

Among dozens of books published recently on China in Africa, I think few have implications as profound and as far-reaching as *The New Kings of Crude* by Luke Patey. But let me describe the book briefly before I assess the implications. It is a thoroughly researched and densely-written book. The endnotes alone are packed in 62 single-spaced pages and include materials not only in English but also in the Chinese language. The data are derived from primary sources (unstructured interviews) and secondary ones (written documents). Using an unconventional structure that combines the features of a travelogue and a scholarly treatise, of a novel and a survey research report, and of a news report and philosophical analysis, the book chronicles the history of oil companies from China and India in the Sudan. Despite such an unorthodox format, the book is written with clarity; it also has grace and power. Undoubtedly, the author is a good story-teller and a superb analyst.

In the general introduction, Patey first draws the reader's attention to the fact that many of the oil fields under study are located in South Sudan whereas the pipelines taking the oil to the world market are in the (North) Sudan. This is perhaps an indirect way of suggesting (and rightly so in my view) that such interdependence should have served as a foundation for the economic (and potentially political) integration (or re-integration) of the Sudan. But, of course, it has not turned out that way.

The author singles out (pp. 6-7) five years as of central significance in the political history of the Sudan: 1960, when the Southern Sudanese rebel movement known as Anyanya was formed; 1972, when the Addis Ababa Agreement which ended the Civil War was concluded; 1983, the beginning of the Second Sudanese Civil War and the emergence of the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M); 2003, the beginning of the Darfur Civil War; and 2005, the end of the Second Sudanese Civil War (the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement). One year that must be added, I think, is 2011, when South Sudan achieved independence. The book is divided

into four parts, with each part broken further into several readable chapters.

Chapter 1 is a coherent, lucid and comprehensive analysis of the flourishing of US-Sudanese relations from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. Chapter 2 and 3 chronicle (or continue to do so) in detail how the US-Sudanese relations began to run out of steam. It also highlights how in the view of the US Government, the Government of the Sudan shifted from one of its most important allies in Africa into an adversary. From the late 1990s on, Washington pursued a 'diplomacy of hostility' towards the Sudan because of the latter's alleged sponsorship of terrorism and human rights abuse. At about the same time, China pursued a relationship of co-optation that was designed to cultivate friendship with Sudan. As Patey puts it, 'China's role in Sudan was business-driven'; conversely, 'the US was intensely political' (p. 12).

Chapter 4 is partly about how China's oil companies first entered Sudan, followed in Chapter 5 with a thorough examination of the security challenges faced by them in South Sudan. Chapters 6 and 7 are about the political economy of India's quest for energy independence – and the challenges that entailed as well as the major issues which arose just before Indian oil companies, with help from their government, successfully entered Sudan's oil fields. More specifically, the related themes covered in the two chapters additionally

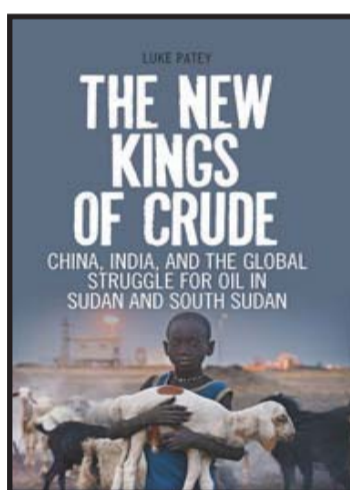
Is China's Diplomatic Discourse Lagging behind Africa's Diplomatic Practice?

Seifudein Adem

The New Kings of Crude: China, India and the Global Struggle for Oil in Sudan and South Sudan

by Luke Patey

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include: the history of oil production in India; its quest for energy independence or, at least, minimum dependence on foreign oil; the strategies India has been using to achieve those goals; and the nature and extent of support given by the Indian government to its oil companies. We also learn about the depth of the historical link between India and the Sudan as symbolized, for instance, by Mahatma Gandhi's visit to the African country in 1937; three years after that historic visit came another one by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who arrived in the Sudan with Indira Gandhi, his daughter and future prime minister of India.

A significant portion of Chapter 8 is about the divestment effort in the Sudan by different groups (including by the US administration under George W. Bush). Chapter 9 documents the beginning of the end of the honeymoon between China's oil companies operating in the Sudan and the Government of Sudan towards the end of the last decade. In this period, China was beginning to realize that it might be relying too much on the Sudanese government; Sudan was also beginning to realize that it might be relying too much on China.

