

China-Sub-Saharan Africa Ties and U.S. Policy

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Since the early 2000s, political, economic, diplomatic, and security engagement between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and countries in sub-Saharan Africa ("Africa" hereinafter, unless otherwise noted) has substantially expanded. Members of Congress and other U.S. policymakers have monitored and assessed the U.S. policy and national interest implications of such trends, and Congress has responded with legislation, hearings, and other oversight activities. In addition to bilateral cooperation, a major vehicle for China-Africa cooperation is the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), established in 2000. FOCAC includes China, the African Union (AU), and all African countries—apart from Eswatini, a diplomatic partner of Taiwan, a self-governing democracy that China views as part of China. China uses FOCAC as a platform for pledging and coordinating regional PRC trade, investment, financing, and aid initiatives, among other ends. FOCAC also serves as a platform for PRC regional diplomacy, which China pursues with African states in a range of UN and other multilateral forums as well.

China presents its engagement in Africa as promoting mutually beneficial economic development without imposing political conditions. In practice, China seeks to use integrated, multidimensional engagement to advance its broader global strategic goals of expanding its international influence, strengthening its access to natural resources, and challenging U.S. global leadership. China engages in regular high-level diplomatic engagement in the region, and also has donated or subsidized high-status state buildings, sports facilities, and other public infrastructure in Africa.

Economic activity is a central pillar of China's activity in Africa. Trade is a major focus and is diverse. Trade trends have included a rise in PRC exports to Africa of renewable energy technology and information and communications technology and services, increasing PRC imports of African agricultural products and critical minerals. Such mineral imports have helped enable China's strategic and commercial dominance of global processing and supply chains for such materials. In 2026, China extended tariff-free access to all African countries, except Eswatini. PRC foreign direct investment (FDI) and contracting services in Africa also have grown, notably with respect to construction, mining, manufacturing, finance, and infrastructure. PRC policy banks and state-backed lenders have extended numerous loans to African governments and other actors, making China a key bilateral creditor in the region. Contracts for such loans reportedly routinely feature provisions favoring PRC lenders. PRC lending volumes have declined over the past decade, however, as China has shifted toward smaller, lower-risk projects. China also promotes the use of its renminbi currency in trade and as a reserve currency in Africa. African-PRC cooperation on artificial intelligence, space and satellite monitoring and data services, and related governance and capacity-building cooperation also is reportedly increasing. Additionally, China engages in education and media cooperation, and provides development aid via grants, concessional loans, technical assistance, and humanitarian programs. China hosts thousands of African university students, sponsors training programs for African professionals in China, and in Africa supports vocational and journalist training and Confucius Institutes to promote Chinese language and culture.

Security cooperation between China and African countries has grown, particularly over the last decade. China established its first overseas military base in Djibouti in 2017 and engages in military diplomacy, peacekeeping, arms sales, military education, joint exercises, counterpiracy operations, and law enforcement cooperation across Africa. The possibility that China might obtain coastal basing rights in West Africa has raised national security concerns for U.S. officials.

African governments have responded to PRC engagement in varied ways. Many appear to value China's provision of financing and investment, especially for infrastructure, though among African publics, concerns have at times arisen over environmental degradation, labor practices, debt sustainability, corruption, and the displacement of local communities associated with some China-aided projects. Multiple public opinion surveys have indicated that China enjoys substantially favorable perceptions across much of Africa.

U.S. policymakers assess PRC activities in Africa in the context of broader U.S.-China geostrategic competition. Areas of concern include China's growing military presence, influence over critical mineral supply chains, expansion of digital infrastructure, increasing diplomatic influence, and efforts to shape international governance norms. Congress has responded through hearings, legislation, oversight activities, and aid and finance programs designed to respond to China's engagement and influence in Africa, as well as highlight the inherent value of U.S. policy norms, values, and commercial approaches. The Trump Administration supports a "constructive relationship of strategic stability with China," but also has characterized China as an adversary and competitor and sought to counter alleged PRC malign activity in Africa.

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Introduction and Overview

Since the early 2000s, political, economic, and security relations between People's Republic of China (PRC or China) state and commercial entities and their counterparts in sub-Saharan Africa have expanded. Congress has monitored and assessed the U.S. policy and national interest implications of such engagement, and in some cases sought to counter such ties or offer U.S. alternatives to what the PRC has offered countries in sub-Saharan Africa ("Africa" hereinafter, unless otherwise specified). Members of Congress have responded through legislation, hearings, and other oversight activities, among other actions.

PRC-Africa relations date to the mid-1950s, shortly after the People's Republic of China's founding in 1949 and initially centered primarily on PRC support for anti-colonial independence movements amid Cold War rivalries. Over time, China increasingly emphasized economic cooperation and political solidarity with developing nations, generally in juxtaposition to the United States and other highly industrialized countries.¹ PRC-Africa engagement has grown rapidly since the early 2000s, following the PRC's decision to expand trade and other commerce globally, including in Africa. Such cooperation takes place both bilaterally and via the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and other multi-country forums. FOCAC, which has met every three years since 2015, was jointly established by China and African states in 2000 as a vehicle for expanding trade, investment, and other economic ties.² FOCAC comprises China, all Africa states except Eswatini (see below), and the African Union (AU). China has also increased its political, military, development, and humanitarian cooperation and expanded its cultural and educational exchanges with African countries.

China portrays its approaches as offering Africa the means to achieve shared economic development, prosperity, and peace. Its engagements in the region also appear to be part of its broader efforts to project PRC economic, political, intelligence, and military power globally, both to counter U.S. global influence and advance PRC national interests.³ The PRC's Africa-focused public relations efforts routinely highlight stated PRC foreign policy principles, such as non-interference in other countries' internal affairs.⁴ China additionally seeks to differentiate its approaches from those of Africa's Western development partners and Western-influenced international financial institutions, whose support may be policy-conditioned. Official PRC policy toward Africa avows "no interference in African countries' internal affairs; no imposition of

¹ PRC development cooperation in Africa initially focused on PRC infrastructure construction, such as railroads (e.g., the famed Tanzania-Zambia railway of the early 1970s) and state buildings, medical aid, and agricultural and selected other sectoral projects, some financed by interest-free loans. See, e.g., Anshan Li, "African Studies in China in the Twentieth Century: A Historiographical Survey," *African Studies Review* (48:1), 2005; and Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press), 2009 (hereinafter, Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift*).

² PRC economic engagement with Africa since FOCAC's creation was initially spurred, in part, by the "going global" or "go out" policy announced by then-PRC leader Jiang Zemin in 2000, following two decades of PRC industrial and trade liberalization. Under this policy, which the Communist Party of China later adopted, the PRC government sought to promote and support PRC commercial activity abroad to boost PRC entity earnings, direct excess foreign currency reserves into foreign investment, secure natural resource inputs, access technology to aid China's domestic economy, and increase PRC global economic influence. Zongyuan Zoe Liu, *Sovereign Funds: How the Communist Party of China Finances Its Global Ambitions*, Harvard University Press, 2023, among others.

³ PRC State Council, *China and Africa in the New Era: A Partnership of Equals*, November 2021 (hereinafter PRC State Council, *China and Africa*), and *White Paper: China and the World in the New Era*, October 2019; David Shinn, "China in Africa," in *Africa in World Politics*, 7th Ed. (Routledge), 2023; and Nadège Rolland, *A New Great Game? Situating Africa in China's Strategic Thinking*, National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR), June 2021.

⁴ PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter PRC MFA), "Wang Yi: China and Africa Stand Shoulder to Shoulder to Safeguard International Fairness and Justice," August 18, 2022; and Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift*.

[China's] ... will on African countries; no attachment of political strings to assistance ... and no pursuit of selfish political gains through investment and financing cooperation" in Africa.⁵ The PRC portrays its ties with Africa as a form of enduring cooperation between peer nations, emphasizing China's claim to be a "developing country"—a status that the U.S. State Department describes as a "misappropriation" that "undermines U.S. interests and the international system."⁶

While PRC diplomacy emphasizes respect for African sovereignty, in practice, China may impose its own de facto policy conditions on bilateral ties, effectively requiring its African partners to back selected PRC positions, especially the PRC's "One China Principle" regarding Taiwan.⁷ Since 2018, after a years-long campaign by Beijing to convince other African countries to sever relations with Taiwan, Eswatini has been the only African country to maintain relations with Taiwan rather than China.⁸ China also appears to expect its partners to avoid raising issues that the PRC views solely as internal affairs (e.g., governance in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, or China's human rights record).⁹ The PRC, in turn, tends to refrain from publicly referencing issues that may be politically sensitive to African governments. PRC government-backed lenders also reportedly sometimes "tie" financing by, for instance, conditioning project loans on the use of certain PRC-origin goods and services, or insisting on loan repayment or other contract provisions favoring PRC creditors in some cases.¹⁰

China's activities in Africa and its long-term, politically and economically integrated approaches to pursuing its geostrategic aims may pose varied challenges to U.S. interests in the region.¹¹ U.S. officials, including some Members of Congress, have expressed concern over China's growing military activity and presence in Africa, including with regard to PRC military basing and its potential to expand PRC global force projection.¹² PRC government-financed trade and investment may competitively disadvantage U.S. and U.S.-linked local or foreign firms and supply chains in Africa, though some PRC infrastructure and other sectoral investments in Africa may help foster more favorable business environments for foreign investors generally, and/or may

⁵ PRC State Council, *China and Africa*.

⁶ PRC State Council, *China and Africa*; and U.S. Department of State (DoS), *Report to Congress on Update on [sic] the People's Republic of China's Status as a Developing Nation*, May 2026.

⁷ The PRC has engaged in a multi-year campaign to persuade African countries to recognize the PRC diplomatically, and to reject official ties with Taiwan. The PRC's "One China Principle" asserts that "there is but one China in the world, Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory" and that the PRC Government "is the sole legal government representing the whole of China." PRC Embassy in United States, "Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China," August 2, 2022.

⁸ VOA, "Once Influential in Africa, Taiwan Loses All But One Ally," May 26, 2018.

⁹ See CRS In Focus IF10275, *Taiwan: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Susan V. Lawrence; and, e.g., South China Morning Post (SCMP), "China Promised Zero Tariffs for Africa. So Why Is South Africa Missing Out?," December 7, 2025.

¹⁰ Shinn, "China in Africa"; and Anna Gelpern, et al., *How China Lends: A Rare Look into 100 Debt Contracts with Foreign Governments*, AidData, March 2021 (hereinafter, Gelpern, et al., *How China Lends*).

¹¹ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC), *Hearing on China's Strategic Aims in Africa*, May 8, 2020; PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2025-2027)* (hereinafter, *FOCAC Action Plan 2025-2027*), September 5, 2024; Carla Jones, et al., *How Chinese Investment in Africa Changes Political Influence*, Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), 2022; and Joshua Eisenman and David Shinn, "China and Africa," in Martin Shanguhya and Toyin Falola, eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History* (Palgrave), 2018.

¹² See, e.g., 2026 AFRICOM Posture Hearings held by the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) and House Armed Services Committee (HASC) in May 2026; and SCMP, "It May Not Say So, but US Sees Africa as a Growing Military Competition with China and Russia," October 15, 2022.

enhance African economic development, which may align with U.S. goals.¹³ Some U.S. policymakers have identified PRC dominance and market manipulation of global supply chains for U.S.-designated critical minerals from Africa as key concerns that are “undermining the sovereignty of African nations and the strategic interests of the United States,” in the words of Senator Ted Cruz.¹⁴ U.S. military officials have suggested that China’s “near-monopoly” of some resources “creates a structural vulnerability for the U.S. Defense Industrial Base.”¹⁵ PRC commercial activity in Africa’s information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and media sectors may enable PRC espionage, data gathering, and influence operations, in some cases with the potential to undermine democratic norms and governance in Africa.¹⁶ In 2025, the then-U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) commander testified that “unchecked, China’s efforts could reshape the information landscape in Africa, creating biases and gaps that could lead African nations to make decisions to subordinate their economic and security interests” to those of China.¹⁷ The House of Representatives Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, established in 2023, repeatedly has addressed such issues in its work.¹⁸

PRC Diplomacy

China maintains active diplomatic missions in every African country except Eswatini—due to Eswatini’s official relations with Taiwan—and maintains “strategic” and other partnerships with certain African countries.¹⁹ Visits to Africa by high-level PRC officials are a core feature of PRC policy. Since becoming PRC president in 2013, Xi Jinping has visited Africa five times, most recently in 2023, and has met with multiple African leaders in China.²⁰ Since 1991, each PRC foreign minister’s first trip abroad every year has included stops in Africa, and other top PRC

¹³ Jake Rinaldi, “PRC Strategic Adaptation in Africa,” Strategic Studies Institute, October 9, 2024; and Paul Nantulya, “Beyond Ports: China Embeds Itself in Africa’s Maritime Networks,” Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), June 10, 2026.

¹⁴ In the 119th Congress, see Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), Africa and Global Health Policy Subcommittee, *China’s Malign Influence in Africa* (hearing), June 4, 2025 (source of quote); and House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), Africa Subcommittee, *Metals, Minerals, and Mining: How the CCP Fuels Conflict and Exploitation in Africa* (hearing), March 25, 2025.

¹⁵ U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), *2026 Posture Statement*, May 14, 2026.

