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ABSTRACT


The United States and China have turned to Africa as an additional source of oil to ensure reliable, secure access to oil supplies in the future. While China stresses noninterventionist foreign policies, the US, at least rhetorically, if not in practice, links its energy policy in Africa to its foreign policy goals. China’s petroleum diplomacy in Africa has raised concern among some scholars and policymakers about the effect an increased Chinese economic presence will have on American foreign policy objectives.

The question arises: What impact has Chinese petroleum diplomacy had on US foreign policy objectives? More specifically, how strongly, if at all, does an increased Chinese economic presence correlate with less democratic African governments, worsening of African countries’ human rights records, and less transparency among African governments? This paper will examine these questions using a longitudinal study of 1993 to 2010 in one case study, Nigeria.
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I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

With energy consumption rising each year in developing countries like China and India, developed countries such as the United States find themselves increasingly competing for precious oil resources. Developing countries looking to secure access to and increase market share of oil supplies may not have similar energy policies to the United States. For example, the United States has stated that it seeks to utilize its energy policies as leverage to improve human rights records and promote democracy in African countries. China’s energy policy is kept (at least rhetorically) separate from its foreign policy objectives. Many US policymakers have begun to speculate about what impact, if any, the increased Chinese economic presence in Africa will have on not just the level of African oil exports to the United States, but also on US foreign policy objectives on the continent.

Trends in Global Oil Consumption

2009 data demonstrate that the United States is the world’s largest consumer of oil using 18.8 million barrels of oil per day (bbl/d). China is the second largest consumer. However, China uses only 8.5 million bbl/d. The third largest consumer is Japan (4.4
million bbl/d), fourth is India (3 million bbl/d), and fifth is Russia (2.9 million bbl/d) ("Country Energy Profiles"). China and India have the fastest oil consumption growth rates with China’s being two and half times the rate of India (Goldstein et. al 26 - 27).

The U.S. Department of Energy’s 2009 International Energy Outlook (IEO) predicts that, if current trends continue, China and the United States will remain the two largest consumers of overall energy and oil through 2030 ("International Energy Outlook” 10). The IEO’s data show that in 2030 the United States will consume 21.7 million bbl/d and China will consume 15.3 million bbl/d. Already the United States and China are vying for access to many of the same oil supplies. Henry Lee estimates that by 2020 nearly 80% of Middle Eastern oil will go to Asia (Lee 56 – 88). Lee argues that this trend, along with the lack of investment by oil producing countries in discovering new oil supplies to meet growing demand, will result in competition among states for access to secure, reliable, and affordable oil. Global oil consumption has risen steadily over the last thirty years.

Since 1990 global oil consumption has increased over 28% from 66.68 million bbl/d to 85.5 million bbl/d in 2008 ("International Petroleum Consumption"). The rate of consumption increase is not steady over time (see Figure 1). From 1980 to 1990 the rate of global oil consumption only increased 4.7% ("International Petroleum Consumption"). However, from 1990 – 2000 global consumption rates rose 15%. Additionally, from 2000 – 2009 oil consumption rates increased 9.45% ("International Petroleum Consumption"). The IEO finds that the global economic recession which began in 2008 will likely decrease global oil consumption rates for a few years, but the IEO predicts that global
consumption will rise in the long term. In 2015, the IEO predicts that global oil consumption will be 93 million bbl/d, an increase from 86 million bbl/d in 2008 (“International Energy Statistics” 25).

The recent rise in demand is not the result of declining oil prices. In recent years, the price of crude oil rose. In fact, world crude oil prices peaked in July 2008 at 137.11 US dollars per barrel (“World Crude Oil Prices”). After dropping significantly from January 2009 to early May 2009, global crude oil prices are rising on a fairly consistent basis. Economic growth in oil importing countries, such as India and China, and gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the United States and China are likely the most significant factors causing increased oil demand and consumption (Pirog 8). The IEO

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predicts that total world oil consumption will increase at an average of 1% annually between 2008 and 2035 (“International Energy Outlook” 10).

![Figure 2. World Crude Oil Prices from July 2008 through December 2010](image)

### Trends in US Oil Consumption

According to Sophie Méritet and Fabienne Salaiin, in 2006 oil composed 39% of US energy supply and represents 25% of global demand for energy (175). They argue the United States must rely on imported oil to meet the demand of its “oil addiction.” This oil addiction is growing so quickly that Méritet and Salaiin project that imported oil could make up as much as 75% of total oil consumed in the United States by 2020 (178). US levels of oil consumption have grown drastically since 1990 from 16.98 million bbl/d to 19.47 million bbl/d in 2008, or over 14%. Since 1993, the amount of oil the United States imported from OPEC countries has ranged from 45-55% of total imports annually. However, the amount of oil imported from the Persian Gulf has fallen from a high of 2.92

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million bbl/d in 2004 to 1.7 million bbl/d as of September 2009 (“U.S. Net Imports by Country”). To meet growing demands the United States has looked to diversify its sources of imported petroleum. In 2011, the United States imported oil from several African countries, including Angola, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, and Ivory Coast (“U.S. Imports by Country of Origin”). With the exception of Gabon, oil imports from each of these countries have increased in the last ten years. In fact, oil importation from some countries has only started in the last ten years. In October of 1999, the United States imported no oil from Libya, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, or Ivory Coast (“U.S. Net Imports by Country”).

Figure 3. US Oil Imports between January 1993 and January 2009

**Trends in Chinese Oil Consumption**

As China continues to grow demographically and economically and develop new industries and expand existing manufacturing industries, oil is providing a key and vital energy source needed for sustainable growth rates. Stephanie Hanson notes that China’s

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annual 9% growth rate for the past twenty years led it to become a net oil importer starting in 1993. This data is confirmed by the EIA which notes that Chinese oil consumption began to exceed oil production in 1993 (“China: Oil”). According to the OECD, China’s net oil imports increased 23% since 2000, from 80.57 million tons annually in 2000 to 99.15 million tons annually in 2003 (Goldstein et. al 26). Looking back to 1993, China’s imports have increased 6775% from a mere 56,000 bbl/d to over 3.85 million bbl/d in 2008 (“China Energy Profile”). Further, China’s increased oil imports accounted for 9.2% of total global oil import growth from 2000-2004 (Goldstein et. al 28). In 2008, half of China’s oil imports came from the Middle East, with 30% of oil imports coming from Africa, 3% from the Asia-Pacific region, and the remaining 7% from various other countries (“China: Oil”).

Figure 4. Chinese Crude Oil Imports by Source, 2009 (Thousand barrels per day)

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4 Chart data obtained from Energy Information Administration..
The Research Question

How strongly, if at all, has Chinese petroleum diplomacy in oil-exporting African countries affected the level of African oil exports to the United States and the stated foreign policy goals of the United States? More specifically, does an increased Chinese economic presence correlate to worsening Freedom House political rights scores and worsening Freedom House civil liberties scores?  

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6 The impact of the United States’ economic involvement on US foreign policy objectives will not be examined in this paper for two reasons. First, it is more parsimonious to examine the effects of one actor’s (China’s) economic involvement on another actor’s foreign policy objectives. Second, due to time and space constraints, focusing solely on the impact of Chinese economic involvement will permit the necessary in-depth analysis of possible intervening variables which is required to contextualize the statistical data.
Sub-questions

1) Are American and Chinese energy policies in Nigeria different in rhetoric and in practice in terms of securing access to adequate, reliable supplies of oil and achieving stated policy goals?

The above research questions will be examined in one case: Nigeria. This study chose Nigeria because both the United States and China are actively involved in Nigeria’s oil industry. Additionally, Nigeria has been a major oil producing and oil exporting state since the 1960’s, when Nigeria granted multiple international oil companies exploration rights. Nigeria’s history of over 50 years as an oil producer and exporter provides ample opportunity to examine Nigerian oil policies, American oil policies, and Chinese oil policies within the same case study. Moreover, since the United States’ consistently remained a major purchaser of Nigerian oil for the time period covered in this study, while China did not, a case study of Nigeria is conducive to examining the impact of Chinese petroleum diplomacy on US foreign policy objectives.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, I assume that Chinese and US energy policies and foreign policies in Nigeria differ from each other in practice as well as in rhetoric. All United States administrations for the years covered in this study (1993 – 2010) claim to use energy policies as leverage to encourage good governance, improve human rights, increase transparency, and obtain access to secure, affordable, and stable energy supplies in Nigeria. Conversely, China affirms that it seeks to use its energy policies solely to secure access to affordable and reliable oil sources which will support its growing
economy and industrial sector. China has strongly emphasized that it will not intervene in domestic Nigerian affairs as part of its energy policies. I hypothesize that an increased Chinese economic presence is negatively correlated with higher Freedom House political rights and civil liberties ratings.

The case study method is appropriate for this research because it permits an in-depth study of Nigeria which allows for utilization of process-tracing to explore possible intervening variables which may affect any correlation between independent and dependent variables. This is an especially valuable addition to a non-explanative statistical analysis, such as the one being employed in this study. Case studies, such as those in this study, are appropriate venues for process tracing interacting variables which are not independent of each other (George and Bennett 212). The independent variable will be the extent of Chinese economic involvement with Nigeria. The dependent variables in this case will be the Nigeria’s level of democracy, political transparency, and promotion of human rights.

Since 1993, successive US administrations have stated that US foreign policy objectives in Africa include promoting democratic government institutions, protecting human rights, increased political transparency, and securing reliable, cheap access to oil (“China in Africa: Implications” 8). These goals can be measured using widely accepted rating systems. The Freedom House Country Reports indicate each country’s protection of human rights by measuring the trends regarding political and civil rights. This data will be analyzed in relation to changes in the levels of Chinese economic involvement in Nigeria. Chinese economic involvement will be measured by three variables: the percentage of each case’s overall exports to China, the percentage of each case’s total oil
exports to China, and the US dollar amount of oil each case exports from China. This data will be obtained from United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Statistical Database. While other databases and organizations, such as the World Bank and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, contain data regarding each case’s overall trade with China, none of these sources provide a breakdown of trade by commodity to recipient country, which is required for this study. While the economic activity and the involvement of private oil corporations would be an interesting and useful factor in examining changes in Nigeria’s Freedom House scores, such data will be excluded from this study because it exceeds the scope of this study and private corporations are not necessarily bound by government policy (Chevalier 36). Traditional secondary sources, such as journal articles, news articles, books, reports of nongovernmental and intergovernmental agencies, and academic reports will be used to examine possible intervening variables or conditioning variables. This study will cover the time period from 1993 to 2010. 1993 was chosen because it is the year in which China first became a net importer of oil. The study ends in 2010, as 2011 data regarding trade, oil imports/exports, and Freedom House scores was not available at the time of this writing.
II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Rise of Energy Politics

Energy politics can be a difficult term to define. It may refer to the policies of international oil companies, government policies, or a mixture of both. Additionally, the term can have domestic and international connotations regarding government policy. It may refer to a state’s policies regarding the logistics of the sale, purchase, transport, and consumption of energy as well as the foreign policies linked to achieving energy security. Unfortunately, a solid definition of energy politics does not appear in the literature. However, by using some of the criteria regarding energy security and policies which scholars have discussed one can create a more encompassing definition of energy politics.

Energy security is perhaps the main concern of an energy policy. Brenda Shaffer writes that energy security has three main components: reliability of supply, affordability of supply, and friendliness of energy policies to the environment (91). For an energy source to be reliable it must allow for regular, uninterrupted access to the quality and quantity needed by the consumer (Shaffer 93). Affordability requires a price which is not only initially affordable, but a price which can also be sustained and promotes economic growth over the long term (Shaffer 93). Finally, for an energy source to be
environmentally friendly it must be environmentally sustainable and not harm the public health (Shaffer 93). Shaffer proposes that these three objectives can be achieved through diversification of energy sources and supplies, stockpiling of fuel, creation of redundant infrastructure to alleviate any disruption in supply or transport, and promotion of flexibility in fuel use (93). Energy consumers can achieve the last of these three objectives through domestic policies.

While Shaffer outlines the major goals and purposes of an energy policy, Steve Biegun creates what he calls the “Political Paradigm” of an energy policy, highlighting the major players and components in energy politics on a macro level. These include the energy industry, the public, the interests of producers and processors, the interests of trans-shippers and distributors, and the interests of consumers (individuals, corporations, and national economies) (219). Biegun also includes specific categories of players for the United States such as greens and hawks in the policy making arena and voters as part of the public arena (219). Using these two descriptions of different aspects of energy politics, a definition comes together. Thus, energy politics is the interconnection between domestic energy policies, domestic public policies, international energy policies and foreign policies involving the type, quality, quantity, and place of origination of energy supplies carried out between consumers, producers, transporters, and distributors. The link between energy policies and foreign policies is not just limited to national security concerns regarding access to energy supplies. Foreign policies can also be affected by how a state acquires energy, where or who the state purchases energy from, and what type of energy the state seeks to obtain. Additionally, one state’s energy policies abroad may affect another state’s foreign policy objectives in the same region. Unfortunately, the
literature and research on energy politics pays little attention to the latter effects. This thesis attempts to fill in this void and explore the effects of energy politics on foreign policy objectives.

**Domestic Energy Policies**

US Senator Thomas “Tip” O’Neill once said “All politics is local” (Cuomo). This is true not only for public policy, but for energy politics as well. The domestic energy policies and politics of a country can often determine the course of its national energy policies. For instance, David Howard Davis argues that energy politics depends on three independent variables: physical characteristics, market forces, and general political environment (21). Specifically, he points out that American oil companies’ rights to access offshore oil became a major election issue in the 1952 presidential race (81). The Republicans attacked the inability of the Democratic administration to come to a decision and create an effective policy regarding the oil companies’ rights to drill in the tidelands. This position won them the support of the oil industry and the Presidency when Eisenhower took office (Davis 81). Additionally, Davis claims it isn’t just politicians who use energy politics to achieve domestic policy goals. He believes that in the United States real and/or false “alarmism” over diminishing energy supplies is used by special interests groups such as environmentalists to sway public opinion and support legislation that favors their agenda (11).

While national political issues regarding energy can remain in the domestic arena, sometimes such domestic energy politics affect a country’s international energy and foreign policies as well. During the 1940’s the impact of the Seven Sisters (the seven
major integrated oil companies) on US foreign policy was clear. Robert Keohane argues that it was the effect of the oil industry lobbyists on national politics in America which drove US foreign energy policies in the 1940’s as the US became a net importer of oil. Keohane points out three specific policy examples, each having a major impact, caused by the oil industry. First he notes that the Foreign Operations Committee of the Petroleum Administration for War (FOCPAW), which included senior representatives of all major international oil companies, thwarted the attempts of the government to participate in the oil industry by creating the Petroleum Reserves Corporation. Through the FOCPAW the oil companies’ senior leaders effectively prevented the government from taking steps to create a government controlled body responsible for the purchase of foreign oil supplies, even though this may have greatly increased energy security for the United States. Even more striking is the fact that this occurred in 1943, when support for government initiatives was at a high point during World War II (Keohane 169 – 173). Second, Keohane writes that after its failure to create the Petroleum Reserves Corporation, the US government attempted to develop the Anglo-American Petroleum Agreement which would facilitate US access to oil supplies in British spheres of interests, notably the Middle East. This was opposed and successfully prevented by the US oil industry in order to secure their future contracts with US oil sales (Keohane 173 – 177). Finally, Keohane notes that, despite objections by the French, from 1946 - 1948 the US State Department supported the violation of the Red Line Agreement in order to support Exxon and Mobil’s interests by their entrance into the Aramco consortium (177). Keohane concludes that oil policies were not carried out “as state policymakers would have preferred: resistance by oil interests led to reliance on the ‘private government of
oil’ … rather than on public authority” despite the United States’ ability to shape oil production and marketing to its own interests after WWII (181).

The literature also notes that domestic government action, such as subsidies and nationalization of energy industries can affect international energy politics. For example, Brenda Shaffer writes that the United States’ population growth, Asia’s growing urbanization, and energy subsidies provided by Asian governments such as China increase energy consumption and raise energy prices worldwide (16 - 17). Moreover, Shaffer finds that low rates of democracy and high rates of political instability are positively correlated with a state being an oil exporter (23 – 26). Additionally, she argues that oil importing states are increasingly becoming involved in the affairs of oil exporting states because oil importers view their purchase of large quantities of petroleum, and subsequent contributions to an oil exporting state’s revenue, as leverage to promote their foreign policy goals (29 – 30). According to Shaffer, this can be problematic because when a nondemocratic regime uses resources earned from energy exports to maintain power and/or an energy exporting state continuously experiences political instability it can undermine oil importing countries’ foreign policy efforts to democratize oil exporting countries. Such may have been the case with the United States and Nigeria during Sani Abacha’s dictatorship. While the United States attempted to promote democracy, Abacha’s regime received most of its revenue from oil exports and used this revenue to help maintain a tight control of resources and power. However, Shaffer discounts studies which have proven a link between energy exports and high levels of intrastate conflict. She argues that when variables such as geography are controlled for, or when Russia is removed from analysis, the link between secessionist movements, civil war, and intrastate
conflict is much weaker (75 – 77). Finally, Shaffer argues that political instability in an energy exporting state can create volatile energy markets, decrease energy security, and force energy importing states to change their energy policies. Specifically, she points to the examples of oil strikes in Venezuela during 2003 and riots in Nigeria during 2005, which raised global oil prices and created petroleum market instability (30).

National security issues provide another connection between domestic and international energy policies. Davis argues that in order for the United States to maintain military superiority, the US needs to secure access to oil for its armed forces and for the armed forces of its allies (120). However, Davis does not discuss the reverse of his argument. If it is in the best interests of the United States to secure energy for its military allies, then is it also in the best interests of the United States to deny or minimize its competitors’ access to oil in order to stunt their military growth? This is an especially valid question in light of the recent Chinese pursuits of foreign energy sources and Chinese military growth. However, even if market instability and intrastate conflict are affecting energy security and thus national security, David Rothkopf argues that the solution does not have to be international in scope. In fact, Rothkopf argues that energy security can be achieved through changes in domestic policies, or creating what he calls a “new energy paradigm” (192). Rothkopf states three actions which are part of a new domestic energy policy: diversification, conservation, and innovation. Diversification of energy sources is to be achieved by obtaining more than one energy type from a variety of sources to end dependence on oil and Middle Eastern supplier states (193 – 4). Additionally, he argues domestic energy conservation would significantly decrease an oil importer’s dependence on foreign energy supplies. For example, he writes that new
energy efficient appliances in American homes could eliminate the need for as many as 40 power plants nationwide equaling the emissions of 12 million cars (195). By eliminating greenhouse gases, this initiative would also promote environmental friendliness and sustainability, which Brenda Shaffer argues is a key step to enhancing energy security (91). Finally, Rothkopf believes innovation will lead to the diversification and conservation needed to increase energy security. Notably, he points out that increasing fuel efficiency in automobiles to achieve 35 miles per gallon would not only cut the amount of imported foreign oil, but would allow the United States to invest the money saved from oil imports and potentially create 241,000 jobs nationwide by 2020 (195).

