

The Principles of Pursuing the Greater Good and Shared Interests: The Value Orientation of China's Diplomacy with Africa

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Abstract. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has proposed a series of diplomatic concepts towards Africa based on the overall strategic situation of the profound changes unseen in a century and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and on the consideration of promoting the sustainable development of China -Africa relations, while maintaining the continuity and stability of the major policy of diplomacy towards Africa. Among them, adhering to the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests is the value orientation of China's diplomacy with Africa in the new era. This core value enhances China's affinity for African diplomacy, while shows bearing the world in mind for China's diplomacy. Guided by this important concept, China -Africa relations have leapt to a new level.

Keywords: the Principles of Pursuing the Greater Good and Shared Interests, Major Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics, China-Africa Community of Shared Future.

1. Introduction

Africa is an important strategic fulcrum of China's diplomacy and the "foundation in the foundation" of the diplomatic layout of major countries with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, on the basis of inheriting the past diplomatic tradition towards Africa, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has made a top-level design and strategic plan for China's diplomacy towards Africa, upgraded China -Africa relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation, made major innovations in China's diplomacy towards Africa in theory and practice, creatively proposed a series of new ideas, new assertions and new initiatives on Africa such as a community of shared future between China and Africa, adhered to the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests and the **Principles of Sincerity, Real Results, Amity and Good Faith, the Initiative of "The Belt and Road"** jointly built by China and Africa, as well as "five-no" approach (no interference in African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions; no interference in African countries' internal affairs; no imposition of its will on African countries; no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa; and no pursuit of selfish political gains through investment and financing cooperation with Africa), and the principle of "four- couldn't" (No one could undermine the great unity between the Chinese people and the African people; no one could hold back the Chinese people or the African people as we march toward rejuvenation; no one could deny the remarkable achievements made in China-Africa cooperation, not with their assumption or imagination; no one could stand in the way or obstruct international efforts to support Africa's development), has summarized and refined the spirit of China Africa friendly cooperation, therefore, formed rich and profound foreign policy thoughts on Africa. Among them, adhering to the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests is the value orientation of this important policy thought.

2. Background That Proposed the Principles of Pursuing the Greater Good and Shared Interests

2.1. The world is undergoing a great changes unseen in a century

It is the changes in the nature of the times and the phased characteristics of China Africa relations that are the background of the times that formed China's foreign policy thoughts on Africa in a new era. The world today is undergoing changes unseen in a century. A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial reform has developed in depth, the reform of the global governance system has accelerated, and the international balance of power has been profoundly adjusted. The overall development of the developing countries represented by China, especially the emerging powers, which originated from "non western civilization", led to the shift of the international pattern from "the countries are strong in the north while the countries weak in the south, the northern ones dominate while the southern ones subordinate" to "the countries are rising in the south while the ones are falling in the north"; and the the shift of the international pattern from "the countries are strong in the west while the countries weak in the east, the western ones dominate while the eastern ones subordinate" to "the countries are rising in the east while the ones are falling in the west". Since the financial crisis in 2008, the western countries led by the United States have faced unprecedented political, economic and social crises. The history of the west dominating the world is gone forever. The world theme is still peace and development. However, the factors of instability and uncertainty are increasing while hegemonism and power politics still exist. Traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined. The global issues, such as unilateralism, trade protectionism, extreme nationalism, growing backlash against globalization, terrorism, global epidemic, climate warming, environmental degradation, food crisis and etc, are prominent. The global governance deficit, peace deficit, development deficit and security deficit have increased so that the cause of human peace and development could faces serious challenges.

The great changes that have not been seen in a century have brought unprecedented opportunities to the development of China-Africa relations, as well as many new problems and challenges, which objectively requires that China's diplomatic work with Africa must keep pace with the times, put forward new ideas and strategies so as to deepen the traditional friendship between China and Africa, deepen mutual trust, strengthen the solidarity and cooperation between China and Africa in security, international affairs, ecological and environmental protection so that China and Africa would jointly address challenges, work together to solve new issues, and build closer China -Africa relations.

