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The People's Republic of China's Stance on Human Rights in Selected Crises

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CLAREMONT McKENNA COLLEGE
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S STANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN
SELECTED CRISES

SUBMITTED TO
PROFESSOR ROSENBAUM
AND
DEAN GREGORY HESS
BY
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Introduction

This thesis will seek to answer whether there is any true support for human rights in the People's Republic of China's foreign policy. This will be done by examining how it responds to or addresses human rights crises, specifically when it chooses to condemn them and when it chooses to remain silent. Human rights crises in Sudan and Israel will be used to illustrate this. Specific issues will include how China views human rights, how it supports or overlooks them, and how it justifies this action. In short, China responds to human rights violations in ways that serve its self-interests. This leads the People's Republic to a double standard: it brings up human rights concerns when doing so may benefit it, often when they are perpetrated by countries or organizations it opposes, but remains silent when it would not benefit, as when they are perpetrated by countries or organizations it supports or has interests in. Its interests may be political, economic, diplomatic, or otherwise. While this is perhaps a widely observed behavior, this paper will examine the particular causes and will determine that China acts this way toward human rights as a means to achieve its foreign policy goals, namely wealth, power, and status (according to Denny Roy in his China's Foreign Relations).

As China points out from time to time, double standards in human rights are found in the foreign policies of some Western nations, and indeed many nations of the world. This thesis will determine the sort of standards that China has and what is unique about them. What this paper seeks is to confirm this phenomenon in China's actions and discover its workings.

This thesis will reveal China's self-serving actions on the international scene. While this bias is perhaps well known, an in-depth examination of it may help illuminate

ways to encourage broader Chinese support of human rights. It will give detailed evidence of this hypocrisy which may help to publicize and thus perhaps minimize it, helping the broader cause of human rights. Many countries treat human rights in self-interested manners. China's case is of interest because: China is one of the most important countries in the world, it accuses others of acting self-interestedly, and it does so domestically. With its importance and influence, how China treats human rights has the potential to affect human rights worldwide. By understanding the circumstances People's Republic of China will and will not support human rights, efforts to promote human rights may be better focused. Furthermore, by understanding the factors that influence People's Republic of China's responses to human rights, we better understand what motivates and influences Chinese foreign policy.

This thesis will also reinforce the realist theory of international relations by showing that much of China's behavior regarding international human rights is motivated by the dictates of its self-interest. However, since there are reasons besides self-interest, in the Realist sense, for its actions, this paper will support the usefulness of some state-level analysis in determining the driving forces of international relations, at least in the case of China.

This paper will be structured as follows. First, the methodology, comparative case studies, will be discussed. Then, there will be a brief overview of Chinese foreign policy and human rights' place within it. This will be followed by an overview of the case studies, first Darfur and then Israel and Palestine. Each will detail the background situation of the conflict. Next, the Chinese interests in each case, including energy security, trade, and other issues, will be presented. Then the human rights abuses will be

discussed and examined. Following that, the Chinese responses and actions will be examined and compared. China's rhetoric and justifications of its policy will then be considered. The discussion of each case study will end with an analysis of China's policy, with particular attention on comparing how China reacts to the violations under different interests. Finally, there will be a conclusion summarizing the findings and their impact.

We now turn to the methodology.

Methodology

This paper will look at several case studies and compare the severity of the human rights violations, the Chinese interests in the situation, and the Chinese response, both in word and deed, to them. This paper will aim to show and examine how China acts to its self-interest in these situations.

Theory

Chinese behavior towards human rights is illustrative of a broader pattern of acting in self-interest, which fits in with the assumptions of the realist theory of international relations, some of which this paper will operate under. It will be assumed that states are primarily concerned with national or self-interest over ideological, moral, or other concerns, of which security is a main but not sole concern, and that states act as rational, choosing the alternative most likely to maximize preferences in a given situation, unitary, acting as a single unity, actors in pursuit of these interests. Though the search for power, economic at the moment, is the strongest, the People's Republic is complex and has many motivations and as such there are a few caveats. First, while the idea of states as rational unitary actors is useful as it is often accurate enough, it is not always true. In China's case, there are various domestic political factions involved in foreign policy-

making who may themselves be rational but have competing goals and interests that conflict, leaving China a non-unitary, sometimes irrational actor. Domestic political concerns are another important factor in China's foreign policy. The Communist Party's legitimacy is largely based on its ability to deliver high sustained economic growth, which is in turn dependent on having sufficient natural resources, which spurs China on a global hunt for them. In addition, China's historical experiences, the "Middle Kingdom complex", influence how it sees the world, itself, and its place in it. With these caveats in mind, realism provides a useful framework for analyzing China's foreign policy.

Case Studies

The first case study will be the Darfur atrocities in Sudan. Darfur is one of the recent history's greatest tragedies, and a particularly salient example of Chinese indifference to human rights violations. There is a clear, measurable Chinese interest at stake- natural resources trade. The second case study will be the Israel-Palestine conflict. While not nearly as horrific as Darfur, there is still much violence, many of it against civilians, and other human rights abuses. While the linkage is less direct, China has strong interests on both sides of this conflict as well.

Interests

This paper will assume that China's basic interests in these case studies are energy security, trade, and other issues; thus, opportunities to advance these or avoid their reduction will be considered. These interests also include gaining influence and power, increasing its wealth and access to natural resources, increasing its status in the international community by appearing to have principled support for human rights by its own definition of them, and gaining domestic support (for example, nationalism by

railing against the West). The means to these goals may include: advancing its own conception of human rights so that nations play by its rules of economic rights and sovereignty, etc., not offending trading partners or acting to compromise trade, standing up to the United States and other developed or Western nations, and gaining support of certain other countries. In addition, as mentioned before, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) needs to maintain its legitimacy to stay in power, so this, acting for domestic political concerns may constitute another interest of China. The means to this may include increasing trade and acting “tough” internationally to appeal to nationalism among others.

Human Rights Abuses

The types of violations will be compared. Rights, and thus the infringement of which entails human rights violations, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights include: life, liberty, and security of person, to not be enslaved, to not be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment, to not be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile, and to equality under the law among others. The severity of the violation will be examined. For example, arbitrary detention will be given less weight than torture. The idea will be to see whether severity affects the response, and if so, how.

Chinese Responses and Actions

The Chinese responses will be compared. What method is used to address the violation will be considered, including policy statements, and confidential documents, actions. Statements tend to be condemnations, criticism, accusations of a double standard and calls for certain actions. The source of statements seems to be very important.

Sources include top officials and their staff, ambassadors, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and national, party, provincial, etc. newspapers. The source indicates the importance of the statement. For example, a statement made by President Hu Jintao or Premier Wen Jiabao would count for much more than a comment in a provincial newspaper. The directness and harshness of the language in statements and documents will be analyzed and weighed. Actions taken at the U.N. will be categorized. Voting for, against, or abstaining from voting on a measure, action or resolution will be considered. The type and intensity of responses of violations and responses will be analyzed to show any bias that China has toward certain violators, certain types of violations, and certain situations.

Rhetoric

China employs a variety of rhetoric to justify and explain its policies. The types of rhetoric used will be examined. For instance, it cites ideology, practicality, and various un-controversial or bland principles, such as peace or stability. What it cites, when, and its emphasis, will be considered, as will its failure to cite principles vehemently supported internationally on the issue.

Analysis

The abuses will be compared against the responses elicited. The types of violations, circumstances in which they are committed, and influence of Chinese interests will be compared against the responses to see which factors lead to which responses. This will indicate that China acts for its self-interest. We now turn to a discussion of Chinese foreign policy.

Chinese Foreign Policy & Human Rights

This section will give a brief introduction on Chinese foreign policy generally and specifically with regard to human rights. It will first discuss the factors that shape Chinese foreign policy and what that policy is in general. Then the factors that shape China's foreign policy with regards to human rights, including China's view of human rights, will be discussed, followed by its general policy and record on the matter. In brief, China's foreign policy objectives are power, wealth, and status, and China does whatever it thinks necessary to achieve these ends. With regards to human rights, China does officially support them, with a focus on collective, economic, and social rights. In practice, it places its own interests first, and then provides support to human rights if it may do so without harming these interests.

Objectives

Domestic concerns trump international concerns in China's foreign policy. China's domestic priorities are maintaining regime stability and economic modernization. The two are linked, as regime stability requires, among other things, economic growth, for which China needs energy, particularly oil. China's international interests and overarching foreign policy goals are power, wealth, status (Roy, 215). It wants to become strong and rich, "a great power," again (Lampton, 25). Moreover, China seeks to be, though is not yet, a comprehensive superpower (Lampton, Chapter 1). Additionally, it is on a "quest for full membership and rightful place" in international society (Zhang, 5).

