On August 31st 2006, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1706, calling for the expansion of the existing United Nations Mission in the Sudan to the devastated Darfur region.[1] A notable achievement for the international community in its efforts to address the ongoing genocide within Darfur, this resolution also revealed a concurrent shift in China's views towards UN peacekeeping. The People's Republic did not vote in support of the resolution, but after two years of obstruction, the Chinese delegation chose to abstain rather than block the resolution's passage. This single instance illustrates multiple trends influencing China's evolving views of such matters, including the increasing benefits to China of participation and the increasing costs of opposition. In short, China has moved from a strongly skeptical opinion of international intervention to a more pragmatic outlook, balancing the traditional focus on state sovereignty with the need for stabilization abroad, domestic military development and international reputational benefits. This change in both doctrine and practice has important implications as China rises to great power status.

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, during the formative years for United Nations peacekeeping operations and doctrine. Here a distinction should be drawn between *peacekeeping*, defined as "military and civilian efforts to establish a secure environment in which to carry out peacebuilding activities," and *peace enforcement*, which is "enforcement aimed at guaranteeing the implementation of a peace agreement or arrangement, including compliance, through judicious application of incentives and disincentives including military force."[2] Only peace enforcement is explicitly outlined, under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter.[3] With the advent of the Cold War and the demise of any envisaged standing United Nations forces, the legal and practical conditions under which peacekeeping and peace enforcement might be undertaken had not yet been defined; in fact, the term "peacekeeping"

itself did not come into use until 1956.[4,5] Thus, it is important to remember that China's first direct experience with a United Nations military operation was the wholly atypical Korean War, in which a Soviet boycott of the Security Council allowed an American-led, United Nations-sanctioned force to enter the war in direct opposition to North Korea and, eventually, China itself.[6] While most certainly not a peacekeeping operation in the current sense, this intervention strongly colored Chinese views of United Nations operations for decades. The experience in Korea combined with several other features of modern Chinese history, including foreign aggression in the 19th century, PRC exclusion from the United Nations in favor of the Republic of China and the Sino-Soviet split to create a deep mistrust of external powers and a belief that international interventions were simply covers for action taken by those strong enough to impose their will.[7]

However, the seating of the PRC on the Security Council in 1971 began a process of expanding engagement. After the launch of Deng's economic reforms in 1978 and subsequent growth in China's ties with the general international community, Chinese perceptions of peacekeeping became increasingly positive. The year 1981 saw China's first vote in favor of a peacekeeping action, and 1990 saw the country's first participation in a United Nations peacekeeping effort when Chinese military observers were sent to serve with the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East.[8] Over the course of the beginning and middle of the last decade, China became steadily more involved in such actions, sending observers to locales such as Mozambique and Liberia and even providing troops for the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).[9] Part of the credit for this development may be due to the overall explosion in UN peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War period, but it is also clear that China made a strategic decision to involve itself in operations when feasible and

low-risk, abandoning its earlier policies of strict non-involvement along with the command economy.

During the past ten years, China has continued and expanded upon this course. In its stated doctrine, China has taken on the role of a country that actively supports peacekeeping efforts. Materially, the PRC is the largest contributor to peacekeeping among the permanent Security Council members, although it still lags far behind the largest contributors to peacekeeping overall.[10,11] A State Council white paper declares that, "The United Nations' status and role in world affairs are being upheld and strengthened," and "China observes the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, honors its international obligations, and participates in UN peacekeeping operations."[12] Of course, China has its own view of peacekeeping beyond simply participating, and remains decidedly cool to more interventionist approaches. Today, as in the past, China supports the application of Chapter I, Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter to peacekeeping doctrine: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."[13] In practice, this means that China requires the full consent of any country before participating in peacekeeping operations of any kind. "China has all along attached importance and rendered support to peacekeeping activities in accordance with the spirit of the UN Charter," said Chinese Major General Liu Pei, who added that "the leading role of the Security Council must be strengthened and that peacekeeping activities can only be implemented when the conditions are right."[14] While this doctrine has been in place since China began to participate in peacekeeping efforts, the breathing room which it gives the PRC leadership in decision-making is important to recognize. Beijing has taken full advantage of this leeway over the past ten years. As long as

