

Africa: China's Newest Stage for Great Power Competition

A Monograph

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Abstract

Africa: China's Newest Stage for Great Power Competition, by Major Ingrid Bruning, US Army, 47 pages.

China's investment, development, and growing influence in Africa has significant consequences to the United States. China competes using unrestricted warfare. Thus, investment does not guarantee sustainable growth for African countries and potentially destabilizes economies. Furthermore, this practice leaves nations vulnerable to violent extremist recruitment and criminal networks. The purpose of this study is to provide insight into Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream, Africa's role in Xi's vision, and China's use of unrestricted warfare. The underlying thesis of this study argues China's strategy in Africa effectively employs elements of UW as a means to project strategic influence in Africa by extending operational reach for its military forces and thus, threatens US security. By understanding how China uses unrestricted warfare in Africa, US military planners gain insight into the China's deliberate employment of unrestricted warfare to accomplish President Xi Jinping's grand strategy. This more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of China's investment on the continent enhances US efforts to stabilize, counter VEO emergence, and create self-reliant partners to increase regional security.

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Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| AFRICOM | Africa Command |
| AOR | Area of Responsibility |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Nations |
| BRI | Belt and Road Initiative |
| BUILD | The Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development |
| CRCC | China Railway Construction Company |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| DOS | Department of State |
| EU | European Union |
| FOCAC | Forum on China-Africa Cooperation |
| NDS | National Defense Strategy |
| NMS | National Military Strategy |
| NSS | National Security Strategy |
| PLA | Peoples Liberation Army |
| PRC | People’s Republic of China |
| REC | Railway Engineering Corps |
| TAZARA | Tanzania-Zambia Railroad Project |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| UW | Unrestricted Warfare |
| VEO | Violent Extremist Organization |

Introduction

When we suddenly realize that all these non-war actions may be the new factors constituting future warfare, we have to come up with a new name for this new form of war: Warfare which transcends all boundaries and limits, in short: unrestricted warfare.

— Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*

In 2015 Xi Jinping outlined his goals for China in the next 35 years. Four major areas of focus, known as “the four comprehensives”, summarize China’s “strategic blueprint” for future success and a return to China’s position of global power by 2050.¹ Xi’s major comprehensives consist of “comprehensively constructing a moderately prosperous society, comprehensively deepening reform, comprehensively governing the country according to the law, and comprehensively using strict governance of the Party.”² As China seeks to gain power and extend influence globally, evidence exists that Africa appears to be a large area of focus for Chinese investments, humanitarian relief, security cooperation, diplomacy, trade, and military cooperation. Upon further investigation of China’s seemingly unplanned and unfocused investment in Africa, there is compelling evidence that China is practicing unrestricted warfare (UW) to achieve extended operational reach.

Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, the authors of *Unrestricted Warfare*, define UW as a type of strategy that “transcends all boundaries and limits.”³ The overarching theme of UW is that it utilizes all elements of diplomacy, information, the military, and economic tools to achieve the desired national strategic aims. UW consists of eight principles; omnidirectionality, synchrony, limited objectives, unlimited measures, asymmetry, minimal consumption, multidimensional coordination, and adjustment and control of the entire process. In practice, China can utilize these eight principles in concert with each other, in any combination, or order. According to *Unrestricted Warfare*, the model of state,

¹ Shannon Tiezzi, “Xi’s Blueprint for Achieving the ‘China Dream,’” *The Diplomat* (February 2015), accessed September 15, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/02/xis-blueprint-for-the-achieving-the-china-dream/>.

² Ibid.

³ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare* (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999), 12.

supranational, trans-national, and non-state combinations bring about “fundamental changes in the face and outcome of warfare, even changing the essential military nature of warfare which has been an unquestionable truth since ancient times.”⁴

Africa remains a vitally important part of the US national security strategy. In the 2017 *National Security Strategy* (NSS), the United States acknowledges China’s economic encroachment with considerable potential security risks due to undermining Africa’s long-term economic development. The NSS states, “China is expanding its economic and military presence in Africa, growing from a small investor in the continent two decades ago into Africa’s largest trading partner today. Some Chinese practices undermine Africa’s long-term development by corrupting elites, dominating extractive industries, and locking countries into unsustainable and opaque debts and commitments.”⁵ As of 2018, the United States acknowledged this threat to stability in the region while United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) remained focused on addressing “violent extremism” in its posture statement.⁶ The emerging Africa strategy and the 2019 AFRICOM Posture Statement acknowledge the threat of great power competition, nesting the aims of AFRICOM with the strategic guidance of the 2017 *National Security Strategy*, and 2018 *National Defense Strategy* to compete with China. However, AFRICOM is not currently resourced with the proper means to compete with China, combat violent extremism, and retain the freedom of maneuver necessary to further US interests.

China’s strategy in Africa effectively employs elements of UW as a means to project strategic influence in Africa by extending operational reach for its military forces. China expands its efforts using synchrony, the pursuit of targeted but limited objectives, and using multi-dimensionality regarding means. China’s use of aid and economic development in its practice of UW challenges US strategy in Africa, and

⁴ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 185.

⁵ Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 3.

⁶ Thomas D. Waldhauser, *2018 US Africa Command Posture Statement* (Stuttgart, GE: US Africa Command, 2018), 23.

legitimacy in Africa threatening US national security. Thus, the United States must develop strategy beyond addressing "violent extremism" to respond to China's expanding operational reach and access.

The purpose of this study is to identify key terrain in Africa that China seeks to cede, contest, or dominate to develop and exploit. With these considerations, this study aims to make recommendations to US military strategy to prevent long-term instability in Africa that leads to vulnerabilities in the United States and global security. The study evaluated China's strategic basing, access, infrastructure, foreign aid, trade, and economic activity in Africa to infer strategic aims and national and military objectives. It also examined China's expanding influence in Africa within the context of the theory of UW using supranational combinations, supra-domain combinations, supra-means combinations, and supra-tier combinations.⁷ Lastly, this monograph examined the US policy tailored to Africa to combat China's activity.

This study's analysis is significant because it is one of the first to identify both US and Chinese strategic aims, political and military objectives, and overlays their respective operational approaches within the context of strategic lodgments and key terrain in Africa. By examining China's investment into Africa through humanitarian relief, foreign aid, investment in infrastructure, and strategic basing, AFRICOM and subordinate operational commands can identify, analyze, and generate enduring solutions to address the potential instability in the region. The body of work contributes to US military planners' understanding of the employment of operational art in the context of a whole of government approach as it affects national security. As China's influence inevitably expands, the United States must be prepared to address the associated security threats in the future to protect its national interests abroad.

To avoid confusion and provide a common understanding, this research outlines definitions of several key concepts discussed throughout the paper. The book *Unrestricted Warfare* provides the definitions of supra-domain combinations, supra-means combinations, and supra-tier combinations.

⁷ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 12.

According to Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, the authors of *Unrestricted Warfare*, UW utilizes all elements of diplomacy, information, the military, and economic tools (DIME) to achieve the desired national strategic aims. UW consists of eight principles: omnidirectionality, synchrony, limited objectives, unlimited measures, asymmetry, minimal consumption, multidimensional coordination, and adjustment and control of the entire process.

The term supra-national combinations acknowledges that nations are affected far more by international, multi-national, or worldwide organizations such as the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN), the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC), the United Nations (UN) or even a group of hackers that are geographically separated by national borders. Liang and Xiangsui believe that the combination of multinational, non-state and supranational organizations comprise the source for ascending global power.⁸

Supra-domain combinations describe the modern battlefield as escaping the boundaries of physical battle. Information warfare, financial warfare, and trade warfare demonstrate the expansion of domains beyond conventional warfare which can be exploited. Supra-domain warfare expands options for adversaries to choose to be their main battlefield that would provide the most opportunity for mission success and to mitigate risk. Liang and Xiangsui provide the example of the employment of supra-domain combinations by the United States following the Gulf War. Military pressure combined with an economic blockade and weapons inspections following direct action is a demonstration of this concept to attack Iraq on “new battlefields.”⁹

Liang and Xiangsui describe the use of military and non-military actions or elements to achieve aims as the definitions of supra-means. Domains encompass means. Consider the example in the military domain, examples of means may be strategy, tactics, deterrence, alliances, military exercises, but they can also include economic assistance, sanctions, UN resolutions, etc. These means can be observed in other

⁸ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

domains, such as the UN resolutions could also fit into a political domain. Thus, the employment of supra-means combinations maximize effects and streamline efficiency with advantageous results.¹⁰

Liang and Xiangsui describe supra-tier combinations having the ability to “change warfare into something like a dragon with interchangeable limbs, torsos, and heads we could put together as we like, and which could swing freely in any direction.”¹¹ Essentially, this combination entails the use of some method to break down all stages of war to create a moment and not have to wait for an accumulation of gains progressing level-by-level to achieve victory.

This study emphasizes that China uses UW as an operational approach to gain key terrain and basing to extend military operational reach. The study tested three hypotheses to determine the validity of the argument. First, as China expands its capability to respond to humanitarian crisis on the continent, African countries receiving assistance from China will refuse US basing requests, hamstringing US strategic objectives, and threaten national security. Second, as China expands its humanitarian response in Africa and its subsequent basing, they gain legitimacy in the international community and seize key terrain to threaten US interests. Lastly, China’s influence as a result of its employment of UW in Africa will result in weak or failed states. China’s exploitation of African energy, trade, and political influence affect long term US national security.

