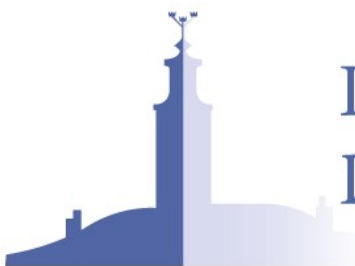


Managing Uncertainties: China–EU International Security Cooperation

Xu Qiyu

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Introduction

Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Europe's integration and China's rise have undoubtedly been among the world's most striking developments in recent history. Cooperation and coordination between these two powers is of great value to both and, at least for a period, has been applauded as a step toward a multipolar world. However, people cannot fail to notice that China–EU cooperation is unbalanced. Economically, cooperation is well developed: EU–China trade grew to more than US\$400 billion in 2008, and the EU has been China's largest trade partner for five consecutive years.¹ In comparison, political cooperation remains in a more preliminary phase, while security cooperation has hardly even begun. This paper duly focuses on EU–China cooperation in the realm of security, especially international security.

The underdeveloped status of EU–China cooperation in international security can be partly attributed to the huge geographic distance between Europe and China, which not only lowers the risk for clashes but also considerably reduces the potential for cooperation. During the 1970s, China and (Western) Europe contemplated strengthening security cooperation in order to deal with the aggression of the Soviet Union. However, even confronted with a common threat, the drive for cooperation was still not strong enough to overcome the geographical distance. In fact, the idea of establishing close security cooperation between China and Europe during the Cold War never went beyond diplomatic interactions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, and thereby the threat that it posed to global and regional security, there seemed, initially at least, to be even less motivation for security cooperation between China and Europe.

¹ Statement by Song Zhe, China's ambassador to the EU, January 17, 2009, <http://news.cctv.com/world/20090117/102845.shtml> (accessed January 23, 2009). The websites referenced in this paper were accessed from January 20–April 10, 2009.

The “U.S. first” security perspective impedes the progress of EU–China cooperation in the security arena. For reasons of history and reality, both Europe and China are inclined to treat their relationship with the United States as the top priority of both their foreign and security policies. Accordingly, there is a tendency for both to view their security in a China–U.S. or EU–U.S. context, which largely explains why both the EU and China, albeit with their very different relationships with the United States, have developed a high level of cooperation and communication with the U.S. in the field of security. In combining all of these factors, cooperation and coordination between the EU and China around security concerns would seem to be more of a luxury than a necessity.

However, with the development of international security and EU–China relations, increasing cooperation between these two powers in the security arena has become more necessary. Globalization, fast developing technology, and a shifting structure amongst major powers have combined to give rise to more turbulence and uncertainty in international security. Terrorism, climate change, and other non-traditional security threats have changed the context within which we assess national interests and manage international relations. The proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and particularly the fear of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorist groups, poses an even more dangerous threat to the international community as a whole. As two major powers, the EU and China should take greater responsibility and contribute more to world security by cooperating more closely. Besides, cooperation in security can also reinforce the foundation for bilateral relations in other arenas, particularly while other uncertainties, which will be outlined later, exist in relations between the EU and China.

The main argument pursued here is that cooperation in the field of security is not just desirable but necessary and also quite feasible. Whilst being fully aware of the significance of the China–EU relationship, however, the two also have to face limitations and constraints that act as a break on further enhancing relations. In recognition of this, both China and the EU are trying to find a way out of the current unsatisfactory situation and to develop a sustainable relationship. EU–China cooperation in international se-

curity can well serve this purpose. Besides, there exist several institutionalized platforms between China and the EU (the China–EU Summit, for instance) on which cooperation can spillover into the field of security. As shown in the development of international regimes after World War II, institutionalized arrangements, initially established for some specific purpose, can serve as a convenient path for furthering international cooperation or coordination in other fields.

However, advancing such cooperation should also take key obstacles into consideration, such as political difficulties, differences in values and conceptions, divergent interests, and problematic bureaucratic procedures, which have so often impacted the development of the EU–China relationship in recent years. For this purpose, some key principles should be followed. Additionally, setting a proper goal will also be necessary to forestall unrealistic expectations, which could easily lead to psychological fluctuation and unrest, both among policy makers and the general public.

Selecting the fields in which cooperation can take the first step is always crucial. In the case of EU–China cooperation in international security, such fields should not only be of mutual concern but also, to the degree possible, politically uncontentious. Such fields may include the following:

- Non-traditional security issues like counter-terrorism, anti-narcotics, combating organized crime, energy security, and climate change
- Non-proliferation and arms control, especially in the nuclear field
- Regional security issues, especially in Africa
- Coordination and cooperation in securing sea lanes of communication (SLOCs)

Based on an analysis of each potential opportunity for cooperation, this paper gives detailed recommendations as to how to proceed, capitalizing on these opportunities.

Background and Context

Since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed tremendous changes in terms of international security. With continuous shifts and readjustments in the international system, regional conflicts and geopolitical competition have never ceased to impact and shape the basic trajectory of international security. Furthermore, the 9/11 terrorist attacks drove home the new and increasingly virulent threat posed by non-state actors. Religious extremism and radicalism, terrorism, organized crime, environmental degradation, climate change, and other non-traditional threats have come to the forefront in shaping the context within which international security cooperation occurs. The interaction between traditional and non-traditional threats makes the international security situation much more complicated than in any previous period of history, giving rise to greater uncertainty and turbulence. It should also be noted that this sort of interaction will continue in the foreseeable future and will be shaped by three overlapping variables: globalization, a shifting power structure, and the development and reliance upon technology.

Globalization

In the post-Cold War era, globalization has become one of the key buzzwords when people talk about international security. Driven by technological progress and government policies, the flows of products, labor, capital, information, ideas, and even religious beliefs are accelerating and becoming more penetrating. As a result, the internal and external aspects of national security have become increasingly interlinked, which has served to create a condensed worldwide network of security interdependence. Any small input, for instance some local or domestic turmoil, may lead to an unpredictable output in a much wider sphere, as captured by the “butterfly” effect.

Another destabilizing impact of globalization results from the unequal development and rate of development in different parts of the world. Many countries, including some developing countries, have grasped the oppor-

tunities presented by globalization and enjoy a high rate of economic and social development. Simultaneously, there are also many countries that cannot address the newly-emerging problems and suffer serious setbacks, which often compound themselves. A World Bank report from 2001 shows that the average income in the richest 20 countries of the world is 37 times the average of that in the poorest 20; and that the gap has doubled in the past 40 years.² In terms of wealth per capita, the gap is even more striking: the average in the ten richest countries is more than 141 times the average in the poorest ten, while the top country's wealth per capita is nearly 330 times that of the bottom ranked country.³ For those who have more to lose in the globalization process, this situation understandably creates frustration and a feeling of injustice. When resentment steadily accumulates, the ground is ripe for extreme ideas and actions, which then spread worldwide through the international networks established by the globalization process.

