)*, Published: Aug. 23, 2006 Last Accessed: Aug. 11, 2008

<sup>13</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* pp. 19-20

<sup>14</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...* , p. 9

<sup>15</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* , p. 19

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 17

<sup>17</sup> Gill, Bates, (2007), *China Becoming a Responsible Stakeholder*, Published: June 11, 2007

possible attack from the Soviet Union as well as on aid to Third World countries.<sup>18</sup>

Overall, during the 1970s, China intentionally isolated itself from the world economy and held on to the principle of self-sufficiency.<sup>19</sup> However, during these initial ten years of UN membership, Beijing came to realise that it had to modify its stance towards participation in UNPKO in order to take account of the interests of the Third World and the other Permanent Members.<sup>20</sup> China's non-participation stance could be interpreted as passive opposition as well as passive support for UN interventions, and it did not want to create the impression that it opposed mandates supported by fellow developing nations. After all, China owed its UN membership in 1971 to the support from the developing nations of the UN.<sup>21</sup>

In January 1979, China and the US officially established diplomatic relations. After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, China began to work together with Western countries to oppose the Soviet regime. For example, Beijing joined the Washington-led boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow but supported the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 1984.<sup>22</sup>

### 3.3 China participates in UNPKO voting: the 1980s

It was not until after Deng Xiaoping assumed the chairmanship of the Chinese Communist Party and launched the reform policies (*gaige kaifang*) in the early 1980s that China left its non-participation stance and adopted a slightly more supportive attitude towards UNPKO.

In 1981, Beijing voted on UNPKO for the first time, supporting Resolution 495 on the extension of the ongoing UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). China also agreed to pay its share of the UNPKO expenditure.<sup>23</sup> Its contributions were still limited however as Deng argued that everything was secondary to

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<sup>18</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...*, p. 19

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 19

<sup>20</sup> Morphet, Sally (2000), 'China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, October 1971-December 1999', *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31, No. 2, p. 152

<sup>21</sup> Tang, Jiaxuan, (1999), *Xin Zhongguo waijiao de guanghui licheng [The Grand History of the Foreign Policy of New China]*, Published: December 1999

<sup>22</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...*, pp. 21-22

<sup>23</sup> Ibid; Staehle *China's Participation in...* p. 26



economic development. Indeed, at the early stages of the reform program, even the military forces were downsized and defence expenditure reduced.<sup>24</sup>

Beijing also decided to contribute financially to the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Syrian Golan Heights and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from 1982.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, it sent a fact-finding mission to the Middle East to study the peacekeeping operations there.<sup>26</sup> China however still did not send personnel to UNPKO.<sup>27</sup>

This fundamental shift in attitude was partly a result of Beijing's increasingly pragmatic and less ideological stance towards the UN. Policymakers realised that active support of UNPKO would contribute to a positive international perception of China. A stable and peaceful environment would also help China achieve its goal of economic development and modernisation.<sup>28</sup> China began to engage in international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy and practically abandoned its ideological disagreement with the West.<sup>29</sup>

The political basis for the new stance towards UNPKO was China's "independent foreign policy" (*duli zizhu waiguan zhengce*), which was written into the country's revised constitution in 1982, when Deng launched his policy of economic reform and opening.<sup>30</sup> The "independent foreign policy" has been explained as a term used by Beijing to denote independence from American power.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the more accommodating attitude, cooperation did not carry much risk, as the UN did not establish a new peacekeeping operation between March 1978 (UNIFIL) and May 1988 (UNGOMAP).<sup>32</sup>

China voted in favour of every UNPKO between 1981 and 1990, which were all traditional peacekeeping and transition management missions. These votes

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<sup>24</sup> *White paper: China's National Defense in 2004*, (2004), Chapter III, Bergstrand, Bengt-Göran, (2004), *WMEAT Data on Military Expenditures: A Statistical Compendium for 1963-99*, Published: September, 2004

<sup>25</sup> Morphet, 'China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, October 1971-December 1999', p. 158.

<sup>26</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 90

<sup>27</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 20

<sup>28</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 90, Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 27

<sup>29</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...*; Staehle *China's Participation in...*

<sup>30</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 90

<sup>31</sup> Rogers, *et al.*, *China's Expanding Global Influence*, p. 94

<sup>32</sup> Fravel, 'China's Attitude Towards U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Since 1989', p. 1104, *United Nations Peacekeeping List of Operations 1948-2008*, (2008), Published: 2008 Last Accessed: Aug. 14, 2008

referred to renewals of five mandates dating back as early as 1948 as well as five new operations in 1988 and 1989.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.4 China begins to send peacekeepers: 1989-1999

When the Cold War approached its ending, Beijing began to engage more actively in the decision-making and implementation of UNPKO. It began to work more with the other Permanent Members and to adjust to a fragmenting Soviet Union and Eastern Europe's political influence.<sup>34</sup>

China joined the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in November 1988, the year when the UN peacekeeping forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Special Committee had been established in 1965 to review all issues relating to peacekeeping. In April 1989, Beijing urged the international community to give 'powerful support' to UNPKO, which had proven to be an 'effective mechanism' and an 'integral part' of UN efforts to settle conflicts peacefully.<sup>35</sup>

There was a clear upswing in Chinese peacekeeping later that year, in the aftermath of the violent suppression of student protests on Tiananmen Square. The Tiananmen crackdown damaged ties that had developed between the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the people of China since the revolution in 1949.<sup>36</sup> According to several scholars, the PLA saw participation in UN peacekeeping as a means to restore its bonds with the Chinese people and the rest of the world.<sup>37</sup> Overall, Beijing hoped to reap political as well as economic benefits in an environment where several Western countries had imposed embargoes against it after the June 4 crackdown.<sup>38</sup>

In October 1989, Beijing announced that it would provide 20 non-military observers to join the UN Namibia Transitional Period Aid Group (UNTAG) overseeing a general election. This decision marked the beginning of its official

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<sup>33</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 27, *United Nations Peacekeeping List of Operations 1948-2008*,

<sup>34</sup> Morphet, 'China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, October 1971-December 1999', p. 152

<sup>35</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 28, citing Xinhua article published in April 1989. Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 90

<sup>36</sup> Rogers, 'China and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa', p. 77

<sup>37</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p.29, He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 30, Rogers, 'China and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa', p. 77, Thompson *Beijing's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations*, p. 11

<sup>38</sup> Carlson, 'Helping to Keep the Peace', p. 13

participation in UN peacekeeping operations. In 1990, China dispatched its first military observers to the Middle East (UNTSO).<sup>39</sup>

China's attitude toward the Gulf War in 1990-91 showed its opposition to non-traditional peacekeeping in general, and the use of force in particular.<sup>40</sup> While China supported most of the Chapter VII resolutions regarding Iraq prior to the US-led enforcement mission, it was eager to remove any reference to the use of military force from these resolutions. When Resolution 678 finally authorised the use of "all necessary means" under Chapter VII, China abstained from the vote to show its opposition to the operation.<sup>41</sup>

Foreign Minister Qian Qichen defended China's reservation against the enforcement mission in Iraq with the fact that "the Chinese people still clearly remember that the Korean War was launched in the name of the United Nations".<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, China voted in favour of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1991, one of the largest and most complex UNPKO at the time. In 1992, China also provided a large military contingent of engineers and observers, a total of 800 engineering troops accompanied by 49 military observers over a two-year period, 1992–1994.<sup>43</sup> This was the first time China sent formed military units to a UNPKO and the only time it did so during the entire 1990s.<sup>44</sup>

UNTAC assumed many functions of the government and thus its broad mandate more resembled state-building than peacekeeping. Therefore, UNTAC by definition infringed on the sovereignty of the Cambodian state.<sup>45</sup> From this perspective, Beijing's support of UNTAC can be seen as an initial step away from its opposition against interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states.<sup>46</sup>

The Chinese leadership, however, had good reasons to engage in Cambodia: the mandate was agreed upon by all conflicting parties; China was a key member of the peace process and had a stake in the regional stability of Southeast Asia; and

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<sup>39</sup>Stahle *China's Participation in...*, p. 28 Rogers, 'China and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa', p. 75

<sup>40</sup>Fravel, 'China's Attitude Towards U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Since 1989', p. 1107.

<sup>41</sup>Stahle *China's Participation in...*, p. 28

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 27

<sup>43</sup>Gill and Reilly, 'Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping', p. 44

<sup>44</sup>He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 24

<sup>45</sup>Fravel, 'China's Attitude Towards U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Since 1989', p. 1110

<sup>46</sup>Stahle *China's Participation in...*, pp. 29-30

Beijing was able to improve its international reputation after the diplomatic isolation that followed the Tiananmen crackdown.<sup>47</sup>

China however still opposed any authorisation of the use of force. When one of the parties to the conflict withdrew its support for the peace process, Chinese diplomats resisted any attempt to authorise peace enforcement actions.<sup>48</sup> China's open opposition against "non-traditional" aspects of peacekeeping mandates continued. Those aspects included Chapter VII authorisation of "all necessary means" and employing forces under national, rather than UN, command. These concerns led Fravel to come to the conclusion that Beijing actually became more conservative and cautious towards UNPKO in the years following 1989.<sup>49</sup>

China voted in favour of the UN Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) and the US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in Somalia in 1992, despite the fact that these mandates sanctioned the use of "all necessary means". Beijing's representative in the UNSC however stressed that military action was "exceptional" and motivated by "the unique situation in Somalia".<sup>50</sup>

Also in the case of UNOSOM II in 1993, Beijing supported the Chapter VII mandate citing "exceptional measures" in a "unique situation", adding that the authorisation of the use of force should not constitute a precedent for UNPKO.<sup>51</sup>

But Beijing began to regret its initial support of the missions in Somalia when US forces became involved in combat with Somali militias, prompting Chinese scholars to stress the importance of not interfering in domestic matters. Also China's UN representative Li Zhaoxing stated that the Somali conflict should have been solved by peaceful means.<sup>52</sup>

After the failure of UN efforts in Somalia, China became reluctant to support any peace enforcement measures. It therefore abstained on a number of UNPKO resolutions in the early 1990s, due to non-traditional aspects of the mandates:

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 29

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30

<sup>49</sup> Fravel, 'China's Attitude Towards U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Since 1989', p. 1103. Fravel's argument is based on China's opposition towards aspects of Operation Provide Comfort in Iraqi Kurdistan, UNPROFOR in Yugoslavia, Operation Turquoise in Rwanda and Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti.