**International Energy Policies**

Jean-Marie Chevalier predicts that the history of the twenty-first century will be shaped through a series of permanent battles and conflicts. Further, he writes many of these conflicts will be political clashes between individuals, corporations, and government institutions over access to energy resources. Recent oil consumption and growth trends demonstrate that Chevalier’s prediction could be correct. As global oil prices and demand continue to rise, the geopolitics of energy is a major concern for both net oil importing and net oil exporting countries. Importers and exporters are linked together through their international energy policies. Oil exporting countries and oil importers are faced with concerns such as preventing the development of resource nationalism (the tendency of the state to obtain absolute economic, logistic, and political control over natural resource industries), anticipating and planning for changes in the security of long-term demand, avoiding the potential political instability that an economy
based on a single natural resource can cause and preventing “Dutch Disease” (the
tendency to overinvest in a resource industry to the detriment of manufacturing industries
and economic growth) (Chevalier 8; Goldstein et. al 69 -71).

It is difficult to determine at what point energy policies became more than just
trade relationships between countries. In the 1920’s, the United States government
designated federal public lands which produced oil as Naval Petroleum Reserves, from
which oil could be made available to the US Navy in times of war (Kash and Rycroft 6).
This legislation shows the government’s recognition of the vital role that oil played in
national security long before access to oil became a decisive factor in military victory.
After World War I, despite a surplus of domestic oil production, the United States
demonstrated clear unease over Britain’s vast global oil operations, especially compared
to American companies’ minimal presence in overseas oil exploration (Randall 13). The
link between national security and access to oil was again evident when multiple advisors
to President Wilson, including the director of research for the American Petroleum
Institute (API), Harry Garfield, warned the President that nearly forty percent of the
United States’ domestic oil supply was exhausted and that the US could not afford to
allow Britain to control the global oil supplies necessary to the maintenance of US
industries and the US Navy (Randall 13-14). As a result, the API and the American
Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineering recommended that the United States
form a more active foreign oil policy, including reciprocity with Britain which would
allow for mutual concessions on trade restrictions and facilitate the entry of American oil
companies into overseas oil exploration operations (Randall 16-17). By 1928, the US
concluded negotiations with Britain and the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPC) over
American oil companies’ participation in oil exploration and production in Iraq (Randall 40). Through the 1920’s and 1930’s American oil companies continued to increase overseas oil production in the Middle East, Latin America, and in the Dutch East Indies.

While American oil operations overseas were initially intended to ensure security of oil supply and the United States mainly focused on trade policies, the growing US presence in the international oil market resulted in increasing ties between oil policy and foreign policy. Countries began to realize oil, or denying access to oil, could be employed as a weapon. One of the earliest and most notable examples of this link is the United State’s oil embargo on Japan in 1941. In response to the Japanese military move into South East Asia, the United States placed an oil embargo on Japan (Utley 137). Because Japan relied on the US for 80% of its oil supply, the US believed the Japanese military would be unable to continue fighting in the war if an oil embargo was enacted (Stern 1650; Utley 137). The link between energy policies and foreign policies is also evident in the energy crisis of 1973 when the oil exporting Arab states instituted an oil embargo on the United States to protest US aid to Israel during the Yom Kippur War. This link was evident again in 1995, when the United States enacted a total embargo on Iran which ended purchases of Iranian oil by American companies equaling $4 billion, or one fifth of Iran’s oil revenues as a protest to Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons and support of terrorism (“Iran Embargo”).

Today oil is the most traded commodity in the world (Shaffer 15). With such an enormous global market, all countries’ energy policies have an international facet. Shaffer claims that because a change in supply and/or demand affects oil prices everywhere oil creates an international system of interdependency which thus creates a
link between countries foreign and energy policies (28). Oil prices may be cyclical, but Shaffer argues that the policies of oil producers and consumers can affect the length of the cycle segments, at times creating and maintaining high prices and at other times decreasing prices (15). She also points out that with over 75% of the world’s oil controlled by state owned companies, importing countries may attempt to coerce others to implement domestic policies which are friendly to the importing country’s foreign and energy policy goals as the sale of oil to large importers would account for significant majority of government revenue for the exporting countries (29). Shaffer discounts predictions by Henry Kissinger and U.S. Senator Richard Lugar that future international conflicts will be the result of fighting over access to energy sources. She points out that such arguments are “antiquated” because oil exporting and oil importing states are too economically interdependent to isolate each other through conflict. Further, she argues that during a conflict securing energy supplies would require the military strength to control access to the natural petroleum resources and to ensure international transportation of oil supplies, a task which would be impossible during a time of war (67). While Shaffer’s arguments may be true for countries such as Bulgaria seeking to assert control over a Russian-supplied natural gas line, they do not necessarily hold for countries such as the United States, China, or Russia who have the military capability to better control access to energy supplies and the ability to transport energy supplies long distances. Shaffer makes an exception for oil producing states which may enter into conflict over access to a cross border oil deposit. Shaffer believes that because oil deposits could be accessed either partially or fully from either side of a border, neighboring states may fight to obtain sole access to the energy supply (68).
The literature often notes that net oil importers may tie their energy policies to their foreign policy objectives. This appears to be the case for the United States. During the Reagan administration in the 1980’s the United States initially refused to sanction or cut diplomatic ties with South Africa in order to encourage the abolition of apartheid. Instead, the Reagan administration employed a policy termed “constructive engagement”, in which the US argued it needed to maintain trade and diplomatic relations with South Africa if the US was to influence the country’s nationalist white leaders to end South Africa’s apartheid system (Ungar and Vale 234). Reagan eventually enacted sanctions against South Africa over its failure to abolish apartheid; however, while constructive engagement was in effect, US trade with South Africa increased, including the export of military equipment (Ungar and Vale 236). Constructive engagement was viewed as a major failure and embarrassment in US foreign policy (Ungar and Vale 249-251). More recent policy decisions indicate the US has moved away from constructive engagement. Brenda Shaffer argues that, while the main concern of US energy policy is to establish energy independence, the United States has also used sanctions and market denial against energy suppliers to promote its foreign policy (138). Notably, Shaffer points out three examples. First, the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act in 1996 imposed sanctions on companies that invested over $20 million annually in Iranian oil. This was a response to Iran’s growing nuclear energy program which was deemed a threat to the national security interests of the United States and its ally, Israel. Second, she notes the sanctions imposed on Sudan in 1997 due to its human rights violations and ongoing genocide (138). Finally, as a third example, Shaffer cites the sanctions imposed on Syria in 2003 over its
assistance to Saddam Hussein and support for terrorism (138). Although not mentioned by Shaffer, another example is the US’s 1995 total trade embargo on Iran due to Iranian support of terrorism and development of nuclear weapons (“Iran Embargo”). What Shaffer fails to discuss is attempts by the United States, if any, to use its energy policies to reward or encourage energy suppliers to pursue policies friendly to US interests, rather than punishing suppliers for policies which go against US interests.

There is some evidence to support the argument that the United States does use its energy policies and energy deals as leverage or rewards for those countries which pursue policies favorable to the US. At least rhetorically, the United States seeks to utilize its oil policies as leverage to pressure African countries to strive for good governance and improve human rights records. However, American lawmakers have stated that they believe such goals cannot be accomplished unilaterally. Recent US Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs meeting minutes reveal a strategy among lawmakers to engage other oil importing countries to follow the United States’ lead. A joint statement by James Swan and Thomas Christensen notes that the major concerns for the United States regarding Chinese energy policies in Africa are issues which affect United States’ foreign policy goals for Africa such as promoting democracy, government transparency, and human rights. The statement concluded “[W]e engage at multiple levels to influence Chinese actions on issues such as good governance, human rights, and transparency – issues that we believe should play as prominent a role in Chinese Africa policy as in ours [The United States’ policy]” (“China in Africa” 12).

In his article, Rothkopf explores possible ways that US energy policies could be used to promote other US interests. He lists several links between US foreign policy and
energy policy. First, Rothkopf argues that by diversifying US energy supplies to reduce the amount of money paid to Middle Eastern suppliers, the United States would limit funding provided to Islamic extremist groups (189). Rothkopf also believes that US oil imports support international anti-American leaders such as Putin, Chávez, and Ahmadinejad. Similar to his argument regarding funding to extremist groups, Rothkopf contends that by reducing the amount of oil the United States imports, the US can reduce the amount of funding and influence these leaders have (189). Further, he claims that reducing our dependence on Middle Eastern oil will reduce the need for the United States to intervene militarily in the region to promote or maintain stability (189). But for Rothkopf, reducing oil imports could lessen the United States’ involvement in not only the Middle East but other regions as well. He asserts that reduced oil imports, replaced by renewable energy supplies (wind, hydroelectric, solar, etc.), will lessen the likelihood of future conflict between the United States and growing superpowers such as China and India over access to energy resources. Rothkopf strongly believes that the development and subsequent use of new renewable energy sources would additionally help the United States by encouraging the formation of new cooperative relationships, such as the US-Brazilian effort to develop and promote biofuel use (189 – 90). Finally, Rothkopf reiterates the widely accepted belief that reducing dependence on fossil fuels will help curb global warming (which he claims to be a key interest of the United States) and reduce vulnerability to global economic pressure by decreasing our trade deficits and national debt (190).

However persuasive Rothkopf’s arguments are on the surface, he fails to explore several important concerns. First, he fails to fully determine if ceasing to import oil from
countries suspected of harboring and supporting terrorism would in turn reduce the amount of oil revenues the country receives drastically enough to reverse their support of terrorism. With China and India importing increasing amounts of petroleum every year, it is possible that any decrease in oil exports from Middle Eastern countries to the United States would be offset by increased demand from other countries resulting in little to no loss of income for the suppliers. However, even if this is not the case then there still remains a problem with Rothkopf’s argument. If the United States does purchase enough oil to seriously impact a Middle Eastern country’s revenue and the loss of profits of these imports cannot be balanced by increased oil imports from another country such as China, then that suggests a situation in which the United States can use its oil imports as important and valuable leverage to its advantage when negotiating with Middle Eastern countries over matters of national security such as the global war on terrorism. Rothkopf also fails to explore the consequences of developing alternative energy supplies.

Currently, the infrastructure needed to the power the country with renewable energy is not in place. Additionally, a renewable energy source for mass transit and personal vehicles is not widely available or widely utilized. The United States will not be able to reduce oil imports until renewable energy is logistically feasible.

**Current Chinese Energy Policies**

Some research argues that, unlike the United States, China is not seeking to use its energy policies as leverage to promote democracy. For example, the EIA states that China’s demand for and reliance on oil imports drive Chinese energy policies. However, this does not necessarily mean that Chinese energy policy drives Chinese foreign policy. In 1954, Chinese leader Mao Zedong announced the “Five Principles of Peaceful
Coexistence.” One of these principles is non-interference in other states’ domestic affairs. The principles set a standard for Chinese foreign relations. While the non-interference policy was originally intended to support China’s foreign policy with India regarding Tibet, it was soon applied to Sino-African relations and embraced by African countries in 1955 at the Asian-African Bandung Conference (Raine 15).

Over the years, Chinese policy has varied in rhetoric and practice. Early in Sino-African relations, Mao Zedong advocated Chinese support of African independence movements (Raine 16). This is non-interventionist policy has its roots in the beginnings of China’s soft power policy. For Mao, and for China today, employing soft power means the use of any means outside of the military and security realm which would increase China’s attractiveness, or “name brand”, to other countries (Kurlantzick 5-6). In 1955 at the Bandung Conference, in an attempt to develop closer ties with other developing countries, China promoted itself as a model for African and Asian developing countries (Kurlantzick 13). Although China imported no oil in the 1950’s, international conferences such as this set the stage for China to increase the attractiveness of its name brand as a model for economic and social development. China’s model is especially attractive to authoritarian regimes in developing nations as it does not call for political liberalization (Kurlantzick 56-57). Moreover, China’s respect for sovereignty along with foreign aid was an attractive policy for post-colonial African states emerging at the time. In 1964, while visiting Somalia during a tour of Africa, Premier Zhou Enlai announced the “Eight Principles Governing China’s Economic and Technological Assistance to Foreign Countries”, which slightly expanded the policy set forth in the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” by mandating that a recipient government’s sovereignty would
be respected by China when receiving foreign aid (Raine 17). However, China’s soft power was not always successful. In the mid-1970’s, Chinese support of revolutionary movements in African countries alienated many national governments which cut off ties with China until the 1980’s when Deng Xiaoping assumed political power in China and improved China’s international image by maintaining a low profile in global affairs (Kurlantzick 14, 16-17).

In the late 1980’s and mid-1990’s, younger and more educated Chinese rose to positions of political power in China (Kurlantzick 30-31). These more educated politicians, often Western educated, believed China could no longer rely on the US and should instead take a more active role in international politics than it had during Deng’s leadership. In the early 2000’s China began a policy that Joshua Kurlantzick terms the “Charm Offensive,” a policy in which wooing, not intimidating, would be the method of achieving peace, stability, and development (37-39). Chinese President Hu Jintao expanded China’s Eight Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and hinted at this new, active role in international politics at the Forum on China-African Cooperation in November of 2006 when he announced the “Six Pillars of Sino-African Relations,” which reiterated non-interference, emphasized African ownership of African problems, and called upon the international community to pay closer attention to African issues and promote African development (Corkin 2). It was also during this time that China’s soft power began to focus not only on peace and stability, but on the need for natural resources and China’s dependence on imported energy. In 2006 alone, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao mentioned China’s dependence on mineral imports 28 times in his speeches. Even more telling, Wen created an internal Chinese government task force staffed by prominent Chinese officials
to focus on China’s growing energy needs (Kurlantzick 40-41). To help meet its energy needs, China employed soft power in the form of business development and financial aid. Between 2002 and 2007, Chinese firms purchased $15 billion in oil and gas fields and companies worldwide (Kurlantzick 90). By 2007, nine hundred Chinese companies were invested in Africa (Kurlantzick 88). Business development and aid weren’t solely directed to African countries, but to other developing countries as well. In 2004 Hu Jintao pledged $100 billion in investment to Argentina and Brazil while the same year China provided $1.5 billion in aid to Asian countries (Kurlantzick 87, 98).

China’s focus on energy continues. Recently has China reestablished a National Energy Commission, effective 27 January 2010 (Zhiyue 2). Chinese oil policies are complicated by the fact that it is national oil companies, not necessarily the Chinese government, that make energy policy decisions, especially abroad (Shaffer 147). Some scholars, such as Bo Kong, closely examine the role that Chinese national oil companies (NOC’s) play in the formation for Chinese petroleum policies. Kong argues that currently the Chinese national government and Chinese NOC’s co-govern and co-implement Chinese oil policies (5-6). Kong writes that the increasing complexity and subsequent problems in the Chinese oil industry were due to four factors: supply and demand were preset by a government planned target, lack of incentive to increase production due to artificially low pricing strategy created by the government, lack of funding by the Chinese government (the sole source of investment in the oil industry), and the soaring costs associated with the Chinese Petroleum Administration Bureau’s (PABs) mass oil exploration campaigns (9). To address these concerns China created three NOC’s: China National Oil Offshore Corporation (CNOOC), Sinopec, and China National Petroleum
Corporation (CNPC) (Kong 9). According to Kong, the decentralization of China’s oil industry reduced the central government’s power over the national oil companies and the oil industry as a whole (10).

China’s National Energy Administration (NEA) maintains vice-ministerial status which gives it authority over lower ranking petroleum bureaucracies while allowing the NOCs to retain all operational autonomy (Kong 18-19). Kong argues that this created a split in interests between the national oil companies and the Chinese government. While the NOCs are seeking to implement oil policies which promote commercial interests, the Chinese government is pursuing policies which serve both the economic and political interests of the China (Kong 23). For example, one purpose of the Chinese national oil companies is to ensure that between one-third and one-half of China’s total oil imports will be comprised of “equity oil” or the portion of crude production that Chinese NOCs have the legal and contractual right to retain or sell as a guarantee on investment under the production-sharing agreements (Kong 92). While “equity oil” will cut down the total amount of oil Chinese NOCs can sell on the international market, it will increase energy security for China during times of market turbulence and instability. However, to reinforce its grip on strategic control of the oil industry, the CPC established Discipline and Inspection Groups which act as a watchdog for all state owned assets in each of the three NOCs and their subsidiaries and bear the responsibility of ensuring that all of the national oil companies’ strategic decisions fall in line with CPC policies (Kong 25).

Not all scholars agree with Kong that Chinese NOC interests and the interests of the Chinese government will diverge. Some scholars argue that the Chinese government and Chinese NOCs’ policies coincide and thus can be easily analyzed and predicted. For
example, in their article, “Searching for Oil: China’s Oil Strategies in Africa,” Henry Lee and Dan Shalmon argue that China’s state strategic control over Chinese NOCs will necessitate a combination of oil policies with Chinese foreign policies in both the economic and diplomatic realms (Lee and Shalmon 111). Even though Lee and Shalmon acknowledge that the Chinese government turned over operational control to the Chinese NOCs, they assert that because the Chinese government can intervene legally in the business operations of the NOCs and because most senior officials at Chinese NOCs aspire to be government officials, the influence of the Chinese government is impossible for the NOCs to ignore (Lee and Shalmon 114). This influence in turn almost always assures that Chinese NOCs will practice the policies in line with those of the Chinese government.

However, even if the interests of the NOCs and the Chinese government may sometimes diverge, one can forecast and analyze Chinese petroleum policies by observing the policies of the Chinese government since the government has retained strategic control over the NOCs’ operations. One of the most pressing concerns for the Chinese government is energy security. To address this concern the government has instituted a “going out” policy for Chinese NOCs (Shaffer 145). On October 11, 2000, Chinese President Jiang explained that insufficient Chinese domestic oil supplies, international oil shortages, and increasing fluctuations in the international oil markets made it strategically necessary for China to “‘go out,’ actively explore and develop resources abroad through various means, and diversify petroleum imports” in order to sustain the current levels of economic growth in China (Kong 46). Kong argues that the “going out” strategy has become China’s official petroleum policy, evidenced by its
enshrinement in the Tenth Five-Year Plan in March 2001. In the Tenth Five-Year Plan, the Chinese government proposed that China more actively utilize foreign oil resources, establish overseas oil supply bases, and diversify sources of petroleum imports among other initiatives as methods to enhance petroleum supply and guarantee energy security (“Tenth Five-Year Plan”). Like Kong, Lee and Shalmon believe that China’s struggle with localized energy shortages and their reliance on petroleum to fuel its booming economy and population growth have driven China to actively seek oil supplies from abroad (110 – 111). They argue that a central element of China’s energy policy is a “going abroad” strategy to seek foreign sources of petroleum from areas where oil reserves are expected to grow and where China can exert more influence than other oil importing countries, specifically Western countries (113-114). Shaffer also finds that China’s overall energy policy now includes a “going out” strategy. Specifically, she notes that the growing Chinese demand for imported oil has led Beijing to pursue long-term oil supply contracts with foreign production companies instead of relying on short-term market exchanges for oil to guarantee energy security (Shaffer 146).

