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**THE SECURITY IMPLICATION OF CHINA'S UNLIMITED PRESIDENTIAL TERM
ON AFRICA**

Frank-Collins N. Okafor and Kingsley Chinonso Mark

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¹Frank-Collins N. Okafor

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social
Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka,
Anambra State-Nigeria

²Kingsley Chinonso Mark

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social
Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka,
Anambra State-Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper looks at the security implication of China's policy of unlimited presidential term on Africa, noting that "He that pays the piper determines its pace" as such; Africa being at the receiving end of Chinese aid, goods, services, military supplies and assistance and Chinese military presence in some African countries notwithstanding will continue to depend on the whims and caprices of China.

Methodology: Using Marxist Economic Theory of Imperialism and Dependency theory, the paper argues that the policy will continue to take advantage of the systemic and structural imbalance of the African economic, political and strategic/military architecture. As such her dependent on China, which in the long-run engenders neo-colonial condition favourable to China's strategic interest in Africa.

Findings: The all-pervading Chinese presence in Africa visa-vise her policy of unlimited presidential term serves as instrument of imperialism to Africa, parasitically corroding strategic, national economic base and provokes acute neo-colonialism which at the stance of dependency state. Hence the dire need for a wakeup call to countries of African to develop and incorporate advance security measures to avoid the risk of continual domination of Africa strategic and economic relation by China, which has continued to engenders communal crisis and inter-tribal wars orchestrated by her regular arms sale to African countries, as one will agree that term limit in governance is one of the few checks on the ruler embedded in the state constitution that can quickly bring about a change in government policy and philosophy.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This paper recommends among others, that African countries should carry their destiny in their own hands instead of succumbing to the prevailing China's national interest (aid) driven interventions which is currently re-championed in her current unlimited presidential term.

Keywords: *Foreign Policy, Security, Dependency, Imperialism, Neo-Colonialism*

INTRODUCTION

Debates on the issue of unlimited presidential term and arguments for its backing and recognition notwithstanding are nascent area of inquiry. Nations by the dictates of their constitution have time line to which a particular government can stay in power. This may range from 3years, 4years, 5years, 8years, or beyond as the case may be in a given country. The recent development and the several calls for unlimited term by the People's Republic of China, and the passage of such policy to law notwithstanding emerged as part of her several constitutional amendments, deliberated at the annual congressional meeting which took off from the 5th of March, 2018, and legislatures voted overwhelmingly in favour off. The amendment vote required a two-thirds majority to pass. A total of 2,958 delegates voted to remove the two-term limit in the constitution for the state president and vice president to amend the constitution, while 2 delegates voted against, 3 abstained and 1 spoiled ballot. Shen-Chunyao (2018) noted "the Communist Party that controls the legislature and its leadership, never rejected the proposal for term removal".

This policy therefore, has triggered ceaseless mystification among researchers and scholars alike around the world. While analyst may insist that the term removal in the People's Republic of China "meant that China has returned to the era of Chairman Mao, when the Great Helmsman, who had no term limits, ruled by diktat,". Willy-Lam, (2018), notes "assuming that Xi Jinping's health holds up, it is almost certain that he will remain president until 2028, and possibly 2033, when he will be 80 years of age." The policy potentially cleared way for President Xi Jinping the incumbent to remain in power for the rest of his life and consolidate power to a degree unseen since Mao Zedong (Spotlight, 2018).

Chinese Presidency before now has three major titles: The Head of the Chinese Communists Party, Head of the Central Military Commission and President of the People's Republic of China. In other words, Chinese President rules the Party, the military and the nation. While in practical terms, the president of China is by far least important of the three roles; a ceremonial position, as against the early 1950's, when the role was designated to have some real power, but the power was abolished for much of former Chinese ruler Mao Zedong's reign (wikipedia)

Considering the wobbly state of China's presidential term, from two five-year terms to unlimited presidential term, one can quickly pin point the obvious that the policy is most likely to compel China to concentration on ruthless and advanced neo-colonial, stringent-ingenuities that require long-term efforts, which most of which will be policy-disastrous to Africa, as had always been the case since the reign of Chairman Mao Zedong who ceaselessly plunged, loot and interlarded the domestic affairs of emerging nations, occasioned by her pretentious craving for the resources of this emerging economy, bearing in mind her massive power and influence in the strategic/military and political-economy of Africa in past and present years whose growing population depend on the agricultural sector and the sector contributes 35% of GDP as well as employed more than 62% of the workforce (Shobande, 2018).