<sup>50</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...* ; *U.N. Security Council Verbatim Record, S/PV.3145*, (1992), Published: Dec 3, 1992

<sup>51</sup> *Jiaqiang guoji he diqu hezuo xiaochu wuzhuang chongtu ji qi genyuan: Qian Qichen tongzhi zai riben yantaohui shang de zhuchi fayan [Strengthening international and regional cooperation in order to eliminate armed conflict and its origins: Keynote speech by Comrade Qian Qichen at seminar in Japan]*, (2004), Published: July 6, 2004

<sup>52</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...* , pp. 31-32

Operation Provide Comfort in Iraqi Kurdistan, UNPROFOR in Yugoslavia, Operation Turquoise in Rwanda and Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti.<sup>53</sup>

Beijing's changing voting behaviour during the 1990s indicates that Chinese diplomats were undergoing a learning process over the years, in which they tried to find the right balance between their humanitarian concerns and their normative reservations against the use of force.<sup>54</sup>

In the late 1990s, Beijing's concern over the secession of Taiwan prompted it to block peacekeeping resolutions twice. The Taiwan issue had re-emerged in the early part of the decade. In 1992, Washington outraged Beijing when President Bush approved the sale of 150 F-16 fighter aircraft to Taiwan.<sup>55</sup> The previous year Taipei had, however, renounced the use of force to retake mainland China. This move paved the way for a landmark meeting between Beijing and Taipei, which took place in Singapore in 1993. In 1995 and 1996, however, their relations came under renewed strain as China test-fired missiles in waters near Taiwanese ports ahead of the island's first democratic presidential election.<sup>56</sup>

In 1997, Beijing vetoed a resolution to deploy ceasefire observers to Guatemala, which kept diplomatic relations with Taipei. China's representative stated that Guatemala, which supported Taiwan's UN membership applications, had "unscrupulously supported activities aimed at splitting China at the United Nations".<sup>57</sup>

In 1999, Beijing vetoed an extension of observers to the Republic of Macedonia, which also had diplomatic ties with Taipei. However, it refrained from citing the Taiwan issue, but stated that the situation in Macedonia had stabilised and that the UN should instead focus on other conflicts due to its financial difficulties.<sup>58</sup>

China also voted in favour of the Australia-led intervention in East Timor in 1999 (UNTAET). Its support of the Chapter VII mandate was motivated by consent of the conflicting parties. Beijing may also have seen this as an opportunity to project its image as a responsible power.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Fravel, 'China's Attitude Towards U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Since 1989', p. 1103

<sup>54</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 30

<sup>55</sup> John J. Tkacik, Jr., (2007), *Will History Repeat With Latest Taiwan Arms Deal?*, Published: October 9, 2007

<sup>56</sup> *TIMELINE: Milestones in China-Taiwan relations since 1949*, (2008), Published: June 12, 2008

<sup>57</sup> *United Nations Security Council 3730th meeting* (1997), Published: Jan 10, 1997

<sup>58</sup> *United Nations Security Council meeting 3982*, (1999), Published: Feb 25, 1999

<sup>59</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 40

China agreed to participate in the UN Standby Arrangement for the rapid deployment of peacekeepers in 1997, but it was not until 2002 that it was able to meet the standards required by the United Nations.<sup>60</sup>

### 3.5 Chinese peacekeeping takes off: 2000-present

The way UN peacekeeping missions are conducted changed after the Brahimi Report in 2000 (see pages 34-35), which made UN peacekeeping more agreeable to the Chinese leadership.<sup>61</sup> As China in the early 2000s moved to become a member of the World Trade Organization and took steps to become fully integrated into the global economy, it naturally felt compelled to participate more actively in multilateral activities.<sup>62</sup>

China took on a larger role in the rebuilding of Afghanistan both financially and politically in 2001. Also, for the first time ever, China sent a special envoy to the Middle East. The goal was to try to push forward an easing of tension between Israel and Palestine, and 'to establish a broad and in-depth relationship with the parties in the Middle East'.<sup>63</sup> Also in 2001, China sent a total of 20 police officers to the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>64</sup>

China broke new ground in January 2002 when it sent civilian police to East Timor (UNTAET), which was a Chapter VII mission. Thus, Chinese police officers were authorised to carry light weapons and patrol the community of a foreign country. This was China's first signal that a UN mission, which featured peace enforcement, could be politically acceptable.<sup>65</sup>

It made sense for Beijing to support UNTAET. It was in China's interest to reinforce stability in an Asia-Pacific country; it had contributed election observers to East Timor; and it felt a desire to respond in some way to anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia. It also wanted to retain UN authority, and thus Chinese influence, over issues of intervention and the use of force.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 74

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. ii, UN Security Council, (2000), *Resolution 1327 (Brahimi Report)* Published: Nov. 13, 2000 Last Accessed: Aug. 14, 2008

<sup>62</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 91

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 91

<sup>64</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* pp. 31-32.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Gill and Reilly, 'Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping', pp. 49-50

In 2003, China for the first time sent military units, to the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)<sup>67</sup>; a 175-member engineering company and a 43-member medical company.<sup>68</sup>

The following year, China sent logistics troops, an engineering company and a field hospital to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The deployment of 597 personnel to Liberia is by far the largest Chinese military contingent in a peacekeeping mission to date.<sup>69</sup>

Also in 2004, China sent a police contingent to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and dispatched a formed police unit as well as civilian police to the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti. This was not only the first time China dispatched a formed police unit (FPU) to a peacekeeping mission, but also the first time China sent peacekeepers to a UN member state with which it did not have diplomatic relations.<sup>70</sup>

As a result, China's annual share of UN peacekeeping personnel surged from 0.25 percent to 1.50 percent between 2001 and 2005. This implies that the number of Chinese peacekeepers has increased by a higher speed than the overall increase in the number of deployed UN peacekeepers, at least since 2003. In 2004, China for the first time surpassed the annual participation rate of the average contributor to UN peacekeeping, which was 1.15 percent that year.<sup>71</sup> More recent figures indicate that China's share has increased even more. Indeed, by December 2008, China's participation rate had risen to 2.3 percent.<sup>72</sup>

In 2006, China sent military logistics troops to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In late September that year, the UN Security Council resolved to reinforce African Union troops with more than 20,000 UN peacekeeping troops in Sudan's strife-torn Darfur. Sudanese President al-Bashir, however, rejected the proposed UN force. It was not until April 2007 that Khartoum agreed to let 3,000 UN peacekeepers into Darfur. The approval came after China, in response to international pressure, advised Sudan to cooperate with UN efforts.<sup>73</sup> Beijing's principled insistence on the Sudanese government's consent was regarded by

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<sup>67</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* pp. 31-32

<sup>68</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', , p. 92

<sup>69</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* pp. 31-32

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. pp. 33

<sup>71</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...* , p. 49

<sup>72</sup> *United Nations Peacekeeping: Facts and Figures*

<sup>73</sup> 'Chinese Leader Tells Sudan of Genocide Case Concerns', (2008), *Reuters* July 29, 2008; Massand, Rikki N. (2008), 'Ban Ki-moon Encourages China to Play Global Role', *China Daily*, July 1, 2008; Ransom, Ian (2008), *U.N.'s Ban Calls on China to be Bigger Peacemaker*, *Reuters*,

Western observers as a reflection of the continuing importance of oil exports from Sudan to China.<sup>74</sup>

China agreed to send a 315-member engineering unit to Darfur of which 142 troops had been deployed by November 2007. In late 2008, there were 795 Chinese peacekeepers in Sudan, of which 321 were deployed in the Darfur region (UNAMID) and the remainder in southern Sudan (UNMIS).<sup>75</sup>

Since the end of 1999, the Chinese representative in the UNSC has voted in favour of every newly established UNPKO and refrained from dissociating China from resolutions that authorised the use of force or mandated pivotal states to carry out enforcement actions.<sup>76</sup> Staehle argues that this shows that Beijing has fully approved the concept of peace support operations with limited peace enforcement tasks and that these are carried out by pivotal states.<sup>77</sup>

Beijing has supported all peace support operations so far in the 2000s – in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Burundi, and Sudan. In these cases, however, its representative rarely elaborated in the Security Council on the grounds of its decisions. While these mandates authorise the use of force, enforcement actions are explicitly limited to the protection of UN personnel, their freedom of movement, and civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Kamphausen, Roy D. and Liang, Justin (2007a), 'PLA Power Projection, Current Realities and Emerging Trends', in: Swaine, *et al.* (Eds.) *Assessing the Threat: The Chinese Military and Taiwan's Security* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), pp. 119-121

<sup>75</sup> *United Nations Peacekeeping: Facts and Figures*

<sup>76</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 85

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42. The term "traditional peacekeeping", formulated by the late U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, is outlined in the introduction of this study.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41



## 4 China defines peacekeeping: incentives and concerns

The UN has initiated 63 peacekeeping missions since 1948, of which most have commenced since the beginning of the 1990s. Between 1948 and 1988, the UN undertook just 15 peace operations.<sup>79</sup> Demand for peacekeepers has thus grown significantly since China decided to send its first officials to UNPKO in 1989. The increasing pressure on the UN to secure a peaceful global environment, coupled with the rapid expansion of China's economy and influence, has led to calls from the international community for Beijing to engage more in UNPKO.<sup>80</sup> UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in July 2008 stated that it was vital that China matched its rising economic and political clout with more funding and peacekeepers in order for the organisation to be able to meet "growing global challenges".<sup>81</sup> The urgent need for more UNPKO personnel is underlined by the shortage of UN troops in the DRC (MONUC) in spite of calls in late 2008 for an additional 3,000 peacekeepers.<sup>82</sup>

As outlined in the previous chapter, China has developed an increasingly accommodative attitude towards UN peacekeeping operations since it cast its first peacekeeping-related vote in the Security Council in 1981. China briefly formulated its official stance towards UNPKO in its White Paper for Defence in 2004, the fourth in a series of such documents published since 1998. The document states that Beijing has "consistently supported and actively participated in the peacekeeping operations that are consistent with the spirit of the UN Charter".<sup>83</sup> China's initial refusal to support peacekeeping mandates in the 1970s is thus not taken into account in the official Chinese version of its history in the UN. The latest Chinese defence policy paper published in January 2009 used the same wording. In its 2004 Defence White Paper, China also vowed to continue to support UNPKO reform in order to strengthen the UN's capability to preserve peace.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Peacekeeping in Africa*, (2001), United States Institute of Peace Special Report, Published: Feb 13, 2001, pp. 3-4; *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, Background note: 31 December 2008*, (2008), Published: Dec 31, 2008

<sup>80</sup> Taylor, 'The Future of China's Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', p. 8, Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 100

<sup>81</sup> Ransom, *U.N.'s Ban Calls on China to be Bigger Peacemaker*,

<sup>82</sup> *Facing shortfall, Ban appeals for more peacekeepers for DR Congo*, (2009), UN News Centre, Published: Feb 3, 2009

<sup>83</sup> *White paper: China's National Defense in 2004*, Chapter IX

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter IX

Since China's admission into the UN and the Security Council in 1971 both Beijing and the UN have undergone changes shaping China's role in relation to UN peacekeeping. Studies examined in this report bring up a number of factors that have influenced China's view of the UN peacekeeping regime, which are outlined below. Apart from obvious motivating aspects, such as reimbursements from the UN to personnel-contributing countries,<sup>85</sup> the following factors may have shaped China's stance towards the UNPKO system:<sup>86</sup>

- Shared security interests with the rest of the world
- China's rising comfort level in the UN peacekeeping regime
- Changes in Beijing's foreign and security policy:
  - Beijing's concerns about its international reputation
  - Efforts to counterbalance the perceived US hegemony, while keeping a low profile as not to challenge the US
  - China's drive to isolate Taipei diplomatically, and its opposition against supporting countries with links to Taiwan
  - Preventing security threats from failing states
- Economic interests
- Opportunities for training of personnel and gaining international experience
- Normative concerns:
  - Beijing's strong adherence to principles of non-interference and sovereignty
  - China's opposition against the use of force.

The above mentioned factors, and their implications for China's stance towards UNPKO, are discussed further in the subsequent sections.

