
IV. African Development

SCHILLER INSTITUTE FEB. 4 CONFERENCE

New African Assertiveness Presages an End to Colonialism

by Daniel Platt

Will colonialism finally end during our lifetime? According to its own official “narrative,” the dominant institution of colonialism, the British Empire, ended its colonial exploitation in 1960 with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s “Wind of Change” address. However, a more modern and sophisticated system of exploitation was already in place, a system of supranational bureaucracies, such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, that prevented the development of infrastructure and local manufacturing in the now nominally independent nations of the Global South. As a consequence, the economic relations of these nations remained essentially unchanged, and the exploitation continued unabated. As an added measure, the “climate change” crisis has more recently been introduced to further suppress development, to avoid the purported possibility that “the planet will boil over,” in the words of former U.S. President Barack Obama.

However, in recent years, new conditions have arisen that have altered the political landscape. We have seen the spectacular success of China, and its willingness to share its success with other nations through the Belt and Road Initiative. This has caused shrieks of alarm from the colonial powers. In addition, the brutal sanctions policies of recent, neocon-dominated administrations in the United States have forced nations around the world to begin a process of disengagement from the dollar-denominated financial system and its institutions, creating an opportunity for a new, development-oriented system to supplant it.

The first internationally coordinated effort to end colonialism was the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia. Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche, speaking at the Institute’s February 4, 2023

online conference, said, “... the developing countries, the Non-Aligned Movement, are having a renaissance right now; they’re picking up on the fight to end colonialism. The Spirit of Bandung has reemerged.”

We present here edited transcripts of speeches of participants in the Feb. 4 Schiller Institute conference who spoke on the development of Africa. Their contributions illustrate that reinvigorated spirit. They are followed by the dialogue at the conference on the historical importance of the first Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba.

Prof. Liu Haifang

African Development: A Chinese Perspective

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My topic is really trilateral cooperation. As a scholar,

also working in one of China's older universities, properly also prodigious, and then serving as Director for the Center of African Studies, I also frequently receive guests, either from the African continent, and beyond, and all coming to discuss either African development or China-African cooperation.

So, for many years, trilateral cooperation is also a topic, and either from academic levels, or from other areas, people also come to discuss this issue with me. And from one of those kinds of groups, they are American diplomats who are resident in Beijing, and I still very clearly recall, since 2015, the year our leader participated in the UN General Assembly, and he noted how U.S. and China should have more cooperation on African affairs, and also, of course, for other developing countries, to join hands to be friends.

And then, soon enough, the two governments signed an MOU about U.S.-China trilateral cooperation, and those diplomats started to frequently come to my office, and we talked a lot of the time over coffee, over how to enhance [our cooperation]. And, of course, I had my previous investigations, my interactions with so many Chinese companies in Africa, so that's what I could offer to exchange with American colleagues.

But suddenly, around 2017-2018, each year, they came many times, but they stopped asking these questions again, and then, they started to focus only on what are the new developments in China-African cooperations, what are new measures, and so on and so forth; and likewise, when I received German colleagues, EU colleagues working in either Beijing or elsewhere, they also switched the topic.

So that's why, from 2017-2018, I started to ask back: What's wrong with you? You don't ask me about trilateral cooperation anymore? Why have you stopped asking? And, of course, we all understand the changes coming from those moments.

And I guess, today's topic, when Schiller Institute organizes such a conference about this heavy change,



Courtesy of Liu Haifang

South Sudan: He Xiangdong, Chinese Ambassador to South Sudan (6th from right) shakes hands with Onyoti Adigo Nyikuac, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, celebrating the donation of 349 pieces of agricultural machinery by the Chinese government, to enable South Sudan to reinvigorate and transform its agricultural sector amid food insecurity caused by five years of conflict. Juba, Dec. 13, 2018.

this epochal change of the era, it didn't start from nowhere, nor did it start with the Ukraine war. It rather had already been there, and we as scholars can understand it from a little bit longer perspective.

Another very quick case is about Sudan's case. We all know that when Sudan's Bashir government had a very bad relationship with U.S., the U.S. was sanctioning, and then there was no business diplomat at all, the dialogue actually started from China. The U.S. government relied on the Chinese special envoys so much; the Chinese special envoy was also put in place as a new mechanism started by them. So, for one hour, the Chinese-American scholar or government representative, we sat together discussing about the older, beautiful days of China trilateral cooperation. We never, ever forget about understanding such an important case.

But this is not only part of how, politically, the U.S. can use China as a channel to work with one of those "fragile [countries]," or whatever bad word that the U.S. government back then would use for that. And then we know that Sudan was separated into the two—this is in South Sudan. And then, different Chinese actors have been joining this country, and doing lots of different types of development programs.

Four of my students, who graduated with master's degrees, didn't find proper places to show their

China's Idea of Developmental Peace Is Not the Liberal Approach

Prof. Liu displayed these conclusions during her speech.

- The current mainstream theory of peacebuilding is the liberal approach, which is also the guide and principle of the Western countries and international organizations (United Nations, World Bank, etc.) to practice in conflict-affected areas

- China's perception of peace building: aims to resolve conflicts by addressing the root causes of conflicts and it includes all social, political and economical measures.
- Chinese scholars: Developmental Peace is not only a goal, but also a process of peacebuilding.
- Developmental Peace theory, meaning to promote sustainable peace through development. "Development" has three dimensions: economic growth; effective development and governance; and the right to survival and development (the basic form of human rights).

capacities inside China, so they decided to go to Africa, and in Uganda, they identified in this country the oil sector is going to be booming, and soon enough we knew there would be oil produced.

