

China's and India's Energy Diplomacy towards Africa: The other face of the two giants' rivalry

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Abstract:

Energy security is among the most substantial pillars of China's and India's foreign policy. As a result the two countries have developed an energy diplomacy that aims to guarantee access to oil-and-gas-rich regions, namely Africa. The continent is a target to Chinese and Indian oil and gas companies activities, therefore, The two countries are leading soft policies to penetrate Africa and achieve their interests, noting that China's presence into Africa is deeper and more efficient than the Indian's one. Nonetheless, New Delhi has not given up and it is projected to be a strong competitor to China in the next decades.

Key words: China; India; Africa; Energy diplomacy; Energy security.

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1. Introduction

The wild competition about natural resources, especially those of energy, represents one of the most important and strategic aspects of interactions among nations in the instant international system, as the various economic, military social and political sectors depend on energy resources like oil and gas basically.

China and India are among the emergent powers in international relations, and they are among the major players in the global energy market. They have the greatest share in the world's growing energy demands, notably on oil, as urged by their economic growth and the huge number of the two countries population.

Such situation generates critical energy challenges for both of them, which is why they seek to satisfy their energy needs from abroad. Given their insufficient domestic resources, they face an energy dilemma that obliges each of them to follow a going-out strategy of high risks to cover the local energy deficit.

The two powers are seeking alternative energy sources to avoid any energy risks and to achieve the aim of diversifying the energy supplies, as a key factor to secure sustainable energy supplies.

Africa is one of the most important destinations vis-à-vis rich energy reserves like oil and gas. As a result, China and India attempt to secure a deep and a soft access to the African's energy exporting countries, In this regard, the two rivals have developed energy diplomacy towards this continent, where in the two fierce competitors require a sustainable presence in the African energy market.

Both of them adopt active energy diplomacy toward Africa, depending on different tools and strategies, they declared a silent war to gain access to Africa's rich energy production regions, that what push us to analyse the problematic of the effectiveness of china's and India's energy diplomacy toward Africa.

2. Conceptualising the CHINA'S and INDIA'S energy security

For China and India, the need to adopt a concept for energy security is a vital question. As each one of them has its special context, their view to this affair must be compatible their own circumstances, in order to be able to identify accurately the challenges that they are facing and, hence, to formulate the adequate policies and responses.

Actually, China is the leader in relation to the world's energy demand growth, which is why the Chinese leadership with collaboration of the Chinese think-tank

centres and institutes work for defining a purely-Chinese concept of energy security.

But, like in other countries, there was no concise definition for energy security in China until 1993; it is the year when China became a net oil importer and, as such the term of 'energy security' has been in increasing use to Chinese discourse on energy. A research on the "China Economic News" indicated that the use of the term in Chinese publications rose from forty-one publications in 1994-1999 to 1.150 publications in 2000-2005. It is worth noting that, in the Chinese context, the term 'energy security' remains a controversial topic that has caused a heated debate¹.

Generally speaking, the Chinese perception of energy security focuses on the continuity of supplies. The Review of Chinese Public Discourse, for example indicates that energy security for China is:

"The acquisition of sufficient energy supplies to protect the Chinese leadership's core objectives at prices that are neither too high nor too low to undermine those objectives. Reliability for oil and natural gas includes the safe delivery of imports to China"².

Scholars believe that China adopts a strategy that combines between two mainstreams, The first one is the paradigm of Realism, which considers that the oil is a rare and strategic resource, while the second one is concerned, the Liberal paradigm, but the majority of them argue that the Realism paradigm is often the privileged Chinese way of thinking and behaving about the issue of energy security. For example, "Daniel Yergin" notes, that "many describe Beijing's policy options in ways that come perilously close to the shortage- equals-security- threat scenarios of the 1970's" meanwhile, "Phillip Andrews" has argued that China has adopted a 'strategic' approach to ensure its energy security, by using political means particularly³.

