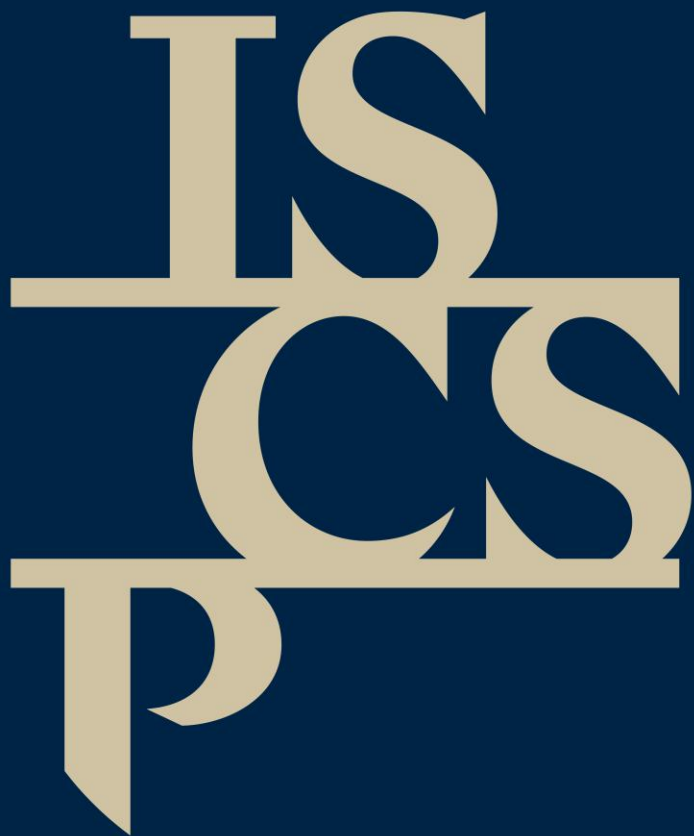




Tweets, Tensions, and Soft Power: China's Digital Public Diplomacy in Africa

CHINA SESSIONS

Digital Public Diplomacy: China's Engagement in
Africa

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PhD Scholarship Holder of CCCM/FCT

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Fundação
para a Ciência
e a Tecnologia

PRESENTATION CONTENT

About Li Guofeng

- 1. China´s Digital Diplomacy**
- 2. China and Africa: old friends, true friends and
good friends**
- 3. China´s Digital Diplomacy in Africa**

About Li Guofeng

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Areas of interest:

International Relations Theories; Foreign Policy; Diplomacy (Cultural Diplomacy; Gastrodiplomacy; Public Diplomacy); Cross-Strait Relations; PLE teaching in China; Soft Power

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China's Digital Diplomacy

General Context

Decline of the West and the Rise of the East (Asian countries).

A more proactive role in the international society.

To gain the Discourse Power (huayu quan/话语权)

- 2009, Great External Publicity (da waixuan/大外宣)
- 2012, Chinese Dream (中国梦) and New Era (新时代)
- 2013, Telling China's Stories Well (jianghao zhongguo gushi/讲好中国故事)

Domestic Consumption



Keep a low profile and achieve something.

(avoid standing out)

Play a major role
Rule maker

If you don't tell your own story well, others will tell it for you.

China's Digital Diplomacy

Understanding Digital Diplomacy:

A. Public diplomacy in the digital age (Huang & Wang, 2019)

B. External activities in the regards of digital affairs, like digital sovereignty, internet security, counter-virtual-terrorism etc.

Digital Diplomacy: what's new?

