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COOPERATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA WITH COUNTRIES OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IN THE MILITARY SPHERE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research paper is to investigate the collaboration between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and African nations in the military domain, examining the impact of ideological, socio-economic, international, and other elements.

Scientific novelty. Based on documents and historiographical materials, the study analyzes the stages of development, characteristics, and content of the PRC's military cooperation with African countries.

Conclusions. The PRC's with African countries has gone through a long and complex path. The first stage (late 1950s – mid-1970s) coincided with the rise of national liberation struggles in Africa, and China's involvement had an ideological character.

The second stage, (late 1970s – 1990s) witnessed a transition to commercialization, but faced limitations due to resource constraints, low-quality weaponry, and concerns about relations with Western investors. However, cooperation with Western corporations to modernize the military-industrial complex and develop new weapons was disrupted by the events in Tiananmen Square in 1989. Instead, cooperation with Russia in the defense field intensified, which allowed China to update the military-industrial complex and develop new weapons systems. However, due to their low quality, they did not stand up to competition, particularly in the African arms market. From the mid-1990s, China involved European and American corporations in modernization process, under the condition of potential export opportunities.

The third stage of cooperation began in the early 2000s and continues to this day. China has significantly expanded its military cooperation with African countries through various military training programs, participation in international arms exhibitions, arms loans, military equipment sales, and involvement in UN peacekeeping missions. Deepening military cooperation strengthens China's position in Africa and increases its competitive advantage not only in the African arms market.

Keywords: Africa, PRC, cooperation, arms, equipment

СПІВПРАЦЯ КИТАЙСЬКОЇ НАРОДНОЇ РЕСПУБЛІКИ З КРАЇНАМИ АФРИКАНСЬКОГО КОНТИНЕНТУ У ВІЙСЬКОВІЙ СФЕРІ

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Мета статті – дослідити співпрацю Китайської Народної Республіки з країнами Африки у військовій сфері, проаналізувати вплив на неї ідеологічних, соціально-економічних, міжнародних та інших чинників.

Наукова новизна: на основі документів та історіографічних матеріалів комплексно проаналізовано етапи становлення, особливості та зміст співпраці КНР з країнами Африки у військовій сфері.

Висновки. Співробітництво КНР з країнами Африки у військовій сфері пройшло тривалий і складний шлях. Перший етап (кінець 1950-х – середина 1970-х років) збігся з піднесенням національно-визвольної боротьби в Африці. Співпраця Китаю мала ідеологічний характер.

На другому етапі (кінець 1970-х – 1990-ті) відбувся перехід до комерціалізації, але він зіткнувся з обмеженістю ресурсів, низькою якістю зброї та занепокоєнням щодо відносин із західними інвесторами. Проте співпраця із західними корпораціями з модернізації військово-промислового комплексу та розробки нової зброї була зірвана подіями на площі Тяньаньмень у 1989 р. Натомість активізувалася співпраця з Росією в оборонній сфері, що дозволило Китаю оновити свій військово-промисловий комплекс і розробити нові системи озброєння. Однак через низьку якість вони не витримували конкуренції, зокрема на африканському ринку зброї. З середини 1990-х років Китай залучив європейські й американські корпорації до процесу модернізації за умови потенційних експортних можливостей.

Третій етап співпраці розпочався на початку 2000-х років і триває досі. Китай значно розширив військову співпрацю з африканськими країнами через різноманітні програми військової підготовки, участь у міжнародних виставках озброєнь, кредитування продажу зброї та військової техніки, участь у миротворчих місіях ООН. Поглиблення військового співробітництва зміцнює позиції Китаю в Африці та підвищує його конкурентну перевагу не лише на африканському ринку зброї.

Ключові слова: Африка, КНР, співробітництво, зброя, техніка

INTRODUCTION

The Russian Federation's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, commencing on February 24, 2022, provided a striking display of the «second army of the world's» true capabilities and the overwhelming superiority of Western weapon models effectively employed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Consequently, a fierce competition is anticipated among arms-exporting nations in the post-war arms market. Given that the military-industrial complexes of the United States and their NATO allies will be occupied primarily fulfilling defensive orders to replenish their depleted armed forces and enhance Ukraine's defense capabilities post-Russia's defeat, China is positioned to seize opportunities in this market, particularly in Africa. China's longstanding traditions of cooperation with African countries underscore the importance of analyzing the historical development, peculiarities, and significance of its collaboration in this sphere.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of contemporary historiography indicates a growing scholarly interest in various aspects of Sino-African Military Cooperation, particularly in the military sphere. Researchers such as Judith van de Looy¹ from the Dutch African Studies Centre in Leiden and Oleksii Volovych² from the Ukrainian Independent Analytical Center for Geopolitical Studies «Borysfen Intel» have conducted a short historical overview of Sino-African relations, shedding light on their current state, including military cooperation. Similarly, Cullen S. Hendrix³, a Senior Research Associate at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, and Andrew Hull and David Markov⁴ from the Institute for Defense Analyses have focused their publications on the specifics of China's arms supply to African countries. Notably, Robert La Terza⁵, the Undergraduate Program Coordinator at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, United States, has also contributed significantly to the understanding of this issue.