Shifting Power Structure

The works of Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz have revealed how the structure of power distribution among major countries is a key determinant in international security.⁴ Unfortunately, the contemporary power structure is far from stable. The continuously shifting structure adds uncertainty to the international security system. Some attribute this to the traditional "rise and fall of powers," particularly the rise of China. It is argued that China's gradual rise in power will eventually disturb the present power structure and make a clash between the United States and China "inevitable," just as was the case between Athens and Sparta in Thucydides'

² "Overview: Attacking Poverty: Opportunity, Empowerment and Security," in The World Bank, *World Development Report 2000/2001* (Washington, D.C.: Oxford University Press and the World Bank, 2000), p. 3.

³ The World Bank, *Where Is the Wealth of Nations? Measuring Capital for the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2006).

⁴ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th rev. ed (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), esp. pp. 4–15; Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

works.⁵ However, a major shift in the international power structure began already with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the subsequent and prolonged “transitional” period, “multipolar vs. unipolar” became one of the most controversial topics in international politics. Newly-emerging economies like China, India, and Brazil, a resurgent Russia, and a steadily integrating Europe, all contribute to a multipolar world and can be perceived as a challenge to a unipolar world. Around the time of the Iraq War in 2003, the shift in power structure was mainly revealed in the transatlantic rift. Even the celebrated scholar Charles Kupchan viewed Europe as a challenge to U.S. supremacy, by arguing that the EU would inevitably seek influence commensurate with its economic power (which already rivals that of the U.S.), and thus decades of strategic partnership would give way to renewed geopolitical competition.⁶

Globalization has made the shift in power structure much more complicated and paradoxical than in any previous time. On the one hand, globalization facilitates the circulation of “Western” values and culture, which in turn helps to strengthen the soft power of Western countries, particularly the United States. On the other hand, the proliferation of technology and weaponry through international networks makes the privatization of war a reality. In other words, there are various dimensions to the impact of globalization on the power structure. This is neatly encapsulated by Joseph Nye as having evolved into a “three-dimensional chess board.” On the military board the United States undoubtedly retains supremacy; on the economic board there is balance and it is already multipolar; and on the board of transnational relations there are a number of flows, whether they be ideas or materials, crossing borders out of the control of governments.⁷ The inte-

⁵ One of the most clear articulations of this point of view is in John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2001); a similar argument can also be found in Zbigniew Brzezinski and John J. Mearsheimer, “Clash of the Titans,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 146, January/February 2005.

⁶ Charles A. Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: A. Knopf, 2002).

⁷ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

reactions and shifts within this structure have become more unpredictable. This may in fact be the real meaning of the shift in the international power structure in the contemporary world.

Development of Technology

The impact of globalization or the shift in the power structure may never have worked in, or indeed occurred, in today's global system without the development of technology. In fact, technological innovation has brought about a worldwide information revolution, creating access for many ordinary people to global information sources and instantaneous communication. This explains the thriving transnational networks and their increasing influence in international politics and security, among which terrorist groups are probably the most prominent. An important difference between today's terrorists and those in the past, apart from exhibiting very different structures, is that they now have greater access to much more destructive weaponry. Indeed, the prospect of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists becomes increasingly probable with the development of technology. To a large extent, the impact of this technological revolution is still unfolding and no one can give an accurate evaluation of it.

There could also be another revolution in the foreseeable future. New technology always serves as the herald or catalyst of a new era. Although the next breakthrough in technology remains unknown to the world, it is fair to say that such a breakthrough will undoubtedly have a large impact on people's lifestyles as well as upon international security. Moreover, a new technology, whether it is about energy or genes, will very likely trigger a redistribution of power among nations, which may start a new cycle of competition and make the security situation more uncertain.

The above forms the backdrop or "objective environment" in which the EU–China security relationship is developing. However, the ideas and perspectives of the material world also factor in. Max Weber explored the connection between material and ideal factors when he wrote about interests and ideas: "Interests, not ideas, dominate directly the actions of men. Yet the 'images of the world' created by these ideas have very often served as switches determining the tracks on which the dynamism of interests kept

actions moving.”⁸ As to the respective ideas and judgments of the EU and China in regard to international security, it is not difficult to find out the basic congruence between the two.

In the 2008 white paper on national defense issued by the Chinese government, the judgment on international security is that:

a profound readjustment is brewing in the international system. In addition, factors conducive to maintaining peace and containing war are on the rise, and the common interests of countries in the security field have increased, and their willingness to cooperate is enhanced, thereby keeping the risk of worldwide, all-out, large-scale wars low for a relatively long period of time.⁹

As to the challenges and threats in international security, the white paper adds:

World peace and development are faced with multiple difficulties and challenges. Struggles for strategic resources, strategic locations and strategic dominance have intensified. Meanwhile, hegemonism and power politics still exist, regional turmoil keeps spilling over, hotspot issues are increasing and local conflicts and wars keep emerging. The impact of the global financial crisis triggered by the U.S. subprime mortgage crisis is snowballing. In the aspect of world economic development, issues such as energy and food are becoming more serious, highlighting deep-seated contradictions. Economic risks are manifesting in a more interconnected, systematic and global nature. Issues such as terrorism, environmental disasters, climate change, serious epidemics, transnational crime and pirates are becoming increasingly prominent.¹⁰

According to the first security strategy of the European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, the general analysis of international security is

⁸ Marianne Weber, *Max Weber* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), pp. 347f; quoted in Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), p. 9.

⁹ State Council Information Office, *China's National Defense in 2008*, http://www.china.org.cn/government/central_government/2009-01/20/content_17155577_3.htm

¹⁰ Ibid.

quite similar to China's analysis. It argues that large-scale aggression against any member state of the EU is improbable. Instead, Europe faces new threats which are more diverse, less visible, and less predictable. Among them, terrorism, proliferation of WMD, regional conflicts, regional failure, and organized crime are identified as "key threats" to the EU.¹¹ So, in addition to the objective security background, the similar perceptions and viewpoints of the basic trend in international security provides a subjective context for the development of the EU–China security relationship. In this context the EU–China relationship and possible cooperation in international security can be analyzed and visualized.

¹¹ Europe, Summaries of EU Legislation, "European Security Strategy," http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/fight_against_terrorism/r00004_en.htm

Dynamics, Possibilities, and Obstacles

In the EU–China relationship, the lack of overlap between strategic priorities and security priorities was traditionally considered an advantage. Free from strategic and security rivalry, both sides believe they can focus on areas of greater harmony such as economy and trade, in order to sustain the stable development of a healthy bilateral relationship. However, it becomes increasingly clear that, in the long run, this current advantage will turn out to be a disadvantage to developing a full-fledged and mature relationship. As to security cooperation, it has been marked more by disappointment than achievement. The EU maintains an arms embargo on China, which is viewed within China as an extremely disappointing political gesture. Moreover, the constant quarrels and suspicions concerning China's participation in Galileo, a European project to build a satellite navigation system, is another example of mitigating circumstances that impact upon what should be a success. This generates the following question: Is EU–China cooperation in the security arena a necessity or merely a luxury?