By exploring Chinese government documents, such as the Special Energy Plan for the Tenth Five-Year Plan, Kong finds three strategies among the Chinese government’s international petroleum policies have led China to allocate more overseas oil investment from 1992 – 2009 in Africa than any other region of the world: China’s going-out strategy, diversification goal, and desire for globally competitive flagship oil companies (Kong 58, 65). To facilitate their African oil investments, Kong finds that Chinese NOC’s and the Chinese government have employed a tactic known as petroleum diplomacy. Kong defines China’s petroleum diplomacy as the intersection between the pursuit of one
country’s petroleum interests and its diplomatic interests, with one morphing into the realm of the other (117). Both oil importing and oil exporting countries engage in petroleum diplomacy, but for oil importing countries, Kong argues, diplomacy supplies the means to petroleum supplies, the end (118).

Other scholars agree with many of the previous authors’ assessments regarding China’s petroleum policy. For example, in her article “New Africa Policy: China’s Quest for Oil and Influence,” Wei Liang examines a slew of recent Chinese foreign aid to Africa. Liang argues that the billions of dollars spent in aid to Africa cover not just the same areas as Western donors, such as health care and education, but also areas which Western donors have long ignored, such as infrastructure, industry, and agriculture (159-60). Liang believes much of China’s foreign aid is given as means to exert influence to increase trade, especially in petroleum. Wenran Jiang’s article “China’s Emerging Partnerships in Africa” corroborates Liang’s argument. Jiang points out that China has provided African countries with over $44 billion in aid for approximately 900 infrastructure projects in the past 50 years and that over half of China’s $950 million in aid went to African countries in 2005 (52 - 3). Further, he lists a slew of aid projects which Chinese President Hu promised to Africa as part of China’s “Year of Africa” 2006 gathering in Beijing (52). These included doubling bilateral trade by 2010, establishing a $5 billion China-Africa development fund, working with African governments to establish Special Economic Zones in Africa to facilitate trade, providing $3 billion in preferential loans to Africa, cancelling $1 billion in African debt, signing trade deals worth $1.9 billion, providing a $37.5 million grant for antimalarial drugs, building 30 hospitals and 30 additional treatment centers for malaria, building 100 rural schools and
doubling the number of scholarships for study abroad students from Africa in China (52-3).

Like Wei Liang, Jiang also believes China’s investment in Africa comes with a price tag. China expects access to natural resources, most importantly oil, in return for their aid. Underscoring this point, he writes that in 2003 President Hu and Premier Wen traveled with Chinese oil executives to several oil-producing African states and three years later, in 2006, Africa supplied nearly 30 percent of China’s total oil imports (53). Agreeing with Jiang, Liang believes this aid was given primarily for access to oil. In fact, Liang goes as far as to claim that natural resources, notably oil, are the most significant factor in China’s renewed interest in Africa (158). However, according to Liang, natural resources are not the sole factor in China’s activity in Africa. Another benefit of increasing aid to African countries is opening up a new export markets. China is continuously seeking to find new markets for their growing exports, and African countries’ developing economies provide an excellent customer base for their inexpensive manufactured goods (Liang 161). While Liang does not formally define China’s activities in Africa as petroleum diplomacy, her description of China’s practice of giving aid in return for oil and political recognition falls completely within the parameters of the petroleum diplomacy described by Kong.

Kong claims that the Chinese government varies its petroleum diplomacy tactics in three ways, depending on the type of oil exporting state with which the Chinese government is engaging. One set of tactics is used for oil rich countries, another for oil transporting countries, and a third set for countries over which China’s pursuit of oil may conflict with a third party’s interest (119). For example, Kong points out that Sinopec’s
expansion in Iran has aroused protests from the United States (120). Chinese petroleum diplomacy with Africa falls under the first set of tactics. China’s bilateral petroleum diplomacy with oil rich African countries includes high level official visits, developmental aid, debt cancellation, zero and low interests loans, and infrastructure development financing (Kong 121). Tactics such as the ones Kong describes help to achieve the political image that Liang argues China is attempting to create of itself in Africa, via soft power. According to Liang, there are five components to this political image. First, China is attempting to capitalize on its image as a ‘Cold War’ friend to Africa and benefit from the investment it gave during the 1960’s, despite struggling with its own poverty (162). Other components of its desired political image include non-interference, promotion of equality and partnership, persuasion over coercion, and mutually beneficial “win-win” relationships (Liang 161-63). However, Liang warns that China’s policy of noninterference may become its own undoing. She writes that tensions among sub-state and non-state actors who wish to retain or regain regional control over oil resources (for example the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta) in Africa have worsened due to China’s state-centric involvement on the continent (167). In support of this argument, Liang cites a poll conducted in ten Cameroonian cities in which over three-fourths of the respondents believed China does not help the local economy (167). Further, she points out that non-governmental organizations have accused China of racism and neo-colonialism, claiming that China either lacks the capacity or willfully chooses not to engage domestic groups and civil society (167). If China wishes to create an image of partnership and equality, continued and growing frustration among
grassroots groups in Africa may ultimately work to escalate domestic conflict and subsequently hinder the development of strong Sino-African relationships.

Despite the continuous updates to China’s Five-Year Plans, multiple changes to the state energy bureaucracy, and the creation of Chinese national oil companies, the rhetoric of China’s policy of non-interference remains largely unchanged since China became a net importer of oil in 1993. If Chinese policy is taken at face value, it appears extremely unlikely that China will use its energy policies as leverage to encourage African governments to meet good governance and human rights standards as the United States wishes. If the literature is correct, it seems most likely that China will use its economic influence and foreign relations as tools to promote petroleum diplomacy and secure long-term petroleum supplies from abroad.

**Chinese Impact on American Foreign Policy Objectives**

*Minimal to No Impact*

Scholars and researchers disagree over the impact that Chinese economic involvement in Africa has had and/or will have on US foreign policy objectives in Africa. Additionally, disagreement exists regarding the impact of Chinese economic involvement on the level of oil exports the US receives from Africa. One argument advanced by researchers such as Erica Downs is that, while Chinese importation and consumption of oil is increasing, China poses no threat to US access to African oil exports nor does it hinder American foreign policy objectives in Africa. Downs claims that Chinese oil companies are not dominating the oil industry in Africa (43 – 44). Rather, Downs notes that Chinese NOCs are minor actors in many African oil producing states, including
Nigeria, Angola, and Sudan (44). Raine also finds that skeptics of the Chinese impact in Africa have some convincing statistics on their side. The majority of African oil exports currently go to the United States and the European Union. Additionally, Western oil companies in Africa still produce more oil than Chinese NOCs (Raine 52). Raine also notes that some statistics demonstrate that the level of Chinese economic involvement in Africa is rather minimal. For example, Raine points out that African bilateral trade with China does not exceed the bilateral trade with South Korea, and that only 3% of Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) went to Africa in 2005 (Raine 52). A report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development found that Chinese FDI to Africa remained the same in 2007, at 3% of China’s total FDI (“Asian Foreign Direct Investment”).

Other scholars maintain that China’s economic impact in Africa is significant, but claim that it can be beneficial for African states. For example, in her article “Is China the Key to Africa’s Development?” Eliza Barclay argues that increased trade with China could improve living conditions for Africans. She writes that cheap Chinese imports entering African markets create an opportunity for poor and middle-class Africans to buy goods they otherwise could not afford. While Barclay admits that the advantages of natural resource export economies do not often benefit the African working class, she believes steps can be taken to maximize these benefits for communities as a whole. For instance, Barclay advocates processing natural resources before exporting them to increase the number of jobs available to Africans. However, Barclay does not explore the possibility that this solution may lead to the development of “Dutch Disease,” or an
overinvestment in resource industries which causes economic detriment to a state’s other industrial and agricultural sectors.

Shaffer argues that the development of Dutch Disease causes political instability and economic instability. First, because after an overinvestment in the energy sector and volatile oil prices, a major price drop in the oil industry can crash the economy and make long term stability impossible (20). She writes that a price drop and lowered resource derived revenue make it impossible for the government of an oil exporting state to meet public demands, resulting in civil unrest (20). Further, the exporting state does not perform well economically because energy exports create little employment opportunities for the populace, provide little incentive for economic reform during boom periods, and provide little means for economic reform when prices fall (20). Finally, Shaffer argues that during boom periods, the government of an energy exporting state is likely to seize control and nationalize the energy sector in order to profit as much as possible from high prices, a process that she refers to as resource nationalism (30).

Other scholars, such as Marie-Claire Aoun, have found high levels of corruption when resource nationalism occurs. Aoun examines how the domestic policies of oil-producing Middle Eastern and North African countries can lead to poor governance. She notes that countries which are major oil exporters ranked among the lowest scores for good governance. Aoun argues that oil rich countries often struggle with implementing democratic, transparent government institutions and experience civil conflict or political instability (154). One reason this occurs, according to Aoun, is because oil producing countries develop rent-seeking policies which substitute dependence on taxation for dependence on oil revenues for income (157). According to Aoun, this dependence on oil
revenues is associated with higher levels of corruption and decreased transparency because money is often channeled to individuals or groups in power. Further, Aoun notes that the corruption associated with increasing oil revenues can lead to institutional collapse and cause civil and/or political unrest (160). Aoun’s argument implies the impact of China on each case’s Freedom House scores may be negligible or even nonexistent.

In his book, *State Power, Autarchy, and Political Conquest in Nigerian Federalism*, Kalu Kalu makes a similar argument to Aoun’s. Kalu argues that Nigeria’s poor governance and civil violence is due to rentier policies that are created by and inherent of systemic and structural problems in Nigerian governments. For example, he argues that it was the creation of twelve states by General Gowon in 1967 which “used the territorial location of oil resources as its primary criteria in the political and economic dismemberment of the Eastern Region” turning “a war fought for the preservation of rights” into the Biafran War, a “war over oil and territorial control” (Kalu 126).

According to Kalu, the link between territory, resources, and political power created a cycle of prevalent government corruption established by the military and perpetuated by civilian government officials upon taking office (Kalu 2). He characterizes this corruption cycle as political mining, or “the relentless quest and use of politics as means of securing instrumental rewards” (Kalu 128). While Kalu acknowledges the role oil has played in supporting flawed anti-democratic government in Nigeria, he argues that the policies of the states which buy Nigerian oil matter very little or not at all if the Nigerian government remains corrupt and systemic flaws remain unaddressed.
One can infer from the above arguments of Shaffer, Aoun, and Kalu, that it is not simply the policies or agendas of oil importing countries which may destabilize an oil exporting country. Oil exports may be an intrinsic source of instability, regardless of other countries’ foreign policies or economic involvement. If the development of Dutch Disease (and the poor governance which is often found alongside it) is linked intrinsically to the possession of high priced natural resources, then the impact of a Chinese economic presence may do little to influence the accomplishment of US foreign policy goals. For example, if the United States is seeking to democratize and stabilize a country which happens to be a major oil exporter, such as Iraq, the main obstacle is the corruption and political unrest resulting for poor management of natural resources, not the influence of third parties importing goods from the country.

Another argument is that the extent of Chinese economic involvement, specifically foreign aid, and their political motives (i.e. reducing the number of states which officially recognize Taiwan as an independent state) in Africa is overblown. A skeptic of the potential impact of Chinese economic involvement, Thomas J. Christensen, testified to Congress that China’s foreign aid to Africa should be kept in perspective, as it amounts to only a third, at the most, of the amount of foreign aid the United States contributes each year to Africa (“China in Africa” 5). Further, Christensen noted that taken as a whole, the oil production of Chinese NOC’s in Africa amounts to only one third of the total production of ExxonMobil alone (“China in Africa” 5). Erica Downs agrees with Christensen and argues that China has no anti-Western motives in its search for African oil supplies. In her research, Downs finds that the Chinese government does
not have a “highly coordinated” oil policy which is removing oil from the world markets and such an impact is highly exaggerated (Downs 52).

According to Kong, China’s latecomer status to the international oil market has caused China to pursue oil in countries not already dominated by Western oil interests (133). Kong argues that China’s presence in countries such as Sudan and Iran implicate Beijing in local conflicts even if China’s oil policies have had little to no impact. To counter this negative perception of its petroleum policies, Kong argues that China is attempting to work multilaterally to promote stability in oil producing countries. For example, he notes President Hu’s proposal at a 17 July 2006 meeting of the Group of Eight which called upon the international community to cooperatively promote stability and security in oil producing countries, specifically the Middle East (136). However, Kong does not address other motives for China’s proposal, notably, the difference between Chinese rhetoric and action. China has done little to promote stability in Sudan, for example, despite the international community’s pressure to use their economic influence to help end the crisis in Darfur. Additionally, Kong’s interpretation of Hu’s proposal as a means to mitigate China’s implication in international crises seems naïve. An alternative interpretation could also be that China benefits greatly from increased stability and security in oil producing states. The greater the stability and security in an oil producing state, the greater the stability and security of China’s oil supply from that state. The difference between Chinese policy in rhetoric and practice, notably on a case by case basis, is a significant gap in the literature on Chinese petroleum diplomacy. Unfortunately, Kong does not discuss any alternative interpretations, nor does any of the other literature on this subject.
Significant Impact

Data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development demonstrates that from 1995 to 2004, oil imports to industrialized countries fell for all oil exporting African countries with the exception of Zambia. Further, their data show that, with the exception of Nigeria and Zambia, oil exports to China rose significantly for all oil exporting African countries during the same time period (Goldstein et. al 46). It could be argued that this increase in oil exports to China is due more to the growth of China’s domestic markets and G.D.P than a Chinese economic presence in Africa. However, the same study also demonstrates that oil exports from African countries to India have decreased for five out of nine oil exporting states despite the fact that both India and China have experienced similar gross domestic product growth rates (Goldstein et al 47). Even though Raine addresses current statistics which demonstrate that the impact of China may be overblown, she finds that, when projected into the future, statistics support arguments that China’s economic engagement in Africa and demand for African oil imports could create competition with the United States. Specifically, Raine points to the World Energy Outlook Report from 2007 which projected that China will need to import 80% of its oil by 2030 if China’s gross domestic product and population growth increase steadily over the next 20 years (Raine 53; World Energy Outlook 2007: China and India Insights 284). Raine notes that China’s government pledges to increase African oil imports by 7% within five to ten years, while the US intends to increase African oil imports 10% by 2015 (53). Additionally, Raine states that Africa’s total number of all exports to China are increasing at two and half times the rate of Africa’s total number of all exports to the US and four and a half times the rate of Africa’s total number of all
exports to the European Union (53). These projections support concerns that China and the United States may soon be competing for the same African oil exports. Moreover, China seeks not only to increase oil imports from Africa, but also to increase and strengthen its economic presence on the continent by engaging in African markets and developing Chinese NOCs within Africa. *The China Daily*, a state controlled newspaper responsible for reporting on Chinese government policies for English-speaking audiences, confirms that China seeks to increase its total trade with Africa. In 2007, the newspaper reported that Chinese trade with Africa is set to top $100 billion by 2010 (“China's FDI in Africa”). This figure was already achieved by 2008, when Chinese trade with Africa reached a record $106 billion, an increase of 45% from 2007 (“China-Africa Trade Up”).

In light of these statistics, some scholars believe that increased levels of Chinese oil imports from and an increased Chinese economic presence in African oil producing states directly affects US supplies of oil and hinders the success of US policy goals in these countries. One such view holds that foreign aid may hinder the development of democracy if donor countries are not sincere in their commitment to reform. For example, Thad Dunning writes that when two opposing donors are competing for influence within the same region, one donor’s commitment to reform may waiver if imposing such reform results in losing leverage over the recipient country to the opposing donor country (Dunning 411). Such is the case in Africa today. American lawmakers have advocated using American energy policies and foreign aid to achieve foreign policy objectives in Africa such as promoting good governance and human rights, encouraging governments to take steps toward democracy or ensuring democratic governments remain
in power, and exerting pressure on Sudan to peacefully resolve the crisis in Darfur. However, as Raine explains, contemporary Chinese policy regarding its economic presence in Africa stems from Zhou’s “Eight Principles Governing China’s Economic and Technological Assistance to Foreign Countries” which requires China to respect a recipient state’s sovereignty (7). Therefore, the presence of Chinese involvement in the oil sector plus Chinese foreign aid coupled with a policy of non-involvement may make it impossible for the alternate US influence to exert the required pressure to urge African governments to reform.

Wei Liang also agrees that China’s involvement in Africa can pose challenges to US foreign policy. She notes that the absence of democracy, human rights protection, industry deregulation and privatization as prerequisites to trade and investment, make China a more attractive trading partner than many Western countries (164). Specifically, she notes that China’s tolerance of rogue states such as Sudan, despite grave human rights violations, along with China’s use of soft loans and political support provide African governments with alternative offers and more leverage to resist Western pressure for domestic reforms and democratization (165). Liang argues that by increasing their relations with rogue states, China also increases its leverage with the United States and its importance in international affairs, evidenced by the fact that the US now sees China as a key player in convincing the Sudanese government to end the conflict in Darfur (165). At the very least, Liang claims, China is providing African countries with an alternative political model of a non-democratic, but economically thriving state, a sharp contrast to the democratic capitalist model Western countries wish to promote (164).
While Shaffer generally argues that Dutch Disease can be an intrinsic source of instability, she finds that in the case of many developing countries China’s policy of noninterference is undermining US efforts to promote human rights and democracy abroad. She points specifically to a 2006 report by the U.S. Department of Energy which states that Chinese ties with rogue oil producing states “runs counter to key strategic goals of the United States” (85). Despite this argument, Shaffer concludes that China and the United States have more shared interests than not and conflict between the two countries over energy is unlikely. First, she notes that oil is likely the only energy source over which the two would come into conflict as they do not compete for other energy resources (86). Thus Shaffer finds that the world supply of oil is able to currently meet and actually supersede global demand, reducing the potential for conflict over access to oil supplies (87). One concern about future conflict Shaffer expresses is that China relies on long-term sales arrangements with oil suppliers, rather than international oil markets to acquire its supplies (87). This diminishes the amount of oil available for export to other countries. Although, as noted earlier, scholars such as Kong find that currently and in the near future, most of China’s oil equity acquired through long-term sales contracts will be sold on the international market. While Shaffer may be correct in asserting that the United States and China will not engage in conflict over access to oil, her assessment completely ignores the possible effects of China’s petroleum diplomacy in Africa on US foreign policy objectives.