As such, China makes its "external relations serve the national goal of economic modernization and political stability" (Yetiv). Thus, its top international priority is the search for economic power and growth, and thus energy and natural resources like oil. Power and status come second, and China will use any means to achieve this growth as

long it does not interfere too much with these. Generally, its actions are all intended to serve these interests.

Influences

Chinese foreign policy influenced by a variety of factors. Firstly, both internal and external considerations, and the perceived interactions between them, are taken into account (Roy, 218). Furthermore, domestic factors may influence foreign policy and foreign factors may influence domestic policy (Roy, 218). But, as mentioned, when there is serious conflict between the two, domestic considerations win out over foreign ones (Roy, 218). The primacy of domestic political concerns is due to the Communist Party's concerns over its ability to maintain power. With the abandonment of communism, the Party's legitimacy is largely based on its ability to deliver high sustained economic growth and, occasionally, nationalism. This may explain much of the current priority of economic concerns in China's foreign policy. The importance of oil in Chinese foreign relations typifies this, as China's growth is dependent on having sufficient natural resources, leading China on a global search for them. Related to this is what policymakers see as one of China's main challenges: how to keep up with rising (material and political) expectations and instability in times of change (Lampton, 32)? It is understood that economic growth is central to China's future as well as the Chinese Communist Party's regime security, but it is also understood that reaching modest level of development will take a long time (Lampton, Chapter 1). In the meantime expectations are rising, which can cause problems, namely instability. Policymakers are very concerned about instability and the need to prevent it, particularly in light of the gap between demand and the capacity of the state (Lampton, 257). Perhaps in evidence of this

concern for stability, and the greater fear of internal problems than external military threats, China, at least as of the last year or two, spends more on internal security than on its military (CMC China conference 4/7/11).

General Policy

A main current of Chinese foreign policy is self-interested action. This is not uncommon; however China, like other countries, often attempts to obscure this with rhetorical flourish. Even though it claims moral high ground, the People's Republic basically does "realpolitik" (Roy, 217). It tends to be pragmatic and is economically neo-mercantilist (Roy, 217). Its views on natural resources follow this. The combination of this and China's drastic need for energy, particularly oil, lead it to "go global" in its attempt to acquire energy, and these trade deals often form the basis of its relations with countries. Moreover, this acts as one of the main drivers of Chinese foreign policy, and it deals with anyone who will sell it these resources with little regard to other concerns, like poor governance or human rights.

Influences on Chinese Human Rights Foreign Policy

In contrast to prior times, "The [Chinese] government no longer denies the importance of human rights" (Wan 1998). However, China's preferred definition of human rights differs from the Western conception, and it places a larger emphasis on economic development and social cohesion and a smaller emphasis on political and individual rights. In particular, the government tends to "treat rights to subsistence and development as taking precedence over civil and political rights in China's current situation. Economic rights are therefore given priority in all these documents. The 1991 Human Rights White Paper maintains that 'the right to subsistence is the most important

of all human rights, without which the other rights are out of the question' ” (Wan C). As writers in the *Beijing Review* have said “the Beijing regime does indeed protect human rights and, in any case, [they] argue that different countries have different situations” (Wan C). By its own standards, it appears China is less biased and hypocritical and may possess a significant commitment to human rights. The Chinese think so, as can be seen from an official’s response, which “reflect[s] the dominant view in the Chinese government,” to being asked about Tiananmen Square: “the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government have long drawn the correct conclusion on this political disturbance, and facts have also proved that if a country with an over 1.2 billion population does not enjoy social and political stability, it cannot possibly have the situation of reform and opening up that we are having today” (Wan 1998). Nonetheless, in lines with its personal concerns, China sees human rights promotion as meddling in the affairs of others, “interference” in official parlance, and attempting to harm sovereignty.

Interests with Regards to Human Rights

As with the rest of its foreign policy, China responds to human rights violations in ways that serve its self-interests. While its desire for respect internationally may turn it towards following increasingly strong international human rights norms, China’s political and economic interests tend to lean the other way. Politically, by overlooking human rights it can enhance its relationships with major human rights violators, including Russia and many countries with natural resources it covets. But it is its desire for economic growth that exerts the strongest influence on its human rights policy. As mentioned previously, energy acquisition is vital to the Communist Party, both in domestic and international senses. Since domestic concerns are stronger for China, it will pursue these

economic goals to the detriment of political, strategic, or other objectives. For example, if going against the tide of international opinion is necessary for an oil deal, it accepts the cost easily.

Its policy on human rights is primarily self-interested, and follows this. If it can benefit, in terms of natural resource deals or political support, by ignoring human rights, it does so. On the other hand, if promoting human rights or deploring its violation can help it gain natural resources or avoid hurting it politically, it does so.

With these general topics covered, we now turn to the first case study, Darfur.

Darfur

The purpose of this chapter is to give an example of China's overlooking of human rights violations. Specifically, it will detail the background of the atrocities in Darfur, China's interests in Sudan the atrocities themselves, China's actions on the issue, and how China has explained these actions. The chapter will show that China has a policy of ignoring human rights abuses when they conflict with its economic and/or strategic interests.

Background

Darfur is a region beset by conflict. (The source material for this section is Miller, 18-21 and Totten 3-4). It lies in western Sudan, the largest country in Africa. There are several main distinctions in Darfur: ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, and natural conditions. These differences have contributed to and precipitated the conflict there. Darfur is divided administratively and ethnically into the North, West, and South. In the North, there are some Arabs, but many are non-Arab Zaghawa, all of which are camel nomads and Muslim; and the land is semi-desert, with water intermittent. In the West, there are the Fur, Massalit, Daju, Berti, all of which are non-Arab, sedentary farmers; many or most are Muslim, with some Animists; and the land is fertile, with water plentiful. In the South, there are the semi-Arab Baqqara, who are cattle/camel nomads; and water is reliable. In general, the split between the victims and the oppressors, and the government, is sedentary farmers and nomadic herdsmen, Christians and Animists and Muslims, blacks and Arabs (with these having different connotations in Sudan), and South and North.

The main source of the conflict seems to concern water and arable or fertile land. The Fur live near the resources, while the Arabs don't for most of the year. During the dry season, Arabs head to the resources, and conflicts over them are usually resolved peacefully. Droughts, possibly caused by global warming, have increased conflicts in recent years, which have turned violent. The Government of Sudan (GoS) armed Arabs in Darfur to fight against Southern rebels, which led to the conflict at hand.

The conflict began in 2003 with two Darfur rebel groups – the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) – accusing the GoS of oppressing non-Arabs in Sudan and attacking a military installation. GoS responded by mobilizing and arming Arab militias known as the *Janjaweed*. The *Janjaweed* began to attack black African civilians, especially those of same tribe as the SLA and JEM. This included attacking men, women, and children, raping women and girls, and looting and destroying buildings. GoS sometimes joined in the attacks, most notably with airborne bombing. In 2004, African Union (AU) forces were deployed as the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), which later became part of the African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). In 2006, a peace agreement between the GoS and part of the SLA was signed. In 2007 and 2008, the International Criminal Court indicted GoS leaders with genocide and/or crimes against humanity. Efforts to end the conflict have been largely unsuccessful, though in 2010 a ceasefire between the GoS and the JEM was signed, and while conflict has somewhat petered out, violence appears to continue.

Interests

Oil is a key issue in not only China's policy on Darfur, but in all of its foreign policy. In 1998, the government declared energy security "an integral part of China's overall security," and from then on the obtaining of natural resources has been one of the main drivers of Chinese foreign policy (Tull, 468). This is partially due to China's zero-sum view of natural resource competition, and the Communist Party's view that their legitimacy and thus hold on power are dependent on strong economic growth, which requires large amounts of natural resources. In particular, China has focused on expanding and diversifying its access to oil (Tull, 469). While Sin-Sudanese relations began in the late 1950s, it was not until the West withdrew from the country in the 1990s over security and human rights concerns that Sudan became China's most important African oil supplier (Miller, 96). This is just one example of a broader pattern in Chinese foreign economic relations: the West economically withdraws from or sanctions a country, often due to human rights concerns, and China then comes in to make deals with the country (Miller, 96). These sanctions make countries "niche markets," and China then offers "itself as an alternative partner" (Tull, 468). China focuses on these countries because it feels unable to compete well enough with the West normally, and these countries offer opportunities to "lock up" resources (Tull, 469). Therefore, there has been a particular focus on purchasing oil from Africa, which is the cause of China's growing closeness with the countries of the continent (Tull, 469). The reduced competition in Sudan from sanctions and operating has allowed China to dominate the oil-buying market there (Miller, 97).

