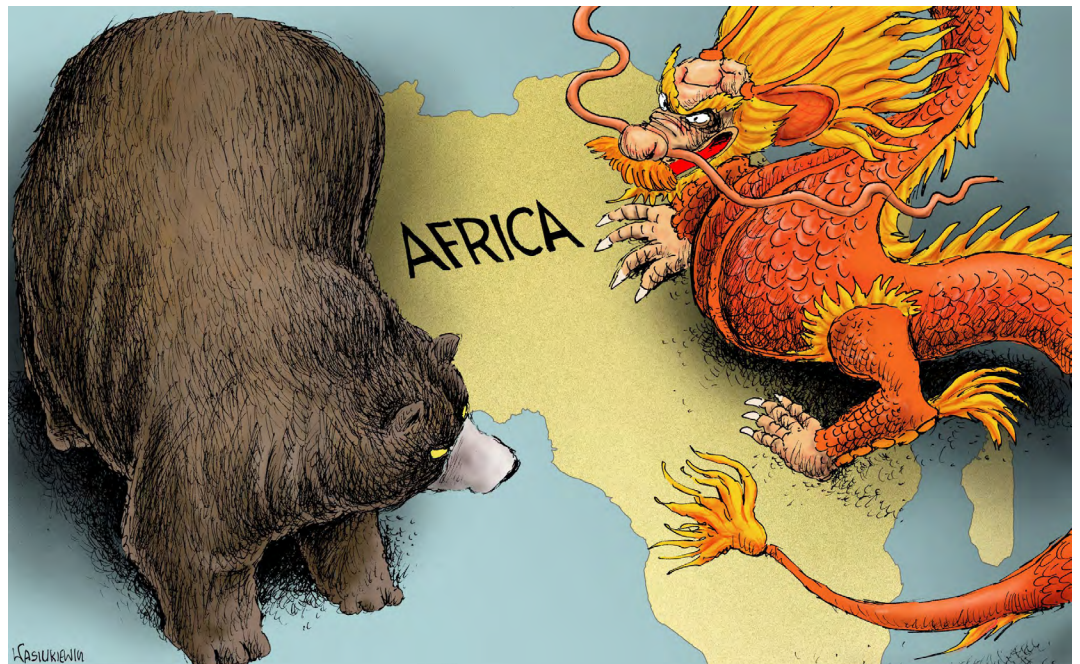


China and Russia in West Africa: A Tale of Two Powers and Their Quest for Dominance

MAY 2024

INFORMATION CURRENT
AS OF NOVEMBER 2023

**CHRISTIANE
THOMPSON,**
MA, MMAS, ALM,
JSOU Assistant
Professor



Source: gisreportsonline.com

Unveiling the Context

The influence of China and Russia in West Africa is characterized by its geopolitical, strategic, and economic dimensions. West African countries are strategically located along important sea trade routes and have a pivotal role in the United Nations General Assembly by their number of votes.¹ Moreover, the region has rapidly growing youth demographics.² West Africa represents a large free-trade area abundant in natural resources, including hydrocarbon and rare earth element deposits.³ Furthermore, the region forms part of Europe's southern flank. Nevertheless,

in 2023, escalating conflict resulting in violence, intertwined with climate shocks, dampened economic activity in the area. In addition, current dynamics leave the region vulnerable to further violence, cross-border fragility, and humanitarian crisis, all of which have security-related spillover effects or can be exploited as part of the geopolitical considerations by global actors.⁴ Incentives exist for many local and international stakeholders to prevent the spread of fragility and violence and pave the way for a new development trajectory, yet also capitalize on

SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD
THE DIGITAL
VERSION HERE





Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Africa has become a pivotal element in its global strategic approach as it navigates the repercussions of its actions.



West Africa's vast resources and human potential.⁵ China's influence in Africa is pervasive, and Russia has re-engaged in West Africa following its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Russia's and China's engagement in West Africa has important implications for the region's balance of power, security, and alliances.⁶

Both China and Russia are actively engaging with African countries. China, particularly, has forged strong ties with many African nations, which has made the latter hesitant to align more closely with Western powers.⁷ Geostrategically, West Africa's significance to a multitude of countries and as Europe's southern flank is critical in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and Russia and China are becoming more aggressive in establishing a paramilitary and military presence in the region.⁸ The unprecedented levels of violence committed by various actors, including violent extremist organizations in the region, foster this approach and have the potential to represent increasing security concerns with wide-reaching impacts.