¹⁶ Amodani Gariba, “Enter the Dragon: The Impact of China’s Digital Authoritarianism on Democracy in Africa,” *Africa Governance Papers* (1:4), October 2023; Daria Impiombato, “Chinese Telecommunications Giants and Africa’s Emerging Digital Infrastructure,” in N. Rolland, ed., *(In)Roads and Outposts: Critical Infrastructure in China’s Africa Strategy*, NBR, May 3, 2022; Charity Wright, “China’s Digital Colonialism: Espionage and Repression Along the Digital Silk Road,” *SAIS Review of International Affairs* (41: 2), 2021; and Joshua Meservey, *Government Buildings in Africa Are a Likely Vector for Chinese Spying*, Heritage Foundation, May 20, 2020.

¹⁷ SASC, AFRICOM Commander’s testimony, *To receive testimony on the posture of United States European Command and United States Africa Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program*, April 3, 2025.

¹⁸ The House China Select Committee (abbreviated reference hereinafter) was established under H.Res. 11 (118th Cong.)

¹⁹ The PRC describes many of these partnerships as “strategic,” “comprehensive,” and/or “cooperative” or a combination thereof, but what such distinctions mean in practice can be unclear. Other PRC bilateral forums in Africa include binational commissions and strategic dialogues, and China maintains bilateral trade and economic cooperation committees with 51 African countries. PRC State Council, “China and Africa”; and USCC, Chapter 1, Section 3, *2020 Report to Congress*, 2020.

²⁰ Xinhua “(FOCAC) Xi Jinping—True Friend of Africa,” September 3, 2024.

officials regularly visit the region.²¹ PRC officials have unveiled Africa-specific policies or initiatives during these trips and promoted broader efforts, such as China's Belt and Road Initiative.²² China also has financed, built, and in some cases donated high-status public buildings and facilities (e.g., parliaments and other state buildings, sports facilities, and AU buildings).²³

Multilateral Forums

In addition to its bilateral and FOCAC ties in Africa, China engages with African countries via the United Nations (UN), other multilateral forums, and the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) bloc.²⁴ China reportedly pushed for the expansion of the original "BRIC" bloc, including the transition to "BRICS" with the addition of South Africa in 2010, and the addition of Ethiopia as a member and Nigeria and Uganda as "partner countries" in 2024.²⁵ During triennial FOCAC summits, China has repeatedly set out extensive cooperation pledges to African FOCAC member states, and during non-summit years, FOCAC participants periodically hold special issues forums. At the 2024 FOCAC summit, China pledged \$50.8 billion over the following three years and to support 10 PRC-Africa "partnership initiatives," among other aid.²⁶ Summit participants also reaffirmed their joint agreement, set out at the 2018 FOCAC summit, to foster a "China-Africa Community with a Shared Future."²⁷

China's Global Initiatives in Africa

Since 2024, African participants in FOCAC have stated support for PRC global initiatives that arguably may challenge U.S. global leadership. FOCAC 2024 summit participants committed to jointly advance PRC leader Xi Jinping's Global Development Initiative (GDI) and Global Security Initiative (GSI) and expressed support for the related PRC Global Civilization Initiative (GCI). According to PRC officials, these three initiatives seek to "guide

²¹ PRC MFA, "Wang Yi on the Tradition of Making Africa the Destination of the Chinese Foreign Minister's First Overseas Trip in a New Year for 36 Consecutive Years," January 9, 2026; and *SCMP*, "Why—After More Than 3 Decades—China's Foreign Minister Still Starts the Year with a Trip to Africa," February 20, 2024.

²² On the most recent such visit, by PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi, see, e.g., PRC MFA, "Joint Press Release of the African Union-China Strategic Dialogue," January 8, 2026, and "Key Activities for 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges," January 9, 2026; and *SCMP*, "China FM Wang Yi Opens Africa Tour with United Call for Rules-Based Order," January 9, 2026, and "How China Is Stepping up Africa Charm Offensive to Boost Cultural Ties, Deepen Influence," January 18, 2026, among others.

²³ See, e.g., Joshua Meservey, "China's Palace Diplomacy in Africa," Warontherocks.com, June 25, 2020; and *Le Monde* via *Worldcrunch* translation, "China's 'Stadium Diplomacy,' A Winning Formula in Africa," May 11, 2021.

²⁴ Starting in 2024, the BRICS group expanded its membership, adding Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Iran, and is now dubbed "BRICS+." Other PRC-Africa cooperation forums include the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-Operation between China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries (including Angola, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe). Carla Jones, et al., "How Chinese Investment in Africa Changes Political Influence," FPRI, 2022.

²⁵ Africa Policy Research Institute, "Building a Bloc from BRICS: Assessing China's Strategic Interests and Influence," December 19, 2024; and Peterson Institute for International Economics, "The BRICS Countries' Inability to Define Its Identity Limits Action," November 7, 2024.

²⁶ The pledged aid included \$29.61 billion in credit lines and \$11.28 billion of varied "assistance" including \$9.87 billion of "investment by Chinese companies" supporting PRC-Africa "practical cooperation" on such issues as "mutual learning between civilizations, trade prosperity, industrial chain cooperation, connectivity, development cooperation, healthcare, rural revitalization and people's wellbeing, people-to-people exchanges, green development, and common security." PRC MFA, *FOCAC Action Plan 2025-2027*.

²⁷ See, e.g., PRC MFA, *Beijing Declaration—Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future*, September 12, 2018; PRC State Council, *China and Africa*; and Joshua Eisenman, "Locating Africa in China's Community of Shared Future for Mankind: A Relational Approach," *Journal of International Development* (35:1), 2022.

the progress of human society” in each initiative focus area.²⁸ GDI’s stated goals are to advance the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while GSI seeks to advance PRC norms on an array of international security and law enforcement challenges. Through GCI, China seeks to promote shared “respect for the diversity of civilizations, ... the common values of humanity, ... the importance of continuity and evolution of civilizations, and ... closer international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation.”²⁹ China and many African states reiterated their joint support in 2025.³⁰ In 2025, Xi announced a related Global Governance Initiative (GGI), which promotes “a multipolar world” and, per Reuters, “prioritises the ‘Global South,’ in a direct challenge to the United States.”³¹ All four initiatives, which China promotes in Africa, reflect Xi’s contention that there are global “deficits” in governance, intra-country trust, development, and peace.³² These initiatives may function as “additive layers in Beijing’s authoritarian grand strategy” globally to “push ideological narratives that serve to legitimize its global influence ... and challeng[e] American technological leadership.”³³

African Perspectives and Agency

African governments may view China’s engagement in the region as driven both by shared PRC-African commercial, development, security, and political goals and unilateral PRC interests. Some African governments may consider PRC diplomacy and assistance a welcome counterweight to Western governments, including in multilateral forums, and as an alternative source of development financing. For some governments or officials, China may be perceived as a cooperation partner that is less inclined than Western governments to criticize or condition aid or finance on recipient countries’ internal governance records or policy choices.³⁴ Others may welcome China’s history of opposing sanctions on African state actors in the UN Security Council, for instance, though research suggests that African countries do not always reciprocate by backing PRC positions on other issues during Security Council votes.³⁵ Some African leaders have criticized perceived or actual pressure to align either with China or the United States, advocating non-alignment or friendly relations with both.³⁶

²⁸ PRC MFA, “China’s Three Global Initiatives: China’s Solutions to Addressing Global Challenges—Speech by Chinese Ambassador to PNG Yang Xiaoguang at the ‘China’s Global Initiative and China-PNG Cooperation’ Symposium,” March 13, 2025 (hereinafter, PRC MFA, “China’s Three Global Initiatives”); and CRS In Focus IF13099, *China Primer: China’s Global Development Initiative*, by Ricardo Barrios.

²⁹ PRC MFA, “China’s Three Global Initiatives.”

³⁰ PRC MFA, *China-Africa Changsha Declaration on Upholding Solidarity and Cooperation of the Global South*, June 11, 2025.

³¹ In remarks announcing the GGI, Xi advocated continued efforts to “unequivocally oppose hegemonism and power politics, practice true multilateralism, and stand as a pillar in promoting a multipolar world and greater democracy in international relations”—all implied references to PRC efforts to counter U.S. global influence. Reuters, “China’s Xi Pushes a New Global Order, Flanked by Leaders of Russia and India,” September 1, 2025; and PRC State Council/Xinhua, “Full Text of Xi Jinping’s Speech at the ‘Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus’ Meeting,” September 1, 2025.

³² PRC MFA, “China and the African Union Hold Strategic Dialogue,” January 9, 2026 (quote source); and PRC State Council, “Xi Outlines 4-Pronged Proposal on Global Governance,” March 27, 2019.

³³ Katie Cheung, “Xi’s Four ‘Global Initiatives’: China’s Blueprint for a Parallel World Order,” Special Competitive Studies Project blog, September 17, 2025.

³⁴ Stated shared African-PRC goals are set out in PRC MFA, *Beijing Declaration*, September 5, 2024, and *China-Africa Changsha Declaration*. See also Anant Singh Mann, “Deconstructing the Metanarratives of China’s Engagement with the African Continent: African Agency and Competing Narratives,” *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* (79:3), 2023.

³⁵ Hao Wu, “Is China Truly the Spokesperson for Developing Countries? An Examination of China’s Voting Position with Africa in the United Nations Security Council,” *Journal of Contemporary China* (35:157), 2026.

³⁶ See, e.g., *Financial Times*, “Africa Should Not Pick Sides in Minerals Race, Says Zambia,” March 2, 2026; and (continued...)

For African citizens and local businesses, the impacts of PRC-origin commercial and political cooperation activity have been mixed. Such activity has resulted in infrastructure growth and, in some cases, increased employment opportunities; African export growth; access to PRC-sponsored education and exchange programs; and small enterprise access to PRC-origin credit. Such activity has sometimes had downsides. Some China-origin firms' activities have been tied to population displacement; pollution and deforestation; poor labor conditions and low pay; unsustainable natural resource extraction and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and commercial threats to local African retailers.³⁷ Some China-origin firms, criminal groups, and individuals also have been implicated in wildlife trafficking or other criminal activity.³⁸

A 2022-2023 AidData survey of African public, private, and civil society leaders' views of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) compared to the offerings of other foreign development partners found that 22.4% of respondents favored China's development approach, the highest of any global region. Many respondents (31%-48%) ranked the speed of PRC project execution, project terms, lack of conditionality in PRC financing, and/or PRC project alignment with local priorities as positive features of PRC engagement, though sizable shares faulted PRC projects for low project quality and reporting opacity and for not building local capacities.³⁹

African citizens' views of China vary, but multiple surveys have shown significant rates of public approval for China's involvement in Africa. In some surveys China and the United States earn roughly equal approval ratings; a 2024 Asia Society assessment found that "positive views of China ... have outweighed negative views by a factor of about 3:1 across nearly 300 surveys" in Africa.⁴⁰ A 2026 *Afrobarometer* analysis of 2024/2025 surveys in 38 African countries found that 62% of respondents, on average, saw China as a positive economic and political influence. This China approval rating was higher than ratings for African regional organizations (56%) and the United States (52%), but down from some prior-year polls.⁴¹ A July 2026 Pew survey on global views of China found that majorities in four African countries surveyed held positive views of China, though they were lowest in China's fellow BRICS member South Africa.⁴²

Trade, Investment, and Other Economic Issues

The value of PRC trade, commercial activity, and foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa have grown substantially since 2000. While primarily led by PRC state-owned firms, PRC private sector firms, albeit at times with government policy or financial backing, have played an increasing role. Total PRC-Africa trade, which first exceeded U.S.-Africa trade in 2009, was four

Kiseok Michael Kang "The Problem with America's Africa Strategy: What Is Wrong and How to Fix It," *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, October 25, 2022.

³⁷ See, e.g., Abiodun Egbetokun, "Despite the Drawbacks, Chinese Investments in Africa Are Worth It. Just.," *Africa at LSE* (blog), July 31, 2024; David H. Shinn, "The Environmental Impact of China's Investment in Africa," *Cornell International Law Journal* (49:1), 2016; Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), "PRC Illicit and Malign Activities in Africa: Critical Infrastructure and Mining," March 2024; International Rivers, *Advancing Ecological Civilization? Chinese Hydropower Giants and Their Biodiversity Footprints*, 2021; and Atlantic Council, "Chinese Fishing in West Africa: Responding to the Environmental and Social Impacts," October 6, 2025.

³⁸ USCC, *China's Role in Wildlife Trafficking and the Chinese Government's Response*, December 6, 2018.

³⁹ Samantha Custer et al., *BRI From the Ground Up: Leaders from 129 Countries Evaluate a Decade of Beijing's Signature Initiative*, AidData, March 2024.

⁴⁰ Asia Society Policy Institute, *Global Public Opinion on China*, 2024.

⁴¹ Afrobarometer, "Popular Perceptions of Russia Lag, Even as Its Influence Grows Across Africa," February 27, 2026.

⁴² These countries were South Africa (52% positive); Ghana (64%), Kenya (76%), and Nigeria (78%). Pew Research Center, "Views of China and Xi Are Improving Globally," July 15, 2026.

times as large as that of U.S.-Africa trade in 2025; see **Figure 1**. PRC imports of raw or semi-processed mined commodities from Africa have grown substantially.