Gaps in Research

While much has been written on Chinese petroleum diplomacy in Africa, very little research has covered the impact of China’s petroleum diplomacy on US foreign
policy objectives. A systematic study of the effects China’s petroleum diplomacy and how it may or may not impact the foreign policy goals of the United States in Africa remains to be completed. Such a study is difficult to conduct due to the scarcity of data. The Chinese government does not release commodity-specific trade statistics and few sources exist which provide a complete historical set of Chinese trade data. This thesis will conduct such a study to determine if an increased Chinese economic presence in Nigeria has impacted US foreign policy objectives. This study will use statistical analysis coupled with qualitative process tracing to determine if a correlation exists between an increased Chinese economic presence and less democracy, worsening human rights records, and less transparency among national governments in Nigeria.
III

NIGERIA

This chapter presents a correlation between Chinese economic involvement with Nigeria (measured by the total amount of oil exports and overall exports from Nigeria to China and the by the percentage of total exports from Nigeria to China) and Nigeria’s Freedom House scores. Freedom House releases annual reports assessing countries’ democratic freedom by analyzing multiple components of political and civil liberties. As discussed earlier, US foreign policy goals in Nigeria are similar in rhetoric to the components which Freedom House assesses in its political rights and civil liberties ratings. For example, in assessing a country’s political rights, Freedom House examines the extent to which voting is free, fair, and universal. Similarly, the United States promotes free and fair elections in its foreign policy. The extent to which US foreign policy varies in practice from its rhetoric is examined later in the process tracing section.

Presentation of Statistics

Freedom House ratings are conducted on a scale of one through seven, with seven being the least free. Nigeria’s Freedom House political rating and Freedom House civil liberty rating were each independently correlated with the percentage of Nigeria’s total exports which went to China, the US dollar amount of exports to China, and the amount of oil exports in US dollars to China for the time period of 1993-2010.
Explanation of Data

Scores for all independent variables improved overall in the long term for the years covered in this study (see Figure 6). The correlation between Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights scores and the percentage of Nigeria’s total exports to China, the correlation between Nigeria’s Freedom House civil liberties score and the percentage of Nigeria’s total exports to China, and the correlation between Nigeria’s Freedom House civil liberties score and Nigeria’s total exports to China are not statistically significant. However, three of the correlations are statistically significant (see Table 1). Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights rating is negatively correlated with the total exports to China (measured in USD) and to the amount of Nigerian oil exports to China (measured in USD). Additionally, Nigeria’s Freedom House civil liberty rating is also negatively correlated to the amount of Nigerian oil exports to China (measured in USD). These three statistically significant correlations indicate that increased Chinese economic involvement, notably in Nigeria’s oil industry, may have a positive impact on Nigeria’s Freedom House ratings. Thus, contrary to this study’s hypothesis, increased Chinese economic involvement in Nigeria’s petroleum industry is correlated which improving Freedom House political rights ratings and improving Freedom House civil liberties ratings. While this correlation is surprising, Nigeria’s improved Freedom House ratings could be due to several factors, notably the end of military rule followed by the creation of Nigeria’s constitution and establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1999.
While the data show intriguing trends and several statistically significant correlations, the data are still weak and incomplete (See Appendix Tables A1 and A2).

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7 Data in Figure 6 is derived from Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Reports for the years 1993 through 2010. Report is available online at http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world.

8 Pearson’s P-Value is the likelihood that the statistical correlation observed is due to chance. A P-Value ≤ .05 is considered the threshold to determine statistical significance of correlation.

9 Data in Table 1 is derived from the author’s calculations of the correlations between Nigeria’s Freedom House scores (obtained from Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Reports for the years 1993 through 2010) and Nigerian export data (obtained from United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database).
An additional problem is that the data are only available for a 17 year period, which significantly limits the amount of data for statistical analysis. In order to identify and better understand the trends of dependable variables and apparent statistically significant correlations, process tracing of historical, qualitative data is used to examine and expose possible reasons for each dependable variable data set and statistically significant correlation.

*Lack of Statistical Significance, Gaps in Data*

While this study finds three statistically significant correlations it also finds three of the correlations are not statistically significant. The dependent variables did not have a statistically significant correlation with the percentage of total Nigerian exports to China while Nigeria’s Freedom House civil liberties rating did not have a statistically significant correlation with Nigeria’s total exports to China measured in US dollars. Additionally, there are gaps in the data which hinder statistical analysis in this case study. Notably, the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database only contains information on Nigeria’s total petroleum exports to the world for the years 2006 - 2010. There exists no other publically accessible database which measures total Nigerian oil exports in US Dollars with which the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database could be combined to determine the percentage of Nigerian oil exports which China imported from 1993 – 2005. Moreover, intervening variables such as regime change and political and civil instability may likely have negatively impacted both Nigeria’s Freedom House scores. Consequently, the absence of some export data and the impact of possible intervening variables give this study’s process tracing more relevance. The following section provides a brief post-colonial history of Nigeria through 1993
followed by a qualitative, historical process tracing for the years 1993 through 2010 in which this study examines intervening variables to determine the impact of Chinese involvement in Nigeria’s oil industry on Nigeria’s Freedom House political liberties and civil rights scores.

**Background**

While Nigeria’s history is too rich and complex to permit a thorough discussion here, a brief look at its post-colonial past up to 1993 helps to provide a basis of understanding for its current socio-economic and political climate. The following history is organized by political regime changes in Nigerian history. This case study also examines the development of Nigeria’s oil industry and role Nigeria’s petroleum resources have played as a source of power and wealth for both military and civilian political leaders and regimes, contributing to political instability and regional violence.

**1960 – 1978: Independence, the First Republic, and Military Rule**

Nigeria gained its independence from Great Britain on 01 October 1960 and entered into the period known as the First Republic (1960 – 1966) (Akinwumi 57). The Nigerian state created upon independence in 1960 was, and still remains, a diverse country consisting of over 250 ethnic groups (Osaghae 18). Although not true in all cases, divisions among Nigeria’s ethnic groups were often reinforced by geographical divisions (Muslims generally live in the North, while Christians live in the South), religious divisions (Nigeria is split nearly evenly between Islam and Christianity with a majority of the Hausa-Fulani practicing Islam and a majority of Igbos practicing Christianity), socio-economic divisions and political inequality (Osaghae 18). Due to these reinforcing
divisions, ethnic, religious, and regional tensions persisted after gaining independence among Nigeria’s three dominant ethnic groups: the Muslim Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Christian Igbo in the East, and the religiously mixed Yoruba in the West. Akinwumi writes that the previous British colonial policies and the practices of British colonial officers contributed to regional tensions post-independence as Britain was biased toward development of the south. For example, when Nigeria became a British protectorate in 1900, the British divided the country geographically into Northern and Southern protectorates which served to reinforce geographical, religious, and ethnic divisions (Akinwumi 21). When Britain initiated a policy of amalgamation in 1914, many British officers fought unification and British colonialism established practices that contributed to inequality between Northern and Southern Nigeria. For example, Akinwumi writes that Fredrick Lugard, the Commissioner of the Northern protectorate, wanted to “prevent Northern provinces from being polluted by Southern educated elite” and thus failed to fully implement unification of the two regions (31). Lugard made an agreement with Northern Muslim leaders to shield Northern Nigeria from Western influences, including educational systems. As a result, Southern Nigeria’s education system flourished sooner and more quickly than that of the North, and by 1912 there were only 34 primary schools in Northern Nigeria while there were 150 primary and ten secondary schools in the South (Osaghae 5). Moreover, British officers in the North protectorate were especially against unification, believing that the regions were separate entities, and many, such as Lieutenant Governor Richmond Palmer, refused to apply laws passed by the Southern-based Nigerian Legislative Council to the North despite official unification (Akinwumi 34). For example, governors in the Northern protectorate settled Southern, Christian
Nigerians apart from the indigenous Muslim Nigerians in the North (Osaghae 5).

Akinwumi believes this antagonism between British colonial officers reinforced existing ethnic divisions and partly laid the foundation for future regional conflict among Nigerians post-independence (35).

It was with this divisive history that Nigeria entered into independence in 1960. In 1959 Nigerians had approved the First Republic’s constitution which divided Nigeria into three states and set up a parliamentary system of government with a judicial, a bi-cameral legislative, and an executive branch (Falola 95). The same year Nigeria held a general election in which three major political parties were elected into office: the Action Group (AG) from the West, the Northern People’s Congress (NPC), and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) from the Southeast, none having an overall majority of votes (Akinwumi 48). In order to achieve an overall majority, the NPC and the NCNC formed a political alliance in which the NPC’s deputy leader would become prime minister and the NCNC’s leader would become the governor general (and later president) when Nigeria became a republic in 1963 (Akinwumi 48). Despite opposition from the NCNC, which wished to share in the spoils of electoral victory, the NPC actively promoted Northern interests (Akinwumi 58). Notably, the NPC appointed Northern Nigerians to federal positions and ensured that most of the developments contained in the 1962 – 1968 development plan were located in the North (Akinwumi 58). Falola writes “Politics [of this era] involved primarily the ability to gain control of public resources, or the process of doing this, not for public ends, but for private ends” (108). The politicians elected to office viewed their position as an opportunity to consolidate power by funneling as many resources to their regional electoral bases as possible. Thus “[c]hanges
in government were interpreted as changes in fortunes” for Nigerians (Falola 109). The preferential appointment of Northern officials to government posts and disproportionate allocation of funds to the North by Northern Nigerian parties only reinforced existing geographical, religious, ethnic, and cultural divides (Osaghae 38 - 39). Two political parties, Nigerian National Alliance and the United Progressive Grand Alliance, contested the 1964 elections due to widespread vote rigging and election fraud (Falola 105). As a result Nigeria held new elections in 1965. By the time the 1965 elections were declared fraudulent as well, the government had lost popular support and widespread violence broke out, resulting in a military coup by Igbo officers of the Nigerian military on 15 January 1966 (Osaghae 56).

After the coup, Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi assumed control of the military regime, becoming the first military head of state (Osaghae 57, 59). From 1951 until the Ironsi’s coup in 1966, Northern military officers and politicians had been at helm of Nigeria’s political processes (Ojeleye 41). Aguiyi-Ironsi attempted to unify Nigeria by issuing the Unification Decree on 24 May 1966 which created a unitary republic of provinces and abolished the federal structure (Osaghae 59). Northern Nigerians, who viewed federalism as a means to protect regional differences, opposed the decree (Osaghae 60). Backlash against the Unification Decree, resulted in multiple attacks on civilian Igbos between May and September 1966. In three separate attacks during this time frame, soldiers and civilians killed between 5,000 and 50,000 Igbos, offering a glimpse of what was to come in the Biafran civil war (Kelly 44). Additionally, Northern officers were still bitter over the murder of Northern officers by Igbo officers during the coup which brought Ironsi to power (Ojeleye 41). This bitterness, coupled with Northern
officers’ belief that Igbo officers were marginalizing Northerners from the political process, resulted in a counter-coup, led mostly by Northern army officers, which ended Ironsi’s rule on 29 July 1966 (Falola 118 – 119, Osaghae 60).

Due to the violence against Northern officers by Igbo officers during Ironsi’s coup, many Northern officers distrusted the Igbo officers. Subsequently, many Igbo officers lost their lives during the coup (Ojeleye 42). Traditionally, Ironsi’s replacement should have been the most senior member of the military regime, in this case a Yoruba general (Ojeleye 43). However, General Gowon, a Northerner, was appointed as head of the new regime. The violence against Igbo officers and the appointment of a Northern general as head of the regime were unacceptable to many Eastern military leaders. In response, in April 1967, the Eastern region began to withhold customs and other revenue from the federal military regime in opposition to the Northern-led coup (Burns 312). One month later, in May 1967, the Eastern region’s general assembly ordered the region’s military governor, Colonel Ojukwu, to declare the Eastern region independent. On 30 May 1967, Colonel Ojukwu made the official declaration to secede (Burns 312).

The Igbo declaration of independence for Eastern Nigeria launched the Nigerian Biafran civil war to create a state of Biafra, during which one to three million Nigerians lost their lives (Falola and Heaton 180). General Gowon responded by proclaiming Ojukwu’s declaration of independence an act of treason, instituting a state of emergency for all of Nigeria, and eventually ordering a blockade of the Eastern region (Ojeleye 45; Burns 312). Gowon’s declaration of a state of emergency created 12 new states to replace the North, West, and East regions (Osaghae 65). At the time, the Biafran army was estimated to be approximately 25,000 troops, mostly youths and hurriedly organized and
trained in makeshift camps while the federal army was an estimated 40,000 troops (Uwechue 7). However, on 6 July 1967, when federal military forces and Eastern region’s forces clashed for the first time, Biafran forces pushed back federal forces as they entered into the Eastern region (Ojeleye 45). Soon after Biafran forces overran the Mid-West state in a lightning operation on 9 August 1967 (Uwechue 8). By the next day, Biafran forces controlled the city of Benin but lost the city to federal troops in September 1967 (Burns 312). Throughout September Biafran forces were swept out of the Mid-West region by federal troops and by May 1968 Biafra was completely blockaded (Uwechue 9). From the beginning of the war until December 1969 several attempts at peace talks collapsed (Uwechue 9 – 10). However, the stalemate ended in January 1970 when federal troops took control of Owerri, the only major town still under Biafran control (Uwechue 10). Anticipating defeat, Colonel Ojukwu fled the country, and on 15 January his successor, Colonel Effiong, surrendered to the federal military effectively ending the Biafran civil war (Burns 313).

The civil war exacted a devastating humanitarian toll. By early 1968 the death toll estimates for Biafra ranged from 200 to 6,000 per day (Kelly 46). Gowon’s regime had not only changed the Nigerian currency after the start of the war, effectively preventing the Biafran government from purchasing food, but successfully blockaded both the Biafran coast and land borders and prevented humanitarian aircraft from using Nigerian airspace to fly in supplies (Kelly 46; Falola and Heaton 176). As a result, millions of Biafran civilians suffered from malnutrition and/or starved to death during the war. By the end of the war, three million Nigerians had perished (Kelly 46). The civil war strengthened existing regional, religious, and ethnic divisions. Colonial-era divisions
between Eastern and Northern Nigerians were more deeply entrenched by the coups and subsequent war while Igbo/Yoruba divisions were reinforced due to the Yoruban support of the Northern-led federal military regime during the war (Osaghae 67-68).

The Biafran civil war also had a significant impact on Nigeria’s foreign relations. In 1960 Nigeria’s foreign minister expressed a desire for Nigeria to have closer relations with Western states, despite Nigeria’s official policy of non-alignment and primary focus on the elimination of racism and colonization of Africa (Uhakheme 10-11; Mbachu 76). Whether from a desire to have greater influence in international politics or because Nigeria received $273 million in foreign aid from Western states between 1960 and 1966, Nigeria often supported Western positions (Uhakheme 10). Although in 1960, Nigeria spoke out against blocking Communist China from joining the United Nations, exercising its non-alignment policy (Chibundu 5-6). Western states assisted Nigeria in creating its National Development Plan in the early 1960’s, signaling Nigeria’s strong foreign relations with the West (Mbachu 76). At this time most of Nigeria’s economic partnerships were with the Western bloc, with only 6% of its imports coming from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), China, and Eastern Europe combined (Mbachu 92). However, in 1967, shortly before the outbreak of the Biafran civil war, General Gowon exerted Nigeria’s independence from Western policies in the international community and actively pursued relations with the USSR which was looking to establish a foothold in West Africa (Uwechue 9). General Gowon’s regime received MIG-17s and 122 mm artillery batteries from the USSR (Uhakheme 12). Gowon’s regime also oversaw the establishment of foreign relations with China in 1971, when Nigeria formally acknowledged the People’s Republic of China as the official
Chinese government in lieu of the Republic of China (Chibundu 12). Nigeria culminated this recognition with a formal state visit by Gowon to China in 1974 (Chibundu 12).

The civil war was a major concern for the international community. Despite USSR involvement, General Gowon and the federal military received support from Great Britain, which wished to retain influence in its former colony (Uwechue 9). Several countries supported the Biafran cause with humanitarian and military aid allowing Colonel Ojukwu and the Biafran forces to fight for 30 months (Osaghae 66). Notably, France officially announced its support of the Biafran forces in 1968, reportedly due to publicized accounts of the atrocities in Biafra (“France Voices”). However, France may also have been motivated by two of its former colonies, Gabon and Ivory Coast, supporting the Biafran cause or possibly by hopes of securing access to oil supplies. In display of its support, France provided 300 tons of arms per week during September and October 1968 and secretly sold two B-26 bombers to Biafran forces (Osaghae 66; Uwechue 8). Colonel Ojukwu wrote to the Italian prime minister and the Pope expressing his concern of Italy’s arms sales, which provided Northern Muslims with weapons to kill Catholic Igbos. As a result, Biafra won Italy’s support in the war and the federal troops lost some of their arms supply (Osaghae 66). Several non-governmental agencies, including the Red Cross, Oxfam, and Caritas, had pro-Biafra sympathies and actively campaigned internationally to rally support for Biafra (Osaghae 66).

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10 In 1949 the Chinese Communist Party founded the People’s Republic of China (PROC) in mainland China. The opposing party, the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) relocated to Taipei, Taiwan where it formed the Republic of China (ROC). The PROC and ROC each adhere to a “one China” policy which states that mainland China and Taiwan are one country. Both the PROC and ROC claim to be the sole legitimate government of China. Countries wishing to have diplomatic relations with the PROC must recognize the PROC as the only legitimate government of China (“One-China Principle”).
After the war oil played an important role in the policies of Gowon’s regime, as it provided the revenue for the regime’s developmental plans. Oil had first been discovered in Nigeria in the Delta region in 1956 by the Shell-BP Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (“Oil and Gas”). Then in 1960 other foreign companies were permitted exploration rights in the Delta. In the 1970’s oil became an increasingly important means of national income. During the war, the importance of Nigeria’s oil industry grew as did the association between oil industry control and power. As oil prices soared in the 1970’s the Gowon regime continued to benefit from increased revenues and became more actively involved in the oil industry. Due to increased oil revenue, Gowon’s regime was able to achieve budget surpluses from 1970 – 1975, allowing the regime to afford the Second National Development Plan (1970 – 1974) which restored educational, agricultural, industrial, and travel infrastructure damaged during the civil war (Falola 139). Gowon announced that once his regime had achieved the goals of its reform program (which included eliminating corruption, approving a new constitution, creating new states, holding a new census, establishing new political parties, and reorganizing the army and civil service) he would relinquish power to a democratic government (Falola 146-7). However, in October 1974 Gowon announced the transition would be delayed as he claimed that withdrawing from power in 1976 as planned would create further instability and confusion (Akinwumi 97). Capitalizing on public disapproval of Gowon’s delay, a group of military officers successfully overthrew Gowon’s regime in a bloodless coup that brought Lieutenant-General Murtala Mohammed to power on 29 July 1975 (Osaghae 79).
Once in power Mohammed reversed many of Gowon’s international and domestic policies. Diplomatically, Mohammed transitioned Nigeria’s foreign policy back toward non-alignment and focused on supporting liberation movements in Africa, notably ending apartheid in South Africa (Uhakheme 12). Despite the shift away from pursuing a closer relationship with the USSR, Nigerian-U.S. relations were strained between 1975 and 1976. During this time the US had no active Nigerian policy while Nigeria was focused on increasing self-reliance of African states (Uhakheme 13; Mbachu 61-2). Adding to the strain was Nigeria’s disapproval of the Americans’ covert armament of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) faction which was fighting against the Nigerian-supported Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) faction in the Angolan civil war (Uhakheme 13, 15, 21). Domestically, Mohammed worked quickly to enact government reform and address corruption. Mohammed removed over 11,000 government officials from military and civilian service, promoted and appointed new officials to governmental positions, and required all government officials (current and retired) to be transparent in their finances (Falola 152, 154). In 1975 the Mohammed regime instigated a five-stage, four-year transition plan which included the creation of a Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) to determine a new democratic system of government for Nigeria (Akinwumi 72-3). However, less than a year after Mohammed assumed power, an unsuccessful coup resulted in the death of Lieutenant-General Mohammed and brought Lieutenant-General Olusegun Obasanjo to power as head of government (Osaghae 79).