The geo-economic dimension in West Africa is tightly interconnected with strategic and political aspirations. West Africa's vast natural resources, including hydrocarbon, rare earth element deposits and other minerals, water, and agricultural land render some West African countries attractive

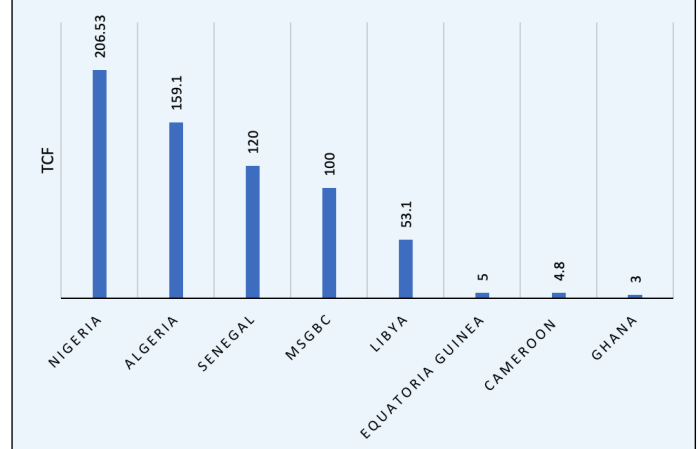
trading partners.⁹ Most recently, the region was considered by European countries as an alternative to Russia as a hydrocarbon supplier.¹⁰ Thus, securing access to these resources has become a significant driver of engagement on the continent.

Exploring China's Involvement in West Africa: An Overview

China facilitates its strategic pursuit of influence in Africa via exchange diplomacy and financial and educational-technical assistance, often tied to China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). BRI projects are the central plank of Chinese statecraft in Africa. BRI projects are manifold and include the expansion of hydrocarbon and its linked transport sector in the region. Nigeria holds Africa's largest gas reserves.¹¹ See Table 1.

Between 2013–2021, China invested some 4.21 billion in Nigeria, including the building of the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-

TABLE 1. SELECTED NORTH/WEST AFRICAN GAS RESERVES IN TRILLION CUBIC FEET (TCF)



Source: "Top 10 African Countries Sitting on the Most Natural Gas," July 16, 2021. <https://energycapitalpower.com/top-ten-african-countries-sitting-on-the-most-natural-gas/>; "Africa and the Global LNG Crunch: Balancing Energy Security, Development, and Decarbonization." Atlantic Council.
Note: MSGBC = Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau-Conakry offshore basin

Kano (AKK) natural gas pipeline, which was to become part of the North African Trans-Saharan pipeline and, increasingly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, export gas to Europe.¹² The 2023 coup in Niger added challenges and uncertainty to this endeavor.¹³ Funding concerns complicated the project's completion, with the Bank of China withholding loan disbursements beginning in 2021.¹⁴ The AKK completion deadline was moved from early 2023 to July–August 2024.¹⁵ Other West African countries hold significant natural gas reserves as well; China has made investments for the Niger–Benin crude pipeline and seeks investments in the Equatorial Guinean, Ghanaian, and Senegalese oil and gas sectors, among others.¹⁶

Thus, while Chinese engagement has fostered education, economic growth, and development in African nations—mainly through extensive infrastructure development connecting African cities and enabling the development of linked global and regional value chains—China's completion of BRI projects is not guaranteed.¹⁷

Chinese companies often secure bids for projects in Africa due to their lower costs, freedom from some regulatory constraints, and cost-effective methods and equipment, which often comes at the expense of labor security and construction quality.¹⁸ High-interest loans on Chinese financing has led to Beijing being called a loan shark, and locals have alleged unfair terms related to Chinese projects.¹⁹ Some nations now allocate up to 60 percent of their government revenues to debt-servicing, particularly to China, hampering Western companies from viewing Africa as a viable business destination.²⁰