This study worries that the implication of the policy to Africa is likely to do harm than good. Hence over the years China has been constantly involved in the sale of arms to Africa, which has heated up the atmosphere of ethnic, religious and group rivalries and bigotries. Therefore the need for a

wakeup call to countries of Africa to modernized and integrate advance security measures to avoid the risk of China's continual domination of African strategic, economic, political and social structures. As one will agree that term limit in governance is one of the checks on the president embedded in the state constitution that can quickly bring about a change in government policy and philosophy.

Conceptual Clarification

China's term limit remains one of a number of political reforms enacted during her liberal times in the 1980s. The head of state is elected to a five-year term by the National People's Congress. The presidency is largely a ceremonial office, while the actual decision-making power rests on the State Council, which is headed by the premier, chosen by the president and voted by the NPC to a five-year term. The CCP has so much control; the party's general secretary wields real power over China's government. The second most powerful person is the premier. The level of authority that an office commands relates very much to the personality of the individual holding the office.

Consequently, the People's Republic of China a fast growing economy in the world with her first constitution in 1954 which established the government structure and detailed citizens' rights and duties. The government adopted new constitutions in 1975; 1978; under the leadership of then-paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, the Communist Party decided in 1981 to "put an end to the virtually lifelong tenure of leading cadres, and change the over-concentration of power," in the words of an official document on the subject and adopted the present constitution in 1982 limiting the presidency to two five-year terms. Guoguang, (2015) noted that the early 1980s constitutional amendments were largely symbolic, but important. The symbolism is that "while hereditary monarchs rule for life, democracies have presidential term limits,"

From the above, each constitution reflected the ideological concerns and policy priorities of the time, although none fundamentally altered the government structure. The present constitution echoes the formality and detail of the first, reflecting an ideological return to the concept of rule of law. All of the constitutions nominally centralized power in the National People's Congress, giving it the power to appoint and supervise the top officials of both the executive and the judicial branches. The 1982 constitution was amended in 1993 to confirm the practice of a "socialist market economy"; in 1999 to legitimize the economic role of private firms; and in 2004 to provide legal protection of private property.

These efforts were meant to move China away from decades of turmoil under Mao Zedong, whose violent political campaigns killed millions and took the national economy to the brink of collapse. But while Deng expected others to stick to the rules, he himself flouted them. He ruled China almost until his death in 1997, despite officially retiring years before. Guoguang(2015), argued that it is only Hu Jintao, Xi's predecessor was the only China's eight top leaders in nearly seven decades of communist rule that retired and relinquished power on schedule. All the others were either purged or found ways to cling to power despite formal and informal regulations. Tenuous and superficial as the regulations were, Xi's breaking them is historically significant and seen by Chinese liberals and scholars alike as a big step backward especially as it might not be favourable to the dictates of modern day democratic principles.

Theoretical Explication

The neo-imperialist perspective of Raymond Aron and Eugene Rostow, drawn from the all-encompassing Marxist Economic Theory of Imperialism, borrowed by the conservative economists contend that actions and inactions of states towards other states including foreign policy decisions are for the benefit of their states, including the general activities of their indigent multinational corporations. In the words of Eze,(2017)

“The illusion that indigenous collaboration with industrialized states and their transnational firms would endow the modernizing society with enormous benefits related to financial support, technological innovations, technical assistance, and easy access to the world market and to results of multinational research and development activities”. What would result from these benefits would be “a higher degree of standardization and quality control of the strategic, economic and all its resources”. Development would then become the fruit of collaboration (Eze, 2017).

The argument is an extrapolation of Hodder’s (1968) of the neo-imperialist economists’ slogan of the 18th century “that Industrialised nation and her multinational corporations institute a modern type of outmoded Europe exertions to develop and bear the burdens of the Third World. A disfigured economic history of Europe and of the rise of imperialism is finally advanced.

From the above theory therefore, it is our thesis that the policy of China’s unlimited presidential term is an instrument formed and geared towards the accumulation and domination of African’s strategic/military and economic base etc. China’s action is limited only by drive for profit. Her recent power in world politics is neither extemporaneous nor as sudden as a few defensive analysts would have us believe. Her power has been derived from an organized plunder of the resources of the weaker nations of Africa which has evolved over the years, with different combination of force, persuasion and deceit, exemplified in the prolonged history of imperialism authenticated in the earlier show of China’s corporations towards a continued Africa’s exploitation.