The answer should be “a necessity.” As to EU–China cooperation in international security, the whole scenario has altered a great deal during the past two decades. Two developments are responsible for this change: the continuing growth of the European Union as a global security actor, and the increasing expansion of China's national interests into overseas areas which overlap with European interests. Besides, the development of the EU–China overall relationship also requires such cooperation. In general, the motives or reasons for developing EU–China cooperation in international security can be listed as follows.

First, EU–China cooperation in international security can increase the security and stability of the international community as a whole. As mentioned above, international security has become more uncertain and turbulent because of globalization, the development of technology, and the consequent shift of the international power structure. Against this background, the interdependence among countries has reached such an extent that no country, even the strongest one, can resolve its security concerns single-

handedly. The experiences and lessons derived from the response to 9/11 have clearly demonstrated that international cooperation is indispensable in addressing various security threats in today's world. As two major powers, the EU and China should contribute more to international security, especially in such cases where they face similar security threats, and share a similar perspective toward international security.

Second, EU–China cooperation in international security can promote their respective roles as leading international security actors. Since its establishment, the EU has consistently pursued an active policy in international security. The European approach to security is often described as post-modern or post-Westphalian in that there is a significant inclination to use soft power or civilian power rather than conventional “hard power.” The intergovernmental mode of decision-making also provides the EU with a unique advantage in carrying out the interregional management of crises and conflicts, especially when the spillover of conflicts into neighboring countries requires a sophisticated regional response.¹² While the EU and China can be argued to share a similar perception in terms of international security, cooperation with China can provide yet more soft power and leverage for the EU, particularly in regional security issues. As an actor with increasing influence on the global stage, China has to adapt its own perceptions and policies to the changing world in order to formulate its own approach to security: on the one hand, China has to safeguard its expanding interests and address various security problems; on the other hand, China has to avoid the security dilemma of a “rising power” in order to avoid repeating history. Cooperation with the EU will not only help China to be a responsible great power, but also gain a better position in the arena of international security.

Third, EU–China cooperation in international security will help to consolidate the overall relationship between the EU and China. In general, the bilateral relationship between these two powers has developed quite

¹² Björn Hettne, Fredrik Söderbaum, and Paltrik Stålgren, *The EU as a Global Actor in the South*, Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, *SIEPS Report 2008/8*, http://netris-acp.org/uploads/media/2008_08.pdf

smoothly and successfully since the end of the Cold War. However, turbulence and squabbles between the two sides have increased considerably. Particularly in recent years, the fluctuation of the EU–China relationship has become so conspicuous that some observers have proclaimed the end of the EU–China “honeymoon,”¹³ which is undoubtedly a blow to those who view the increasing cooperation between China and the EU as an irreversible step toward a multipolar world. There are at least two deep-rooted driving causes which can explain the contemporary “transformation” within EU–China relations. One is the unbalanced development of the relationship between the EU and China, which has been pointed out at the beginning of this paper. The other is, as some have argued, because of globalization and the consequent shift of the international power structure, especially the diminishing gap in GDP between the EU and China, resulting in EU frustration.¹⁴ Cooperation in international security, therefore, can play an important role in restoring a more balanced development in the EU–China relationship. And once established, this sort of cooperation has proven to be more stable than political or economic cooperation. Accordingly, cooperation in international security could serve as an “anchor” in the EU–China relationship.

Fourth, cooperation in international security is also an efficient way to head off potential security competition and conflict. The huge distance be-

¹³ Cao Min, “China and the EU Step into the Post-Honey Moon Period”, *China Newsweek*, No. 43, 2005; also see the interviews with Zhao Huapu, professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, and Feng Zhongping, professor at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, December 11, 2007, available at: <http://www.zjol.com.cn/05world/system/2007/12/11/009042319.shtml>; and David Shambaugh, “China and Europe: The ‘China Honeymoon’ Is Over,” *International Herald Tribune*, November 26, 2007.

¹⁴ Xin Hua, a senior researcher at the China Institute of International Studies and a specialist on European affairs, believes that the EU is facing a difficult or even frustrating situation under globalization where the gap with the U.S. remains and the emerging economies are chasing behind. The tension and being at odds with China is a sort of natural reflection of this situation; see Xin Hua, “Facing the Fluctuation in China–Europe Relations,” *China Review*, January 2009, http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2009-01/20/content_10687565_1.htm

tween the two has so far prevented any real security competition between China and the EU. However, with the process of globalization and the extending overseas interests of China, the potential for clash and conflict are looming within the EU–China relationship. While sticking to a market-oriented approach and increasing its aid and investment in some regions, particularly Africa, China is repeatedly described as a ravenous dragon searching for oil, ore, and other raw materials by some in the European mass media, which implies suspicion and tension between these two powers. It is fair to say that at least in Africa, the continent in which some European countries have enjoyed supremacy for a long period, mistrust and uncertainties are not easy to ignore, especially considering the suspicion aroused by China’s participation in the UN peace-keeping operation in Sudan.¹⁵ Cooperation in international security is helpful for fostering mutual understanding and mutual trust. In this sense, it is not only an effort toward a better relationship, but also a necessary “insurance” against negative developments. The “common aversion” to a possible rising security competition between China and EU can be as effective in motivating cooperation as “common interests.”

The next question concerns the feasibility of EU–China cooperation in international security. First and foremost, besides having similar perceptions of international security threats as previously outlined, a developing China increasingly resembles the EU in terms of its security approach. This similarity makes the two sides more “compatible” in terms of cooperation in international security. Like the EU, China also disapproves of the unilateral use of military force to resolve international security issues, and has a strong inclination toward fixing international problems through the format

¹⁵ This Chinese engineering unit of 315 personnel was described by Larry Wortzel, commissioner of the U.S.–China Economic and Security Review Commission, as “an engineering battalion to Sudan to help secure oil and guard Chinese petroleum production facilities.” Furthermore, it was also “first real deployment of a Chinese unit abroad...the West will have to wrestle with the fact that China will send military units abroad.” Quoted in Wendell Minnick, “Chinese Military Expands Its Influence,” *Defense News*, December 17, 2007, <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=3281971>.

of multilateral dialogue and peaceful negotiation. In Chinese foreign policy circles, one of the most widely-used terms is “soft power”(软实力), coined by Joseph Nye in 1990, which is being pursued and promoted with much more enthusiasm in Beijing than in Washington. Furthermore, the essence of the slogan “harmonious world” (和谐世界) put forward in 2005 by Chinese president Hu Jintao is a combination of four powerful ideas: economic development, political sovereignty, international law, and the balance between national interests and international interests.

Both the EU and China have shown a strong willingness to improve their relationship, which gives sufficient impetus for bilateral cooperation in international security. Amidst the turbulence stemming from trade disputes and political issues, such as the riots in Tibet before the opening of the Olympic Games in Beijing, the leaders of the EU and China kept their distance. But when Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao paid an official visit to the headquarters of the European Commission on January 30, 2009, both sides formally and officially reaffirmed their commitment to further developing the EU–China partnership, and pledged to strengthen coordination and cooperation on international and regional issues.¹⁶ However, as far as turning this willingness into policy is concerned, the cooperation in international security is perhaps the only field where both sides still have enough space to “further” develop, since economic cooperation has already developed to a nearly “sufficient” extent.