peacekeepers enter into a state with the consent of that nation and do not become parties to the conflict, China has the ability to pick and choose which efforts it would like to support. To date, these have included such diverse countries as Haiti, Bosnia and Afghanistan in addition to those already mentioned above. A common motivating factor is lacking, however, and sheer benevolence is unlikely to provide a satisfactory explanation for Chinese choices. Instead, one must look to the general reasons for which the PRC backs peacekeeping operations to explain the connection between a permissive but non-interventionist Chinese doctrine and the nation's growing practical support.

First, and most clearly, China's international reputation is both increasingly important and increasingly at stake. Pang writes that, "China's reputation as a major power in the UN has become an important national goal. Since the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, China has been pursuing its new role as a 'responsible power' with increasing confidence."[15] In 1997, China still strongly identified as a developing nation with little involvement in international diplomacy beyond its own borders. Since then, China has helped stabilize its region during the financial crisis, joined the World Trade Organization, become a founding member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and taken on the role of a major player in the six-party talks aimed at defusing the North Korean nuclear issue. Chinese GNP has risen from $620 to $1,740 per capita from 1998 to 2005,[16,17] and coastal cities and provinces are attaining levels of development approaching or even equaling the West. This increased involvement abroad and domestic development have combined with China's ballooning economic stature to put the country in the world spotlight, for good and for ill.

As a nation embarking on a self-proclaimed "peaceful rise" in economic, diplomatic and military terms, the PRC faces a constant struggle to convince others of its own benign intentions.

Absent this goodwill on the part of the world community and especially the United States, China could certainly face larger barriers to trade, strengthening of the American system of bilateral alliances along its borders, or even a concerted and ongoing effort to contain the expansion of Chinese prosperity and power.[18] In 2005, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick stated that, "As it becomes a major global player, we are now encouraging China to become a "responsible stakeholder" that will work with the United States and others to sustain, adapt, and advance the peaceful international system that has enabled its success."[19] The PRC government has taken up the "responsible stakeholder" phrase as a desirable description of China and its developmental path. With increased pressure to support international standards of behavior and to promote conformity within the current system, leaders know that China must act in a way which strongly projects an image of benign influence.

To that end, China has indeed moved to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the field of UN peacekeeping over the last decade. This shift is easily observed in the pattern of Chinese deployments. Before 1997, China's major peacekeeping experience consisted of the deployment of 800 total troops and 97 observers as part of UNTAC.[20] China underwrote the mission politically and financially in addition to its military contributions, but "The involvement was not repeated in subsequent missions."[21] China's next mission contribution of more than 40 personnel did not occur until the UN Mission of Support in East Timor in 2000, but since that time, the UN has witnessed still greater Chinese involvement in its missions in the Congo, Liberia and now the Sudan.[22] Whereas earlier major involvement was clearly focused on China's local neighborhood, support for recent interventions in Africa now takes center stage among Chinese operations. While hard to measure, this support may have plausibly brought some of the sought-after reputational benefits among local populations: as Thompson notes,

"Images of Chinese police officers and People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers wearing blue helmets and Chinese national flags project a positive image that dispels fears of a rising China."[23] Indeed, Chinese officials and government releases highlight these reputational aspects: "Chinese peacekeeping forces have earned praise from the United Nations and from the government and people of host nations for their courage, perseverance, professionalism and discipline …," said Major General Liu.[24] More importantly, practical support for peacekeeping has played into the U.S hopes for China as a "stakeholder" described above, demonstrating visible financial and military support for collective actions taken in support of peace.