Some analysts have expressed concern about alleged African economic dependency on China, asymmetrical economic and other power dynamics favoring China, growing African sovereign debt to China, the PRC's use of tied finance and aid, and PRC efforts to expand the use of its currency, the *renminbi* (RMB, denominated in *yuan*).⁴³ Other analysts have noted that PRC finance offers African countries access to capital and related benefits (e.g., infrastructure); that some African governments may wield considerable agency in defining their economic relations with China; and that the PRC government has begun to coordinate debt treatments for some African countries with other official lenders as African debts to China have grown.⁴⁴

China has broadly framed its government-aided infrastructure projects in Africa as a component of the BRI, “which aims to develop China-centered—and controlled—global infrastructure, transportation, trade, and production networks” and build related bilateral partnerships.⁴⁵ Africa-wide, 53 countries have signed BRI agreements.⁴⁶ While BRI-associated large, sometimes arguably economically unviable infrastructure projects in Africa were common in the 2000s through the mid-2010s, PRC lending to Africa has declined over the past decade, as has the typical size of PRC projects. PRC-backed projects in Africa increasingly appear to prioritize commercial viability. For instance, the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model—in which PRC firms, at times operating under public-private partnerships, finance, build, and operate infrastructure in Africa (e.g., ports or railroads), rather than simply building and handing them over to African recipients—has become more common. This model may enable PRC firms and their financiers to recoup and profit from their investments while enjoying decades-long control of project assets before they are transferred to host countries.⁴⁷ Under a 2025 BOT-styled deal, China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation, a PRC government-owned conglomerate, agreed to rehabilitate, upgrade, and operate the decrepit Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA), built by China in the 1970s, under a \$1.4 billion, 30-year agreement.⁴⁸

PRC firms and state agencies engaged in Africa collectively represent a powerful tool for advancing PRC goals in Africa. Since the early 2000s, however, the PRC government has faced

⁴³ “Tied” here refers to loan requirements that certain PRC goods and services be used. Gelpern, et al., *How China Lends*; Timothy Ditter, “Dangers and Opportunities as China’s Loans to Africa Come Due,” CNA *InDepth* blog, March 18, 2024; Pádraig Carmody, “Dependence Not Debt-Trap Diplomacy,” *Area Development and Policy* (5:1), 2020; and Gordon Moyo, “China’s Development Finance to Africa and the Spectre of Debt Distress in *The Palgrave Handbook of African Political Economy* (Palgrave) 2020.

⁴⁴ Institute of New Structural Economics, Peking University, *A Study on the Effectiveness of China’s Sovereign Financing in Africa*, 2023; Vito Amendolagine et al., “Chinese Infrastructure Lending and Africa’s Global Value Chain Participation,” Centre for Economic Policy Research *VoxEU*, December 19, 2024; and Niall Duggan, “The Agency Problem in Readings of Sino–African Relations,” *African Affairs* (122:488), 2023.

⁴⁵ CRS In Focus IF13099, *China Primer: China’s Global Development Initiative*, by Ricardo Barrios. On BRI, see CRS In Focus IF11735, *China’s “One Belt, One Road” Initiative: Economic Issues*, by Karen M. Sutter and Michael D. Sutherland.

⁴⁶ Green Finance and Development Center, *Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)*, 2025.

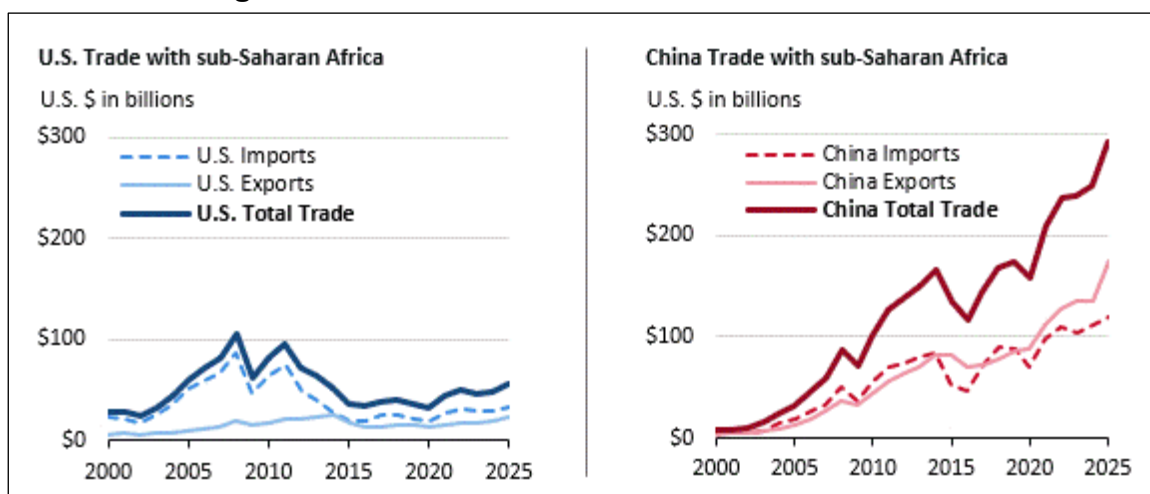
⁴⁷ *SCMP*, “China Turns to PPPs as a ‘Yellow Brick Road’ Solution to Fund Big Projects in Africa,” May 18, 2025; Kjeld van Wieringen and Tim Zajontz, “From Loan-Financed to Privatised Infrastructure?: Tracing China’s Turn Towards Public-Private Partnerships in Africa,” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* (52:3), 2023; and *In on Africa*, “China’s Infrastructure Partnerships in Africa Require Strategising Developmental Needs over Debt Risks and Security Vulnerabilities,” November 28, 2025.

⁴⁸ *SCMP*, “US\$1.4 Billion Tazara Rail Deal Puts China on Fast Track to Africa’s Copperbelt,” October 1, 2025.

challenges in managing the full range of state-owned and private PRC firms active in the region, each with their own interests and incentives, and hundreds of thousands of PRC expatriates.⁴⁹

Trade. From 2000 when FOCAC was founded, until 2008, the aggregate value of U.S.-Africa trade in goods exceeded that between China and Africa, but since 2009, PRC-Africa trade has exceeded that of U.S.-Africa trade. Both trade relationships then grew moderately through 2011. While both since have fluctuated, U.S.-Africa trade has trended downward or remained relatively flat, while overall China-Africa trade has trended upward, with some exceptions. In 2025, PRC-Africa trade was worth four times that of U.S.-Africa trade. See **Figure 1**.⁵⁰

Figure 1. China and U.S. Trade with Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: CRS graphic and calculations utilizing *Trade Data Monitor*-compiled data sourced from official PRC and U.S. trade data, accessed July 27, 2026.

Top PRC trade partners in sub-Saharan Africa in 2025 included South Africa, \$53.6 billion in total trade (i.e., imports plus exports); Nigeria, \$28.1 billion; and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), \$27.0 billion. U.S. partners trade partners in Africa included South Africa, \$22.7 billion; Nigeria, \$11.8 billion; and Côte d'Ivoire, \$2.6 billion.⁵¹ From 2021 through 2025, fossil fuels, raw or semi-processed mined commodities, copper, and precious or semi-precious stones and metals dominated PRC goods imports from Africa. Top U.S. imports included precious or semi-precious stones and metals, fossil fuels, cocoa, and apparel. China's top exports to Africa included varied machinery and equipment, autos and ships, and transport and earth-moving equipment; top U.S. exports were fuels, vehicles and aircraft (and parts thereof), and machinery.

While raw materials remain a major component of PRC imports from Africa, China's overall trade with Africa has diversified. Since 2021, China also has lowered technical barriers to trade, for instance, by creating "green lanes" for Africa—bilateral agreements to streamline phytosanitary trade requirements and otherwise foster PRC imports of African horticultural

⁴⁹ Xu Yi-Chong, "Chinese State-Owned Enterprises in Africa: Ambassadors or Freebooters?," *Journal of Contemporary China* (23:89), 2014; and Bates Gill and James Reilly, "The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. in Africa," *Washington Quarterly* (30:3), 2007.

⁵⁰ Data in this paragraph reflect U.S. and PRC customs data from Trade Data Monitor (TDM) as of February 24, 2026, and CRS calculations.

⁵¹ Data in this paragraph reflect TDM U.S. and PRC customs data as of July 17, 2026, and CRS calculations.

products.⁵² Additionally, China has played a central role in expanding access to renewable energy in Africa, the most energy-poor region globally, particularly via exports of solar energy technology.⁵³ China's government, however, has recently begun scaling back solar technology subsidies, which helped boost its global market share, potentially with downsides for Africa.⁵⁴

Investment. PRC foreign direct investment (FDI) positions in Africa are challenging to authoritatively estimate, given data gaps, methodological variation among sources, and the routing of investments through offshore banking centers.⁵⁵ Increasingly, large PRC FDI projects in Africa use blended public and private financing, which may further complicate tracking of PRC FDI flows to Africa.⁵⁶ PRC FDI in Africa over the past two decades has featured joint ventures by large PRC government-owned enterprises, particularly in the energy, mining, and manufacturing sectors, as well as PRC firm-constructed and -dominated special economic and trade cooperation zones in the region.⁵⁷

PRC investment in Africa is more significant for African economies than for China's economy. Official PRC data indicate that in 2024 (latest data), PRC FDI stock in Africa stood at \$43.8 billion, 1.4% of global PRC FDI stock. Annual PRC FDI flows to the region stood at \$2.8 billion, or 1.5% of the global total.⁵⁸ This number was up from stock of \$465 million and flows of \$70 million in 2003 (earliest uniform data in historical terms), but down from these measures' prior peaks (\$42.1 billion in 2018 and \$5.4 billion in 2008). Top PRC FDI destinations over the last decade (2015-2024) were South Africa, DRC, Zambia, Niger, and Kenya. PRC FDI stock by sector for all of Africa in 2024 focused on construction (31.8%), mining (23.0%), manufacturing (16.1%), finance (11.6%), and leasing and business services (4.9%). In 2024, U.S. FDI stock in Africa stood at \$30.4 billion, down slightly from \$31.4 billion in 2023.⁵⁹

PRC Lending and Debt. PRC state and private lenders provide varied types of financing to African borrowers and to PRC firms active in Africa.⁶⁰ Data compiled by Boston University's Global Development Policy Center (GDPC) document 1,286 PRC loans to African countries and regional projects between 2000 and 2024, worth a total of \$172.0 billion.⁶¹ Of these loans, two

⁵² PRC MFA, *FOCAC Action Plan 2025-2027*; *SCMP*, "Xi Jinping Plays Up Roles for Private Sector in China-Africa Trade and Finance," December 1, 2021, and "As China Develops a Taste for African Farm Produce, Why 'Green Lanes' Still Have a Long Way to Go," April 4, 2023.

⁵³ AP, "Africa Leads Growth in Solar Energy as Demand Spreads Beyond Traditional Markets, Report Says," February 12, 2026; Bloomberg, "African Imports of Chinese Solar Panels Surge in Energy Shakeup," August 26, 2025; *New York Times*, "Cheap Solar Is Transforming Lives and Economies Across Africa," December 30, 2025.

⁵⁴ AP, "Africa's Solar Boom Faces Higher Costs as China Cuts Export Subsidies," March 22, 2026.

⁵⁵ See CRS In Focus IF12035, *China's Global Investments: Data and Transparency Challenges*; and China Africa Research Initiative (CARI), Johns Hopkins University, *Data: Chinese Investment in Africa*, November 2025 (see spreadsheet data notes).

⁵⁶ Oyintarelado Moses, et al., *China's Paid-In Capital: Identifying and Analyzing China's Overseas Development Investment Funds*, Global Development Policy Center (GDPC/Boston University), November 2022.

⁵⁷ Zongyuan Zoe Liu, "Tracking Chinese Investments in Overseas Industrial Parks," Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), March 30, 2026; and Bryan Robinson, *African Special Economic Zones: Lessons and Investments from China* (Palgrave Macmillan), 2022.

⁵⁸ PRC FDI data in this paragraph from Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (PRC Commerce Ministry), et al., *Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Direct Investment*, 2024 and selected prior-year editions, as compiled by CARI, *Data: Chinese Investment in Africa*; and CRS calculations.

⁵⁹ U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Balance of Payments and Direct Investment Position Data" for African countries, accessed April 9, 2026; and CRS calculations.

⁶⁰ This financing includes no-interest, concessional, and non-concessional official loans, commercial loans, buyer and supplier credits, credit guarantees or insurance, and grant-based financing.

⁶¹ GDPC, *Chinese Loans to Africa* database, as of February 27, 2026, and CRS calculations.