It can be said that China's main interest in Sudan is its "relatively untapped oil reserves, newly discovered in 1978" (Miller, 96). While Africa does not have the greatest

amount of oil, it is becoming increasingly important with growing efforts to diversify from the often unstable Middle East (Miller, 96). Sudan is Africa's third largest oil producer, with reserves estimated at five billion barrels (Miller, 96). Additionally, China is the world's second largest (the United States being the first) oil consumer (Miller, 96). This need for oil has made China the Sudan's largest oil purchaser and foreign direct investor; about two thirds of Sudan's oil goes to China (Miller, 96). "Sudan is China's first overseas oil supplier," with 96 percent of Sudan's \$3.4 billion exports to China in 2005 being (Prunier, 178). The China National Petroleum Corporation is one of the largest investors in Sudan's oil (Miller, 97). The current situation is good for the PRC because others perceive it as too risky to invest in, but China is confident its oil operations are safe and stable enough (Downs, 61). This leads to potential disincentives to end the conflict as solving the Darfur conflict would create competition for oil, which would hurt Chinese interests (Downs, 62). In return for the oil, China supplies arms and equipment, which many say are used in Darfur (Miller, 96).

Aside from oil, China has further economic interests in Sudan, including investments in other industries like alternative energy (Miller, 97). Sudan is China's third largest trading partner in Africa (Miller, 97). China also gives significant aid to Sudan; it has agreed to forgive \$80 million of debt and provide \$13 million in interest-free loans for infrastructure projects, as well as promised \$5.2 million in humanitarian assistance for Darfur (Miller, 97). In addition, Sudan imports a fair amount from China (Prunier, 178), and China is Sudan's largest trading partner, with 75% of its exports (Miller, 100). Aside from any inherent benefits, China probably wants peace and stability in Darfur as an

economic matter (Miller 122). According to some, Chinese investments in Sudan are almost “a form of economic colonialism” (Prunier, 178).

International image and ideological concerns are the other main interests China has in dealing with the Darfur conflict. Looking bad internationally is something China generally prefers to avoid, in line with concerns about “face.” Additionally, cultivating the image of a “responsible stakeholder” is another current foreign policy concern of China’s, and Darfur makes it not look like one (Miller, 126). China also fears “intervention” might make it become associated with the West and United States in a negative way (Miller, 126). China also knows that other African countries are upset over Darfur, and doesn’t want to offend them (Downs, 60). Along with securing access to natural resources and image concerns, China is very concerned with the principles of sovereignty, national unity, and territorial integrity; this in essence creates a strong support for non-intervention in other countries affairs (Miller, 124, 126). As such, China prefers the least level of outside involvement or interference in dealing with conflicts as can be successful (Miller, 122). Furthermore, on a 2007 trip to Sudan, President Hu Jintao’s first principle for dealing with Darfur was respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity (Miller, 124). It is also worried that advances for human rights in Sudan could hurt China in the form of breaching these principles (Miller, 124).

Human Rights Violations

The first word usually used to describe the conflict in Darfur is “genocide.” (The source material for this section is mostly Miller, 45-87; Flint, 130-150; Prunier 100-150; there is significant overlap between all of the above). Regardless of the accuracy and implications of the term, the violence and horrors of the conflict constitute grave human

rights violations on a mass scale. This section will show the scope and types of the abuses and touch on the validity of the accusation of genocide, and what implications this would have for Chinese involvement.

While the statistics are somewhat conflicting, what happened in Darfur was tragedy and violence on a mass scale. At least 200,000-400,000 people have been killed in the conflict, with probably at least another 2.5 million displaced, most internally, but some to neighboring Chad (Miller, p. 45). These refugees themselves provide further humanitarian issues. It has been called “the worst humanitarian situation in the world” (“Mass rape atrocity in west Sudan”), and all told this doesn’t seem unreasonable.

The sheer numbers of people killed, displaced, and otherwise affected by the conflict are beyond disturbing. The details of the human rights violations only add to this. The abuses mostly fit into several categories: physical violence, sexual crimes, and destruction of means of survival. The physical violence includes murder by firearm execution, bombings, aircraft strafing, aircraft rocket fire, burning people alive; torture, both physical and psychological; mutilation, including branding women to mark them as spoiled, and the mutilation of bodies; and other forms of physical assault. The sexual crimes include rape, singularly and gang rape, of women and girls; and sexual slavery. Destruction of means of survival includes destroying villages, by bombing, burning, and shelling; looting; polluting water supplies, sometimes with bodies (Udombana, 1155); stealing and killing livestock (Totten, 121); and deterring people from hunting or foraging for food by threat of rape or death by the Janjaweed. This was essentially man-made famine, which contributed to and caused many deaths. Additionally, the delivery of humanitarian assistance, specifically, food, water, medicine, and other humanitarian

supplies, for affected people has been blocked and the Janjaweed have sometimes crossed the border into Chad to attack refugee camps. There have also been abductions, mosques burned, censorship of the press, and human rights activists detained.

There is debate as to whether the violence in Darfur constitutes genocide. The United States and the International Criminal Court say it is, while the United Nations disagrees. Article Two of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and Article Six of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court lay out the following criteria for genocide: killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions in order to bring about physical destruction of group as whole or part, imposing measures to prevent birth or transferring children to another group; targeted against specific ethnic, religious, national, or racial group; and committed “with intent to destroy” the group.

The situation in Darfur fulfills the genocide criteria in the form of: murder, rape, and physical assault; destruction of villages, food, and other means of survival; and the blocking of food, water, medical, humanitarian supplies obstructed from reaching affected people. The Government of Sudan (GoS) has been given notice repeatedly, but the abuses have not stopped. It seems pretty clear that these actions have occurred and that GoS is complicit in these actions: the Janjaweed have been incorporated into the Sudanese army and police, and aircraft and materiel from and by the Sudanese armed forces have been used to bomb, strafe, and shell civilians. Some argue that GoS participation equals or indicates support for ethnic cleansing, thus making the actions genocide. Whether these actions have been taken against specific groups to the exclusion of others or whether the total destruction of specific groups was intended is another

matter. Genocide aside, the United Nations has declared the Darfur conflict to be a crime against humanity, which does not seem to have been contested by many besides the GoS.

While clearly a label does not change the hundreds of thousands killed and millions of lives ruined, the designation of genocide would matter in that it creates a certain obligation to all of the signatories of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide – essentially most of the world, including China. This would make Chinese inaction or obstruction on the issue even worse, as there would be a legal obligation it accepted to prevent and act against. In any case, massive human rights violations have occurred, and therefore it would seem incumbent on those who value human rights to take action, or at least not obstruct action on the issue.

Actions

As is its standard practice, China's official policy toward Sudan is "non-interference" and respecting sovereignty (Miller, 97). China has supported Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir and the GoS internationally, which has provided some protection for them (Miller, 97). There are some general trends in its behavior on the issue. It has been very lenient in general, speaking of a desire for "peace and stability" but issuing no condemnations of violence. It treats the Sudanese government as a party in the issue, not the instigator of the issue and treats it as a mild problem to be discussed and solved as opposed to an urgent crisis. China abstains on votes that might punish Sudanese government, opposes sanctions and "foreign intervention," and favors dialogue, "consulting among the various sides," and consensus. It does not discuss much of its role with Sudanese government, and when it does, it does not see it as a problem. China condemned Olympic boycott calls based on Darfur, but did not offer defense of its role in

the country. On the other hand, China has told al-Bashir that Darfur is a problem that needs to be solved and does claim to be helping resolve the issue. In general it has not condemned or taken action against the GoS. But it could be looking at the issue from a utilitarian perspective; maybe it knows public actions aren't likely to be as effective as attempts at cooperation.

Sudan's oil revenues may be a major source of funding for GoS, which allows it to purchase more arms, quite possibly from China (Miller, 98). From 2000 to 2006, Sudan's oil revenues went from \$1.2 billion to \$4.7 billion, with at least 70 percent of these revenues going to the military, according to the former Sudanese finance minister (Miller, 101). China has long sold arms to Sudan, and always to the government in the North (Miller, 102). China has been accused of selling arms to Sudan in violation of UN embargoes, arms which have been seen by the UN and NGOs with GoS and Janjaweed forces in Darfur and are then used against the people in Darfur (Miller 98). Indeed, China has been a major provider of small arms to Sudan selling over \$55 million worth from 2003 to 2006 (Miller, 102). Since 2004, it has supplied about 90 percent of GoS arms purchases (Miller, 102). China has also militarily advised Sudan (Miller, 100).

In particular, China has often, directly or otherwise, blocked or diminished UN action, stemming from its ability to veto UN Security Council measures as a permanent member (Miller, 97). It abstains on votes that might punish Sudanese government and threaten veto of sanctions. While the UN has passed many resolutions regarding Darfur, China has blocked strong actions like economic sanctions on the issue (Miller, 98). Resolution 1556 was going to have economic sanctions if GoS didn't disarm the Janjaweed and prosecute the atrocities, but China threatened a veto unless the sanctions were dropped (Miller, 103).