So, in around 2017, when they first arrived, they noticed, indeed, there is really such an important need to help people prepare for the scale. So they had such a company, maybe we can call it social entrepreneur, because they don't have lots of investment, they cannot invest even for business or other investment. And then they are all professionally trained in the oil sector, so therefore, they started such an academy, the Sunmaker Oil and Gas Institute, to train local people.

And soon enough, they had lots of success and lots of acknowledgment from the Ugandan government. The Ugandan government now even uses their academy as the one pioneer to help with their youth development. And they have now moved to South Sudan about two or three years ago.

So during the whole period, they have trained so many people in South Sudan. For me, South Sudan's issue has lots of dimensions, not only about the politics, how the North and the South couldn't get along. There are also other very important issues—livelihood, and where the youth can have a proper livelihood. So, in such a program these several young, Chinese graduates, they brought lots of American and European scholars and engineers, helping with training. And then for some time, they also had their Chinese technicians to be teachers to train the local people.

Their academy, the Sunmaker Oil and Gas Institute, has almost become the only one in many countries. Now they have branches in Ethiopia, in Tanzania, in

Kenya, in the Seychelles, and they are preparing to move to many more.

And they are such change-makers for me, truly the change-makers. And they are bringing different people, from different countries together to help with solving Africa's very urgent need to provide jobs, provide proper training for the youth.

So, quickly coming to my main topic: today's international environment is so bad for China, for China's collaboration with different partners, and I think the misunderstanding is the main thing. During those beautiful older days, as I said in the past 10 years' time, with lots of trilateral cooperation, people have promised so much knowledge from different partners, what you could handle, what the other is strong in, and then what Africa is good at, so that the trilateral cooperation there was really helping, and the global development agenda was progressing in a very nice, very beautiful way.

But then, suddenly, in these recent years, we don't know what happened. We only know that there are bad impressions and a very negative attitude toward China as a whole. This is very much a pity for us. My older colleagues will all speak to our European or American colleagues: Please don't worry about China-African relations, because what our China does in Africa is so much supervised or monitored by so many different stakeholders.

I think this only could happen in a period of time, or in a working mode like the trilateral cooperation, if you could have a candid dialogue, if you could have a good relationship, even to pursue a trilateral cooperation, then each side could harness the momentum and then develop further.

Now, all this has stopped. And for me, this is such a pity, and I want to use this older period of time, the past trilateral cooperation stories, to show how the liberal international development order or the attitude of peace is important. Please don't neglect that China's own development peace is also contributing to the world's development. And then it specifically helped to deal with poverty, to deal with lack of skills, and it helped with the people's livelihood and therefore can be helpful for a self-sustaining future for the whole human species.

So for me, this is my main purpose. I really hope all people from different parts of the world can jointly work to have a human-centered perspective, to really help each other, instead of to let this world go down, and then to even have war, and see the worst situation happen.

Elison Karuhanga

Come Hell or High Water, We Are Going To Develop Our Energy Projects

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Uganda is an African country, as you know. It's a land-locked country that discovered 6.5 billion barrels of oil. The oil in Uganda is 1.5 billion barrels of it so far recoverable; that's just in 40% of the area. The country has resolved that it will have a crude oil export pipeline and a refinery, and it will also have commercialized liquefied petroleum gas. So, this project reached a final investment decision which was made by the investors—Total Energies and CNOC, the Chinese National Oil Company. The project is on cost. The construction of the refinery is going to happen with other investors, but the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) has commenced, and the

development of the oil fields that are codenamed Tilinga and Kingfisher.

This project is in the middle of an interesting period in human history. We are alive in Uganda, more than anywhere else, to the realities of climate change. We understand more than most the dangers of climate change. In 1995, Uganda inserted in its constitution a fundamental human right to a clean and healthy environment. Uganda has no problem with the concept of a clean and healthy environment, but that does not mean it is an environment where we must conserve poverty. We have come to the realization that the biggest threat facing our people is not the threat that our grandchildren will face, serious though that threat may be, but it is also, along with that threat, the threat that we face today.

In Africa and in Uganda, we are concerned about many things. We are concerned about the climate; we are concerned about the ethics of climate change today; but we are also concerned and deeply concerned about the effects of poverty today. There is an argument that we need to see a change in the oil price; that we need to see a phase-out of fossil fuels. And this argument seems to suggest—and you can correct me if I am wrong—that the solution is that we phase out fossils. How do we phase out fossils? We stop any new investments in oil and gas. Once we stop new investments in oil and gas, we make oil and gas as expensive as possible. And once oil and gas are very expensive, the world will be forced to transition to renewables, once the fossils have been completely out-priced by all methods available to human ingenuity.

That all sounds very nice when you think about it as an activist, or when you think about it from a European capital—when you think about it from a rich, developed country. But what does that mean when broken down in real terms? That means that the higher the price of fuel, we have now learned, that the high oil price does not hurt oil companies. The year 2022 saw a rise in oil prices and record profits for oil giants. The only people who pay for this transition will be poor people. And in this side of the world—in Africa and Uganda—we have paid enough. We have sacrificed enough; we have been guinea pigs for way too long. We cannot continue paying for these transitions. We cannot, on our end, continue to transition from darkness to deeper darkness in a night already devoid of stars, to quote one great American.