## 4.1 Shared security interests with the rest of the world

China's rising support for UNPKO coincides with the increasing socio-economic interdependence with the rest of the world, a fact addressed by several foreign observers.<sup>87</sup> By participating in UNPKO, China can support efforts aimed at securing a peaceful global environment and contribute to the safeguarding of stable overseas markets needed for its economic growth.<sup>88</sup> In a lecture about

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<sup>85</sup> The base reimbursement is just over \$1,000 for pay and allowances per peacekeeper and month. *United Nations Peacekeeping: Meeting New Challenges Q&A*, (2006),

<sup>86</sup> The studies include, among others, Staehle *China's Participation in...*, pp. ii, 62, Kamphausen and Liang 'PLA Power Projection', p. 119, Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 87

<sup>87</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 79

<sup>88</sup> Taylor, 'The Future of China's Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', p. 8;

UNPKO in 2007, PLA Senior Colonel Xu Weidi emphasised that global stability is a prerequisite for China's sound economic development:

*“With the policy of reform and opening up, we entered the path of peaceful development and were integrated gradually into the international community. (...) In the last 20-odd years, China has been the country with the most rapid development. In this circumstance, we need international social stability.”*<sup>89</sup>

China is in increasing need for natural resources in order to sustain its role as the workshop of the world and requires stable markets where it can offload its products. Recently, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have separately stressed the importance of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in order to protect common strategic interests.<sup>90</sup>

## 4.2 China's rising comfort level within UNPKO

Beijing feels increasingly comfortable with UNPKO, which has made it eager to participate more widely in peacekeeping. China has even supported peace enforcement missions in some cases, including INTERFET and UNTAET in East Timor and the U.S.-led intervention into Afghanistan in 2001.<sup>91</sup> In the 1990s, China was still reluctant to approve non-traditional peacekeeping mandates that sanctioned the use of force. However, the so-called Brahimi Report in 2000 dealt with some of Beijing's doubts. The report was the result of “The Panel on UN Peace Operations”, chaired by Ambassador Lakhdar

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The way China's economic interests have affected its eagerness to support UNPKO are further outlined in section 3.7.

<sup>89</sup> Xu Weidi, *Lianheguo weihe xingdong yu Zhongguo [U.N. peacekeeping operations and China]*, (Recording: 02:23:10)

<sup>90</sup> Dai Bingguo *Attends and Addresses Seminar to Mark the 30th Anniversary of Sino-U.S. Diplomatic Relations*, (2009), Published: Jan 15, 2009 ; *Secretary's Remarks: Secretary Clinton At the Asia Society* (2009), Published: Feb 13, 2009

<sup>91</sup> Gill, *China Becoming a Responsible Stakeholder*,

Brahimi.<sup>92</sup> It contained specific recommendations to enhance the UN's capacity to conduct peace operations more effectively.

The Brahimi report, which underscored the growing need for peacekeepers, importantly embraced peace enforcement but suggested that the use of force should be restricted to self-defence and seen as a very last option. Peace support operations emerged as a new form of UNPKO as a result of these recommendations and the experiences made in Kosovo and East Timor from 1999.<sup>93</sup> All newly established missions since 1999 have been designed as peace support operations with the exception of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which operated under a traditional peacekeeping mandate.<sup>94</sup>

In the 2000s, China's own experiences with peace support operations also convinced Beijing that it was indeed necessary in specific cases to use military force in order to protect peacekeeping contingents.<sup>95</sup> The appointment of Major General Zhao Jingmin as China's first UN peacekeeping Force Commander in August 2007, a reflection of Beijing's growing influence in UNPKO, also contributed to its rising comfort level in the UN peacekeeping system.<sup>96</sup>

### 4.3 Raising its international profile

Since Beijing in the early 1980s chose economic development as the primary means to promote its national interests, it has become increasingly important for China to portray itself as a responsible member of the international community. Through its supportive attitude towards UNPKO, Beijing shows that it can live up to its global responsibilities in a peaceful way. In turn, such a positive global image is likely to make China more attractive as a partner in international politics, economics and security.

In regard to its political image, Beijing views its participation in peacekeeping missions as a direct reflection of its rising international strength. This view was exemplified by Premier Wen Jiabao's comment that China's military

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<sup>92</sup> Durch, William J. , (2001), *UN Peace Operations and the "Brahimi Report"*, Published: October 2001 Last Accessed: Aug. 26, 2008

<sup>93</sup> *Peacekeeping in Africa*,

<sup>94</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...* , pp. 22-23. Staehle's definition of peace support operations is that such mandates combine a robust military force capable of peace enforcement actions with a strong civilian component that carries out civil administration, civilian policing, and humanitarian tasks. Thereby they differ from traditional peacekeeping, which does not include the authorisation of the use of force.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., pp. 60, 86, 87

<sup>96</sup> *First Chinese UN peacekeeping force commander takes office*, (2007), Xinhua, Published: Sept 17, 2007 ; *Secretary-General Appoints Major General Zhao Jingmin as Force Commander for Western Sahara Mission*, (2007), Published: Aug 28, 2007

participation in Lebanon (UNIFIL) manifested its growing status in the world. International leaders have also made similar statements.<sup>97</sup>

While Beijing is rapidly becoming a truly international player, it continues to be bogged down by issues denting its global image, including accusations of human rights violations such as imprisonment of human rights activists and repression of minority groups. China's international behaviour is also coming under intensifying scrutiny, for instance its friendship with "rogue governments" of countries such as Zimbabwe and Sudan. The "Genocide Olympics" campaign against Chinese investment in Sudan and arms sales to Khartoum are mentioned as cases which have harmed Beijing's international image.<sup>98</sup> China's support for the military junta in Myanmar is another sensitive issue hurting its reputation, as is the Chinese policy to provide no-strings-attached loans to human rights-breaching regimes. The argument is that such nations might have adopted transparency and anti-corruption measures if those were conditions for aid.<sup>99</sup>

Some US observers argue that China is using its participation in African peacekeeping operations in a strategic manner, in order to offset criticism of some of Beijing's activities abroad.<sup>100</sup> While it is difficult to assess whether Beijing indeed has such a strategy, it is obvious that China's support of UNPKO shows that it is willing to contribute to world peace.

China's growing presence in UNPKO is sometimes referred to as a means of projecting power overseas, together with its military modernisation programme.<sup>101</sup> The Chinese defence budget grows by more than an annual 10 percent according to official figures, and Beijing plans to increase military spending by 14.9 percent in 2009. Beijing therefore tries hard to convey the message that its military build-up does not constitute a threat to the outside world. Such efforts include its launch of the concepts of China's "peaceful rise" (or "peaceful development") and of China as a "responsible great power".

The slogan 'responsible great power' (fuzeren de daguo) was coined by then-Premier Zhu Rongji towards the end of the Asian financial crisis in 1999. It has subsequently been promoted by Beijing to endorse the image of China as a responsible player economically as well as politically, upholding justice and

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<sup>97</sup> Kamphausen and Liang 'PLA Power Projection', pp. 119-121, Aneja, Atul, (2006), *More Chinese troops for Lebanon*, The Hindu, Published: Sept. 21, 2006

<sup>98</sup> Fairclough, Gordon (2007), 'China's Force in Sudan Signals New Global Position', *The Wall Street Journal*, 17 September; Rogers, et al., *China's Expanding Global Influence*, p. 128

<sup>99</sup> Rogers, et al., *China's Expanding Global Influence*, pp. 2-3, 21, Fairclough 'China's Force in Sudan Signals New Global Position',

<sup>100</sup> Rogers, et al., *China's Expanding Global Influence*, p. 100

<sup>101</sup> Kamphausen, Roy D. and Liang, Justin, (2007b), *PLA Power Projection, Current Realities and Emerging Trends*, Assessing the Threat: The Chinese Military and Taiwan's Security

peace. The political purpose could be served by a supportive attitude towards peacekeeping.<sup>102</sup>

Premier Wen Jiabao outlined the 'peaceful rise' (heping jueqi) theory in a speech at Harvard University in 2003, saying that China of today is "a rising power dedicated to peace".<sup>103</sup> One aspect of the idea, Wen later stated, was that China must take full advantage of the opportunity of world peace to develop and strengthen itself. He emphasised that the rise of China would not pose any threat to other countries, and that Beijing would never seek hegemony.<sup>104</sup>

The idea of a 'peaceful rise', which was later replaced by the term 'peaceful development' (heping fazhan), involves settling border issues with neighbouring countries and to increase economic relations with countries in the region. China's aim to become a member of institutions such as the WTO, APEC and ASEAN has also been included in the concept.<sup>105</sup>

Overall, China strives to rebut the perception in Western countries, that the PLA keeps a hidden military agenda, reflected by the low transparency of Chinese military affairs.<sup>106</sup> The leadership in Beijing emphasises that the Chinese defence budget is significantly smaller than that of the US.<sup>107</sup>

That said, concerns that China's international clout will eventually translate into Chinese power projection and strategic competition with the US are still at large. Observers have also interpreted Deng Xiaoping's motto to "keep a low profile" (taoguang yanghui, yousuo zouwei) as a euphemism for secretly building a strong military capability.<sup>108</sup> This has fuelled concerns that Beijing will turn more aggressive once it has strengthened itself, and that the emphasis on China's

<sup>102</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', pp. 96-97

<sup>103</sup> de Montesquiou, Alfred (2008), *Sudan welcomes Chinese peacekeepers*, Associated Press, Published: Feb. 1, 2008 Last Accessed: Aug. 11, 2008

<sup>104</sup> Glaser, Bonnie S and Medeiros, Evan S, *The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of "Peaceful Rise"* The China Quarterly, Published: July 19 2007, pp. 298-299, Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', pp. 97-98

<sup>105</sup> *China's Peaceful Development Road (White paper)*, (2005), Xinhua News Agency, Published: Dec 22, 2005 ; Pan, Esther, (2006a), *The Promise and Pitfalls of China's 'Peaceful Rise'*, Backgrounder, Published: April 14, 2006

<sup>106</sup> See for example Lo, Alex, (2008), *US is guarding China's nuclear 'secrets'* South China Morning Post, Published: Nov 20, 2008 ; Pan, Esther, (2006b), *The Scope of China's Military Threat*, Council on Foreign Relations, Published: June 2, 2006

<sup>107</sup> The US military expenditure was \$578 billion in 2007, up 9 percent on 2006, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) estimates. The same estimate for China was 506 billion yuan, roughly corresponding to \$67 billion. Beijing said in 2008 it would spend 18 percent more on its defence during the year than in 2007.

<sup>108</sup> Translation note: The expression "taoguang yanghui, yousuo zouwei" is often directly translated into "to hide brightness and nourish obscurity". While the official Beijing translation is "to bide our time and build up our capabilities", it has also often been translated into "to bide our time, hide our capabilities", or as above, simply "to keep a low profile".