Furthermore, Chinese development projects in Africa encounter obstacles as the local capacity for adequate maintenance of these facilities, roads, and other construction endeavors often falls short.²¹ The absence of routine and periodic maintenance has led to infrastructure failures in some countries.²² The availability of inexpensive Chinese products in local markets has constrained the growth of domestic industries, affecting their economic development.²³

In the social and demographic spheres, China has collapsing demographics, and Africa at large has growing youth bulges.²⁴ China may need young Africans to increase its labor force in the future, and its education initiatives, such as the Confucius Institutes and associated classrooms, aid in developing skills and the indoctrination of the workforce. Nevertheless, both Chinese and West African locals have displayed racist behavior toward each other.²⁵ Additionally, the perception that China is not hiring local labor is a subject of debate, with varying perspectives. The impact of China's development initiatives in Africa is highly contested. While some argue that these initiatives have improved the quality of life for many Africans, others contend that there needs to be more evidence of significant improvements.

In 2023, China's economic growth started to slow, and many geopolitical analysts now question if China will or is capable of financing additional BRI projects.²⁶ With China experiencing low consumer spending, high youth employment, a collapse of the property market, and a hemorrhaging manufacturing base, financing of BRI projects could be a risk for Beijing.²⁷ Nevertheless, as of late 2023, President Xi Jinping ignored criticism

“

As global proxy wars intensify, so does the competition over West Africa's natural resources and strategic trade routes, which are shaping global power dynamics.

”

and vowed to ramp up BRI initiatives, possibly to provide opportunities for state-owned companies.²⁸ On the other hand, Chinese financing is likely to become more selective toward profit- and geopolitical-strategic maximization with projects tied to natural resources.²⁹ China's ambitions in establishing military basing, as well as state and private security assistance agreements including multifaceted surveillance, are in part motivated by the need to protect investments.³⁰

Exploring Russia's Involvement in West Africa: An Overview

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Africa has become a pivotal element in its global strategic approach as it navigates the repercussions of its actions.³¹ Russia, facing global backlash and a contracting economy, is adopting a low-risk, high-reward approach in Africa.³² Just like China, Russia can benefit from a low-cost African labor force. In West Africa, the Kremlin's strategy involves working with African elites, undermining democracy, and supporting authoritarian regimes.³³ Moreover, Russia is changing its energy cooperation with the region.

Confronted with international isolation and economic downturn, Russia so far has not primarily focused on traditional methods of engagement, such as foreign direct investment, trade, development aid, or cultural and educational initiatives, but instead has emphasized political support, military equipment sales, and both state-sponsored and private security cooperation.³⁴ Moscow's paramilitary troops, especially the Wagner Group, have a documented record of exploiting the fragile security situation and the deteriorating relations between West African states

and Western countries, particularly France.³⁵ Moscow's information operations undermine democracy by inciting anti-western sentiments and leveraging its limited colonial history.³⁶ In recent years, the Kremlin has presented itself as a more favorable partner to locals over Western and former colonial powers via social media, open and gray diplomacy, and paramilitary support. This strategy is to counteract Western influence and gain geopolitical leverage.³⁷

Thus, the Kremlin's strategy includes forming alliances with West-African elites, eroding democratic values throughout the region, and propping up authoritarian governments, such as those in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, through the deployment of paramilitary organizations providing security services.³⁸ Regardless of Wagner private military/security companies (PMC/PSC) committing abuses and crimes against civilians, local leaders are supported in retaining power, granting rights to natural resources, and voting or abstaining from voting against Russian interests in the United Nations Security Council.³⁹ Despite the insurrection by the late Wagner commander Yevgeny Prigozhin, Russian Wagner forces continue to operate in the region, and its combatants appear to be smoothly incorporated into a more Kremlin-controlled paramilitary structure.