As suggested many experts, there are five main factors affecting the Chinese energy policy. First, China is located far from petroleum suppliers. Second, China has no sufficient energy resources. Third, its demand is increasing faster than supplies. Fourth, China adopts a humble approach that point out that China is not a great power yet, but just a developing country. Finally, the improving of level of living brings about more energy demand; such developments has urged the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to maintain a stable rate of economic growth and ensure access to energy services for all citizens.

Similar to China, Indian's energy security faces serious challenges. Various India's decision makers and experts identified energy security as one of the major challenges to the national security of India.

Given the importance of this factor, India has adopted its own concept of energy security, which is based on the referent report of the "Indian Planning commission," 2006. The report has put the "integration energy policy" paper that defined the energy security of India as:

"We are energy secure when we can supply lifeline energy to all our citizens irrespective of their ability to pay for it as well as meet their effective demand for safe and convenient energy to satisfy their various needs at competitive prices at all times and with a prescribed confidence level considering shocks and disruptions that can be reasonably expected"⁴.

Based on this view, energy security of India has four interrelated aspects⁵:

- * **Reliability and supply security:** securing energy supply by reducing the potential risks.
- * **Economics:** providing economically supplies for all consumers.
- * **Access:** delivering affordable modern energy to all citizens.
- * **Sustainability:** The balancing between a sustainable energy mix and controlled CO₂ emissions in the long-term.

3. The origins of the CHINESE and the INDIAN'S energy dilemma

Economically and geopolitically, China and India suffer from energy dilemma, because of several factors, as quoted bellow:

***Economic factors:** China and India are emergent economies, and they have achieved great economic growth for many decades (since the economic reforms of 1978 for China, and after the economic liberalization of 1991 for India). It is reasonable that the great economic growth brings about increased energy supplies.

Since 2014, China is the largest world economy in terms of GDP in (PPP), according to the IMF World Economic Outlook Database, April 2018. It is at the top of the world's economies in 2017 with a GDP (PPP) of 23.15 trillion dollars. By 2023, China's GDP (PPP) would be 37.06 trillion dollars, but it is ranked

second, after the USA, in terms of nominal GDP with 12.01 trillion dollars in 2017, and it is projected to reach to 21.57 trillion dollars by 2023⁶.

Turning to India, the beginning of the economic shift was in 1991; it was when India followed a policy of economic liberalization that allowed its economy to record remarkable growth and thus it became next to China as the largest global economic growth, with regard to the annual economic growth rate.

The IMF World Economic Outlook, April 2018, estimated that India will occupy the fifth place before UK and France with 4.6 trillion dollars in terms of NGDP. India will be in the third place in terms of (PPP) with 10.3 trillion dollars and a share of 7.96% in world economy. Moreover, projects of being the third world economy in terms of (PPP) with 16.7 trillion dollars by 2023 stand to show the Indian potential as world economic power⁷.

***Demographic factors:** China and India are the home of about 3 billion inhabitants; this represents more than 35% of the total world population. According to the May 2021 statistics, China is the most populated country in the world, as it has 1.444 billion inhabitants, which is equivalent to 18.47 % of the total world population, with a yearly growing rate of less than 1%, While India occupied the second place, as it is the home of 1.391 billion inhabitants according to the United Nations 'estimates of May 2021, i.e. 17.7% of the total world population. the organisation projects that India will overtake China as the most world populated country by 2025⁸.

The huge number of population rises the needs to energy services, especially when taking into consideration the rate of urbanization in the two countries, as the level of live in the two countries knowing historical increasing.

*** Environmental factors:** China and India are among the most polluted countries in the world, and they are among the biggest contributors in CO₂ emissions. In 2014, China was the second largest CO₂ emitter in the world at 7.1 tonnes of CO₂/person, and India was the third one, with a total of 2.597 million tonnes of CO₂ and its per capita emissions were 1.9 tonnes of CO₂/person. It should be noted that the USA was in the first place at 17 tonnes of CO₂/person⁹.

The dependence on coal as the main energy resource in China and India, the insufficient access to clean and modern energy, the spread of biomass as a means of cooking and heating - especially in India's rural regions - the high rate of energy waste because of the lack of energy efficiency and the weak shares of

renewable energy for daily usage are the main causes of the high levels of pollution in the principle cities of India and China.