“peaceful rise” merely is a smokescreen. Comments by Xu Weidi reflected that Beijing is very well aware of such concerns:

*“Our participation in UN peacekeeping operations means that the Chinese army is heading outwards. We all know that these Western countries always say that ‘Chinese military issues aren’t opaque’. We say that we’re developing peacefully; they still say that ‘you’re peaceful now, but who can guarantee that you will be peaceful after that you have risen?’”*<sup>109</sup>

Staehle points out that China’s desire to use peacekeeping as a means to project an image as a responsible power also has been expressed in several official statements.<sup>110</sup> He notes that the PLA regards its participation in UNPKO as evidence for “China’s peace-loving image”, and that senior officials of the Ministry of Public Security expect that China’s UNPKO contribution helps to strengthen this image.<sup>111</sup> Ian Taylor agrees that policymakers in Beijing are acutely aware of China’s global image and reputation, and that they realise that participation in UNPKO can help to project a more positive impression of the regime.<sup>112</sup> More recently, Chinese officials have initiated efforts to change the perception that China’s demand for natural resources is the sole reason for its interest in Africa, which is the main destination of UN missions.<sup>113</sup>

Xu’s statement above can serve as an example of how Chinese scholars stand by their government’s message that the increasing presence of UN peacekeepers from China mainly reflects its efforts to preserve world peace. Concerns that China’s greater role in international politics poses a potential challenge to US interests however persist, as expressed by CIA Director Michael V. Hayden in 2008:

*After two centuries of perceived Western hegemony, China seems to be determined to flex its muscles.*<sup>114</sup>

Despite such concerns, a notion that Chinese efforts to promote peace and stability will in turn serve the interests of the broader international community is however gaining acceptance. To this end, the two countries have opened more

<sup>109</sup> Xu Weidi, *Lianheguo weihe xingdong yu Zhongguo [U.N. peacekeeping operations and China]*,

<sup>110</sup> See, for example Zhu, Zhe, (2007), *China to train more peacekeepers*, China Daily, Published: 21 Nov, 2007

<sup>111</sup> Staehle *China’s Participation in...*, p. 71

<sup>112</sup> Taylor, ‘The Future of China’s Overseas Peacekeeping Operations’, p. 8

<sup>113</sup> Chen, Shirong, (2009), *China seeks broader Africa role*, BBC News, Published: Feb 12, 2009

<sup>114</sup> *CIA Director warns China’s military could get ‘adversarial,’ seems determined to ‘flex its muscles’*, (2008), East-Asia-Intel.com, Published: May 8, 2008

than 50 dialogues that increasingly focus on how to coordinate US and Chinese problem-solving in third areas of the world.<sup>115</sup>

Recent statements from Washington show that the perception of China as a benign international player has now gained a broad clout. Hillary Clinton in February 2009 addressed concerns that a rising China would, by definition, be an adversary, stating that the two nations could “contribute to each other’s successes”. Announcing a resumption of mid-level military-to-military talks between the US and China, Clinton emphasised Chinese participation in international peacekeeping as one of the positive efforts undertaken by Beijing.<sup>116</sup>

#### 4.4 Counterbalancing the perceived US hegemony

As previously noted, in the 1970s China regarded the UN peacekeeping regime as a mere tool for the expansion of US or Soviet domination in the developing world.<sup>117</sup> Xu asserts that the US, having come out as a winner of the Cold War, has been able to dictate international rules, giving it strategic overhand. The strengthening of the US has in turn led to a weaker UN, he argues.<sup>118</sup> Some Chinese observers are convinced that the US has consciously used UNPKO in order to expand its global influence.<sup>119</sup>

By increasing participation in the UN peacekeeping system, Beijing is able to boost its own power as well as the authority of the UN. As a result, China is able to assert more influence in the UN, thereby counterbalancing what it sees as a post-Cold War US hegemony.<sup>120</sup> Official statements show that 21<sup>st</sup> century China wants to play an ever more active role in international affairs. This is captured by President Hu Jintao’s emphasis of the doctrine of “you suo zuo wei” or “making some contributions” by seizing opportunities. Previously, Beijing assigned a relatively low priority to foreign policy as it was guided by Deng Xiaoping’s motto of keeping a low profile and “seeking not to lead” (bu dang tou).<sup>121</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Rogers, *et al.*, *China’s Expanding Global Influence*, pp. 5-6

<sup>116</sup> *Secretary’s Remarks: Secretary Clinton At the Asia Society*

<sup>117</sup> Carlson, ‘Helping to Keep the Peace’, p. 13

<sup>118</sup> Xu Weidi (2005), ‘Yaobai yu Panghuang zhong de Tansuo: Lianheguo Weihe Xingdong Mianlin de Kunnan yu Tiaozhan [Exploration in Vacillation and Hesitation: The Difficulties and Challenges Facing U.N. Peacekeeping Operations]’, *World Economics and Politics*, No. 5, p. 3

<sup>119</sup> Carlson, ‘Helping to Keep the Peace’, p. 23

<sup>120</sup> Staehle *China’s Participation in...*, p. 62

<sup>121</sup> Pang, ‘China’s Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping’, p. 97, Lam, Willy, *Hu’s Tightening Grip: CMC Personnel Shifts and Increasing the PLA’s Budget*, Jamestown Foundation China Brief, Published: May 30, 2007, pp. 6-8



Still, Beijing is wary of giving Washington the impression that its peacekeeping efforts are part of a strategy of Chinese regional and global power projection. China does not want to be regarded as a strategic competitor of the US in Asia, and therefore avoids assertiveness in its attitude towards peacekeeping. A possible result of such concerns is that Beijing still maintains a relatively limited participation in peacekeeping efforts in Asia, in spite of promoting the idea of its 'peaceful rise' in the region. It has no interest in challenging the status quo in Asia for as long as the United States does not intervene in its domestic issues, for example in the case of Taiwan. China's dispatch of civilian police, rather than military forces, to East Timor, could serve as an example of such concerns. Neither did Beijing consider sending soldiers to post-Taliban Afghanistan, which has distinguished its position from that of the United States.<sup>122</sup>

Similar to most developed nations, the US is vastly under-represented in terms of contributions to UNPKO personnel. The US had 91 peacekeepers serving on UN missions as of December 2008, versus China's 2,146 (see table 3). The main contributors, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, supply about 10,000 peacekeepers each. The fact that Beijing by far outweighs Washington in terms of personnel devoted to UN peacekeeping efforts gives it an opportunity to develop know-how of strategic value. There is a perception that this can provide China with relative strength in regions including Africa, reflected by a statement by a US observer:

*Conceivably, the United States will one day turn to the Chinese military to ask them for help and expertise for missions in Africa.*<sup>123</sup>

## 4.5 The Taiwan factor

Many scholars analysing China's role in UNPKO stress Beijing's claims of sovereignty over Taiwan as an important factor affecting its behaviour in the Security Council. Beijing's interest to isolate Taiwan diplomatically may have motivated it to play a larger role in peacekeeping missions in countries that have recently severed ties with Taipei, or still keep ties with Taipei.<sup>124</sup> China's presence in peacekeeping missions is thus seen by some as an alternative to the "check book diplomacy" used by Beijing and Taipei in the race for diplomatic recognition.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 98

<sup>123</sup> Rogers, *et al.*, *China's Expanding Global Influence*, p. 98

<sup>124</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* ; Staehle *China's Participation in...* ; Thompson *Beijing's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations*,

<sup>125</sup> Thompson *Beijing's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations*, p. 8

The fact that Beijing has chosen to deploy more peacekeepers to Haiti and Liberia than to other host countries possibly reflects how the Taiwan issue has become part of China's peacekeeping diplomacy.<sup>126</sup> Haiti retains diplomatic ties with Taipei, while Liberia switched recognition to Beijing in 2003. As of December 31, 2008, China's contingent in Liberia consisted of 569 troops, police and military observers, while Haiti was host to 143 Chinese police. Thus, one-third of China's 2,146 peacekeepers, serving in 11 UN missions, are currently deployed in the two countries.<sup>127</sup>

In 2004, China voted in favour of the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in spite of Haiti's recognition of Taipei. It followed up with the deployment of peacekeepers there and it was the first time China sent personnel to a UN mission in a country with which it has never had diplomatic relations.

China sent peacekeepers to the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) shortly after the Liberian government had shifted recognition from Taipei to Beijing.<sup>128</sup> This was quickly followed up with aid packages that included food aid and motorcycles for the Liberian police force. Beijing also supplied a rebuilt sports complex, a US\$2 million grant to help restructure the Liberian army and is providing pensions and pay-outs for demobilizing troops.<sup>129</sup>

Yin He however argues that Taiwan has ceased to affect China's behaviour in the UNSC to any larger extent, reflected by the fact that Beijing now even agrees to support UN missions in countries linked to Taipei.<sup>130</sup> He's view echoes Beijing's claims that its support for MINUSTAH was merely a response to a UN appeal for assistance to Haiti and had nothing to do with China's national diplomacy.<sup>131</sup>

While Beijing has shown that it may in certain cases be willing to support UN operations in countries with diplomatic ties to Taipei, the Taiwan issue has also led China to use its veto in the UNSC to block a number of peacekeeping mandates. Three out of the four Chinese vetoes cast before the year 2000 were related to the Taiwan sovereignty issue.<sup>132</sup> China vetoed the deployment of

<sup>126</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 85

<sup>127</sup> *United Nations Peacekeeping: Facts and Figures*.

<sup>128</sup> Liberia has shifted between Beijing and Taipei several times since it established diplomatic relations with the PRC in 1977. In 1989, Liberia re-established diplomatic relations with Taipei, prompting Beijing to suspend diplomatic relations with Liberia. In 1993, Liberia resumed diplomatic relations with Beijing. In 1997, Liberia declared that it would recognise both Taipei and Beijing, after which China again suspended diplomatic relations with the country. (source: PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs; He *China's Changing Policy...*, p. 60

<sup>129</sup> Thompson *Beijing's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations*, p. 8

<sup>130</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 69, Staehle *China's Participation in...*

<sup>131</sup> Cody, Edward, (2004), *China Readies Riot Force For Peacekeeping in Haiti*, Washington Post, Published: Sept. 30, 2004 Last Accessed: Aug. 12, 2008

<sup>132</sup> Morphet, 'China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, October 1971-December 1999', China's first used its veto in 1972 to block the admission of Bangladesh into the U.N. (similar to

military observers to MINUGUA in Guatemala in 1997 and an extension of UNPREDEP in Macedonia in 1999.

China's concerns over Taiwan's potential secession and its efforts to isolate the Taipei government diplomatically are closely linked to Beijing's principle of non-interference. Beijing fears that sovereignty issues could backlash and give rise to international criticism of matters which China regards as strictly internal, including the Taiwan issue, as well as the situation in Tibet and Xinjiang.<sup>133</sup>

In the case of MINUGUA, Beijing motivated its veto by stating that "no country's peace process should be at the expense of another country's sovereignty and territorial integrity". China's representative in the UN bitterly noted that Guatemala had kept diplomatic links with Taipei, a fact which barred China from supporting the mandate.<sup>134</sup> He added that the Chinese Government had no room for compromise on the issue. China only lifted its veto after Guatemala agreed to stop pushing for Taiwan's membership in the UN.<sup>135</sup>

UNPREDEP was ended prematurely by the Security Council in 1999 due to China's fierce objection against Macedonia's 'illegal' relations with Taiwan. Macedonia had shifted its recognition from Beijing to Taipei 17 days before the UNSC planned to deliberate on the extension of the mission. Macedonia shifted back to Beijing in 2001.<sup>136</sup>

Today, merely 23 states have diplomatic relations with Taipei. The Taiwan issue is thus likely to have a limited impact on Chinese decision-making in regard to peacekeeping in the future. In Africa, where most UN peacekeeping are

China's stance on Taiwan, its ally Pakistan saw Bangladesh as a breakaway province; see Security Council Official Records 1660<sup>th</sup> meeting, 25 August 1972) and to block a resolution on the ceasefire of the Yom Kippur war (see Security Council Official Records 1662<sup>nd</sup> meeting, 10 September 1972); in 1997 it vetoed ceasefire observers to Guatemala (which accepted the ROC as legitimate; United Nations Security Council Verbatim Report meeting 3730 on 10 January 1997); in 1999 to veto an extension of observers to the Republic of Macedonia (which had diplomatic ties with Taipei; see United Nations Security Council meeting 3982 on 25 February 1999).