This study aims to validate these hypotheses by answering the subsequent research questions:

1. What is China’s strategic aim in its use of UW?
2. What are China’s national political objectives in Africa?
3. What are China’s military objectives in Africa?
4. What is China’s operational approach in Africa?
5. What are the US national strategic aims in Africa?
6. What are the US political objectives in Africa?

¹⁰ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 192.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 196-197.

7. What are the US military objectives in Africa?
8. What is the US operational approach in Africa?
9. What are the US national strategic objectives in Africa affecting security?
10. How is China using UW in Africa?
11. Where has key terrain been ceded, contested or dominated
12. How effective has China been using unrestricted warfare in Africa?
13. How has the United States responded to China?

This monograph has significant limitations. The analysis of this study scopes to observations in Africa; additionally, within Africa, this study further focuses on key terrain and geographically substantial locations on the continent contested by both China and the United States. Thus, the research will examine several pieces of key terrain within Africa. Additionally, Chinese primary documents are limited and present a language barrier for research and translation. Consequently research is limited to translated sources that may have a bias or mistranslations due to stark contrasts between western and eastern cultures. Third, information available for secondary translated sources from China may present biases or align with messaging China seeks to further enable its employment of unrestricted warfare. Finally, this investigation is limited to open source research. The focus and scope of this study are limited to specific key terrain with sea and air corridors in Africa. This monograph further scopes research to a period after the publication of *Unrestricted Warfare* in 1999.

This study makes several required assumptions. First, China will continue to seek strategic basing and influence in Africa. China's economic investments and humanitarian efforts on the continent influence global opinions of China. Compared to the United States and many of its allies, China maintains a relatively stable and positive relationship with the continent. Additionally, China does not perceive that Africa presents any direct threat to its security or desire to gain influence and power globally.

Six sections comprise this monograph. The first section of this work is the introduction, which seeks to provide context for this examination in space and time, while also introducing key concepts and key players. The introduction also outlines the purpose and significance of the study. The introduction

articulates the primary research question, hypotheses, and subsequent research questions. Lastly, the introduction identifies fundamental limitations, delimitations, and assumptions necessary to express the scope of this study in context. In the second section, the literature review, develops and expands essential terminology and concepts critical to the common understanding of the study. The third section describes the methodology used for the research. The fourth section examines the Chinese and US influence within selected key terrain in Africa. The fifth section, yields findings and analysis of China's operational approach in Africa and the US response. The sixth section concludes the investigation and proposes necessary changes to AFRICOM's posture statement to more holistically address China's growing influence and threats to US national security.

Literature Review

This section reviews some of the source literature on strategy, specifically, Qiao Lang's and Wang Xiangsui's theory of unrestricted warfare and the concepts of supranational combinations, supra-domain combinations, supra-means combinations, and supra-tier combinations. A foundational understanding of this theory and these basic principles enables a comparative analysis of China's employment of unrestricted warfare to affect key terrain and geographically significant locations on the continent contested by both China and the United States. A theoretical approach better demonstrates the principles of unrestricted warfare as well as, assumptions, and generalizations that systematically inform patterns and trends about China's operational approach in Africa. This literature review has three subsections: theoretical, conceptual, and empirical. The theoretical section examines unrestricted warfare as an operational approach to China's presence and influence in these countries. The conceptual section provides definitions and information used to evaluate outlined criteria contained within the case study. Finally, given the theoretical and conceptual framework, the empirical section examines several prevailing studies, predictions, and informed implications on China's African presence and influence.

Unrestricted warfare serves as an indirect approach to achieve an asymmetric advantage using the principles of omnidirectionality, synchrony, limited objectives, unlimited measures, asymmetry, minimal

consumption, multidimensional coordination, and adjustment and control of the entire process.¹²

Unrestricted warfare leverages “all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one’s interests.”¹³ China employs UW in the lines of effort of its overarching strategy in Africa. According to Yun Sun in his study of China’s foreign policy in Africa, China aims to achieve and secure four broad national interests in its relations with Africa.¹⁴ First, China strives for Africa's political support for its “One China” policy. Furthermore, China seeks the support of its foreign policy agendas in multinational political arenas such as the United Nations. Second, China sees Africa as a rich source of natural resources and raw materials along with providing market opportunities for China's commercial domestic growth. Third, China sees security vulnerabilities and challenges for their commercial interests on the continent. China has a vested interest in the safety of both commercial investments and the associated personnel threatened by regional political instability, and criminal activity. Finally, China has an ideological interest in the success of the China model in non-democratic African countries. Their success serves as an indirect endorsement of China's ideology while providing proof that Western democratic principles are not universal or critical to the success or livelihood of a nation.¹⁵

The employment of UW to achieve these outlined objectives presents itself in distinctly different ways geographically on the continent. China’s use of UW principles varies in scope and scale based on the proportionality of the eight elements of UW to achieve a specific objective as it pertains to China’s desired end state. Colonels Liang and Xiangsui emphasize that the employment of UW can be utilized in any order or in concert to achieve the objective with the least amount of resources or capital.¹⁶

¹² Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 206.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁴ Yun Sun, *Africa in China’s Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings, John L. Thornton China Center and Africa Initiative, 2014), 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 216.

There are many relevant reasons to study China's employment of UW in Africa. According to a 2015 Rand study, "across economic, political, and security domains, the growth of China's presence has been swift and staggering."¹⁷ This multi-faceted approach by China to influence and trade with Africa increased almost twentyfold since 2000, replacing the United States as Africa's largest trading partner. China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) is now the largest contributor to UN peacekeeping in Africa among the permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) members. China deploys twenty times the number of peacekeepers it sent to Africa just fifteen years ago. According to a Booz, Allen, Hamilton study, in order to protect its investments, there is evidence that "China is laying the groundwork for more military engagement, such as warehouses in Lamu, an eventual port in northeastern Kenya, and securing an invitation from the Djibouti government to establish a base in Djibouti, alongside the United States, France and possibly Japan."¹⁸ Additionally, an estimated one million Chinese nationals live in Africa, up from only a few thousand ten years ago. Thus, China's emergence on the African continent is likely the most significant geopolitical and economic event since the conclusion of the Cold War.¹⁹ Evidence of China employing principles of UW is present and deserves a closer examination as the consequences in the near future have secondary and tertiary effects to the security of the United States.

China's growing African investments complicate Beijing's ability to remain neutral to the internal affairs of African states. Emerging and expanding interests on the continent along with an increase in Chinese representation of these state interests and a lack of complete control of their regulation may expand Chinese involvement in African states' regional balances of power and domestic affairs.²⁰ China is demonstrating employment of what Colonels Liang and Xiangsui describe as a "method, resolving conflicts or conducting warfare not just with national power, but also with combinations of supra-

¹⁷ Lloyd Thrall, *China's Expanding Africa Relations, Implications for U.S. National Security* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015), xi.

¹⁸ The Office of New Assessment, Booz, Allen, Hamilton, *The Future of Africa: The Future of China in Africa 2035* (Washington, DC: Booz, Allen, Hamilton), 10.

¹⁹ Thrall, *China's Expanding Africa Relations, Implications for U.S. National Security*, xi.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xvi.

national, trans-national, and non-state power” known as supra-national combinations.²¹ To better assess China's actions and the significance of specific investments on the continent, UW provides a model to examine China’s investment in geographically significant terrain to draw conclusions and recommend prescriptive recommendations.

While the term UW is not explicitly used, China's indirect approach utilizing geoeconomics, supranational organizations, coercive diplomacy to obtain basing, and a whole-of-government approach represents its strategy to conduct UW in modern terms. Additionally, the terms supranational combinations, supra-domain combinations, supra-means combinations, and supra-tier combinations are not used to describe China’s strategy. However, their definitions as outlined by the *Unrestricted Warfare* doctrine closely align with geoeconomics, supranational organizations, coercive diplomacy to obtain basing, and a whole-of-government approach. Furthermore, it is necessary to have a general understanding of the eight principles of Unrestricted Warfare: omnidirectionality, synchrony, limited objectives, unlimited measures, asymmetry, minimal consumption, multidimensional coordination, and adjustment and control of the entire process.

Supranational organizations utilize supranational combinations and supra-means combinations. These organizations use combinations “of all available means (military and non-military) to carry out operations.”²² Additionally, the authors of *Unrestricted Warfare* define supranational combinations as the practice of “combining national, international, and non-state organizations.”²³ The sub-elements of synchrony and multidimensional coordination often play a significant part of the effective employment of supranational organizations. Synchrony is the act of conducting operations in different spaces within the same time frame. These actions can also be different mediums in different domains. The principle of synchrony recognizes innovative technology that can interconnect battlefields while also equalizing

²¹ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 185.

²² *Ibid.*, 191.

²³ *Ibid.*, 181.

military and non-military resources to achieve a political or military aim.²⁴ According to *Unlimited Warfare*, “Multidimensional coordination” refers to coordination and cooperation among different forces in different spheres to accomplish an objective.²⁵ The key to this principle, is using non-military means to achieve limited objectives instead of solely using conventional military means. This examination focuses on the involvement of supranational organizations in regards to the development of infrastructure such as the construction of railroads, airports and transportation nodes, and also examines the number of Chinese employers and employees inside the continent to develop these projects.

Based on Liang and Xiangsui’s overly indirect approach, coercive diplomacy to obtain basing, and supporting infrastructure is inherently limited. According to the authors of *Unrestricted Warfare*, limited “objectives means limited in relation to measures used. Thus, the principle of setting limited objectives means that objectives must always be smaller than measures.”²⁶ The objectives one seeks to achieve must exceed the measures one uses. There are no exceptions to this principle. The results of violating this principle can only lead to catastrophic outcomes.