PRC state policy banks, the Export–Import Bank of China and the China Development Bank, reportedly provided \$135.2 billion (79%). These banks provided additional loans jointly with PRC commercial banks, some of which coordinate their loans with the PRC government, and with a range of PRC state-owned corporations. PRC government agencies reportedly provided additional loans during the period. Top sectors included energy (38%), transport (30%), and information and communications technology (9%). Top borrowing countries were Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, and Nigeria. Annual PRC-origin loans to Africa peaked at \$27.1 billion in 2016 (which included a \$10 billion loan to Angola’s state oil firm), and then steadily declined to \$799 million in 2021. Since 2021, such lending has since risen moderately but remained low relative to that from 2012 through 2018, when it averaged over \$16 billion annually.⁶² This trend reflects a shift to a smaller number of core African creditor countries and smaller, potentially less risky PRC loans. Some newer loans have been denominated in RMB, rather than dollars.⁶³ World Bank data indicate that total external public and private debt stock owed to China by African governments stood at \$77.6 billion as of 2024 (latest data), about 8.6% of total foreign debt owed by African countries, and that China was the largest bilateral creditor for Africa as a region.⁶⁴

Selected PRC-Africa Economic and Trade Issues

Debt and Credit Issues. Estimates of the volume and share of African sovereign debt owed to China vary, due to both methodological differences and data gaps linked to opacity in government-backed PRC lending. Both PRC lenders and African governments reportedly may underreport debt levels, loan terms, repayments, and other financial flows.⁶⁵ Such data opacity may reflect a range of financial, political, or other motivations by lenders or borrowers, or mask defaults, missed payments, and debt restructuring agreements between PRC entities and African borrowers. Data gaps like this may reduce other lenders’ ability to accurately assess African debt and repayment capacities when making debt restructuring or loan decisions. Political considerations, contract steering, graft, or other factors may influence one or both parties’ desire for non-transparency, though nondisclosure itself may endanger borrowers’ creditworthiness. Some PRC commercial and sovereign loan contracts reportedly contain extensive confidentiality clauses relative to other lenders, some of which reportedly grant PRC lenders advantages (e.g., repayment priority over other creditors or control of underlying project revenue flows).⁶⁶

PRC lending has generated growing African sovereign debt to China since 2007, in some cases, contributed to debt distress (i.e., an actual or prospective inability to repay debt). Since 2020, PRC loans have declined sharply, and China has become a net debt collector in Africa, rather than a net lender, as in earlier periods.⁶⁷ U.S. officials have at times accused China of so-called “predatory lending” or “debt trap diplomacy”—intentionally providing poor countries with easy

⁶² GDPC, *Chinese Loans to Africa* database, as of February 27, 2026, and CRS calculations.

⁶³ Mengdi Yue, et al., *Selective Engagement and Strategic Retooling: The Chinese Loans to Africa Database, 2000–2024*, November 2025, Lucas Engel, et al., *Relative Risk and the Rate of Return: Chinese Loans to Africa Database, 2000–2023*, GDPC, August 2024, and Rebecca Ray, “Small Is Beautiful”: A New Era in China’s Overseas Development Finance? January 2023, all from GPDC.

⁶⁴ World Bank, *International Debt Statistics*, and CRS calculations.

⁶⁵ Sebastian Horn, et al., *China’s Overseas Lending*, Kiel Institute, April 16, 2020, and *Hidden Defaults*, January 2022; Kathleen Brown, *Why Hide? Africa’s Unreported Debt to China*, AidData, August 2022; and BRI Monitor, *BRI Monitor Heatmap*, n.d.

⁶⁶ Gelpert, et al., *How China Lends*; Gelpert, et al., *How China Collateralizes*, AidData, June 2025; Brown, *Why Hide?* Christopher Culver, “Chinese Investment and Corruption in Africa,” *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies* (9:2), 2021; and CNA, *PRC Lending in Africa: Impacts in a Time of Global Shocks*, March 2024.

⁶⁷ Bloomberg, “China’s Retreat from Africa Lending Turns It into Debt Collector,” January 27, 2026; and ONE, *The Great Reversal*, January 27, 2026.

credit to gain political or economic leverage when the borrower cannot repay—a paradigm that PRC officials and some analysts have disputed.⁶⁸ Some research suggests that rather than seizing assets of projects in default, PRC government-owned or subsidized lenders sometimes instead tap cash flows from PRC-based projects or revenue accounts associated with such undertakings. In other cases, PRC firms may rely on repayment guarantees provided by privileged access to selected borrowing country export commodity revenues or related escrow accounts financed by or routed through PRC entities, among other strategies.⁶⁹

U.S. and international financial institution officials have periodically urged China to increase the transparency of its loans to Africa and pressed China to participate in multilateral debt relief for African countries.⁷⁰ China has begun to do the latter in some cases, as in 2020, when amid concern over rising African indebtedness during the COVID-19 pandemic, China joined the temporary 2020-2021 G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative.⁷¹ Subsequently, China collaborated with members of the Paris Club, an informal grouping of major official bilateral creditor countries, to jointly negotiate debt reductions with selected debt-distressed African states under the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments. China co-chaired the framework's official creditor committees for Zambia, Ethiopia, and Ghana. Progress in these cases, however, reportedly has been or was slow due to factors such as China's limited experience in that role, the variety of PRC lenders at issue, and questions over how to differentiate certain PRC commercial and official credit.⁷² Other reasons have included institutional and structural factors disincentivizing PRC loan restructuring and debt cancellations, and PRC lenders' de facto preference for comparability in the terms they accept and those offered to non-PRC official and private lenders.⁷³ China also has periodically canceled some African sovereign debt owed to the PRC—mostly interest-free and a smaller number of concessional loans—but released limited data on such actions, which reportedly likely covers a relatively small share of such debt.⁷⁴

PRC Currency Issues. China is seeking to expand the global use of the RMB as a means of settling trade transactions and as a reserve currency, as several African countries now permit.⁷⁵ In

⁶⁸ See, e.g., DoS, "Secretary of State Marco Rubio Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on the FY26 Department of State Budget Request," May 20, 2025; Bloomberg, "China's Qin Gang Defends African Lending on His First Trip," January 11, 2023; and Chatham House, *Debunking the Myth of 'Debt-trap Diplomacy': How Recipient Countries Shape China's Belt and Road Initiative*, 2020.

⁶⁹ Gelpert, et al., *How China Collateralizes*.

⁷⁰ BBC, "China's Loans to Africa Worry World Bank President David Malpass," April 1, 2023; and Bloomberg, "US to Push for Transparency on Chinese Loans to African Nations," December 15, 2022.

⁷¹ Deborah Brautigam and Yufan Huang, *Integrating China into Multilateral Debt Relief: Progress and Problems in the G20 DSSI*, CARI Briefing Paper No.9, April 2023; ODI Global, *Common Framework, Uncommon Challenges: Lessons from the Post-COVID Debt Restructuring Architecture*, February 21, 2025; and Paris Club, "Common Framework" at clubdeparis.org.

⁷² Center for Global Development, *Zambia: A Case Study of Sovereign Debt Restructuring under the G20 Common Framework*, May 2026, among others.

⁷³ David Grigorian and Winston Tang, *China and the Common Framework: Understanding the Motives Behind Debt Relief Provision to Low-income Countries*, October 15, 2024, and "Can Domestic Factors Explain China's Debt Relief Record?," blog post, October 18, 2024, both Center for Global Development; and Collaborative Africa Budget Reform, *China's Approach to Sovereign Lending and Debt Restructuring: A Primer for African Public Debt Manager*, 2021.

⁷⁴ Jyhjong Hwang and Oyintarelado (Tarela) Moses, *China's Interest-Free Loans to Africa: Uses and Cancellations*, GPDC, September 2022; and Kevin Acker, et al., *Debt Relief with Chinese Characteristics*, CARI, 2020.

⁷⁵ Reuters, "Angola Allows Banks to Use China's Yuan for Reserve Requirements," July 10, 2026; *China Daily*, "Paving the Way for the RMB in Africa," August 30, 2024; and Xinhua via PRC State Council, "How China Steadily Advances RMB Internationalization," October 12, 2022. The U.S. dollar long has been the world's dominant reserve currency; see CRS In Focus IF11885, *De-Dollarization Efforts in China and Russia*, by Rebecca M. Nelson and Karen M. Sutter.

2025, Zambia began to permit certain mining sector taxes to be paid in RMB, in part to support RMB-based bilateral debt service to PRC state lenders.⁷⁶ Other examples of RMB adoption include denominating PRC loans in yuan, including via the retroactive conversion to RMB of U.S. dollar-based debt owed to PRC entities (e.g., in Kenya and Ethiopia);⁷⁷ and enabling rapid clearance and settlement of RMB-denominated cross-border payments, thus aiding trade.⁷⁸ A 2025 People's Bank of China (PBC, China's central bank) report on RMB internationalization found that RMB-denominated China-Africa trade settlement grew by an annual average of 18.1% between 2020 and 2024.⁷⁹ China also has promoted currency swap agreements, some of which enable African central banks to borrow RMB for onward local lending using their local currency as collateral at prearranged exchange rates.⁸⁰ Internationally, the RMB at issue are primarily a form of yuan traded outside China as "CNH," a free-floating but government-influenced "bridge currency" (AKA the "offshore renminbi").⁸¹ China permits certain foreign entities, some in Africa, to issue RMB-denominated "panda bonds" sold to domestic investors in China.⁸² Such channels are primarily available to large firms. Small-scale traders also engage in unofficial RMB-foreign currency exchanges, as when PRC logistics firms, among others, accept payment from African importers in African currency but pay PRC exporters in RMB, acting as de facto small-scale clearing houses.⁸³

Trade Liberalization. In 2024, China announced it would provide tariff-free treatment to 33 Least Developed Countries in Africa, among countries in other global regions. In 2025, China extended such treatment to all African countries (apart from Taiwan diplomatic partner Eswatini), if they signed bilateral free trade development-focused economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with China and maintained diplomatic relations with China.⁸⁴ In early 2026, China said it would offer nonreciprocal zero-tariff treatment to all of Africa, without requiring EPAs, though many

⁷⁶ Bloomberg, "Chinese Mining Companies in Zambia Start Paying Taxes in Yuan," December 31, 2025.

⁷⁷ *Financial Times*, "Developing Countries Swap Out of Dollar Debt to Cut Borrowing Costs," September 2, 2025; *SCMP*, "China's Global Goal for Yuan Boosted by Ethiopian Hopes for Loan Currency Swap," October 23, 2025; Bloomberg, "China Finds Costly New Way of Boosting Xi's Global Yuan Push," October 23, 2025; and Yue, et al., *Selective Engagement*.

⁷⁸ The main vehicle for such clearing is the People's Bank of China's Cross-border Interbank Payment System (CIPS). CIPS allows foreign "indirect participant" banks, including 67 in Africa, to clear and settle yuan-denominated cross-border payments through a network of PRC-incorporated banks, without having to exchange their local currency to another hard currency (e.g., U.S. dollars). CIPS, "CIPS Participants Announcement No. 116," December 31, 2025; and Barry Eichengreen, et al., *Is Capital Account Convertibility Required for the Renminbi to Acquire Reserve Currency Status?*, Banque de France, November 2022.

⁷⁹ People's Bank of China, *RMB Internationalization Report 2025*, December 31, 2025.

⁸⁰ Such arrangements may also enable PRC entities to obtain African currencies from the People's Bank of China. *SCMP*, "China Looks to Africa as Testing Ground for Global Roll-Out of Yuan," July 16, 2025; AidData, "CBN Makes RMB 669.66 Million Drawdown Under Currency Swap Agreement with PBOC in 2018," 2018; and Bastian von Beschwitz, "Internationalization of the Chinese Renminbi: Progress and Outlook," *FEDS Notes*, August 30, 2024.

⁸¹ Bastian von Beschwitz, "Internationalization of the Chinese Renminbi: Progress and Outlook," *FEDS Notes*, August 30, 2024; and Saleem Bahaj and Ricardo Reis, "The Anatomy of a Peg: Lessons from China's Parallel Currencies," October 2023, for ECB Conference on Money Markets 2023.

⁸² *SCMP*, "Africa's Yuan Pivot: Why More Top Lenders Are Eyeing China's Bond Market," February 13, 2026, and "China's Green Panda Bonds Are 'Reliable' Financing Option for Africa, Summit Hears," August 23, 2024; Reuters, "China Bond Market Opening Offers No Panacea to Debt-Laden African States," September 25, 2024.

⁸³ *SCMP*, "Why African Traders Are Looking Beyond the US dollar to China's Yuan," May 4, 2025.

⁸⁴ PRC MFA, "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a Community with a Shared Future," September 5, 2024, and PRC MFA post on X, "MOFCOM Elaborates on Zero-Tariff Treatment for 100% of Tariff Lines to 53 African Countries through Agreements on Economic Partnership for Shared Development," June 20, 2025.