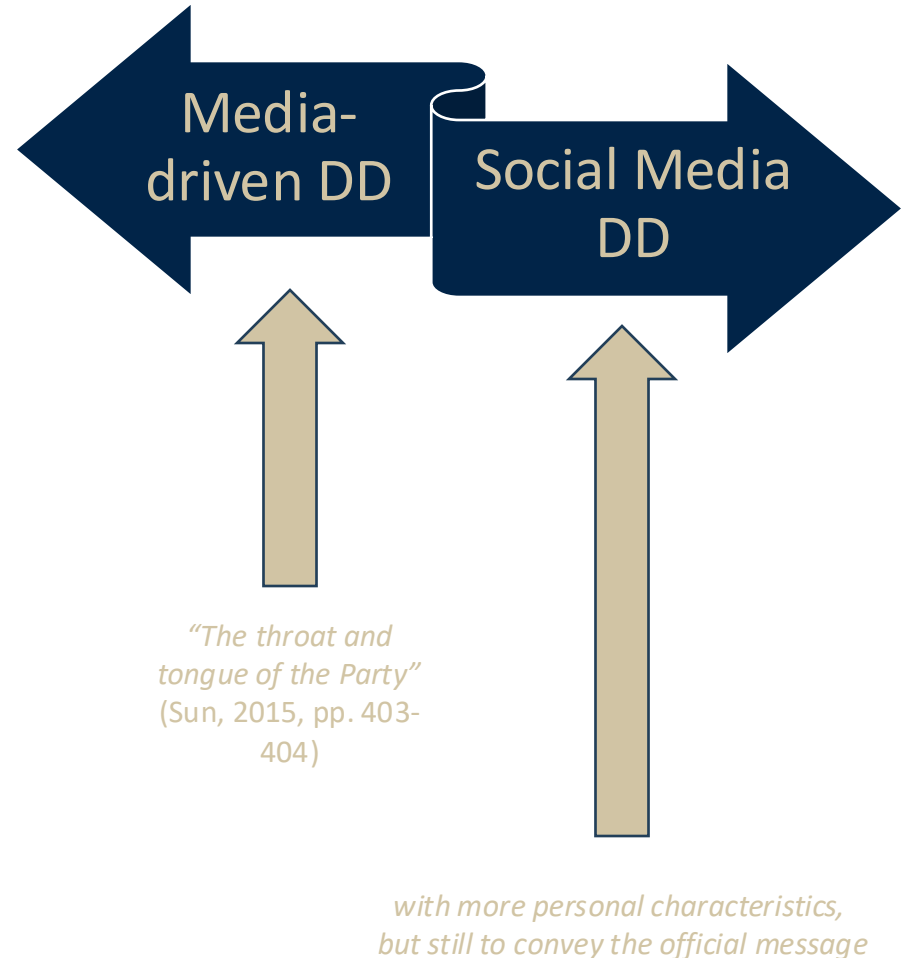
A. Connectivity

B. Interactivity

China's Digital Diplomacy Network

Media-driven: Xinhua Agency, People's Daily, CGTN, China Daily, CRI and Global Times.

Social media: X, Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok.



China's Digital Diplomacy

POLYPHONIC FEATURES

(Huang & Arifon, 2018)



2025 - CGTN
Sachs at CDF 2025: China is not
Here's why



March 10, 2025 - CGTN
The Heat: One-on-one with Jeffrey Sachs



February 24, 2025 - CGTN
Interview with Jeffrey Sachs



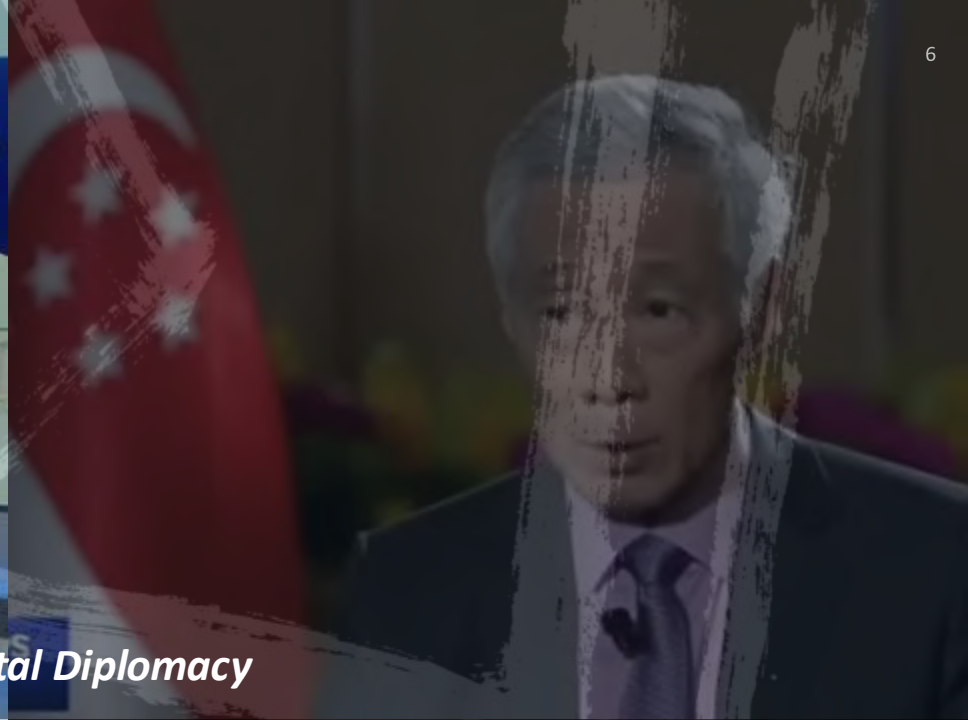
2024 - CGTN
Sachs on 'China collapse' theory