***Imbalance and dependency factors:** The 2007's World Energy Outlook Reference Scenario 2005-2030 projected that China's primary energy needs will expand from 1.742 million tonnes of oil in 2005 to 3.819 Mtoe in 2030, an average annual rate of increase of 3.2%. Whereas, the India's needs grow by 3.6% per year, from 537 Mtoe to 1.299 Mtoe, Their energy needs grow much faster than in the rest of the world. China and India account for 45% of the total increase in world energy demand over the projection period (2005-2030), and 82% of the increase in coal demand. The two countries together will account for 29% of the world's primary energy use by 2030¹⁰.

In 2017, China alone contributed to over a third of the world's global energy demand growth, with energy consumption growing by over 3.1%. For the third consecutive year, China (by 500,000 b/d) was the largest contributor to growth in oil consumption followed by the USA as well as to gas consumption (31 bcm-15.1%). After India, China was the second contributor in coal growth consumption (by 4 Mtoe).

According to the BP energy outlook reference scenario 2016-2040, India's energy consumption will be the fastest growing among all major economies (165%).By 2040, India's share of global demand will rise to 11% in 2040 from 5% in 2016, and oil imports will rise by 175 %¹¹.

On contrary to their high growth rates, China's and India's domestic reserves and production are limited especially those of oil and gas, as a result, the two countries suffer from a sharp imbalance between demand and supply. China has poor hydrocarbons endowments; its oil and gas proved reserves are less than 2% of the world proved reserves for each one¹².

Meanwhile, India accounts for only 0.4% of the world's oil reserves, and 0.9% of the world's total oil production. Concerning gas reserves, it has only 0.6% of the world's proved reserves¹³.

Because of resources insufficiency, the two Asia's energy giants depend widely on foreign suppliers to meet their needs and ensure their energy security.

4. Energy diplomacy. The road to Africa

Because of their great dependency on external suppliers to meet their energy requirements, China and India have evolved peaceful strategy towards the different regions of energy production all over the world, based on cooperation,

investment, assistance and diplomatic approach. Such measures are known as energy diplomacy, which is the use of foreign policy to secure energy supplies, and improve bilateral relations with the main producers of energy resources.

4.1 China's specificity. China's primacy

China has a primacy position not as a thirsty consumer of energy only, but as a skilled energy diplomacy actor too. China mobilizes all its capabilities, experiences and influence to serve its efforts to access in any region of energy production.

Africa is one of the most important regions in the China's energy agenda, and it is a main target of China's energy diplomacy, as it is richly endowed with energy resources, and as it is an important energy exporter. In 2017, 8.9% of global gas exports and 10.2% of global oil exports are coming from Africa, with 5.7% growth in energy production, 5% growth in oil production, 9% for gas and 3.6% for coal¹⁴.

Therefore, China makes this continent a primary target, and its policy there is completely different from that of the western countries; "James Troub" wrote on this Chinese specificity towards Africa:

“The People's Republic has declared 2006 'the Year of Africa. 'The West had its own unofficial Year of Africa in 2005, and it is instructive to compare the two. The industrial nations conducted a sort of moral crusade, with advocacy organizations exposing Africa's dreadful sores...China, by contrast, offers a pragmatic relationship between equals: the strategic partnership promised in China's African policy is premised on mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity And the benefits are very tangible”¹⁵.

This specificity opened the African portal widely for China. Beijing's principle of non-interference makes the Chinese loans and investments more appealing. Relying on the Chinese finances allows the African countries to avoid the comparatively sever conditions of the western financial institutions like the World Bank's loans. In this context, China has successfully presented itself as a fellow developing country, which shares the same historical colonial pain with African countries and understands their needs¹⁶.

The “Chinese model” of investment and infrastructure loans known conventionally as the “Beijing Consensus”. It forms the China’s pillars of dealing with the international sphere on politics, development and global balance of power, on the basis of multilateralism, consensus and peaceful co-existence, is very attractive for African countries. The Chinese approach countered the western one of neo-liberal paradigm, which is conventionally known as “Washington Consensus”. The latter focuses on democracy, good governance, and poverty reduction, but, generally speaking, it is not widely welcome in Africa¹⁷.