Addressing the impact of Chinese arms imports on African countries, Luke Encarnation⁶ from the Center for Security Studies at Georgetown University and Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury from the Center for Global Development at Boston University have offered valuable insights, as presented in «The Economic Times»⁷. Moreover, scholars like Hans Spross⁸, Roman Kot⁹, and Volodymyr Zabrodskyi¹⁰ have examined various aspects of China's contemporary policies in military and military-technical cooperation with African countries. China's economic cooperation within international regional organizations is represented by the works of Anatoliy Khudoliy¹¹ and Oleg Kravets¹².

Furthermore, the significance of China's expanding relations with African countries and its potential consequences for the national security of the United States have been

¹ Van de Looy J. Africa and China: A Strategic Partnership? *ASC Working Paper 67/2006*. African Studies Centre Leiden, The Netherlands, 2006. 28 p. URL: <https://www.ascleiden.nl/pdf/wp67.pdf>

² Волович О. Африканська політика Китаю. Незалежний аналітичний центр геополітичних досліджень «Борисфен Інтел». 2019.07.18. URL: <http://bintel.com.ua/uk/article/afrykanska-polityka-kytayu/>

³ Hendrix C.S. Arms and influence? Chinese arms transfers to Africa in context. *Peterson Institute for International Economics* (PIIE). 2020. July 15. URL: <https://bit.ly/3NLF7qX>

⁴ Hull A., Markov D. Chinese arms sales to Africa. *IDA.org. Research notes*. 2012. URL: <https://bit.ly/48rhLyW>

⁵ La Terza R. Chinese Arms Sales to Africa: Growing Market Share and Transfer Controls Gaps. *Dlog*. 2019. December 19. 29 p. URL: <https://bit.ly/3TIWuwv>

⁶ Encarnation L. Assessing the Impact of Chinese Arms in Africa. *Georgetown Security Studies Review*. 2021. April 20. URL: <https://bit.ly/4aBdLOa>

⁷ Chaudhury D.R. China expands defence supplies with African states. *The Economic Times*. 2022. May 12. URL: <https://bit.ly/3RlCdV1>

⁸ Spross H. Why has China invited African army chiefs to Beijing? *Deutsche Welle*. 2018. June 29. URL: <https://bit.ly/41E4Uae>

⁹ Кот Р. Більше ніж економіка. Китай нарощує оборонне співробітництво з країнами Африки. *Китай поглинає Африку*. Strategic Group Sofia, 2018. URL: <https://sg-sofia.com.ua/kitaj-poglinaje-afriku-zikl-materialiv>

¹⁰ Як КНР нарощує свою військову потужність. *Defense Express*. 2022. 22 січня. URL: <https://bit.ly/3Sqaevf>

¹¹ Khudoliy A. Geopolitical and regional considerations: US, China and, Russia: partners or competitors? *Acta De Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI*. 2021. Vol. 2. P. 55-65. DOI: 10.26693/ahpsxxi2020.02.055

¹² Кравець О. Економічне співробітництво КНР і Латинської Америки упродовж 1990-х років – XXI ст. *Acta De Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI*. 2022. Vol. 3. P. 13-21. DOI: 10.26693/ahpsxxi2021-2022.03.013

thoughtfully analyzed by RAND Arroyo, a part of the RAND Corporation, with a report signed by Lloyd Thrall¹³. Ugwu Victor Ugonna¹⁴ has undertaken dissertation research that delves into various aspects of China's strategy concerning African countries, encompassing topics such as the peacekeeping activities of the People's Liberation Army of China (PLAC) on the continent.

Despite the contributions of these researchers, the conducted historiographical analysis also reveals a noteworthy gap in comprehensive scholarly works concerning this subject.

The main source material for this article is derived from SIPRI Yearbooks covering the period from 1968 to 2020.

The purpose of the research paper is to conduct a rigorous scholarly analysis of the cooperation between the PRC and African countries in the military sphere throughout the entire period of communist China. By exploring the influence of various factors, including ideological, socio-economic, and international considerations, among others, on this cooperation, we can gain valuable insights into its future development with a high degree of probability.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PRC AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES DURING THE PERIOD FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE 1950S TO THE MID-1970S

The development of cooperation between the PRC and African countries in the military sphere was fraught with considerable challenges. In the early years of communist rule, such cooperation faced practical impossibility due to China's post-war recovery efforts, including the establishment of its military-industrial complex with the assistance of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, China's principles, coupled with African nations' colonial dependency, posed hindrances to cooperation. Notably, Liberia, Ethiopia, and South Africa, the three independent African states at that time, did not recognize communist China, adding significant obstacles to meaningful military collaboration.

In the 1950s, the intensification of national liberation struggles for independence in Africa compelled major world powers to take positions on the matter, with China being no exception. During the Bandung Conference in April 1955, Premier Zhou Enlai actively advocated that «we all belong to the third world countries, we are developing countries». In fact, he made it clear that the People's Republic of China claims the role of the leader of these countries. To assure them, he emphasized Beijing's (the modern pronunciation of the Chinese capital's name; the name «Peking» is a relic of its colonial past, the only name used during the Soviet period. In the framework of decolonization in Ukraine it is important to abandon its use – *Auth.*) pursuit of peaceful coexistence, as underscored by the five principles adopted at the conference¹⁵.

The first step in military cooperation between China, in alliance with the Soviet Union, with national liberation movements was the training of guerrilla units for the

¹³ Thrall L. China's Expanding African Relations: Implications for U.S. National Security. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2015. URL: <https://bit.ly/48y7YHb>

¹⁴ Угву В.У. Стратегія КНР щодо країн Африки: дис. ... канд. політ. наук: 23.00.04 / Київ. нац. ун-т ім. Тараса Шевченка. Київ, 2020. 234 с.