October 24, 2024 - CGTN
U.S. economist: BRICS to form true
multilateral world



July 31, 2024 - CGTN
China's opening vs. U.S. closing?
Sachs explains the shift



China and Africa: old friends, true friends and good friends

Why Africa?

Three Worlds Theory
anti-colonialism; anti-imperialism
(Yan, 2009)

Global South
call for a new world order
(Yan, 2009)



President Mao's Era

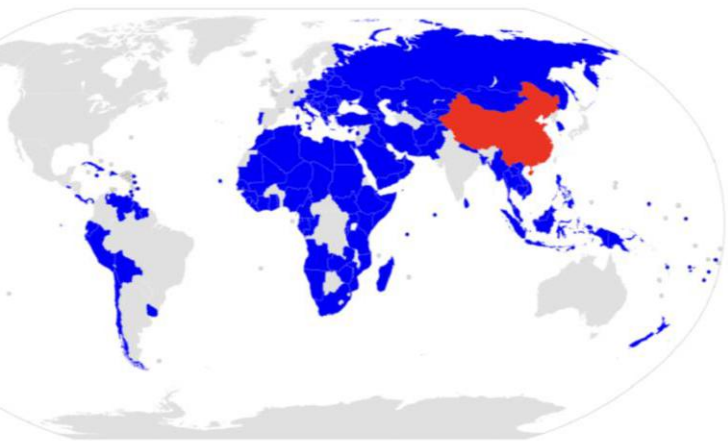
XXI Century

Ideological and political considerations

Political and economical considerations

military training and ideology export

economical, financial and humanitarian support



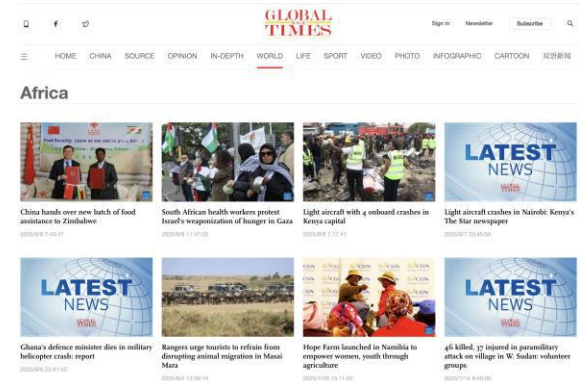
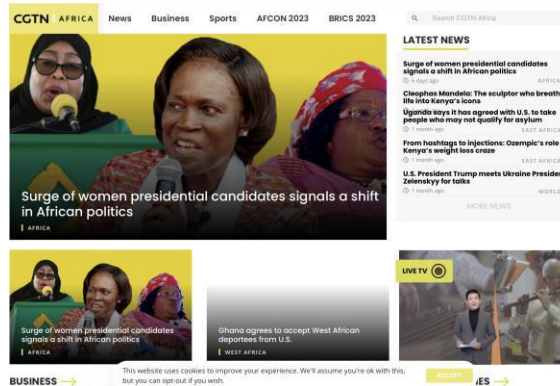
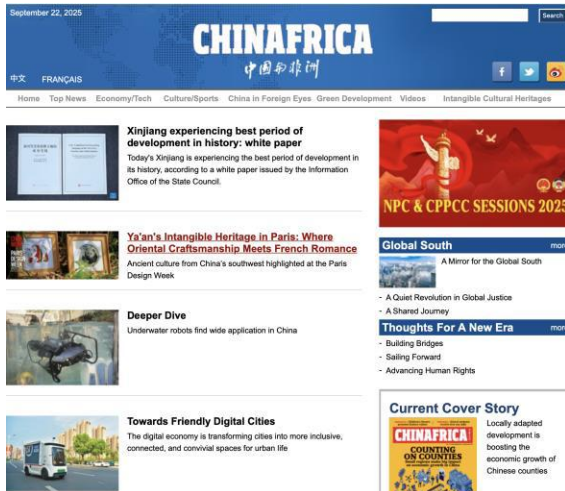
China and Africa: old friends, true friends and good friends

- UN 2758 Resolution: Legal Representation of China by PRC
- Countries that support China's Hong Kong policy
- Energy supply to China
- ...