They were, and China abstained from the vote (Miller, 103). Indeed, in 2004 al-Bashir called China and the three other abstaining countries “true friends” of Sudan. In 2004 and 2005, the UN passed arms embargoes on combatants in Darfur (Resolutions 1556 and 1591), and China threatened a veto and prevented the passing of enforcement measures (Miller, 98). Increasing international pressure has affected Chinese policies on Sudan (Miller, 98). In 2006, after opposing the “power to use force when necessary,” which was granted, to which al-Bashir expressed gratitude for “the support China has given us in the Security Council” (Miller, 105), China helped convince the GoS to accept the UNAMID peacekeeping forces (Miller, 98). In 2007, it pledged 275 military engineers to the deployment (Miller, 105). When the peacekeepers were accepted, PRC took credit for it because of its relationship with Sudan (Miller, 105). Between 2004 and October 2007 the UN Security Council considered fourteen “substantive” resolutions about Darfur, nine of which were softened by China, by taking out harsh language and sanctions (Miller, 104). In 2005, the UNSC referred Darfur to the International Criminal Court and PRC didn’t veto (Miller, 104). In 2006, the PRC asked al-Bashir to follow UN Resolution 1706, and when he said it was more advantageous to refuse than to accept, China was “not shocked by his open cynicism” (Prunier, 179).

China has also contributed aid and development to Sudan. It has helped develop much of the country’s oil infrastructure, including more than 1,000 kilometers of pipelines and large marine terminals (Miller, 100). The Export-Import Bank of China has given Sudan more than \$1 billion in “concessional loans,” which are usually used to help poor countries; China is probably using them to enhance its economic access to Sudan

(Miller, 101). China has offered aid, including \$10 million humanitarian relief (Miller, 105).

On the diplomatic front, there have been mixed actions. In 2007, US Special Envoy Andrew Natsios asked China if it would support a blockade in case of non-compliance, which would have been devastating to Sudan, and to all appearances it refused (Prunier, 179). China has also increased its diplomatic efforts on Darfur with Sudan, even sending a special envoy in 2008 (Miller, 98). The envoy expressed concern with Chinese PRC weapons being used in Darfur (Miller, 105). Realizing the West wasn't going to back down on Darfur prompted greater Chinese action (Downs, 58). Additionally, if China participated, it could shape a policy on Darfur advantageous to its economic interests (Downs, 60). China was also persuaded that pressure from it on Sudan would help it improve its image (Downs, 59). Interestingly, it seems in some ways that China wants "to have its cake and eat it too;" it wants to be a "responsible stakeholder," but also wants the oil.

Rhetoric

As stated earlier, China highly values and is very concerned with the principles of sovereignty, national unity, and territorial integrity and the practice of non-intervention in other countries affairs. China has historically disliked interference in its own affairs, particularly with regards to criticism of human rights, which many developing nations, in Africa and elsewhere, appreciate (Miller, 97). This non-interference and protection is often greatly appreciated, and especially by authoritarian rulers it seems (Miller, 97). These concerns have formed much of the basis for the justification of its policies. Hu Jintao's first principle for dealing with Darfur was respect for sovereignty and territorial

integrity. In 2004, Zhou Wen-zhong, China's then-deputy minister of foreign affairs, stated with regards to Darfur "business is business. We try to separate business from politics. Secondly, I think the internal situation in Sudan is an internal affair, and we are not in a position to impose on them" (Downs, 59). In line with this thinking, China prefers the least level of outside involvement or interference in dealing with conflicts as can be successful. It also likes to speak of "harmonious resolutions" in favor of "peace and stability". It does not value confrontation and instead favors dialogue, "consulting among the various sides," and consensus; this may stem from ideological, practical concerns or both.

China has also given practical justifications. Chinese officials say that maintaining economic activity in Darfur allows China leverage that others don't have (Downs, 61). Additionally, the PRC largely sees Darfur conflict as caused by poverty, so PRC aid or investments can help with economic development (Downs, 61).

Conclusion

It is not difficult to argue that China's actions in Sudan are driven by a greed for oil and make it complicit in the atrocities of Darfur. While things are not quite that black and white, it does seem that China has chosen to do little in the face of a human rights and humanitarian disaster due to its economic and strategic interests. Yet, as indicated by China's actions, it does not completely turn a blind eye, so perhaps all hope for its concern for human rights is not lost.

Israel-Palestine Conflict

The purpose of this chapter is to give an example of China's condemnation of human rights violations. Specifically, it will detail the background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the violations themselves, China's interests in Israel and Palestine, China's actions on the issue, and how China has explained these actions. The chapter will show that China has a policy of condemning human rights abuses when it benefits its economic, strategic and ideological interests.

Background

The Israel-Palestine conflict is a complex issue. (The source material for this section is Milton-Edwards, Smith, Tessler, and "Recent History of Israel...Conflict"). Its historical roots and main issue are in conflicting claims between Muslims and Jews to the historical territory of Palestine. It is divided into the Palestinian Gaza Strip and the West Bank on the one hand, and the State of Israel on the other. Israel occupied both Palestinian territories, until 2005 when it withdrew from the Gaza Strip. Other issues within the conflict include the status of Jerusalem (claimed by both sides as one of their holiest sites), the legitimacy of the State of Israel, Palestinian refugees, Palestinian infighting, and Israeli security.

The modern origin of the conflict was the United Nations partition of the territory into Arab and Jewish sections and the declaration of the State of Israel. Since then, violence has reigned, with the region at war or not far from it for much of the time. Israel has fought wars with nearly all of its neighbors, in addition to frequent fighting within Israel-Palestine. Efforts to achieve peace have been made between Israel, Palestine, and other nations in the region, with varying degrees of success. Israel's peace agreement

with Egypt is seen as a key component of regional stability. The peace process between Israel and Palestine has ebbed and flowed and seen much less success. In 1993, the Oslo Accords marked the first official, direct talks between the two sides and a mutual recognition. In 2000, the Camp David Summit again attempted to bring peace to both sides, but ended in failure.

Later in 2000, the Second (al-Aqsa) Intifada began. Since then, a cycle of a minor incident of violence by one side, followed by an escalation by first the other and then both sides, remains an all-too-regular occurrence to this day. The uprising by Palestinians against the Israelis was more violent than the first a decade earlier. Unlike the First Intifada, both sides were armed for the most part, and both sides suffered a great number of casualties, especially civilian. Following the intifada, there have been several prominent conflicts in the Gaza Strip between Israel and the Islamist Palestinian political party Hamas. The most infamous of these was the 2008-2009 Gaza War, which ended the truce brokered between the two earlier that year. In addition to being the worst violence since the Second Intifada, the war may have included crimes against humanity by both sides. In 2010, the two sides began direct negotiations, but the talks broke down after Israel refused to halt the construction of settlements in the West Bank.

Human Rights Violations

There are many human rights issues within the conflict. While both sides are guilty of many crimes, the Israeli side has committed a greater variety of abuses. The gravest offense is the unlawful attacking and killing of civilians. Israeli security forces have frequently used excessive force, as well as indiscriminate fire, in dealing with situations, including firing without warning on trespassers/people in restricted areas

(Cordesman, 144). Security forces raids and targeted killings regularly incur collateral damage in the form of civilian casualties; over 500 Palestinians were killed in target killings from 2000-2007, including many civilians (Lütgenau Lütgenau,13). Additionally, many targeted killings are conducted in areas of likely civilian casualties (Cordesman, 142). Israeli security forces have also made use of human shields (Cordesman, 142). Another major Israeli violation and issue is its illegal occupation and settlements in Palestinian territory. Nearly 40% of settlement land is Palestinian private property (Lütgenau, 13). Israeli forces have also damaged and destroyed civilian property, intentionally and otherwise, by means of “missiles, shells and bulldozers” (Lütgenau, 13). This includes “homes, schools, hospitals, mosques, public buildings, bridges, water pipelines, and electricity networks” and agricultural lands (Lütgenau, 13; Cordesman, 143). Israel has also obstructed Palestinian of freedom of movement. Methods include “over 500 checkpoints and roadblocks” (Lütgenau, 13) and walls and separation barriers in the West Bank (Lütgenau, 13) and Gaza. The West Bank wall was apparently intended to Judaize Jerusalem (Lütgenau, 13). There have also been abuses with Palestinian prisoners, particularly with arbitrary detention (Lütgenau, 265; Cordesman, 149). There are about 9,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israel, and allegations of mistreatment abound (Lütgenau, 13), including poor/inhumane conditions and beatings (Cordesman, 149). Israeli security forces have also tortured Palestinians (Lütgenau, 265).