China imports more than 25% of oil from Africa and because of its increasing oil needs, it works to protect oil and natural gas fields in African countries, attempting to access to the rich oil gulf of Guinea. China has already acquired new areas of economic influence in Angola, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. In addition to Sudan, China imports oil from Chad, Algeria, Angola and Gabon and it is planning for signing more oil contracts in North Africa, notably with Algeria and Libya¹⁸.

Since more than 20 years, Chinese companies announced its presence in Sudanese oil production fields. Since then, more than 15 Billion dollars were invested by China in the Sudanese oil sector. According to official Sudanese statistics of August 2017, this cooperation is projected to increase as the two sides have the needed will to promote their oil bilateral ties. This is conspicuously expressed in the Sudanese officials’ invitation to the Chinese side to bring further investments in oil and gas sectors, during the visit of the Deputy Chairman of the Chinese petroleum company “Jianhua Zhang” in August 2017¹⁹.

China controls 75% of the Sudanese oil sector, with a production of 133.000 bpd. No doubt, the separation of the South Sudan in 2011 had negative effects on the Sudanese production power, but Chinese companies are looking for discovering new oil deposits in order to compensate the lost deposits and achieving the Sudanese aims of increasing oil production²⁰.

This wide Chinese investments in Sudan and many other African countries have faced waves of criticism and accusations; the opponents of Chinese energy diplomacy describe it as a neo-colonialist country, because it invested in corrupted and authoritarian regimes who violate basic human rights and commit even crimes against humanity, like Sudan, Angola and other countries, without forgetting the appalling working conditions in many Chinese sites.

Much of this criticism came from western sources of course, like the U.S policymakers, international observers, experts and, to a lesser degree, from environment protection and human rights NGOs. However, China remains

indifferent in the face of the western criticism, and it is highly unlikely to change the principles of its energy diplomacy towards Africa. This is very obvious in the foundation and the activities of the "Forum on China-Africa cooperation" (FOCAC), which is an evidence of the country's determination to going further.

4.2 India's energy ambitions in Africa

Energy security emerged as a second major objective of Indian diplomacy after, of course, its primary foreign policy objective which is the isolation of its traditional enemy, Pakistan. China still enjoys a primacy over India as regards their energy competition in Africa, but Indian's private companies have got increasing support from the New Delhi's diplomacy. Therefore, they have engaged in many energy activities and investments in Africa²¹.

India has historical ties to Africa, for example the India's national leader Mahatma Gandhi lived in South Africa. India like many African countries suffered from colonialism. It participated also c effectively in the UN peace missions in Africa.

India, the world's biggest democracy, depends on its reputation as a democratic country, a model of social coexistence between different ethnic and religious groups and a home of technological talents and knowledge to access softly to the African continent as a part of its diplomacy to secure its energy supplies overseas.

Natural resources dominated African imports to India, especially crude oil and minerals, for securing the requirements of a rapidly growing economy. It is not a surprise then that about one-fifth of India's crude oil imports (about 20%) come from Africa; African's energy resources exports to India are 60%,2.7% and 3.5%, of oil, gas and coal respectively. In addition, India has surpassed the USA as the largest importer of the Nigerian crude oil in 2014²².

As a result of Africa's importance for Indian's energy security, New Delhi has become the a major investor in the continent, not in energy sector only, but in other sectors like infrastructures, health, agriculture and industry too.

The Indian Oil and Natural Gas Corporations succeeded to gain overseas investments in Africa. ONGC Videsh OVL) is the leader of the Indian's companies who has succeeded in acquiring exploration and development stakes across the continent, OVL occupies the top ranking by 59.8% of Indian's investments in Africa, followed by Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation by 6.3% and Oil India Limited by 2.1%.Mozambique is the target of the most important Indian's energy investments in Africa and it is the cornerstone of OVL's activities

there; OVL acquired 10% of the Rovuma gas field, which has a strategic location to supply the Indian market, especially after the estimations of 70 tcf as reserves in this field, for a price of 2.6 billion dollars, besides. In a similar vein, the activities of the Coal India Africana Limited (CIAL), which invested about 5.1 million dollars in Mozambique between 2008-2016, are exemplary as well. Indian investments in Egypt's energy sector are the second one after Mozambique; they concentrate predominantly on oil and gas sectors, but the Indian private company "Shapoorji Pallonji Capital Company" Ltd, broke this rule and it invested 6.8 million dollars to generate 50MW solar power plant there²³.