African countries reportedly had already signed such EPAs.⁸⁵ This move followed soon after Congress reauthorized a one-year extension of African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA, Title I, P.L. 106-200, as amended), which provides U.S. duty-free treatment to selected qualifying African countries.⁸⁶ Additionally, China is pursuing in Africa what it calls “early harvest” agreements, broader accords that eliminate many tariff and quota adjustments, but are not fully-fledged comprehensive free trade agreements.⁸⁷

China and African ICT Infrastructure. PRC ICT firms, such as Huawei and ZTE and their subsidiaries, have spearheaded financing and building of digital infrastructure in much of Africa, including 5G wireless systems, internet backbones, data centers, and subsea digital data fiber-optic cable links. Such activities are part of what China calls its Digital Silk Road. PRC firms dominate Africa’s mobile handset markets and offer cost-competitive products and services spanning the entire African ICT sector, backed by networks of PRC vendors.⁸⁸ Prominent among such firms is Huawei, which is subject to U.S. export and federal contracting restrictions and sanctions due to national security concerns, and has faced U.S. federal indictments for fraud, U.S. technology theft, sanctions evasion, and other alleged crimes.⁸⁹ Huawei has established several research and development hubs in Africa, including in Angola and South Africa.⁹⁰ In multiple African countries, Huawei and other PRC firms have implemented “smart city” or “safe city” projects—surveillance-enabling integrated networks of cameras, sensors, and data processing centers—that employ PRC-origin hardware, software, and cloud computing services, typically in support of public and/or state security functions.⁹¹

The broad economic and national security potential ramifications of artificial intelligence (AI) in Africa is a growing area of U.S.-PRC geostrategic and commercial competition.⁹² Microsoft, for instance, is seeking to expand business and consumer adoption of its Copilot and other AI tools, which face stiff competition in Africa from China-origin DeepSeek and other AI models. These models reportedly may be less costly and power-intensive than their Western competitors—key factors in Africa, a financially under-resourced and energy-poor region.⁹³ AI governance is another area of PRC-African cooperation. In 2024, China’s Cyberspace Administration and other PRC officials met with 20 African countries to foster efforts to shape emergent multilateral AI and other cyberspace regulatory frameworks and build the capacity in Africa necessary to operate

⁸⁵ Xinhua via PRC State Council, “Xi Jinping Sends Congratulatory Message to the 39th African Union Summit,” February 14, 2026; and *People’s Dispatch*, “South Africa and China Sign Trade Partnership Granting Zero-Tariff Access,” February 11, 2026.

⁸⁶ On AGOA, see CRS In Focus IF10149, *African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)*, by Liana Wong.

⁸⁷ *SCMP*, “Why ‘Monumental’ China Duty-Free Trade Deal Has Kenya Wanting More,” January 16, 2026, and “China Says It Won’t Seek Reciprocity with South Africa on Zero-Tariff Policy,” February 19, 2026.

⁸⁸ Rahul Karan Reddy, “Mapping China’s Presence in Africa’s Digital Economy-Analysis,” *Eurasia Review*, July 16, 2021; Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), “Mapping China’s Digital Silk Road,” October 19, 2021; and Reuters, “Exclusive: China Plans \$500 Million Subsea Internet Cable to Rival US-Backed Project,” April 6, 2023.

⁸⁹ DoS, “The United States Further Restricts Huawei Access to U.S. Technology,” August 17, 2020; and University of Maryland, “U.S. Restricted Parties Lists,” as of July 9, 2026.

⁹⁰ Huawei, “South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa Officially Opens Huawei Innovation Centre, Describing It as a Boost for Local Innovation,” July 14, 2023, and “Huawei to Build R&D Center in Angola,” October 6, 2025.

⁹¹ *SCMP*, “Chinese Surveillance Tech Rolled Out in Africa with ZTE, Hikvision and Huawei at the Helm,” April 4, 2026; and Australian Strategic Policy Institute, *Mapping China’s Tech Giants*, chinatechmap.aspi.org.au.

⁹² *SCMP*, “As Africa Races Towards Its AI Revolution, China Is with It Each Step of the Way,” March 1, 2025; and CSIS, *An Open Door: AI Innovation in the Global South amid Geostrategic Competition*, August 13, 2025.

⁹³ Bloomberg, “Microsoft Pushes for Africa AI Adoption in Challenge to DeepSeek,” March 12, 2026, and “China’s DeepSeek Is Beating Out OpenAI and Google in Africa,” October 22, 2025; and CSIS, *What to Know About Chinese AI Models*, July 2, 2026.

AI systems, and announced plans to establish a China-Africa Exchange and Cooperation Center on Cybersecurity and Digital Economy.⁹⁴ In July 2026, 10 African nations joined 19 other countries as founding members of the newly launched, China-led World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organisation, which aims to strengthen global AI cooperation. China is also offering AI technology training to AU countries.⁹⁵

Some analysts suggest that PRC ICT exports foster African states' adoption of PRC digitally aided authoritarian governance practices, including cyber access controls, social monitoring, and mass surveillance.⁹⁶ China reportedly has helped build state surveillance capacities in some countries, and tapped into China-built public ICT infrastructure in Africa for espionage purposes.⁹⁷ Such trends, and the potential for PRC-origin AI to shape African public opinion and information environments and bind African data and digital ecosystems to PRC-origin technology raises African sovereignty and governance concerns for some analysts.⁹⁸ Such PRC activities and technology may pose data and intelligence security risks to U.S. government assets and firms in Africa, as well as increase competitive challenges faced by non-PRC ICT firms in the region.

Mining and Critical Minerals. Since the mid-2010s, successive U.S. Administrations and multiple Members of Congress have identified PRC dominance of multiple global critical and other mineral supply chains as a U.S. national security and economic threat.⁹⁹ Mines in Africa are a top source of many U.S.-designated critical mineral ores, and Africa has additional unexploited mineral reserves.¹⁰⁰ PRC firms dominate the mining of some critical minerals in Africa and, to an even greater extent, the processing of such materials globally. In 2025, Africa supplied 99.9% and 91%, respectively, of China's global imports of cobalt and chromium ores and concentrates and 86% of its natural graphite imports.¹⁰¹ To secure mineral supplies for the PRC, China-origin firms have directed substantial publicly subsidized FDI to mining operations in Africa. PRC FDI stocks

⁹⁴ SCMP, "China's Cyberspace Regulator Vows to Work with Africa on AI Governance," April 4, 2024.

⁹⁵ Reuters, "Xi Pitches China as Leader of New Global AI Order, Challenging US Dominance," July 16, 2026; and *Sarawak Tribune*, "Five Asean Countries Among 29 Founding Members of New Global Ai Organisation," July 17, 2026.

⁹⁶ Institute of Development Studies, *Smart City Surveillance in Africa: Mapping Chinese AI Surveillance Across 11 Countries*, March 12, 2026; Bulelani Jili, *What Is Driving the Adoption of Chinese Surveillance Technology in Africa?*, Atlantic Council, May 15, 2023; Erin Baggott Carter and Brett L. Carter, "Exporting the Tools of Dictatorship: The Politics of China's Technology Transfers," *Perspectives on Politics* (23:3), 2025; and Australian Strategic Policy Institute, *Mapping China's Tech Giants*, chinatechmap.aspi.org.au.

⁹⁷ Daria Impiombato, "Chinese Telecommunications Giants and Africa's Emerging Digital Infrastructure," in N. Rolland, ed., *(In)Roads and Outposts: Critical Infrastructure in China's Africa Strategy*, NBR, May 3, 2022; and Joshua Meservey, *Government Buildings in Africa Are a Likely Vector for Chinese Spying*, Heritage Foundation, May 20, 2020.

⁹⁸ *Africa Report*, "Opinion: Will China's Influence in Africa's AI Revolution Undermine Its Sovereignty?," November 5, 2024.

⁹⁹ House China Select Committee, *Creating Resilient Critical Mineral Supply Chains*, December 11, 2024; Trump Administration, "Addressing the Threat to the Domestic Supply Chain From Reliance on Critical Minerals From Foreign Adversaries and Supporting the Domestic Mining and Processing Industries," Executive Order (E.O.) 13953, September 30, 2020; and Biden Administration, "America's Supply Chains," E.O. 14017, February 24, 2021.

¹⁰⁰ CSIS, "Underexplored and Undervalued: Addressing Africa's Mineral Exploration Gap," May 9, 2025.

¹⁰¹ The 2025 shares of China's 2025 total imports from Africa of the following ores and concentrates or metals included uranium/thorium, 79%; aluminum, 78%; manganese, 81%; titanium, 74%; niobium/tantalum/related materials, 63%; and tin, 52%. Critical minerals are 60 elements essential to a range of defense, battery, digital devices, metal alloys, and other applications. If African exports to China of higher-value primary metal imports (e.g., copper cathodes or alumina) are added, the level of PRC reliance on African production is even higher. On levels of U.S. import reliance and PRC processing shares, see U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), *Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026*, February 6, 2026; and USGS, "Interior Department Releases Final 2025 List of Critical Minerals," November 14, 2025. Trade data from *Trade Data Monitor* and CRS calculations using data accessed August 6, 2026.

in the sector in Africa in 2024 totaled \$10.1 billion and accounted for 23% of total PRC FDI stock in the region.¹⁰² Some of these projects are large; the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) *China Global Investment Tracker* found that from 2006 through 2025, PRC firms had invested an aggregate \$57.4 billion in 122 “metal” sector projects worth \$95 million or higher in Africa.¹⁰³ In response to bans on unprocessed mineral exports by an increasing number of African governments intent on adding value to their mineral exports, some PRC firms are investing in mineral primary processing operations in the region, notably of lithium in Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁴

China-Origin Mining Companies’ Activities in Mineral-Rich DRC

China’s role in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) stands out among countries where large PRC-origin industrial mining firms are active. In 2025, the DRC was the second-largest copper producer globally, and in 2024 (latest data) accounted for 76% of global cobalt mining output. DRC holds 55% of global cobalt reserves, which in DRC are often geologically co-located with copper. DRC also possesses lithium and rare earth reserves.¹⁰⁵ Large PRC government-owned or -financed mining firms, including PRC mining giant CMOC (formerly China Molybdenum Company), control several of DRC’s largest copper-cobalt mines, in some cases through joint ventures with DRC’s mining parastatal or other foreign firms. PRC influence over DRC’s copper-cobalt sector began in the late 2000s, when a multi-billion-dollar PRC-DRC minerals-for-infrastructure deal known as SICOMINES was signed; it remains in effect. CMOC’s influence in the sector grew after it bought majority stakes in two large copper/cobalt mines from U.S.-based company Freeport McMoRan and other stakeholders in the late 2010s.¹⁰⁶ CMOC later surged its copper and cobalt production in DRC, driving global cobalt prices downward and effectively disincentivizing exploration or production of the mineral elsewhere—and prompting the DRC government to impose cobalt export controls in 2025.¹⁰⁷ Other PRC firm mining activity in DRC is advancing apace, even as the United States has also acted to gain access to DRC’s mineral wealth under a Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in late 2025 (see final section of this report). In March 2026, the DRC and China signed a mining cooperation agreement centered on “geological data sharing, investment protection” and an expansion of DRC-based mineral processing.¹⁰⁸ Concurrently, PRC’s Zijin Mining Group projected that its new lithium mine in DRC potentially could provide 5% of global lithium mining supplies.¹⁰⁹ U.S. mining firm Kibold has a provisional but stalled agreement to buy the rights to an adjoining large lithium concession from Australian firm AVZ. AVZ is in a mining permit dispute with the DRC government—which reportedly, along with Trump Administration officials, is supporting Kibold’s bid to buy out AVZ.¹¹⁰

Corruption. PRC law officially criminalizes corruption by PRC firms abroad, but enforcement is inconsistent.¹¹¹ Multiple alleged cases of corruption linked to PRC activity in Africa have been reported, but systematic empirical studies of the manner and extent to which corruption affects

¹⁰² PRC Commerce Ministry, *2024 Statistical Bulletin of China’s Outward Foreign Direct Investment*, September 8, 2025.

¹⁰³ The largest of these deals were in DRC (32%), Guinea (16%), and Zambia (8%), with 18 other countries with 7% or lower shares, led by South Africa, Sierra Leone, and Namibia. Derek Scissors, *China Global Investment Tracker* and “Steady, Not Soaring, Chinese Investment in 2025,” AEI, January 26, 2026; and CRS calculations using *Tracker* data.

¹⁰⁴ Reuters, “Beijing Tells Chinese Firms to Strengthen Zimbabwe Risk Prevention After Mineral Export Ban,” March 19, 2026, and “Zimbabwe Bans Exports of All Raw Minerals and Lithium Concentrates, Cites Malpractices,” February 25, 2026.

¹⁰⁵ USGS, *Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026*, “Cobalt,” “Copper,” “Lithium,” and CRS calculations.

¹⁰⁶ *New York Times*, “A Power Struggle Over Cobalt Rattles the Clean Energy Revolution,” December 7, 2021.

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., CSIS, “Stabilizing Cobalt Markets: A Price Floor for U.S. Minerals Security,” December 10, 2025.

¹⁰⁸ Reuters, “Congo, China Deepen Mining Ties as US Pushes Rival Minerals Pact,” March 27, 2026.

¹⁰⁹ Bloomberg, “Zijin’s Congo Lithium Mine Set to Be Among World’s Biggest,” March 24, 2026.

¹¹⁰ Bloomberg, “Trump Aides Urged Sale of Congo Lithium Claim to a US Company,” February 12, 2026; and Reuters “AVZ Minerals Says Congo Deal with Kibold Breaches Arbitration Order,” July 21, 2025.

¹¹¹ Qingxiu Bu, “Chinese Multinational Corporations’ Obligations in the Global Anti-Corruption Arena,” in Régis Bismuth, et al., eds., *The Transnationalization of Anti-Corruption Law* (Routledge), 2021.