Lieutenant-General Obasanjo continued Mohammed’s anti-corruption and government reform policies. Specifically, he continued Mohammed’s purge of military
government officials by enforcing compulsory retirement and installing new military
governors. The purge carried over to include civil servants. Mohammed and Obasanjo
removed over 11,000 civil servants, including police and judges, for malfeance or
ineptitude (Falola and Heaton 189). However, while government and military officials
were replaced, the overall system remained largely unchanged. One significant
improvement was the elimination of Nigeria’s ban on politics, which Obasanjo lifted on
21 September 1978 (Falola 151, 162). Also, Obasanjo continued Mohammed’s foreign
policy of non-alignment, international cooperation for peace, total unity of Africa, and
support of African liberation movements, by peaceful means if possible but by arming
liberation forces if necessary (Uhakheme 20; Mbachu 63). Large Western involvement in
Nigeria’s oil industry, successful diplomatic exchanges in 1977 and 1978, and increased
US trade and investment in Nigeria ($1.49 billion and $3.5 billion respectively) all helped
to improve Nigeria-U.S. relations (Uhakheme 12-3). Moreover, by 1979 the United
States received 18.8% of its oil from Nigeria while the American-owned Gulf Oil
Corporation received 60% of its total oil from Nigeria (Uhakheme 27-8). Nigeria desired
American support of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, but, aware of its
significance as a key American oil supplier, was not hesitant to engage in confrontation
to acquire support of its pro-liberation policies in Africa. To prove its point, Nigeria
disqualified British oil companies from seeking licenses and contracts in Nigeria over a
disagreement with British policy toward Rhodesia (Uhakheme 30). Nigeria threatened an
oil embargo against the United States if the US lifted sanctions on Rhodesia, but never
had to carry the threat out as the United States left the sanctions in place (Mbachu 81).
According to Uhakheme, the U.S. saw Africa in terms of the East/West conflict and
failed to recognize the unique dynamics of African struggles, consistently opposing armed conflict in rhetoric but covertly backing the anti-Russia side in conflicts (20). The US viewed Nigeria as a state with increasing continental influence and thus a potential counter to Cuban and Russian involvement in Africa and promoter of American foreign policy in Africa overall (Uhakheme 14). Although both countries had a common objective of promoting freedom in Africa (the Carter administration favored ending apartheid in South Africa), Nigeria maintained an Africentric policy of promoting decolonization and freedom while the United States’ policy was motivated by the East/West conflict and access to oil supplies (Uhakheme 14, 29; Mbachu 81).

The two oil booms of the 1970’s provided as much as 80% of Nigeria’s budget revenues (Akinwumi 122). Although the early to mid-1970’s were a prosperous time for the Nigerian oil industry, the oil boom busted in 1978 resulting in a nearly 30% decrease in oil production and turned a budget surplus into a deficit (Osaghae 99; Falola 158). The deficit resulted in the Obasanjo regime enacting laws to increase and control oil revenue. For example, in 1977 the Nigerian government created the Land Use Act which declared that governors would control all state land and thus all petroleum reserves (“Oil and Gas”). However, the regime failed to reduce Nigeria’s economic dependency on oil exports, and subsequently the new civilian government inherited a huge budget deficit, escalating debt, growing inflation, and an unbalanced economy overly dependent on the petroleum industry (Osaghae 156-157).
For the first time in Nigerian history, a military regime initiated a democratic transition. Lt. Gen. Obasanjo’s regime successfully oversaw the return to civilian rule in 1979 when elections were held during the months of July and August (Osaghae 95). For the Second Republic, Nigeria modeled its new government after the American presidential system and elected the president and legislature in a national election. The bicameral legislative body consisted of a Senate and House of Representatives (Akinwumi 73). The president appointed the head of an independent judiciary which required Senate confirmation. Once elections were held, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), a Northern Muslim party, won the presidency and, with over 30% of the vote, the most seats in the legislature (Akinwumi 79). On 1 October 1979, NPN candidate Alhaji Shehu Shagari took the oath of office and assumed the presidency (Osaghae 95).

Unfortunately, the government failed to work across party lines and address Nigeria’s problems. Falola writes that Nigerian politicians primarily focused on achieving and securing power to serve their own self-interests. As a result, the Second Republic was marked by rampant corruption, a failure to achieve any of the goals the government set out, and complete dysfunction (Falola 174). On 31 December 1983, amid great social unrest and widespread disapproval of the civilian government, Major General Muhammadu Buhari led a coup and overthrew the civilian government, effectively ending Second Republic (Akinwumi 87). Like previous coups, the new military regime promised to restore national unity, improve the standard of living for Nigerians, and, highest on the list, remove corruption from politics by “housecleaning” the government (Falola 180-1). However, Buhari’s regime lost popular support and moved away from
democracy by issuing decrees which proclaimed military decrees supreme over civilian statutes and eroded freedom of the press (Akinwumi 100). This authoritarianism combined with the regime’s failure to reverse Nigeria’s economic decline and failure to develop an actionable transition plan for a return to a civilian democratic government provided General Ibrahim Babangida a springboard to launch another coup on 27 August 1985 (Osaghae 189).

Yet, Babangida’s policies also failed to improve Nigeria’s worsening economy or decrease violence. One of Babangida’s most unsuccessful policies was his institution of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1986, an austerity plan designed to promote economic growth in Nigeria’s economy (Osaghae 198 - 199). Babangida hoped to receive a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help reduce and restructure Nigeria’s debt. However, the IMF required Nigeria to implement economic reforms to receive a loan. In an effort to acquire the IMF loan but appear independent of the IMF and Western influence, Babangida allowed Nigerians to vote on whether to execute the IMF’s suggested economic reforms or develop its own economic reforms plan. Nigerians voted to implement their own reform program, the SAP, which still opened the doors to receiving an IMF loan and future debt restructuring (Falola and Heaton 217).

Unfortunately, the SAP completely failed to stimulate the Nigerian economy. From 1986 - 1988 external debt increased from $15 billion to $23.45 billion and the naira devalued, resulting in lower standard of living for many lower and middle class Nigerians (Falola 185). Nigeria’s worsening economic situation also precluded Nigeria from actively aiding other African states and assisting liberation forces, as Babangida wished to do (Mbachu 84). Because of Nigeria’s financial crisis, Babangida’s foreign policy
focused on economic issues, such as increasing trade, attracting foreign investment, and reducing Nigeria’s debt (Jega 5). In this vein, Babangida visited China in 1985, resulting in a purchase of arms and ammunition by Nigeria (Chibundu 13). This visit set the stage for subsequent exchanges and a deepening economic relationship with China, a relationship that further blossomed in creation of the Nigeria-China Joint Commission, which is responsible for developing economic cooperation between the two countries (Chibundu 19).

Perhaps Babangida’s second significant policy failure was his decision for Nigeria to join the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), an organization that promoted values and governance based on Islam. This decision escalated existing tensions between Muslim and Christian Nigerians. Christians viewed Nigeria’s membership in the OIC as an attempt by Babangida to win support from Muslims to reinforce his political power and encroach on their rights and were concerned OIC membership would lead to impose Islam on all Nigerians (Akinwumi 142-3). Babangida tried to ease tensions by reversing the decision to join the OIC, but from 1986 to 1992 nine riots occurred between Christians and Muslims, resulting in over 2,000 deaths (Falola and Heaton 222-3).

Babangida’s transition program was also fraught with failure and setbacks. From the beginning of his rule General Babangida claimed to be working towards a transition to civilian rule. In January 1986, just months after assuming his role as head of state, Babangida created a political bureau which drafted the Transition to Civilian Rule Decree 19 of 1987 outlining a plan to transition to a democratically elected civilian government (Osaghae 212 - 214). Akinwumi argues that Babangida’s elaborate bureaucratization of the transition process (he created three bureaucracies in charge of the transition: the
National Electoral Commission, the Directorate of Social Mobilisation, and the Center for Democratic Studies) was a strategy to perpetuate his power by causing confusion (101). In fact, Babangida’s regime tightly controlled the transition to civilian rule. The regime criticized civilian leaders, created the only two political parties allowed to form, the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Party, and determined which politicians could participate in the process (Falola 189). While Babangida lifted the ban on political parties in 1989 and the ban on political participation by former politicians and government officials in 1992, he postponed national elections three times to change the transition procedures as he deemed necessary (Falola and Heaton 225). Finally, in 1993, Babaginda’s regime approved two candidates to run for president. Chief M.K.O Abiola and Bashir Tofa, both Muslim, ran for president in a national election on 12 June 1993. (Falola and Heaton 227). The election was largely considered to be free and fair, but ultimately failed to usher in a democratically elected government when Babangida annulled the results eleven days later. The annulment caused widespread unrest which forced Babangida to hand power over to an Interim National Government (ING), led by Ernest Shonekan, which ruled intermediately (Akinwumi 105). However, in November 1993 the Lagos High Court declared the ING illegal. This decision provided the opportunity for General Sani Abacha to seize power in a military coup, effectively ending the aborted Third Republic (Falola and Heaton 229).

**Process Tracing: 1993 – 2010**

This section seeks to determine which factors most impacted Nigeria’s Freedom House scores between 1993 and 2010. As a general trend, Nigeria’s scores started out extremely low in 1993 and gradually improved from 1998 until 2010. While this analysis
bears a similar chronological structure to the above history section, more emphasis and focus is paid to the events which have most affected Nigeria’s political and civil liberties and subsequently, its Freedom House scores. Overall, domestic political policies, ethnic and religious tensions, and violent regional clashes over petroleum exploitation had the strongest impact on Nigeria’s Freedom House scores. However, multinational petroleum corporations, especially Shell, also affected political and civil liberties in Nigeria by exploiting oil resources, often resulting in violent clashes between regional and ethnic groups and the government over the subsequent environmental degradation and unequal distribution of oil revenue. Additionally, foreign countries, such as the United States and Britain, impacted civil and political rights in Nigeria by exerting diplomatic and economic pressure on military regimes to return to civilian rule and reinstitute democracy. However, the overall impact of such pressure remained minimal as the United States and other major oil importers never used the strongest tool at their disposal, an embargo on Nigerian petroleum exports.


During Abacha’s rule (1993 – 1998) Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights score remained a seven, the lowest possible score. Above all else, the low score was a direct result of the annulment of the 1993 presidential elections and of several of the policies of Sani Abacha’s subsequent military dictatorship. The 1993 elections were widely considered Nigeria’s freest, fairest, and most peaceful to date (Falola and Heaton 227). By itself, Babangida’s annulment of the election would likely have been enough to result in a Freedom House political rights score of seven, but it was Abacha’s military coup, arrest of widely accepted presidential election winner M.K.O Abiola, and despotic
rule until 1998 that eroded political rights in Nigeria and kept the country’s political rights score at a seven for five years. By itself Abacha’s military dictatorship negatively impacted Nigeria’s political rights score as it undermined the results of a free and fair election, eliminated Nigerians’ political choices, prevented elected officials from determining national policies, and was unaccountable to the Nigerian people. Several of Abacha’s policies negatively impacted Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights score, but two of the most significant factors were his complete control of the political process and his violent prohibition of any political opposition.

**Political Rights During Abacha’s Rule**

Upon assuming office, Abacha took measures to retain complete control over political processes, including any democratic transition plans, severely degrading political rights in Nigeria and consequently Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights score. One of Abacha’s first undertakings after seizing power was to remove all civilians from government positions and ban all political parties and activities (Falola and Heaton 230). By September 1994, Abacha announced he had eliminated all civilians from his eleven-member ruling council and expanded the council to twenty-five members, mostly military officers, with two civilian observers (“Military Ruler”). Moreover, Abacha dissolved all elected government bodies, including state and national assemblies (Falola and Heaton 230). When political parties were allowed to form again in 1994, only the five political parties which nominated Abacha as their presidential nominee and which were secretly sponsored by Abacha were allowed to officially register (Akinwumi 106, Falola and Heaton 233). Although Abacha officially lifted the ban on political activity in 1995, the Transition to Civil Rule Decree 1 of 1996 declared all accusations,
misrepresentations, and distortions of the transition program illegal, facilitating arrests of political opponents (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1997”). Abacha’s regime also controlled elections held at all levels. The 1996 and 1997 Human Rights Watch World Reports note that the local government elections held in March 1996 were fraudulent, as they were conducted on a “zero party” basis and extremely compromised by executive interference. Moreover, the candidates in the March 1997 local elections were screened by the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria, the State Security Service, and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency to ensure no candidate had connections to pro-democracy, human rights or opposition groups. Similarly, candidates were screened in the same manner for the December 1997 state assembly elections (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1999”).

In order to retain such rigid political control, Abacha quickly, and often violently, suppressed all political opposition, significantly degrading political rights in Nigeria and negatively impacting Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights score. Soon after seizing power in 1993, Abacha created the State Secret Security Service and the Presidential Strike Force, both designed to seek out and eliminate political opponents either through arrests or in some cases assassination (Akinwumi 105). Notably, Abacha charged 1993 presidential election winner Moshood Abiola with treason for proclaiming himself as rightful leader of Nigeria. In June 1994 Abacha’s regime arrested Abiola and held him in isolation, resulting in widespread riots for his release. A couple of months later Abacha offered Abiola release, but on the condition that Abiola not speak with the press or participate in political activities. Abiola declined the offer and spent four more years in prison (“Nigeria Finds”). Furthermore, Abacha’s regime harassed Abiola’s wife, Kudirat
Abiola, for participating in anti-government activities and criticizing the military ("Wife"). In 1996 Kudirat Abiola was shot and killed by an unidentified gunman, widely believed to have been acting on behalf of the military regime (Jukwey).

The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa is perhaps the most infamous example of Abacha’s violent suppression of political opponents. Saro-Wiwa, a well-known Nigerian playwright and author, had strongly criticized the Abacha regime for environmental damage by oil companies in the Delta region and actively campaigned for a greater share of oil revenue to be distributed to oil producing regions (French, “Nigeria Executes”). In 1994 Abacha arrested Saro-Wiwa along with eight others, known as the Ogoni Nine, for the murder of four pro-military Ogoni leaders (French, “Nigeria Executes”). Although widely believed to be innocent of the charges, Saro-Wiwa was held for a year in a military camp while often denied access to legal counsel and outside visitation (French, “Nigeria Executes”). Despite international pressure from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Organization for African Unity, and the United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Abacha’s regime hanged the Ogoni Nine on 10 November 1995 (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1996”). Ken Saro-Wiwa’s arrest and execution highlighted Abacha’s disregard for political freedoms and his intent on silencing political opposition and dissent.

Many other political opponents were also arrested for their criticisms of the military regime. Abacha arrested over 50 alleged coup plotters, including former head of state General Olusegun Obasanjo, Major-General Musa Yar’Adua, and several leaders of human rights and pro-democracy groups such as Democratic Alternative, the Civil Liberties Organization, and the National Democratic Coalition (“Human Rights Watch

**Civil Liberties During Abacha’s Regime**

Abacha’s regard for civil liberties was dismal. During his rule, Nigeria’s civil liberties score fell from a five in 1993 to a seven in 1995 and rose only minimally to a six in 1996 and 1997. While Abacha’s power seizure further eroded the rule of law, three of Abacha’s gravest abuses of civil liberties were his suppression of freedom of the press, his suppression of freedom to assemble (especially concerning non-governmental organizations and labor unions), and his regime’s failure to protect women and children’s rights, notably by failing to prevent drug and human trafficking.

Abacha prohibited any criticism of the military regime by the Nigerian press. Shortly after assuming power, in September 1993, Abacha issued a decree which effectively shut down three Nigerian newspapers (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1995”). The military regime harassed and arrested many journalists and shut down newspapers for publishing articles critical of the regime. For example, in 1995 *The New York Times* reported that security agents confiscated an edition of the Nigerian news magazine *Tell* in order to prevent its publication of an article critical of Abacha, raided the homes of two editors, and arrested *Tell’s* editor-in-chief (“Nigerian Journal”). According to Human Rights Watch, at least two other editors-in-chief were also arrested and sentenced to life in prison for printing anti-regime articles, although their sentences were later commuted to fifteen years in prison (“Human Rights Watch World Report
Arrests continued until 1998 and included members of the foreign press as well ("Human Rights Watch World Report 1997-1999"). Often violence was involved in the arrests. Notably, in 1997, Oni Egbunine, editor of The Horn, was arrested and beaten into a coma. Then in 1998, a journalist was shot and killed by Nigerian police when they arrived to arrest the newspaper printer ("Human Rights Watch World Report 1998 – 1999").

Under Abacha Nigerians’ freedom to assemble was gravely diminished. In June 1995 a Democratic Alternative meeting was broken up by Abacha’s State Security Service ("Human Rights Watch World Report 1996"). Activities and meetings of human rights groups and labor unions, including the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) were disrupted and leaders harassed and sometimes killed ("Human Rights Watch World Report 1997 – 1998"). In 1998, Nigerian police shot and killed five Muslims protesting the arrest of Sheikh El Zak-Zaky, a Northern Shiite Muslim leader ("Human Rights Watch World Report 1998").