Last but not least, there are several institutionalized platforms between the EU and China which can be utilized for the purpose of cooperation in international security. These institutionalized dialogues range from the prime ministerial level such as the EU–China Summits, foreign minister level, meetings between political directors and geographic directors, and meetings at an expert level, the latter mainly covering political subjects including foreign policy, illegal immigration, and human rights. Apart from the political and economic dialogues, there are also 24 sectoral dialogues

¹⁶ *EU–China Joint Statement*, January 30, 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/china/docs/joint_statement_300109%20en.pdf

and agreements. Although so far there is no specific dialogue on security issues, it will be easy to infuse the content of security cooperation into the existing frameworks and make them more comprehensive. In the multilateral context, the EU and China have already established channels (although indirectly) on international security issues, for example in the ASEAN Regional Forum.

The platforms that already exist therefore constitute a base for furthering EU–China cooperation and are an arena for practical action in the domain of international security. However, turning this into policy or strategy requires overcoming a number of challenges:

- Political difficulties
- Difference in values and conceptions
- Diverging interests
- Procedural problems

Political difficulties range from Taiwan, Tibet, and relations with other great powers, especially the United States. It was not until recently that these problems became both eye-catching and frustrating. For instance, the EU's refusal to lift the military embargo on China in 2003 reflected the impact on the China–EU relationship of "the third power." In 2008, the relationship was undermined by a serious quarrel between the two sides after the demonstrations in Tibet turned violent. Not only were the governments on both sides involved, but also the domestic societies (particularly in China). Large-scale protests and demonstrations erupted in China after the EU foreign ministers issued a statement on the Tibet situation, especially after the French foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner, threatened to link the Olympic Games with the issue of Tibet.¹⁷ For the first time since the end of the 1970s, ordinary Chinese (particularly students) demonstrated and protested against European countries' rhetoric and policies. This quarrel and

¹⁷ "EU urges China to show restraint in Tibet," *Reuters*, March 14, 2008, <http://in.reuters.com/article/southAsiaNews/idINIndia-32492120080314?pageNumber=2&virtualBrandChannel=0>

its consequences also deepened the impression among Chinese people that a “biased Western media” was responsible for the turbulence, and thus made them more reluctant to seek to understand public opinion in other countries.¹⁸ In European countries, Chinese public opinion is also problematic. The “spillover” of political issues in both societies and its impact on public opinion will be far more harmful for the EU–China relationship in the long run, and make cooperation, particularly in international security, a highly sensitive issue.

With its integration into the world system, China now shares more and more ideas with the EU. However, there still exist differences in values and conceptions that also serve to hinder EU–China cooperation in the arena of international security. Taking the “non-intervention principle” as an example, China still adheres to this principle but also tries to “balance its old principles and new reality” in order to “play a more constructive and responsible role in international conflicts and other crises,” as China’s dispatch of naval forces to Somalia demonstrates.¹⁹ Furthermore, China does not think shared values should be a precondition when it comes to finding mutually beneficial solutions to regional security or aid programs. Nevertheless, the EU believes values play an important role in security, and, like the rest of the Western countries, interprets China’s detachment to values as a rival model with which the EU should seriously deal.²⁰ Besides, China and the EU also hold different views on other conceptions, such as “peace building” or “peacemaking.” These differences will undoubtedly make effective cooperation in international security all the more difficult.

¹⁸ According to the poll made by Pew Research Centre, Washington D.C., available at: <http://www.stockcity.cn/CaiJin/caijinshidian/200808665726.html>

¹⁹ Zhang Haizhou, “Experts Debate China’s Role in Somalia Mission,” *China Daily*, December 12, 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2008-12/12/content_7297675.htm

²⁰ The main argument is that China’s model will encourage African governments to pay less attention on meeting demands for transparency, democracy, and human rights, and who will focus instead on economic growth. See Akwe Amosu, “China in Africa: It’s (Still) the Governance, Stupid,” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, March 9, 2007, <http://www.fpif.org/fgiftxt/4068>

Another obstacle to achieving closer EU–China ties is diverging interests. It should be acknowledged that common interests between China and Europe are steadily increasing and will contribute to the consolidation of the China–EU relationship in the long run. Nevertheless, we should not ignore the differences or clashes of interests. Taking Africa again as an example, the differences between the EU and China on the continent are by no means limited to relatively abstract notions of values and conceptions. The competition for markets and natural resources in Africa is intense. To some European firms, Chinese companies’ increasing gains in Africa may equate to fewer opportunities and profits for their firms. These differences and this competition, although carefully worded by diplomatic rhetoric or diverted toward issues like human rights and democracy, will be a real challenge for EU–China cooperation in nearly every field, particularly international security.

Obstacles can also come from lower or “technical” levels, i.e. from the procedural level. Because China is a sovereign nation-state and the EU remains a hybrid entity of a supranational and inter-governmental framework, bilateral cooperation in international security will be confronted with difficulties of procedure. Although the Lisbon Treaty, if accepted by all member states, could largely ease procedural difficulties in the EU’s cooperation with other powers by establishing the position of a new EU High Representative in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, several problems remain. For instance, regarding the issues of security and defense, finding a willing counterpart in the EU remains difficult. Sometimes it is also difficult to distinguish the EU’s behavior from that of its member states, which might give rise to confusion or the misreading of policies and intentions of the EU in international security. Take the EU’s first large-scale peace operation in Africa, EUFOR Chad/CAR, as an example. Hailed as a significant step for the EU in international security, this 3,500-strong mission in Chad and the Central African Republic, under the EU’s flag, also invites criticism for resembling more a French ex-colonial intervention than an EU opera-

tion, especially as most of the soldiers are French.²¹ Like in any other field, the cooperation between China and the EU will be confronted with procedural challenges, sometimes of the technical variety.

In conclusion, EU–China cooperation in international security does not lack impetus. The above mentioned obstacles can create problems for cooperation, but they are by no means overwhelming. To advance cooperation in international security is a pragmatic choice for both China and the EU.

²¹ The questions of the Swiss columnist Jacques Pilet can serve as an example. See his “The EU’s Military Mission in Africa Lacks Transparency,” *eurotopics*, February 7, 2008, http://www.eurotopics.net/en/search/results/archiv_article/ARTICLE_24433-The-EU-s-military-mission-in-Africa-lacks-transparency

Advancing Cooperation

The question remains: How can the seeds of cooperation be turned into reality? In general, improving international cooperation has to cover at least four points: goals, principles, institutions, and starting points. The goal is to clarify expectations, the principles for regulating activities, the institutions for facilitating cooperation, and the starting points which are selected areas for initial cooperation where positive results can help to encourage further cooperation. Concerning EU–China cooperation in international security and the problem of institutions, the existing bilateral framework can serve as institutional support.