In response, Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations, Sir Akram, read a statement from a group of 54* countries backing China's Hong Kong policy: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Grenada, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

China's Digital Diplomacy in Africa

- To keep the true friends, China is investing heavily on public diplomacy in Africa, including the digital dimension.



China's Digital Diplomacy in Africa

Twitter (X)

one of the most used social media

	Institution Level	Personal Level
General Level	• Xi's Moments • China MFA Spokesperson • China Consular Affairs • ChinaAid • State media • ...	• Lijian Zhao • Mao Ning • Ambassador Lu Shaye • ...
Local Level	• Diplomatic delegations in the local country • Local delegations of the State media	Head of the diplomatic delegations in the local country

Ecosystem of China's Twitter Diplomacy in Africa

China's Digital Diplomacy in Africa



中国驻加纳大使馆 Chinese E... · 11/09/25 ...
China's #auto production, sales both surpass 20 million units for the first time from January to August, reflecting the rapid growth of the country's automobile industry under the drive for new quality productive forces.



68

中国驻加纳大使馆 Chinese E... · 14/08/24 ...
On 13th August, H.E. TONG Defa, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, presents the Letter of Credence to H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana. Ambassador TONG conveyed the warm greetings and best wishes from H.E. President Xi Jinping.



67 7 36 1萬

CHINA MFA Spokesperson 中国... @MFA_China 跟隨

The Belt and Road Initiative is a boon to regional development and the world economy.

翻譯貼文



10:03 · 06/09/22

73 116 427 3

CHINA MFA Spokesperson 中国... @MFA_China 跟隨

Chinese railway has become a name brand for Belt and Road cooperation.