In addition, India has signed many other investments around the African continent. In 2006, OVL acquired 25% stake in Sudan's Greater Nile Oil Project; this step cost the Indian company 690 million dollars. Next to other interests no less important in Sudanese oil blocks, the India Oil Corporation (IOC) has invested 1 billion dollars in an offshore block in Côte d'Ivoire; OVL conducted geological studies in the exclusive economic zone of Mauritius and other African countries entered the Indian scope of interest, like Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal etc²⁴.

For India, energy security is not only a question of obtaining energy resources, but there is another important aspect may be decisive in any energy policy, which is the safety and the protection of transportation roads.

The Indian Ocean's lanes of communication are the passage of Indian energy supplies coming from Africa, Therefore, one of the most important Indian's national interests is the maintenance of strong position in this ocean, which is considered as its strategic backyard.

In order to serve these strategic interests, India founded the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) in 2008 as an institutional frame of discussion, coordination and cooperation between India and the African countries. In this context, the first meeting between the heads of state and government of India and African countries was held in 2008, it has signed defence agreements with Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania in order to strengthen its presence there too²⁵.

India has a policy of integrated package towards Africa, as the Indian policymakers believe that the access to the African energy regions require more than just investments in energy sector.

Thus, India is ready to give the African countries its experience in technology and to share with Africa its knowledge and expertise in exploration, distribution,

refining, storage, transportation and to help African countries to strengthen their governance frameworks in the energy sector.

India's energy diplomacy was accompanied by projects in different sectors, mainly projects of infrastructure: the Railway rehabilitation project in Angola, renewal of urban transport system in Abidjan, Energy transmission and distribution project in Ethiopia, housing project in Gabon. Apart from energy and infrastructure, projects like agricultural equipment plant in Chad and even military assistance and training are archetypal investments²⁶.

China and India have engaged in severe energy competition outside the Asian continent. Chinese influence in African continent has extended because of energy resources and multi trading relationships. On the other hand, Indian's prime oil company ONGC (Videsh) and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) invested in African countries for guarantying India's energy security far from west Asia. in "Debasish Nand's "words":we are keen on crossing 'two oceans' to secure our energy needs...There is a need to competitively access oil and gas instead of finding ourselves stranded in a sellers' market"²⁷.

China is a major actor in African energy investments, while India has hardly acquired 25% stake in GNPOC. The former China has the priority in Sudan since 1997; it has dominated more than 75% of Sudanese oil sector and it has the largest task in GNPOC by 40 %²⁸.

But the great evidence of the Chinese skilled and experienced energy policy in Africa, as compared to India, was in Angola. in 2004, India was about to sign a deal with Angola to buy 50% of Shell's share in "Block 18" for about 620 million dollars, but China succeeded to frustrate the Indian planning there, where it offered 2 billion dollars in aid for various projects in Angola to persuade the local government that China is the adequate option. the India's offer of 200 million dollars for developing railways was not good enough to counter balance the Chinese one. Despite losing to China in Angola, India has managed to maintain energy ties with the country; it still imports 5% of its crude oil from Angola⁽²⁹⁾.

Moreover, China moved towards the two major Indian's African partners, i.e. Mozambique, the home of the largest Indian's energy investments in Africa, and Mauritius, the favoured destination for Indian foreign direct investments.

China's growing presence in Mauritius, which accounts 68% of the population from Indian origin, is another piece of evidence of its intentions to challenge New Delhi in regions that belong traditionally to the Indian sphere of influence. It seems that even the officials of Mauritius privilege China's 'different' approach,

in contrast to India's more fragmented style. Mozambique, China strengthens its ties by employing more locals in Chinese companies and signing more investments³⁰.