Setting a proper goal for cooperation is extremely important in the EU–China case, particularly as the exact nature of the relationship between the EU and China has thus far been difficult to identify. While the two sides claim to have established a “strategic partnership” in the early 21st century, the real meaning of this identification remains nebulous to many on both sides.²² Next to the high expectations it has created, some policies in 2003 caused a backlash when people became aware of the limitations of the EU–China relationship. To avoid similar problems, a goal must be set that helps to keep expectations at a moderate, manageable level. For that reason, the goal should be set as “viable” cooperation, which can meet the security demands of both sides and is acceptable to the “third power,” and would thus be capable of developing relatively independently.

For the purpose of developing “viable” cooperation, a number of principles would be useful.

²² The talk about a “strategic partnership” between the EU and China around 2003 did not amend this situation but, ironically, exposed further the unbalanced development in the EU–China relationship. It is argued, especially on the European side, that the word “strategic” has a specific definition and does not suitably describe the EU–China relationship. See Fraser Cameron and Zheng Yongnian, “Key Elements of a Strategic Partnership,” in Stanley Crossick and Etienne Reuter, eds., *China–EU: A Common Future* (Singapore: World Scientific Printers, 2007), pp. 3–8.

Mutual Respect

Considering the obstacles, particularly the political difficulties and different values, mutual respect is a crucial principle in terms of China–EU cooperation in international security. On the Chinese side, it means increased responsibility and more active participation in international security institutions. On the part of the EU, it means greater open-mindedness and tolerance toward China. It should be noted that, China is still a developing country with a low GDP per capita and limited experience in collaborative international security affairs, despite its growing economic strength. However, China increasingly finds itself confronted with a dilemma, which seems to only affect a superpower: when you choose to do nothing, you are selfish and indifferent; when you choose to take action, it is very likely that you will be perceived as a threat. To address this problem, the EU and its member states could help by offering constructive advice as more experienced actors in international security, as well as by adjusting their own perspectives on China. This sort of mutual respect will go beyond the nebulous diplomatic rhetoric and contribute to the healthy development of cooperation in the arena of international security.

Focusing on “Lower” Level Cooperation

To keep international relations on a “lower” or technical level is an effective way to remain unencumbered of the fluctuations in political relations.²³ In the case of EU–China cooperation in international security, keeping, or at least starting, the cooperation on a lower or technical level would be a good choice since some issues are extremely sensitive and sometimes divisive.²⁴

²³ One good example is the agreement on “Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas” (INCSEA) signed in 1972 by the United States and the Soviet Union, which was strictly limited to the technical level and successfully survived through all major turbulences between these two superpowers, including the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan.

²⁴ Author’s interview with Dr. Magnus Ekengren, Head, Department of Security and Strategic Studies Section, National Defense College, Stockholm, March 3, 2009.

By carrying out cooperation on this level, both sides in effect can foster mutual trust in a relatively low risk sphere, which is essential for providing the basis for further cooperation and coordination. In addition, focusing on a lower or technical level should be easier to implement and achieve tangible results, which is always useful for encouraging more efforts and commitments. Maybe only in this way can cooperation in international security prove practical and play the role of “anchor” in the EU–China relationship.

Within the Framework of the UN Charter

There are some differences and debates within the EU in regard to its role in international security, as some member states simply do not want to be limited by the UN Charter. It has been widely noted that the EU has pledged to act within the spirit of the UN Charter, but has not committed to seek authorization from the UN Security Council prior to each prospective operation. However, since the EU acts mainly as a “soft power” or “civilian power” in international security, to keep a closer commitment to the UN Charter would be valuable in the long run. In this sense, maintaining cooperation with China within the framework of the UN Charter will not only facilitate cooperation itself, considering China’s policy toward the UN, but will also help to strengthen the tendency within the EU of adhering to the UN and the system of international law.²⁵

Given these considerations, EU–China cooperation in international security can start in four areas:

- Non-traditional security issues
- Non-proliferation and disarmament of WMD
- Regional security
- Security of SLOCs

Non-traditional security issues like terrorism, transnational organized crime, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and climate change pose a

²⁵ Ibid.

common threat to the whole international community. Meanwhile, they also provide strong impetus for international cooperation since no country, not even the most powerful one, can deal with them singlehandedly. Among these issues, a few are particularly relevant to EU–China cooperation. For example, EU–China cooperation on anti-narcotics issues becomes increasingly necessary in a situation where the Golden Crescent, the area with Afghanistan as its center, continues to dominate the European narcotics markets while also remaining the main source of drug smuggling into China.²⁶ On April 1, 2004, China, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan signed a memorandum on the eradication of the narcotics trade. In 2008, the foreign ministers of China, Russia, and India also proposed establishing anti-drug security belts around Afghanistan.²⁷ However, these projects cannot succeed on the regional level without effective cooperation from the United States and its European allies.²⁸ In regard to the EU, however, it seems that it has not been very successful in pursuing a clear-cut and consistent anti-drug strategy as a whole, despite many of its member states' troops being employed in Afghanistan. Instead, differences with the U.S. on anti-drug policy, and the lack of cooperation with Afghanistan's neighboring countries, further limit the effectiveness of EU policy.²⁹ In order to wage a successful campaign against the narcotics trade in the

²⁶ Aleksandr Zelichenko, "Globalization of Narco-traffic: 'The Golden Crescent' dominates," http://zhurnal.lib.ru/z/zelichenko_a_1/globalizationofnarcotrafficthegoldencrescentdominates.shtml

²⁷ "Anti-drug belts to be created around Afghanistan," *Xinhua*, May 16, 2008, http://www.china.org.cn/international/2008-05/16/content_15264742.htm

²⁸ However, so far China has been quite effective in pursuing anti-drug cooperation with the U.S., ranging from high-level dialogue, information sharing, to personnel training. In 2006, the director of China's National Anti-Drug Commission, Zhou Yongkang, visited the U.S. and signed a memorandum with the White House, which was viewed as a milestone in Sino–U.S. anti-drug cooperation. See "International cooperation for drug prohibition," *china.com.cn*, June 18, 2007, http://www.china.com.cn/law/zhuanti/zgjdbg/2007-06/18/content_8406765.htm

²⁹ Richard Weitz, "Afghanistan: US and EU Anti-Drug Strategies Are Diverging," *eurasianet.org*, March 4, 2007, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav040307.html>

Golden Crescent area, and improve security and stability in Afghanistan, anti-narcotics cooperation between the EU and China will be a major piece of any such strategy.

Besides, anti-narcotics cooperation is carried out primarily on a technical level including intelligence sharing, cooperative operations, and sustained dialogues over time between concerned units. Such cooperation would likely be multilateral from the very beginning, that is, a formal or informal framework for the purpose of anti-narcotics cooperation could be established among the United States, the European Union, and China, perhaps also including Russia. If the framework is initially successful, it could further be extended to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and other countries in the region, forming a regional institution whose goal will be strictly limited to combating narcotics.