Chapter 10 is primarily about the end of the honeymoon between Sudan and China's oil companies following the independence of South Sudan. From the point of view of the major objective of the book, Chapters 10 and 11 examine the oil factor in the relationship between

Sudan and South Sudan. The last chapter provides a summary and outline of the major arguments advanced in the preceding chapters.

The book illustrates how Sudan embraced China (and India) because it was abandoned by the West (p. 58). After Sudan was placed on the US government's list of state sponsors of terrorism in 1993, and Washington imposed unilateral economic sanctions on it in 1997, the possibility that other US oil companies might invest in Sudan faded. Subsequently, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) was able to capitalize on the American exit; Sudan thus offered not only proven oil reserves, but also the absence of US and European competition (p. 269). As Sudan's President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir said in 2011: 'When the American companies refused to work in the oil fields and when restrictions were imposed on the Western companies' operation in Sudan, we found in China the real partner' (p. 241). In other words, Sudan did not just embrace China; it did so because it was abandoned by the West. The same could be said to some extent about the relationship which China was able to forge with many other countries in Africa.

The book supports the theory that China (and India) is using Africa as a laboratory before venturing into the larger global stage as a major actor. 'For CNPC in particular', observes Patey, 'Sudan was a strategic investment providing the company with crucial management and technical experience in operating a large overseas project and launching its various oil service subsidiaries into the international marketplace' (p. 264). Patey adds: 'The cumulative impact of Sudanese politics and civil wars on CNPC and [India's] ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) [was to empower them] to begin to explore how they could avoid the consequences of political and security risk in their wider overseas investments' (p. 265). Again, the same can be said to some extent about important aspects of China's engagements in other parts of Africa – Africa serves as a 'testing ground' for the international expansion of China's and India's companies.¹

'Darfur is a part of Sudan, and you have to resolve this problem'; this

was what President Hu Jintao of the People's Republic of China reportedly told President Bashir of Sudan many years ago (p. 175). What is more, the major opposition movements in the Sudan, both armed and unarmed, do not seem to believe that China follows the principle of non-interference in the Sudan (as well as in other parts of Africa). As one Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) commander put it: 'The suffering of the people is on the hands of the Chinese' (p. 222). What these observations demonstrate is that the so-called principle of non-interference which China espouses was hardly followed in practice in the Sudan.

China, too, interferes in the domestic affairs of African countries even if the effects of its interferences could sometimes take various forms and a long time to mature. Furthermore, we can assume, given the historical patterns of great power behavior, that China's natural impulse towards interference would become stronger as its power and interest expand, prompting it to brand itself as more and not less interventionist in African affairs, not only because that is what it would be doing in any case, but also because the principle of non-interference is in fact no longer cherished even by Africans. The question which thus arises is: Is China's diplomatic rhetoric lagging behind the principle of African diplomacy as it is practiced today?

Luke Patey's book also illustrates that either the Government of China has no grand design to dominate Africa (and the world) or, as suggested above, its agentive power in Africa (and elsewhere) is highly exaggerated. In other words, we might have too readily given the leaders of China (as well as India) the credit which they neither deserved nor demanded. As Patey reminds us, 'what externally appear to be formal national-owned companies (of China and India) are not necessarily following instructions from their home governments, but rather have their own unique internal dynamics that in turn heavily influence the direction of China's [and India's] relations with Africa' (p.

263). If anything, quite the reverse seems to be true: 'Sudanese agency was instrumental in both empowering and restricting the investments of Chinese and Indian national oil companies in Sudan and South Sudan' (p. 264). What is more, Patey draws our attention to the important distinction between 'government ownership of the oil companies' and 'government control of the oil companies' (p. 266). This is a simple distinction which is often overlooked; 'control' does not necessarily follow from 'ownership'. Chinese and Indian companies do not necessarily always serve as agents of their respective governments in Beijing and New Delhi:

In the process of riding the highs and lows of changing Sudanese politics, diverging and conflicting interests that exist between actors in China and India were internationalized. Rather than simply a coordinated and well-executed plan drawn up by Chinese and Indian governments to expand their interests abroad, there was plenty of circumstance and chance at work, guided in part by the individuals, corporations and organizations that are at the forefront of Chinese and Indian engagement overseas. The idea of China and India as straightforward rising powers often paints over a complexity that lies behind (p. 272).

