

Peace Operations: Is China a Responsible Member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)?

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Abstract

Study investigated whether or not China is a responsible member of the United Nations Security Council using her actions in Peace keeping Operations as a yardstick to measure her performances. Study used secondary data sources, and adopted thematic/content descriptive analysis. The theory of a responsible power, for the purpose of this paper, is viewed from two major perspectives, first relates to responsibility of a powerful state within the international system and then to the most important definition of responsible state from the domestic standpoint. Although China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), working for the promotion of global peace and security through international best practices, its UNSC roles seem to contrast with its national interests and domestic practices, especially with reference to respect for human rights. Owing to its human rights abuses domestically, damning reports from human rights' groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, classify China as an irresponsible power. In spite of these criticisms, however, China believes its approach mirrors its desire to secure its national interests without compromising its critical roles as a responsible member of the UNSC, a duty it considers vital for any responsible state. Consequently, therefore, the paper contends that how China conducts itself within the UN peace operations frameworks is in tandem with actualising its national interests. Evidence from field operations suggest that China has played a modest role as a responsible power in these operations, albeit in a way that supports the pursuit of its economically driven national interests. The paper concludes that China's peace operations efforts at the international level are therefore proactively initiated where China's national interests are pursued in its foreign policy arena therefore making her a responsible member of the UNSC.

Keywords: China, National Interest, Responsible Power, United Nations Security Council.

Introduction

The provisions of the United Nations Charter, especially Chapter VII allowing conflict resolution by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and recently developed human security dictums, like the 'responsibility to protect', 'humanitarian intervention', are usually invoked while intervening in conflict-ridden areas by the United Nations (UN). Traditionally, these interventions, in the forms of UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs), were administered using small troops with light armament, often provided by Western powers and deployed to peacekeeping missions where conflicting parties had agreed to a ceasefire. However, modern conflicts have changed. Its nature is intra-state, and faces difficulty in reaching a ceasefire between warring parties, and getting their consent during wars. As fighting may still be ongoing in some instances, the nature of modern conflicts requires not only larger troops deployment but more broad tactics and efforts, a multidimensional peace operation. PKOs now also embrace international peacebuilding operations (IPBOs). The complexity of modern peace missions requires larger peacekeepers, more heavily armed troops and 'enabler units' with a view to protecting civilians, disarming combatants, train local police and render other expertise service and build institutions and peace (Mariani 2011: 1).

While (Western) dominant states used to provide a large portion of the funds and troops to these traditional peace missions, their experiences in Vietnam and Somalia, coupled with dissent on procedures leading to PKOs have led the West not only shrinking their contributions to such operations, but also to them relying on other platforms like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) while trying to enforce peace by 'all necessary means'. This has given room to developing countries like China to play more significant roles in UNPKOs and IPBOs. China is the only developing country in the UNSC, and *ipso facto*, earns developing countries' support for legitimacy in such platforms. Since

it rose to major power status in the 1980s, it has differed on some occasions from the Western dominant powers on how international peace and security under the UN framework should be embraced and conducted. Due to the prevalence of economic priorities in China's activities,¹ one might argue, therefore, that China's role in UNPKOs and IPBOs, which is philosophically different from that of the West, is geared towards attaining China's economic interests, just as some Western powers do while embarking on peace missions through the UNSC and its adjoining bodies. A careful observation, however, shows that China gets involved in peace operations for other reasons. And in attaining these objectives, China does not abuse its UNSC position. It merely attempts to meet its own national interests where possible and make contributions to international peace processes where it is affordable to China to do so. China thus strikes a balance between national interest(s) and international peace efforts.

China's options in these peace processes are based on strategic preferences, a product of carefully conceived ideas that influence China's foreign policy (including PKOs) actions (Yang 2013). Thus, China attempts to position itself as a responsible power that contributes to peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes in the UNSC for peace and development. Consequently, China adopts a balanced, and somewhat equidistance policy option that uses cautionary and courteous relationships to settle disputes between parties in dispute on the one hand, and between parties in dispute and 'interventionists forces' especially the UNSC on the other hand. This gives China the image of a constructive responsible power having 'greater flexibility' in resolving global conflicts and managing actors involved while attempting to build peace. It may be understood as a modest policy of fairness to all, injustice by China to none.