In countering non-traditional security threats, anti-terrorism constitutes another domain for EU–China cooperation. The EU and China have both been afflicted by terrorism and both have adopted active anti-terrorism policies. In its first security strategy in 2003, the EU put international terrorism at the top of “three key threats” that it confronted.³⁰ After the 2004 bombings in Madrid, this threat became more imperative to address and the European Union issued a declaration against terrorism and appointed Gijs de Vries as counter-terrorism coordinator. With the suicide bombing attacks on London in July 2005, anti-terror policy and tactics have further become the absolute top priority for the British government, as well as for the EU. In December 2005, the EU approved a new strategy for counter-terrorism, which serves as a milestone in its efforts to combat international terrorism. In the meantime, the EU consistently seeks international cooperation in combating terrorism. It is especially with the U.S. that the EU has achieved concrete cooperation, including intelligence sharing, financial cooperation in anti-terror activities, etc. Since 2001, the EU and the U.S. have signed six important agreements, which cover areas like police cooperation, judicial criminal cooperation, transfer of passenger data (PNR), and the Container

³⁰ European Council, “A Secure Europe in A Better World,” June 20, 2003, http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/76255.pdf

Security Initiative (CSI). The EU has also made important progress in anti-terrorism cooperation with Russia.

China has also put anti-terrorism at the very top of its security agenda. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, it began to participate actively in international counter-terrorism cooperation. In particular, China has carried out effective cooperation with many neighboring countries, both under bilateral and multilateral frameworks. In the meantime, China also integrates military relations into counter-terrorism cooperation and has carried out several joint military exercises (see Table 1 on the following page).

With other countries, for example the United States, China has also achieved fruitful cooperation covering intelligence-sharing, technical and personnel exchange, and financial cooperation against the funding of terrorist groups. In 2002, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) established a post as legal attaché in Beijing, which was regarded as a breakthrough in China–U.S. cooperation against terrorism and transnational crime. The FBI also offered to assist China with security during the Beijing Olympic Games, including information sharing and technical assistance. Some Chinese security personnel also received FBI special agents training, which is also viewed as a milestone in U.S.–China anti-terrorism cooperation. China and the United States further took another big step in strengthening their cooperation by signing a declaration on the Container Security Initiative, with an aim to increasing anti-terrorism cooperation centered on container security. According to the declaration, the U.S. can send customs officials to ports in Shanghai and Shenzhen in order to help identify and check high risk containers before they are delivered to the United States.

Table 1: China’s Counter-terrorism Joint Military Exercises with Foreign Countries

Date	Name of Exercise	Place	No. of Troops Participating
Oct. 10–11, 2002	“Exercise-01” China–Kyrgyzstan counter-terrorism military exercise	Border area of Kyrgyzstan and China	Hundreds of troops from both countries

Aug. 6–12, 2003	“Coalition-2003” multi-lateral joint counter-terrorism exercise of the armed forces of the SCO member states	Border area of Kazakhstan and China	About 1300 troops from all SCO countries
Aug. 6, 2004	“Friendship-2004” Sino-Pakistani joint counter-terrorism exercise	Xinjiang, China	About 200 troops from both countries
Sept. 22–23, 2006	“Coordination-2006” China–Tajikistan joint counter-terrorism military exercise	Hatlon Prefecture, Tajikistan	More than 300 Tajik troops and about 150 Chinese troops
Dec.11 –18, 2006	“Friendship-2006” China–Pakistan joint counter-terrorism military exercise	Abbottabad, Pakistan	More than 400 troops from both countries
Aug.9– 17, 2007	“Peace Mission 2007” joint military anti-terrorism exercise by members of the SCO	Xinjiang, China; Chelyabinsk, Russia	More than 4,000 troops from all SCO countries
Dec.19 –27, 2007	“Hand-in-Hand 2007” China–India joint counter-terrorism training	Kunming, China	About 100 troops from both countries
Dec.5– 14, 2008	“Hand-in-Hand 2008” China–India joint counter-terrorism training	Belgaum, India	137 troops from China, about 100 troops from India

Sources: *China’s National Defense in 2002*, *China’s National Defense in 2004*, *in 2006*, *in 2008*, available at: <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20021209/VI.htm#2>; <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20041227/AppendixV.htm>; <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/wp2006.html#app4>; <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/wp2006.html#app4>; http://www.china.org.cn/government/centralgovernment/2009-01/20/content_17155577_18.htm; B. Raman, “India–China Joint Anti-Terror Exercise: An Assessment,” *International Terrorism Monitor – Paper No. 333* (December 26, 2007), http://www.saag.org/common/uploaded_files/paper_2518.html

In comparison, EU–China anti-terrorism cooperation is far from well-developed. One of the main stumbling blocks may be the problem of procedure, and also the lack of institutions. For example, the European Union lacks a center for the gathering and dealing of intelligence relating to public

security, something which will be crucial for any intelligence-sharing between China and the EU.³¹ This notwithstanding, there are still many important things that can be done:

Financial Collaboration – aimed at stopping and destroying the international network of fundraising and money laundering for terrorist groups. In this respect, there is much potential for improving cooperation between the EU and China. Dialogues could be arranged and institutionalized on the level of central banks, market supervising organizations, and police ministries.

Technical Cooperation – advanced technology and sophisticated equipment are essential for contemporary counter-terrorism efforts. As stated clearly in the report of the European Commission, the allowance of “targeted technical assistance” is a crucial part of the EU’s international counter-terrorism cooperation.³² The counter-terrorism situation within China and its neighboring countries also requires carrying out technical exchanges with other nations. In this sense, the cooperation between China and the EU on this topic could be practical and of much significance. Besides, technical exchanges for the purpose of counter-terrorism will be confronted with fewer obstacles since they are much less sensitive than the exchange of military technology.

Personnel Exchange – Chinese security personnel trained by the FBI could, to some extent, serve as a precedent. Anti-terrorism personnel exchanges between the EU and China could cover a wide spectrum ranging from police and civilian officials, to personnel from special service forces. The project could be undertaken either between Brussels and Beijing, or between China and the separate EU member states.

³¹ Ekengren interview.

³² European Commission, “Strengthening the European Union as an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice,” July 2, 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/terrorism/international/fsj_terrorism_international_en.htm

Non-Proliferation and Arms Control

The Joint Declaration on Non-proliferation and Arms Control issued after the 2004 EU–China Summit expressed the intention of both sides to work together as “strategic partners in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.”³³ This declaration also serves as a framework for EU–China cooperation to strengthen the existing export control regulations and legislation. At the 9th EU–China Summit in 2006, both sides reaffirmed their willingness to deepen cooperation in this field, especially in preparation for the review of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the 10th EU–China Summit in 2007, similar words were repeated. However, due to many factors, among which the policy of the Bush administration was undoubtedly a significant one, the development of EU–China cooperation in non-proliferation and arms control has been minimal. With the change of U.S. administration, however, there now seems a possibility for EU–China cooperation to develop in this area, particularly in regard to nuclear weapons.