<sup>133</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 88

<sup>134</sup> *Press Release SC/6311, Security Council Fails to Authorize Deployment of UN Military Observers to Verify Implementation of Cease-Fire Agreement in Guatemala*, (1997), Published: Jan. 10, 1997 Last Accessed: Aug. 11, 2008

<sup>135</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 59

<sup>136</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 100

deployed, only four smaller states recognise Taiwan as the legal representative of China.<sup>137</sup>

## 4.6 Preventing security threats from failing states

Beijing policymakers have realised that peacekeeping efforts can bring stability to failing states. It is indeed in China's interest to prevent conflicts in such states, which could otherwise threaten transnational peace and create safe havens for international terrorists. Beijing's enthusiastic drive in 2002 to promote its New Security Concept (xin anquan guan), which was originally launched in 1996, underlines this notion.<sup>138</sup>

The New Security Concept has become one of China's new cardinal principles of international relations as well as an approach to cope with power politics and the post-Cold War environment.<sup>139</sup> The official aim of the concept is to 'foster mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination',<sup>140</sup> which in practice translates into a focus on non-traditional security issues such as terrorism and drug trafficking.<sup>141</sup> According to the policy paper that outlines the concept, China seeks to cooperate with other powers "on the basis of the UN Charter, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and other widely recognized norms governing international relations, and give full play to the leading role of the United Nations".<sup>142</sup>

Some Chinese scholars have even advocated interventions in failing states based on security and humanitarian concerns. Such views however deviate from the

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<sup>137</sup> So far in the 2000s, four African states have cut diplomatic ties to Taipei in order to establish diplomatic links to Beijing: Liberia (October 2003), Senegal (October 2005), Chad (August 2006) and Malawi (January 2008). Another five states have resumed diplomatic relations with Beijing in the 2000s, namely Costa Rica, Macedonia, Dominica, Vanuatu and Grenada. None of the above mentioned states were hosts to UNPKO.

<sup>138</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 79

<sup>139</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 97

<sup>140</sup> *China's Position Paper on the New Security Concept*, (2002), Published: July 31, 2002 ; Tang Jiaxuan zai Lianda chanshu huxin huli pingdeng xiezu xin anquan guan [(Foreign Minister) Tang Jiaxuan Elaborates on the New Security Concept of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination in the U.N. General Assembly], (2002), Xinhua News Agency, Published: 14 Sept, 2002

<sup>141</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, pp. 79-80

<sup>142</sup> *Position Paper of the People's Republic of China on the United Nations Reforms* (2005), Published: June 7, 2005

official Party line.<sup>143</sup> Beijing even refrains from using the term “failing state” due to the risk of upsetting the government and people of the country concerned.<sup>144</sup>

## 4.7 Economic interests

There are plenty of economic advantages in store for Beijing motivating it to support UNPKO. Firstly, Chinese peacekeeping efforts can contribute in securing a healthy and stable global economic development, thereby safeguarding demand in overseas markets. Secondly, as previously noted, an improved international profile is of high value for China in its pursuit of economic benefits.<sup>145</sup> Thirdly, through its positive approach towards UNPKO, Beijing has been able to improve bilateral trade relations. During the prelude to the Gulf War in 1990, the Bush administration took a series of measures to end US-imposed sanctions on Beijing following China’s support of the initial Security Council resolution (UNSC 660).<sup>146</sup> Finally, China is able to use UNPKO as a means to protect its investments abroad, a fact which is highlighted by Xu Weidi:

*China also needs peacekeeping, not only as a means to contribute to world peace, but also for ourselves. As Chinese capital now is heading overseas, this also brings with it a problem: Chinese capital is moving out, can it then also be brought back smoothly?*<sup>147</sup>

*When our peacekeeping troops went to Africa - to Sudan, Liberia, West Sahara, Congo and Sierra Leone – who came to the airport to greet them, apart from government officials and diplomats? There were managers of Chinese-invested companies, because they knew that the arrival of peacekeeping troops meant that their security would be safeguarded.*<sup>148</sup>

Sino-African trade and China’s investments in Africa are growing rapidly, underlining its need for stability on the continent. An estimated 800 Chinese companies are present in African countries, where roughly three-quarters of China’s UNPKO personnel are also deployed (see table 1).<sup>149</sup> China’s share of

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<sup>143</sup> Staehle *China’s Participation in...* pp. 80-81

<sup>144</sup> *Strengthening international and regional cooperation...*

<sup>145</sup> Taylor, 'The Future of China’s Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', p. 8

<sup>146</sup> Carlson, 'Helping to Keep the Peace', p. 13

<sup>147</sup> Xu Weidi, *Lianheguo weihe xingdong yu Zhongguo [U.N. peacekeeping operations and China]*, (Recording: 02:25:55)

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. (Recording: 02:27:10)

<sup>149</sup> Broadman, Harry G., (2007), *Africa's Silk Road: China and India's New Economic Frontier*; Gill, Bates and Reilly, James, (2007), *The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. in Africa*, The Washington Quarterly, Published: Summer 2007; Premier Wen's Africa tour boosts bilateral investment, (2006), Xinhua News Service, Published: June 19, 2006; Wezeman, Pieter D., (2007), *United*

trade with Africa has grown to 10.7 percent, putting it in third place among the continent's trade partners after the EU at 30 percent and the US at 17.3 percent.<sup>150</sup> In 2008, the value of the Sino-African trade exceeded \$100 billion, reflecting a ten-fold increase over 2000.<sup>151</sup>

Three out of six African countries where Chinese peacekeepers are deployed rank among China's top-20 trade partners on the continent: Sudan, Liberia and the DRC.<sup>152</sup> The trade growth between China and these three countries is explained by increasing Chinese demand for natural resources. Due to Sudan's oil exports to China, it has become China's third-largest trade partner and recipient of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa. Sudan also hosted more than one-third of China's UN troops in the continent as of December 31, 2008.<sup>153</sup>

Based on this correlation, concerns have emerged that China's hunger for oil and other natural resources drives Beijing's engagement in UNPKO.<sup>154</sup> There is also a perception that China's arms trade with African nations is part of an overall military strategy, including the deployment of peacekeepers, to gain influence on the continent. Beijing has sent peacekeepers to the UN missions in Eritrea, Ethiopia (UNOCI) and Sudan (UNMIS and UNAMID), which have received "significant" arms shipments from China, according to one observer.<sup>155</sup>

It is however important to put matters into perspective. Firstly, the distribution of Chinese personnel in UN peacekeeping operations by and large follows the overall personnel structure of UN missions on the continent. Secondly, while Chinese enterprises are present in nearly all of Africa, the continent still only

*Nations Arms Embargoes: Their Impact on Arms Flows and Target Behaviour. Case study: Darfur, Sudan, 2004-2006,*

<sup>150</sup> *Africa Economy: Waiting for an Industrial Revolution*, (2008), Economist Intelligence Unit, Published: July 30, 2008

<sup>151</sup> *Sino-African trade passes \$100 bln mark in 2008* (2009), Xinhua News Agency, Published: Jan 27, 2009

<sup>152</sup> China Ministry of Commerce, (2008a), *2008 nian 1-10 yue wo yu xiya feizhou guojia maoyi tongji guobie qingkuang [Jan-Oct 2008 statistics of trade between China and West Asian, African nations]*, Published: Nov 28, 2008.

<sup>153</sup> 'China's ambiguity in Sudan ', (2006), *Jane's Intelligence Review*, ; China Ministry of Commerce, *Jan-Oct 2008 statistics of trade.*,

<sup>154</sup> McGhie, Stuart (2007), 'China Reviews Peacekeeping Commitments', *Jane's International Defense Review*, Vol. 40, ; UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, (2008), *UN Mission's Summary Detailed by Country* Published: June 30, 2008 Last Accessed: Aug. 18, 2008

<sup>155</sup> Rogers, et al., *China's Expanding Global Influence*, p. 95

accounts for 3 percent of China's outward Foreign Direct Investment,<sup>156</sup> and Sino-African trade merely represents about 4 percent of China's total foreign trade.<sup>157</sup> In 2006, China's trade with Africa was valued at \$56 billion, which can be compared with Europe's trade with the continent of \$315 billion the same year.<sup>158</sup> Also worth noting, arms transfers to Sudan represented only about 2 percent of Chinese and Russian major conventional weapons transfers in the period 2003–2007.<sup>159</sup> Belarus, China, Iran and Russia were the main suppliers of arms and support for Sudan's domestic arms industry in the period preceding the imposition of the UN arms embargo in July 2004.<sup>160</sup>

Defending its investments in states hosting UNPKO, Beijing maintains that it would not be possible to achieve peace without securing socioeconomic development. It also states that the pursuit of economic growth in conflict areas should be an integral part of any peacekeeping effort.<sup>161</sup>

## 4.8 Opportunities for gaining international experience and training

By participating in the UN peacekeeping system China has gained an invaluable opportunity to obtain international experience of mobilising, organising, and deploying forces overseas. This is a key incentive for Beijing's engagement in UNPKO. Chinese soldiers in peacekeeping missions can acquire battle experience, learn from the military doctrine and management expertise of foreign armed forces, and become acquainted with technologically advanced equipment.<sup>162</sup> A US observer notes that the knowledge gained from UNPKO may be valuable in other overseas deployments, whether UN-related or not:

*Chinese peacekeepers who serve in Africa on UN missions also enjoy a unique opportunity ...: nothing can replace boots on the ground knowledge gained from such missions. Any [UN Military Observer] who has GPS-navigated across thousands of kilometres of desert, talked to local Bedouin, and survived the harsh weather extremes and challenging*

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<sup>156</sup> 'China's ambiguity in Sudan',

<sup>157</sup> China Ministry of Commerce, *Jan-Oct 2008 statistics of trade*, ; China Ministry of Commerce, (2008b), *Qian 10 yue Zhongguo jinchukou zongzhi chao qunian quannian zong guimo [Chinese import-export total surpasses last year's full-year total in first 10 months]*, Published: Nov 24, 2008 ; *Sino-African trade to hit \$100 bln in 2008, China predicts* (2008), Xinhua News Service, Published: Sept. 3, 2008

<sup>158</sup> Berger, Bernt, (2007), *China outwits the EU in Africa*, Asia Times, Published: Dec 13, 2007

<sup>159</sup> Wezeman, *United Nations Arms Embargoes*, p. 9

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.p. 3

<sup>161</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 99

<sup>162</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 61

*austerity of the Sahara, will have a decided advantageous knowledge of that operational environment.*<sup>163</sup>

Most of China's seven military regions have contributed peacekeepers PLA contributions to UNPKO, resulting in an even distribution of experiences from UN missions throughout the Chinese military.<sup>164</sup> One mission which has provided China with valuable training is MINUSTAH in Haiti, where Chinese riot police was able to train the latest crowd control techniques. Staehle argues that these experiences benefited China's Public Security Bureau, especially in preparation of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.<sup>165</sup>

China has also made efforts in order to improve the skills of its peacekeepers. The 125-member police unit in Haiti had been trained at a facility near Beijing before its deployment.<sup>166</sup> The China Peacekeeping Civpol Training Center (CPCTC) was established in Langfang in August 2000 and put into use in October 2004. The total investment in the facilities at the end of 2006 was 150 million RMB.<sup>167</sup> The PLA has also been running classes for Chinese peacekeepers since 1989 at the International Relations Academy in Nanjing.<sup>168</sup>

UNPKO also serves as a base for future international cooperation on security issues. The presence of Chinese peacekeepers has helped China to foster relations to the militaries of the host country and foreign defence attachés of other nations.<sup>169</sup> Such interaction is also likely to benefit the PLA as the interdependence between states grows. China is becoming more integrated into the international community and should learn from the experiences of other actors. This would in turn benefit China's domestic security situation, as argued by Xu Weidi:

*Based on my personal experiences, I think that we can learn a lot from participating in UN peacekeeping operations. We can make friends and obtain a better understanding of this world. An army that is sealed is an army that doesn't understand the outside world; and an army that doesn't understand the outside world is an army in the dark (... ) which cannot fully accomplish the tasks handed to it by the homeland and the people.*<sup>170</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Rogers, *et al.*, *China's Expanding Global Influence*, p. 98