Against this background, this essay interrogates the roles of China as a responsible power in the UNSC in peacekeeping and peacebuilding since the 1980s. The next section examines the concept of a responsible power vis-à-vis China's role in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. This is followed by an interrogation of the ways China contributes to peace efforts in the UNSC, while the last section concludes the essay.

Conceptual Framework: The Notion of a Responsible State Power

Concepts in international relations are often subjects of many interpretations. As a result of these multiple interpretations, the notion of a responsible power can thus be gleaned from a number of perspectives. The notion of a responsible power, for the purpose of this paper, will be viewed from two major perspectives. The first relates to responsibility of a powerful state within the international system. A responsible power is an influential state that use and deploys its power and capabilities in collaboration with other states in the promotion and preservation of peace, security and development within existing international norms and best practices and institutions, and without recourse to outright and violent competition with other powers and/or suspicion by other powerful states in the international system. Put differently, the notion of a responsible power is that of an influential state within the international system which has the capacity to follow an independent course of action and policy choices irrespective of the power of others but which chooses to pursue less hostile and generally perceived cooperative policies that are in the interests of the international system. Such policies are pursued with reference to respect for existing international norms, promotion of inter-state cooperation and collaborative endeavours state ours in the preservation of international peace and security.

While this notion finds resonance in the activities of powerful states when they relate with one another, it is not without its limitation. Central to its limitation is that fact that these norms and practices draw from the primacy of the assumption of the quality of the values of certain dominant states over other equally relevant but less compelling values within the international system. The adoption of certain norms as global, therefore, always raises critical questions about the universality of such norms and practises within the international relations. Nevertheless, these dominant values often trump those from poorer and weaker states and develop into what eventually becomes the normative principles for state to state relations within the international system. The development global norms in this manner

¹ Some analysts have seen China's overall efforts in global affairs from the China's economic interest's point of view. See Bjørkum 2005; Mearsheimer 2006.

are rooted in the doctrine of the power politics schools – realism and neorealism. According to Hedley Bull, this is the foundation of an international society. In Foot (2001:2), Bull contends that,

International society exists when a group of powerful states recognises that it shares certain common interests from which limited rules of coexistence can be derived, and exhibits a willingness to share in the workings of institutions that maintain those arrangements. Importantly, international society in this formulation acknowledges diversity in values but a set of reciprocal interests.

Although limited in scope and controversial in its arguments, this operational doctrine defined international relations for states since the end of the Second World War (WWII). Consequently, the concept of a responsible state developed immediately after the Second World War with reference to the United Nations Charter. According to the Article 2 of the UN Charter, states that acknowledge and respect the principles of this Article, including the sovereign equality of states, the norm of non-interference in other states domestic affairs and reliance on pacific settlement of disputes, are regarded as responsible states. Evolving powers in the succeeding decades in the international system queue up behind the drawers of the UN Charter.

Secondly and very important is the definition of a responsible power from the domestic point of view. This is important because while it mirrors the proportional level of a state's elements of power vis-à-vis other states, it helps in turn to contextualise the power of such a state within the international system. Responsible power in this sense is two sides of a coin. On the one hand, it translates to a state's ability to address its local needs and ensure the attainment of these domestic needs, the interests of the country's population. On the heels of the concepts such as collapsed, weak, fragile, failed, failing and vulnerable states, that are used to describe many states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, a responsible power does more than overcome these basic challenges but also ensure steady economic growth and development; having a measure of economic might that could be wielded internationally. For some analysts, the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), the Asian Tiger and the emerging economies whose economies account for a significant portion of the global economy are attaining responsible states status. On the other hand, a responsible power represents a state that has the ability to translate the aggregation of its elements of power and national interests into foreign policy decisions that the state is able to pursue and achieve to a certain degree using every instrument of power within its reach, including diplomacy, but without unsettling extant international order. A responsible power in international relations thus refers to a state with the ability and capability to be able to withstand its core roles and duties, including the protection of its sovereignty and population from internal and external attacks and the provision of the basic necessities of their populations, to its citizens and is able to pursue its foreign policy without jeopardy to international order.

It is in the light of the above that China's involvements as a permanent (P5) member of the UNSC in the UN peace operations is explored below.