Consequently, this study defines both basing and lodgment according to the United States military doctrine. Where China seeks basing, it may settle for lodgment. According to US Army doctrine, basing is “a locality from which operations are projected or supported.”²⁷ Joint military doctrine describes a lodgment as a “designated area in a hostile or potentially hostile operational area (OA) (such as an airhead, a beachhead, or combination thereof) that affords continuous landing of troops and materiel while providing maneuver space for subsequent operations.”²⁸ This study will analyze Chinese investment in infrastructure such as port projects and airports that could serve as tentative basing or

²⁴ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 207-208.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 213

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 208

²⁷ US Department of the Army, *ADRP 3-0, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 2-6.

²⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-18 Joint Force Entry Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), vii.

lodgment. Furthermore, it will examine respective lines of communication such as roads, rail, and canals within the key or contested terrain that could extend Chinese operational reach.

Lastly, China's use of a whole-of-government approach can be described through Liang and Xiangsui's use of supra-tier combinations. Supra-tier combinations are the integration of all levels into each campaign.²⁹ The authors of *Unrestricted Warfare* illustrate these tiers as a demonstration of scale. "Grand war - War policy" is the first level. Regarding scale, "Grand war - War policy" is military and non-military actions of warfare spanning supra-national to the nation.³⁰ "War - strategy" is the second level of war which spans national level military actions and includes non-military instruments of national power.³¹ The third level is "campaigns - operational art," which encompasses combat actions covering the spectrum lower than wars but higher than battles.³² Finally, unrestricted warfare doctrine defines the fourth level of supra-tier combinations as "battles - tactics."³³ This level comprises combat actions on the most basic scale also referred to as "tactics."³⁴ The concept outlines the employment of elements of national power: diplomacy, information, military, and economy. This monograph examines the effective employment of whole of government approach studying China's challenges to US influence. Specifically, this study will examine UN actions indicating the condition of African nations concerning both the United States and China. Additionally, this examination will identify ceded or vulnerable key terrain where China seeks to dislocate the United States strategically.

Many authors have written about China's apparent effective use of UW. Conclusions on the extent of the practice and what this means regarding security ramifications vary. The following section will examine several scholarly works as they pertain to China's practice of unrestricted warfare in Africa.

²⁹ Liang and Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, 195.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 197.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 198.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

In *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, Deborah Brautigam focuses her study on the potential consequences of the economic aspect of China's efforts in Africa. She concludes that China is not a "rogue donor" with misinformed, destabilizing, and obstructive to governance.³⁵ Her research implies that China's approach to aid and the development of infrastructure is strategic, planned, long-term but still developing. She also asserts that African governments have a role in shaping their interactions with China. Her research ultimately concludes that there is evidence of elements of UW, however, just like the United States, China provides aid for strategic diplomacy, commercial profit and as a reflection of society's ideals and morals.³⁶

The authors of *War by Other Means* allege China is using geoeconomics to bolster foreign political support for initiatives such as Beijing's "one-China policy" using aid money.³⁷ There is evidence aid enables China to influence developing nations to make policy decisions in opposition to the United States without severe negative consequences.³⁸ Furthermore, Chinese investment, debt forgiveness, refinanced loans, and expansion of lines of credit can provide opportunities for China to request or demand access to refueling rights for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) or landing rights for PLA aircraft.³⁹

Ching Kwan Lee explores Chinese influence in politics, immigration, and investment in Africa. In his book, *The Specter of Global China*, he proposes Chinese state investment and global private investment are two mechanisms China leverages in Africa. His case study is specific to Zambia. However, his conclusions have a more holistic significance for the continent. He argues "without the recourse of military force," China's national "varieties of capital" allow it to be more flexible and open to

³⁵ Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China In Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 311.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁷ Robert Blackwill and Jennifer Harris, *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 56.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

political negotiation.⁴⁰ Lee echoes the use of geoeconomics, supranational organizations, coercive diplomacy to obtain basing, and a whole-of-government approach by China. Lastly, Lee proposes the examination of China should be beyond “methodological nationalism” which artificially constrains China’s actions tied back to borders.⁴¹ It fails to account for the many other ways besides state investment in national economies that fall squarely into the categories of UW. UW includes migration, multilateral, regional and global credit institutions, higher education, and the expansion of Chinese non-governmental organizations abroad.⁴²

The Center of Naval Analysis released a preliminary study titled “China’s Military Support Facility in Djibouti: The Economic and Security Dimensions of China’s First Overseas Base.” This study examined China’s establishment of a military base on Djibouti, the first of its kind. This case makes the argument for the escalation of UW to successfully obtain basing in geographically significant terrain next to Bab-el-Mandeb, a critical maritime access point.⁴³ This monograph describes the history, policy, and economic relationships that shaped conditions for Chinese basing to occur. This study also proposes the media frenzy around the possible conclusions of the base in Djibouti and of the extent of the economic ties of China to the nation are exaggerated.⁴⁴ The authors also reference China’s new naval strategy: “near seas defense, far seas protection.”⁴⁵ China seeks to compete for space and resources to support economic endeavors. The study also recommends the United States genuinely work closely to strengthen relationships beyond economic and resource exploitation. Additionally, Downs, Becker, and deGategno

⁴⁰ Ching Kwan Lee, *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Africa* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017), xii-xiii.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Erica Downs, Jeffery Becker, and Patrick deGategno, *China’s Military Support Facility in Djibouti: The Economic and Security Dimensions of China’s First Overseas Base* (Arlington, VA: Center for Navy Analysis), iii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

offer the Djibouti case study provides insight on site selection for further Chinese basing on the continent.⁴⁶

In *China's Expanding Relations* Lloyd Thrall concludes China's influence in Africa is not going away. However, the influence does not pose an exceptional security threat to the United States.⁴⁷ He demonstrates the use of unrestricted warfare in the diplomatic and geoeconomic realm while also proposing that China's conflicting activities need to be examined in context as both China and the United States generally idealize their involvement in Africa while criticizing the other for the same action.⁴⁸ Thrall argues there is evidence of China's use of UW while recommending the importance of genuine cooperation with African nations rather than "balance of power politics as a solution."⁴⁹ Thrall's investigation concludes China will neither become a dominant force on of the continent nor will it cease to have a presence in Africa.⁵⁰ His recommendations are for AFRICOM to seek greater engagement with the PLA to genuinely increase stability in the region as it is in the best interest of both countries.⁵¹

This study aims to reinforce the overarching idea of China's growing influence in Africa is due to its practical application of the UW. This research will evaluate this assertion through three hypothesis. First, as China expands its capability to respond to humanitarian crisis on the continent, African countries receiving assistance from China will refuse US basing requests and hamstring US strategic objectives and threaten national security. Second, as China expands its humanitarian response in Africa and its subsequent basing, it gains legitimacy in the international community and seizes key terrain to threaten US interests. Lastly, China's influence, as a result of its employment of UW, in Africa will result in weak

⁴⁶ Downs, Becker, and deGategno, *China's Military Support Facility in Djibouti: The Economic and Security Dimensions of China's First Overseas Base*, 33.

⁴⁷ Thrall, *China's Expanding Africa Relations, Implications for U.S. National Security*, xv.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, xvii.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

or failed states through the exploitation of African energy and trade compounded by its influence in political, diplomatic, and military elements resulting in threats to US security.

Methodology

This monograph will use the structure, focused comparison methodology to quantitatively and qualitatively assess China's influence, activity, and presence in geographically significant terrain to achieve China's national objectives using seventeen standardized research questions. These research questions structure the case study. Specifically, the case study seeks to provide evidence to China's employment of principles of UW. Furthermore, this methodology aims to identify trends and patterns that indicate vulnerabilities to security in the region and abroad with potential consequences to the United States. The remainder of the methodology section provides a brief overview of the case study, identifies the structured research questions, and the resources used to obtain qualitative and quantitative data.

This monograph analyzes China's activity and influence in key terrain in Africa selected based on China's substantial financial investment in the last ten years, their abundance of natural resources, and their geographic significance for basing and access. Understanding China's nuanced relationships with individual African countries provides the insight necessary to interpret China's specific objectives regarding their use of UW. Sino-African relationships with individual African nations involve actors across fifty-four African states with diverse motivations and national interests. Caution must be taken when attempting to cite trends without generalizing these unique relationships.⁵² Consequentially, this monograph further scopes certain principles of UW as they can be measured with the least amount of subjectivity and due to the availability of data. This study will focus its analysis on China's activity since 1999. However, notable exceptions include geographic, historical, and cultural factors bearing on the strategic, operational environment before 1999.

This study's focused questions seek to accumulate necessary empirical data to analyze China's employment of UW. The structured, focused comparison method will be used as it is a method to collect

⁵² Thrall, *China's Expanding Africa Relations, Implications for U.S. National Security*, 2.

critical information on foreign policy issues. The monograph seeks to focus the study by generating research questions that most comprehensively address the influence of China and the respective US response to structure the means to collect the data for this case study.