Israel has violated Palestinian human rights in less direct and forceful ways. Discrimination of various types is practiced against Palestinians, which may constitute violations of the 1973 Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crimes of Apartheid (Lütgenau, 14). There is also the violation of the Palestinian right to self-

determination and thus sovereignty over their territory. Economic sanctions in Gaza have been a particularly grave problem, allowing for little more than the minimum required for the population to get by one normal (Lütgenau, 13). This has been said to violate the Fourth Geneva Convention 12/8/1949 – collective punishment (Lütgenau, 13). Israel has also impeded delivery of medical assistance (Cordesman, 150) and blocked access to water. It has also instituted curfews that negatively affected food and livelihood (Cordesman, 150) and attacked medical personnel and journalists (Lütgenau, 265).

Things are slightly different on the Palestinian side. First, the official/government (the Palestinian authority) role is often unclear in rights violations. Additionally, Palestinian forces' power relative to Israel limits the range, and scale to a degree, of abuses committed, though they still serious. These violations mostly take the form of unlawful attacking and killing of civilians. This includes suicide attacks bombings (Lütgenau, 11) near settlements and civilian areas. These basically began with the start of the Second Intifada (Cordesman, 364), and have been used by several Palestinian terrorist groups/elements, including the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade (Cordesman, 184), the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and most infamously, Hamas. Palestinian tactics have also including car bombings (Cordesman, 364) and directly shooting at civilians (Cordesman, 457), including security/government forces attacks (PA) (Cordesman, 145). Palestinian forces have also knowingly engaged Israeli forces near Palestinian civilians, thus with the possibility of civilian casualties. One of the more inflammatory tactics used by Palestinians against Israel, especially Hamas, has been (Qassam) rocket and mortar attacks on civilian areas (Cordesman, 199), which basically began in early 2001 (Cordesman, 366).

From the Second Intifada until the Gaza War, around 2200 Palestinian Civilians were killed by Israeli forces and around 700 Israeli citizens were killed by Palestinians (Btselem.org). In the Gaza War, around 800 Palestinian Civilians were killed by Israeli forces and with 3 Israeli citizens were killed by Palestinians (Btselem.org). Since the Gaza War, around 50 Palestinian Civilians have been killed by Israeli forces and around 10 Israeli citizens by Palestinians (Btselem.org).

Interests

Unlike with Sudan, the People's Republic of China has a more complex relationship with the belligerents in the Israel-Palestine conflict. While its interests appear to be stronger for the Palestinian side, it also has some on the Israeli side. This section will detail them.

As discussed previously, China's international goals are to become wealthy and powerful, a "great power," and be seen as such. Currently, its top priority is wealth, economic growth, and it tends to do everything in its power to achieve it so long as it does not seriously compromise its other objectives. In accordance with their precedence in Chinese calculation, the economic interests will first be discussed, followed by strategic and other interests.

Economic Interests

Compared to other outside powers involved in the region, such as the United States and Russia, China's relationship with the Middle East is very economic based, as "policy matters are subservient to the need for economic growth" (The Diplomat). Its interest in the region is "driven in part by a hunger for Chinese manufactured goods and

construction in the Gulf, and an unslakable thirst for the oil that helps drive the Chinese economy” (Alterman, 2).

Perhaps the most important Chinese concern in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is its need for energy security. As mentioned in the chapter on Darfur, energy security, and oil in particular, is one of the main concerns of Chinese foreign policy. China is dependent on oil imports, especially from Islamic countries in the Middle East. By some estimates, in 2020 China will import 75% of its oil, with 90% of coming from the Middle East (Wald, 36). This is perhaps “the single most important determinant” of its behavior toward the region (Wald, 35). In particular, “China has no near-term substitute for Middle Eastern oil” (Yetiv) and it sees the region “as a focal point for its efforts to secure direct control of critical hydrocarbon resources, rather than through the world market.” (Abdel-Khalek, 426). This is due to several reasons: “Their cordial economic and political relationship, the advantages of the region as an oil supplier, and the complexity and difficulty for China to substitute Middle East oil by other sources” (Xin Ma) and it “has the largest proven reserves of oil in the world” (Alterman). In addition to the concerns of the government, China’s interest in the Middle East is also influenced “by the commercial interests of its national oil companies (NOCs)” (Xin Ma). The degree of their involvement means that “The future prosperity of large Chinese companies is now inexorably linked to that of the global oil market as a whole and Middle East oil in particular” (Alterman).

More specifically, Saudi Arabia and Iran are China’s first and third largest oil suppliers (Wald, 36; EIA-China). The two alone comprise about one-third, and together with the rest of the Middle East about half of China’s oil imports (EIA-China). But these

are one-sided relationships: there is high degree of mutual dependence and need. China is Saudi Arabia's largest oil purchaser and one of its largest trading partners (CIA World Factbook 2009). China is also Iran's largest oil purchaser and trading partner (EIA-Iran, 7; CIA World Factbook 2009). This oil is crucial for China's functioning, let alone prospering. Thus, "Beijing views Iran and the Arab world through the prism of its oil needs" (Blumenthal).

China has other economic interests in the Muslim Middle East. The region also has several other important natural resources including minerals (especially "phosphate, manganese, chrome, boron and cobalt" [Abdel-Khalek 425]), and fibers ("both natural and synthetic, vital for China's textile and clothing industry") [Abdel-Khalek 426]. The Middle East is also seen as a "market for its cheap labour-intensive goods" (Abdel-Khalek 425). The growth in Sino-Middle Eastern trade has been rapid: "China's exports to the ME increased from \$5,764 million in 1998 to \$22,998 million in 2004, which is almost 400 per cent over six years. Simultaneously, China's imports from the ME increased from \$3,205 million to \$24,162 million, or 754 per cent over the same period" (Abdel-Khalek 425). Also, in 2009, China exported more to the Arab world than the United States did (Jacobs).

Good relations with these countries are necessary "in order to ensure a smooth and friendly environment for energy deals" and trade (Xin Ma). And since the Arab world/the Islamic Middle East is hostile to Israel, China must at least appear somewhat hostile from time to time or when appropriate to maintain good relations.

China also has strong trade interests in Israel, particularly in the areas of technology and agriculture. In particular, there are strong PRC-Israel relations in the

fields of defense, agriculture, and academia (Wald, 45). China also values Israeli agricultural, telecommunications, and military technology, and wants continued access to them (Wald, 79). The People's Republic "is Israel's largest trading partner in Asia and the volume of trade between China and Israel represents the sixth largest in the world" (Zambelis). The Chinese ambassador underlined the importance of this trade, saying "As has been shown, China's sound and steady economic growth has not only benefited its 1.3 billion people, but also offered enormous business opportunities to other countries, including and particularly Israel, whose economic structure complement that of China" (Zambelis). As with the rest of the Middle East, Sino-Israeli trade has also grown rapidly: "Bilateral trade grew from \$54 million in 1992 to \$3.4 billion in 2006 and stood at \$4.6 billion in 2009" (The Israel Project). Also, "In 2005, the Israeli Ministry of Industry and Trade named China an "Israeli Export Target Country" in the fields of telecommunications, high-technology, agro-technology, security, environment and infrastructure" (The Israel Project). Additionally, "Israeli trade representative offices are located throughout China, with the greatest cooperation in agro-technology, venture capital and green technology" (The Israel Project).

While not as salient as trade, energy is another interest China has in Israel. In addition to securing energy supplies around the world, "many Chinese scholars perceive a strategic imperative in conservation and pursuit of alternative energy" (Alterman). To that end, "Chinese companies have been investing in and collaborating with Israeli start-up companies on a variety of projects in the green technology sector" (The Israel Project). More importantly, there is the issue of Iran. Iran clearly stated its intense opposition for Israel. Israel feels very threatened by Iran's development of nuclear weapons. Last year,

Israel sent a delegation on these weapons to China with the actual intention to “convince Beijing that it is serious about plans to bomb nuclear facilities in Iran if international sanctions fail to curb Tehran’s development of atomic weapons” (Mahnaimi).

Furthermore, it came to “warn China of the international consequences of military action, particularly the potential disruption to oil supplies on which much of China’s manufacturing and international trade depend,” which gave it pause for thought (Mahnaimi). As one of the Israeli delegates said: “The Chinese didn’t seem too surprised by the evidence we showed them, but they really sat up in their chairs when we described what a pre-emptive attack would do to the region and on oil supplies they have come to depend on” (Jacobs).

On another note, peace in the region also benefits these interests, as China knows “peace can bring the stability needed to ensure a steady flow of oil” (Jin).