China and the Concept of a Responsible Power in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

Though some elements of Mao's regime continued with China in the first decade in the UNSC, succeeding Deng Xiaoping's regime exhibited some changes, which represented a greater engagement in China's foreign policy with international affairs and away from passivity and scepticism of the earlier years. With reforms, China learned the ropes in diplomacy, international law and multilateral relations (Kim 1995; Yang 2013). Even though China still felt greatly unsatisfied with the prevailing global order, it desires to peacefully transform but not eager to suddenly overturn it. PRC began to play more active and responsible roles in the UN since the 1980s. Dating China's involvement in the UN, and the UNPKOs in particular, to the 1980s is instructive. According to Chan (2006: 73-4), 'the 1980s witnessed a golden decade in China's accession to international treaties'². China moved from global isolation to active participation and developing a voting behaviour at the UNSC. Domestically, the 1980s marked the beginning of an era of unprecedented economic turnaround; a development that has

²See Kim 1990; Kim 1995; and Yang 2013.

continued to challenge United States-led Western-dominated global economy. China's foreign policy and peace efforts are predicated on fundamental principles of state sovereignty (and territory protection from external interference especially as it concerns Taiwan), maintenance of geo-strategic balance and national security, promotion of economic and political interests, and a favourable international image (Yang 2013: 61). It uses discipline, independent stance, consistent and balanced behaviour, even though some level of inconsistency and immaturity are observable, to address international conflicts at the UNSC.

Table 1

China's foreign policy goals and strategies in pre-reform and reform eras

	<i>Pre-reform era (1949-77)</i>	<i>Reform Era (1978-2002)</i>
<i>Themes</i>	War and Revolution	Peace and Reform
<i>Goals</i>	Security, independence, status	Peaceful International environment, independence, status
<i>Means</i>	Alliance, united Front	Balance of power, multilateralism
<i>Strategies</i>	1) Leaning to one side 2) Fighting with two fists 3) United front	1) Independent and pragmatic diplomacy 2) Keeping moderate profile while making contributions 3) Accommodating and hedging
<i>Characteristics</i>	World revolution Revisionist Political military orientation Communist ideology and dogma	World peace Status quo Economic orientation Realist pragmatism and flexibility

Source (*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vols. II and III, Jiang Zemin Report at the National Congress of the CCP as cited in Yang 2013: 91).

As Deng Xiaoping's policy of peace and development shows (see table 1 above), it 'served as the basis and guideline for Chinese domestic as well as foreign policies and has enabled China's economic development to take off' (He Fang cited in Yang 2013: 90). According to Chan, China's 'three worlds' theory by Mao Zedong 'has given way to an independent foreign policy and then to peace and development, evolving into something that is multi-level, multi-faceted and omni-directional, aimed at winning friends from all over the world' (Chan 2008: 87). China came to be seen more as a 'system maintainer', even a 'system exploiter', than a 'system challenger' from the 1970s and early 1980s onward (Rosemary 2001: 8).

China, thus, approaches complex global affairs with caution conscious of the likely threats its rise might pose to extant global order under Western hegemony (Steahle 2006:7; Munro and Bernstein 1997; Ross 1997; Shambaugh, 1996 and Chan 2008). China douses this tension by arguing that its rise is not only peaceful, but also geared towards a harmonious world – Chinese leadership's carefully conceived philosophical notion of global transformation for global peace and development (Xintian 2006). In a bid to demonstrate this, China pursues what it deems balance and fair in the interests of peace and development as captured in Deng Xiaoping's five principles including: peaceful coexistence among (all) states, non-interference in (their) domestic affairs, non-use of force in maintaining international peace and security, an independent foreign policy of peace and anti-hegemonism (Yang 2013: 91). These are attributes that China preaches and adopts while relating with other states and powers within the UN and the UNSC respectively.