From the above therefore, quest for profit and its maximization has been a major directive of China’s policy towards the rest of the world as Nnoli (1977:8-9) notes, that “since profit maximization rather than the needs of the population dictated the establishment and transfer of Chinese industries and her multinational companies and her continued greed to produced goods in excess of what the local population could buy”. Thus created need for external source of local markets. According to Lenin (1959), “China is characterized by “the export of capital, language, aid, and commodities; the formation of monopoly capitalist in Africa” (Lenin 1959:143). Hence, her financial oligarchies came to control and dominate the instruments of security (The Military base), government, church, tertiary education, and business in Africa. This process or phenomenon is what we refer to as imperialism. Given the above circumstances, one cannot help being outraged when one hears that transnational’s’ are authentic channels through which the secrets of development are communicated to new states. It is even more despicable to argue that” it was their formation that liberated Africans from the shackles of poverty and hunger”, for the benefit of primitive societies (Eze, 2017).

He further posits “to argue that an exploiter can develop the exploited is to buy a false suggestion that there exists a mutual exchange of benefits between parasites and their hosts. Development is hardly generated by the excruciating dynamics of trans-nationals”. He went on to opine that “society develops from within itself. Development is neither invented nor imposed. It is rather a phenomenon of natural history obeying its dialectically determined rules and regulations. Therefore, Chinese multinational firms and their local proxies cannot develop the host countries of Africa on whom they prey. By their very essence, they are unsuitable for providing new states with the concrete material base necessary for external resources procurement. After all, the China’s’ domination of new states’ means of economic activity does not affirm the laws of economic development. It denies, distorts and disfigures them. The transnational exploitation of local labour and the deliberate payment of subsistence wages frustrate rather than facilitate internal self-development. The new world capitalist allocation of inferior functions to new states, in the international division of labour, repudiates rather than represent a genuine expression of the need for a just economic order (Eze, 2017).

Following the above arguments, China’s gesture towards Africa is devoid of any known humanitarian gesture, rather a combat of self-cherishment and sufficiency. China an organized exploitative and military dominating-mafia Dom with transnational memberships legitimizes its exploitation in Africa. The use of her transnational organizations and her profit motives bias the socio-political interests and structures of the victim states of Africa in favour of an international mercantilist China. Under this circumstance, the purpose of Chinese unlimited presidential term and her foreign policy is to buttress multinational privileges and to guarantee the terrible nature of her profits in Africa with its attendant effect of dependence.

In support of the above view, dependency theorists argue that it would be impossible to understand the processes and problems of Africa without considering the wider socio-historical context of expansion and colonialism (Matunhu; 2011). For Rodney (1972), imperialism was not merely a system of exploitation, but one whose essential purpose was to repatriate the profits made in Africa to the so called homeland (Eze, and Ogbuene, 2016). Accordingly, through military support and assistance, trade assistance, aids, and surplus values created using African labour and African resources were repatriated to the benefiting country.

These theories aptly explains Africa’s experience in the face of China’s persistent interference and her current policy herein, that left nothing to be desired than the accumulation and domination experience and the ‘master- servant’ relationship that has continued to exist between them. It is therefore in line with the foregoing exposition of strategic/political and economic taproot of neo imperialism and dependency therefore can one understand and explain why China would spend enormous human and material resources in Africa. The power relationship becomes that of power manipulation domination, wealth accumulation and coercion in the form of aid giving, strategic assistance in purely utilitarian manners in order to ensure the victim’s (Africa’s) conformity with Chinese owned transnational rules and regulations (Eze, 2017).

China's Unlimited Presidential Term; Africans Military Dependence

China often called an “emerging donor,” and has in fact had an aid programme since the 1950s, marking Egypt as her first African recipient of aid in 1956 (Brautigam, 2010). Brautigam, (2010) further posit that “China’s aid is almost automatic for African countries with little or no formal ties”. Every country in Africa, with the exception of Swaziland, has been a recipient of Chinese aid. Countries such as Chad, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Gambia, have switched diplomatic recognition back and forth between Beijing and China (Brautigam2008:12) in (Brautigam, 2010.)