Strategic & Other Interests

China has long-standing support of the Arab/Muslim/Third World. This basic stance means a certain amount of perfunctory opposition to Israel, for in doing so, it gains favor with Arab countries. Additionally, there has been some ideological camaraderie with the Third World in general (including the Arab world) in the past: “During the first decades after Mao’s Communist revolution, China’s interests in the Middle East were largely tethered to ideology. The Chinese government saw itself as a standard-bearer for the developing world — and a champion of the Palestinian cause” (Jacobs). The Chinese government and media also sympathize with the “Arab cause” (Wald, 10). Furthermore, media coverage in China is biased towards Arabs, with coverage of the Second Intifada distressing many Chinese, particularly Muslims (Wald, 10). The intifada received much

airtime in China, which has led to less Chinese sympathy for Israel, and more for the Palestinians. While Chinese relations with Israel had been good for some time, the “Falcon Affair” (in which the United States forced Israel to not sell reconnaissance planes to China) and the start of the Second Intifada significantly damaged them (Wald, 45).

The increasing Muslim population in China also affects its interests towards the Palestinian side. More Muslims in China has perhaps led to greater sympathy for Palestinians and Arabs. Problems with Muslims in China have also grown, particularly with regards to Xinjiang and the Uighurs, and separatist movements and terrorism therein. The 2009 Xinjiang riots “underscored for many the reality that if China wants to maintain stability in Xinjiang, it will require the support of the global Muslim community” (The Diplomat). “Rather than distance itself from these promoters of jihad, the Chinese government has gambled that embracing Iran and Saudi Arabia in lucrative oil and weapons deals will buy it some protection from their export of political Islam” (Blumenthal). China may also see it in its advantage and thus try to assuage these problems and improve relations with Muslims by supporting the Palestinian cause (Wald, 41). Additionally, it varies, but some Chinese officials are hostile to the Israeli side of the conflict (Wald, 11).

China also has strategic interests in relations with Israel. China purchases arms from Israel, which “is reported to be China’s second-largest arms supplier (with Russia being the first source)” (Zambelis). Furthermore, it “enabled Beijing to circumvent U.S. and European military sanctions imposed following the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown” (Kumaraswamy). China looks to Israel “to help further its ambitious efforts

to modernize its military and bolster its technological prowess” (Zambelis), particularly “to acquire Western technology necessary for China's military modernization program” (Blumenthal).

Israel’s influence on China’s relationship with the United States is also important. China has viewed ties with Israel as a way to improve this relationship, with the hope that Israel will lobby for Chinese interests or influence the U.S. toward China. As the Hong Kong-based *Wen Wei Pao* reminded its readers, “Israel enjoys a special relationship with the United States.” The Jewish people in the United States have always supported Israel and are very influential in U.S. political, economic, and media circles. It is not possible for Israel's embellishment of diplomatic relations with China not to have some effect on the Sino-U.S. relations” (Kumaraswamy). Some this evidenced by the fact that “it tried to help China out of its global isolation following the Tiananmen massacre. It even tried to lobby Washington for Chinese interests” (Bishara).

Support for Israel is also related to the People’s Republic’s difficulties with Muslims. With heavy coverage of the Palestinian intifada possibly contributing, segments of the Chinese Muslims have become increasingly radical and extremist in recent years (Wald, 10). This may make China more wary about support for the Muslim side of the Israel-Palestine conflict. According to a former senior official in the Chinese security apparatus “Islam is arguably the most dire threat to Chinese national security and national internal cohesion today...Thus, what comes out of Saudi Arabia will be one our main dilemmas of the future...We also have a deep fear of their ever growing and immense influence in the Islamic world.” (Wald, 40). Admittedly, this statement was made shortly after Muslim terrorists, who were mostly from Saudi Arabia, attacked the United States

on September 11, 2001, so it was quite possibly an exaggeration. Nonetheless, it seems to signify great Chinese concern about Islam.

Concerns about strategic competitors are another factor in Chinese interest in Israel. Israel has increased its links with India in recent years, particularly with regards to military affairs. India is one of China's main strategic competitors, so this cooperation makes China nervous. To counter India influence, China may improve relations with Israel (Wald, 42). Another issue for China is stability, especially in the Middle East. This is a high priority for the PRC for several reasons, oil not the least of which. Israel's role in this is essential; therefore, China is very keen for Israel to do its utmost to achieve this end (Wald, 11).

China also has some friendly ties to Israel. Israel's historical stance on the China-Taiwan issue compares favorably with its neighbors: "Israel was the first and, until 1956, the only country from the Middle East to recognize the People's Republic of China...Unlike many Arab countries, Israel never recognized the government in Taipei although Israel and Taiwan did pursue military ties" (Jin). Though the "Falcon Affair" and the Second Intifada have damaged them, relations with Israel were good prior to those events and have rebounded somewhat since then (Wald, 45). Additionally, while not all, some Chinese officials are sympathetic to Israel (Wald, 11). Though it has changed somewhat in recent years, the Chinese people have had a relatively good attitude towards the Jewish people. There has never been any real historical enmity in China towards the Jews. Unlike other languages, Chinese term for Jews (youtai) has no negative connotation (Wald, 9). There was also a significant Jewish community in the Chinese city of Kaifeng in the 1200s-1800s (Wald, 9). China even served as a refuge during World

War II, with tens of thousands of Jews fled from Russia and Nazi Germany to Shanghai and Harbin (Wald, 9). Moreover, there has been some historical sympathy for the Jews. When the Chinese first learned of a global Jewish people from Christian missionaries in the early 1800s, one view of them was that both Jews and the Chinese were “victims of the white man” (Wald, 9). Sun Yat-sen, the father of modern China, grounded his support for Zionism on this (Wald, 9). There is also Chinese respect and admiration for Jewish success and achievement (Wald, 10). In addition to economic issues, famous Jews such as Marx, Einstein, and Freud are highly respected (Wald, 10). In a sign of great respect, it is often said in China that together the two nations are the “two oldest living civilizations” (Wald, 10). Chinese sympathy for the Jews as victims was greatly increased by the Holocaust (Wald, 10). Given this background, friendly relations with Israel are not surprising.

Policy

Chinese policy towards Israel is somewhat complex. Official PRC-Israel relations began in 1991 after the start of the Oslo peace process. However, unofficial relations in the 1980s, started with military cooperation and trade (Friedman). In addition to continuing military cooperation, the two have extensive trade relations, particularly with regards to technology (“Trade: China No 1 in Israeli Asian trade”, Xinhua, 11/9/2006).

With regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict, China has always given public support to the Palestinian (and Arab) side, with strong statements and votes in the United Nations, and it manages to do this without harming relations with Israel (Wald, 45). Additionally, China has clearly voiced its overall stance on the conflict: "The only way to solve the question of the Middle East is a cessation of the Israeli military

occupation of the Palestine territory on the basis of the principle of the land for peace, the implementation of all peace agreements, and the full restoration of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to an independent state" (Shen Guofang; "China Supports Palestine's Peace Efforts", People's Daily, 12/17/2001). It tends not to take the initiative, but it does seem to support any pro-Palestine material that comes its way. Its statements tend to have some of the following characteristics: support for the Palestinian Authority as the legitimate government of Palestine; support for peace and negotiations to achieve it; general condemnations of attacks on civilians; and specific condemnation of Israeli attacks on civilians.

China has measurably responded to Israeli human rights violations. For example, on 12/13/2001 China urged both sides to stop retaliations and negotiate ("China Supports Palestine's Peace Efforts", People's Daily). It has also called for "international observer forces" to assist in resolving the conflict (Shen Guofang; "China Supports Palestine's Peace Efforts"). Upon creation of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2006, one of the first resolutions passed instituted an ongoing review of Israeli behavior towards Palestine. The resolution was pushed by a group of Islamic states, who, along with China, comprised most of the votes for it (eyeontheun.org). In particular, the People's Republic has vocal regarding issues with the Gaza Strip. On 1/24/2008, China voted for a UNHRC resolution calling for Israel to stop violations and blockade/embargo in Gaza and expressed its concern about violence and humanitarian situation in Gaza ("6th Special session of the Human Rights Council ..."). During the Gaza War, President Hu expressed concern over the conflict and "humanitarian crisis" there and "hope(d)" that "relevant parties" would cease violence ("China's Hu concerned about 'humanitarian

crisis' in Gaza", Channel News Asia, 1/5/2009). China also voted to endorse the UN report on the Gaza War "in the hope of protecting the human rights of the people in the occupied Palestinian territories and to promote the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace process" ("China to continue playing constructive role in Mideast peace process", China View 10/22/2009). With regards to the Gaza flotilla raid in 2010, China condemned the "attack" and "urged Israel to seriously implement UN Security Council resolutions and improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza" ("China Condemns Israel's Attack on Gaza Aid Flotilla", Xinhua, 5/31/2010).

China does not act as forcefully toward Israel as it could. While it supports UN resolutions against it, in addition to its own public criticism, U.N. actions against Israel beyond reprimands are rarely substantive. One example is its opposition to the U.N. Security Council discussing the report on the Gaza and opposition to use of the report to sue Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC) ("China against report's referral to UNSC", Jerusalem Post, 10/21/2009). In sum, China often acts against Israel, but usually not in a substantially harmful way.