The concept of responsible state has undergone some transformations. While it initially represented states that abide by international standards as set out in the UN Charter in terms of the principles of equality of states and respect for sovereignty, modern meaning captures states that act responsibly to protect individual rights across the globe, willingness by states to promote human security within them and the fostering of legitimate forms of representation through democratic governance on people among others (Foot 2000: 9). China has merely adjusted itself to these changes and continued in its drive for global peace and development, even though its human rights and

governance system slightly differ from global norm. The responsibility this places on China accounts for why Robert Zoellick (2005: 6), at the diplomatic discussion between China and the US, calls on China to become a responsible stakeholder in the international system as this is critical to how China will use its huge influence. It must be stressed that China's consciousness of its role as a responsible actor in global affairs predates this period. Premier Zhu Rongji noted in 1999 that 'China was not only a responsible economic player but also a political one in upholding justice and peace' (Richardson 2011:288). Therefore, 'great [and responsible] powers [like China] formed the core of international society not only because they shared important interests and could generate a set of rules, but because they were capable of passing these rules on to others within the system' (Foot 2001: 4).

While China adjusts to international norms on peace efforts since the late 1980s, it never lost sight of its domestic interests. For this reason, China might be seen as a two-phased actor: one, China is willing to play by global normative rules for international peace, that is, a responsible power to the international system. And two, desirous of attaining and sustaining economic development at home, what China needs for global relevance and influence for it to be seen also as responsible to its domestic population. Both are co-jointly pursued by China in most of the peacekeeping and peacebuilding roles in the UNSC. Thus, for China, responsible PKO is a high-profile, cross-cutting matter, weaving together several issues, from push for resources abroad, to its relationships with other states, to its projection of military power and national development. Consequently, China's growing peacekeeping presence brings about greater attention to other issues in the purview of its foreign and security policies (Richardson 2011: 286).

Peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes by the UN predate China's participation³ in the process but have continued to evolve even after China gained membership of the UNSC. The application of any peacekeeping operations is usually predicated on three essential ground norms: consent of the parties to the crisis; principle of impartiality; and non-use of force as well as an establishment of a cease-fire (Boutros-Ghali 1992; Steahle 2006 and Yang 2013: 82). Peacebuilding, which embraces more than traditional peacekeeping, was coined after the Brahimi report of 2000. It covers 'the use of a wider spectrum of security, civilian, administrative, political, humanitarian, human rights and economic tools and interventions to build the foundations for sustainable peace in post-conflict countries' (Mariani 2011: 5). As a member of the UNSC, whose major role is the preservation of international peace without the use of force, in a world that is enmeshed in intractable conflicts, China embraces and advocates that these conditions be met while intervening in conflict areas. China's permanent membership in the UNSC has enabled China to make this and other contributions to debates and decision-making processes on issues concerning international peace and security.

Richardson (2011: 288-289) argues that there are four ways in which China has been able to frame the discourse on peacekeeping as a responsible power. 'First, China is able to proactively frame the discourse regarding its role in peacekeeping, instead of having conceptions of peacekeeping and China's role dictated to it'. Secondly, China can pursue independent and aloofness policy free from Western influence. Thirdly, China can semantically update its critique of the existing international order to resonate with evolving conceptions of the system. Since this is bound to gain the support of other developing states, it becomes a useful phraseology for China. And finally, the usefulness of responsible power 'allows China to note that it is an atypical great power, emphasizing its 'peaceful development' and intention not to destabilize international politics for the sake of its own narrow national interests'. A People's Liberation Army (PLA) strategic thinker, Major General Peng Guangqian, clearly highlights this point: '[u]nlike some Western countries, China does not take advantage of peacekeeping to push national interests in other countries' (Richardson 2011: 289). It may be said, therefore, that China acts responsibly to protect its interests and in fairness to other actors.