Additionally, violations of women and children’s rights during Abacha’s regime also negatively impacted Nigeria’s civil liberties score. Human trafficking posed a significant problem for women and children. A 1997 New York Times article noted that Nigeria was a stop for child slaves during their transport to Central Africa ("Slave Trade"). However, according to the article, many children would remain in Nigeria where it was common-place for them to be sold as household servants or as prostitutes. Human Rights Watch World Report 1999 observed that by the end of Abacha’s rule in 1998 child
labor, often completely unpaid, and child marriages, were common practice in Nigeria. The report also reveals that martial rape and physical abuse that did not cause “grievous hurt” of wives remained legal throughout Abacha’s dictatorship. Moreover, the report claims 60% of Nigerian women experienced female genital mutilation (FGM). Abacha’s regime publically condemned FGM, but made no attempts to eradicate the practice (“Nigerian Human Rights Practices”). Child marriages and the tradition of FGM in Nigeria were, and continue to be, founded upon cultural customs and values, and both issues were prevalent before Abacha assumed power. While Abacha’s dictatorship may not have exacerbated these issues, its unwillingness to proactively abolish FGM and enforce laws prohibiting child marriage contributed to Nigeria’s poor civil liberties ranking.

Effect of Nigeria’s Oil Industry on Political Rights and Civil Liberties

Nigeria’s oil industry played a role in two of the factors which impacted Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights and civil liberties scores. Notably, much of the political opposition to Abacha was over the regime’s oil policies, specifically revenue distribution. The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, opposed the Abacha regime over its cooperation with oil companies, such as Shell, which degraded the Delta’s environment and destroyed the region’s waters used by local fishermen (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1996”). MOSOP also opposed Abacha’s policies regarding oil revenue distribution, which stipulated the Delta region would receive only three percent of oil income (later to be increased to thirteen percent). MOSOP contended that oil producing regions in the South should receive more than what was allocated by the government’s plan (Lewis, “Blood and Oil”). As noted earlier, Saro-
Wiwa and several other Ogoni activists were later executed by Abacha’s regime for charges widely believed to be fraudulent.

Abacha’s regime often denied labor unions the right to assemble and, as a result of ongoing strikes, dissolved some labor unions completely, notably those unions involved in the oil industry. One example is the oil industry strike in July 1994. After a month of strikes by oil workers, who were angry over the incarceration of M. K. O. Abiola (a Southerner), earnings from Nigeria’s oil exports were diminished enough to motivate Abacha to offer Abiola’s release in return for an end to the strikes (French, “In Nigeria”). However, Abiola’s release was to be on the condition that he would not speak to the press or participate in politics. The oil unions rejected the offer and strikes continued, diminishing oil output by twenty percent (French, “In Nigeria”). As a result, Abiola dissolved the labor unions and ordered the workers to return to work (“Nigeria Judge”). From that point on, labor unions were run by government-appointed heads and arrests of union leaders continued throughout 1995 (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1996”). As noted earlier, leaders of NUPENG, an oil industry labor union, including its Secretary General Frank Kokori, remained incarcerated through Abacha’s rule (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1998”).

Often Abacha acted at the bequest of or in cooperation with oil companies, notably Shell, which produced nearly half of Nigeria’s crude oil by the end of 1995 (“Five Companies”). According to a New York Times article, Shell appealed to the Nigeria government in 1992 for protection of its operations from vandalism, but was forced to withdraw temporarily from Nigeria in 1993 due to security concerns (Lewis, “Blood and Oil”). Lewis claims that Nigerian military documents show that a year later
in 1994, Abacha deployed military troops to the region in hopes of ending the attacks and stabilizing the area to entice Shell to return (Lewis, “Blood and Oil”). Shell did return to oil production by 1995, announcing new construction of an oil pipeline through the Delta region, despite the International Finance Corporation pulling out of the project over the execution of the Ogoni Nine (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1996”). Shell was criticized for not intervening for clemency on Ken Saro-Wiwa’s behalf. While Shell retracted initial press statements accusing Saro-Wiwa of violent tactics, the company stated it was “not for commercial organizations like Shell to interfere in the legal process of a sovereign state such as Nigeria” (Lewis, “Blood and Oil”). Other oil companies also cooperated with the Abacha regime. Elf and Agip were involved in joint ventures with Shell and the Nigerian governments as well (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1996”). Notably, in May 1998, 200 Nigerian youths attacked one of its offshore oil platforms, Chevron transported Nigerian troops out to the platform to regain control. The troops killed two youths and injured one in the process of taking over the platform (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1999”).

**US Foreign Policy Toward Nigeria During Abacha’s Rule**

The United States took diplomatic and economic measures to promote democracy and human rights in Nigeria during this period. When the 1993 elections were cancelled, the United States suspended all foreign aid except for aid channeled through nongovernmental organizations, selectively approved military arms sales on a case-by-case basis, and expelled the Nigerian military attaché from the US (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1994”). In 1994, President Clinton sent Reverend Jesse Jackson to Nigeria as part of a diplomatic attempt to urge General Abacha to hand over power and
release former presidential candidate, M.K.O. Abiola (Noble). Ultimately, Jackson’s diplomacy attempts were unsuccessful and in 1995 the Clinton administration threatened to continue economic actions, but never seriously considered an oil embargo. The US also recalled the American ambassador from Lagos and banned all military arms sales over opposition to the continued detention of political prisoners and the Ogoni Nine’s death sentence (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1996”).

At first, American economic and diplomatic pressure appeared to have minor success. In August 1995 Clinton urged Abacha to grant clemency to forty political prisoners and commute Ken Saro-Wiwa’s death sentence (“Clinton Seeking”). Less than two months later, Abacha announced he would grant clemency to the forty prisoners, but still refused to release Abiola or commute Saro-Wiwa’s sentence (French, “Nigeria Chief”). In November 1995, when Abacha’s regime went ahead with the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni Nine, the United States responded by extending the ban of military sales and aid to Nigeria (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1997”). The United States had already placed sanctions on Nigeria in 1994 due to its “uncooperative” country status in the war against narcotics (“Speaking Softly”). This time the United States attempted to enact stronger economic sanctions against Nigeria at an international level and asked the international community to join in banning all new foreign investment in Nigeria and in freezing the international financial assets of Nigerian leaders (Lewis, “U.S. Seeking”). However, the United States’ push for broader economic sanctions failed to gain broad support as it faced international opposition, notably from the United Kingdom, France, and Netherlands, all of whom had strong trade interests in Nigeria and opposed broader measures arguing that eliminating foreign direct investment
in Nigeria would hurt the Nigerian economy and subsequently Nigeria’s impoverished population (Myers; “Human Rights Watch World Report 1997”).

Despite its diplomatic and economic pressure to urge a return to democracy in Nigeria, the United States failed to use its strongest tool, an oil embargo. TransAfrica, an African-American political lobby in the US, urged the Clinton administration to enact an oil embargo to push for democracy in Nigeria, noting that the US was the largest purchaser of Nigeria’s petroleum (French, “Nigeria Chief”). However, at least two lobbying firms, the Corporate Council on Africa and the National Foreign Trade Council, which represented American business interests, persuaded on the Clinton administration not to enact tougher sanctions or an oil embargo as both would hurt American businesses in Nigeria (Lewis, “U.S. Seeking”). Whether due to political pressure or a reliance on Nigerian oil imports, the United States never seriously threatened to enforce an oil embargo and was largely a failure when it came to pressuring the Abacha regime to hand over power.

**Chinese Foreign Policy Toward Nigeria During Abacha’s Rule**

During Abacha’s rule (1993-1998) China did not have a strong presence in Nigeria. When Abacha took power in 1993 China became a net importer of oil for the first time. However, China did not import any Nigerian petroleum during 1993, 1994, 1996, or 1997. China imported Nigerian crude oil only during two years of Abacha’s rule, 1995 and 1998. For both 1995 and 1998, the amount of Nigerian crude oil that China imported was relatively small (see Appendix Table A1). While oil trade was minimal during this time, Nigeria and China’s relationship was developing. This
relationship was fostered by multiple official visits and exchanges, which helped pave the way for greater cooperation in trade and development. In 1995, the Chinese Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Qian Qichen, paid an official visit to Nigeria. A year later, Chinese engineers from the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation traveled to Nigeria to assess Nigeria’s railroad for infrastructure improvement projects (Chibundu 15). Nigerian officials also visited China. In 1996, Ernest Shonekan, the chair of Nigeria’s Vision 2010 committee, visited to China to study China’s Economic Development and Vision 2010 agenda. In 1997 Abubakar traveled with a high-level military delegation to China to discuss increased military cooperation with his Chinese counterparts (Chibundu 13-14). Later, in 1998, China provided short term military training courses at Chinese military facilities for Nigerian Armed Forces Personnel (Chibundu 14). When the Chinese Premier of State Council, Li Peng, met with General Abacha in May 1997 the visit resulted in several trade and development agreements, including on cooperation in Nigeria’s oil industry (Chibundu 16). In addition to official visits, several commissions expanded Nigeria and China’s cultural and trade relationships. Notably, the Nigeria-China Joint Commission (NCJC) also fostered trade between the two countries during Abacha’s rule. The NCJC is the instrument for the execution of bilateral trade, economic, and technological cooperation between Nigeria and China (Chibundu 19). The value of overall trade between the two countries grew significantly from 1.3 billion naira in 1990 to 5.3 billion in 1996 (Utomi 40). Also significant, was the Implementation Programme for Cultural and Educational Cooperation established in 1997 (Chibundu 47). This agreement established
arrangements for multiple cultural and educational exchanges between the two countries for the next two years.

China maintained its non-interventionist foreign policy toward Nigeria as the countries developed foreign relations and increased trade. China did not participate in or support efforts by the international community to condemn the Abacha regime or the United States’ call to enact tougher sanctions. From 1993 to 1998 the United Nations Security Council did not pass any resolutions regarding the situation in Nigeria. This may be partly because countries which had trade relationships with Nigeria, such as the United Kingdom and France which were permanent members of the Security Council and could effectively veto resolutions, would have likely blocked increased sanctions (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1997”). However, there is an indication that China would have also opposed sanctions against Nigeria based on human rights. In 1995, China voted no on United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/50/199, which condemned the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and urged Nigeria to implement a transition to democracy (“United Nations Bibliographic”). Although the resolution ultimately passed, China’s no vote provides insight that China’s non-interventionist policy applied to Nigeria.

China’s non-interventionist policy may have benefited Abacha’s regime at times, such as during United Nations votes, but China’s petroleum diplomacy likely had little to no causal effect on Nigeria’s Freedom House scores. From 1993 to 1998 China imported little to no Nigerian crude oil and Nigeria’s scores remained around seven and six on the Freedom House scale. With both scores being the lowest possible score, Nigeria’s Freedom House scores could only improve. The correlation between an increased Chinese economic involvement and improved Nigerian Freedom House scores is simply
due to the coincidental increase in Chinese oil imports from Niger (required to meet consumption needs), Nigeria’s scores improving with the death of Abacha, and the subsequent end of his military dictatorship.

1998 – 1999: Abubakar’s Transition Program

The Impact of Abubakar’s Transition Program on Political Rights and Civil Liberties

General Abacha’s sudden death in 1998 marked a turning point for political rights and civil liberties in Nigeria. First, his appointed successor, General Abdusalami Abubakar, took immediate steps to promote political freedom and eased decrees restricting civil liberties, notably decrees which restricted press freedoms. Second, Abubakar initiated a transition program which resulted in democratic elections with seven months, in January 1999.

General Abacha died on 8 June 1998, and General Abubakar was quickly sworn in the next day (McFadden). Abubakar took steps to improve political freedoms, notably by freeing political prisoners. Abubakar’s treatment of political prisoners may have helped Nigeria’s political rights score, but only minimally so. In July 1998, General Olusegun Obasanjo was released from prison (“Abubakar Pardons”). However, Abubakar did not release M.K.O. Abiola, who was to be emancipated shortly after Abacha’s death, but died suddenly under suspicious circumstances while incarcerated (McFadden). Later in December 1998, Abubakar freed Sheik el-Zak Zaky, a radical Shi’ite Muslim preacher who had been jailed over clashes with police in 1996 (“Nigeria Frees”). Additionally, 163
bank executives remained in detention without charge and close followers of Abacha were also detained on corruption charges (“Human Rights Watch World Report 1999”).

Abubakar’s quick actions to reinvigorate the transition process to a democratically elected civilian government and the subsequent elections also helped to improve Nigeria’s political rights score. For example, Abubakar dissolved the transitional authority created by Abacha which was making little progress toward a democratic government (“Nigerian Leader to Unveil”). Abubakar also dissolved the existing five Obasanjo-era political parties and eased restrictions on party formation allowing new political parties to form. By November 1998, nine new parties had been registered (“Nigeria Eases”). On 4 December 1998, Nigeria held local primary elections to nominate presidential candidates (“Obasanjo’s Party”). A little over a month later national elections were held in which former General Olusegun Obasanjo was declared the winner of the Nigerian presidency. The elections were declared to be free and fair overall by international observers who reported voting was more orderly, electoral officials better trained, and security around voting station improved over the December 1998 elections (Onishi, “Observers Give”). On 29 May, Abubakar completed the transition phase by handing over Nigeria’s 24-day-old constitution to Obasanjo, and along with it, power to lead a civilian government of 774 newly elected local officials, 36 newly elected state governors, and newly elected state and national legislatures (Onishi, “Nigeria’s Military”).

Abubakar’s administration (June 1998 – May 1999) made significant improvements and progress towards democracy, but not all his policies and decisions resulted in positive developments. Violence in the Delta region held back civil liberties.
As interim ruler, he continued to protect oil infrastructure at the expense of civilian lives. In early January 1999, there were 19 reported deaths, some as a result of soldiers’ gunfire, among protestors who were demonstrating against the oil industry in the Delta region (“Government Lays”). Moreover, the 1999 elections experienced problems which limited the improvement of Nigeria’s political rights score. There were reports of ghost names on ballots, resulting in a list of 60 million voter names, rather than the anticipated 40 million (“Suspicion Over”). Additionally, voter turnout was reportedly low, around five percent in some northern states, while elections were completely cancelled in Bayelsa due to violence (Onishi, “Observers Give”). Overall Abubakar’s policies improved political rights and civil liberties in Nigeria. The transition laid an important stepping stone to the longest period of civilian rule since independence. Moreover, Abubakar’s handover to civilian rule paved the way for the country to begin democratic reforms. As a result, Nigeria’s Freedom House scores rose significantly in 1999 from what they were in the mid-1990’s.

1999 – 2007: Obasanjo’s Presidency (The Beginning of the Fourth Republic)

Abubakar’s transition program came to fruition with national elections in 1999. Olusegun Obasanjo won the 1999 national election for the Nigerian presidency and won again for re-election in 2003. Political rights during Obasanjo’s administration (1999 – 2007) significantly improved. Restrictions on political parties and opposition were lifted and elected officials, rather than military leaders, created and enacted laws and policies. However, Nigeria still faced two obstacles to improving political rights during Obasanjo’s two terms as Nigeria’s president. First, Obasanjo’s administration was unsuccessful in significantly reducing corruption. Second, democratic processes,
including elections, still didn’t function well during Obasanjo’s tenure. While civil liberties during Obasanjo’s presidency were more respected than under Abacha’s regime, violence, often between Muslims and Christians, and the government’s aggressive use of the military as a response to violence countered positive improvements to Nigeria’s civil liberties score.

**Political Rights During Obasanjo’s Presidency**

Nigeria’s political rights score was hampered by the Obasanjo administration’s struggle to significantly reduce corruption in the new democratic government. In 1999 Obasanjo created panels to investigate past embezzlement by government officials and introduced an anti-corruption bill into the Nigerian senate (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2000”). By March 2000 *The New York Times* reported that Obasanjo’s administration had removed from office and brought legal charges against hundreds of military and government officials (“Violence in Nigeria”). In 2000 the legislature passed anti-corruption legislation; and the government recovered some of the money stolen by former officials. However, in 2002, Freedom House stated in its *Freedom in the World Report* on Nigeria that despite government anti-corruption reforms the Nigerian judiciary remained corrupt, inefficient, and susceptible to political influences (“Country Report: Nigeria 2002”). Human Rights Watch also noted that in addition to a corrupt judicial system Nigeria’s police force was often corrupted by bribery (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2003”). Obasanjo attempted to address corruption by creating the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in December 2002 which initially focused on fighting email scams originating from Nigeria but by 2004 had turned its attention to public officials (“Corruption on Trial”). Obasanjo appointed a former
assistant police commissioner, Nuhu Ribadu, as executive chairman of the EFCC. Ribadu oversaw dozens of corruption investigations of Nigeria public officials, including several state governors (“Corruption on Trial”).\(^\text{11}\) However, a year later, Transparency International ranked Nigeria 144 out of 146 countries by in its Corruption Perceptions Index, indicating that little progress had been made (“Country Report: Nigeria 2005”).\(^\text{12}\) The next year, Nigeria did improve its ranking slightly, to 152 out of 159, probably in large part to the arrests of government officials over corruption charges, including Senator Adolphus Wabara and Education Minister Fabian Osuji (“Country Report: Nigeria 2006”). In 2006, when legislation was introduced which would alter Nigeria’s constitution to allow Obasanjo to run for a third term, several opponents of the bill claimed they had been offered bribes to change their vote (“Democracy ‘Triumphs’”). The amendment failed and by the end of Obasanjo’s tenure corruption was still pervasive, but Nigeria’s Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index rank improved to 142 out of 163 countries by 2006 (“Country Report: Nigeria 2007”). Although the Obasanjo administration hardly eliminated corruption entirely from the government, its anti-corruption reforms, notably the creations of the EFCC, still helped to reduce corruption and subsequently contributed to an improved Freedom House political rights score.

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\(^\text{11}\) Ribadu’s removal is further discussed in the next section on political rights during Yar’Adua’s presidency.

\(^\text{12}\) Nigeria’s Finance Minister, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, contested the low ranking on the grounds that Transparency International did not consider current anti-corruption reforms in its decision (Nigeria…Ranking).
Civil Liberties During Obasanjo’s Presidency

Civil liberties under Obasanjo’s regime were more respected and protected than under Abacha’s regime. Notably, there was more freedom of the press and freedom to assemble since Abacha’s previous decrees restricting these rights had been lifted and both rights were guaranteed by the constitution and generally respected (“Country Report: Nigeria 2002”). Despite improvements to freedom of press and freedom of religion due to implementation of Nigeria’s new constitution, Nigeria’s Freedom House civil liberties score only improved to a four in 2000 before falling to a five in 2001 and 2002. In 2003 it rose to a four again where it remained throughout Obasanjo’s tenure (“Country Report: Nigeria 2004”; “Country Report: Nigeria 2008”).