Research questions first set the stage with the strategic context and progresses to national military strategy and operational level considerations. The first set of research questions are: What is China's strategic aim in its use of unrestricted warfare? What are China's national political objectives in Africa? What are China's military objectives in Africa? What is China's operational approach in Africa? These questions examine the strategic, operational environment and implications across diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of national power the United States could seek to influence. The second set of questions are: What are the US national strategic aims in Africa? What are the US political objectives in Africa? What are the US military objectives in Africa? What is the US operational approach in Africa? What are the US national strategic objectives in Africa affecting security? Understanding our current strategic aim allows this inquiry to examine whether the United States' national interests and strategy in Africa can achieve the desired strategic ends.

The third set of questions seek to identify the employment of UW by China, its effectiveness and subsequent US response. The questions are: How is China using unrestricted warfare in East Africa? How is China using unrestricted warfare in North Africa? How is China using unrestricted warfare in the Sahel Region? How is China using unrestricted warfare in West Africa? How is China using unrestricted warfare in the Gulf of Guinea and Central Africa? Where has key terrain been ceded, contested or dominated? How effective has China been using elements of unrestricted warfare in Africa? How has the United States responded to China?

There are indications of Chinese employment of UW in Africa. There is undeniable proof of Chinese investment throughout the continent, specifically this monograph seeks to find strategic investment concentrated to control and develop sea and airports, major lines of communication, natural resources and territory surrounding this type of infrastructure. Evidence of this type of investment strongly indicates the effective use of UW and causes some concern with respect to US security.

Furthermore, the research is expected to reveal a disconnect between this threat and US strategy and resourcing to counter China's employment of UW in Africa.

In summary, this section outlined the structure, focused methodology used throughout this study. Additionally, it introduced the case study along with the thirteen focused research questions that provide critical empirical data necessary for the assessment of the studies' three hypotheses. This methodology seeks to ensure consistent quantitative and qualitative data that ultimately provides the evidence necessary to prove or disprove this studies' thesis. Specifically, China's strategy in Africa effectively employs elements of UW (synchrony, the pursuit of targeted but limited objectives, and using multi-dimensionality) as a means to project strategic influence in Africa by extending operational reach for its military forces and thus, threatens US security.

Case Study

This section transitions from key terminology, theory, and publications outlined in the literature review and focuses on examining China's involvement in Africa. This section answers the thirteen focused research questions as part of the "structure, focused comparison" method articulated in the methodology section of this monograph. By answering the focused research questions, this section defines the strategic, operational environment in the AFRICOM AOR and collects relevant data and information for subsequent analysis and conclusions.

This section is organized into four sub-sections and proceeds as follows. In the first section, this study provides a brief historical background and strategic context of China's role in Africa. The second section answers the questions examining the strategic, operational environment and China's operational approach. The third set of questions seeks to explore the current US strategic aim for Africa. Finally, the fourth section and the last set of questions assess the employment and effectiveness of unrestricted warfare by China and the subsequent US response.

The History of China in Africa

The beginning of current Sino-African involvement occurred in the 1950s, at the end of colonial rule in Africa and as the Cold War intensified.⁵³ For this monograph, The Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955 marked the starting point.⁵⁴ Attended by twenty-nine countries, many representatives were young African nationalists from newly independent nations whose main purpose was eradicating colonialism and safeguarding the sovereignty of these fledgling nations against Cold War politics. The conference was important not only for these newly independent nations, but it was also significant for China as it was the first international conference for Communist China without the presence of representation by the Soviet Union.⁵⁵ This forum and a series of following conferences resulted in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement in Africa in 1961. The Bandung Principles were also a critical outcome of the conference. These principles were: “reiterating the sanctity of territorial integrity and state sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual noninterference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence.”⁵⁶ Bandung further added even “higher-minded” principles of “human rights, the equality of all races and states, respect for states defending themselves in conformity with the charter of the United Nations, and abstention from joining collective defence to serve the interests of big powers.”⁵⁷

China leveraged its status as the largest member of the non-aligned group and as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to assume the role as the de facto leader of the developing world. Despite its communist ideology, China used its platform and status as a non-aligned

⁵³ Ousman Murzik Kobo, “A New World Order? Africa and China,” *Origins*, 6, no. 8 (May 2013), accessed 1 November 2018, <https://origins.osu.edu/print/2056>, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Amitav Acharya, “Who Are the Norm Makers? The Asian-African Conference in Bandung and the Evolution of Norms,” *Global Governance*, 20, no. 3 (2014): 405-417, accessed November 1, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24526222>, 407.

⁵⁶ Julia C. Strauss, “The Past in the Present: Historical and Rhetorical Lineages in China’s Relations with Africa,” *The China Quarterly*, 199 (2009): 777-795, accessed November 1, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27756501>.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 783.

country to accuse both the Soviet Union and the US-led Western powers as neo-colonialists. China branded itself to the developing world as an alternative ideological partner that shared both the principles outlined by the Bandung Conference and the experience of colonial exploitation.⁵⁸ As China viewed the situation, Africa and China were both victims of “colonization by the capitalists and imperialists” and sought national independence and liberation in the post-World War II era.⁵⁹ Thus, China’s actions during this period included offering “military intelligence, weapons, and training to freedom fighters in Algeria, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, and Namibia.”⁶⁰ China also provided financial support to the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress of South Africa to fight against apartheid in South Africa.⁶¹

As the Cold War intensified, China sought opportunities to compete or contest the Soviet Union and the United States. Between 1963 and 1964, China’s communist political leader, Zhou Enlai, toured ten African countries and issued his “Eight Principles of Foreign Economic and Technological Assistance.”⁶² The eight principles and the ideas themselves were designed to accomplish two primary Chinese objectives: compete simultaneously with the United States and the Soviet Union, and, just as importantly, gain Africa’s approval, access, and support using foreign aid as an instrument to advance China’s political interests in Africa.⁶³

Despite widespread famine and its economic turmoil during The Great Leap Forward, China provided large amounts of foreign aid to Africa.⁶⁴ China contributed low interest to zero interest loans for the construction of public projects.⁶⁵ Most notably China’s direct economic assistance took form in the

⁵⁸ Kobo, “A New World Order? Africa and China,” 1.

⁵⁹ Yun Sun, *Africa in China’s Foreign Policy*, 3.

⁶⁰ Kobo, “A New World Order? Africa and China,” 1.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Yun Sun, *Africa in China’s Foreign Policy*, 4.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Kobo, “A New World Order? Africa and China,” 1.

⁶⁵ Yun Sun, *Africa in China’s Foreign Policy*, 4.

zero interest loan of \$147 million, for the Tanzania-Zambia Railroad Project (TAZARA).⁶⁶ Symbolically, the TAZARA Railroad demonstrated China's readiness and openness to include economic activities in its interactions with Africa.⁶⁷ This project and projects like it helped to convince Africans that China was both a political ally and a potential investment partner to Africa. Projects like the TAZARA railway contributed to the establishment of diplomatic relations between a group of nineteen African countries and China during China's Cultural Revolution.⁶⁸

Throughout the Cold War, China's overarching aspiration was to gain diplomatic recognition from African nations and political affiliation to achieve and reinforce political legitimacy globally. These ties to African nations paid off in 1972 when twenty-six of these countries voted in favor of the People's Republic of China to resume its seat at the United Nations. These twenty-six votes accounted for more than one-third of nations that supported the PRC. By the mid-1980s, aid and diplomatic efforts yielded China favorable political ties with forty-four African countries. Of the \$38.2 billion aggregate foreign aid China committed by the end of 2009, 45.7 percent went to African countries.⁶⁹ In 1989, Western sanctions following the Tiananmen Square Massacre threatened China into isolation. Again, ties to Africa allowed China to retain international relevance in the form of six African countries inviting Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen to visit later that year.⁷⁰ The fifty-four African nations comprise one-quarter of the United Nations' voting body. China continues to leverage these historic diplomatic ties to further its agenda.

China's economic ties to Africa may be as important if not more important than their political relationships. For example, in 2011, China's then-Premier Wen Jiabao declared that "China had selflessly assisted Africa when itself was the poorest. We did not exploit one single drop of oil or extract one single

⁶⁶ Yun Sun, *Africa in China's Foreign Policy*, 4.

⁶⁷ Kobo, "A New World Order? Africa and China," 1.

⁶⁸ Yun Sun, *Africa in China's Foreign Policy*, 4.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

ton of minerals out of Africa.”⁷¹ This action implies that China values its diplomatic relationships with Africa more than Africa’s natural resources and its market potential.

The counterargument to this messaging and the reality is that China has elevated its economic considerations domestically and internationally since the origins of its reform and opening up. Sino-African economic ties evolved throughout their relationship. These evolutions can be broken into three stages. During the first stage, from 1949 to 1979, China’s financial interests in Africa were principally driven by China’s political agenda and focused on providing monetary aid to fledgling independent African nations in order to build diplomatic relations, bolster anti-imperialist sentiment, and to gain African nations’ support for the legitimacy of the People’s Republic of China internationally.⁷² In the second stage, from the beginning of China’s reform and opening up in 1979 up to the mid-1990s, China’s foreign policy refocused to support its domestic economic development. “This shift directly resulted in the gradual adjustment of China’s priorities for its Africa policy from extracting political favors to “mutually beneficial economic cooperation,”⁷³ and from providing assistance to promoting “service contracts, investment, and trade.”⁷⁴ The third stage of China and Africa’s economic ties began in the mid-1990s influenced by the prevailing theory of “utilizing both domestic and international markets and resources.”⁷⁵ This policy resulted in an increase in economic cooperation by China and the rollout of the “Going Out” strategy in 1996 and was endorsed and solidified as a national strategy in 2000.⁷⁶

The launch of the new Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in October 2000 established a myriad of new programs assisted the forty-four African countries invited to participate.⁷⁷ These programs assisted in debt relief, training programs, and investment funds to move economic

⁷¹ Yun Sun, *Africa in China’s Foreign Policy*, 5.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷³ Brautigam, *The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, 51.