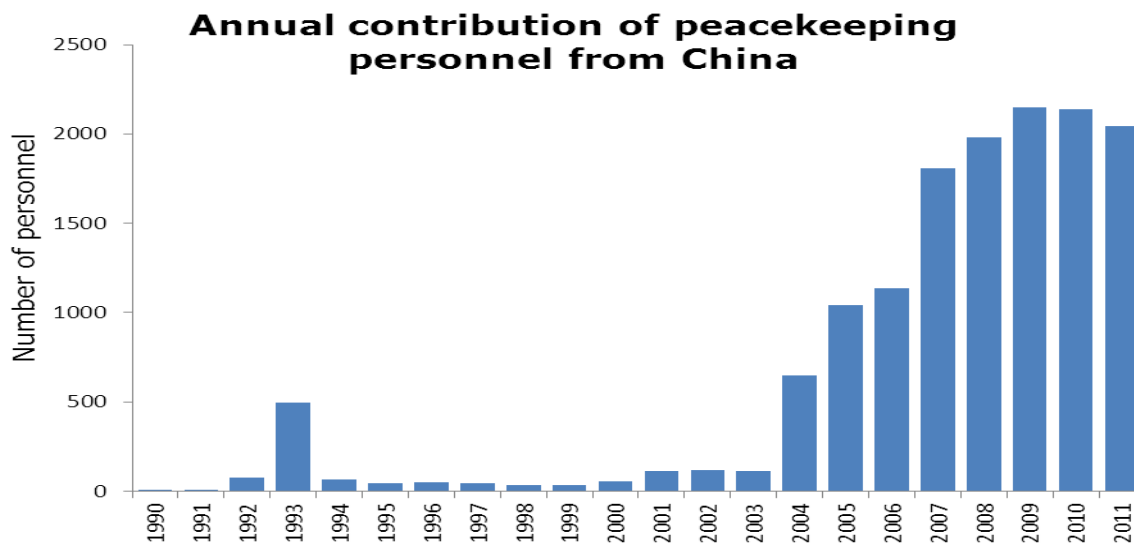
Interrogating China's Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Responsibilities in the UNSC

³ The first peacekeeping operation of the UN, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), was established for the Suez Crisis of 1956. See Diehl as cited in Steahle 2006.

China uses ‘peaceful language’ and adherence to international relations principles to prove it is a responsible P-5 member. According to Staehle (2006:10), China has always insisted on the inviolability of state sovereignty and non-interference in states’ internal affairs and the preservation of the Westphalian state system. China uses less provocative language while working with other UNSC members in dealing with conflict-related issues. In 2005, for example, President Hu Jintao announced that China would endorse a ‘comprehensive strategy featuring prevention, peace restoration, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction’ peacefully (Huang 2011: 259). The careful gauging and amendment of authority statements using terms such as ‘harmonious world’, ‘peaceful rise’ and ‘responsible power’, capture China’s strategic outlook and emphasize its commitment to a peaceful international environment (Richardson 2011: 287). China’s use of such language and statements conforms to its responsible behaviour that preserves international norms in international peace processes. In the Gulf War between Iraq and Kuwait in 1990-1991, China used this kind of language to rationalise why it abstained from Security Council Resolution (SCR) 678. Rather than vote for or veto the resolution, Qian Qichen, China’s foreign minister, called for caution and peaceful resolution of the conflict rather than the force eventually adopted and used by the UNSC under the US (Yang 2013: 88).

According to Mariani (2011), China ranks 15th in the world and largest among the UNSC P-5 contributing troops to the UNPKOs. The figure below shows China’s contribution to UNPKOs between the years 1990 and 2011.

Figure 1



Source: Bernardo Mariana 2011.

To show its willingness, as a responsible member of the UNSC, to pursue peaceful peacekeeping efforts, China joined a number of UN peace arrangements and committees. It joined the UN Standby Arrangement system in 2002, where ‘the Ministry of Defence has a 525-strong engineering battalion, a 25-strong medical unit and two 160-strong transport companies on standby and ready for deployment with other UN forces within 90 days’ (Huang 2011: 263). Even though China is yet to provide combat troops to the UNSC operations, China has improved peacekeeping and peacebuilding through expert troop deployments. These expert troops are usually sought after but in short supply which makes these troops very valuable to peace processes.

China became a member of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in 1988. After a year, China deployed 20 military observers to the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) to help monitor Namibian elections, five military observers to the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East and 400 engineering troops and 49 military observers to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) (Huang 2011: 258). It is estimated that Chinese peacekeepers and enabler units (engineers, military observers, transport and logistical support units,

civilian police and medical staff) have altogether built or repaired 8,000 km of roads and more than 230 bridges, dismantled 8,700 mines and explosives, transported 4,300,000 tonnes of goods and provided medical treatment for more than 60,000 patients. China's contributions to troop deployment have increased twenty-fold since 2000, it was the first P-5 member to deploy troops (315) to Sudan in 2006 (Huang 2011). China has boosted its peacekeeping credentials further by establishing a Civilian Peacekeeping Police Training Centre in Hebei Province in August 2000 and a new peacekeeping centre for the training of Chinese military peacekeepers, which became operational in Huairou in November 2009. A sum of 1,569 police officers had been deployed in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Liberia, Sudan and Haiti. These troops have had no casualties, no discipline violations and never left in the middle of a mission (although 8 Chinese peacekeepers died in the Haiti earth quake on 13 January 2010). China has indeed made great contributions to regional and international peace operations (Zhou Lei 2011).