¹⁵ Brown K., Chun Zh. China in Africa – Preparing for the Next Forum for China Africa Cooperation. Chatham House. Asia Programme. 2009. June. P. 4. URL: <https://bit.ly/3RWeFFB>; Van de Looy J. Africa and China... P. 2.

Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). This cooperation started in 1958 and involved the supply of weapons and ammunition¹⁶.

However, by the early 1960s, the worsening relations between Moscow and Beijing led to active competition between them for the support of popular African and Western figures. One such figure was Jonas Savimbi, the thirty-year-old exiled Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Angolan government. China was able to capitalize on the ambitions of the young politician, and in the summer of 1964, Savimbi left the Angolan government and traveled to China. There, he met with Zhou Enlai and received support for his plans to create his own liberation organization. During his subsequent trip to China in the following year, Jonas Savimbi and a group of his associates underwent training in guerrilla warfare. In March 1966, he declared the establishment of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Its creation provided Savimbi with a means to fight not only for Angola's independence but also for his own authority within the country. Taking on the responsibility of providing UNITA with finances, weapons, and other support, China hoped for future dividends. Interestingly, after the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), with its pro-Soviet orientation, took power following Angola's declaration of independence on November 11, 1975, Savimbi's pro-Chinese stance did not prevent him from forming an alliance with the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and South Africa, which supported him, to jointly fight against the MPLA. China also supported this coalition¹⁷. Furthermore, China provided equipment, funds, and conducted training for guerrilla units of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO)¹⁸.

It is worth noting that China's assistance in defending young independent African states played a significant role in establishing military cooperation. For instance, when Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) escalated from threatening Zambia with an embargo in 1964 to direct airspace intrusion, China supported the victim of aggression by providing military aircraft. Despite their outdated nature, these aircraft offered a substantial advantage to the impoverished country due to their low cost. Additionally, Beijing provided favorable credits for their procurement¹⁹.

It should be noted that both the USSR and China provided rebels with mainly small arms, bazookas, mortars, and light anti-aircraft guns free of charge. The primary criterion was not material gain but the desire to gain allies among the newly

¹⁶ Ангола в борьбе за национальную независимость (1975-1979 гг.). *Россия (СССР) в войнах второй половины XX века* [участие российских (советских) военнослужащих в боевых действиях за пределами Российской Федерации (СССР) после Второй мировой (1946-2002)]. Москва: Триада-фарм, 2002. С. 413. URL: <https://bit.ly/3H1gZT>

¹⁷ Токарев А. «Черный петух» Анголы. *Советские советники и специалисты в Анголе*. 2002. URL: <https://peacekeeping-centre.in.ua/Museum/AngolaS/Articles/Savimbi.htm>; Бестужев Е. Чёрная воля Жонаса Савимби. *Аргумент*. 2017. 25 лютого. URL: <https://argumentua.com/stati/chernaya-volya-zhonasa-savimbi>

¹⁸ The third world: military expenditure and the trade in major weapons. *SIPRI Yearbook of World Armaments and Disarmament 1968/69*. Almqvist & Wiksell Stockholm. Humanities Press New York Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. London, 1969. P. 73. URL: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI%20Yearbook%201968-69.pdf>

¹⁹ Chaudhury D.R. China expands defence...; Landgren-Backstrom S., Mallmann W., Loose-Weintraub E., Ohlson T. The Third World importers. *World Armaments and Disarmament. SIPRI Yearbook 1980*. Taylor & Francis Ltd. London, 1980. P. 110. URL: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI%20Yearbook%201980.pdf>

independent states²⁰. This became evident during the voting at the 26th session of the United Nations General Assembly on October 25, 1971. The adoption of Resolution № 2758, «Restoration of the Lawful Rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations», was significantly influenced by the position of the delegations of 26 African countries. This led to China being admitted to the UN as a permanent member of the Security Council, while Taiwan's membership was terminated²¹.

However, the scale of their arms supplies should not be overestimated. It should be noted that until the mid-1970s, the main suppliers of weapons to African countries were the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. Only in the second half of the 1970s «The Soviet Union disrupted their almost monopoly»²². Since «SIPRI Yearbooks» and other sources do not provide specific data on the volume of Chinese arms deliveries in the 1960s and 1970s, it can be assumed that they were relatively small. Objectively, they could not have been significant in one of the poorest countries in the world, especially considering the disarray caused by the «Cultural Revolution» and the struggle against the «Gang of Four». The confrontation with their recent «elder brother» – the USSR, which escalated into armed clashes on the Ussuri and Amur rivers in 1969, also had a negative impact. Additionally, significant resources were allocated to the development of China's own nuclear capabilities. The crisis in the country affected not only the volume of aid to allies in Africa but also the state of the People's Liberation Army of China. As a result, China suffered a defeat in the war with Vietnam in 1979. Due to these circumstances, the assistance to national liberation movements in Africa and friendly countries on the continent was minimized.

DEIDEOLOGIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF MILITARY COOPERATION (LATE 1970S – LATE 1990S)

The crisis forced the implementation of the comprehensive «Four Modernizations» program initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. It involved attracting foreign investments. To avoid deterring investors with their support for revolutionary movements in Africa, Beijing refrained from most ideologically motivated aid programs (especially considering the lack of financial resources)²³. This was because during the country's reforms, the funding for the military-industrial complex (MIC) and armed forces was carried out on a residual principle.