2.2. China's strategic demand for Africa is rising

Africa is an important leverage for China to optimize its international situation and counter the pressure from the outside world. After the implementation of reform and opening up, China's economic development has embarked on a fast track, and its comprehensive national strength has continued to increase. In 2009, China became the largest exporter and the second largest importer of global trade in goods. In 2010, China became the second largest economy in the world, and its international status and influence have continued to rise, and China has increasingly entered the center of the world stage. The strong rise of China has aroused the concern of the United States. The competition between China and the United States is intensifying, and the China-US relations are deteriorating. With the United States 's wooing and sowing discord, China's relations with major countries in the world have gradually become estranged or increasingly tense while neighboring countries are increasingly vigilant, defensive and hostile to China. As China's international environment and the diplomatic situation around it become increasingly complex and severe, Africa, which has profound traditional friendship with China and rapidly developed friendly cooperation, has become increasingly important in China's overall diplomacy.^[1]

Africa is also an important partner for China to achieve sustainable economic development. With the rapid economic development, China's demand for energy resources is growing, and the dependence on foreign oil and natural gas is high. Africa is rich in resources, with 41.06 billion tons

of oil resources, accounting for 8.1% of the world's total oil resources; The natural gas resources amount to 31 trillion cubic meters, accounting for 6.3% of the world's total natural gas resources. Cooperation with Africa in energy resources can effectively alleviate the problem of insufficient supply of energy resources in China. In 2011, China imported 57.97 million tons of crude oil from Africa, accounting for 23% of all crude oil imported by China that year.^[2] The Chinese and African economies are at different stages of development, and industrial cooperation is highly complementary. China's industrial restructuring and upgrading have provided opportunities for Africa's industrialization. In the process of modernization, China has gradually accumulated a large number of high-quality surplus capacity products and advanced equipment technology, which have exceeded the demand of the domestic market. Africa, with rapid population growth and huge market potential, that the middle-income group has not only expanded, has increasingly become an important external force and an important region for China to promote economic restructuring and industrial echelon transfer.^[3]

In addition, on issues related to China's core interests, such as Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the South China Sea, China needs Africa's continued support while the maintenance and expansion of China's interests in Africa also need the assistance and support of African countries.

It can be seen that China needs Africa even more in the international situation of increasing uncertainty and instability, and in the unfavorable diplomatic situation. Africa is an important strategic support for China whether it is to address the challenges of global issues such as climate change, food security, poverty reduction and development, participate in the formulation of global rules, promote the reform of the global governance system and the construction of a new international political and economic order, or achieve sustainable development. China cannot achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation without the support of Africa. Therefore, it is necessary to put forward new ideas on the basis of inheriting and summarizing the previous policy thoughts on Africa, so as to lead the work on Africa under the new situation. At the same time, based on its own strength and position, and taking into account the international response of China's actions in Africa, China innovated its policy ideas on Africa and clearly announced its own policy propositions.^[4]

3. Profound connotation of the Principles of Pursuing the Greater Good and Shared Interests

3.1. The Principles of Pursuing the Greater Good and Shared Interests Fully Demonstrates Bearing the World in Mind for China's Diplomacy

In March 2013, during the president Xi Jinping's visit to Africa, he put forward the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests for the first time, and then made incisive discussions on the principles on many international occasions. "The greater good" advocated by him has four levels of connotation, that is, "to stress good faith, value friendship, promote integrity, and establish morality". As for "shared interests", he pointed out that it means mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. He especially emphasized that the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests should be adhered to, shared interests and the greater good, are of vital importance and united, but more emphasis is given to the latter which is a dialectical and profound exposition of the relationship between shared interests and the greater good and is the inheritance and development of the concept of shared interests and the greater good in Chinese traditional culture. "The country does not take shared interests as interests, but the greater good as interests." "We should not only pursue less of you and more of us at the expense of others, let alone make me win by letting you lose, and one takes all. Only by balancing shared interests and the greater good can we achieve both shared interests and the greater good and only by balancing shared interests and the greater good can we achieve both shared interests and the greater good."^[5] While serving the overall strategic situation of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, China's diplomacy also aims to resolutely safeguard world peace and promote common development, which requires us to adhere to the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests, and we must resolutely safeguard and defend China's