PRC commercial activity in Africa are limited.¹¹² Such studies tend to analyze broad trends (e.g., correlations between corruption, governance indices, and patterns of PRC FDI and lending).¹¹³ Some analyses suggest that some PRC firms may exploit the use of corruption in contexts where it already exists; in other cases, such firms may be perceived as willing to pay bribes and thus become targets of demands for bribes.¹¹⁴ Parties to PRC-African commercial deals also may structure them in ways that benefit participants' political or patronage networks or financial interests.¹¹⁵ A March 2026 work report by the National People's Congress (NPC, China's legislature) reportedly indicated that the NPC plans to enact a new cross-border corruption law this year aimed at improving anti-corruption enforcement for PRC firms operating overseas.¹¹⁶

PRC Foreign Aid

Foreign aid is a significant component of China's engagement with Africa. PRC "assistance" is not qualitatively equivalent or directly comparable to Western aid, as PRC aid data, reporting limitations, and definitional features make PRC aid flows distinct from that of other foreign donors.¹¹⁷ China reports that between 2013 and 2018 (latest data), African countries received nearly \$19 billion in PRC foreign aid grants, interest-free loans, and concessional loans (45% of \$42 billion globally).¹¹⁸ Such aid supported what China calls "international development cooperation" activities. China's aid activity includes participation from the foreign affairs, commerce, and finance ministries, policy banks, provincial governments, and the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA).¹¹⁹ CIDCA, established in 2018, operates under State Council (the PRC's top executive body) via the foreign affairs minister. It is charged with coordinating and streamlining China's varied and decentralized foreign "aid" flows and actors, but some analysts contend that it may lack the authority and resources to exercise effective control over this system.¹²⁰

¹¹² Joshua Meservey, *Chinese Corruption in Africa Undermines Beijing's Rhetoric About Friendship with the Continent*, Heritage Foundation, August 8, 2018, and *New York Times*, "'Jewel in the Crown of Corruption': The Troubles of Kenya's China-Funded Train," August 7, 2022, among multiple case reports from across Africa.

¹¹³ See, e.g., Ann-Sofie Isaksson and Andreas Kotsadam, "Chinese Aid and Local Corruption," *Journal of Public Economics* (159), 2018; Christopher Culver, "Chinese Investment and Corruption in Africa," *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies* (9:2), 2021; and Vincent Tawiah, et al., "Corruption, Chinese Investment, and Trade: Evidence from Africa," *Journal of Emerging Market Finance* (21:2), February 8, 2022.

¹¹⁴ McKinsey, *Dance of the Lions and Dragons: How Are Africa and China Engaging, and How Will the Partnership Evolve?*, 2017; and Justice Department, "Glencore Entered Guilty Pleas to Foreign Bribery and Market Manipulation Schemes," May 24, 2022.

¹¹⁵ Axel Dreher, et al., "African Leaders and the Geography of China's Foreign Assistance," *Journal of Development Economics* (140), 2019; and Paul Nantulya, *Guanxi: Power, Networking, and Influence in China-Africa Relations*, ACSS, 2021.

¹¹⁶ Reuters, "China Aims Deeper Fight Against Corruption with Cross-Border Law," March 8, 2026.

¹¹⁷ The PRC does not adhere to aid category definitions set out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), including the OECD definition of official development assistance (ODA). PRC international "development cooperation" may include ODA and "other official flows" (OOF), including non-concessional loans and other non-grant or commercial flows. OECD, "Glossary of Statistical Terms and Concepts of Development Finance," October 30, 2024, and "Development Co-operation Profiles: China, People's Republic of," June 11, 2025.

¹¹⁸ PRC State Council, *China and Africa*.

¹¹⁹ PRC State Council, *China and Africa*, and *China's International Development Cooperation in the New Era*, January 10, 2021; and Wu Yue, "Performance of the China International Development Cooperation Agency: A Critical Assessment," *East Asian Policy* (17:4), 2025.

¹²⁰ Wu Yue and Zhang Muhui, "China International Development Cooperation Agency: Establishment, Improvement, (continued...)"

PRC Media, Training, and Educational Activity

China seeks to foster positive public views of its multifaceted engagement in Africa, including through media, propaganda, influence operations, educational exchanges, and varied training programs.¹²¹ PRC state media maintain an expansive presence in Africa, hire and train local journalists, and engage in media cooperation.¹²² Such cooperation includes efforts by PRC official and government-aligned media outlets to build working ties with and train African journalists, including via the PRC Foreign Affairs Ministry-managed China-Africa Press Center. Some PRC media investments reportedly have had less impact than intended.¹²³ China Global Television Network (CGTN) announced in late March 2025 that it was expanding its Africa operations, following the Trump Administration's move to shutdown Voice of America broadcasting.¹²⁴ Additionally, the Communist Party of China (CPC) systematically engages with African state officials and parties, sponsoring learning exchanges and undertaking political influence campaigns in the region.¹²⁵ China, broadly under the FOCAC framework, also sponsors professional and technical exchanges and high-level forums with African countries focusing on topics like media cooperation, poverty reduction, economic development, and local governance. Tens of thousands of African students annually receive higher education in China and there are multiple PRC-African university cooperation programs.¹²⁶ Additionally, China operates Confucius Institutes to promote Chinese language and culture, and in 2018 launched "Luban Workshops," a vocational education initiative.¹²⁷

PRC Security Cooperation

China's military and security engagement in Africa has grown alongside its economic interests, as China has increasingly sought to project military power globally. PRC leaders have tasked the military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), with developing capacities to protect and advance China's global economic interests, protect PRC nationals abroad, and conduct military diplomacy,

and Limitations," *Journal of Global and Area Studies* (5:1), 2021; and Asia Society Policy Institute, "Foreign Affairs," in *Decoding Chinese Politics*, April 17, 2025; and entries at China Aid Blog (<http://china-aid-blog.com>).

¹²¹ Nadège Rolland, ed., *Political Front Lines: China's Pursuit of Influence in Africa*, NBR, June 1, 2022; Atlantic Council, *China's Discourse Power Operations in the Global South*, 2022; and Joshua Meservey, *China's Propaganda in Africa Hurts U.S. Interests—and the U.S. Must Counter It*, Heritage Foundation, November 19, 2018.

¹²² Paul Nantulya, *China's Strategy to Shape Africa's Media Space*, ACSS, April 16, 2024; and Sarah Cook, et al., *Beijing's Global Media Influence 2022: Authoritarian Expansion and the Power of Democratic Resilience*, Freedom House, 2022. For further information, Rolland, ed., *Political Front Lines*; Atlantic Council, *China's Discourse Power Operations in the Global South*, 2022; and Joshua Meservey, *China's Propaganda in Africa Hurts U.S. Interests—and the U.S. Must Counter It*, Heritage Foundation, November 19, 2018.

¹²³ *China Daily*, "New Era for China-Africa Media Links," July 5, 2018; and Bloomberg, "China Spent Big on an African Media Empire, But No One's Watching," March 2, 2026.

¹²⁴ China Global South Project, "CGTN to Expand African Operations," March 25, 2025.

¹²⁵ Paul Nantulya, *China's United Front Strategy in Africa*, ACSS, September 5, 2023, and *China's Deepening Ties to Africa in Xi Jinping's Third Term*, November 2022; Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "Party-to-Party Relations and Political Training," in Rolland, ed., *Political Front Lines*; Raphael Chan, "Political Training Under the Belt and Road Initiative: A Look at the Chinese Communist Party's First Party School in Africa," FPRI, 2022; and Abhishek Mishra, "China's Political Influence Activities in Africa," *Raisina Debates*, Observer Research Foundation, September 14, 2022.

¹²⁶ PIE News, "Numbers of African Students in China Expected to Grow as Ties Increase," March 1, 2024.

¹²⁷ Siyuan Li, "China's Confucius Institute in Africa: A Different Story?," *International Journal of Comparative Education and Development*, (23:4), 2021; Tingting Yuan and Ning Ma, "From Confucius Institute to Luban Workshop: China's Evolving Education Policies in Africa," in Tingting Yuan and Catherine Simon, eds., *Chinese Education in a Changing Global Landscape: Projects, Policies and Practices from Schools to Universities* (Routledge), 2025; and PRC State Council, *China and Africa*.

among other activities to advance PRC policy goals.¹²⁸ PRC security cooperation in Africa includes military basing, training, counterpiracy patrols, peacekeeping, arms sales, and military training (see textbox, below).¹²⁹ Senior PLA officials also regularly conduct diplomatic consultations with their African peers; an estimated 11% of PLA military diplomatic activities from 2016 to 2025 occurred in Africa.¹³⁰ In 2017, China established its first overseas military base in Djibouti, a small, strategically located country located at the Bab el Mandeb strait, which is a major maritime chokepoint linking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The PLA base is sited near Camp Lemonnier, the sole permanent U.S. military base in Africa.¹³¹

PRC security cooperation in Africa is coordinated bilaterally and regionally, with the African Union (AU) as a key PRC counterpart. In 2015, PRC leader Xi pledged \$100 million in military aid to the AU over five years. While the final disposition of PRC pledges is not always clear, in 2021 a PRC official said China had delivered this aid, of which about \$47 million had been earmarked for the G5's Sahel Joint Force and \$80 million to aid AU peacekeeping capacities.¹³² Such aid also has supported the AU's African Standby Force and a Southern African regional anti-terrorism mission in Mozambique.¹³³ In 2022, China pledged to "launch 10 peace and security projects for Africa."¹³⁴ Some PRC security engagement in Africa has been branded under China's Global Security Initiative (GSI), an international security framework launched by Xi Jinping in 2022.¹³⁵ At the 2024 FOCAC summit, participants announced a Partnership Initiative for Common Security to implement a GSI "partnership, build a [GSI] demonstration zone ... and conduct early-stage cooperation" under the GSI.¹³⁶ Other vehicles for PRC-Africa regional cooperative include an Initiative on Jointly Building a Community with a Shared Future in Cyberspace.¹³⁷

Noncombatant evacuation operations have been another element of PRC force projection in Africa. In 2023, amid the breakout of civil war in Sudan, a PLA Naval Escort Task Force

¹²⁸ PRC national security interests and military activities have been concentrated in East Asia, and the PLA has a limited capacity to conduct complex or combat military operations beyond the PRC's immediate periphery. Department of Defense (DOD), *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022 Annual Report to Congress*, October 2022 (*Annual Report 2022* hereinafter).

¹²⁹ For a survey of several of these issues, see CNA, *The Military and Security Dimensions of the PRC's Africa Presence: Changes in a Time of Global Shocks*, October 2024.

¹³⁰ Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, National Defense University, *Chinese Military Diplomacy Database*, version 6.0, as of July 17, 2026; and Phillip C. Saunders and Melodie Ha, "China's Military Diplomacy," *Strategic Perspectives* (19), June 23, 2025.

¹³¹ CRS In Focus IF11304, *China's Engagement in Djibouti*, by Lauren Ploch Blanchard.

¹³² PRC MFA, "Report by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," December 6, 2021; and PRC State Council, *China and Africa*.

¹³³ African Union, "African Union Hands Over Military Equipment to SADC's SAMIM in Mozambique," November 17, 2023, and "Press Release: Signing of Agreements between the African Union and the People's Republic of China," May 10, 2020.

¹³⁴ *People's Daily Online*, "China, Africa Work to Build Security Community," July 29, 2022.

¹³⁵ Paul Nantulya, *Africa as a Testing Ground for China's Global Security Initiative*, August 4, 2025, and *China Widening Its Influence in Africa Through Expanded Security Engagements*, June 10, 2025, both from ACSS.

¹³⁶ *FOCAC Action Plan 2025-2027*.

¹³⁷ PRC Cyberspace Administration, "Cyberspace Administration of China Launches the Initiative on China-Africa Jointly Building a Community with a Shared Future in Cyberspace," August 25, 2021.

participated in an emergency evacuation operation of 940 PRC nationals and 231 foreign nationals.¹³⁸ In 2015, a Naval Escort Task Force evacuated 629 PRC nationals from Yemen.¹³⁹

Elements of PRC Security Cooperation with African Countries

Basing. The PRC's military base in Djibouti serves as a logistics hub for the PLA Navy. In the initial years after the PLA base was created, the Department of Defense (DOD) reported that PLA elements at the base used lasers to harass U.S. military flights, causing minor injuries to U.S. military personnel.¹⁴⁰ In 2024, DOD reported that China had "sought to restrict Djiboutian sovereign airspace over" the PLA base.¹⁴¹

In 2025, DOD reported that PRC and Gabonese officials had discussed a possible PLA base in Gabon and that China "has likely considered" Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, and Tanzania as possible locations for future PLA facilities.¹⁴² Gabon experienced a military coup in 2023. In 2024, prior to elections in 2025 that enabled coup-related U.S. restrictions to be lifted, U.S. officials reportedly discussed a potential security package for Gabon's military, in part to avert the creation of a PRC base in Gabon.¹⁴³ In 2026, the AFRICOM commander testified that the PLA's ability "to operate from a dual-use base on the West coast of Africa would significantly complicate our security posture and be a direct threat to the U.S. homeland."¹⁴⁴

Dual Use Facilities. Some PRC-origin firm port projects in Africa may have dual commercial and military use potential. A 2024 Council on Foreign Relations assessment found that 40 of 129 seaport projects owned, constructed, or operated by PRC-origin entities were in Africa; of these, 28 (70%) had dual-use potential.¹⁴⁵ Using broader criteria, a 2025 paper by DOD's Africa Center for Strategic Studies identified 68 Africa-based port or port-linked projects with direct or indirect PRC-origin linkages; of these, 30 had hosted PLA port calls or drills and seven had a reported capacity to berth PLA Navy vessels.¹⁴⁶ AFRICOM has described the potential for PLA use of dual-use bases in West Africa as a prospective "direct threat to the U.S. homeland."¹⁴⁷

Arms Sales. China has sold arms to Africa for decades, and from 2021 to 2024 reportedly was the largest arms supplier to Africa.¹⁴⁸ Among other equipment, some African countries (e.g., DRC, Nigeria, and Sudan) have procured military uncrewed aerial vehicles from China.¹⁴⁹ In some cases, PRC arms, whether exported by China or supplied by third parties, reportedly have been used in armed conflicts in Africa, including in DRC, South Sudan, and Sudan, in some cases counter to UN arms embargoes.¹⁵⁰

Maritime Counterpiracy. Since 2008, the PLA has conducted counterpiracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa, along major global shipping routes. DOD reported that PLA Naval Escort Task Forces had

¹³⁸ Xinhua, "Chinese Military Evacuates 1,171 People from Sudan as Mission Ends," April 30, 2023.