Not only that, China ranks seventh among the top providers of financial contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. It provides about 3 percent of the peacekeeping budget and a total of US\$3 million to the UN Peacebuilding Fund from 2007 to 2009 according to the UN Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office (Huang 2011).

China has also played important roles in interstate diplomacy and acted as a channel for peace negotiations between and among states as well as warring parties. In November 2006, with the humanitarian situation worsening in Sudan, 'China's Ambassador to the UN, Wang Guangya, was widely credited with gaining Sudanese acceptance of the UN/AU hybrid peacekeeping force of 20,000 troops in Darfur' (Huang 2011). Yang (2013: 84) argues that, in the Iraq-Kuwait Gulf War, China's President, Yang Shangkun, engaged in a lot of diplomacy with Iraq on the one hand and the UNSC on the other hand, so also are the diplomatic efforts of former Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) Ambassador to the United Nations, Li Daoyu. China engaged in 'peace diplomacy' with countries in the Middle East and Asia. For these different diplomatic roles, former President Clinton described China's global and regional roles as being remarkable as China convinced North Korea to halt plutonium production and refrain from further missile tests, and helped avert nuclear confrontation in South Asia in 1998 (Foot 2013: 13).

Unlike other members of the UNSC from the West that merely kowtow to the US line of thoughts on peace efforts, especially on peace enforcement, China follows independent lines of thought and action. China advocates adherence to the principles of international law in peace processes and follows an independent line of action. Even though this remains reactive and non-assertive, it provides an alternative to the undiluted Western domination from which the issue could be examined and understood. In spite of China's material and political limitations, it was the only country that criticized US motives and alleged selfish interests in the Gulf region (Yang 2013: 89). However, China douses suspicion and tension by behaviour that signals an intention for peace. China demonstrated this by joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the 1990s, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and accepted the safeguards, reporting requirements and inspection systems that went with them. China no longer provides assistance to pariah states like Iran in its nuclear program or sold anti-ship cruise missiles to it. China has also halted assistance to Pakistan's nuclear facilities (Foot 2013: 13).

It may be appropriate, at this juncture, to interrogate the motivation behind China's roles in peacekeeping and peacebuilding as a responsible member of the UNSC. Furthermore, does China have a proactive measure or it merely reacts to UNSC obligatory responsibilities in response to threats to peace in tandem with global norms? A reactive China simply means that it does not place high premium on peacekeeping and peacebuilding, but is motivated by other factors, especially its national (economic) interest(s). Whereas, a proactive China places primacy on global peace by ensuring that peace mechanisms are either initiated or supported in the overall interest of global peace and harmony. Without gainsaying, evidence above has indicated that China contributes largely to global peace in many ways. However, it may be seen that there are some proactive and reactive roles in China's peace efforts; both of these define China's roles, aspirations and expectations in peace processes.

It must be borne in mind that in taking proactive initiative to address threats to peace, China intends to achieve its national interests, just as the West behaves. Only that unlike the West, China may