More recently, China's involvement in the Sudan has given even greater weight to the argument that international reputational benefits are China's largest concern in increasing its peacekeeping involvement. Since 2003, conflict and admitted genocide have been decimating the Darfur region, addressed on the ground only through an ill-equipped 7,000 member African Union Mission in Sudan.[25] Initially, Chinese, Russian and French interests all worked against Security Council action on the issue, but as pressure mounted, attention focused on persistent Chinese opposition to intervention.[26] Most of the criticism has centered on China's oil ties to Sudan and the assumed link between energy supplies and its support for the Sudanese government on the Security Council. Finally, the pressure began to generate calls for an association between China's "abetting genocide" and the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, an intended showpiece for China's modernization and development.[27] Fearing permanent damage to the image of the Games, the PRC ultimately ratcheted down its support for Khartoum and abstained from the eventual vote on UN Security Council Resolution 1706, which allows any eventual peacekeepers the mandate to "use all necessary means … to prevent attacks and threats against civilians," as well as expanding their deployment specifically to the Darfur region

pending Sudan's consent.[28] While the Chinese leadership may well have had other legitimate reasons for softening its stance, international censure and the threat of a major blow to prestige certainly had some effect. Since the Resolution's passage, China has committed to send a detachment of 315 engineers to Darfur, and the initially reluctant authorization of Resolution 1706 has already been appropriated by the leadership as an example of positive action on the part of the PRC. Again according to Liu, "The Chinese government's active participation in peacekeeping in the Darfur region has won commendation and appreciation from relevant departments of the United Nations and from the international community."[29]

Besides reputational concerns, the second major reason for China's changing actions over the last ten years is the PRC concern with stability, both in its own "near abroad" and in more distant areas of strategic importance. This stability has become inextricably linked to China's development and CCP legitimacy, which is predicated on globalization and reliable institutions in order to provide an environment for continued Chinese growth. As Lieberthal writes, "China's grand strategy is designed both to sustain high speed economic development and to blunt any concerns that other countries may have about rapidly growing PRC capabilities. This strategy seeks to reduce to a minimum the chances that conflict abroad will disrupt the path to development at home; assure access to the raw materials, parts and components, and technology necessary to sustain China's unprecedented economic growth; and prevent developments in Taiwan from provoking either cross-Strait military conflict or a domestic political crisis in the PRC."[30] In order to "reduce to a minimum" chances for disruptive conflict abroad and "assure access to raw materials," China has come to view United Nations peacekeeping as a useful tool. Access to raw materials often depends on the domestic stability of other nations, and this same stability helps ensure favorable conditions for international trade and investment. Admittedly,

opportunities for peacekeeping mainly occur in smaller, resource poor states.[31] Overall stability in such states, however, can produce positive externalities among states around them and eliminate the potentially massive negative externalities associated with war in any state. For instance, China's current assistance (182 engineers) to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon helps build peace and security in the most energy-critical region of the world, even if only in a limited fashion.[32] The eventual acceptance of action in Sudan also falls into this category, as long-term stability in that country can only benefit Chinese access to Sudanese natural resources.

Finally, China has used peacekeeping not only as a carrot to induce cooperation but also as a stick, actively withdrawing support for peacekeeping as punishment for actions which violate core Communist Party interests such as the Taiwan issue. Two major cases outline this type of approach to peacekeeping. First, in Liberia, "China's deployment of troops to Liberia shortly after it switched recognition from Taiwan to China was quickly followed up with aid packages that included food aid, motorcycles for the Liberian police force, a rebuilt sports complex, and even a US $2 million grant to help restructure the Liberian army and provide pensions and pay-outs for demobilizing troops."[33] This type of incentive to go along with Beijing's principles is highly visible to any of the other remaining countries which recognize the Republic of China. Second, in the case of the United Nations Preventative Deployment to Macedonia, China used its position on the Security Council to prematurely end "one of the two most successful missions in Southeast Europe" in 1999.[34] This action came on the heels of Macedonian recognition of the Republic of China, which was subsequently switched to the People's Republic in 2001. In both of the above cases, Beijing has been able to use peacekeeping as a means to the end of securing diplomatic support for its own viewpoints and further isolating the Republic of China, arguably shifting Macedonia's behavior decisively simply through its power over peacekeeping and aid in

the United Nations.