To be concrete, the analysis should take into account non-proliferation as well as arms control. As to EU–China cooperation concerning the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the first priority remains the Iranian nuclear issue. On this topic, the Obama administration has displayed greater flexibility and more willingness to start a direct dialogue with Iran. However, considering the deep mistrust between Iran and the United States, as well as the powerful political forces within both countries that are loath to make any rapprochement, there is still a strong feeling of uncertainty. Compared with the Six-Party Talks on the Korean nuclear issue, the negotiations around the Iranian nuclear issue seem to have achieved less

³³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Joint Declaration of the People’s Republic of China and the European Union on Non-proliferation and Arms Control,” December 9, 2004, available at: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/2649/t173749.htm>

progress. Some observers believe that the main problem lies in the lack of a key coordinator, like the role China is playing in the Six-Party Talks.³⁴

Among Russia, EU, and China, the EU could potentially be the most suitable for fulfilling the role of a key coordinator, considering its deep interdependence with Iran and its tradition of multilateralism. For instance, at least until 2007, the EU remains the largest oil export destination and the top trading partner of Iran. Regarding the oil trade, five EU member states (Italy, France, Netherlands, Greece, and Spain) imported 613,000 barrels per day (bbl/d) in 2007, constituting 24.9 per cent of the total exports of Iran; this was more than Japan (523,000 bbl/d), China (411), India (374), and South Korea (258).³⁵ Concerning trade with Iran, in 2007, the EU accounted for 24 per cent of Iran's foreign trade, while China's proportion was 14.5 per cent, Japan 9.8, and South Korea 6.3.³⁶ In addition, the EU is also the biggest investor in Iran, particularly in its energy industry, from which 80 per cent of the Iranian government's revenue derives.³⁷ For the EU, to play the role of key coordinator in the Iranian nuclear issue would not only represent a big challenge but also an opportunity, since such a role would be a breakthrough for the EU in the international security arena, as well as symbolize its position as a "soft superpower."

Undoubtedly, it will be an extremely tricky task for the European Union (or its member states such as the UK, France, and Germany) to play such a role. Just like China in the Six-Party Talks, it is almost impossible for the EU to play the role of key coordinator singlehandedly, although European countries can simultaneously maintain close ties with both of the antagonists, that is, the United States and Iran. Active cooperation and coordination

³⁴ Interview with Bates Gill, Director, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Stockholm, March 17, 2009.

³⁵ Data from Energy Information Administration, Official Energy Statistics from the U.S. Government, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Iran/Oil.html>

³⁶ Data from European Commission, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs2006/september/tradoc_113392.pdf

³⁷ Roger Stern, "Why Europe Has Leverage With Iran", *The Wall Street Journal*, August 14, 2007, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB118705513094996781.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

from China (or from Russia) will not only be valuable but necessary. As two powers who have few geopolitical interests in this area (neither the EU nor China wants to seek military bases in Iran but to some other powers, one or two military bases would be extremely welcome) an efficient and stable linkage between China and the EU around the Iranian nuclear issue could act as a buffer against any escalation of crisis or geopolitical competition between major powers, either real or potential. Besides, while the EU and China have huge economic interests in Iran, cooperation with China will also increase the EU's leverage in this issue and allow them to better leverage the Iranian government, which in turn can encourage a positive response from the United States. In short, when the U.S. policy toward Iran shows some signal of positive change, it also signals ripe timing for more coordination and cooperation between the EU and China.

In the dimension of arms control and the disarmament of nuclear weapons, the timing for strengthening cooperation between China and the EU would also seem opportune. (Of course, such cooperation is mainly conducted between China and the nuclear member states of the EU, i.e. the UK and France). The positive change in the Obama administration's policy toward nuclear arms control and disarmament gives new impetus to this process after nearly a decade's stagnation. At the 45th Munich Conference on Security Policy on February 68, 2009, U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden reaffirmed the Obama administration's commitment to a new strategic arms agreement with Russia. The official talk of willingness by the U.S., and the positive response from the Russian side, give the international community hope that the U.S. and Russia are prepared to negotiate substantial reductions in their nuclear arsenals.³⁸ In March 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke even more

³⁸ Cole Harvey, "Disarmament Efforts Get New Impetus," *Arms Control Today*, March 2007, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_03/Disarmament

boldly on nuclear disarmament during the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.³⁹

Against this backdrop, it would be exceedingly constructive if the EU and China could achieve more coordination and cooperation within the framework of the United Nations; and it is even more relevant and necessary for the coordination between China and the two EU member states possessing nuclear weapons. As three “smaller” nuclear powers, consensus among China, the UK, and France on nuclear disarmament will be crucial, particularly if the two nuclear “superpowers” can achieve a breakthrough. A clear, consistent and positive gesture from these three powers can contribute a lot toward shaping a favorable environment for nuclear disarmament, and thus may encourage the United States and Russia to make further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. Concerning cooperation between the UK, France, and China, there are at least two easily attainable steps to take. The first is to begin a strategic dialogue and try to reach a consensus that can serve as a guideline for the next step. Secondly, after concrete results are achieved in negotiations between the U.S. and Russia, the former three powers can together make a pledge to reduce their own respective nuclear arsenals. In this case, a joint statement would be very constructive.

Regional Security Issues

With regards to regional security, cooperation between the EU and China in Africa could be the most significant. Although there are some differences in values, cooperation can still be established firmly in areas of common interest. As clarified by some research, the EU’s policy toward Africa is not solely driven by the ideals and values so often emphasized by political leaders and policymakers, but by interests like Africa’s market and natural resources.⁴⁰ Table 2 shows the supply of African crude oil to EU countries.

³⁹ Nicholas Krlev, “U.S., Russia Aim to Cut Nukes,” *The Washington Times*, March 9, 2009, <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/mar/09/us-russia-aim-to-cut-nukes/>

⁴⁰ Hettne, Söderbaum, and Stålgren, *The EU as a Global Actor in the South*.

Table 2. Major Destinations for African crude oil; Source Location as % Share of Total Imports by Importer (2005)

	North Africa	Guinea Gulf	Chad/Sudan
EU	28	13	0
USA	8	34	1
China	1	9	2
Japan	0	1	2

Source: *Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa*, available at: <http://www.atlas-ouestafrique.org/squelette/carte.php?lang=en&file=IMG/png/7.-African-oil-exports-20052.png&titre=Destination%20of%20African%20Oil%20Exports%20in%202005>

China’s interests in Africa have increased rapidly in recent years. For China, Africa serves as a base for practicing its policy toward other developing countries, which is a pillar for the whole structure of Chinese foreign policy. For China’s economy, close and mutually beneficial economic ties with Africa are significant. Despite the potential competition over markets and/or natural resources, the EU and China share the vital interest of helping to maintain peace and stability on the continent of Africa as well as some “basic values” like concern for humanitarian issues. The EU’s and China’s interest in strengthening the authority of the UN creates greater convergence in their approaches toward regional security issues, and will help facilitate their cooperation in the regional security arena of Africa. Moreover, some researchers have noticed that there is also a positive trend in the EU’s attitude toward China, which is changing from having been very negative at the beginning to being more moderate.⁴¹ This psychological change will also be helpful.