The above observation, I think, is a useful corrective to the China, Inc. and India, Inc. discourse which are dominant in some circles today.² In many ways, the companies from China and India in the Sudan have a good deal more in common with similar companies from Europe and North America.³ Patey's analysis makes another unique contribution by highlighting the enhanced role played by African actors:

While much attention is paid to the ways in which renewed Chinese and Indian engagement has impacted Africa, the book examines how the politics, civil

wars, and foreign relations of two African countries influenced China and India as rising powers in the world (p. 263).

Additionally, the book takes side, possibly inadvertently, on the issue of who has a greater soft power in Africa: India or China? There were some influential scholars who had suggested that in the long run India has a greater soft power than China in Africa. In this vein, for instance, the distinguished Kenyan political scientist Ali Mazrui observed a few years ago:

China and India are two emerging super-powers on the global stage. India's influence in Africa already includes the influence of 'Bollywood', Indian music, South Asian cuisine, and the legacies of Gandhi, Nehru and nonalignment from the 20th century onwards. India's cultural power is much older than China's. However, Beijing's involvement in Africa's liberation wars, oil exploration, investments, arms sales and infrastructural projects have begun to deepen China's penetration of postcolonial Africa. India has greater softer power than China; China is evolving harder forms of leverage.⁴

Patey's analysis strongly suggests that it is China rather than India which

probably would come to enjoy the greater soft power in Africa. He writes:

Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were prominent in helping South Africa's struggle against apartheid and the continent's struggle to sever its colonial bonds. But Indo-Afro solidarity was put to the test during the 1962 border war between India and China; many African countries did not provide the political support New Delhi had hoped for. While the peaceful ideals of non-violence resistance and cultural co-existence expressed by Gandhi and Nehru fell easily on the ears of African leaders, they could not match China's more tangible military, political and financial support (p. 145).

Does the book also expose, in effect, the hypocritical reactions of some entities and individuals in the West to China in the Sudan? I think this is a legitimate conclusion since, after reading the book, one cannot help but ask why 'undemocratic' China is severely criticized when it does business with Sudan but 'democratic' India is not subjected to similar criticism? This book is a good read for those who are interested in understanding different dimensions of China's relations with the Sudan, and with Africa.

Notes

1. Ali A. Mazrui and Seifudein Adem, 2013, *AFRASIA: A Tale of Two Continents*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, p. 134.
2. See Martyn J. Davies, 2008, 'Special Economic Zones: China's Developmental Model Comes to Africa,' in *China into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, pp. 151-153. For a broadly comparative analysis of this theme, see Edward S. Steinfeld, 2010, *Playing Our Game: Why China's Rise Doesn't Threaten the West*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 39-47.
3. Tom Burgis, 2015, *The Looting Machine: Warlords, Oligarchs, Corporations, Smugglers, and the Theft of Africa's Wealth*, New York: Public Affairs.
4. Ali A. Mazrui, 2012, 'Are China and India Rivals for Influence in Africa? Afro-Asian Interaction in the Post-Cold War Era', Institute of Global Cultural Studies, Binghamton University, New York, unpublished paper.



Land in the Struggles for Citizenship in Africa

Le foncier dans les luttes pour la citoyenneté en Afrique

Edited by/ sous la direction de Sam Moyo, Dzodzi Tsikata et Yakham Diop

The variety of land questions facing Africa and the divergent strategies proposed to resolve them continue to evoke debates. Increasingly, in response to the enduring problems of land tenure, there are land movements of all shapes and orientations, some reformist and others quite revolutionary in their agenda. However revolutionary, land movements have tended to ignore the land tenure interests of women, pastoralists, youth and indigenous people. Several of these longstanding and emerging issues in land tenure include the role of the state in land tenure reforms; urban land questions, the nature of land struggles and movements; and, the impact of land tenure developments on particular social groups and countries. An overarching concern is the extent to which land rights are being commodified, through the conversion of land held under customary tenure systems into marketised systems. The consequences of this include growing land concentration, land tenure insecurities, diminishing access to land by various sections of society, including the poor, women and less dominant ethno-religious groups. This volume brings together different studies on Africa's land questions exploring emerging land issues on the continent in terms of the wider questions of development, citizenship, and democratisation. The chapters discuss the land question through a variety of themes. Some focus on the agrarian aspects of the land questions, while others elucidate the urban dimensions of the land question.

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