In the peak period of the mid 1970s, after Beijing had won back its United Nations seat from Chinese Taipei, China had aid programmes in more African countries than did the United States (Brautigam 1998, p. 4). Although the quantity of funding dipped during the 1980s, Chinese aid programmes remained, with a focus on sustaining and consolidating the results of aid investments made during the 1970s. Some knew that China continued to support its flagship project, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, but it was less known that in the 1980s and 1990s, China sent teams to dozens of African countries to repair, rebuild, and consolidate many of their earlier infrastructure and production projects (Brautigam 1998; 2009). It is widely said that China does not have a central aid agency, but in fact, China’s aid programme is organized by the Department of Foreign Aid in the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), which cooperates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Brautigam 2009).

From the above exposition from Ezeh (2017), Brautigam (2009), Brautigam, (2010); Brautigam (1998); Eze, and etal, (2016) of the philanthropic aid giving by China to Africa, it should be borne in mind and as earlier stated that the President of China is a ceremonial head of State, serving as the ceremonial figure under National People’s Congress. The premier of China is the head of government, presiding over the State Council composed of four vice premiers and the heads of ministries and commissions, while the general secretary of the Communist Party of China holds ultimate power and authority over state and government. It’s on record that these principal and strategic offices “President, General Secretary, and Chairman of the central Military Commission” have since 27th March, 1993 to 15th March, 2003 been occupied by a sole individual, 15th May 2003 – 14th March 2013 occupied by another individual, granting these individuals de jure and de facto power over the country and on other bilateral/strategic issues as it concerns China’s relation with other countries.

Following the above therefore and the history lane of China’s presidential terms and the presidency so far, China have not had a stable leadership term limit. For instance, Mao Zedong ruled from 27th September 1954-27th April 1959, Liu Shaoqi 27th April 1959-31 October 1968, while Acting Chairman Dong Biwu from 24th February 1972-17th January 1979; Honourary President Song Qingling from 16th-28thMay 1981; President Li Xiannian from 18th June 1983-8th April 1988; President Yang Shangkun from 8th April 1988-27thMarch 1993; President Jiang Zemin from 27th March 1993-15thMarch 2003, President Hu Jintao from 15thMarch 2003 -14th March 2013; while President Xi Jinping from 14th March 2013 to Present, and the current passage of unlimited presidential term limit, which will further continue to place her in a continued state of domination with the developing states of Africa. As Eze (2017), Eze and etal (2016), noted “there is no father

Christmas in the international system". As such, despite China's aid driven like external relations to Africa, "She never engaged in 'Charity Begins Abroad' nor 'Father Christmas benevolence' or 'Bazaar Jamboree'" (rather, masquerading under the smokescreen of aid giving for her strategic/Military interest, Oil, for Arms sales/deal or for other economic reasons (Ezeh, 2015); Ezech et al (2016). In addition, to aid given, investment and development assistance, there are also other areas like military cooperation and assistance through supplies of arms which scholars established as being a destabilizing factor to the existing peace in Africa. As China is the world's fifth largest supplier of weapons and one of the largest in Africa (Curtis and Hickson, 2006, 2017) has repeatedly supplied weapons to Nigeria and Africa in general as they engage in conflicts.

It is in the light of the above that Chuka (2011) added;

"China in order to meet its oil and mineral needs, Beijing has consistently delivered arms to pariah states in Africa especially the conflict-torn zones which have come under western sanctions and United Nations' embargo, in their attempt to address the horrendous massacre and genocidal killings that have characterized the politics of those areas. Severally, China has been implicated in the proliferation of arms in Africa which either provoke conflicts or exacerbate the existing ones (Tongkeh, 2009, Alden, 2005, Taylor 2005, SAVEDARFUR, 2007, Hickson, 2017).

Following the above therefore, from 1957 till Algerian independence, China supplied the Algeria's National Liberation Front, FLN, with military weapons and training in Angola's fight against the French colonial power. China offered to send 280,000 volunteers to Egypt during the Suez crisis. Owing to the deteriorated relationship between China and the West principally the USA on one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other hand, China saw disruption and promotion of unrest in Africa as central to China's policy of frustrating the ambitions of the United States and the Soviet Union. Chinese military instructors made Ghana a base for training guerrilla fighters in 1964, and that Rhodesian freedom fighters received training in China (Chuka 2010).