national interests. However, China will never follow the old path of "a strong country must seek hegemony", firmly uphold international fairness and justice, promote democracy in international relations, support multilateralism, and "maintain the international system with the United Nations at its core, and maintain the international order based on international law".^[6]

3.2. It reflects the core value orientation of China's diplomacy with Africa

Adhering to the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests is an important part of China's foreign policy towards Africa in the new era, which reflects the core value orientation of China's diplomacy towards Africa. President Xi stressed that the greatest good in China-Africa relations is to closely combine Africa's independent and sustainable development with China's own development, and reject the zero-sum game and actions driven by a narrow pursuit of profit. The ultimate goal is to realize win-win cooperation. "righteousness" of China Africa relations is to use China's development to help Africa's development and ultimately achieve mutual benefit and win-win results and common development.^[7]

This fully reveals the essence of the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests. China's promotion of cooperation with Africa is purely based on Africa's needs. China does not seek a sphere of influence, does not engage in geopolitical contests, and has no private interests. At the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, President Xi Jinping solemnly promised: "In cooperation, China adheres to the principle that shared interests and the greater good, are of vital importance, but more emphasis is given to the latter" "China advocates giving more and taking less, giving first and taking later, and giving only and not taking. China welcomes Africa to take the China development express with open arms."^[8] In communication with Africa, China adhere to the principles that morality comes first and the greater good yields shared interests, which reflects China's style as a great socialist country and its international responsibility. This is a transcendence of the national interest concept of "no permanent friends, only permanent interests" advocated by western realism, and also a transcendence of the hegemonic stability theory. Hegemonic stabilization theorists represented by Robert Gilpin believe that hegemonic countries provide public goods for maintaining the stability of the international system; Because the cost of providing public goods is inversely proportional to the benefits obtained, the challenge of latecomers and the existence of "free riders" lead to the decline of hegemonic countries; allowing other countries to share responsibility or "multilateral leadership" is an important countermeasure to avoid the decline of hegemony.^[9] The hegemonic countries provide public goods to the international community not for altruism, nor for the greater good, but for the purpose of gaining recognition of the international order established by them, so as to maintain their hegemonic position and their own national interests.

4. Significance of adhering to the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests

4.1. Theoretical significance: innovate diplomatic theories towards Africa and enrich diplomatic connotation with Chinese characteristics

The principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests inherits and develops the value orientation of morality comes first and the dialectical thought of greater good and shared interests is of vital importance, and the international moral concept of "making all nations live together peacefully" in the excellent traditional Chinese culture, which it draws on and sublimes the norms of international relations, reflects the common adherence to international codes of conduct, the universal pursuit of international fairness and justice, and the collective recognition of global common development.^[10]

The proposal to the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests will help to dispel African countries' doubts about the rapidly developing China. The rising China will still firmly stand with Africa and other developing countries, and assume more responsibilities and obligations.

The principles of the greater good and shared interests has enriched the concept of major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. After President Xi Jinping first put forward the principles during his visit to Africa, at the diplomatic work forum on neighboring countries held in October 2013, he proposed that "we should find common ground and intersection of interests, adhere to the principles of the greater good and shared interests, having principles, valuing friendship and morality, and provide more help to developing countries within our capacity" , which raise the principles of the greater good and shared interests to the height of the basic policy of neighboring diplomacy and diplomacy of developing countries. In July 2014, during his visit to the South Korea, President Xi expanded adherence to the principles of the greater good and shared interest to the diplomatic values that should be followed in handling all international relations. In November 2014, at the *Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs*, the principles of the greater good and shared interests was included in the concept of "major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics". The principles of the greater good and shared interests has enriched Marxist diplomatic theory, developed the theoretical system of major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, demonstrated China's sense of responsibility and responsibility as a major country, enhanced China's diplomatic voice and soft power, and contributed to the construction of a community with a shared future for China and Africa, as well as a community with a shared future for mankind.