<sup>164</sup> Kamphausen and Liang 'PLA Power Projection', p. 119

<sup>165</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 61; *China to send anti-riot peacekeepers for Haiti*, (2004), Xinhua News Agency, Published: Jan 4, 2004

<sup>166</sup> China Ministry of Public Security, *A Brief Introduction to China Peacekeeping CIVPOL Training Center*, Published: 23 Nov 2006

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p.73

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 61

<sup>170</sup> Xu Weidi, *Lianheguo weihe xingdong yu Zhongguo [U.N. peacekeeping operations and China]*,



Participation in peace operations can also provide an opportunity for the PLA to gather military intelligence, though this factor has not been examined by observers whose works form the basis of this study. Philippe D. Rogers does however mention that US military observers have categorically assumed their Chinese counterparts to be either political or intelligence officers.<sup>171</sup>

## 4.9 Normative concerns

Throughout its membership of the UN, China has firmly defended the concept of traditional peacekeeping, i.e. missions with Chapter VI mandates. China puts great emphasis on the three so-called Hammarskjöld principles of peacekeeping: consent of the country concerned, non-use of force except in self-defence, and neutrality.<sup>172</sup>

Beijing has opposed more robust operations operating under Chapter VII, which is the enforcement chapter of the UN Charter. Chapter VII allows “all necessary means” to protect civilians and UN staff<sup>173</sup> and to potentially interfere in the internal affairs of the host country concerned.<sup>174</sup>

China formulated its normative concerns in its 1984 UNPKO policy<sup>175</sup>, where it stated that a peacekeeping mission must

- Respect national sovereignty
- Be authorised by the UN
- Not be deployed without an invitation from the target state
- Not sanction the use of force unless all other options have proven ineffective.<sup>176</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Rogers, 'China and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa', p. 86

<sup>172</sup> *United Nations Security Council 6075th meeting*, (2009), Published: Jan 23, 2009

<sup>173</sup> *United Nations Peacekeeping: Meeting New Challenges Q&A*,

<sup>174</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...* p. iii; Article 2(7) of the UN Charter contains a ban on UN intervention “in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state,” but adds that “this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.”

<sup>175</sup> Clark, Ian (2002), *Why the 'World's Policeman' Cannot Retire in Southeast Asia : A Critical Assessment of the 'East Timor Model'*, Naval Postgraduate School, pp. 78-79, citing Xinhua News Agency; *China's principles on peacekeeping operations* (2003), PLA Daily, Published: July 31, 2003 Last Accessed: Aug. 11, 2008

<sup>176</sup> Carlson, 'Helping to Keep the Peace', p. 10; Huang, Kunlun (2009), *Cong yadingwan huhang kan lixing wo jun xin shiming [A look at the Chinese army's execution of new missions, based on the escorts through the Gulf of Aden]*, PLA Daily, Published: Jan 4, 2009

Beijing's stance has been reiterated in official Chinese statements and was also laid out in its 2000 Defence White Paper:

*In order to guarantee their success and sound development, UN peacekeeping operations must strictly adhere to the purpose and principles of the UN Charter, especially the principles of respect for state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. UN peacekeeping operations should obtain prior consent of the countries concerned, strictly observe neutrality and must not use force except for self-defense.*<sup>177</sup>

China, together with some other states, most notably Russia and India, usually advocate the Westphalian conception of peacekeeping which requires the consent of the host country. They insist that the role of peacekeeping is to create a basis for the parties concerned to settle disputes peacefully. This is why China argues that the UN should only act when the sovereigns approve and when there is no risk of interfering in matters that could be regarded as internal. Other states, predominantly in the West, maintain that an important aspect of the UN is that it can contribute to securing liberal and democratic societies in war-torn places. Such a position implies significant limits on sovereignty.<sup>178</sup>

China's insistence on the consent of the hosting state can potentially be problematic given the nature of the state in a number of countries where peacekeeping is most needed.<sup>179</sup> One such example is Beijing's unwillingness to support UN intervention during the Rwandan genocide in 1994. A more recent case is Beijing's opposition to attempts to improve the security situation in Sudan's Darfur region, which Khartoum regards as an internal matter.<sup>180</sup> In late September 2006, the UN Security Council decided to deploy more than 20,000 additional UN peacekeeping troops to Darfur. But given China's support of the Khartoum government, there were concerns that Beijing might use its veto against such a mandate. Taylor argues that China's initial position was motivated by economic interests, namely oil exports from Sudan to China, leading to a prolongation of the conflict.<sup>181</sup> Sudan opposed non-African troops in the UNAMID peacekeeping force, and was criticised by Western countries that this stance blocked a wider deployment of UN peacekeepers to conflict areas.<sup>182</sup> In

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<sup>177</sup> United Nations Security Council 3730th meeting China-Africa trade jumps by 39%, BBC, Published: Jan 6, 2006

<sup>178</sup> Alex J. Bellamy, *et al.* (2004), *Understanding Peacekeeping*, (Polity), p. 26

<sup>179</sup> Taylor, 'The Future of China's Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', p. 9

<sup>180</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 42

<sup>181</sup> Taylor, 'The Future of China's Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', p. 9, Kamphausen and Liang 'PLA Power Projection', pp. 119-121

<sup>182</sup> McDoom, Opheera, *China Presses Sudan over Darfur Peacekeepers*, Reuters, Published: Feb 24, 2008

early April 2007, China however tempered the announcement amid criticism from other UNSC members by urging Sudan to accept the deployment of UN peacekeepers in Darfur.<sup>183</sup>

Beijing's principles of national sovereignty and non-interference are closely linked to its concerns over Taiwan's potential secession, outlined in this study<sup>184</sup>, as well as worries about calls for independence in the autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang.<sup>185</sup> Beijing is concerned that any actions that may be perceived as interfering in the domestic affairs of other states could invite scrutiny into matters which it regards as purely domestic.<sup>186</sup>

Ren Xiao, Professor at the Institute of International Studies of Shanghai's prestigious Fudan University, notes that an important basis of China's stance towards non-interference is the Ethic of Reciprocity, or *Do not do to others what you don't want to be done to you* (formulated by Confucius as *ji suo bu yu, wu shi yu ren*).<sup>187</sup> By not giving any opinion on internal politics of other states, the Chinese leadership can deflect criticism of its domestic policies.<sup>188</sup> Beijing's idea is that no other state should criticise it, provided that it keeps from scolding others openly.

According to Gill and Reilly, China's traumatic experiences from the first Opium War (1839-1842) to the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912 laid the foundation for its strict adherence to the Westphalian norm of state sovereignty.<sup>189</sup> These principles were further reinforced by the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and Western support for India during the China-India Border War in 1962. The Chinese Communist Party in the 1920s emphasised the importance of sovereignty as a means to support its legitimacy.<sup>190</sup>

While China's foreign policy today is strongly influenced by its non-interference policy, any humanitarian concerns merely play a minor role. There was a gradual shift in the international debate in the 1990s, which implied a gradual shift from a focus on state sovereignty to a focus on states' obligations vis-à-vis their citizens. The budding idea was that long-term international peace and stability could only be guaranteed by free, open, and pluralist societies. China however resisted this notion of state sovereignty centred on the well being of individuals,

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<sup>183</sup> Kamphausen and Liang 'PLA Power Projection', pp. 119-121

<sup>184</sup> See the "Taiwan Factor" section.

<sup>185</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 88

<sup>186</sup> Taylor, 'The Future of China's Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', p. 9

<sup>187</sup> Ren, Xiao (2008), 'China's Darfur Policy in Tune with Law, Morality', *China Daily* July 25, 2008

<sup>188</sup> Gill and Reilly, 'Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping', p. 1

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p. 42

<sup>190</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 17 Gill and Reilly, 'Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping', p. 42

as reflected by its opposition against military intervention in the Kosovo conflict in the late 1990s to protect human rights.<sup>191</sup>

Beijing has instead put increasing emphasis on the central importance of state authorities in this regard, especially as China itself is subject to perceived threats from separatist movements.<sup>192</sup> This stance was underlined by a Chinese observer who argued that “the national authorities which rule over the people within a specific area are the ultimate authority for dealing with all domestic and foreign affairs faced by the nation state”.<sup>193</sup>

China’s view of sovereignty has, however, developed much since it was allowed into the UN in 1971. From the early 1990s, China has notably adjusted its interpretation of sovereignty in order to create a rhetorical space for it to reluctantly agree to various UN operations.<sup>194</sup> China’s entry into the WTO in 2001, for example, has changed Beijing’s notion of Chinese sovereignty and has led to a greater exposure to global norms.<sup>195</sup>

The basis of China’s principled adherence to non-coercive measures in peacekeeping can be found in its experiences at the end of the Cold War. The frequent use of force to solve conflicts in the early 1990s led to concerns in Beijing that forceful intervention, including the US-led “coalition of the willing”, was likely to dominate peacekeeping. According to He, Beijing is worried that non-UN peace enforcement could threaten its own national interests, as such actions damaged the UN’s authority as the only international institution with the legitimacy to authorise the use of force.<sup>196</sup>

Beijing’s stance that an overemphasis on UN’s military intervention measures is “undesirable” is underlined by this official statement: “To invoke Chapter VII of the UN Charter and adopt enforcement actions indiscreetly will only in the end aggravate the situation and be detrimental to the fundamental solution to the problem.”<sup>197</sup> Xu Weidi also strongly emphasises the Chinese concept of peacekeeping as “non-coercive military operations used to prevent, control and solve armed conflicts”.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Staehle *China’s Participation in...*, p. 10

<sup>192</sup> Gill and Reilly, ‘Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping’, p. 42

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 42, citing Guo Longlong, et al. (1995), *Lianhe guo xinlun* [New Theories About the United Nations] pp. 14–15.

<sup>194</sup> Carlson, ‘Helping to Keep the Peace’, p. 10

<sup>195</sup> Taylor, ‘The Future of China’s Overseas Peacekeeping Operations’, p. 9

<sup>196</sup> He *China’s Changing Policy...* p. 58

<sup>197</sup> PRC Foreign Ministry, *China and the UN Peacekeeping Operations* Published: N/A Last Accessed: Aug. 11, 2008

<sup>198</sup> Xu Weidi, *Lianheguo weihe xingdong yu Zhongguo* [U.N. peacekeeping operations and China], (Recording: 00:04:12)

While Beijing's behaviour in the UNSC so far suggests that it is unlikely to actively promote peace enforcement, another statement in China's 2005 policy paper on UN reforms leaves some room for it to approve of Chapter VII resolutions in "specific" situations:

*The [...] use of force shall not be resorted to without the authorization of the Security Council with the exception of self-defence under armed attack. Whether an urgent threat exists should be determined and handled with prudence by the Security Council in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter and in light of the specific situation.*<sup>199</sup>

In cases where a target state complies, this can also persuade China to tone down its opposition against Chapter VII mandates authorising the use of force. Such an instance was UNTAET in East Timor in 1999, where the conflicting parties supported the peace enforcement intervention. Another example is Beijing's support of a Chapter VII resolution to take necessary measures to deal with human rights violations in the DRC in 2003 as it had the consent of the Congolese regime.<sup>200</sup> As China is eager to show its concern for African problems, it may also have realised Congo's importance for overall regional stability. These factors combined led to the Chinese decision to send its second-largest peacekeeping force to the DRC.<sup>201</sup>

Overall, China has come to realise that by supporting some non-traditional operations it can contribute to the strengthening of the UN. As of mid-2006, UN missions in the DRC, Liberia, Kosovo, Burundi, Haiti and Côte d'Ivoire operate under Chapter VII mandates.<sup>202</sup>

According to most scholars whose studies have been used in this paper, China's stern interpretation of sovereignty has been one of the main factors limiting its support of UNPKO resolutions and its contributions to UNPKO staff.<sup>203</sup> In recent years however, China has made some compromises on these principles. It has justified its more supportive attitude toward peace enforcement operations by emphasising "dramatic changes in international relations".<sup>204</sup>

China insisted that the two humanitarian intervention missions in Somalia in the early 1990s were such exceptions.<sup>205</sup> It also emphasised that the Australia-led

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<sup>199</sup> *Position Paper of the People's Republic of China on the United Nations Reforms*

<sup>200</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...*, p. 42

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57

<sup>202</sup> *United Nations Peacekeeping: Meeting New Challenges Q&A*,

<sup>203</sup> Rogers, 'China and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa', ; Staehle *China's Participation in...*, Fravel, 'China's Attitude Towards U.N. Peacekeeping Operations Since 1989', ; He *China's Changing Policy...* Carlson, 'Helping to Keep the Peace', p. 9, et al.