During the conversion process, «over 40% of defense enterprises ceased production of military goods, another 40% only accounted for half of the order portfolio. Only 10% of MIC enterprises continued to operate with their original profile»²⁴.

As a result of the lack of funds, Beijing shifted from providing free military assistance to African countries in the 1980s to commercial arms sales. According to

²⁰ The third world: military expenditure... P. 73.

²¹ Van de Looy J. Africa and China... P. 2; Кошовий С. Діяльність Китайської Народної Республіки в Організації Об'єднаних Націй. *Україна-Китай*. 2019. № 3 (17). С. 62-71. URL: https://sinologist.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/N17_fw.pdf

²² World trade in major conventional weapons in the 1970s. *World Armaments and Disarmament SIPRI Yearbook 1981*. Taylor & Francis Ltd. London, 1981. P. 113. URL: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI%20Yearbook%201981.pdf>

²³ Van de Looy J. Africa and China... P. 5; Brown K., Chun Zh. China in Africa... P. 5.

²⁴ Deger S. World military expenditure. *SIPRI Yearbook 1991. World Armaments and Disarmament*. Oxford university press. 1991. P. 156-158. URL: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI%20Yearbook%201999.pdf>

data from the RAND Arroyo Center, China «managed to sell 80 F-7 fighter jets, six submarines, and 13 speedboats to Egypt... However, due to the low quality of the supplied weapons, China practically lost its sales markets on the verge of the 1980s and 1990s, which were mostly captured by Russia»²⁵.

Notably, this was not a surprise for the Chinese leadership. During the 1970s and 1980s, they had been attempting to secure contracts with leading global manufacturers to acquire modern technologies that would allow the modernization of China's weapons, which were essentially clones of Soviet models from the 1950s. Some of the most successful agreements were made with French companies for licensed production of their weaponry in China and with American corporations Garrett and Grumman for the modernization of engines and avionics of the Chinese-Pakistani aircraft K-8 (JL-8) with investments totaling over 0.5 billion dollars. However, by 1990, almost all of these contracts were prematurely terminated due to «financial difficulties»²⁶.

The true reason for this was the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square protests on June 4, 1989. The West condemned the violence and imposed sanctions against China, including a ban on the export of weapons and military-technical cooperation with China. However, most African countries remained silent on the matter. In this context, China intensified its diplomatic efforts to restore previous levels of relations. During negotiations, China's red line was the belief that «respect for each other's affairs and non-interference should be the basis for the emerging new international order»²⁷. The parties continued to reassure each other of their anti-colonial solidarity, but the focus was shifted to cooperation in the economic sphere. China, where the positive results of deep economic reforms initiated during the country's modernization in the late 1980s were becoming evident, needed a significant increase in the import of natural resources, especially energy resources, as the annual economic growth rate approached about 8%²⁸. However, the sanctions imposed by the West closed access to traditional markets. As a result, China was forced to establish cooperation primarily with African countries that were under UN sanctions for arms supplies due to civil wars or human rights violations. For instance, despite the UN arms embargo on UNITA imposed in 1993, China continued to support Jonas Savimbi. However, gradually, China distanced itself from this support and shifted to cooperation with the official government of Angola. In return, China received preferential treatment in the trade and economic sphere, particularly in oil imports. Consequently, by 2002, Angola became China's second-largest trading partner on the African continent²⁹.

Additionally, China was able to secure favorable conditions for importing oil from Sudan, despite the ongoing civil war that started in 1995. China disregarded the UN embargo imposed in 1997 and continued to «sell weapons and helicopters to the Sudanese government, which were used in Darfur». For instance, between 1992 and 2005, China supplied six K-8 trainer-combat aircraft and three A-5 aircraft to Sudan. Whenever there was an opportunity to profit from arms sales, Beijing made sure to

²⁵ Thrall L. China's Expanding African Relations... P. 43.

²⁶ Deger S. World military expenditure... P. 159; K-8 Karakorum Light Attack and Jet Trainer Aircraft. *Global Defense Technology*. 2021. July 30. URL: <https://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/hongdu-k8/>

²⁷ Van de Looy J. Africa and China... P. 5

²⁸ Ibid. P. 158.

²⁹ Терентьева О. Китай у неоколоніальному змаганні за Африку: новачкам щастить? *Політична критика*. 2021.07.16. URL: <https://bit.ly/3S1EQ62>

seize it. During the Ethiopian-Eritrean War in 1998, China supplied weapons to both sides, totaling over 1 billion dollars in sales³⁰.

Another factor that contributed to Chinese-African cooperation in the military sphere was the extremely flexible terms of such collaboration. These terms ranged from providing preferential bank credits to accepting payment for supplied weapons in natural resources. For example, in 2000, Zimbabwe, which faced a human rights-related embargo imposed by the European Union, paid for acquired firearms with eight tons of ivory. Furthermore, after selling Zimbabwe 12 fighter jets and 100 trucks worth over 200 million US dollars in 2004, China became Zimbabwe's primary external economic partner³¹.

The intensification of military cooperation with African countries was also made possible by a 12% increase in China's military budget in 1990³². Subsequently, the growth of the military budget continued at comparable rates. According to SIPRI data, «from 1989 to 2018, China's military expenditures increased more than any other country in the world, with a real increase of 1140%»³³.

