



The Developing Relationship Between China & Africa

China-Africa Relations

China's influence continues to grow on the economic, diplomatic, and socio-cultural fronts at time when the U.S. and China are becoming more competitive with one another. This competition is being exhibited in multiple areas including trade, education, health, technology, etc. China **utilizes public diplomacy and soft power to exert influence in Africa**. This relationship involves everything from loans to foreign direct investment (FDI). The decline in U.S. FDI has led to **China's rise in influence and positive perception in Africa as China is increasingly becoming more visible than the U.S.**

LOANS FROM CHINA TO AFRICA

There have been **suggestions that China is enforcing debt, but China has been relatively open to renegotiate loans**. We have not seen materialization of seizure of assets that many claim have happened. There is more agency in place for African countries than we [the U.S.] take notice of. Consequently, Chinese loans are in decline. The U.S. must be more concerned with the transparency of these loans, nonetheless.

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The Atlantic – [“The Chinese ‘Debt Trap’ Is A Myth”](#)

OTHER TRENDS

There has been a **reversal in trade relationships from a strong U.S.-Africa relationship to a strong China-Africa relationship**. Chinese products allow more access because they are cheaper than U.S. products. Additionally, **assistance in military presence and peacekeeping has changed**. U.S. military presence continues to be very active in comparison to China, but China has stronger presence of peacekeeping efforts in Africa through significant expansion in personal relations and diplomacy.

Tangible, Practical Offerings From China

China is **providing training opportunities for government officials** and other sectors. China is not focused on mimicking itself in Africa, but instead attempting to show off Africa for what it is. China is **providing increasing growth opportunities for students** as approximately 80,000 African students are in China. Many students are self-funded, but several scholarships also remain available for African students. China has a proactive approach to attracting African students, and most importantly more relaxed visa policies.

GROWING PRESENCE OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

China has **established 54 Confucius Institutes** in various universities in Africa. There are also **27 Confucius Classrooms across the continent**. These institutes can be controversial in the U.S., but in Africa they are quite dynamic (promoting the learning of Chinese, helping with future job opportunities, etc.).

Points For Policy

U.S. engagement in Africa is still desirable. However, Africans are frustrated with U.S. critique of China's involvement despite the lack of U.S. engagement. There is **room for engagement especially in the education and public diplomacy areas**. There are even some opportunities for U.S. collaboration with China in Africa.

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