not be described as pursuing a realist hegemonic ambition. Instead, it balances its interests with international peace objectives. This is because, one, China understands the importance of aligning its interests with these emerging global conventions because active participation in peacekeeping helps to burnish China's image, standing and reputation (Huang 2011: 260). Two, these activities, broadly defined, are non-traditional security issues and their growing importance parallel the PLA's interest in mobilising its resources and preparing for military operations other than war (MOOTW) both at home and abroad, a 'new historic mission' the PLA should achieve in 'peacekeeping, anti-piracy missions, rescue-and-relief operations, counterterrorism exercises, post-conflict reconstruction, energy security and climate change dialogues', which are 'major components of China's increasingly complex and dynamic international strategy' (*Ibid*: 261). For these reasons, China does not only participate in UNSC peacekeeping but goes further into bilateral peace efforts with other states like Russia (Peace Mission 2005) and Cambodia. UNSC PKOs and IPBOs are part of China's multilateral rather than unilateral solutions to global security challenges. Its peacekeeping training centre, which has simulation rooms, shooting and driving ranges and simulated UN peacekeeping camps and demining training grounds facilities, is used for Chinese troops' pre-deployment training and serves as the main venue for international peacekeeping exchanges. Consequently, China, its enabler units on the UNPKOs have benefited from peacekeeping by gaining local security management and 'more knowledge about logistics, ports of debarkation, lines of communication, lines of operation, operational intelligence, local "atmospherics" and modus operandi and means of sustaining forces in Africa over prolonged periods' (*Ibid*: 261-262).

Again, China does not get involved in peacekeeping for peace purposes alone. China's effort to restore peace to country in conflict may depend on whether the state is willing to adopt policies acceptable to Beijing (Foot 2001: 7). China's role in the UNSC may also be tied to the issue of Taiwan.⁴Peacekeeping and peacebuilding abroad provide the Chinese leadership with the opportunities to globalise its national interests, access global resources, especially energy, for commercial opportunities that will continuously 'fuel China's industrialisation' (Chan, 2008:84). China's presence through the UNSC peace processes in Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo can be seen in this light. Indeed, the press reports that 'Chinese peacekeeping troops also collaborate with Chinese institutions and organizations in the country of residence to protect the rightful interests of Chinese people and companies' (Shan 2010). This is coupled with the accusations of willingness by China to work with less democratic regimes, and a conservative, principled stance regarding intervention. This suggests that peacekeeping activities facilitate China's search for foreign resources. However, it may be added that the relationship between economic activity and peacekeeping participation in the face of humanitarian concerns as well as China's desire for international peace is more nuanced than it might appear.

China also tries to court all parties involved in conflict. In the Sudanese case, China rendered assistance to the parties to the conflict in the North and South. Beijing's agreements with Sudan, under which China buys more than 60 per cent of Sudan's oil output that accounts for more than six per cent of China's oil imports (Sun 2010), must have had huge influence on why China vetoed many sanctions against Sudan. At the cusp of the split, China established diplomatic ties with Juba, the new capital city of South Sudan, so as to safeguard its oil interest in the oil-rich South Sudan territory. It can, therefore, be said that Chinese peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts are motivated by factors including gaining operational experience, addressing domestic economic and security concerns, adapting to military diplomacy and displaying a reorienting of China's role in the international system (Richardson 2011).

Conclusion

This paper examines the ways in which China's actions in the UN peace operations can be viewed within the prism of a responsible power concept as a P5 member of the UNSC since its active

⁴China objects to authorising UN peacekeeping missions in countries that recognise Taiwan. China vetoed peace mission in Guatemala in 1997; vetoed the continuation of UN Preventive Deployment in Macedonia (UNPREDEP) in 1999; and withdrew its troops from Haiti rescue mission in 2010. See Huang 2011.

involvement in the 1980s. It gathered that although China is a major and responsible power in the UN, it acts both proactively and reactively, depending on where its interests align with international norms and principles. The need to meet international obligations without compromising local interests causes China to strive to maintain a delicate balance between its national interests and the onerous obligations of a P5 member of the UNSC. China's peace operations efforts at the international level are therefore proactively initiated where China's national interests are pursued in its foreign policy arena. It is observable that China's allies like Omar al Bashir's Sudan has benefited from Chinese support to the UN mission. The generous monetary and materiel assistance from China to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid peacekeeping mission in Sudan is a reference point here. However, Chinese peace mission interventions may also be seen as a reaction to UNSC initiatives. In cases like these China has either absconded from influencing major decision on the state involved or withdrawn its support for the mission. Whichever way China goes, it carefully weighs its options and deploys actions that might have positive implications for itself as a state that is willing to sustain the tempo of its power and simultaneously remain as a peace enabler within the existing framework of the international community. It is therefore not unimaginable to perceive China as a country that speaks peace, although mostly in rhetorical terms, and adopts a benign, balanced policy action at the global level.

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