<sup>204</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 91

<sup>205</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 58

intervention in East Timor in 1999 was invited by the concerned parties, which is why Beijing voted in favour of the mandate. In 2006, China agreed to the deployment of peacekeepers to Darfur, on the condition that the Sudanese government consented.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, China supported UNTAC in Cambodia, a mission which more resembled state-building than peacekeeping, despite its principles mentioned above.<sup>207</sup>

Judging from such official statements and China's actions so far, China is not likely to block peace enforcement operations in the UNSC as long as the host nation acquiesces, UNSC authority is secured and China's core interests are not endangered.

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., p. 57

<sup>207</sup> See further in historical background chapter

## 5 Prospects for the future

China has vowed to increase its support for UNPKO, both in terms of finances and personnel. These promises have been made in official statements, including its Defence White Papers, stating that

*China has consistently supported and actively participated in the peacekeeping operations that are consistent with the spirit of the UN Charter [...] China will continue to support the reform of the UN peacekeeping missions, hoping to further strengthen the UN capability in preserving peace.*<sup>208</sup>

As seen in the conclusions made by the observers cited below, it is highly likely that more Chinese staff will be involved in UNPKO in the future, strengthening the UN's ability to handle conflicts. Opinions however vary in regard to how Beijing will handle its principled resistance against Chapter VII mandates and how this will impact its support of UNPKO mandates in years ahead.

Pang (2005) notes that the Chinese attitude towards UNPKO has become more positive, and is "cautiously optimistic" that China could be a significant actor in future UN peace operations. He concludes that it has been able to accommodate change with more flexibility than before, despite Beijing's emphasis on state sovereignty:

*In fact, as China becomes more engaged, it cannot continue to safeguard these principles rigidly. Rather, it needs to change its approach to buttress the principles. The fact is that peacekeeping itself has weakened these principles. But for developing countries, including China, adherence to state sovereignty and non-interference still matters, and they will resist any attempts to destroy this commitment.*<sup>209</sup>

He (2007) concludes that in spite of an increasingly active Chinese policy on UNPKO, Beijing is unlikely to totally abandon its position on Westphalian norms including the non-use of force. Only with adequate encouragement from other major powers as well as from its Asian neighbours China could one day consider to contribute combat troops to UNPKO, according to He.

*In the future, China may pay higher dues for UN peacekeeping and send more civilian police officers and units, military observers and logistic troops to UNPKO. However, China is likely to continue to remain*

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<sup>208</sup> White paper: China's National Defense in 2004, Chapter IX

<sup>209</sup> Pang, 'China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping', p. 102

*reluctant to deploy combat troops to UNPKO and this will in turn constrain China's scale of peacekeeping personnel contribution.*<sup>210</sup>

Also Staehle (2006) is optimistic about China's role in UNPKO in the years ahead, based on its less-principled approach. He asserts that China's peacekeeping role will help the leadership in Beijing to shape the image of the country as a responsible great power. More importantly, however, is that it will strengthen the UN and delegitimise unilateralist actions by Western powers:

*China has clearly moved away from its strict Westphalian interpretation of state sovereignty and from promoting the traditional definition of the three UNPKO principles ... all indicators discussed in this study suggest that China can and will do more. Given China's embrace of peace support operations, its ambition as a responsible and peaceful great power, its eagerness to strengthen the role of the United Nations, its recent investments in training capacities, and the enthusiasm of its peacekeepers, the world is likely to see a sustainable Chinese participation in the UN peacekeeping regime in the years to come.*<sup>211</sup>

Staehle argues that India may provide a good benchmark to show the potential of China's future contribution, given the former's vast population, its status as a developing country, and its ambition to become a permanent member of the UNSC.

Morphet (2000), who focuses on China's voting behaviour in the UNSC, assesses that China will normally continue to abstain rather than use its veto because of its concern to keep the UN international machinery intact and in use.<sup>212</sup> In terms of China's behaviour in UNPKO voting, this has also been the case since Morphet's prediction in 2000.

In the study by Gill/Reilly (2000), the authors note that China adheres to a looser definition of sovereignty than ever before. They point to a range of critical issues, including trade, foreign direct investment, and international crime. Their prediction is that this evolution is likely to continue and that China's participation in peacekeeping will serve as a significant indicator for assessing this trend.<sup>213</sup>

Rogers (2007) expects China to continue to send peacekeepers to UN missions, but that it will be selective in terms of what regions its citizens are deployed to.

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<sup>210</sup> He *China's Changing Policy...* p. 70

<sup>211</sup> Staehle *China's Participation in...* , p. 87

<sup>212</sup> Morphet, 'China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, October 1971-December 1999', p. 165

<sup>213</sup> Gill and Reilly, 'Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping', p. 55



He also believes that China has realised the value of UNPKO as a promoter of global stability:

*Whereas China once might have seen UN intervention as a potential threat to its own internal affairs, it now sees the intrinsic value of UN efforts in peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace building and perhaps appreciates more than it once did how interventions can promote regional stability and security. (...) China will continue to send UN peacekeepers worldwide, but it will do so specifically with a keen eye to regions that correspond to its strategic vision. Beijing will continue to view peacekeeping as a valuable security cooperation tool in Africa, and it will take every opportunity to contribute to missions on the continent due to the strategic, operational, and tactical benefit and influence it gains from them.*<sup>214</sup>

Carlson (2004) anticipates that Beijing will continue to discuss multilateral and humanitarian operations with the international community. He, however, cautions that shifts in the international climate in recent years are likely to raise questions about the extent of the Chinese support for intervention. Such shifts include the US-led war on terrorism and the American doctrine of pre-emptive warfare to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>215</sup>

Also Taylor (2008) expects Beijing's involvement in peace operations to grow in the future, as it becomes more comfortable with such missions. Similar to many other observers, he states that China's participation in UNPKO will always be connected to its position on state sovereignty:

*Where the defense of Chinese sovereignty encounters the necessity of playing a greater role in the world will mark out the limits of China's involvement. It appears that China's emerging role in peacekeeping operation is part of a pragmatic reorientation and reassessment of Beijing's political interests by policymakers, who are now more concerned with looking like a responsible great power and less of a developing country bent on protecting state sovereignty at all costs.*<sup>216</sup>

Having examined the motives for China to increase its support of peacekeeping operations, it is clear that Beijing has more to gain from active participation than the opposite. There are also signs that China will continue to make case-by-case compromises on its principles of sovereignty, non-use of force and non-interference. A more pragmatic and less ideological approach has evolved, serving China's needs for stable external markets and likely leading to a further strengthening of its contribution to UNPKO in years ahead.

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<sup>214</sup> Rogers, 'China and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa', p. 90

<sup>215</sup> Carlson, 'Helping to Keep the Peace', p. 26

<sup>216</sup> Taylor, 'The Future of China's Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', pp. 8-9

Overall, the world is likely to witness an increasing amount of Chinese personnel in peacekeeping missions in years ahead. There are important incentives for China to support the UNPKO system and to boost its engagement. The Chinese presence in peacekeeping efforts serves Beijing's interests in global peace, security and stability, which it shares with other countries. Peacekeeping operations provide China with valuable training and intelligence, which is also why its policy documents stress the importance of participation in Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). China also realises that its support of UNPKO contributes to raising its international profile. Broadly speaking, participation in peace support operations serves China's goals of strengthening economically and politically.

## 6 Conclusions

China has gradually boosted its participation in UN peacekeeping missions and support for UNPKO mandates over the latest years, and this trend is likely to continue. While China will continue to make case-by-case compromises on its stance towards non-interference and the non-use of force, it is not likely to fully abandon these principles.

China's increasing support of UNPKO is intimately linked to its economic and political ascent in the world. There are however differing views among observers of the connection between China's growing global role and its stance towards UN peacekeeping missions. Some observers argue that it is a conscious strategy by Beijing to increase Chinese engagement in UNPKO in order to strengthen China's comprehensive national power. Other scholars state that China's economic expansion overseas has made it dependent on peace and stability in markets where it is active, and that a stronger UNPKO regime is therefore in its interest.

The most feasible assumption is that the two are intertwined: Beijing needs global stability in order to continue to expand its economic interests overseas and is eager to carry an increasing part of the load. As China rises, it also comes under pressure from the international community to play a bigger role as a peacemaker.

As this study shows, the incentives for Chinese policymakers to support the UN peacekeeping regime vastly outnumber their concerns over UNPKO. By participating more in UNPKO, Beijing can safeguard its international reputation when its rise in the international community comes under scrutiny. If China is able to promote an image of itself as a great power that takes its global responsibilities seriously, this can give it valuable international economic and political support. While engaging more in multilateral cooperation China hopes to strengthen itself and to counterbalance what it perceives as US hegemony.

Beijing's concerns over possible interference in domestic matters and its opposition against the use of force are likely to limit the possibility of any significant increase in UN peace enforcement mandates, at least in those cases when the host states do not consent.

The implications of China's increasing support for UNPKO are manifold. The UN peacekeeping regime suffers from understaffing and will be better positioned to handle conflicts with more contributions of personnel and finances from China. Developed countries are increasingly reluctant to provide personnel to UNPKO, making the participation of developing nations – including China – more important than ever before. At the same time, the UN peacekeeping forces

have to handle a growing amount of large conflicts, such as the current biggest mission in the DRC, and are under heavy pressure to provide enough troops.<sup>217</sup>

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China also plays an important role in forming the future of the organisation's peacekeeping efforts.

With an increasing insight into matters regarding UNPKO, China's support of its mandates will also grow, not least due to the fact that efforts to promote peace and stability will in the end benefit its economic expansion.