In the words of Taylor (2006) "Rhodesia, ZANU fighters were taken to China for military training. A pocket book found on the body of a guerrilla fighter killed in Sinoia skirmish, showed that he had been a pupil at Nanjing's Military College in 1965. Eduardo Mondlane's Mozambique Liberation Front, FRELIMO, fighters received free weapons from China and adopted Chinese tactics of guerrilla warfare (Taylor, 2006). In the words and records of Shinn (2008) "from the early 1960s FRELIMO began sending delegations to China, within the structure of the Organization for African Unity, OAU, China equally coordinated its military training for liberation groups struggling for freedom from colonial subjugation. It provided the organization's liberation committee with 75% of all the military aid it received externally between 1971 and 1972 (Shinn 2008, Taylor 2006).

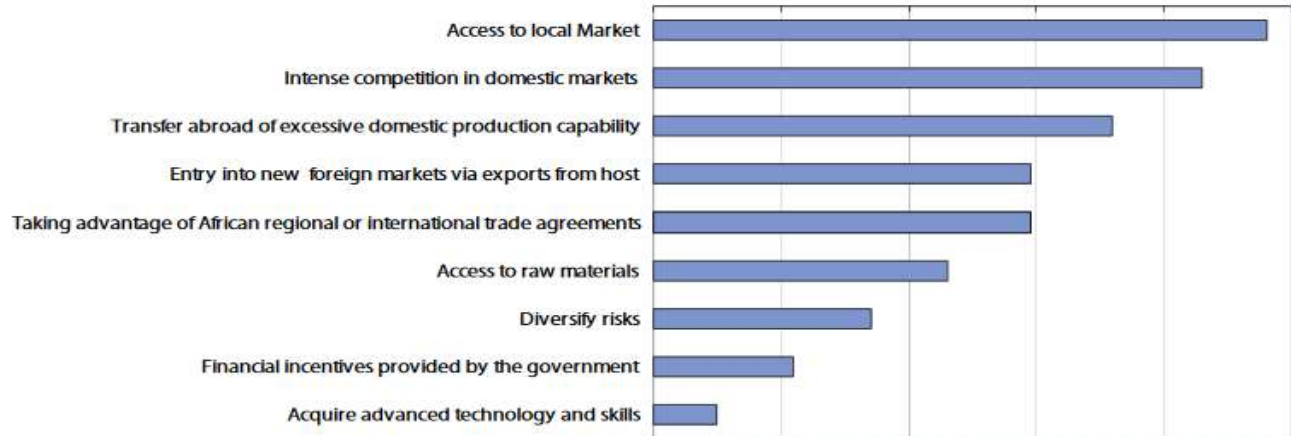
China trained and supplied arms to a number of losing opposition and revolutionary groups in Africa. It gave early and initial support to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA. But as Angola strengthened its ties with the Soviet Union, China shifted its military assistance in the late 1960s to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, UNITA. Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's leader reportedly received military training in China (Rotberg 2008).

Not many years after, China in a dramatic shift, had its support focused on the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, FNLA, and its leader, Holden Roberto. By the early 70s, China had its 112 military instructors deployed to Zaire, to train the FNLA. It was notable that China ignored its rhetoric on noninterference, and got involved in Africa militarily.

It is of paramount importance to mention here that the above identified China's aid-alike driven gestures to Africa were basically done on presidential termed basis, which history lane marked from 27th September 1954-27th April 1959 of the reign of Chairman Mao Zedong; 27th April 1959-31 October 1968 of the reign of Liu Shaoqi; 24th February 1972-17th January 1979 of the leadership of Acting Chairman Dong Biwu; 16th -28th May 1981 days of Honourary President Song Qingling; 18th June 1983-8th April 1988 under the leadership of President Li Xiannian; from 8th April 1988-27th March 1993 under President Yang Shangkun; 27th March 1993-15th March 2003 in the days of President Jiang Zemin; 15th March 2003 -14th March 2013 under the leadership of President Hu Jintao; while President Xi Jinping from 14th March 2013 to date (2018) and the passage of unlimited presidential term limit. It is on this note that this paper maintains just as the names of the policy implies "unlimited, untenured, un-termed, and limitless" as such it will create unlimited, limitless and undue security threat and hardship to African populace.