¹³⁹ DOD, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022*, Annual Report to Congress, November 29, 2022 (hereinafter, "PRC Annual Report 2022").

¹⁴⁰ DOD is currently operating under the "secondary title" the Department of War, per Executive Order 14347 (September 5, 2025). See e.g., DOD, "U.S. Protests Chinese Interference with U.S. Planes in Djibouti," May 3, 2018, and *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2024 Annual Report to Congress*, November 2024 ("PRC Annual Report 2024").

¹⁴¹ DOD, PRC Annual Report 2024.

¹⁴² DOD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2025*, December 2025 (DOD, PRC Annual Report 2025).

¹⁴³ Bloomberg, "US Pitches Deal to Thwart Chinese Military Base in Africa," September 6, 2024.

¹⁴⁴ AFRICOM, *2026 Posture Statement*, May 14, 2026.

¹⁴⁵ Zongyuan Zoe Liu, "Tracking China's Control of Overseas Ports," Council on Foreign Relations, August 26, 2024.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Nantulya, *Mapping China's Strategic Port Development in Africa*, ACSS, March 10, 2025.

¹⁴⁷ AFRICOM, *2026 Posture Statement*.

¹⁴⁸ The top three 2021–2025 suppliers to African countries were China (22%), Russia, 12%, and Turkey (Türkiye) (11%). Mathew George, et al, *Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2025*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), March 2026.

¹⁴⁹ SIPRI, *Arms Transfers Database*.

¹⁵⁰ Amnesty International, *Sudan: Advanced Chinese Weaponry Provided by UAE Identified in Breach of Arms Embargo—New Investigation*, May 8, 2025, "South Sudan: Evidence of Violations and Illicit Concealment of Arms Must Spur UN to Renew Arms Embargo," April 30, 2020, and "Darfur: New Weapons from China and Russia Fueling Conflict," February 2012; and James Daniel, "China's One Belt, One Road Initiative and Its International Arms Sales: An Overlooked Aspect of Connectivity and Cooperation?," *Military Review*, (99:5), 2019.

deployed more than 150 ships and more than 35,000 personnel during 45 escort missions as of early 2024 and continued them throughout the year.¹⁵¹

United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping. As of April 30, 2026, China was the eighth-largest uniformed personnel contributor to UN peacekeeping missions and the largest such contributor among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. As of the same date, China's largest peacekeeping deployment was with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS, 866 personnel), when it also had personnel in UN missions in the DRC, the Abyei area between Sudan and South Sudan, Western Sahara, and the Central African Republic.¹⁵² In March 2026, a PLA general was named UNMISS force commander.¹⁵³

Military Exercises and Related Activity. The PLA regularly conducts bilateral and multilateral military exercises with African counterparts, at times jointly with other non-African countries. In 2019, China, Russia, and South Africa conducted a trilateral maritime security exercise for the first time; they reprised the exercise in 2023.¹⁵⁴ A third iteration of the exercise was postponed while South Africa hosted the 2025 G20 leadership summit, but in early 2026, South Africa hosted *Will for Peace 2026*, a naval exercise for selected BRICS+ countries coordinated by China. The navies of South Africa, China, Russia, the UAE, and Iran participated, the latter in contravention of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's order that Iranian naval ships not join the exercise nor observe it, drawing U.S. criticism.¹⁵⁵ In 2024, the PLA conducted its first land and naval forces exercise in Africa, with Tanzania and Mozambique.¹⁵⁶ Multiple African coastal states have hosted PLA Navy port calls.¹⁵⁷

Professional Military Education (PME) and Training. PME is a major area of PRC security engagement in Africa. As of 2024, more than 50 African militaries reportedly had participated in PRC PME programs, and African officers comprise a reported 60% of foreign officers admitted to PRC military institutions; five current or former African presidents are graduates of such programs.¹⁵⁸ The PLA set up a military training school in Tanzania in 2018.¹⁵⁹ At the 2024 FOCAC summit, China pledged about \$141 million in military aid grants; military training, exercises, and patrols; training for 6,000 African military personnel and 1,000 police/law enforcement personnel; and opportunities for 500 "young African military officers to visit China."¹⁶⁰

Law Enforcement Cooperation. China's police and law enforcement agencies reportedly have agreements with some 40 African countries.¹⁶¹ The PRC Ministry of Public Security, which in China has jurisdiction over law enforcement issues in China, has conducted police diplomacy, provided capacity-building training and material aid, and signed cooperative agreements with African partners.¹⁶² The 2024 FOCAC summit set out plans to increase cooperation between China and the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (Afripol), to hold regular law enforcement dialogues with 14 East African countries, and work with the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization on capacity-building, combating transnational crime, and "Belt and Road security."¹⁶³

¹⁵¹ DOD, PRC Annual Reports for 2024 and 2025.

¹⁵² UN Peacekeeping, "Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Country, Mission, and Personnel Type," December 21, 2025.

¹⁵³ UN, "Major General Junhui Wu of China—Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)," March 5, 2026.

¹⁵⁴ Reuters, "South Africa's Naval Exercise with Russia, China Raises Western Alarm," Reuters, February 18, 2023.

¹⁵⁵ Bloomberg, "South Africa Appoints Judge to Chair Inquiry on Iran Naval Drill," January 28, 2026; and *Daily Maverick*, "US Embassy in Pretoria Criticises Iran's Participation in Naval Drill off Simon's Town" and "Naval-Gazing—the SANDF, Iran and the Potential Threat to SA's Democracy," both January 15, 2026.

¹⁵⁶ *Global Times*, "PLA Continues Peace Unity-2024 Exercises in Africa," August 6, 2024.

¹⁵⁷ Paul Nantulya, *The Growing Militarization of China's Africa Policy*, ACSS, December 2, 2024.

¹⁵⁸ Tim Ditter, et al., *The Military and Security Dimensions of the PRC's Africa Presence: Changes in a Time of Global Shocks*, Center for Naval Analyses, October 2024.

¹⁵⁹ *People's Daily Online*, "China, Africa Work to Build Security Community," July 29, 2022, inter alia; and *Defenceweb*, "Chinese-Built Military Training Centre Opens in Tanzania," February 13, 2018.

¹⁶⁰ PRC MFA, "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization."

¹⁶¹ Paul Nantulya, *China's Policing Models Make Inroads in Africa*, ACSS, May 22, 2023, and "China's Growing Police and Law-Enforcement Cooperation in Africa," in Nadège Rolland, ed., *Political Front Lines: China's Pursuit of Influence in Africa*, NBR, June 1, 2022.

¹⁶² USCC, "China's Military Diplomacy and Overseas Security Activities," Hearing testimony by Jordan Link, January 26, 2023.

¹⁶³ *FOCAC Action Plan 2025-2027*.

PRC Private Security Contractors (PSCs). Concerns over the safety and security of PRC nationals living and working overseas have helped drive increased PRC security engagement in Africa. More than 150 “violent incidents involving Chinese citizens” reportedly occurred in Africa between 2010 and 2020.¹⁶⁴ PRC PSCs operate in 16 African countries, according to a 2022 RAND study, primarily to protect and secure PRC commercial interests (e.g., mining and infrastructure projects) and personnel (e.g., from kidnappings targeting PRC workers).¹⁶⁵

Space Collaboration

China is building space alliances in Africa and has over 20 agreements with African countries on space collaboration; has pledged financing for satellites and ground stations to collect satellite imagery and data in several countries; and has launched satellites for African countries.¹⁶⁶ In 2024, Egypt, South Africa, and Senegal joined a China-led effort to pioneer a future crewed moon station.¹⁶⁷ Four African countries (Namibia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Tunisia) host PRC-built satellite or space monitoring ground stations. A ground station in Ethiopia is to provide paid satellite data processing and analysis services to countries and other users.¹⁶⁸ While U.S. public and private sector actors also have engaged with African counterparts in the space sector, including via the U.S.-hosted Artemis Accords on civil lunar and other space cooperation, some observers suggest that the scope and focus of PRC-led space projects and partnerships in Africa may have the potential to outpace comparable U.S. efforts in the region.¹⁶⁹

U.S. Responses, Policy, and Options for Congress

The second Trump Administration has stated that it supports a “constructive relationship of strategic stability with China,”¹⁷⁰ while concurrently having characterized China as an adversary and competitor and stating an intent to counter alleged PRC malign activity in Africa—as did the Biden Administration and the first Trump Administration.¹⁷¹ AFRICOM assesses that China,

¹⁶⁴ Testimony of Judd Devermont, in U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *China’s Strategic Aims in Africa*, hearings, May 8, 2020.

¹⁶⁵ RAND, *Mapping Chinese and Russian Military and Security Exports to Africa*, 2022; and, e.g., Alessandro Arduino, “Chinese Private Security Firms Are Growing Their Presence in Africa: Why It Matters,” *The Conversation*, August 8, 2022, and *The Footprint of Chinese Private Security Companies in Africa*, CARL, March 2020.

¹⁶⁶ Reuters, “China Builds Space Alliances in Africa as Trump Cuts Foreign Aid,” February 11, 2025; SCMP, “How China Is Building the Hi-Tech Backbone of Africa’s Space Ambitions,” February 23, 2026; ISPI, *China’s Space Presence in the African Continent*, January 8, 2026; CSIS, “In China’s Orbit: Beijing’s Space Diplomacy in the Global South,” January 15, 2026; and ODI Global, “China’s Expanding Role in Space in Africa: Geostrategic Implications,” December 17, 2024.

¹⁶⁷ Spaceinafrica.com, “Senegal Joins China’s ILRS Moon Project,” September 5, 2024.

¹⁶⁸ SCMP, “China-Built Satellite Station a ‘Shining’ Example of Support for Namibian Space Programme,” August 2, 2025; *People’s Daily*, “Ethiopia Launches Innovative Satellite Data Service in Partnership with China,” March 5, 2024; and Reuters, “Countries in Africa That Have Space Infrastructure Built by China,” N.D.

¹⁶⁹ Angola, Botswana, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Senegal are among 70 signatories of the Artemis Accords globally. Atlantic Council, “To Compete with China in Space, the US Must Form More Equitable Commercial Partnerships with African Nations,” February 18, 2026; DoS, *Artemis Accords*, as of July 17, 2026; and U.S. Institute of Peace, *China’s Space Collaboration with Africa: Implications and Recommendations for the United States*, September 2023.

¹⁷⁰ White House, “Fact Sheet: President Donald Trump Secures Historic Deals with China, Delivering for American Workers, Farmers, and Industry,” May 17, 2026.

¹⁷¹ DOS, “Remarks for Launch of Bureau of African Affairs Commercial Diplomacy Strategy,” May 6, 2025; White House (Biden Administration), *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2022 and *National Security Strategy*, 2022; (continued...)

Russia, and Iran are “disruptive actors” in Africa, and that China “sees Africa as their second continent and critical to their economic and military future,” and has described the prospect of a PRC military coastal base in West Africa as a “direct threat” to the United States.¹⁷²

Congress has examined African relations with China through hearings, oversight activities, and legislation, and some Members have raised concerns about PRC activities in Africa, such as PLA basing efforts; economic competition, including over access to critical minerals (see Textbox below); and PRC alliances with certain African countries.¹⁷³ Some Members have examined the role of PRC IUU fishing in African waters and pursued related legislation.¹⁷⁴ In the 119th Congress, H.R. 2633, U.S.-South Africa Bilateral Relations Review Act of 2025, criticizes a range of South African interactions with China (as well as Russia and Iran), and calls for a review of U.S.-South Africa relations and presidential certification of whether South Africa’s foreign policy undermines U.S. national security or foreign policy interests. Some Members have also questioned the impacts of the Administration’s downsizing of various foreign policy and assistance tools on U.S. efforts to counter PRC influence in Africa; other Members have questioned the impact of past aid and called for the review of aid to determine its effectiveness in accomplishing U.S. “soft power” goals.¹⁷⁵ The 119th and past Congresses have provided foreign aid resources under the Countering PRC Influence Fund (CPIF) for activities in Africa.