Shortly after taking office in 1999, Obasanjo’s administration attempted to rein in the military by reducing the number of military personnel from 80,000 to 50,000 over four years; however, abuse, executions, and torture still occurred at the hands of security forces despite the dismantling of abusive paramilitary forces and reorganization of the police (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2000”). The next year, in a national television broadcast, Obasanjo’s administration authorized police to shoot members of the Odua People’s Congress (OPC) opposition group which resulted in increased brutality and summary executions. In one case police killed approximately twenty civilians in the town of Suleja in response to riots (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2001”). In 2001, Obasanjo sent the Nigerian army into the central state Benue to disarm a local militia and to arrest citizens responsible for the murder of 19 Nigerian soldiers by members of a local militia (Onishi, “Nigeria Army”). According to a BBC News report, the army enacted revenge for the murders by killing over 200 civilians, despite orders
from Obasanjo to cease operations in Benue (“Army Clampdown”). However, *The New York Times* four days later claimed that over 500 civilians had been killed and houses burned by the Nigerian army (Onishi, “Nigeria Army”). The army’s killings appeared to have been committed with impunity as Obasanjo excused the soldiers’ behavior as acts of self-defense during an interview on state television (Onishi, “Nigerian Army”). It seemed possible that the Nigerian government might be taking the first steps toward addressing police brutality when President Obasanjo publically admitted the Nigerian police tortured and killed criminal suspects in 2005 and five police officers were charged with murder (“President Said”). However, police violence continued. In 2006, Nigeria’s Centre for Law Enforcement Education which found that police killed 1 in 20 motorists at check points for failing to pay bribes indicating that police and military brutality was still common (“Country Report: Nigeria 2007”). The violent acts committed by the policy and military against civilians weren’t ordered by the government as had been the case during Abacha’s rule. However, Obasanjo’s administration fell short of the expectation for a democratically elected government to protect civilian life and this failure contributed to Nigeria’s poor civil liberties rating.

Multiple political assassinations, conducted at all levels of government, demonstrate rampant corruption and hindered opportunities for political opposition to develop by preventing political challengers from having a realistic opportunity to win office. Politically motivated killings, often committed by hired thugs, were common. In December 2001, armed gunmen shot and killed Justice Minister Bola Ige, reportedly over his political opposition to the implementation of Shari’a law (“Emergency Declared”). In October 2002, armed attackers pulled Barnabas Igwe, the chairman of the Anambra state
Nigerian Bar Association and vocal critic of the governor of Anambra, from his car at a traffic stop. The attackers shot, stabbed, and killed Igwe and his wife (Onishi, “Nigerian Militias”). Violence increased around the 2003 elections and political assassinations continued (“Country Report: Nigeria 2005”). In 2006, Funsho Williams, a likely candidate for Lagos state governor and PDP member, and Ayo Daramola, a candidate for governor in the Ekiti state were both murdered (“Country Report: Nigeria 2007”).

Religious violence also plagued Nigeria during Obasanjo’s presidency and further hindered Nigeria’s civil liberties score. Ironically, Freedom House reports the decline in Nigeria’s civil liberties rating during 2001 and 2002 was due to ethnic and religious outbreaks of violence which resulted from increased religious freedom that allowed for the implementation of Shari’a law. In November 1999 fighting in Lagos between Yoruba and Hausa ethnicities resulted in the deaths of over 100 people. The ethnic clashes were due to tensions among the Hausa over the election of Obasanjo, a southern Yoruba. Obasanjo’s response to the violence was an authorization for the police to shoot “troublemakers” (“Hundreds Flee”). A month later, Northern Muslims displayed their regional influence by implementing Shari’a law in the northern state of Zamfara. Although state officials claimed Shari’a would only be used to settle civil and criminal disputes among Muslims, it raised religious tensions as Christians feared it would impact them as well (Onishi, “A Nigerian State”). In January 2000, Christian women were already denied taxi services for having their heads uncovered and Obasanjo had still failed to openly condemn Shari’a law, adding to Christians’ fears (Phillips).

By February 2000 a man was caned 80 times for drinking in public (“Muslim Caning”). The same month police in Kaduna requested reinforcements to contain violent
clashes between Christians and Muslims as tensions continued to rise (Pearce). Only one month later, in March 2000, *The New York Times* reported that over 400 people had been killed by the riots in Kaduna (Onishi, “New Strife”). Moreover, the article noted that Obasanjo still had not openly criticized Shari’a law. Tensions mounted as Shari’a law spread to other states. In August 2000, Borno became the seventh state to implement Shari’a (Onishi, “Gulf Grows”). By October 2000, the *BBC News* reported that the Nigerian army had to be deployed to Minna, a Northern city, to suppress religious violence (“Ethnic Unrest”). In September 2001, violent clashes also broke out in the central Nigerian city of Jos (“Religious and Ethnic”). By the end of 2001, over 1,000 people died in religious clashes in Jos (“Muslims Riot”). In 2002, Human Rights Watch reported women and men were sentenced to death by stoning for adultery (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2003”). The report also noted that, although Obasanjo criticized execution by stoning, his administration still failed to prevent such methods of execution. The same year, the total number of states implementing Shari’a law reached twelve: Sokoto, Jigawa, Niger, Zamfara, Yobe, Kaduna, Katsina, Borno, Bauchi, Kano, Kebbi, Gombe (“Sharia Law”). In 2003 a Nigerian woman’s sentence to death by stoning was overturned by an appellate court indicating possible improvement of criminal and civil legal procedures under Shari’a law and possibly a reduction in religious tension (Habila). Unfortunately, in 2004, a Christian ethnic group in Yelwa killed around 60 Muslims, resulting in a Muslim retaliation which killed at least 30 (“Muslim Mobs”). As a result of the retaliation, 20,000 Christians fled their homes in Yelwa (Sengupta). By May 2004, the *BBC News* reported that over 10,000 Nigerians had died in “communal
violence” in Nigeria often as a result of religious tension between Muslims and Christians since 1999 (Isaacs).

Although the majority of news reporting focused on ethnic and religious violence, Nigeria’s civil liberties score was also unable to rise above a four due to violations of women’s and children’s rights. Women faced legal discrimination at a national level. From 1999 – 2003, Human Rights Watch World Reports on Nigeria noted that it remained legal for a man to physically harm his wife so long as he did not cause “grievous hurt”, usually considered to be loss of sight, hearing, mobility, or facial maiming. Moreover, women’s legal rights were especially restricted in states which implemented Shari’a law. In 1999, when Zamfara instituted Shari’a law women found their freedoms and rights restricted. For example, women were not permitted to ride in taxis with men and were required to cover their heads in order to ride in “women only” taxis (Phillips). Women also received harsh punishments under Shari’a law. In 2003, a woman was sentenced to death for adultery, despite several procedural errors made by the Shari’a court (Habila). Human trafficking of women was a significant problem during Obasanjo’s presidency. A 2003 United States Department of State report on human rights in Nigeria noted that Nigeria had an active market for trafficking in women and children while the government had not taken any steps to prevent the sale of women and girls into marriage (“Country Reports”).

**Effect of Nigeria’s Oil Industry on Political Rights and Civil Liberties**

As during Abacha’s rule, outbreaks of regional violence during Obasanjo’s presidency were frequently centered on oil production in the Delta. Civilian casualties
resulted from both attacks by militant groups and from violent police responses. Moreover, despite the ongoing violence and attacks on oil infrastructure, oil companies continued to invest in Nigeria. When Obasanjo took office in 1999, violence was already common in the Nigerian Delta. When violence erupted in the town of Warri in June 1999, Obasanjo’s administration responded by sending in troops to quell the violence (“Violence Erupts”). Shortly afterward, Obasanjo travelled to Warri and promised to initiatives designed to help the impoverished Delta residents and reduce violence, such as a cash for guns program and a jobs for young men program (“Change Promised”). Violence continued and in November 1999 Obasanjo sent in Nigerian military troops to the region, troops which reportedly burned villages in attempts to suppress rebel youths (Soldiers ‘Killed’). In June 2000, Obasanjo again sent the Nigerian military to the Delta after 12 police officers were murdered by militants (“Oil: Nigeria’s Blessing”). The violence did not preclude oil companies from investing in Nigeria. Two months later, in August 2000, US oil company Conoco bid $164 million to jointly develop an offshore oil field in Nigeria (“Conoco Bids”). Obasanjo’s goals included not only increased and steady oil production, but increased national and local involvement in the industry to increase Nigeria’s share of oil revenue and to counter unemployment in the country. In August 2001, Obasanjo’s administration encouraged talks between Nigeria’s state-owned oil company, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, and foreign oil companies to award more oil contracts to and facilitate the involvement of Nigerian companies in the oil industry (“Nigeria Explores”). Despite continuing investments, regional violence often reduced or shut down oil production in the Delta. In March 2003 Shell closed five oil flow stations in the Delta when militant fighting left five people dead (“Shell
Nigeria”). The New York Times reported the fighting, between Ijaw and Itsekiri rival militant groups, resulted after the Ijaws accused Obasanjo of altering voting boundaries to benefit the Itsekiri in the next election (“ChevronTexaco Shuts”).

In 2006, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) emerged (“Growing Power”). MEND followed in the footsteps of previous Delta rights groups such as the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force and the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). MOSOP, led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, organized in 1990 (Hanson, “MEND: The Niger”). Although MOSOP’s campaign was non-violent unlike MEND’s, the two groups protested several of same issues, such as environmental degradation to the Delta region caused by major oil companies, the inability of local residents to farm or develop agriculture in the Delta as a result of environmental degradation, government mishandling of oil revenues, and the government’s oil revenue distribution policies (Hanson, “MEND: The Niger”). In 2006, MEND held several foreigners, including Americans, hostage, in attempts to pressure the government to allocate a greater share of oil revenue to the region (Polgreen, “Militants Free”). By the end of 2006, at least 50 expatriate oil workers had been taken hostage and released unharmed (Maier). MEND increased attacks on oil companies, their employees, and military forces deployed to the region during 2006. October 2006 was an especially violent month in the Delta. MEND claimed responsibility for the deaths of 17 soldiers as well as multiple attacks on supply boats (Maier). Near the end of Obasanjo’s term, in February 2007, kidnapping attacks and armed conflict had continued, but not all were the responsibility of MEND. Local armed gangs had reportedly engaged in copycat tactics (Ashby). It was not necessarily the presence of the oil industry in the Delta which caused
violence. Rather, violence by armed gangs and militants was in response to the real and/or perceived unfairness of oil companies’ practices and the Nigerian government’s oil revenue distribution policies. Although Nigeria’s oil industry was not an inherent cause of violence, it was a central focal point of militant attacks which contributed to Nigeria’s low civil liberties score.

**US Foreign Policy Toward Nigeria During Obasanjo’s Presidency**

During Abacha’s regime, the main goal of the United States’ foreign policy in Nigeria had been to encourage a transition to democracy without losing access to Nigeria’s oil supply as evidenced by the Clinton administration’s refusal to employ an oil embargo. Once Obasanjo assumed the presidency the United States moved quickly to restore diplomatic relations and resume aid. In September 1999 the United States pledged to help the young Nigerian government recover millions of dollars in American banks that former military officials had embezzled (“Nigerian Heading”). The next month, during an official visit to Abuja, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced the US would triple or quadruple the amount of foreign aid to Nigeria (Onishi, “Albright Vows”). In August 2000 Clinton travelled to Nigeria, the first time an American president had visited since 1978 (Lacey). Clinton’s visit provided evidence that the United States’ foreign policy in Nigeria still focused on oil supplies. During his visit, Clinton reportedly encouraged Nigeria to work with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to lower oil prices and pushed Obasanjo to reduce corruption and inefficiencies in Nigeria’s oil production industry while promising to help reduce Nigeria’s foreign debt and pledging $80 million to fight HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (Lacey; Dagne). The Clinton administration appeared to be willing to overlook human rights and
good governance issues in Nigeria now that an elected government had been installed. During his trip to Nigeria 2000, Clinton did not publicly criticize Nigeria for human rights violations. Moreover, Clinton issued a waiver for Nigeria’s noncompliance of the requirements for the counter-narcotics certification of the Foreign Assistance Act, which allowed the US to give Nigeria foreign aid (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2001”).

Under the Bush administration relations between Abuja and Washington D.C. continued to improve as Bush maintained many of the same policies as Clinton. In 2001, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had a $20 million budget for democracy and good governance support to Nigeria (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2002”). Despite a report by the US Department of State detailing human rights violations in Nigeria, USAID’s budget for assistance to Nigeria grew to $80 million in 2002 (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2003”). In 2005 the United States followed through on debt reduction promises when the US and seven European states forgave $18 billion of Nigeria’s $30 billion debt, reducing Nigeria’s debt from thirty-six percent of its gross domestic product to less than four percent (“Background Note: Nigeria”).

The Bush administration’s policy toward Nigeria also focused on counter-drug trafficking efforts. In 2008, Bush named Nigeria as one of 20 major drug transit or illicit drug producing countries (“Memorandum for the Secretary”). To assist Nigeria in the fight against drug-trafficking, Washington gave body scanners to Nigerian police forces for use in its major international airports (“Memorandum for the Secretary”). By August 2005, the US had recommenced military aid and had begun training Nigerian troops for peacekeeping missions in Africa (Crossette). Human Rights Watch noted in its reports on
Nigeria for 2005 – 2007 that the US failed to exert meaningful pressure on Nigeria to address human rights concerns, indicating the United States was stronger on rhetoric than on action, as the US had often been with Abacha’s regime when the United States was unwilling to employ unilateral embargoes to promote human rights in Nigeria.

**Chinese Foreign Policy Toward Nigeria During Obasanjo’s Presidency**

Obasanjo maintained Nigeria’s increased level of engagement with China. As president-elect, Obasanjo visited China to reaffirm Nigeria’s support of the “One China” policy and reaffirm Nigeria’s cooperative stance toward China (Chibundu 14-15).

Exchanges resulting from the Implementation Programme for Cultural and Educational Cooperation continued. Two Chinese cultural troupes performed in Nigeria, while, in 1999, several pieces of Nigerian artwork were placed on display at the Grand Exhibition of African Arts in Beijing. Additionally, Nigeria participated in China’s 1999 International Year Folk Song and Dance (Chibundu 49). As it had done during Abacha’s rule, China continued to provide foreign investment in and developmental assistance to Nigeria. In 2000, Nigeria contracted the China Civil Engineering Corporation to build 5,000 athlete housing units in Abuja for the All Africa Games (Utomi 41). As part of a National Programme for Food Security established in 2001, China dispatched over 500 agricultural experts and technicians to Nigeria to assist in food production and water conservancy efforts (“Success Stories - Nigeria”). In 2005, Nigeria was the third largest African investor in China, although it only account of 1.3% of total investment in China (“China’s Foreign Policy” 119). China invested more heavily in Nigeria. In 2006, Nigeria was one of the largest recipients of Chinese loans, which were heavily weighted toward infrastructure projects (“China’s Foreign Policy” 118). The Forum on China-Africa
Cooperation (FOCAC) was established and held its First Ministerial Conference, in which Nigeria participated, in October 2000 (“First Ministerial”). FOCAC provides a platform for continued Sino-African cooperation every three years when it holds its ministerial conferences. At the 2006 FOCAC conference, China and twelve African states agreed to $1.9 billion worth of deals, including a commitment from China to build expressways in Nigeria (Aizhu and Beck).

Trade between the two countries also continued to increase. By 2005, overall trade between China and Nigeria was valued at $42 billion (“Trade to Top”). From 2003 to 2006, China was the third largest exporter of conventional and small arms sales to Africa (Germany and Russia were the two largest), sales which included arms deals with Nigeria (“China’s Foreign Policy” 112). Between 2001 and 2006, 89% of China’s African imports came from seven African countries, including Nigeria. Imports from all but one of the seven, consisted primarily of oil (“China’s Foreign Policy” 121). Moreover, from 2006 through 2010, Nigeria was China’s fourth largest African trading partner, exporting crude oil, ore, petroleum gases, and nonferrous base metals to China (“FOCAC”).

During Obasanjo’s presidency (1999 – 2007) China increased its imports of Nigerian oil and became more active in the Nigerian oil industry. In January 2000 the Chinese foreign minister visited Nigeria, reportedly to discuss Chinese imports of Nigerian oil (“China’s Foreign Minister”). Chinese oil deals in Nigeria focused on securing oil for years at a time. In 2005, China signed an $800 million deal with Nigeria to buy oil for the next five years as it was also assisting in the rebuilding of Nigeria’s railroad system (Leggett; Lyman). The same year, the Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou
Wenzhong was quoted as saying China would refrain from intertwining politics and business, unlike Western countries, and would oppose embargos (Lyman). In 2006, China purchased a $4 billion stake in a Nigerian offshore oil field to further secure access to oil imports (Pan). Additionally, China purchased a controlling stake in Nigeria’s Kaduna refinery and committed to further construction on Nigeria’s rail system and to construction of new power stations (“China and Nigeria”). Soon after China signed its 2006 oil deal, MEND warned Chinese companies they would be targets of attacks if they engaged in oil production in the Delta (“China Warned”). MEND’s threats against China’s proposed oil investments and trade agreements illustrate MEND’s opposition to the Nigerian government’s oil revenue distribution policies and the unaddressed environmental degradation to the Delta, rather than opposition to any particular foreign country or specific oil company operating in the Delta.

2007 – 2010: Yar’Adua’s and Jonathan’s Presidencies

Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, a Muslim governor from Northern Nigeria, became the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) candidate for president after being backed by President Obasanjo (“Uncertainty Over Nigeria”). Despite allegations of nepotism (Yar’Adua was rumored to have received Obasanjo’s support due to his brother’s position as Obasanjo’s deputy in the 1970’s), Yar’Adua was elected president in April 2007 resulting in continued political dominance by the PDP (“Surprise at Nigerian”). However, in 2009, President Yar’Adua left Nigeria and flew to Saudi Arabia where he received medical treatment for heart problems, during which time the Nigerian senate named Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, a Southerner, acting president of Nigeria in February 2010. Shortly afterwards, Yar’Adua passed away on 5 May 2010. With his succession to the
presidency, Goodluck Jonathan became the first Nigerian president from the Niger Delta region. Jonathan’s appointment as acting-president upset the traditional rotation of the presidency between a Northern and a Southern Nigerian resulting in riots in the Muslim North and divisions with the PDP over who to nominate as a presidential nominee.

