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Competing hegemon? Chinese versus American geo-economic strategies in Africa

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Abstract

For the first time since the era of the slave trade, African trade is arguably re-orienting from the ‘Global North’ to the ‘Global East.’ Chinese investment and trade with Africa is rising quickly. At the same time, the U.S. has increased its strategic engagement with Africa very significantly since the terrorist attacks of 2001. As a consequence of this, the continent has moved centre stage in global oil and security politics. This paper investigates the nature of Chinese and American investment and trade in Africa; the ways in which these governments view the continent, and explores the economic and political impacts of enhanced geo-economic competition between the West and the East there. It finds that current trends are reworking the colonial trade structure, strengthening authoritarian states, and fuelling conflict. However, there are also progressive dimensions to the current conjuncture which could be built on with more robust international coordination and action.



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Keywords

Africa; China; United States; Geo-economy; Geopolitics; Oil

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