In practice, EU–China cooperation should focus on three levels: the African Union, regional organizations within Africa, and individual states. On the levels of the African Union and regional organizations, China, as a sovereign nation-state, lacks the necessary experience to carry out cooperation

⁴¹ Interview with Professor Henning Melber, Director of the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, and Executive Director of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, March 6, 2009.

through regional intergovernmental institutions, while the EU has a unique advantage because of its similar structure and strong trends of interregionalism in its foreign policy.⁴² Therefore, cooperation with the EU on these two levels will help China play a more constructive role in Africa, particularly in overcoming China's increasing "dilemma of non-intervention" — intervening in African conflicts with the Chinese perspective and principle on sovereignty, while in some cases strict non-intervention can be interpreted as indifference. If China was able, with the EU's help, to effectively cooperate with African organizations like the African Union on regional security issues, China could function more as a mediator or advisor, thereby avoiding accusations of meddling in the affairs of sovereign states.⁴³ On the level of individual states, coordination and cooperation between the EU and China are more complementary since EU member states and China both keep solid ties with respective African countries. In general, the cooperation and coordination on these three levels can effectively mitigate the potential competition between China and the EU in aid programs and regional security issues, and will increase the efficiency of efforts from the EU and China in helping African countries improve their socio-economic situation as well as security. These possible areas include conflict management, peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, and natural disaster assistance.

Among these areas, cooperation in peacekeeping could be significant. Neither the EU nor China has Africa as a main focus of its peacekeeping operations. Until February 2009, China had employed a total of only 1,549 troops (non-combat), 49 military observers, and 38 civilian police in Afri-

⁴² Vinod K. Aggarwal and Edward A. Forgy, "Explaining Trends in EU Interregionalism", in Vinod Aggarwal and Edward Fogarty, eds., *European Union Trade Strategies: Between Globalism and Regionalism* (London: Palgrave, 2004), available at: <http://basc.berkeley.edu/pdf/articles/Explaining%20Trends%20in%20EU%20Interregionalism.pdf>

⁴³ Klas Marklund and Karin Odqvist, *Perspectives on Africa Today: A Swedish-Chinese-Africa Dialogue*, Report on a conference organized by the Institute for Security and Development Policy and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala and Stockholm, February 14–15, 2008, p. 14.

ca.⁴⁴ By comparison, the EU's peacekeeping operations in Africa are of a much larger scale. In the military bridging operation EUFOR Chad/CAR alone, 3,700 European troops have been deployed under the EU flag in eastern Chad and in the northeastern part of the Central African Republic.⁴⁵ Considering the size and the geographic proximity of the peacekeeping troops, it is necessary to build communication ties between the Chinese and EU peacekeeping troops. This is also an approach to increase the efficiency of "hybrid" peacekeeping operations. The cooperation or coordination can be implemented simultaneously on an EU–China level and/or between China and the individual member states, particularly those EU countries that send the main bulk of peacekeeping troops. On the level of the African Union, cooperation should mainly focus on policy and strategic issues, in which official or non-official dialogue mechanisms between China and the EU could potentially be helpful. On the level of individual sovereign states, more concrete or operational coordination could be carried out, such as communication between the deployed peacekeeping troops, logistical support, and co-planning contingencies for a potential emergency.

Security of SLOCs

Unlike between the U.S. and China, there is no formal dialogue on maritime safety or security between the EU and China, let alone on the important sub-topic of the security of sea lanes of communication. However, the necessity is growing to address this topic, particularly when the EU and China both participate in overseas security operations.

For example, in order to fight piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast, the European Union decided to send a fleet to Somalia on December 8, 2008. The military operation, named NAVFOR Somalia, was conducted

⁴⁴ "UN Mission's Summary detailed by Country," February 28, 2009, http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/2009/feb09_3.pdf

⁴⁵ European Union, European Security and Defense Policy, "EU military Operation in Eastern Chad and North Eastern Central African Republic (EUFOR Tchad/RCA)," March 2009, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Final%20FACTSHEET%20EUFOR%20TCHAD-RCA%20version%209_EN.pdf

in support of UN Security Council Resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1838 (2008), and 1846 (2008). The operation is planned for an initial period of 12 months, including at least six frigates and three maritime patrol aircraft. This is the first EU maritime operation.⁴⁶ China is also deeply concerned by the acts of piracy and, for the same purpose as the EU, made a similar decision to send a fleet consisting of three destroyers to the seas off the Somali coast on December 20, 2008, only 12 days after the EU decision. For China this is unusual, because it is the first time in recent history that the country has sent its navy overseas to conduct an operation. In doing so, China is sending an unequivocal signal to the international community that China is not aspiring to be a traditional “sea power” as such, but instead wants to appear more willing and competent to take part in international security cooperation. The Ministry of National Defense of China declared that China would also be willing to share intelligence and conduct humanitarian rescue operations with other countries involved in anti-piracy efforts.⁴⁷

That fleets from many countries operate in the same sea area generates problems of communication and coordination. In some cases, a degree of tactical and technical coordination between the different sides would be indispensable to operational commanders. Undoubtedly, any tactical or technical coordination or cooperation between the EU and China should be carried out on a “case by case” basis, initially at least, in order to keep it flexible and low profile. If this is carried out successfully, which could be regarded as a breakthrough in the China–EU relationship, both sides could attempt more far-reaching and ambitious steps, including establishing a regular dialogue on maritime safety like the Military Maritime Cooperation Agreement (MMCA) between China and the United States, and more con-

⁴⁶ European Union, European Security and Defence Policy, “EU Operation against piracy, (EU NAVFOR Somalia-Operation ATALANTA),” March 2009, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/090313FactsheetEU-NAVFORSomalia-v3_EN.pdf

⁴⁷ “Chinese Warships Set Sail for Pirate Fight,” *Fox News*, December 26, 2008, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,473044,00.html>

crete cooperation revolving around refueling, resupply, and repairs of naval vessels in particular operational zones.

In the long run, EU–China coordination or cooperation regarding the security of SLOCs will be of increasing significance. With its growing economy and expanding interests, China is more and more concerned with safeguarding the crucial sea lanes. However, in bearing numerous historical lessons in mind, China will not aspire to be a naval superpower because it entails harsh competition and confrontation with other great powers as well as poses a huge financial burden, neither of which China can afford. Therefore, China will address the problem of SLOCs through a “combined” strategy, which means it will develop a navy of moderate size and participate in international cooperation. In the future, nobody should be surprised if China displays more willingness and readiness to take part in international cooperation to protect the sea lanes. Therefore, EU–China cooperation over SLOCs can effectively mitigate misunderstanding and miscalculation between the two sides and help China to establish a healthy strategic culture on maritime security. Moreover, the cooperation can also encourage other newly emerging powers to engage in cooperation when they address the same problems, which will be helpful in maintaining the stability of the international community.

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