In a more minor case, Chinese involvement in Haiti may also have been related to Haiti's ongoing recognition of the ROC, but this is less clear. Thompson asserts that, "China has recently [2004] provided over 100 riot police from the People's Armed Police (PAP) to the UN mission in Haiti [MINUSTAH], their only deployment in the Western hemisphere, and a nation that still recognizes Taiwan. While Haiti has not switched recognition from Taiwan to China, it can be assumed that this goal factored into China's decision to deploy police on that mission."[35] This assumption seems contradictory to China's earlier willingness to deny a country aid and peacekeeping involvement based on the Taiwan question as witnessed in Macedonia, as well as the positive feedback from Macedonia's subsequent compliance. Either Beijing's policy on the issue shifted between 1999 and 2004, or else Haiti possessed some outside set of factors inviting Chinese participation that outweighed any concerns over ROC recognition. Regardless, Haiti appears to be something of an outlier in Beijing's peacekeeping policy. Idealistically, China's involvement in MINUSTAH may represent an early example of Chinese peacekeeping for the sake of keeping the peace rather than a shrewdly calculated geopolitical maneuver. Realistically, the PRC support for this mission appears to be a miscalculation of potential benefits.

Each of the above justifications for expanding Chinese involvement in peacekeeping is important, but a final domestic matter both contributes to and feeds off this change. At the same time that China has found new reasons to support deployments diplomatically, it has been increasing its military capability to participate as needed and using UN operations as learning labs for the People's Liberation Army. Because China has not had occasion to deploy its armed forces externally since the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979, very few of its current personnel and equipment have field experience. This makes United Nations deployments especially attractive

means to gain such experience in a diplomatically safe way. By 2002, the PLA was able to field "One UN-standard engineering battalion, one UN-standard medical team and two UN-standard transport companies." Since that time, China also made its largest deployment ever of peacekeepers: 550 to Liberia.[36] These increased capabilities have come during a period of unprecedented Chinese military expansion and modernization, an expansion that is coincident with China's growth into a legitimate international power during the past decade. From 2000 to 2005, even the PRC's own conservative numbers show Chinese defense expenditures as doubling, from $14.6 billion to $30.6 billion.[37,38] While individual contributions to UN missions have been modest in military terms, they have helped the PLA to gain invaluable experience in coordinating with other militaries, to field-test equipment and to undergo rigorous and specialized UN training programs required for peacekeeping personnel.[39] All of this has served to assist in China's drive to move the PLA from a primarily continental, numbers-based force to one that is more mobile, technologically advanced and able to respond rapidly throughout China's immediate region.[40] At the same time, China's ongoing military transformation further increases its ability to participate in and even lead intensive UN peacekeeping operations.

Looking over the actions enumerated above, one clearly sees the trend of expansion in peacekeeping participation by China, a trend made possible by doctrinal changes of the 1980's but which only began in earnest during the mid-1990's. As China carries its military development and growing stature in international relations forward, a few different possibilities for longer-term peacekeeping policy present themselves. Based on the trajectory of the past ten years, some may seem more likely than others, but all appear plausible.

First, Beijing may simply continue as it is now, offering peacekeeping support where a clear national benefit exists and occasionally using its position on the Security Council to enforce

unique Chinese perspectives. In this case, China would continue to maintain a lower overall profile than its economy and status as a veto-wielder might suggest. This outcome would play primarily off of acknowledgement that the United States will remain the dominant world power for the foreseeable future and that Beijing must therefore make pragmatic use of the tools available. Such a course would see China continue to support actions in nations with obvious impact on Chinese diplomatic, economic or energy interests.