4.2. Practical significance: promoting the comprehensive development of China Africa relations

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, under the circumstances of its own economic hardship, China made every effort to help Africa in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and racism, and regarded this as its international responsibility, making an important contribution to promoting the decolonization process in Africa. In the 1980s and 1990s, China adhered to the principle of putting the greater good first and paid attention to both the greater good and shared interests. Under the guidance of the ideology of equality, mutual benefit and common development, China carried out cooperation with Africa, and China -Africa economic and trade relations continued to develop. After Entering the 21st century, China's cooperation with Africa is in full swing. Following the Tanzania Zambia Railway, China's largest aid project to Africa, the African Union Center built with 800 million yuan of assistance, fully witnessed the profound friendship between China and Africa, and also reflected the moral value of China's adherence to putting the greater good first and valuing friendship in its cooperation with Africa.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, under the guidance of the important principles of the greater good and shared interests, China- Africa relations have developed comprehensively and rapidly. China-Africa cooperation has continued to deepen and consolidate, political mutual trust has continued to strengthen, economic cooperation has accelerated, people-to-people and cultural exchanges have been effectively promoted, ecological protection cooperation has been expanding, and peace and security cooperation has been deepening. China has strengthened exchanges of experience in governance with Africa, and deepened cooperation in digital economy, climate change, security, and international affairs. China's cooperation with Africa truly aims to advance our shared interests, with putting morality and the greater good first. In 2014, after Ebola epidemic broke out in west Africa, China took the lead in providing large-scale and intensive assistance. Many countries withdrew their investment and overseas nationals on a large scale, while Chinese diplomats, medical teams and other Chinese personnel chose to stick to it, sharing weal and woe with the people in the affected areas. After the outbreak of COVID-19 in Africa, China immediately gave its support, providing full assistance by delivering anti epidemic materials, dispatching medical expert teams, sharing anti epidemic experience and other means. China has repeatedly spoken for Africa on international occasions and called on the international community to increase its support for Africa's peace and development. China's cooperation with Africa is "faithful" and keeps its promises. The "ten major cooperation plans" and "eight major actions" have been fully implemented. China has helped Africa improve people's livelihood, improve Africa's "hematopoietic"

function, and help Africa achieve sustainable development. China actively implements the solemn commitment made by President Xi Jinping at the Special Summit on China-Africa Solidarity and Anti epidemic, that "after the new COVID-19 vaccines is completed and put into use, China is willing to take the lead in benefiting African countries". By November 2021,

China has provided nearly 200 million doses of vaccines to 53 African countries and the AU Commission. Chinese enterprises are also actively cooperating with African enterprises in the joint production of COVID-19 vaccines in Africa. China has actively implemented the debt relief initiative for Africa, reducing the interest free loan debt of 15 African countries by the end of 2020, signed debt relief agreements or reached consensus with 19 African countries, which is the country with the largest amount of debt relief among G20 members.^[11]

5. Conclusion

To sum up, in the new era, the Party Central Committee scientifically grasps the era background of China-Africa relations, has a deep insight into the opportunities and challenges faced by the development of China-Africa relations, adheres to the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests in the exchanges with Africa, and continues to expand the extension of the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests, and innovate and enrich the connotation of China's distinctive major country diplomacy in the new era. The principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests is conducive to enhancing China's diplomatic morality and image, promoting the comprehensive development of China-Africa relations, and promoting the construction of a community of shared future between China and Africa.

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