As a major oil and gas producer, Russia considers the hydrocarbon industry a crucial part of its political economy and national security.⁴⁰ Russian oil and gas companies such as Gazprom and Lukoil operate in North and West Africa, including Algeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Gazprom, Russia's hydrocarbon giant,

is evolving into a significant player in Moscow's West Africa game.⁴¹ In late 2023 at the African Energy Week conference, Gazprom leadership advocated for natural gas as a critical driver for development in Africa, highlighting the potential of natural gas to support economic growth and energy security.⁴² International Russian news outlets like Interfax and TASS echo Gazprom's advocacy.⁴³ Russia's oil sales in Africa have increased.⁴⁴ Gazprom, along with Gazpromneft and Transneft—Gazprom's oil and pipeline arms—vie to sign more regional deals to capture the hydrocarbon market with security provided by its own PMC/ PSC.⁴⁵

Controlled mainly by President Putin, Gazprom is increasing its private security force, and several Russian paramilitary groups are now tied to the company.⁴⁶ In 2007, Russia's Duma authorized energy companies Gazprom, Gazpromneft, and Transneft to establish private internal armies.⁴⁷ In October 2023, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin permitted Gazpromneft to form a "private security organization," which began operations in Omsk, Russia, under Gazpromneft Security.⁴⁸ Gazprom-linked PMC/PSC arms such as Fakel, Plamy, Potok, Redut, STAF Alliance, and Gazpromneft Security have emerged with some, reportedly fighting in Ukraine.⁴⁹ These PMCs/PSCs are shrouded in mystery regarding their names and activities. Some of these groups are already operating or plan to operate in Africa. Patriot, a well-known entity, is linked to Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Moscow is taking measures to bring all PMCs/PSCs under greater control of the Ministry of Defense to avoid warlordism and insurrections while

indicating a strategic expansion of Russia's private military capabilities.

Gazprom, via its affiliated companies, is also uniquely structured to replace or absorb the information operations arm of "Prigozhin's Galaxy" and engage in disinformation campaigns.⁵¹ Since its establishment, Gazprom has primarily served the interests of a wealthy elite closely associated with and ultimately controlled by Putin.⁵² In 2023, the pattern continues, with surviving oligarchs effectively functioning as subordinates, furthering their and Putin's financial interests through Gazprom and its affiliated security entities. Gazprom holds a significant stake in VK Company via Gazprom Media,⁵³ Russia's largest media conglomerate, which controls a vast portion of the Russian online sphere, including social networks and payment services. This ownership extends to VKontakte, VK Company's largest asset.⁵⁴ VKontakte creates government-related web apps, including education applications, which can be used as an influence mechanism.⁵⁵ In this context, Gazprom, with its extensive media influence, appears poised to absorb or replace Wagner operations.

Endgame: Synthesizing the Findings

As global proxy wars intensify, so does the competition over West Africa's natural resources and strategic trade routes, which are shaping global power dynamics. In late 2023, China and Russia undermined the United States, Europe, and their allies, challenging NATO and seeking increased influence abroad. While both countries pursue different strategies toward Africa, they share the goals of subverting U.S. and

LOOKING FOR MORE?

Check out all of our publications with one click!



European influence.⁵⁶ Both also seek economic gains through commercial, financial, and military engagement. Since launching its war in Ukraine, Russia has increased trade with China, including providing hydrocarbons at heavily discounted rates.⁵⁷ Putin's perception that Europeans would falter after he invaded Ukraine due to their dependence on Russian hydrocarbons was a miscalculation, leading to revenue losses for Gazprom. In 2023, the Kremlin poised Gazprom for strategic expansion into the West African market, paramilitary security, and information operations sector, bringing PMC/PSC under state control. These actions signal a concerted

effort by Putin to diversify Gazprom's revenue streams and possibly consolidate control over the supply chains of vital natural resources, particularly hydrocarbons. His efforts are potentially in a coordinated collaboration with China's initiatives such as BRI projects.⁵⁸ The extension of China's and Russia's strategic alliance into West Africa could serve as a lever against NATO. Moreover, it could provide both countries with access to the region's valuable natural resources. Yet, due to historical and cultural factors, the Sino-Russian alliance may not be as enduring and deep as it seems at first glance. ♠



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHRISTIANE THOMPSON is an assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies at JSOU. She holds a master's degree in political science from the University of Akron; a masters degree in military arts from the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies; a master's of liberal arts (ALM) degree in extension studies sustainability from Harvard University, Harvard Extension School, and has completed advanced military education at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. She has more than three decades of experience supporting the U.S. DOD, from hands-on operational engagement to strategic analyst and planner positions. Her current research interests leverage innovative technologies such as geospatial information systems and artificial intelligence.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE ENTIRELY THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS, POLICY, OR POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, OR THE JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIVERSITY.