There would no longer be a time line that will draw home the attention of emergent Chinese president on her foreign policy objectives as it regards to the existing realities of the developing nations of Africa. With the unlimited, untenured, un-termed, and limitless nature of her presidential term by implication marking an emergent Chinese President "a life President" with such endless powers can only concentrate on the long-term of her foreign policy not minding its consequence to the developing nations of the world. Brautigam, (2010) argued in favour of the view "A nations foreign policy directives and their implementations are heavily determined, influenced, and objectified by government, ably in the person of the Chairman or President as the case may be in China, (Institute of Economic and Resource Management, 2003:129). That is to say that the head of the helms of affairs of government to a large extent determines the policy directives of his country in relations to another. This relation can be on a win-win or win-lose basis as currently the case between China and Africa.

China's Driving Essentials to Africa



Source: China-Africa Project Survey (2017)

Africa is an Emerging Market for Defense Weapons

Chinese defense expenditure increased by 28 per cent between 2008 and 2017, challenging the deteriorating development in some other continents. During this period, African countries procured Chinese weapons worth \$3 billion, accounting for 21 per cent of the latter's global arms exports. But the buoyancy of African countries, presence of inter-state and intra-state conflicts, supplemented by the cost-effectiveness of Chinese weapons, mean a potentially huge market for Chinese products in future. Perhaps, that explains why China took pains to expose visiting delegates to the massiveness of Chinese domestic military industrial complex (MIC).

The presence of almost all African countries in the defense forum shows that China still enjoys considerable favourable opinion amongst the local regimes despite its so-called neo-colonial practices. In this context, the increase in size and functionalities of Chinese peacekeeping formations in Africa remains a question. Not long back, Chinese peacekeepers in Africa were quite small in number and did not take combat functionalities. Instead, as a UN peacekeeper in Sudan, China used its troops for intelligence-gathering for exploring the local market and had geologists, agriculturists and economists in its formations masquerading as peacekeepers. China has also used its peacekeeping operations in Africa to market its military diplomacy duly reflected through wide coverage on its ministerial website. China had amply benefited from this approach. When Sudan was united, China was selling weapons to President Bashir's regime in return for monopoly over oil production. Now China does the same with respect to the successor state of South Sudan

From the foregoing circuses of China's strategic relations with Africa, it can be deduced that the basic element of China's strength in manipulating the military/strategic and economic architectures of countries of Africa, strongly lie on her aid-alike driven venture to Africa. In the face of the contemporaneous unlimited presidential term, the military/strategic and economic show in the form of aid-alike to Africa will ceaselessly and consistently endangers a state of acute dependency

to Africa. Be that as it may, China's long history in Africans affairs is solely determined by her strategic interest in Africa which over time has been driven by oil, new markets, and her military invasion of new crisis turn areas where her weapons could be sold. In support of the above view, Ezeh,(2015), argues that "they are no Father Christmas in the international political system, where no nation is an Island unto itself". Bringing home Ezeh's view of the USA-Middle East relation to the China's-African parlance; China would like to think of their country as the goddess of liberty, holding high the torch of freedom as a beacon light to Africa. This view according to Palmer and Perkins (1996) currently shapes the foreign policy of China.

Conclusion

From the above elucidations therefore, it is of the stand of the paper that China has continually exploited Africa in all spheres. This domination will further be fostered and Fast tracked by her current policy of unlimited presidential term. The study holds that term limit is a form of check that cuts down the boss syndrome of leadership; hence China's engagement with Africa has proven that the unbalanced (master-servant relations) is happening and as concerned Africans, we need to systematically analyze these unfolding relationships. However, I am with Tull (2006); Ezeh, (2015);Brautigam, (2010); and others in thinking that while we should pay attention to China's role we should not overvalue its aids: It is clear that China's role will alter Africa's military/strategic structural composition within the global economy, with her undoubted strategic supports and assistance in Africa. Indeed, her arms sales to countries of Africa in most cases have exacerbate communal conflicts, and inter-tribal wars in various countries of Africa

Another driver of China's domination of Africa and her continued imperialistic proceedings therefore as Chuka (2011) rightly observed, "Most studies of China in Africa focus on the obvious politics as manifested in diplomatic dealings, huge loans, and her current interest notwithstanding, while necessary, most studies often overlook the long-run security challenges it will pose to Africa beyond and below these 'big' processes, is also the growing numbers of Chinese who make African countries a temporary or permanent home (Mohan and Kale, 2007; Alden, 2007). Only by strategically monitoring these in everyday bases and social processes can we fully understand that their presence in Africa is detrimental to the security processes of the African States, and her term limits which has come to stay notwithstanding is most likely to threaten the very security foundation of Africa in the nearest future.

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