The modernization of Chinese weaponry and technology played a significant role in increasing military cooperation with foreign partners in general, and with African countries in particular. This was facilitated by the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations. During the visit of the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, to Beijing in May 1989, and the visit of the Chairman of the State Council of China, Li Peng, to Moscow in April 1990, alongside discussions on other issues, both sides engaged in talks regarding the trade of defense equipment and the transfer of relevant technologies³⁴. The importance of the agreements reached is evident from the fact that Russia, as the successor state to the USSR, continued to fulfill them. As a result, throughout the 1990s, China began importing a wide range of armaments from Russia, including MiG-29 and Su-27 aircraft. As SIPRI analysts emphasize, «through arms imports, China managed to partially narrow the technological gap during the 1990s, but it remains dependent on arms imports, especially components and technologies»³⁵.

A clear manifestation of progress in the technological sphere was the emergence of a large number of new Chinese armaments from 2000 onwards. However, foreign experts noticed that many of these weapons were copied from Russian originals. For instance, the J-11B was identified as an exact copy of the Russian Su-27 aircraft. As these copied weapons started to compete in the global market, Russia even threatened

³⁰ Терентьева О. Китай у неоколоніальному змаганні...; *Van de Looy J. Africa and China...* P. 10, 14, 17, 19, 25; Холтом П., Бромлі М., Веземан П.Д. Міжнародні поставки озброєнь. СІПРІ. 2008: Щорічник: Озброєння, роззброєння та міжнародна безпека: Пер. з англ. / Стокгольм. міжнар. інститут дослідження миру; Укр. центр екон. і політ. досліджень ім. О.Разумкова; редкол. укр. вид.: Л. Шангіна (гол. ред.) та ін. Київ: Заповіт, 2009. С. 274. URL: https://razumkov.org.ua/images/sipri/SIPRI_2008_ukr.pdf

³¹ *Van de Looy J. Africa and China...* P. 25.

³² *Deger S. World military expenditure...* P. 158.

³³ Тянь Н., Фльора О., Куїмова А., Веземан П.Д., Веземан С.Т. Глобальні події у сфері військових витрат. СІПРІ 2019: Щорічник: Озброєння, роззброєння та міжнародна безпека. Пер. з англ. / Стокгольм. міжнар. ін-т дослідження миру; Укр. центр екон. і політ. досліджень ім. О.Разумкова; Редкол. укр. вид.: О.Мельник (кер. проекту) та ін. Київ: Заповіт, 2020. С. 189. URL: https://razumkov.org.ua/images/sipri/SIPRI_2019_ukr.pdf

³⁴ *Deger S. World military expenditure ...* P. 159.

³⁵ Веземан С.Т., Бромлі М., Веземан П.Д. Міжнародні поставки озброєнь. СІПРІ. 2009: Щорічник... С. 291.

legal action. However, the fact that over 90% of China's military imports in the 2000s came from Russia persuaded them not to pursue the threat³⁶.

Despite the EU's embargo on arms sales to China, certain EU member countries contributed to the modernization of China's military capabilities. From 1989 to 2008, these countries accounted for 6.7% of China's imports of major conventional arms. A significant portion of these imports included aircraft and military electronic equipment. It is important to note that in most cases, defense cooperation with China was carried out within the framework of collaboration with Chinese manufacturers to export weapons to third countries. As a result, after 2000, China gained the ability to supply «F-7 fighters equipped with Italian Grifo radars, and AS365 helicopters manufactured under a French license»³⁷.

The advantage of Western technologies over the post-Soviet ones was clearly demonstrated in the production and export of the K-8 trainer-combat aircraft. Due to the termination of cooperation with American corporations, as mentioned earlier, it was initially equipped with Russian «Progress AI-25» engines, and then with Chinese WS-11 engines, copied from the Ukrainian AI-25TLK engines. However, in this configuration, the aircraft lacked prospects in foreign markets, even in regions with lower demands, such as Africa. Even Pakistan refused to pursue its serial production on its territory in 1994³⁸. By the late 1990s, when the aircraft was equipped with the Garrett TFE731-2A-2A turboprop engine from the American Honeywell Aerospace and the Rockwell Collins EFIS-86 avionics, it became one of the best in its category worldwide. As a result, in December 1999, the China National Aero-Technology Import & Export Corporation (CATIC) and the Egyptian Ministry of Defense signed an agreement for joint production of 80 K-8E aircraft and the establishment of an aircraft research and development center in Egypt. In 2004, the parties signed a new contract for the production of an additional 40 K-8E aircraft. It is worth noting that the execution of these contracts involved 94% localization of production³⁹.

EXPANSION AND DEEPENING OF COOPERATION IN THE MILITARY SPHERE HAVE BEEN OBSERVED FROM THE EARLY 2000S UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY

The successes in the modernization of China's military-industrial complex have allowed Beijing to significantly expand and deepen cooperation with countries on the African continent in the defense sector. The «game-changer» that elevated this cooperation to a new level was the K-8 trainer-combat aircraft. By the mid-2000s, it comprised 80% of the entire fleet of such aircraft in African countries⁴⁰.

Equally impressive was China's contract with Algeria for the construction of three C-28A frigates, which was signed in 2012 after fierce competition with Russia. China gained an advantage because their frigates were to be equipped with «radar and other

³⁶ Перло-Фрімен С., Шьон Е. Виробництво озброєнь. СІПІ. 2008: Щорічник... С. 224.; Веземан С.Т., Бромлі М., Веземан П.Д. Міжнародні поставки озброєнь... С. 290-291.