THIS WORK WAS CLEARED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.

Notes

- 1 Archibong, Belinda, Aloysius Uche Ordu, Danielle Resnick, Witney Schneidman, and Landry Signe. "Why Africa Matters to the United States: Top 5 Reasons." Brookings, December 7, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-africa-matters-to-the-united-states-top-5-reasons/>; United Nations. "UN Voting Record." United Nations Digital Library. Accessed October 17, 2023. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/search?cc=Voting+Data&ln=en&c=Voting+Data>; Ndzendze, Bhaso. "Africa Is Being Courted by China, Russia and the US. Why the Continent Shouldn't Pick Sides." *The Conversation*, August 21, 2023. <http://theconversation.com/africa-is-being-courted-by-china-russia-and-the-us-why-the-continent-shouldnt-pick-sides-210516>.
- 2 The World Bank. "The World Bank in Africa: Overview." Text/HTML. *World Bank*, November 7, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview>.
- 3 World Bank, "Overview," Indian Council of World Affairs - Government of India. "The Changing Contours of Great Power Politics in West Africa' -." *Indian Council of World Affairs*, April 10, 2023. https://www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=1&id=9249&lid=6003.
- 4 Indian Council of World Affairs, "Changing Contours."
- 5 Ndzendze, "Africa is Being Courted By China, Russia."
- 6 Indian Council of World Affairs, "Changing Contours."
- 7 Indian Council of World Affairs, "Changing Contours." Ndzendze, "Africa is Being Courted By China, Russia;" EL Doh, Mohamed. "The Geopolitics of Russia's Foray into West Africa." *Geopolitical Monitor*, August 10, 2023. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/the-geopolitics-of-russias-foray-into-west-africa/>.
- 8 EL Doh, "The Geopolitics of Russia's Foray"; Stronski, Paul. "Russia's Growing Footprint in Africa's Sahel Region." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, November 12, 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/02/28/russia-s-growing-footprint-in-africa-s-sahel-region-pub-89135>; Hanauer, Larry, and Lyle J. Morris. "Intertwined Interests of China and Africa." In *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, 5–18. RAND Corporation, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt6wq7ss.9>; Aidoo, Richard, Pamela L. Martin, Min Ye, and Diego Quiroga. "Footprints of the Dragon: China's Oil Diplomacy and Its Impacts on Sustainable Development Policy in Ecuador and Ghana." *International Development Policy/Revue Internationale de Politique de Développement*, no. 8.1 (September 9, 2017). <https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.2408>; Rajosefa, Laura. "The Future of Strategic Competition in the Sahel Region: Placing Partnership First." *FAO Journal of International Affairs* (blog), July 20, 2023. <https://faoajournal.substack.com/p/the-future-of-strategic-competition>; Hakeenah, Njenga. "What's in Store for Chinese Companies Encouraged to Invest in Equatorial Guinea?" *The China-Global South Project*, April 14, 2023. <https://chinaglobalsouth.com/2023/04/14/whats-in-store-for-chinese-companies-encouraged-to-invest-in-equatorial-guinea/>.