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<sup>217</sup> Morris, Harvey, (2009), *UN peacekeeping forces stretched to limit*, Financial Times, Published: Feb 24, 2009

## Tables and charts

**Table I. Deployment of Chinese peacekeepers as per December 31, 2008**  
(source: UN DPKO)

**Number of Chinese peacekeepers in Africa:**

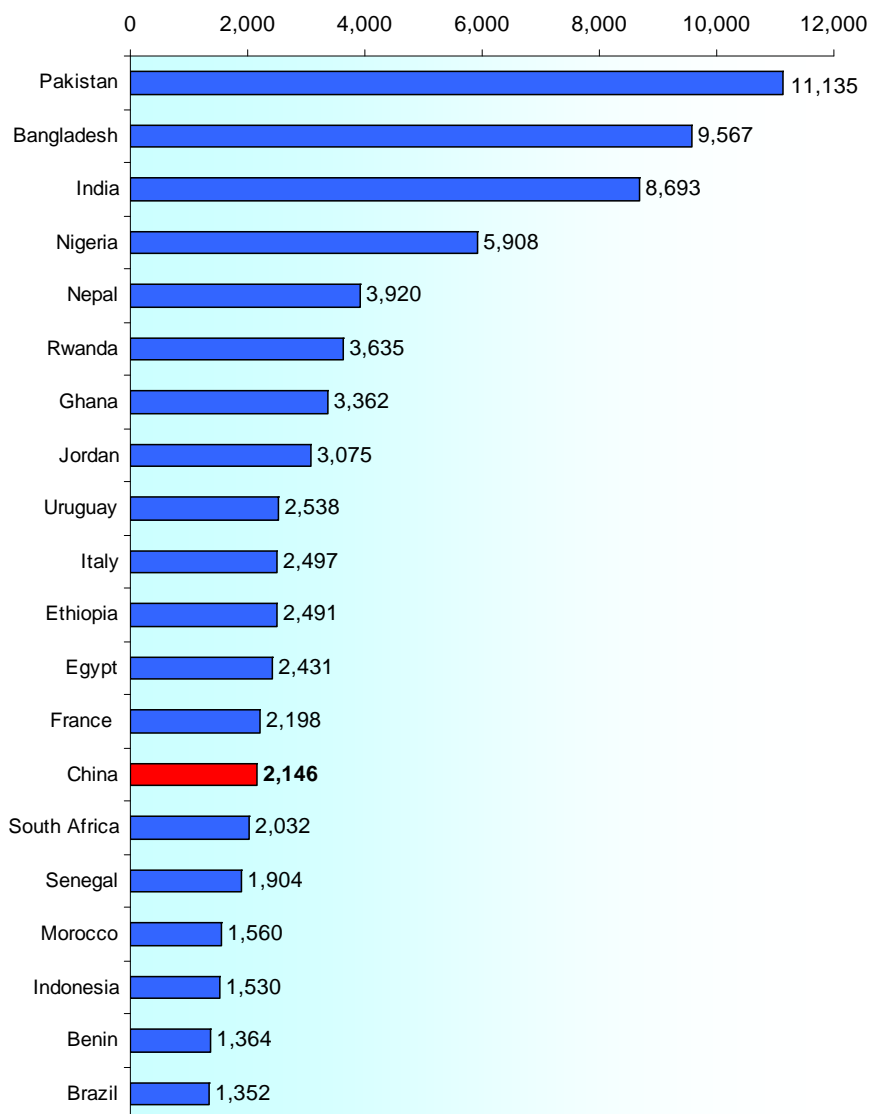
<b>Mission</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Total</b>
MINURSO (W. Sahara)	Military Observers 12	12
MONUC (DRC)	Troops 218	
	Military Observers 16	234
UNAMID (Darfur)	Troops 321	321
UNMIL (Liberia)	Troops 563	
	Police 4	
	Military Observers 2	569
UNMIS (Sudan)	Troops 444	
	Police 18	
	Military Observers 12	474
UNOCI (Ethiopia/Eritrea)	Military Observers 7	7
	<b>Total in Africa</b>	<b>1,617</b>

**Number of Chinese peacekeepers deployed outside of Africa:**

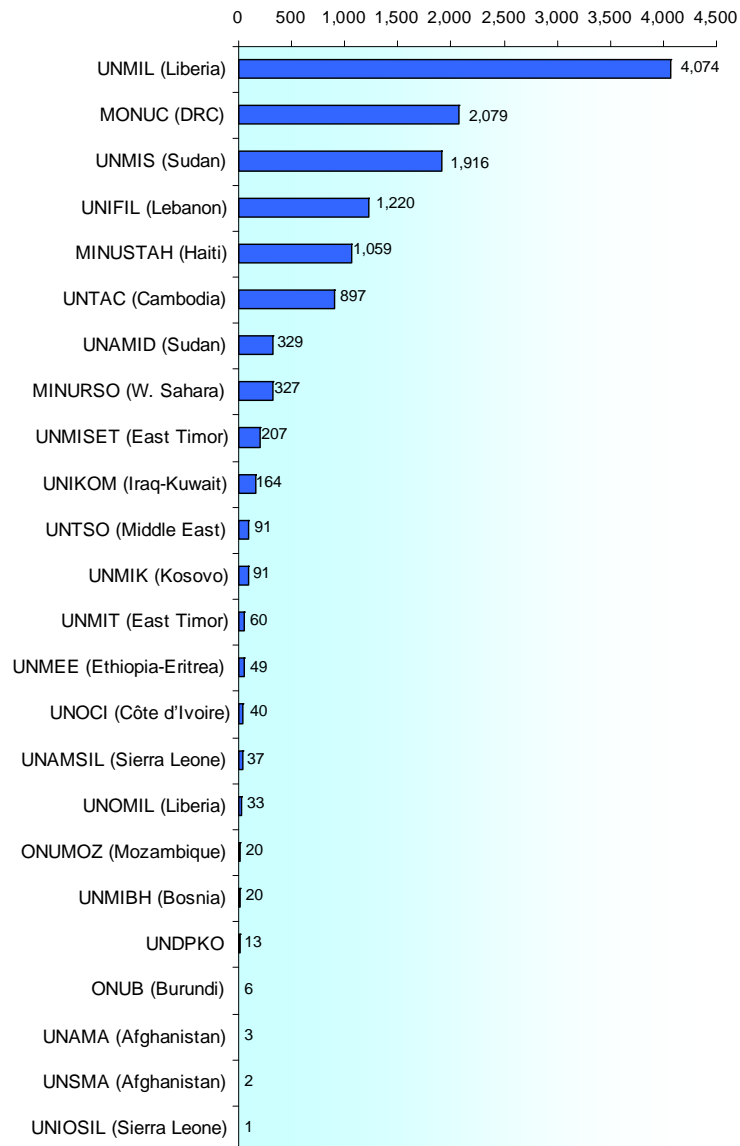
MINUSTAH (Haiti)	Police 143	143
UNIFIL (Lebanon)	Troops 343	343
UNMIK (Kosovo)	Police 18	18
UNMIT (East Timor)	Police 21	
	Military Observers 2	23
UNTSO (Middle East)	Military Observers 2	2
	<b>Total outside of Africa</b>	<b>529</b>
	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>2,146</u></b>

**Chart I. Ranking of top-20 contributors of military and police to UN operations as of Dec 31, 2008**

(source: UN DPKO data)

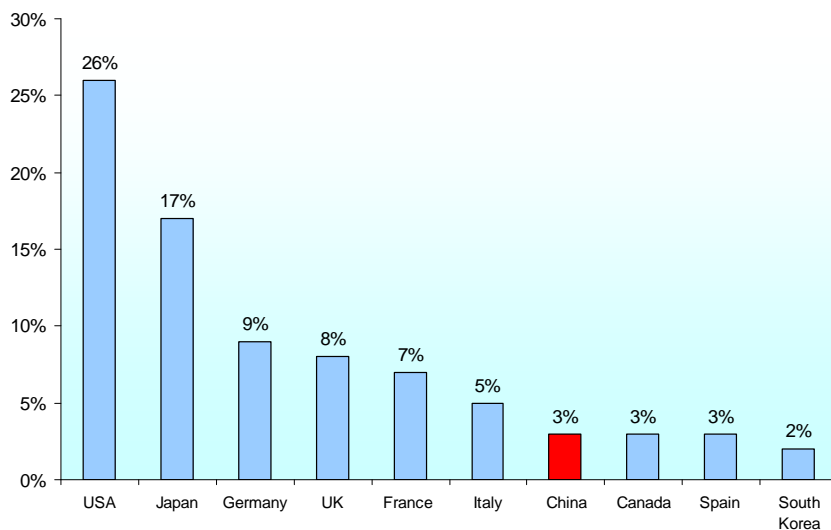


**Chart II. China's participation in UNPKO to-date,  
total number of personnel**  
(source: China 2008 Defence White Paper)



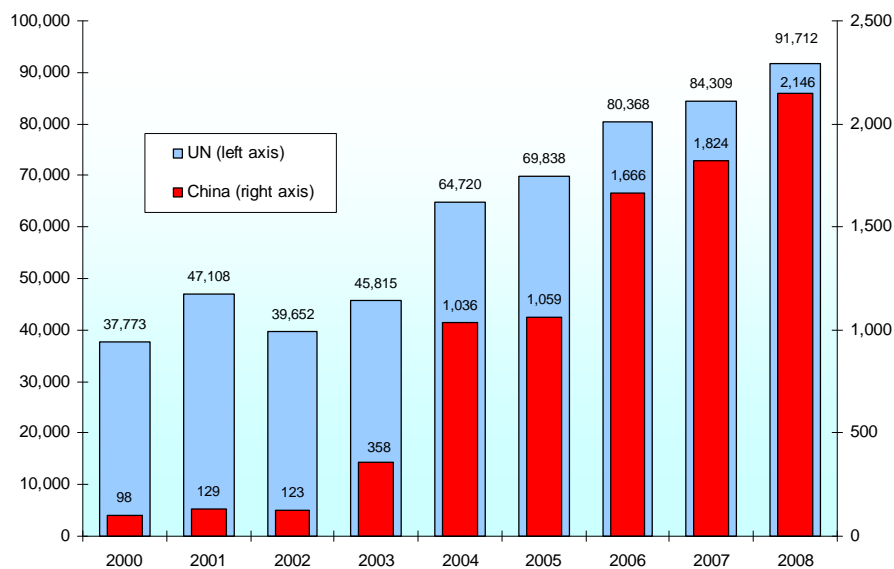
**Chart III. Top-10 providers of assessed contributions to UN peacekeeping budget as of Jan 1, 2008**

(source: United Nations)



**Chart IV. Total number of UN military and police personnel in comparison to China's contributions as per Dec 31 of each year**

(source: UN Peacekeeping, facts & figures)





## Abbreviations

### UN missions

MINUGUA	United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (Jan-May 1997)
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (April 1991-present)
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (June 2004-present)
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Nov 1999-present)
ONUB	United Nations Operation in Burundi (May 2004-Dec 2006)
ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique (Dec 1992-Dec 1994)
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (March 2002-present)
UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (July 2007-present) <sup>218</sup>
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (Oct 1993–March 1996)
UNAMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (Oct 1999—Dec 2005)
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Force (June 1974-present)
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (March 1964-present)
UNGOMAP	UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (May 1988-March 1990)

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<sup>218</sup> UNAMID formally replaced the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) on December 31, 2007. The first deployment of 135 Chinese engineering troops however arrived in Southern Darfur already in November, 2007.

UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (March 1978-present)
UNIKOM	United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (April 1991-Oct 2003)
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (Jan 2006-present)
UNITAF	Unified Task Force (Dec 1992-May 1993)
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (July 2000-July 2008)
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dec 1995-Dec 2002)
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (June 1999-present)
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia (Sept 2003-present)
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan (March 2005-present)
UNMISET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (May 2002-May 2005)
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in East Timor (Aug 2006-present)
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (April 2004-present)
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (Sept 1993-Sept 1997)
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (July 1998-Oct 1999)
UNOSOM I	United Nations Operation in Somalia I (April 1992-March 1993)
UNOSOM II	United Nations Operation in Somalia II (March 1993-March 1995)
UNPREDEP	United Nations Preventive Deployment Force, Macedonia (March 1995-Feb 1999)

UNSMA	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (Dec 1993-present)
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (March 1992-Sept 1993)
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (Aug 1999-May 2002)
UNTAG	UN Namibia Transitional Period Aid Group (April 1989-March 1990)
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (May 1948-present)

**Other**

DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic People's Republic of Congo (Congo- Kinshasa)
INTERFET	International Force in East Timor (1999-2001)
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
PLA	People's Liberation Army of China
UNPKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

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