³⁷ Веземан С.Т., Боро-Судро Л., Веземан П.Д. Події у сфері поставок озброєнь у 2013 р. СІПІ 2014: Щорічник... С. 248.

³⁸ К-8 Karakorum Program Developments. *GlobalSecurity*. 2021.01.08. URL: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/k-8-dev.htm>

³⁹ К-8 aircraft of Egyptian air force is made in China. *China Military Online*. 2013. 15 July. URL: http://www.china.org.cn/world/2013-07/15/content_29424745.htm

⁴⁰ К-8 Karakorum...; *Encarnation L*. Assessing the Impact...

systems produced in the Netherlands»⁴¹. The total cost of fulfilling this contract exceeded 500 million dollars for Algeria⁴². The high quality of the executed work and mutually beneficial terms of the contract played a role in the conclusion of a three-year Chinese-Algerian agreement in 2020 for the construction of a Type 056 corvette for the Algerian Navy. Russia, which boasted that it would build this corvette, was left empty-handed⁴³.

One of the significant factors contributing to the deepening of cooperation with African countries in the defense sector by China is attributed to the human factor. As part of the Chinese-African strategic partnership proposed by Chinese President Hu Jintao at the first Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit in Beijing in November 2006⁴⁴, various training and retraining programs for military personnel from African countries were initiated. In this regard, analysts at the RAND Arroyo Center highlight that China took responsibility for providing instructors, training equipment, transportation, and other support for these programs. Additionally, training of African officers was initiated at China's National Defense University. As a result, by the mid-2010s, nearly all African armies had at least «one colonel or brigadier general who had graduated from this university»⁴⁵. It is worth noting that visits of military delegations between the parties have facilitated cooperation in military education. From 2000 to 2012, 12 Chinese delegations visited African countries, and 13 delegations from African militaries visited China⁴⁶. Naturally, officers and generals who underwent such training contributed to the procurement of weaponry they were familiar with, according to their capabilities.

Significant importance for the promotion of new weapon systems was the substantial increase in participation of Chinese manufacturers in international arms exhibitions, traditionally attended by military delegations from African countries. For instance, at the largest defense exhibition in Africa, the Africa Aerospace and Defense (ADD) held in September 2010, China had its national pavilion covering an area of 1200 square meters for the first time. Ten Chinese firms showcased their products, compared to previous exhibitions where they had only a few separate pavilions. Similar changes occurred with China's presence at the tenth International Defense Exhibition (IDEX) in February 2011 in the United Arab Emirates, where the exhibition space for Chinese firms increased by 53% compared to IDEX-2009. A successful marketing move was also made at the international arms exhibition Eurosatory 2010, held in June 2010 in France, where the catalog featured images of ethnic African models in Chinese military gear for the first time, instead of Chinese models⁴⁷. In addition, the presentation of a wide range of new weapons and military equipment at these and subsequent exhibitions, along with the flexibility shown by the Chinese side during contract negotiations, played a significant role. This proactive approach yielded tangible results: according to Jane's Information Group, «almost 70% of the 54 African countries have Chinese armored military equipment, and almost 20% of all military

⁴¹ Веземан С.Т., Боро-Судро Л., Веземан П.Д. Події у сфері поставок озброєнь у 2013 р... С. 248.

⁴² *La Terza R. Chinese Arms Sales to Africa...* P. 13.

⁴³ Киричевский И. Китай «переиграл» Россию на ее традиционном рынке вооружений. *Наука и техника*. 2021. 26 августа. URL: <https://bit.ly/3S0Utur>

⁴⁴ *He W. China's Perspective...* P. 153.

⁴⁵ *Thrall L. China's Expanding African Relations...* P. 56.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* P. 55; *La Terza R. Chinese Arms Sales to Africa...* P. 18.

⁴⁷ *Hull A., Markov D. Chinese Arms Sales to Africa...* P. 25-26.

vehicles in Africa are imported from China»⁴⁸. Moreover, analysts from the RAND Arroyo Center state that «China is likely the largest supplier of small arms and ammunition to Africa, with exports accounting for over 25% of the total African arms market in 2011»⁴⁹. The basis for these supplies, as highlighted by Peter Steinemil and Emil Uddhammar, were bilateral agreements that China signed with countries such as Namibia, Botswana, Angola, Sudan, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, and others⁵⁰. Based on these agreements, Chinese helicopters were delivered to Ghana, Mali, and Angola, while tanks were supplied to Zimbabwe. Additionally, China established «small arms production plants» in Sudan and Zimbabwe⁵¹.

The deepening of Chinese-African cooperation in the defense sphere was indirectly facilitated by China's peacekeeping activities. Several reasons contributed to this: the need to protect Chinese personnel working on projects that were being constructed or were already operational with China's assistance, from the terrorist threat posed by Islamic militants such as Al-Qaeda affiliates like Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, among others. Additionally, China aimed to demonstrate its commitment to supporting peace in areas affected by internal or interstate conflicts and sought to learn from the experiences of foreign military operations in non-traditional environments⁵². According to Peter Steinemil and Emil Uddhammar, «since 1989, about 40 000 Chinese soldiers have been involved in 24 UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. Today, approximately 2 400 Chinese soldiers participate in seven of these operations»⁵³. It should be noted that participation in UN peacekeeping operations is often complemented by providing military assistance to countries in dire need of it, including various types of weaponry. For example, in 2016, China transferred an old patrol vessel to Nigeria⁵⁴.