China's oil and gas companies in Africa have a financial advantage, fast decision making dynamic and wide experience. On their part, the Indian companies are still working primly. Although 597 Indian companies invested in Africa over 2008-2016, the top 11 companies (most of them are oil and gas companies), which account for about 80% of the total Indian investment flows to Africa, have not expanded across the continent and their investments are concentrated in a few countries only³¹.

Indian experts argue that though the Chinese and the Indian companies aim to similar interests, they have developed deferent policies towards the African markets. As compared to the Chinese state-owned or stated-controlled, the Indian companies, predominantly private ones (or under state-private ownership), appear less integrated and seek to obtain materials and labour forces in cooperation with the local governments. In this regard, the Indian companies' approach is less 'neo-colonialist' in nature than the Chinese one.

Statistics exhibit that India still far behind China in indicators of trade with Africa. China remains the first commercial partner of Africa; trade exchange between them was 170 billion dollars in 2017. This exchange has increased by 14% compared to the past year and Chinese investments in Africa recorded 3.1 billion dollars in 2017³² despite the total trade between India and Africa has increased almost five-fold between 2005-2006 and 2015- 2016. Similarly, India's exports to Africa increased from 14 billion dollars in 2001-2008 to 23 billion dollars in 2016-2017. Comparatively, the amount of trade between India and Africa is less than that of China: 52 billion dollars in March 2016-2017³³.

In this stiff competition, India seems in case of chasing and pursuing of China's steps and strategies, since India has lagged behind China in exploring energy investments on the African continent.

India imitates the Chinese ways in Africa, like military assistance, soft policies and loans. Even regarding the institutional initiatives, India has adopted the similar China's initiative of founding a forum with African countries. Despite the Indian's efforts to evolve its own specific policy towards Africa, China still has the priority and the primacy in the continent over India and even over traditional powers like the USA, France and UK.

Most probably, the remarkable common element, between China and India's energy diplomacy in Africa, is the blames and criticism from formal and informal

sides to their investments there. The reason is that they are never reluctant to invest in countries that have been shunned internationally such as Sudan and Zimbabwe³⁴.

5. Conclusions

Africa is no longer the neglected continent; the world's great powers vision towards it has went well beyond the stigma of being the home of civil wars, diseases, poverty, inequality, military coups and political instability to looking at it as the 'promised' land of resources, opportunities and important investments in different fields especially those of energy sector.

This new approach shifted Africa into a ring of geopolitical and economic confrontations between powers of a similar interests adapting different approaches, whether traditional powers as France, Great Britain and The United States of America or new emergent ones like China and India, which represent the most important actors in the world energy consumption market, and are expected to be responsible of the greatest part of energy increasing demand in the near future.

The need to secure energy security has pushed the two Asian countries China and India to engage in an overseas rivalry, for acquiring access to African's regions of energy production, especially those of oil and gas, like Nigeria, Angola, Sudan, Algeria and Libya or any other African country has important reserves of hydrocarbons.

China's oil and gas strong companies acquired a considerable stake in oil and gas fields around the continent. In this context, Indian falls behind China in terms of access to the African energy market compared due to the lack of experience, financial and diplomatic support. Yet, the Indian side is not going to surrender easily; New Delhi depends on its moral effect as a democratic country and its technical know-how to find other ways of penetrating the black continent, despite China's control and influence, but China till now is the major actor in the great energy diplomacy game in Africa, and its tools of penetration like the good exploration of Pekin's financial, political, military and soft power capabilities, allow it to compete not India only, but many other actors have longer history, relations and presence in Africa than China like the former colonialist powers.

In all probability, this is the historical moment for Africa, which must take advantage of the opportunity of this world rivalry on its land in order to acquire more gains. Furthermore, it is high time Africa opened the scope of competition about the continent's resources to new actors like China and India, so as to

counter act the hegemony of traditional powers, the former colonialist ones particular, which have bad and bloody historical pages in the continent people's memory, unlike China and India which share the same colonialist backgrounds with Africa

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