- 9 Klomegah, Kester Kenn. "Amid Russia-Ukraine Crisis, Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline Offers Hope for Europe." *Modern Diplomacy*, July 6, 2022. <https://modern-diplomacy.eu/2022/07/06/amid-russia-ukraine-crisis-trans-saharan-gas-pipeline-offers-hope-for-europe/>; RAND Corporation, "Intertwined Interests of China and Africa;" Rafiq, Raji. "Europe's 'Gas Rush' in Africa: Risks and Opportunities (for Both)." Italian Institute for International Political Studies, October 12, 2023. <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/europes-gas-rush-africa-risks-and-opportunities-both-35094>.
- 10 Intellinews. "African Gas Pipeline Projects Revived Due to European Gas Crisis," Intellinews, June 23, 2022. <https://www.intellinews.com/african-gas-pipeline-projects-revived-due-to-european-gas-crisis-248456/>; Reid, Juliana. "Proposed West Africa-Europe Gas Pipelines Will Fail Without a Radical Shift in Thinking." Payne Institute for Public Policy, August 29, 2023. <https://payneinstitute.mines.edu/proposed-west-africa-europe-gas-pipelines-will-fail-without-a-radical-shift-in-thinking/>.
- 11 Aidoo et al., "Footprints of the Dragon."
- 12 Kingsley, Jeremiah. "AKK Pipeline to Be Completed Aug 2024, Says Okwuosa." *The Guardian Nigeria News - Nigeria and World News*, October 13, 2023; Mitchell, Charlie. "FEATURE: China Replaces African Loans with Energy Investments amid Faltering Economy," October 12, 2023. <https://www.spglobal.com/commodityinsights/en/market-insights/latest-news/oil/101223-feature-china-replaces-african-loans-with-energy-investments-amid-faltering-economy>; AID DATA. "AidData's Global Chinese Development Finance Dataset, Version 3.0." November 9, 2023. <https://www.aiddata.org/data/aiddatas-global-chinese-development-finance-dataset-version-3-0>; "Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) Gas Pipeline." NS Energy. November 13, 2023. <https://www.nsenerybusiness.com/projects/ajaokuta-kaduna-kano-akk-gas-pipeline/>.
- 13 Intellinews, "African Gas Pipeline Projects."
- 14 Kingsley, "AKK Pipeline."
- 15 Kingsley, "AKK Pipeline."
- 16 Rajosefa, "The future of Strategic Competition."
- 17 Acker, Deborah Brautigam, Yufan Huang, and Kevin Acker. *Risky Business: New Data on Chinese Loans and Africa's Debt Problem*. HKTDC Research. November 12, 2023. <https://research.hktdc.com/en/article/NjK1Nzc1NTQz>.
- 18 Auma Omolo, Loreen. Assessing China-Africa Relations under the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) (2000–2019)." October 17, 2023. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364179970_Assessing_China-Africa_Relations_under_the_Forum_for_China-Africa_Cooperation_FOCAC_2000-2019; Hanauer, Larry, and Lyle J. Morris. "The Impact of Chinese Engagement on African Countries." In *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, 45–54. RAND Corporation, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt6wq7ss.11>.
- 19 Brautigam, "Risky Business."
- 20 Auma Omolo, "Assessing China-Africa Relations."
- 21 Hanauer, Larry, and Lyle J. Morris. "African Reactions to Chinese Engagement." In *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, 55–72. RAND Corporation, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt6wq7ss.12>.
- 22 Hanauer and Morris, "African Reactions"; Auma Omolo, "Assessing China-African Relations."
- 23 Hanauer and Morris, "The Impact of Chinese Engagement."