⁷⁴ Yun Sun, *Africa in China’s Foreign Policy*, 6.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Brautigam, *The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China In Africa*, 77.

cooperation with Africa forward for African nations and, of course, for China.⁷⁸ In 2006, Beijing hosted the first FOCAC Summit expanding these initiatives in an effort to push Chinese private companies to relocate more mature facilities to Africa. China's rationale was to alleviate overcapacity for China while offering this excess industrial capability to support African infrastructure projects and increase modernization initiatives through technical assistance, vocational training, and economic stimulation from the increased industrial competence.⁷⁹ In 2015, the Summit convened again in Johannesburg, South Africa. China's President Xi Jinping pledged to invest an additional \$60 billion in development financial assistance to African countries.⁸⁰ This was notable because it exceeded the precedent of doubling China's financial commitment to Africa at each FOCAC meeting; China tripled investments on the continent.

At the summit in 2018, China renewed a \$60 billion commitment to Africa. This is significant for two reasons. First, intended financial commitments from China remained the same deviating from the pattern of doubling or tripling from every previous pledge.⁸¹ The second important takeaway is the allocation of the \$60 billion has a very different composition from previous commitments. According to Yun Sun, in reference to the financial pledge by China to Africa, "judging by the language alone, the overall level of concessionality and preferentiality of the Chinese financing is decreasing."⁸² The reasons may be the negative impact of the trade war on the Chinese economy, apprehension over capital outflow, continued increase in bad debt in China, and domestic outcry of the use of tax revenue to attempt to gain legitimacy on the international stage.⁸³ Despite stagnation and the increased stipulations on China's investment, FOCAC serves as the key to both China and Africa's long term goals even if this relationship appears to serve Chinese more than African development.

⁷⁸ Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China In Africa*, 77.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁸⁰ Yun Sun, "Xi and the 6th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation: Major commitments, but with questions," Brookings, December 7, 2015, accessed February 8, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2015/12/07/xi-and-the-6th-forum-on-china-africa-cooperation-major-commitments-but-with-questions/>.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

China's Operational Approach in Africa: Focused Research Questions

This set of focused questions examines the strategic and operational environment, and implications across diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of national power the United States could seek to influence.

The first research question is, “What is China’s strategic aim in its use of UW (stated and implied)?” According to China’s most recently published unclassified military strategy, China’s stated national strategic goal is “to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2021 when the CPC celebrates its centenary; and the building of a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious by 2029 when the People’s Republic of China (PRC) marks its centenary.”⁸⁴ Xi Jinping echoes this sentiment while adding economic prosperity and growth. However, China’s published military strategy and President Xi Jinping’s communication of the “China Dream” only tells part of the story. China’s messaging and actions communicate another dimension of its implied desires. President Xi continues to invest significant political capital into China’s Belt and Road (BRI) initiative.⁸⁵

Additionally, the “China Dream” goals imply two potential dangers: nationalism and a consolidation of power by the party versus the Chinese people.⁸⁶ Nationalism on its face is not the danger. However, Chinese rhetoric seeking revenge for hundreds of years of humiliation and colonial victimization present indicators that channeling nationalism to stoke hatred and motives to even the scales with countries like Japan could cause instability in the region and throughout the world.⁸⁷ This aim puts China at a relative advantage because if this consolidation of power is realized, China does not need to

⁸⁴ Xi Jinping, *China’s Military Strategy* (Beijing: State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, 2015), 3, accessed 24 November 2018, <https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/China%E2%80%99s-Military-Strategy-2015.pdf>, 6.

⁸⁵ John Berkeley, “China’s future: Xi Jinping and the Chinese Dream,” *The Economist* (May 2013), accessed 4 October 2018, <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2013/05/04/xi-jinping-and-the-chinese-dream>, 2-3.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

seek accountability or approval from its citizens. Additionally, China in both an official capacity and in the private commercial investment aspect can invest devoid of morals or ethics because it does not need to create sustainable systems, train and improve local economies, or act in the interest of upholding human rights due to China's non-interference policy.

China's non-interference policy originates from the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.⁸⁸ The Five Principles are "mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence."⁸⁹ China used non-interference to reach out to non-communist countries in Asia and newly independent post-colonial states in Africa. Although non-interference applies to military interventions and regime change, China leverages non-interference in its investment and economic interactions with Africa and the rest of the world. Those calling for China to revise the non-interference policy assert that China uses it to obtain resources and raw materials. The narrative is that China props up corrupt governments through investments and access to cheap capital worth billions of dollars under the guise of non-interference.

The second research question is, what are China's national political objectives in Africa? China communicates that political objectives remain mostly independent of economic ties. China maintains bilateral agreements between African nations and uses the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) to communicate major political and economic initiatives in Africa.⁹⁰ China seeks to communicate its relationship to Africa with "win-win" outcomes in mind, "non-interference" in domestic matters and a partnership of "mutual respect."⁹¹ As previously discussed, at the FOCAC summit in 2018, China sought

⁸⁸ Alula Iyasu, "China's Non-Interference Policy and Growing African Concerns," African Arguments, accessed 5 April 2018, <http://africanarguments.org/2013/07/18/china%E2%80%99s-non-interference-policy-and-growing-african-concerns/>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Thrall, *China's Expanding Africa Relations, Implications for U.S. National Security*, 48.

⁹¹ Ibid., 49.

to advance efforts to consolidate support for its international agendas from African countries.⁹²

Furthermore, China advanced its commitment to building capacity in Africa through political and economic development. Areas specifically highlighted include infrastructure increasing interconnectivity between African nations, agriculture initiatives, industrialization, facilitation of trade, the continued expansion of China's green development initiative on the continent, health care, and security interests.⁹³

Summarized, China has four grand strategic interests in Africa. China wants access to natural resources specifically in oil and gas. China desires markets for its exports.⁹⁴ China seeks international political legitimacy, especially in support of China's principle of non-interference, "South-South solidarity," and the recognition and observance of the "One China" policy.⁹⁵ Finally, China endeavors for prosperity, security, and stability in Africa for both Africans and for the well-being and safety of China's investments and expanding commercial activities on the continent.⁹⁶

The third research question is, what are China's military objectives in Africa? According to China's most recently published unclassified military strategy, China's stated military objectives support strategic goals.⁹⁷ Translated into missions and tasks, Chinese Armed Forces are responsible to respond to emergent threats, safeguard Chinese sovereignty to its territorial land, air and sea, safeguard national interests in new domains, maintain strategic deterrence and carry out nuclear counterattacks, participate and facilitate security cooperation, disaster relief, and prevent separatism and terrorism in order to "maintain China's political security and social stability."⁹⁸ Furthermore, according to the 2018 Office of

⁹² "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)," 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation, accessed 12 December 2018, https://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/hyqk_1/t1594297.htm.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris, *Chinese Engagement in Africa Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), 5.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 5-6.

⁹⁷ Xi Jinping, *China's Military Strategy*, 7.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 9.

the Secretary of Defense's Annual Report, China currently pursues an aggressive military modernization program that aligns with China's two centenary goals.⁹⁹ China's PLA leaders aim to "achieve mechanization and make "major progress" toward informatization by 2020, ahead of the first centenary goal."¹⁰⁰ China also aspires to reach "basic modernization" by 2035, and to achieve "peer capability" with the US military by the second centenary goal in the middle of this century.¹⁰¹ Military capacity is critical as Chinese strategy documents highlight requirements for the PLA to be able to secure national interests abroad, "including a growing emphasis on the importance of the maritime and information domains, offensive air operations, long-distance mobility operations, and space and cyber operations."¹⁰²

The fourth question in this section is, what is China's operational approach in Africa? It is first important to understand China's operational approach globally. The overall goal of China's grand strategy is to reemerge as a great power. China's approach has three main end states: by 2021, China doubles its 2010 gross domestic product to \$12 trillion, builds and expands its financial reach beyond China's borders through increased private and public investments, and finally, by 2049 becomes a "world class power."¹⁰³ Summarized, China's global operational approach is push for rapid military modernization, expand economic initiatives, and increase diplomatic influence.

China sees Africa having a vital role in its overall grand strategy. Economically and politically, Africa is an emerging market with potential high payoffs despite the recognized high risks. According to Paul Nantulya of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, gaining "a competitive advantage in less secure political and economic environments allows China's diplomats and state-backed industrialists to nurture

⁹⁹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress, Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2018). 45.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., ii.

¹⁰³ Paul Nantulya, "Grand Strategy and China's Soft Power Push in Africa," Africa Center for Strategic Studies, accessed 14 January 2018, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/grand-strategy-and-chinas-soft-power-push-in-africa/>.

personal ties and negotiate deals outside formal institutions.”¹⁰⁴ Additionally, Africa is abundant in untapped natural resources China identifies as crucial to the continued growth of its economy. In part, China’s BRI is a means to access these critical resources. Finally, China sees Africa as a lucrative partner in influencing international decision making, namely in the UN. Nantulya states, “Africa provides the biggest single bloc of votes at the UN General Assembly, and members of its regional organizations sit in a variety of international institutions that China seeks to influence in advancing its international agenda.”¹⁰⁵

China’s operational approach varies across the fifty-four countries that comprise the continent. However, China communicates an approach that addresses its economic, political, and security interests unique to each nation according to these overarching global and Africa strategies. This monograph focuses on China’s actions in Nigeria and Zambia to highlight trends in investment and involvement on the continent to depict China’s operational approach in the “Demonstration of China’s Employment of Unrestricted Warfare in Africa” section of this monograph.