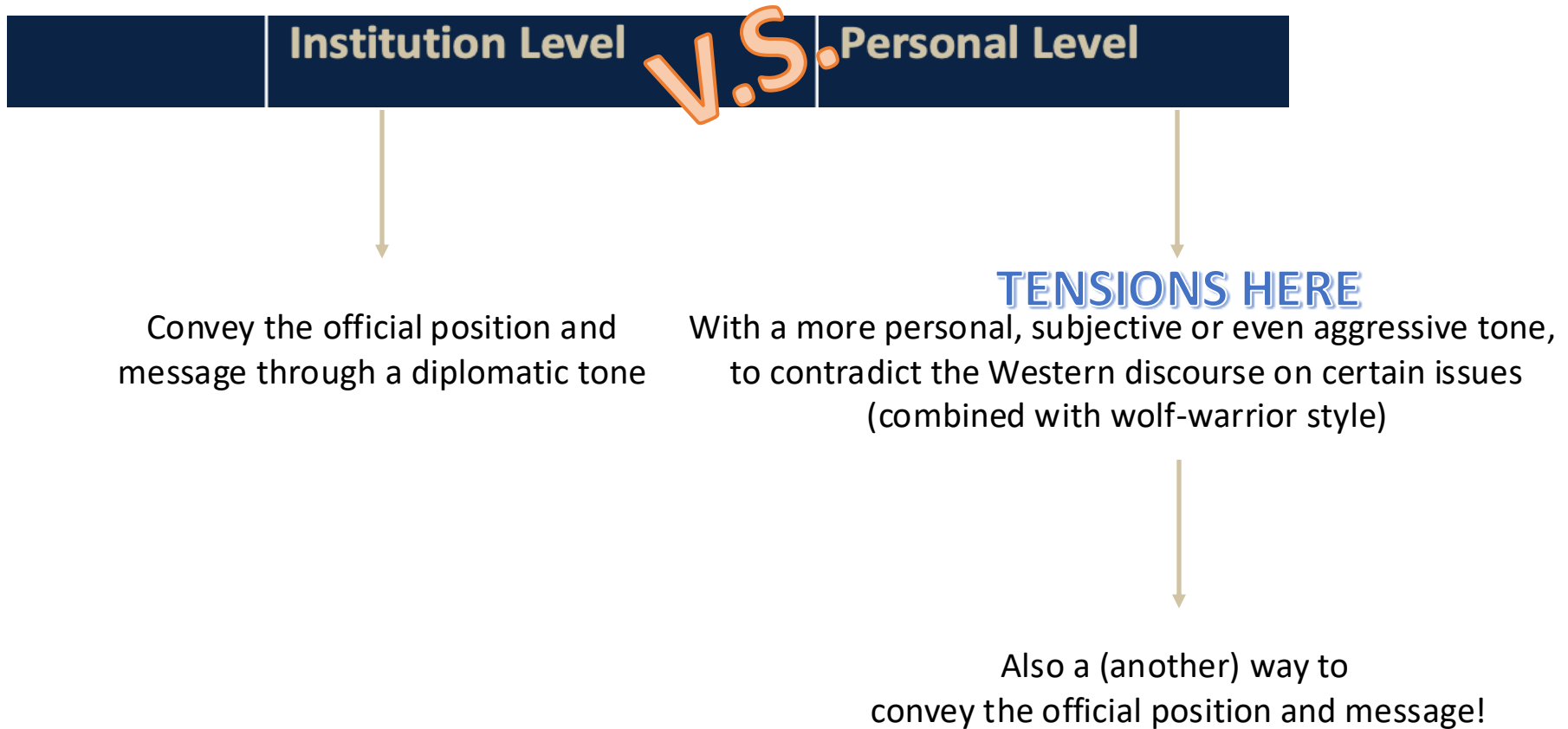
翻譯貼文



15:51 · 11/08/22

63 87 345 2

China's Digital Diplomacy in Africa



Their **evil intention** is to force the central government of China to take strong measures against the violence in Hong Kong so that they can fabricate excuses for sanctions and to contain China in an all-round way. Those are the dirty tricks they always play. Their evil intentions are there for all to see.

Twitter of Amb. Lin Sontian, on 14 December 2019



Twitter of Lijian Zhao, on 9 August 2022



on 28 July 2022



Twitter of Qin Gang, on 13 December 2022



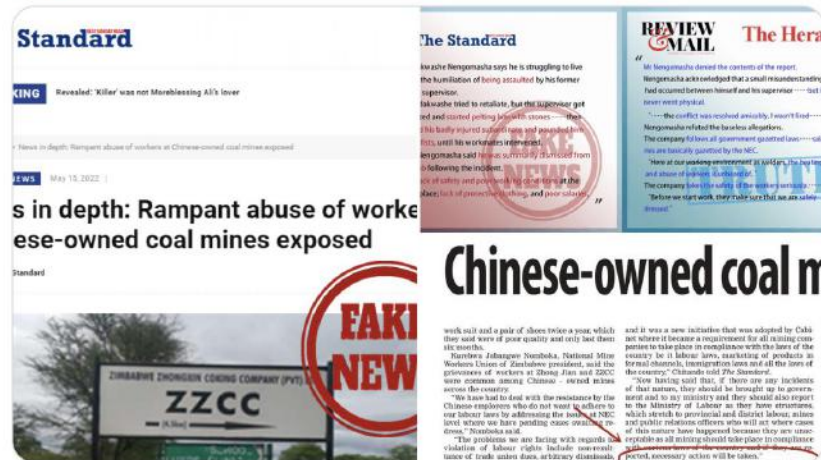
#Mr1k keep making up fake stories and spreading poisonous rumors about Chinese enterprises, which are doomed to fall apart in front of facts and truth.

Such lies and rumors only tarnish local media's reputation and professionalism.

Check below for FACTS.

herald.co.zw/probe-debunks-...

翻譯貼文



下午1:14 · 2022年6月23日

Twitter of Chinese Embassy in Zimbabwe, on 23 June 2022

Mr1k: making fake news about China for only 1k US dollars per year

China 's Digital Diplomacy in Africa

1. Contradict the American discourse: a legitimate way for China to defense itself face the Western accusation
2. The personal level is more obvious when there is ongoing popular topic about China, like during the Hong Kong protest, Covid-19, and human rights issues accusation on Xinjiang.

It is both a product of the shifting dynamics of global political power (particularly the U.S.–China rivalry) and one of its dimensions.

IS CHINA GOING MORE AGGRESSIVE?

It is characterized more by a reactive posture than by proactive offensiveness.

China ´s Digital Diplomacy in Africa

CHALLENGES

1. Lack of widespread telecommunications infrastructure in Africa: only 650 million netizens in Africa (33.6% of the whole population) (ITU, 2024).
2. Good for China´s soft power?
3. Narrative competition.

**When can we make
diplomacy return to be
an art?**

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THANKS!



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