China's efforts to maintain peace extend beyond participating in UN peacekeeping operations. The extensive use of its naval fleet during the international anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden from 2008 to 2014 and ensuring the safety during the evacuation of 35 000 Chinese citizens from Libya in February 2011 garnered significant attention and resonance⁵⁵.

The speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping in September 2015 at the UN summit on peacekeeping operations, where he announced the allocation of \$100 million for military assistance to the African Union, held significant importance in maintaining China's image as a leading peacekeeper in Africa⁵⁶.

⁴⁸ Lubold G. China's Growing Influence in Africa...

⁴⁹ Thrall L. China's Expanding African Relations... P. 44.

⁵⁰ Steinemil P., Uddhammar E. China in Africa: The Role of Trade, Investments, and Loans Amidst Shifting Geopolitical Ambitions. *Observer Research Foundation*. Occasional Paper. 2021. № 327. URL: <https://www.orfonline.org/research/china-in-africa/>

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Thrall L. China's Expanding African Relations... P. 61-62; Угзу В.У. Стратегія КНР... С. 104-106; Ком П. Більше ніж економіка...

⁵³ Steinemil P., Uddhammar E. China in Africa...

⁵⁴ Веземан С.Т. Військова допомога поставками озброєнь. *СІПРІ 2017: Щорічник: Озброєння, роззброєння та міжнародна безпека*: Пер. з англ. / Стокгольм. міжнар. ін-т дослідження миру; Укр. центр екон. і політ. Досліджень ім. О. Разумкова; Редкол. укр. вид.: О. Мельник (кер. проекту) та ін. Київ: Заповіт, 2018. С. 337. URL: https://razumkov.org.ua/images/sipri/SIPRI_2017_ukr.pdf

⁵⁵ Thrall L. China's Expanding African Relations... P. 62; Steinemil P., Uddhammar E. China in Africa...; Військові вартіві...

⁵⁶ China and Africa in the New Era: A Partnership of Equals. *Xinhua*. 2021.11.26. URL: http://www.news.cn/english/2021-11/26/c_1310333813.htm

The experience of these operations demonstrated the necessity of a continuous military presence to protect Chinese citizens and maritime trade routes, especially in the context of China's proposed global geopolitical project «One Belt, One Road», announced by President Xi Jinping in September 2013. To achieve this, in 2015, China reached an agreement with Djibouti to construct a 36-hectare military naval base on its territory. It's worth noting that the United States and France, which already had bases there, tried to persuade Djibouti to reconsider the agreement with Beijing. However, according to Professor Victor Konstantinov, Chinese investments of around \$600 million in expanding the Port of Dorale (near which the Chinese military base is located) and about \$3.5 billion in constructing a railway connecting the port to Ethiopia (the Djibouti section cost half a billion) ensured China's victory. In July 2017, China's naval base in Djibouti was put into operation⁵⁷. Furthermore, leveraging this base, Chinese military ships visited military naval bases in Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria in 2018, conducting bilateral exercises there⁵⁸.

The Chinese-African cooperation in the military sphere was significantly enhanced by the organization of the first China-Africa Defense and Security Forum in Beijing in June 2018, with the participation of China and 50 African countries⁵⁹. Based on the forum's proposals, Beijing decided to establish the China-Africa Peace and Security Fund to promote cooperation in the fields of peacekeeping and stability support. Moreover, they initiated over 50 programs focusing on security, peacekeeping operations, law enforcement, anti-piracy efforts, and counter-terrorism activities⁶⁰.

The financial foundation for these programs was established during the FOCAC held in Beijing in September 2018. During the forum, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the allocation of \$100 million for military aid to the African Union, \$80 million for independent military aid to African countries, and an additional \$300 million to support the construction of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The G5 Sahel Joint Force was formed in 2017 with the support of the United Nations and the initiative of the heads of state of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger⁶¹.

A logical continuation of the ideas expressed at the forum can be seen in the idea of expanding the presence of Chinese naval forces in the Atlantic through the creation of a naval base near the constructed Chinese port in Bata, Equatorial Guinea. It should be noted that the United States has reacted negatively to such intentions, as evidenced by the visit of John Finer, the first deputy national security advisor to the US President, to Equatorial Guinea in October 2021. According to Defense Express, during the visit, he attempted to convince President Teodoro Obiang to reject Beijing's proposal regarding the establishment of the base⁶².

⁵⁷ Константинов В. Військовий захист для інвестицій: що означає відкриття китайської бази в Африці. *Європейська правда*. 2017. 25 липня. URL: <https://www.euointegration.com.ua/articles/2017/07/25/7068921/>; Волович О. Африканська політика...

⁵⁸ Steinemil P., Uddhammar E. China in Africa...

⁵⁹ Spross H. Why has China invited African army...

⁶⁰ Кот Р. Більше ніж економіка...