The United States in Africa: Focused Research Questions

The second set of research questions provides the current US strategic aim and allows an examination whether the United States' national interests and strategy in Africa, as nation-states, can achieve the desired strategic ends. The first research question in this section is, what are US national strategic aims in Africa? The Department of State’s (DOS) Bureau of African Affairs, offers the current US policy towards Africa. The DOS outlines four pillars that serve as the foundation of US policy toward Africa: strengthening democratic institutions; supporting African economic growth and development; advancing peace and security; and promoting opportunity and development.¹⁰⁶ As recently as December

¹⁰⁴ Nantulya, “Grand Strategy and China’s Soft Power Push in Africa.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Donald J. Trump, “Trump’s Africa Strategy Advances Prosperity, Security, and Stability,” Washington, DC, December 13, 2018, accessed 14 January 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-africa-strategy-advances-prosperity-security-stability/>.

2018, the United States communicated a renewed focus to its Africa strategy in response to the “predatory” practices of China and Russia, that are “deliberately and aggressively targeting their investments in the region to gain a competitive advantage.”¹⁰⁷ National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton, outlined this emerging strategy as it nests with American interests. He stated, “under our new approach, every decision we make, every policy we pursue, and every dollar of aid we spend will further US priorities in the region.”¹⁰⁸

The strategy addresses three core US interests on the continent: improving US trade and commercial relationships with African nations to the benefit of both the United States and Africa; thwarting threats from radical Islamic terrorism and violent conflict; lastly, the US will safeguard US taxpayer dollars utilized for aid in Africa to ensure effective and efficient employment. Of note, Ambassador Bolton cites great power competitors acting in self-interest to gain power and influence over the United States. Specifically, Bolton articulates that “predatory practices pursued by China and Russia stunt economic growth in Africa; threaten the financial independence of African nations; inhibit opportunities for US investment; interfere with US military operations; and pose a significant threat to US national security interests.”¹⁰⁹

The second research question in this section is, what are the US political objectives in Africa? The United States codified objectives communicated through the department of state, the *NSS*, and the *NDS*. There are also political objectives outlined in the emergent strategy in Africa articulated by Ambassador Bolton from his remarks in December of 2018.

¹⁰⁷ John R. Bolton, “National Security Advisor remarks on the Trump Administration’s New Africa Strategy,” Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC, December 13, 2018, accessed December 18, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-national-security-advisor-ambassador-john-r-bolton-trump-administrations-new-africa-strategy/>.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

According to the *NSS*, the US seeks to “partner with governments, civil society, and regional organizations to end long-running, violent conflicts.”¹¹⁰ Politically, the *NSS* also articulates the US will “promote effective governance, improve the rule of law, and develop institutions accountable and responsive to citizens.”¹¹¹ President Trump further pledged to respond with humanitarian assistance for nations with “committed governments and regional organizations to address the root causes of human suffering.”¹¹² However, the *NSS* acknowledges this assistance is not altruistic in nature. This document outlines that aid is tied to valued partners committed to Africa’s development. The United States is prepared to initiate sanctions on corrupt government officials and institutions that exploit their citizens and commit atrocities as determined by international norms. When a country or its leaders violate these terms, the US will suspend aid to these nations. Ambassador Bolton stated, “from now on, the United States will not tolerate this longstanding pattern of aid without effect, assistance without accountability, and relief without reform.”¹¹³

Ambassador Bolton indicated a US focus towards great power competition. In no uncertain terms, the US will now choose its African partners more carefully in the interest of US prosperity. In his address to the Heritage Foundation, Bolton introduced the “Prosper Africa” strategy. Bolton stated, “we will encourage African leaders to choose high-quality, transparent, inclusive, and sustainable foreign investment projects, including those from the United States.”¹¹⁴ Ambassador Bolton also cautioned the US will “reevaluate its support for U.N. peacekeeping missions” as well as aid to countries where effectiveness and efficiency are in question. Bolton said, “The United States will no longer provide indiscriminate assistance across the entire continent.”¹¹⁵ He also stated aid would tie directly to US

¹¹⁰ Trump, *National Security Strategy*, 52.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Bolton, “National Security Advisor remarks on the Trump Administration’s New Africa Strategy.”

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

initiatives. Countries that “repeatedly vote against the United States in international forums, or take action counter to US interests, should not receive generous American foreign aid.”¹¹⁶ In summary, political objectives for the United States in Africa seem to be shifting to address great power competition for a more cohesive Africa Strategy.

Two months after Bolton’s statement, AFRICOM updated and republished its posture statement on February, 7, 2019 to account for the administration’s new strategic guidance. AFRICOM acknowledges its two main principles to support the *NSS* directive to “support relationships to address significant terrorist threats in Africa.”¹¹⁷ The first principle is “very few, if any, of Africa’s challenges can be resolved using only military force.”¹¹⁸ AFRICOM demonstrates the importance of this principle through military support to diplomacy and development efforts. Actions of AFRICOM will be in direct support to complement Department of State and USAID endeavors to “reduce the spread of harmful ideologies, strengthen governments who protect their citizens and foster security and economic successes.”¹¹⁹ The second principle is “persistent pressure on terrorist networks—whether it be operational, financial, or political—is necessary to prevent the destabilization of our African partner nations.”¹²⁰ AFRICOM recognizes that applying pressure through African and international partners is the most effective means to yield desired results. This is translated to increasing African and international partners security capabilities and only as a last resort, the use of kinetic force. Lastly, AFRICOM acknowledges and addresses Ambassador Bolton’s comments about great power competition.

AFRICOM’s posture statement acknowledges its role in developing priorities outlined in the *NSS* and *NDS* in response to the rise of Chinese and Russian competition in the AFRICOM area of

¹¹⁶ Bolton, “National Security Advisor remarks on the Trump Administration’s New Africa Strategy.”

¹¹⁷ Thomas D. Waldhauser, “2019 Posture of U.S. Africa Command,” Statement before the Senate Arms Services Committee, February 7, 2019, 11, accessed January 14, 2019, <https://www.africom.mil/about-the-command/2019-posture-statement-to-congress>.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

responsibility. AFRICOM also cites increased engagement by “non-traditional security actors.”¹²¹ Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, pose challenges and opportunities to AFRICOM’s overall mission. Given this environment, AFRICOM continues to act in the best interest of the United States while simultaneously ensuring the United States is the preferred partner in all African matters.¹²²

The third research question in this section is, what are the US military objectives in Africa? The *NDS* supports outlined national interests through strengthening alliances and partnerships, increasing lethality for the warfighter, and reforming the business practices of the Pentagon.¹²³ The *National Military Strategy* reinforces the importance of working with partners and allies to deter, deny and defeat state adversaries.¹²⁴ Concurrently, the NMS identifies the role of the United States military to lead coalition efforts to disrupt, degrade, and defeat violent extremist organizations (VEOs).¹²⁵

These translate into US actions in Africa through the AFRICOM Posture Statement. According to this document, AFRICOM’s mission statement is “U.S. Africa Command, with partners, strengthens security forces, counters transnational threats, and conducts crisis response in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote security, stability, and prosperity.”¹²⁶ In order to accomplish this mission, AFRICOM focuses on “shared goals of a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa, which benefits not only our African partners and the U.S., but also the international community.”¹²⁷

¹²¹ Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 5.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ James Mattis, *National Defense Strategy* (Washington DC: Office of the Secretary of the Department of Defense, 2018), 5, accessed November 25, 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Martin Dempsey, *National Military Strategy* (Washington DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015), 1, accessed November 25, 2018, http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/2015_National_Military_Strategy.pdf.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

AFRICOM seeks to promote stable nations. General Waldhauser, the AFRICOM commander stated, “accountable governments, well-trained and disciplined militaries with a respect for the rule of law and human rights, and growing economies are cornerstones to this stability.”¹²⁸

Of note, AFRICOM’s posture statement reflects the command’s recent revision to nest with the *NSS* and the *NDS*. Additionally, AFRICOM’s posture statement reflects Ambassador Bolton’s remarks acknowledging great power competition on the continent. General Waldhauser writes, “over the past year, consistent with the updated national strategies, U.S. Africa Command revised our strategic approach to effectively strengthen our African partners by evolving our security cooperation from a focus on crisis response to capability and capacity building against our new strategic priorities: state fragility, increased involvement of China and Russia, VEO expansion, and threats to U.S. access and influence.”¹²⁹

The fourth research question in this section is, what is the US operational approach in Africa? AFRICOM’s overall end state for the continent is “a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa” as it serves the United States.¹³⁰ In the long term, the United States seeks to serve its own interests through “well-trained and disciplined militaries with a respect for the rule of law and human rights, and growing economies.”¹³¹ The *AFRICOM Posture Statement* addresses the ways in which the US plans to achieve this ambitious and broad end state using six approaches. The lines of effort serve to focus resources and operations throughout the continent using a whole of government approach. AFRICOM will: strengthen partner networks, enhance partner capability, develop security in Somalia, contain instability in

¹²⁸ Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 11.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

Libya, support partners in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Region, and set the theater to facilitate routine AFRICOM procedures, emergent crisis response, and contingency operations.¹³²