Rhetoric

The People's Republic of China justifies and explains its Israel policy based support for peace, negotiations and human rights, and particular opposition to violence, especially against civilians, and violations of Palestinian human rights. It cites these different principles at various times and in various ways. Sometimes it mentions one concern or another, sometimes several of them. For example, after Israel partially cut off Gaza's power supply in early 2008, the UNHRC passed a resolution against Israel (<http://www.mideastweb.org/timeline.htm>; "6th Special session of the Human Rights

Council ...”). China voted for it, saying “China was concerned about the escalation of violence in Gaza and the serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. The international community had to undertake urgent measures and find ways to stop this cycle of violence. The two parties should immediately cease their military operations and the international community should re-launch a diplomatic process to bring about a just and durable peace” (“HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL OPENS...”). While much of its rhetoric tends to be in opposition to Israel, this is not always the case, as its statements range from the general, to condemnation of one side or the other, condemnation of both sides, sympathy for one side or the other, or sympathy for both.

China grounds much of its rhetoric in support for human rights and opposition to violence. As mentioned previously, China’s position is that the keys to peace in the Middle East are “land for peace,” abiding by all peace agreements, and respect for Palestinian rights. Additionally, it maintains that peace is necessary for durable human rights: “The protection and promotion of human rights constitute a common goal for people of all nations...International peace and security stand as a precondition for the protection and promotion of human rights” (“Statement by Ambassador Shen Guofang”). China has made many statements to that end, and in opposition to violence, particularly against civilians. In a statement made after the Second Intifada had been going on for over a year, the Chinese Ambassador to the U.N. declared: “It has been demonstrated over and over in the Middle East's past and present that violence and military retaliation can only serve to deepen mutual hatred. The ‘violence for violence’ approach will only give rise to more and bloodier violence, bringing greater losses of lives and properties to

civilians on both sides.” (Shen Guofang; “China Supports Palestine’s Peace Efforts”). It may sometime recognize legitimate issues on the part of the Israelis, but still maintain its opposition to violence, saying for example: “Such concerns [Israeli security], however, should not be an excuse for excessive use of force that brings damage to innocent civilians. Both the Palestinians and Israelis should enjoy the equal rights to survival and personal security. We oppose any violence against civilians, and urge the parties concerned to comply with the international humanitarian law and human rights conventions” (“Statement by H.E. Mr. Wang Yingfan”).

The PRC tends to phrase its statements in particular diplomatic language, and uses such phrasing repeatedly. For example, China “condemns all violent activities that lead to the escalation of the conflict and civilian casualty” (Palestine Statement 8/20/01- Ambassador Wang) and “strongly and unequivocally condemn any violent activities targeting innocent civilians. Violence for violence is no way out” (PRC Position Paper 8/25/2002). It often pairs condemnations of violence with exhortations to cease it: “[we/the Chinese side] hope the two sides will take practical steps to immediately stop all violent activities” (“Mr. Wang Yingfan Statement”).

China will often follow up statements opposed to violence in general with specific condemnations of Israel. Elsewhere in the Chinese Ambassador’s statement a year after the start of the Second Intifada he said: “...we condemn all violent attacks against civilians. We also condemn Israel's excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians, its military invasion of territories under the control of the Palestinian and its military attacks targeting the Palestinian leaders” (Shen Guofang; “China Supports Palestine’s Peace Efforts”). Sometimes it makes indirect criticisms of Israel, such as “resorting to military

occupation and violence will not bring peace to either side” (“Mr. Wang Yingfan Statement”) and “[China is] deeply disturbed by the escalation of violence, tragic loss of life on both sides, and vast destruction in the occupied Palestinian territory” (“Statement by H.E. Mr. Wang Yingfan”). Other times it is rather blunt, stating for example, that “Israel's approach of achieving security through military high-handedness will go nowhere” (“Mr. Wang Yingfan Statement”) and “The military action taken by Israel against the Gaza Strip at the end of last year and early this year caused serious casualties and property damage. It not only triggered a severe humanitarian crisis, but also dealt a heavy blow to the Middle East peace process. The excessive use of force by Israel is unacceptable” (“Statement by Ambassador Zhang”).

While making direct condemnations of the Israeli government, it seems to blame Palestinian actions on small segment of Palestinians. For example, in response to an incident China “call for an early end to the vicious cycle of countering violence with violence, so as to prevent extreme and violent activities by a handful of people from disrupting the early restoration of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people” (“Mr. Wang Yingfan Statement”). Additionally, China doesn't seem to distinguish between Palestinian factions; furthermore, unlike with Israel, it seems to never directly criticize the Palestinian side – just its actions. For example, after a Palestinian suicide attack, it stated: “China strongly condemns the suicide bombing targeting innocent civilians. We sincerely hope Palestine and Israel not to have their cause disturbed and to continue their efforts to seek peace” (“China condemns Tel Aviv bombing”). On the other hand, after the Gaza War began, it had this to say: “China expresses serious concern over Israel launching military actions in Gaza which leads to the escalation of tension in Gaza, and

condemns actions that have caused civilian casualties” (“China expresses serious concern over violence in Gaza”). They also tend not to criticize the Palestinian side without criticism toward Israel. It also has referred to certain “conditions” precipitating Palestinian violence. With regards to sanctions it called on Israel to: “lift the blockade and the relevant restrictions on the Palestinian sides so as to create the necessary conditions for the Palestinian side to be able to stop the extreme and violent activities by a handful of people and to make possible a ceasefire between the two sides” (“Mr. Wang Yingfan Statement”).

China is particularly concerned about repeated violent retaliations, and rejects them as a solution. It instead strongly supports negotiations. China often “urges” both sides to stop retaliations and negotiate; as Premier Wen Jiabao said: “We sincerely hope that their conflicts can be resolved peacefully through political dialogue between the two sides” (“China Supports Palestine's Peace Efforts”, People’s Daily; “Premier Wen Jiabao Held a Press Conference”). The People’s Republic also places great value to adhering to agreements made in negotiations. The following is an oft-repeated exhortation, and sums up their position: “Dialogue and negotiation, therefore, are the only right track that leads to peace. We would like to urge the two sides to keep calm in addressing the current serious situation and stop retaliations, so as to avoid a vicious cycle of escalation of violence. We hope they can take concrete steps to faithfully implement existing agreements and understandings and resume peace talks at an early date, so as to find a solution to their conflict through negotiation” (Shen Guofang; “China Supports Palestine’s Peace Efforts”).

China also places special public concern about the violation of Palestinian rights and “the Palestinian people's just cause for national independence” (‘Statement by Ambassador Zhang’). This cause is essential according to China: “At the core of the Middle East issue lies the question of Palestine. Without the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinians, including their right to independent statehood, it would be impossible to arrive at a fair, justified and lasting solution to the issue of the Middle East” (“Statement...” 2001/11/30). Perhaps in accordance with its views on sovereignty, China places a high value on self-determination: “The right to national self-determination is an important part of human rights and represents a sacred right of all peoples, especially the oppressed nations, to fight against imperialism and colonial rule and for independence and national liberation. According to relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the right to self-determination applies to peoples under foreign domination and occupation” (“Statement by Mr. Xie...”). This concern for Palestinian statehood is repeated in most statements the People’s Republic makes on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The situation in the Gaza Strip is another area of public concern for China. It has repeatedly expressed this concern, as well as sympathy for the Palestinians affected by it. According to China, “the economic and social life of the Palestinian people has been seriously disrupted, and the humanitarian situation is in deep crisis” (“Mr. Wang Yingfan Statement”). Speaking as President of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC), the Chinese representative to the U.N. said “The Council is also fully aware of the enormity of the humanitarian crisis on the ground and the urgency of providing varied forms of assistance to the Palestinian people. What is needed now is...alleviate the great suffering of the

Palestinians” (“Statement by H.E. Mr. Wang Yingfan”). In addition to remarking on the situation itself, it has blamed Israel for the damage: “The blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip over the years, particularly the military action that started at the end of last year, has inflicted a serious humanitarian crisis on the Palestinian people, and caused enormous casualties to innocent civilians. Our hearts go out for the plight of the Palestinian people” (“Statement by H.E. Mr. Wang Yingfan”). In its vote to endorse the U.N. report on the Gaza War, it explained that it did so “in the hope of protecting the human rights of the people in the occupied Palestinian territories and to promote the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace process” (“China to continue playing constructive role in Mideast peace process”, China View 10/22/2009).