Alternatively, China might expand its use of peacekeeping to help bring about closer contacts with other Asian nations and the West in addition to further bolstering its international reputation as a responsible power. Attaining such a characterization in the world community might prove especially valuable in light of the present period of American unilateralism. Like other developing nations such as Pakistan and India, China could find that the relatively low cost of engaging as part of a multi-national force is outweighed by respect gained among fellow nations. Moreover, peacekeeping activities present an opportunity for the PLA to forge greater trust and understanding between the Chinese and foreign military establishments, as well as potentially bringing Chinese and foreign non-governmental relief organizations together with the central government on specific issues.[41]

Finally, one can envision a future in which Chinese attitudes towards peacekeeping tend towards those exhibited by the United States as a great power. As China rises, Beijing may increasingly find itself wary of material involvement in external affairs in which it does not command exclusive control. Such an outcome would of course be generally negative for peacekeeping efforts, with the two largest economies and militaries in the world refusing much more than financial aid in this respect. Unfortunately, skepticism regarding multilateral security initiatives may be a corollary of growing individual state power.

Regardless of Beijing's ultimate views on peacekeeping, China's clout in the decision-making process surrounding future interventions and missions will only increase. Along with this power will come expectations from the world community that China exercise its influence and capabilities in a responsible, constructive manner, preferably different from the interests which have too often characterized UN peacekeeping policy during the past 60 years. On this, the world community is likely to be disappointed. Even as China has engaged more closely with the outside world since 1997 through the mechanism of peacekeeping, it has continued to promote its own interests and principles even above material requirements for peace. However, such behavior is nothing new to the exercise of collective security. The ultimate significance of China's role in the process will be to bring to bear additional resources, new perspectives and, with some luck, a firm commitment to safeguarding peace and stability in an ever-volatile world.

To conclude, the People's Republic of China has undertaken a concerted effort to expand its involvement in UN peacekeeping operations over the past ten years as made evident by its recent behavior. Though little has changed in official PRC doctrine since the 1980s, the willingness of Beijing to take action and the attendant benefits of doing so have significantly changed the decision-making calculus. For China, these benefits come in the form of reputational gains, stability which complements Chinese economic growth, fulfilled diplomatic objectives and enhanced military experience for the PLA. Chinese actions have already produced tangible results in countries such as Liberia, the Congo and the Sudan, while perceived failure of China to act constructively now provokes worldwide comment and criticism. Although the ultimate results of pursuing greater involvement in peacekeeping operations may yet be unclear, even to the Chinese themselves, none should doubt that China can and will remain a significant player in the world's most visible collective security arrangement.

1. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1706, Department of Public Information, http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8821.doc.htm (accessed October 18, 2007).

2. David Francis, *Dangers of Co-deployment: UN Co-operative Peacekeeping in Africa* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004). Definitions summarized from the second chapter.

3. William Slomanson, *Fundamental Perspectives on International Law* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2000), 451. Francis describes peacekeeping as "Chapter 6.5" of the UN Charter, lying between the peaceful means of influence described in Chapter 6 and the collective security provisions of Chapter 7.

4. Stephen Hill and Shahin Malik, *Peacekeeping and the United Nations* (Brookfield: Dartmouth Publishing, 1996), 11. The idea of standing UN forces was a legitimate, if impractical, strand of thought during the founding of the UN. "The whole question of providing the Security Council with strength was dealt with by Article 47 which established the MSC (Military Staff Committee). … It was anticipated, therefore, that the MSC would command land, air, and sea forces in order to maintain international peace and security. … The failure of the MSC to assume any responsibility and the ultimate failure to realize the grandiose designs of the Security Council, were less to do with the provisions in the Charter and more to do with the emergence of the Cold war."

5. Slomanson, 453. The term "peacekeeping" was first applied to the UN Emergency Force deployed during the Suez Canal crisis.

6. Stanley Meisler, *United Nations: The First Fifty Years* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995), 63. Korea was the first instance of the United States seeking UN legitimacy for an intended military intervention. Meisler writes, "Truman told the nation that that the unified U.N. command represented a 'landmark in mankind's long search for a rule of law among nations.' But, despite such rhetoric and the unfurling of the U.N. flag, the war remained mainly an American crusade against Communist aggression."