These approaches support the five AFRICOM objectives: “1) African Partners contribute to regional security, 2) threats from VEOs and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are reduced to a level manageable by internal security forces, 3) U.S. access and influence are ensured, 4) U.S. Africa Command sets the theater by aligning forces, authorities, capabilities, footprints, and agreements, and 5) U.S. personnel and facilities are protected.”¹³³ Furthermore, AFRICOM states it will achieve its end state in a holistic manner. Specifically, AFRICOM will not use military force as the primary agent of change and thus, AFRICOM directly supports US diplomatic and development initiatives.¹³⁴ Additionally, AFRICOM’s most recent campaign plan provides all interested parties strategic direction to achieve shared goals through joint accountability, while factoring the additional variables of the increased presence of great power competitors such as China and Russia and the ongoing threat of VEOs.¹³⁵

Demonstration of China’s employment of Unrestricted Warfare in Africa

The research question in this section seeks to identify the employment of unrestricted warfare. This case study specifically found evidence of China's influence on infrastructure, political power, and economic realms. This monograph uses Nigeria and Zambia to highlight common themes and dynamics in Sino-African relationships. The research question in this section is, how is China using unrestricted warfare in Africa? Chinese investment in Nigeria has been significant. Notably, China has committed to investing in projects aligned to the Chinese government’s BRI encompassing telecommunications, road construction, bridges and ports, natural resource extraction, and human capacity development. In 2005,

¹³² Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 13.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

during the “Going Global” initiative, China National Oil Company secured a \$1.6 billion soft loan for investments in resource extraction in Nigeria.¹³⁶ In 2006, the Nigerian government contracted the China Railway Construction Company (CRCC) to upgrade the rail from the coastal city of Lagos to Nigeria’s capital in Kano, an \$8.3 billion railway project.¹³⁷ Significantly, the company in charge of the project was comprised of several merged state-owned companies. One of the companies, The Railway Engineering Corps (REC), was formerly owned by the Chinese Army. This REC and another of the merged companies were also involved in the Tan-Zam Railway.¹³⁸ The CRCC project was put on hold in 2007, after Nigeria’s general elections brought a new economic team, declining oil revenues, and accusations of inflated costs from the contractor.¹³⁹ At the close of the 2018 FOCAC summit held in Beijing, the world’s second biggest economy announced that it set up a new \$60 billion investment commitment to Africa’s development as part of a host of new measures to strengthen Sino-Africa ties. Nigeria received \$5 billion of the \$60 billion committed to the continent at the 2015 FOCAC, and this pattern is likely to continue. China’s precedent of investment in Nigeria largely concentrated on oil and transportation. According to the Brookings Institute, “China is backing two major standard-gauge rail projects: One is a line from Lagos to Kano, the other is a coastal railway from Lagos to Calabar.”¹⁴⁰ Nigeria serves as a case study of the symbiotic relationship between African nations and China to strengthen and develop both economies and create infrastructure to benefit both parties.

Zambia serves as an example of China’s destabilizing impact on an African nation. Ambassador Bolton referenced Zambia in his introduction of the emergent US Africa strategy. He uses Zambia as an example of China’s exploitation of an African nation. He said, “the nation of Zambia, for example, is

¹³⁶ Brautigam, *The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China In Africa*, 87.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁴⁰ Mariama Sow, “Africa In Focus; Figures of the week: Chinese investment in Africa,” Brookings Institute, accessed 14 January 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/09/06/figures-of-the-week-chinese-investment-in-africa/>.

currently in debt to China to the tune of \$6 to \$10 billion dollars. China is now poised to take over Zambia's national power and utility company in order to collect on Zambia's financial obligations."¹⁴¹ This data point does not holistically represent the multifaceted aspects of China's involvement in Zambia. Zambia also falls victim to the negligent business practices of unregulated individual Chinese employers. Arran Elcoate of *The Diplomat* cites, "The explosion at a Chambishi explosives factory, killing 51, the largest industrial disaster in Zambian history, or the shooting of 11 Zambian miners by Chinese managers at the Collum Coal mine" as examples of negligence.¹⁴² Zambian workers complain of poor pay, inadequate personal protective equipment, and dangerous working conditions. In fact, a 2011 report by Human Rights Watch confirmed these complaints, charging that safety and labor conditions at Chinese mines were substantially worse than those at other foreign-owned mines.¹⁴³ Zambia serves as an example of a Sino-African partnership that appears to only benefit China. These types of relationships destabilize the region and global security.

Effective Use and Consequences of Unrestricted Warfare

This fourth set of research questions seek to measure the effectiveness of UW in Africa using basing, infrastructure, and the reliance on China by nations affected by the employment of UW. The first research question in this section is, where has key terrain been ceded, contested, or dominated? Djibouti is a case study cited as a successful example of China's employment of UW as it is the first Chinese establishment of a military facility. Geographically, Djibouti presents a strategically advantageous position adjacent to the Bab el-Mandeb which is a critical maritime chokepoint.¹⁴⁴ Additionally, Djibouti serves as the main port to Ethiopia, which is both landlocked and the largest and fastest growing economy in East Africa.¹⁴⁵ China's three main economic projects in the region prior to the establishment of the base

¹⁴¹ Bolton, "National Security Advisor remarks on the Trump Administration's New Africa Strategy."

¹⁴²Arran Elcoate, "Mines, Money, Mandarin: China in Zambia," *The Diplomat*, accessed 20 January 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/mines-money-mandarin-china-in-zambia/>.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Downs, Becker, and deGategno, *China's Military Support Facility in Djibouti*, iii.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

include the Doraleh Multipurpose Port, the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway, and the Ethiopia-Djibouti Water Pipeline. All of these projects were built by Chinese state-owned firms and are minority owners and operators on the port and railway. In 2015, China announced that it would officially establish a military support facility at Djibouti. Of significance, the support facilities include fuel, weapons, and equipment storage along with maintenance facilities for aircraft and ships. If initial reports are accurate “the Chinese navy’s berth at the Doreleh Multipurpose Port will be able to accommodate all but two of the largest ships in China’s fleet.”¹⁴⁶

How effective has China been using UW in Africa? One could argue that Djibouti is the first example of the United States acknowledging cession of territory to the Chinese in Africa. The 2018 AFRICOM posture statement recognized this vulnerability. “Our relationship with Djibouti is strong, though we are carefully monitoring Chinese encroachment and emergent military presence.”¹⁴⁷ AFRICOM also stated that “Camp Lemonnier remains the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, and as such, a key component of the command’s regional readiness.”¹⁴⁸ In the 2019 update, AFRICOM addresses the increased threat from China. It stated, “Djibouti’s increasing partnership with China across defense, trade, and financial sectors encroaches on and, at times, diminishes U.S. access and influence.”¹⁴⁹ Finally the updated posture statement identified the establishment of the PLA base. It observed, “China’s first overseas naval base in Djibouti, only a few miles from Camp Lemonnier, creates air space and coordination challenges for all international partners. U.S. Africa Command considers access to Djibouti and to critical global shipping lanes through the Bab-el-Mandeb strait an imperative to ensure U.S. strategic interests are not compromised.”¹⁵⁰ While these are not words of concession of territory, they are words that acknowledge two important facts: Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti is the only

¹⁴⁶ Downs, Becker, and deGatego, *China’s Military Support Facility in Djibouti*, iv.

¹⁴⁷ Waldhauser, *United States Africa Command 2018 Posture Statement*, 12.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴⁹ Waldhauser, “Posture of U.S. Africa Command,” 23.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

long-term foothold AFRICOM has in its AOR, and AFRICOM is concerned about the presence of China's base on the continent.

Ambassador Bolton emphasized the gravity of the establishment of this Chinese base in such close proximity to Camp Lemonnier. He described an incident that occurred in May of 2017. Bolton stated, "U.S. officials accused China of using military-grade lasers from this base to target and distract U.S. pilots on ten different occasions. Two of our American pilots suffered eye injuries from exposure to laser beams."¹⁵¹ Additionally, Bolton emphasized his concern over the hand-over of the Doraleh Container Terminal to Chinese state-owned enterprises. If this happens, there is concern that the balance of power could shift to China as China could restrict access to a critical maritime artery. Additionally, military personnel based in Djibouti face even further friction to protect US interests and US citizens.¹⁵²

The last research question in this section is, how has the United States responded to China? As addressed throughout this section of the monograph, the United States attempts to counter great power competition through its new Africa strategy introduced by Ambassador Bolton at the Heritage Foundation. AFRICOM also responded to this strategy shift by incorporating threats from China and Russia into its posture statement and overall campaign plan. The unclassified version of AFRICOM's posture statement references The Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act. The BUILD Act enables overseas private-sector investments and institutional engagements with developing and middle-income nations. In reference to the BUILD act, Secretary Pompeo confirmed, the initiative "provides opportunities for American companies to compete overseas and create jobs here at home, a critical component of the President's national economic strategy. BUILD strengthens the U.S. government's development finance capacity, offering a better alternative to state-directed investments and advancing our foreign policy goals."¹⁵³ For Africa specifically, it creates opportunities for US companies

¹⁵¹ Bolton, "National Security Advisor remarks on the Trump Administration's New Africa Strategy."