⁶¹ China and Africa in the New Era: A Partnership of Equals...; Project supporting the G5 Sahel Joint Force with Implementation of the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Compliance Framework. *United Nations*. URL: <https://bit.ly/3tze3V4>

⁶² Як КНР нарощує свою військову потужність. *Defense Express*. 2022. 22 січня. URL: https://defence-ua.com/army_and_war/jak_knr_naroschuje_svoju_vijskovu_potuzhnist-5922.html; Lubold G. China's Growing Influence in Africa Seen in Arms Trade and Infrastructure Investment. *The Wall Street Journal*. 2022. April 21. URL: <https://on.wsj.com/41Ekv9U>

CONCLUSIONS

The development of cooperation between China and African countries in the military sphere has been a long and complex process. The initial stage, spanning from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, was marked by limited opportunities for collaboration. Before the mid-1950s, discussing cooperation, not only in the military sphere but also in general, was inappropriate due to objective reasons. However, as national liberation struggles unfolded on the African continent, a window of opportunity emerged. During this period, China's cooperation was imbued with an ideological character, aimed at supporting national liberation movements and young independent states in their fight against colonialism and imperialism.

The second stage of cooperation, spanning from the late 1970s to the end of the 1990s, witnessed a gradual shift away from ideological constraints towards commercialization, aligning with the «Four Modernizations» initiative. Nonetheless, this phase faced certain limitations due to resource constraints, the subpar quality of Soviet weaponry, and concerns about jeopardizing relations with Western investors. Consequently, China embarked on the modernization of its military-industrial complex, seeking to create additional avenues for cooperation with African countries in the defense sphere.

During the 1980s, China took initial steps to involve Western corporations in the modernization and development of new weaponry. However, these efforts were impeded by the events at Tiananmen Square in 1989, which curtailed progress in this direction. As an alternative, China increased its defense cooperation with Russia, allowing for significant updates to its military-industrial complex and the development of new weapon models that analysts perceived as replicas of Russian ones. Nonetheless, these weapons faced challenges in the fiercely competitive international arms markets, including Africa.

Despite the European Union's embargo on arms trade with China from the mid-1990s, China devised strategies to engage European and American corporations in the modernization and development of new Chinese weapons. The agreement stipulated that these weapons could be exported afterward, thereby providing China with potential opportunities to enter the African arms market.

The third and current stage of the mentioned cooperation covers the period from the early 2000s to the present day. During this phase, China significantly increased its military cooperation with African countries (as shown in diagram 1). Several factors contributed to this growth, including active engagement in various training and retraining programs for military personnel from African nations, participation of Chinese firms in international arms exhibitions, flexible credit terms for arms and military equipment purchases, and active involvement in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, among others.

In conclusion, the deepening cooperation between China and African countries in the military sphere, highlighted by the establishment of a military-naval base in Djibouti, plays a pivotal role in bolstering Beijing's position across various areas of collaboration with African nations and enhancing its competitiveness within Africa's arms market. To further enrich the understanding of this subject, it would be pertinent to delve into the examination of diverse aspects concerning the formation of strategic relations, particularly in the military domain, with African countries in the context of implementing the global geostrategic project «One Belt, One Road».

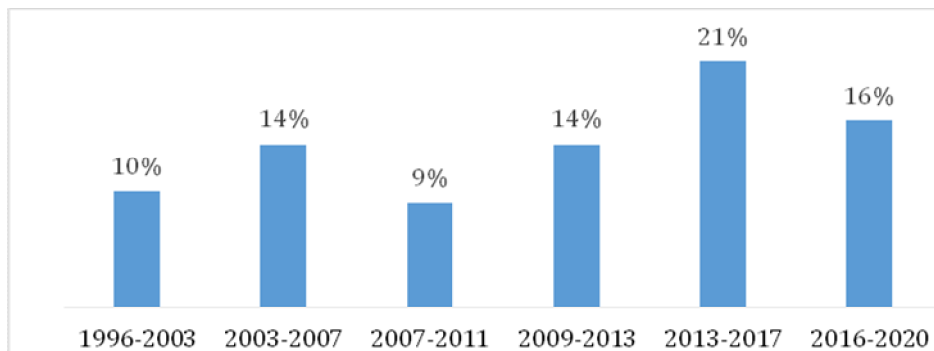


Diagram 1. Share of China in the overall arms exports to African countries⁶³.

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⁶³ Van de Looy J. Africa and China... P. 25; Перло-Фрімен С., Шьон Е. Виробництво озброєнь. СІПРІ. 2008: Щорічник... С. 280; Холтом П., Бромлі М., Веземан П.Д., Веземан С.Т. Події у сфері поставок озброєнь у 2011 р. СІПРІ 2012: Щорічник: Озброєння, роззброєння та міжнародна безпека: Пер. з англ. / Стокгольм. міжнар. ін-т дослідження миру; Укр. центр екон. і політ. Досліджень ім. О. Разумкова; Редкол. укр. вид.: Л. Шангіна (гол. ред.) та ін. Київ: Заповіт, 2013. С. 246. URL: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRIY_2012_ukr.pdf; Веземан С.Т., Бєро-Судро Л., Веземан П.Д. Події у сфері поставок озброєнь у 2013 р.... С. 240; Веземан С.Т., Фльора О., Куїмова А., Тянь Н., Веземан П.Д. Події у сфері поставок озброєнь у 2017 р. СІПРІ 2018: Щорічник... С. 188; Веземан С.Т., Куїмова А., Веземан П.Д. Події у групі постачальників основних озброєнь у 2016-2020 рр. СІПРІ 2021: Щорічник: Озброєння, роззброєння та міжнародна безпека: Пер. з англ. / Стокгольм. міжнар. ін-т дослідження миру; Укр. центр екон. і політ. Досліджень ім. О. Разумкова; Редкол. укр. вид.: О. Мельник (кер. проекту) та ін. Київ: Заповіт, 2022. С. 290. URL: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRIY_2021_ukr.pdf

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