- 24 O'Hanlon, Michael E. "China's Shrinking Population and Constraints on Its Future Power." Brookings, October 17, 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/chinas-shrinking-population-and-constraints-on-its-future-power/>.
- 25 Qiu, Yu. "Cleavage: Guangzhou, Covid-19 and China-Africa Friendship Politics" *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 33 (2021): 184-193; Visser, R., and E. Cezne, Racializing China-Africa Relations: A Test to the Sino-African Friendship. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, (April 2023). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231168062>.
- 26 Liuima, Justinas, and Lan Ha. "China's Slowdown and Deflation Risks: Why It Matters for The Global Economy" *Euromonitor*. August 11, 2023. <https://www.euromonitor.com/article/chinas-slowdown-and-deflation-risks-why-it-matters-for-the-global-economy>; Pike, Lili. "The Belt and Road Ahead." *Foreign Policy* (blog), October 19, 2023. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/10/19/china-xi-jinping-putin-bri-debt/>.
- 27 Liuima and Lan. "China's Slowdown," Pike, "The Belt and Road Ahead."
- 28 Nikkei Asia. "China Vows Belt and Road Ramp up despite Debt-Trap Criticism." Nikkei Asia, November 11, 2023. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Belt-and-Road/China-vows-Belt-and-Road-ramp-up-despite-debt-trap-criticism>.
- 29 Aidoo, "Footprints of the Dragon," Alden, Chris, and Lu Jiang. "Brave New World: Debt, Industrialization and Security in China-Africa Relations." *International Affairs* 95, no. 3 (May 1, 2019): 641-57. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz083>.
- 30 Gazibo, Mamoudou, and Abdou Rahim Lema. "From Non-Interference to Adaptive Pragmatism: China's Security Policy in Africa." *African Studies Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (December, 2022): 1-20. <https://asq.africa.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/168/V21i3a1.pdf>.
- 31 Murphy, Dawn. "Strategic Competition for Overseas Basing in Sub-Saharan Africa." Brookings, November 11, 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strategic-competition-for-overseas-basing-in-sub-saharan-africa/>; Daly, Sarah, and Abdelhak Bassou. "Russia's Influence in Africa, a Security Perspective." Atlantic Council, November 11, 2023. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/event/russias-influence-in-africa-a-security-perspective/>.
- 32 Mishra, Abhishek. "Russia's Low-Risk, High-Reward Strategy for Its Return to Africa." Observer Research Foundation (ORF), November 1, 2023. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/russias-low-risk-high-reward-strategy-for-its-return-to-africa/>.
- 33 Stronski, Paul. "Russia's Growing Footprint in Africa's Sahel Region." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 12, 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/02/28/russia-s-growing-footprint-in-africa-s-sahel-region-pub-89135>.
- 34 Stronski, "Russia's Growing Footprint;" Mishra, "Russia's Low Risk, High-Reward Strategy."
- 35 Daly, "Russia's Influence in Africa."
- 36 Whitman, Dan. "Russian Disinformation in Africa: No Door on This Barn." Foreign Policy Research Institute, November 12, 2023. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/08/russian-disinformation-in-africa-no-door-on-this-barn/>; Snigyr, Olena. "Russian Strategic Narratives, 2022-2023," *Orbis* 68 no. 1 (2024): 3-23, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2023.11.002>.
- 37 Whitman, "Russian Disinformation;" Snigyr, "Russian Strategic Narratives."
- 38 "The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation," January 18, 2024. https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/.
- 39 United Nations. "U.N. Voting Record," Mishra, "Russia's Low-Risk, High-Reward Strategy;" Stronski, "Russia's Growing Footprint."
- 40 Zaytsev, Vadim. "Second Russia-Africa Summit Lays Bare Russia's Waning Influence." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 12, 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/90294>.
- 41 "International Projects." LukOil, November 12, 2023. <http://www.lukoil.com/en/Business/Upstream/Overseas>. "Operations." Gazprom, November 12, 2023. <https://www.gazprom-international.com/operations/>.
- 42 "African Energy Chamber: Gazprom Advocates for Natural Gas as a Catalyst for African Development at AEW 2023," October 17, 2023. <https://energychamber.org/gazprom-advocates-for-natural-gas-as-a-catalyst-for-african-development-at-aew-2023/>.
- 43 Interfax. "Gazprom Prepared to Help African Countries Develop Gas Production, Use," November 17, 2023. <https://interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/91773/>.
- 44 Griffin, Rosemary, and Charlie Mitchell. "Russia Reshaping Africa Energy Links after Ukraine Invasion," July 27, 2023. <https://www.spglobal.com/commodityinsights/en/market-insights/latest-news/oil/072623-russia-reshaping-africa-energy-links-after-ukraine-invasion>.
- 45 TASS. "Gazprom Sees Potential for Cooperation with African Countries," November 1, 2023. https://tass.com/russia/1636869?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com.
- 46 Baev, Pavel. "Rosneft, Gazprom and the Government: The Decision-Making Triangle on Russia's Energy Policy," *Russie.Nei. Visions* No.75, March, 2014. <https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ifrimv75pbaevenergyengmarch2014.pdf>; Meduza. "It is Not Just Wagner At Least Three Gazprom-Linked Private Military Companies Now Have Fighters in Ukraine," October 16, 2023. <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/05/16/it-s-not-just-wagner>.
- 47 Russian Government. "Распоряжение Правительства Российской Федерации от 04.02.2023 № 240-р [Order of the Government of the Russian Federation from 04.02.2023 No. 240-r]." Официальное опубликование правовых актов [Official Publication of Legal Acts], October 12, 2023. <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202302060031>.
- 48 BBC News Русская Служба. "Поток под Бахмутом. Что известно о ЧВК, связанных с 'Газпромом' [Pipeline near Bahmut. What is Known about PMCs Linked to 'Gazprom']," October 10, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-65602020>.
- 49 Kossov, Igor. "Army of Hired Guns: How Russia's 'PMCs' Are Becoming the Main Invasion Force." *Kyiv Independent*, November 18, 2023. <https://kyivindependent.com/army-of-hired-guns-how-russias-pmcs-are-becoming-the-main-invasion-force/>; Bus-