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Daniel F. Runde, and Romina Bondura, "The BUILD Act Has Passed: What's Next?" Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 12, 2018, accessed 17 February 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/build-act-has-passed-whats-next>.

to respond to China's increased economic competition. Most notably the BUILD act is an economic tool AFRICOM sees as an opportunity to counter the \$60 billion committed to the continent by China during the 2018 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.¹⁵⁴

Findings and Analysis

The findings portion of this section will compile the data gathered in response to the studies research questions. Subsequently, the analysis portion will utilize the results of the findings to test the study's three hypotheses. Ultimately, this section seeks to demonstrate China's activity in Africa, the US response, how to interpret the data in terms of threat to US potential loss of basing and key terrain. Together, the findings and analysis section reviews data compiled throughout the research with respect to China's employment of unrestricted warfare. The intent is to use the focused questions to provide analysis of whether the data supports, does not support, or presents mixed data reference the three hypotheses.

The first set of research questions examine Chinese motives in Africa. Specifically, the section examined China's operational approach and overall stated and implied goals in relation to Africa. In summary, China has a long-standing relationship with African partners mostly focused on diplomatic and economic ties. China's activity in Africa nests within its overall "China Dream" objectives and China's Belt and Road Initiative. The establishment of the FOCAC and the subsequent projects that China funds through both loans and grants include areas or infrastructure increasing interconnectivity between African nations, agriculture initiatives, industrialization, facilitation of trade, the continued expansion on China's green development initiative on the continent, health care, and security interests.¹⁵⁵ Similar to the United States' approach in Africa, China acts in its own self-interests. The overall goal of China's Grand Strategy is to reemerge as a great power; Africa's votes in the UN, natural resources, economic markets, and key terrain in relation to the BRI all help to achieve this goal for China.

¹⁵⁴ Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 36.

¹⁵⁵ Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021), 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation, accessed 12 December 2018, https://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/hyqk_1/t1594297.htm.

The second set of research questions assessed the current US strategic aim and allowed an investigation of whether the United States' national interests and strategy in Africa, can achieve the desired strategic ends. It is important to assert that Africa policy is emergent. Ambassador Bolton's address to the heritage foundation and AFRICOM's updated posture statement acknowledge great power competition as a threat to US interests. Beyond great power competition, AFRICOM identifies VEOs, land-use disputes, environmental degradation and the overuse of natural resources as other variables contributing to instability in the region. In reference to VEOs, the AFRICOM posture statement links environmental factors with the potential rise in instability in a region. Waldhauser recognizes the "lack of economic and educational opportunities, a large, disenfranchised youth population, and inadequate natural resources are potential drivers of extremism, which, when coupled with authoritarian, corrupt, or ineffective governments, contribute to persistent instability."¹⁵⁶ VEOs and criminal networks extort these populations for recruitment. Similar to China, the United States seeks the success of African nations to further US interests. The AFRICOM posture statement, the *NSS*, the *NDS*, and Ambassador Bolton's remarks launching the Trump Administration's Africa Strategy all echo that US aid will be tied to lucrative partnerships and alliances. Ambassador Bolton stated, "new foreign assistance strategy will ensure that all U.S. foreign aid, in every corner of the globe, advances U.S. interests."¹⁵⁷ In summary, the United States has refocused its strategy in Africa to address great power competition while remaining focused on VEOs and creating "well-trained and disciplined militaries with a respect for the rule of law and human rights."¹⁵⁸ The United States acts to further US interests in these endeavors.

The third set of research questions describe instances of the employment of UW. This case study specifically found evidence of China's influence on infrastructure, political power, and economic realms. Using Nigeria and Zambia to highlight common themes and dynamics in Sino-African relationships.

¹⁵⁶ Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Bolton, "National Security Advisor remarks on the Trump Administration's New Africa Strategy."

¹⁵⁸ Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 11.

There is evidence of the employment of unrestricted warfare on the continent. Nigeria and Zambia depict the contrast between consequences Chinese investments and Chinese influence. The case studies of Zambia and Nigeria demonstrate combinations of UW. Additionally, AFRICOM identified the patterns of UW. The AFRICOM Posture Statement asserts, “Over the past decade, China has injected considerable amounts of financing into the continent, including offering key loans to strategically-located countries, like Djibouti, Senegal, and Angola. Chinese interests include gaining greater access to Africa’s mineral and other natural resources, opening markets, and accessing naval ports.”¹⁵⁹ This section of research questions identify that China is indeed using practices that could be identified as UW.

The fourth set of research questions measure the effectiveness of UW in Africa using basing, infrastructure, and the reliance on China by nations affected by the employment of UW. Djibouti is the first example of US recognition of Chinese encroachment of territory in Africa. Remarks introducing US Africa Strategy from Ambassador Bolton, as well as, the 2018 and the 2019 AFRICOM posture statements all reference China’s investment in Djibouti while drawing conclusions on the long-term significance. General Waldhauser best summarizes US political opinion in this matter: “Djibouti’s increasing partnership with China across defense, trade, and financial sectors encroaches on and, at times, diminishes U.S. access and influence.”¹⁶⁰

The first hypothesis is as China expands its capability to respond to humanitarian crisis on the continent, African countries receiving assistance from China will refuse US basing requests and hamstring US strategic objectives and threaten national security. This research for this hypothesis produced a mixed outcome. China’s economic and diplomatic activity on the continent has benefitted some countries while leaving other African nations more impoverished and susceptible to VEO activity. This does present a security risk to the United States and its allies however not in the acquisition of basing. Both China and the United States invest in Africa out of self-interest. Djibouti actually

¹⁵⁹ Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 8.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

demonstrates that China and the United States can establish military basing in the same location without armed conflict. In conclusion, irresponsible Chinese investments may destabilize areas making them vulnerable to VEO recruitment. However, Chinese relationships with African nations, on its face, do not currently threaten US interests in Africa.

The second hypothesis is as China expands its humanitarian response in Africa and its subsequent basing, they gain legitimacy in the international community and seize key terrain to threaten US interests. The research does not support this hypothesis. Initiatives such as the BUILD Act counter FOCAC investment on the continent. This monograph does not present evidence of African countries preferring Chinese partners in lieu of US offers. As of February 2019, US and Chinese investments coexist. Investment alone does not delegitimize US efforts on the continent or cause loss of territory.

Lastly, the third hypothesis is China's influence as a result of its employment of UW in Africa will result in weak or failed states through the exploitation of African energy, and trade compounded by its influence in political, diplomatic and military elements resulting in threats to US security. The research supports this hypothesis. As discussed in the Zambia case study, the 2019 AFRICOM posture statement, and comments from Ambassador Bolton, there is compelling evidence that high interest loans, and unequal partnerships with developing countries create vulnerable populations to VEO recruitment and allow “extremist ideology to fester.”¹⁶¹ The FOCAC commitment of \$60 billion with additional stipulations and US initiatives such as the BUILD Act create opportunities for competition. Time will tell if the US response to China’s diplomatic and economic investment will improve stability on the continent.

Conclusion

This study focused on China’s employment of unrestricted warfare in Africa. Furthermore, this monograph examined the United States policy in Africa in response to China’s activity in Africa. The case study analyzed the United States and China’s relationship with Africa using the structured, focused

¹⁶¹ Waldhauser, *Posture of U.S. Africa Command*, 7.

comparison methodology. This monograph used information from primary and secondary sources to quantitatively and qualitatively analyze the case study using seventeen research questions. The research questions focused on the AFRICOM AOR and examined policy for Africa as a whole for both China and the United States. Broken into four parts, the first questions addressed China's operational approach and overall stated and implied goals. Then, the study investigated whether the United States' national interests and strategy in Africa, can achieve the desired strategic ends in the second set of questions. Third, this monograph identified evidence of the use of UW. The fourth set of research questions measured the effectiveness of unrestricted warfare. The respective three hypotheses supported a mixed outcome.

Stability and prosperity in the AFRICOM AOR benefit the United States and the larger international community. China and the US operate in Africa in their own self-interest through private commercial investment, humanitarian relief, and shaping foreign policy. It is critical for the United States to be deliberate and disciplined with its investments in the fifty four countries comprising this resource abundant continent. The emergent United States policy towards Africa seeks to make investments more lucrative to US private companies while also communicating a more deliberate and thus effective use of humanitarian relief. The end goal of this policy is to further US interests, create self-reliant African partners and counter competition from China in these contested spaces and economically vulnerable regions.

Planners must understand China also seeks relationships in the region to further its initiatives. However, on the surface, China appears to be less deliberate in its endeavor. Through a more comprehensive examination of China's activities in Africa, US military planners gain insight into China's deliberate employment of unrestricted warfare to accomplish President Xi Jinping's grand strategy. A more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of China's investment on the continent enhances US efforts to stabilize African nations, counter VEO emergence, and create self-reliant partners to increase regional security.

This study focused on China's use of unrestricted warfare to achieve Xi's China Dream, but additional research is required to develop an understanding of the nuanced relationships between the fifty-

four specific countries that comprise the AFRICOM AOR. This monograph proposes additional studies that would greatly enhance US military planner's ability to affect tangible progress to combat challenges identified by Ambassador Bolton. These studies include research on China's effective use of unrestricted warfare in adjacent combatant commands in order to identify gaps, seams, vulnerabilities, and best practices to combat negative consequences.

The United States must address China's actions taken in support of Xi's initiatives affecting security in Africa. China employs UW to gain marked economic and political advantages on the continent. Ambassador Bolton and AFRICOM recognize China as a worthy competitor in Africa threatening US interests. Thus, the United States' operational approach in AFRICOM must continue to evolve in order to counter China. Resourcing this operational approach is paramount to the US effort to increase continental economic stability, self-reliance, and the eradication of VEOs in support of US national security.

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