On the other hand, China has not been as forceful towards Israel as it could be. This is perhaps to avoid hurting relations with Israel. One example is its opposition to the U.N. Security Council discussing the report on the Gaza War and opposition to use of the report to sue Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC) (“China against report's referral to UNSC,” Jerusalem Post, 10/21/2009). It said that the UNHCR had “tools” to look at the report without outside help and that it voted for the resolution on the report because of other issues in the resolution besides the report. It has also made a point on occasion to “also condemn the violent activities targeting innocent civilians in Israel” (“Mr. Wang Yingfan Statement”). It has even addressed Israeli concerns: “On the other hand, we understand the security concerns of Israel, and are equally saddened by the civilian casualties of Israel” (“Statement by H.E. Mr. Wang Yingfan”).

Analysis

As has been said, Chinese foreign policy is primarily based on self-interest. Its policy on human rights generally follows this as well. However, it does officially admit their value, though its preferred definition of human rights differs from the Western conception. Nonetheless, China acts on human rights, and responds to human rights violations, primarily in ways that serve its self-interests. Its main foreign goals are wealth, power, and status, which means that its main interests in the Israel-Palestine conflict are energy, trade, arms procurement, and strategic relationships. These interests lead it to lend support to Palestine, at the same time avoid harming relations with Israel, as opposed to an adamant commitment to human rights. The following will help demonstrate this.

The 2008-2009 Gaza War, during which both sides may have committed crimes against humanity, provoked a variety of responses. In particular, the reactions between Arab countries, Western countries, and China all differed, and did so in a manner typical of their respective stances on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. In a speech to the U.N. Security Council (S/PV.6100 (Resumption 1) 3/25/2009), Syria declared that Israel's actions "entailed war crimes and crimes against humanity" (S/PV.6100, p. 4) and "what Israel is doing to Palestinians is the true holocaust" (S/PV.6100, p. 5). It also said that "The international community, in particular the Security Council, is called upon to hold Israel's leaders accountable for their repeated crimes, which are legally defined as war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide" (S/PV.6100, p. 5). It later voted to approve the U.N. fact-finding report on the matter ("By Recorded Vote..."). In another speech during the same meeting (S/PV.6100 (Resumption 1) 3/25/2009), Australia said it "was deeply saddened by the recent conflict in the Gaza Strip and

southern Israel and its humanitarian cost. Australia condemns any ongoing rocket and mortar fire perpetrated by Hamas as a threat to peace in the region” (S/PV.6100, p. 25). Furthermore, it “call[ed] on Israel to do all it can to help increase the flow of humanitarian goods and other necessary supplies into the Gaza Strip” and reaffirmed its support for “a two-State solution to the conflict based on the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to a viable State of their own and Israel’s right to live in peace within secure borders” (S/PV.6100, p. 25). It voted against approving the U.N. report (“By Recorded Vote...”). China delivered its own views on the matter shortly after the violence started (S/PV.6060 12/31/2008), saying it was “seriously concerned by the large-scale Israeli air attacks against Gaza that have taken place since 27 December, which have caused an escalation of the tension in Gaza. We strongly condemn all actions that have caused casualties among civilians” (S/PV.6060, p. 15). It also “urge[d] Israel to immediately halt its military activities. Palestinian armed factions should also cease their launching of rockets. The parties concerned should, with the support of the international community, re-establish the ceasefire as soon as possible” (S/PV.6060, p. 15). China also voted to approve the U.N. fact-finding report on the matter (“By Recorded Vote...”).

China’s responses put it between the Arab and Western worlds. Syria called Israel’s actions “war crimes and crimes against humanity”, Australia “was deeply saddened by” them, and China was “seriously concerned” and “strongly condemn[ed] all actions that have caused casualties among civilians”. Whereas Syria wanted Israel prosecuted for its “war crimes”, Australia called on it to assist with humanitarian supplies, and China urged both sides to stop their attacks.

Conclusion

It seems that little is simple with human rights and China. It has condemned Israeli abuses with the clear advantage of gaining favor with oil-supplying Arab nations. On the same hand, it has neglected to respond to Palestinian violations with the same amount of force, thus showing some inconsistency in its treatment of human rights. Yet it has also reacted to Israeli human rights violations more in word than deed. It is also possible that China is very supportive of “anti-Israel” measures at the UN because it knows that the U.S. would block any action seriously detrimental to Israel (excepting extreme cases). China’s ties to Israel, particularly in the fields of trade, defense, agriculture, and technology may prevent it from taking such action, lest it hurt these ties.

China is rhetorically partial to Palestine, but between the Arab & Western responses. Essentially, China’s interests on both sides of the conflict leave it playing to both sides as opposed to championing human rights. One interesting contrast with its Darfur policy is China’s acceptance of and call for international observers/peacekeepers in the situation. This is interesting to note because in Darfur China was far less accepting of peacekeepers at first, advocating for “non-interference” and respecting sovereignty. This may be because China is particularly concerned with the situation having interests on both sides of the conflict, and in particular its stability. Perhaps it can be said that China supports human rights, but this support is weak when its own interests are at stake, as it puts these first.

Conclusion

China has certainly had its share of involvement with controversial human rights issues. On the surface, it seems pretty clear that human rights have no inherent value to China. In the case of Darfur, China has a major supply of its all-important oil. Consequently, we see it mostly ignoring the mass atrocities there. In the “holy land”, China’s biggest energy suppliers have a deep-seated animosity for Israel. Thus, we see plenty of human rights criticism from China. But as China also modernizes its military with the help of and has strong trade links with Israel, so it comes as no surprise that it refrains from too serious criticism of Israel or support of human rights against it. Clearly, we can see that China’s interests take great precedence over human rights concerns. Furthermore, it seems the depth of its interest also influences the strength of its actions on human rights. But this doesn’t necessitate complete lack of support for them. Indeed, its perceived self-interest and the political values it holds, including its conception of human rights, are often linked. This does not preclude the possibility of genuine support for human rights in some way. While this may well have benefitted China, it did seem to make a concerted effort to convince the Sudanese government to stop the violence in Darfur.

In terms of justifications, China uses whatever it needs for the situation at hand. Platitudes about restraint, opposition to violence (especially against civilians), and even human rights are common. But China has also given practical justifications, which, while true, seem to support its position. While it can hardly be accused of rhetorically supporting anything bad, its principles lend themselves to different actions and reactions. One consequence of its interests for this rhetoric is that it makes a point about peace or

stability depending on the situation. When supporting human rights furthers its interest, it tends to emphasize them along with peace. When ignoring human rights will help it, it makes appeals for stability and “harmony”, not unlike its domestic policies. It also frequently cites ideological preferences. This not only includes human rights, but also its favored trio of sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity, and the practice of non-intervention in other countries affairs. In addition to rhetorically supporting its positions, these play to its own desire to not have interference in its own affairs, human rights in particular. Interestingly, while these principles give cover to different types of actions, they may not be contradictory.

As in its domestic politics, China is careful about sticking to the letter of things, though often not the spirit. Given this rarely contradictory and often ambiguous rhetoric, it is difficult to claim any technical inconsistencies in its policies. In practice, its policies tend to have widely different effects. However, in line with its interest as always, it does not always share the position of its allies. Many in the Middle East have called for much to be done about Israel, but, as it values Israel’s help, its policy is often much milder. It is careful to maintain this air of the high ground, or at least neutral ground.

It should be noted that this behavior makes China quite similar to many other nations around the world. Indeed, for a country to act in a self-interested manner is to be expected. China’s case happens to be notable because it tends to emphasize its, as it claims, high moral standing. One would hope that China might be a little more forthright about its actual position. Nonetheless, self-interest may explain but not excuse this behavior. The People’s Republic, the United States, and all nations must serve not only their own citizens but also recognize certain universal responsibilities.

So what does this mean? At the least, China is very driven by its need for energy and growth. But these interests need not spell the end for any chance of Chinese support for human rights. Cognizant of these interests, their importance to China, and how they affect its actions on human rights, particularly when oil is involved, may help us better understand and predict Chinese policy. This knowledge might then be used to usefully engage China on human rights. Perhaps it could be steered away from dealings with particular egregious offenders who possess the resources it needs, while understanding that its support will be difficult to earn when this is not successful. Knowing how oil affects the practice of human rights violations around the world, human rights defenders may wish to advocate for greater usage of alternative energy and the move away from fossil fuels.

But this knowledge could also be used to make respecting human rights in China's interest. If China could be made to see that its drive for wealth, power, or status would be severely hindered by disregard for human rights, or greatly enhanced by support, it could find it easy to turn over a new leaf. At the least, the promotion of human rights should be continued. While China may not be one its greatest supporters, it has changed its position over the years. It now accepts the importance of human rights, a statement one would be hard to get out of its earlier leaders. Pressure on China over Darfur helped to change its tune as well. This may have been because China saw that change was necessary to avoid international alienation; nonetheless it worked. Whether self-interestedly or altruistically, China can change, something the future of human rights depends on.

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