7. Pang Zhongying, "China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping," in *UN Peace Operations and Asian Security,* ed. Mely Caballero-Anthony and Amitav Achirya (New York: Routledge, 2005), 75. Pang writes that, "Given China's closed-door policy and as a consequence of China's Cultural Revolution, China had been highly skeptical about the legitimacy of past UN peacekeeping missions. … Therefore, China did not participate in the Security Council decisions on peacekeeping operations."

8. Drew Thompson, "Beijing's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations," *The Jamestown Foundation China Brief*, volume 5, number 11 (May 10, 2005), 7-10, http://www.jamestown.org/images/pdf/cb_005_011.pdf.

9. Thompson, 7-10.

10. Gao Ying, "China has contributed most peacekeepers of UN Security Council," Chinese Government's Official Web Portal, January 10, 2007, http://www.gov.cn/misc/2007-01/10/content_492317.htm (accessed October 15, 2007). As of January 2007, China had deployed 5,915 personnel over its history, the most of any permanent member. On the other hand, Pakistan has over 9,900 personnel deployed *currently*.

11. Thompson, 9.

12. "China's National Defense in 2006," (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, 2006), 2-6.

13. Gary Rawnsley, "May You Live in Interesting Times: China, Japan and Peacekeeping" in *Major Powers and Peacekeeping,* ed. Rachel Utley (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 83.

14. Pan Letian, "China continues active role in peacekeeping," Chinese Government's Official Web Portal, July 31, 2007, http://www.gov.cn/misc/2007-07/31/content_702020.htm (accessed December 2, 2007). This quote is excerpted from a statement made to the UN Military Staff Committee.

15. Pang, 73.

16. The World Bank, *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 214.

17. The World Bank, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation,* (Washington: Office of the Publisher, The World Bank, 2006), 288.

18. Zhang Yunling and Tang Shiping, "China's Regional Strategy," in *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics,* ed. David Shambaugh (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 49-50. The authors describe China's approach to U.S relations in light of this possibility.

19. Robert Zoellick, "Statement on Conclusion of the Second U.S.-China Senior Dialogue," December 8, 2005, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/57822.htm (accessed December 3, 2007).

20. Thompson, 10.

21. Pang, 76.

22. Thompson, 10.

23. Thompson, 8.

24. Pan.

25. United Nations, "United Nations Mission in the Sudan – Background," *United Nations Official Website*, http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmis/background.html (accessed 1 December 1, 2007.)

26. A.K. Bardalai, *Changing Security Scenario: Implications for UN Peacekeeping* (New Delhi: Kalpana Shukla, 2006), 178-179.

27. *The Economist*, "Too Few, Too Late?" April 19, 2007, http://www.economist.com/world/africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9052142 (accessed December 1, 2007).

28. Security Council Resolution 1706.

29. Pan.

30. Kenneth Lieberthal, "How Domestic Forces Shape the PRC's Grand Strategy and International Impact," in *Strategic Asia 2007–08: Domestic Political Change and Grand Strategy,* ed. Ashley Tellis and Michael Wills (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2007), 35.

31. China's current deployments include states normally considered less important to any Chinese grand strategy, such as Haiti and Kosovo.

32. Thompson, 10.

33. Thompson, 8.

34. Pang, 84

35. Thompson, 8.

36. Pang, 77.

37. "China's National Defense in 2000," (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, 2000) http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2000/china-001016wp.htm (accessed December 2, 2007).

38. "China's National Defense in 2006."

39. Thompson, 8.

40. "Military Power of the People's Republic of China," Washington: Office of the Secretary of Defense, (2007): 1. The Department of Defense describes this transformation succinctly: "The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is pursuing comprehensive transformation from a mass army designed for protracted wars of attrition on its territory to one capable of fighting and winning

short-duration, high-intensity conflicts against high-tech adversaries – which China refers to as 'local wars under conditions of informatization.'"

41. Pang, 85.

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