The Trump Administration has made U.S. business advocacy and deal-making its “core focus” in Africa under the State Department’s May 2025 regional “Commercial Diplomacy Strategy,” though that strategy only briefly mentions China, and the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs did not mention China in his confirmation hearing prepared statement.¹⁷⁶ U.S. tools for promoting commerce and African development include the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), and the U.S. Export-Import Bank (EXIM), which runs a program to help U.S. exporters compete with PRC firms.¹⁷⁷

Geostrategic Competition and U.S. Focus on Critical Minerals from Africa

The Trump Administration and some Members of Congress have emphasized a need to secure robust, reliable, and diversified U.S. critical mineral supplies, as did prior Administrations. In the 119th Congress, several pieces of legislation seek to bolster global U.S. critical mineral supply chains.¹⁷⁸ The Administration also has assessed the national security and economic risks posed by U.S. reliance on critical mineral imports from China and the alleged

DOS, *The Elements of the China Challenge* and *The Chinese Communist Party: Threatening Global Peace and Security* and factsheet, 2020; and White House (first Trump Administration), *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2017.

¹⁷² AFRICOM, *2026 Posture Statement*, May 14, 2026.

¹⁷³ Examples of such hearings in the 119th Congress have included SFRC, *China’s Malign Influence in Africa*, June 4, 2025, and *Critical Minerals: Finding Opportunities for U.S.-Africa Partnerships*, July 30, 2025; and HFAC, *Africa Subcommittee, Metals, Minerals, and Mining: How the CCP Fuels Conflict and Exploitation in Africa*, March 25, 2025, and HFAC, *FY26 State Department Posture: Protecting American Interests*, May 21, 2025.

¹⁷⁴ House China Select Committee, *China’s Global Fishing Offensive*, Majority staff report, January 2026; and S. 2296.

¹⁷⁵ See e.g., SFRC Minority reports *The Price of Retreat: America Cedes Global Leadership to China*, July 2025, and *The Price of Retreat 2.0: Undermining America’s Economic Edge and Alliance Advantage*, March 2026; and Council on Foreign Relations, “A Conversation with House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Brian Mast,” May 15, 2026.

¹⁷⁶ DoS, “Remarks for Launch”; and SFRC, “Statement of Frank Garcia, Nominee for Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of African Affairs,” *Nominations* (hearing), March 5, 2026.

¹⁷⁷ CRS In Focus IF11016, *U.S. Trade Policy: Trade Functions of Key Federal Agencies*, by Shayerah I. Akhtar.

¹⁷⁸ See, e.g., H.Res. 179, Expressing support for the strengthening of United States-Africa partnerships in critical minerals development; S. 823 and H.R. 3198, both titled Intergovernmental Critical Minerals Task Force Act; and S. 492, STRATEGIC Minerals Act; and SFRC, *Critical Minerals: Finding Opportunities for U.S.-Africa Partnerships*, July 30, 2025; and HFAC, *Africa Subcommittee, Metals, Minerals, and Mining: How the CCP Fuels Conflict and Exploitation in Africa*, March 25, 2025.

“market-distorting effects of predatory pricing, export controls and state-backed overcapacity” of China’s critical mineral trade practices.¹⁷⁹ The Administration has announced Project Vault, an EXIM-led initiative to establish U.S. national critical minerals reserves, and launched the Forum on Resource Geostrategic Engagement (FORGE), a successor to the Biden Administration’s Minerals Security Partnership (MSP). Such efforts, which could tap African mineral supply chains, seek to shield U.S. commercial users of these materials from global supply shocks and reduce U.S. reliance on PRC-controlled mineral supply chains.¹⁸⁰ Several ongoing mining projects initiated by the MSP are in Africa.¹⁸¹ Additionally, the U.S. Geological Survey, under the Department of the Interior, has provided technical support to some of its African counterparts. Another Trump Administration approach has been to negotiate bilateral mineral access deals, notably a 2025 U.S.-DRC Strategic Partnership Agreement that seeks to bolster U.S. access to DRC-origin mineral supplies.¹⁸² Several U.S. firms and investors have since announced DRC mining or mineral-trading deals.¹⁸³ The Administration has also maintained a Biden Administration-initiated, G-7-aided effort to upgrade and extend into Zambia the Lobito rail corridor linking DRC’s southeastern mining heartland to Angola and its Atlantic Lobito port, in part to counter PRC global copper and critical mineral supply chain dominance. A \$553 million DFC loan supports the Angola portion of the project,¹⁸⁴ and the Administration is supporting up to \$1 billion in upgrades of a DRC rail line and a tie-in to the Lobito line.¹⁸⁵

The Administration has transformed a range of U.S. foreign assistance tools and cut foreign aid and dismantled the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It did not request country-specific FY2026 or FY2027 State Department foreign aid for most African countries, though that action does not mean the Administration will not allocate resources to the region.¹⁸⁶ The Administration also shuttered the Voice of America network’s Africa-focused programming and African language services.¹⁸⁷ Some critics of these actions, including some Members of Congress, have argued that such actions will benefit China. In a May 2025 hearing, for instance, Senator Jeanne Shaheen alleged that the United States is “not competing either militarily or diplomatically in Africa, and now on the foreign assistance front.”¹⁸⁸ The Trump Administration, as then-Bureau of African Affairs Senior Bureau Official Troy Fitrell testified to Congress,

¹⁷⁹ S&P Global Market Intelligence, “Trump Pushes Critical Mineral Dependence Probes on China Export Restrictions,” April 23, 2025; see also *Washington Post*, “U.S. Agencies Alarmed by China’s Curbs on Exports of Rare-Earth Minerals,” April 24, 2025.

¹⁸⁰ DoS, “2026 Critical Minerals Ministerial,” February 4, 2026; and CSIS, *Project Vault: A Minerals Security Backstop*, February 11, 2026.

¹⁸¹ These include a \$50 million equity investment in a rare earths mining project in South Africa; DFC financing for two helium and natural gas extraction and processing projects in South Africa (\$575 million) and an Australian-run graphite mine in Mozambique that supplies a U.S. battery plant (\$150 million, \$31 million of which in March 2026 was converted into a DFC equity holding); and technical aid of \$5 million or less for several other critical mineral or other mining projects in Africa. DFC, *Active Projects*; Bloomberg, “US Agency to Own 20% of Graphite Miner Syrah in Critical Minerals Push,” March 26, 2026; and DoS, archived MSP resources page, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/minerals-security-partnership>. On the DFC, see CRS In Focus IF11436, *U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)*, by Shayerah I. Akhtar and Nick M. Brown.

¹⁸² The United States also mediated a peace agreement between DRC and Rwanda that provides for a “regional economic integration framework” between the two countries. CRS Insight IN12619, *Peace Process in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo: Issues for Congress*, by Alexis Arieff.

¹⁸³ Bloomberg, “Commodities Congo Sending First Copper to US Under Mercuria-Backed Venture,” January 12, 2026; and *Financial Times*, “US-Backed Group Buys DR Congo Copper-Cobalt Mine Under Minerals Deal,” March 17, 2026.

¹⁸⁴ CRS Report R48208, *Angola: Key Developments and U.S. Relations*, by Nicolas Cook; and Politico, “Trump Adviser Says Congo Minerals Deal Advancing,” April 17, 2025.

¹⁸⁵ DoS, “Strategic Partnership Agreement”; and DFC, “DFC Strengthens Strategic Partnerships.”

¹⁸⁶ CRS In Focus IF10261, *U.S. Agency for International Development: An Overview*, by Emily M. McCabe; and DoS, Congressional Budget Justification, FY2026.

¹⁸⁷ VOA had an estimated audience of 93.6 million people. U.S. Agency for Global Media, “Audience and Impact: Overview for 2025,” February 2025.

¹⁸⁸ SFRC, *East Africa & The Horn: At a Turning Point or Breaking Point?* (hearing), May 13, 2025.

contends that it is competing effectively, by promoting strategic commercial engagement and investment over aid and “reforming U.S. trade and financing tools to better compete with China’s swift and risk-tolerant financing model.”¹⁸⁹

Trump Administration policies on a number of fronts may impact U.S.-Africa engagement and potentially African engagement with the PRC. These policies include Administration restrictions on entry into the United States of many African countries’ nationals, and its imposition of tariff surcharges on African countries. These surcharges stack on top of baseline most-favored nation U.S. import tariffs, which AGOA cuts or reduces for imports from eligible African countries.¹⁹⁰ In other steps, the Administration has negotiated a number of bilateral health memoranda of understanding with African countries; mediated negotiations between the DRC and Rwanda; provided assistance to combat Ebola; and engaged with Sahelian countries that have undergone coups in recent years, criticizing the previous administration for the emphasis it placed on civilian rule and holding elections.¹⁹¹ In early 2026, Congress reauthorized AGOA through 2026 and retroactively extended its benefits to the date of its prior expiration on September 31, 2025 (see Div. I of P.L. 119-75).¹⁹²

Some reports suggest that China may be seeking to exploit some Administration actions to advance PRC interests in Africa. Examples include PRC offers of aid, even if small and symbolic; China’s removal of tariffs on all African countries as of May 1, 2026; PRC promotion of China’s RMB as a U.S. dollar alternative; and PRC criticism of U.S. “unilateral bullying” and aid cuts, and promotion of narratives painting China as a reliable economic and development partner to Africa.¹⁹³ Given China’s approach to providing aid, some observers doubt that China will fill gaps left by U.S. foreign aid reduction in Africa.¹⁹⁴ China to date has, for instance, offered its development partners nothing as extensive as the multi-billion-dollar U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) nor at the scale of grant-based development and humanitarian aid that the United States for decades provided via USAID and other agencies. China has not, to date, acted to substantially increase its voluntary contributions to UN agencies at levels comparable to historical U.S. funding following U.S. withdrawals from some UN agencies.¹⁹⁵

Congress has shaped U.S. approaches to addressing PRC activity in Africa through its authorization and appropriation of funds for the State Department’s Countering PRC Influence Fund (CPIF) and other U.S. economic, democracy, security, and governance tools. For some Members, these approaches may be adequate. For those who may seek further efforts to counter

¹⁸⁹ SFRC Africa and Global Health Policy Subcommittee, *China’s Malign Influence in Africa* (hearing), June 4, 2025.

¹⁹⁰ CRS Report IR10004, *Nationality-Based Immigration Restrictions*; CRS Report R48549, *Presidential 2025 Tariff Actions: Timeline and Status*, by Keigh E. Hammond and William F. Burkhardt; CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11398, *Supreme Court Rules Against Tariffs Imposed Under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

¹⁹¹ SFRC Africa and Global Health Policy Subcommittee, *The U.S. Approach to Counterterrorism in Africa* (hearing), April 21, 2026.

¹⁹² CRS In Focus IF10149, *African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)*, by Liana Wong.

¹⁹³ SCMP, “China on African Charm Offensive to Rally Opposition to ‘Bullying’ US,” May 6, 2025. See also Bloomberg, “Trump and Musk’s USAID ‘Shut Down’ Threat Opens Door for China,” February 3, 2025; *Washington Post*, “Trump’s Global Funding Cuts Leave a Void in Africa for Rivals to Exploit,” March 24, 2025; SCMP, “Why African Traders Are Looking Beyond the US Dollar to China’s Yuan,” May 4, 2025.

¹⁹⁴ Richard Gowan, “China May Not Want the U.N. Opening Trump Is Handing It,” *World Politics Review*, January 30, 2025; Devex, “The US Aid Freeze Has Left a Funding Gap. What If China Steps In?,” March 3, 2025; Yun Sun, “Can China Fill the Void in Foreign Aid?,” Brookings Blog, March 11, 2025; and Xinhua via PRC State Council, “Xi Jinping Sends.”

¹⁹⁵ White House, “Withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization,” Executive Order [E.O.], January 20, 2025.

or otherwise respond to PRC activities in Africa, one option could be to charge the Administration with assessing PRC and U.S. activity in Africa across major policy domains (e.g., diplomatic, defense, development, and trade and investment) and/or crafting a U.S. strategy to compete, counter, confront or, if merited, cooperate with China in and vis-à-vis Africa.¹⁹⁶ Members also may consider whether or not efforts to bolster the U.S. diplomatic presence in Africa may be warranted.¹⁹⁷ Congress could also consider the future scope and scale of relevant U.S. foreign aid in relation to challenges tied to China's engagement in Africa, including under legislation enacted by Congress, such as the Electrify Africa Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-121) or the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-266) or initiatives such as Prosper Africa. The latter was a multi-agency initiative to expand trade and investment with Africa launched by the first Trump Administration, largely as a tool to counter PRC economic influence in Africa, that the second Administration reportedly ended as part of its dismantlement of USAID.¹⁹⁸

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¹⁹⁶ Scott Morris, *China's Role in Developing Countries: Resetting US Policy with a "3 C's" Agenda*, Center for Global Development, December 3, 2020.

¹⁹⁷ Robbie Gramer and Eric Bazail-Eimil, "Empty Ambassador Posts Alarm Natsec Vets," *Politico*, May 12, 2025; and Robbie Gramer and Amy Mackinnon, "U.S. Embassies in Africa Are Chronically Short-Staffed," *Foreign Policy*, July 22, 2022.

¹⁹⁸ White House (First Trump Administration), "Remarks by National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton on the The [sic] Trump Administration's New Africa Strategy," December 13, 2018; and *Africa Report*, "Africa's Year of Donald Trump," December 23, 2025.