**United States Special
Operations Command**

ATTN: JSOU Press

7701 Tampa Point Blvd.

MacDill AFB, FL 33621-5323

jsou.edu/press

**JSOU PRESS
EDITORIAL TEAM**

Cameron Cobb,

Editor in Chief

Melanie Casey, *Editor*

Eric Hughes, *Editor*

Layout and design by

Laura Tindall

- soletti, Francesco. "Russia, the PMC of Gazprom Neft and Staf Alliance is born," October 12, 2023. <https://www.difesaesicurezza.com/en/defence-and-security/russia-the-pmc-of-gazprom-neft-and-staf-alliance-is-born/>, Geopolitical Monitor. "PMC Redut: The Wagner Group's Potential Replacement," October 12, 2023. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/pmc-redut-the-wagner-groups-potential-replacement/>; <https://staf.ru/en/services-enterprise/guarding-services/>; "Guarding Services." October 15, 2023. <https://staf.ru/en/services-enterprise/guarding-services/>.
- 50 Maddocks, Jennifer. "Contracts Between the Wagner Group and Russia's Defense Ministry: International Law Implications." Lieber Institute West Point, June 16, 2023. <https://lieber.westpoint.edu/contracts-wagner-group-russias-defense-ministry-international-law-implications/>; France 24. "What Does the Future Hold for Wagner in Africa after the Failed Rebellion?" October 12, 2023. <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20230627-what-does-the-future-hold-for-wagner-in-africa-after-the-failed-rebellion>.
- 51 The "Prigozhin Galaxy" refers to the extensive network of companies and entities associated with the late Russian oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin. It encompasses a diverse range of sectors including the infamous Wagner Private Military Company. This conglomerate symbolizes Prigozhin's multifaceted influence, extending from military and security services to media, catering, and beyond and playing a significant role in both Russian domestic affairs and international engagements.
- 52 Baev, "Rosneft, Gazprom and the Government."
- 53 Presse, Agence France. "Russia's VKontakte Comes Under Control Of Energy Giant Gazprom," November 1, 2023. <https://www.barrons.com/news/russia-s-vkontakte-comes-under-control-of-energy-giant-gazprom-01638458406>; "Gazprom Takes Majority Stake in Russia's Biggest Social Media Site." Financial Times, November 1, 2023. <https://www.ft.com/content/08e76970-fb82-42f9-87d3-d317189ce5b9>.
- 54 Presse, "Russia's VKontakte;" Financial Times "Gazprom takes Majority Stake."
- 55 Orishev, A., A. Mamedov, D. Kotosov, S. Grigoriev, and E. Makarova. "Digital Education: VKontakte Social Network as a Means of Organizing the Educational Process." *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* 1691 (November 1, 2020): article 012092. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1691/1/012092>.
- 56 Kuo, Mercy. "China-Russia Cooperation in Africa and the Middle East," The Diplomat, accessed November 13, 2023. <https://thediplomat.com/2023/04/china-russia-cooperation-in-africa-and-the-middle-east/>.
- 57 Foreign Policy. "China Stiffs Russia on More Gas Deals." March 18, 2024. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/23/xi-putin-russia-china-energy-gas-pipeline-economy/>.
- 58 Garanina, Olga. "Russian-Chinese Relations: Towards an Energy Partnership." Paper presented at the 1st IAEE Asian Conference, "Asian Energy Security and Economic Development in an Era of High Oil Prices," hosted by The Chinese Petroleum Corporation, November 5-6, 2007, Taipei, Taiwan. HAL archives-ouvertes: halshs-00260560; Wachtmeister, Hendrik. "Russia-China energy relations since 24 February: Consequences and options for Europe." Swedish National China Centre, Report No. 1, June 2023. <https://www.ui.se/globalassets/ui.se-eng/publications/sceeus/russia-china-energy-relations-since-24-february.pdf>.