**Political Rights During Yar’Adua’s and Jonathan’s Presidencies**

In 2007 Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights score was a four, but fell to a five in 2008 and 2009, before rising to a four in 2010. According to Freedom House, fraudulent elections, which resulted in the Peoples’ Democratic Party’s consolidation of political power, was one of the main reasons Nigeria’s political rights score fell to a five (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2009”). Before the 2007 elections, the Network of Mobile Election Monitors began preparations to ensure free and fair elections which included using text messaging to alert officials to fraud and working with observers from the European Union (“Texts Monitor”). Despite their attempts to carry out fair elections, the 2007 elections were widely criticized by international observers and human rights groups. Human Rights Watch described the elections as “marred by fraud, violence, and intimidation so pervasive as to destroy all confidence in the results” (“Human Rights Watch World Report 2008”). Yar’Adua’s landslide victory with seventy percent of the votes coupled with observers’ criticisms cast further doubt on the elections legitimacy. One of Yar’Adua’s opponents, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, won a legal challenge to run for president shortly before the election. As a result, elections were delayed two hours to allow for printing of new ballots with his name (Quist-Arcton). The delay additionally caused vote counting to occur after sunset in the dark and no artificial lighting was provided (“What Nigerian”). Both the observers from the European Union
and observers from the Transition Monitoring Group declared the election flawed, citing incidents of ballot stuffing, premarked ballots, and missing ballots in some locations (“What Nigerian”). Along with the presidency, PDP candidates won 87 out of 109 senate seats, 263 out of 360 house seats, and 28 out of 36 governorships (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2008”). Yar’Adua’s opponents challenged the election results on the grounds that they were fraudulent. Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights score didn’t immediately fall, as Freedom House waited to see what the outcome of the legal challenges would be. By February 2008 election tribunals had overturned 6 of the 36 governorship election results (Polgreen, “A Battle”). However, the Nigerian Supreme Court upheld Yar’Adua’s victory in the 2007 presidential election and election tribunals upheld enough election results to allow the PDP to remain the dominant ruling party causing Freedom House to lower Nigeria’s political rights score to a five through 2009 due to fraud and lack of political opposition as the PDP’s marginalization of opposing minority political parties (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2009”; “Country Reports: Nigeria 2010”).

However, the political situation improved in 2010. After Yar’Adua left Nigeria in November 2009 to seek medical treatment, Vice President Goodluck Jonathan became acting president and initiated electoral reform. In April 2010, Jonathan asked the chairman of the Independent National Election Commission (INEC), Maurice Iwu, to step down, mostly due to his mishandling of the 2007 election process (Onuah). Likely motivated by an opportunity to prove his commitment to electoral reform and preemptively avoid a repeat of shambolic 2007 elections, Jonathan also submitted an electoral reform bill to the Nigerian legislature. The 2010 Electoral Act stipulated and clarified procedures for the next election, including the order of elections, candidacy filing deadlines, and
voter registration deadlines (Eboh). As a result of the electoral reforms, Freedom House raised Nigeria’s political rights score to a four in 2010 (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2011”).

Corruption was the second factor hindering Nigeria’s political rights score. Although Yar’Adua was known for his integrity and his uncompromising policies against corruption, his poor health prevented him from enforcing all his proposed anti-corruption reforms. During Yar’Adua’s presidency several government officials were involved in corruption scandals or charged with corruption. In 2007, Freedom House noted that Nigeria was ranked 147 out of 180 countries on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2008”). In October 2007, the Speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives, Patricia Etteh, was forced to resign after being accused of spending millions to renovate her office and purchase cars without approval (Polgreen, “A Nigerian”). In December 2007, police sent Nuhu Ribadu, the head of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, to a remote training course for one year after the EFCC arrested James Ibori, a political ally of Yar’Adua, on corruption charges (Polgreen, “Nigeria Reassigns”). Ribadu was eventually fired from his position (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2009”). In 2008 Senator Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello, daughter of Olusegun Obasanjo, was charged with receiving kickbacks from the Nigerian Health Ministry (Polgreen, “Senator Faces”). In 2009, Ribadu’s replacement, Farida Waziri, filed corruption charges against prominent bankers (Tattersall, “Nigeria Threatens”). As a result, the EFCC recovered nearly 25.57 billion naira in bad loans owed to banks (Tattersall, “Nigeria Anti-Graft”). In 2010 a senate report on money laundering claimed former Vice President Abubakar transferred $40 million in questionable funds to banks in
the United States (Nossiter, “Academic Tackles”). Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index score for Nigeria reflected the government’s anti-corruption efforts. The score improved from 147 out of 178 in 2007 to 134 out of 178 in 2010 (“TI Corruption Perceptions Index”). Although the Nigerian government made attempts to reign in corruption, through the EFCC for example, corruption remained widespread and prevented Nigeria’s Freedom House political rights score from rising above a four (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2011”).

Civil Liberties During Yar’Adua’s and Jonathan’s Presidencies

From 2007 through 2010, Nigeria’s civil liberties score remained a four. Both Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Reports and Human Rights’ Watch World Reports stated freedom of speech and freedom of press were fairly robust during this time. However, there were exceptions. For example, journalists were subject to intimidation, violence, and arrests. In 2007 the State Security Service (SSS) arrested activists, including two German journalists, for taking pictures and video of the oil industry in the Delta, but later dropped the charges (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2008”). In September 2008, Channels Television in Nigeria was shut down after broadcasting a report claiming President Yar’Adua was in poor health (“Nigeria Shuts”). In April 2010, Edo Ugbagw, a journalist for The Nation, was shot and killed at his home by gunmen (“Journos Killed”). Freedom of speech was also limited by Shari’a law. In March 2010, a Shari’a court in Kaduna issued a temporary ban forbidding the rights group Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria from posting debates of Shari’a’s use of amputation as a legal punishment on social networking websites (“Islamic Court”). By the end of March an appellate Shari’a court upheld the ban, making it permanent (Fabi).
Nigeria’s civil rights score was also held back by violations of minority groups’ rights. Nigeria’s federal law prohibited homosexual behavior, which could be punished by up to 14 years in prison (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2009”). In August 2007, 18 men were arrested in northern Nigeria for engaging in sodomy, wearing women’s clothing, and attending a gay wedding, charges which were punishable by death (“Gay Nigerians”). Although the charges were reduced to “indecent dressing”, possible legal punishment still include one year in prison or 30 lashes (“Clash Over”). Women’s rights continued to be suppressed under Shari’a law as they were during Obasanjo’s presidency. In 2007, northern states began using yellow rickshaws to transport women who couldn’t afford “women only” taxis, as women were still prohibited from riding on motorcycles or in taxis with men (Harris). Additionally, Nigerian law did not recognize spousal rape as a crime and women were denied equal legal rights to inherit property under Shari’a law as of 2010 (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2011”). Women and children continued to be victims of human trafficking. Forty percent of the 15 million child laborers in Nigeria were at risk of being trafficked while pregnant women seeking abortions were at risk of being held captive by scam artists until the baby was delivered and could be sold for adoption (“Country Reports: Nigeria 2011”).

Despite these serious problems, the biggest detriment to Nigeria’s Freedom House civil liberties score was the ongoing violence, notably between Muslims and Christians, and the often violence police responses. Yar’Adua’s presidency began in the midst of violence. Religious violence between Muslims and Christians escalated in 2008. In November 2008 over 400 people died and 7,000 fled their homes when Christian and Muslim gangs clashed over local election results in Jos (Connors). A follow up article by
The New York Times reported that Nigerian government forces were responsible for at least 90 of the deaths in Jos after the regional governor issued a shoot to kill order to suppress violence (Polgreen, “Nigeria Forces”).

Boko Haram, a radical Islamist group opposed to Western influences in Nigeria, notably Western education, was responsible for several outbreaks of violence. In July 2009 Nigerian security forces responded to attacks by Boko Haram that resulted in at least 150 deaths over 4 days in Borno, Bauchi, Kano, and Yobe states (“Nigeria Army”). Another 30 people died in violent clashes between the police and Boko Haram when security forces attempted to suppress the violence (Nossiter, “Clashes Between”). In January 2010 sectarian violence between Muslims and Christians broke out again, this time killing over 320 people although neither Boko Haram nor any other fundamentalist Islamist sect was implicated in the fighting (Saka). However, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for two bombings and an attack on a Christian church in Jos on Christmas Eve 2010 (Mshelizza and Owen). Under Yar’Adua’s presidency Nigerian police failed to maintain civil rest and prevent sectarian violence, often responding aggressively and causing additional bloodshed. The ongoing religious attacks and police brutality played a key role in precluding Nigeria’s civil liberties score from improving.

**Effect of Nigeria’s Oil Industry on Political Rights and Civil Liberties**

Violence in Nigeria was also linked to the country’s oil industry. Like his predecessor, Yar’Adua attempted to end violence and maintain oil production in the Delta by deploying military forces to suppress militants. In June 2008, when MEND claimed responsibility for an armed attack which shut down production at a Shell
offshore oil rig, Yar’Adua responded by sending the military to the region with orders to pursue militants and to help protect Shell’s oil facilities (Polgreen, “Oil Field”; “Security at Oil Field”). In August 2008, MEND claimed to have killed 29 soldiers by using missiles and grenades in response to the killing of civilians by the military (“Nigeria Militants”). Fighting between the military and MEND lasted several days in September, costing Nigerian over 100,000 barrels per day in oil production and resulting in over 100 deaths (“Oil Workers”). Yar’Adua offered militants a presidential pardon, rehabilitation training, and education to lay down their weapons (“Nigeria Offers”). Yar’Adua offered an additional gesture of reconciliation with MEND when he released the group’s leader, Henry Okah from prison. MEND responded to Okah’s release by announcing a 60-day ceasefire (“Militants Announce”). Yar’Adua even attempted to meet some of MEND’s grievances by going against the interests of MNOC’s with the creation of the Petroleum Industry Bill which reformed Nigeria’s oil industry, allocated more oil revenue to the Delta region, and called upon oil companies such as Shell to pay for rehabilitation programs needed to train Delta militants (“Yar’Adua Arm-Twists”; Agoi). However, Yar’Adua’s efforts to end corruption and violence in Nigeria’s oil industry were hampered by his worsening health and ultimately his death in 2009. When Goodluck Jonathan took over the presidency after Yar’Adua’s death he continued Yar’Adua’s amnesty program for Delta militants, but focused mostly on efforts to secure his position as the new president rather than on stabilizing the Delta, despite the region’s high expectations of support from Yar’Adua due to his Southern origin (Agoi).
US Foreign Policy Toward Nigeria During Yar’Adua’s and Jonathan’s Presidencies

Between 2007 and 2010 US-Nigerian relations continued to improve. Nigeria remained a significant source of oil for the United States, being a top five oil supplier. During both Yar’Adua’s and Jonathan’s presidencies the US pushed Nigeria for political reforms to increase transparency and reduce corruption. In August 2009 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Nigeria. During a speech to Nigerian leaders Secretary Clinton praised Nigeria’s military but criticized Nigeria for rampant corruption and flawed elections while urging Nigeria to increase transparency in its government (Gettleman). In testimony to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in February 2010 Assistant Secretary of the State Department’s Bureau of African Affairs, Johnnie Carson, stated he had recently stressed electoral reform with Nigerian leaders for the upcoming 2011 elections and that USAID helped to fund efforts to conduct a joint-electoral assessment designed to assist in improving electoral processes in Nigeria (“Examining the U.S.-Nigeria”). In 2010 the US established the Binational Commission between the United States and Nigeria. Secretary Clinton announced the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission would have four goals, the first of which was improving good governance and transparency (“Signing Ceremony”). In light of this goal, the US worked with the Independent National Election Commission to assist Nigeria in preparing for the 2011 elections to ensure transparency and fairness (“Remarks with Nigerian”).

Another focus of US policy was the Commission’s second goal was to promote regional security and counterterrorism efforts. Yar’Adua’s presidency coincided with the creation and installation of a new US combatant command aimed protecting the national security interests of the United States in Africa through collaboration with African
partner states. In 2007, while Yar’Adua was in office, President Bush announced the creation of a new US combatant command, Africa Command (AFRICOM). Although Bush’s term in office was nearly over, AFRICOM’s conception was seen to fruition under the Obama administration. Nigeria worked cooperatively with the United States through joint training ventures and regional security exercises after AFRICOM became operational in October 2008 (“About United States”). In September 2009, AFRICOM hosted a Nigerian military delegation in Stuttgart, Germany to set the agenda for future US-Nigerian joint training events which prioritized capacity building and peacekeeping operations (Skinner).

In December 2009 a Nigerian, Abdul Abdulmutallab, attempted to detonate an explosive device on an American air flight (Eggen, DeYoung, and Hsu). The attempted terrorist attack prompted the United States to continue to focus on counterterrorism efforts such as the US-conducted joint military exercises with Nigeria in early 2010. During the exercises, the USS Samuel B. Roberts provided anti-terrorism training for Nigerian military forces as well as military-to-military training, damage control training, first aid training, and force protection training (Spain).

The third goal of the US-Nigerian Commission was the promotion of energy reform and stabilization of oil production in the Delta. One of the Commission’s working groups was dedicated to energy and investment. Secretary Clinton announced in August 2010 that the US was providing $1.5 million in technical support to help improve Nigeria’s energy needs for its petroleum sector (“Remarks with Nigerian”). The goal of stabilizing oil production also involved improving the standard of living for Delta residents. In September 2010, the American non-governmental organization Council of
Foreign Relations hosted meetings for the Binational Commission’s working group on energy which were focused on addressing economic and infrastructure development in the Delta as well as the Nigerian government’s role in maintaining security in the region (“U.S.-Nigeria Binational”).

Despite improved relations and increased cooperation, the United States failed to use its influence to publicly criticize Nigeria for its human rights record. Human rights were not mentioned in bilateral meetings between the US and Nigeria, nor were they a focus of the Binational Commission. In April 2010, Secretary Clinton’s description of the Binational Commission at a press conference made no mention of human rights issues in Nigeria (“Signing Ceremony”). Later, when the Commission’s working group on Niger Delta and Security Cooperation met in Washington D.C. in September 2010, the agenda did not include talks on human rights in the Delta, but rather on issues that would directly affect oil production and supply to the United States but that would not explicitly call out the Nigerian government for abuses against civilians in the Delta such as security, economic and infrastructure development, and state governance issues (“U.S.-Nigeria Binational”). US criticism of Nigeria remained rhetorical and calls for improvements in human rights were not reinforced with sanctions or revocations of aid. For example, US Department of State’s 2010 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Nigeria noted several human rights violations by the Nigerian government, including extrajudicial killings by security forces (notably in the Delta region), torture, inhumane treatment of prisoners, denial of fair trials, violence and discrimination against women and children, restrictions on freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly, and human trafficking (“2010 Human Rights Report”). While the report indicates the United States’ criticism of
Nigeria’s human rights record, it lacked the pressure of a diplomatic public condemnation and disapproval of the Nigerian government’s efforts to promote human rights. It is likely that the United States avoided such harsh criticisms as it viewed continued political and economic stability in Nigeria in its best interests. Because past Nigerian political instability had resulted in military coups and because the United States relied on Nigeria for approximately 10 percent of its oil imports, the US arguably benefited from maintaining the status quo in Nigeria. Despite its shortcomings, a democratic Nigerian government would be preferable over a military dictatorship to the United States. Additionally, should Yar’Adua’s or Jonathan’s administrations have fallen, this could have cause upheaval in Nigeria’s oil industry as civil unrest may resulted in increased violence in the Delta and as new energy policies may have impacted oil production.

**Chinese Foreign Policy Toward Nigeria During Yar’Adua’s and Jonathan’s Presidencies**

Between 2007 and 2010, China became more active in Nigeria’s oil industry while its investment in Nigeria’s oil industry continued to grow. In December 2009, China purposed a $50 billion bid to purchase 6 billion barrels of Nigeria’s oil reserves (Sharma). However, China looked to secure oil not only through purchasing reserves, but by investing in Nigeria’s oil production as well. In May 2010 China signed a deal with Nigeria worth $23 billion to build three new oil refineries and a petrochemical plant in Lagos (“China Signs”). The three new refineries could process 900,000 bbl/day, or more than twice Nigeria’s capacity at the time (Hong’e). The increased capacity would further allow China to secure oil imports from Nigeria. The full potential of the new refineries
had not been realized by the end of 2010 at which point China was importing less than three percent of Nigeria’s total oil exports (“Country Analysis Brief: Nigeria”).

China and Nigeria further developed bilateral relationships in other areas as well, notably trade, infrastructure, and technology. The value of total trade, measured in USD, between Nigeria and China increased almost 300% between 2004 and 2007 (“Chinese Ambassador”). In February 2008, Yar’Adua travelled to China and met with President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. After discussions, both countries pledged to increase economic cooperation. Notably, President Hu stated that China was pleased by Nigeria’s “One China” policy (Liang, Yan). Nigeria and China fulfilled their pledges to increased trade and economic cooperation. Trade between Nigerian and China was valued at $7.8 billion in 2008 while Chinese investment in Nigeria was valued at $7.5 billion in June 2008 (“Chinese Ambassador”). Chinese investments focused heavily on Nigeria’s infrastructure. In July 2008 the China Harbour Engineering Company signed a $1 billion deal to construct a six-lane road around Port Harcourt in the Delta region. Additionally, the State Grid Corporation of China was reportedly working to upgrade the Delta region’s electricity system (Tattersall, “Chinese Firm”). The upgrades are likely linked to Chinese interests in the region as the larger highway would improve transportation of oil products for export and the improved electricity system would increase production capacity of oil refineries and production facilities. However, cooperation was not restricted to the oil sector. According to The China Daily, China was involved in 56 projects throughout Nigeria in 2010, most of which focused on road and electricity infrastructure and included locations outside the Delta such as Abuja and in Niger state (Chao). In December 2010, China and Nigeria signed another deal, this time valued at
approximately $900 million, for the construction of rail and communication projects badly needed for Nigeria’s economic development (Hong’e). In addition to infrastructure, China also worked with Nigeria to improve Nigeria’s telecommunications technology. Nigeria was the first country to contract the production and launch of a Chinese-built satellite when China launched a communications satellite for Nigeria to improve cell phone and internet service in May 2007 (“China Builds”). The success led to the public-private Nigerian company, Nigcomsat, contracting China to build and launch two more satellites for future launches (Guodong).

China also provided Nigeria with military sales and assistance. In June 2009, Nigerian Defense Minister Shettima Mustapha travelled to Beijing to meet with Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie to discuss military cooperation between the two countries (Mingxin). The same year The Journal of Energy Security reported that China had provided Nigeria with light patrol boats for the Delta region, two squadrons of F-811M jets, and munitions (Hayward). China’s no questions asked policy of non-interference coupled with its willingness to sell arms and military equipment to the Nigerian government facilitated the Nigerian military’s attacks on Delta militants and prompted Chinese interests in securing a steady energy supply from the Delta.
IV
CONCLUSION

From 1993 through 2010 Chinese economic involvement in Nigeria coincides with a period of improving civil liberties and political rights scores in the country. However, the above process tracing reveals that despite the correlation, a causal relationship does not exist. Chinese economic involvement had little to no impact on Nigeria's Freedom House scores. The correlation is a result of Nigeria's Freedom House scores starting out incredibly low and of Chinese oil imports from Nigeria being zero in 1993. Nigeria’s Freedom House scores could only improve while Chinese imports could only increase as Nigeria's scores could not go lower than a seven and neither could Chinese imports go lower than a zero. The factors that actually caused Nigeria's scores to worsen or improve were domestic. Nigeria's political rights score fell to a seven due to the annulment of the 1993 elections, the military coup, the removal of civilians from the government, and Abacha's control of political opposition (notably through intimidation and assassination by the State Security Service and the Presidential Strike Force). Likewise, Nigeria's civil liberties score was mostly impacted by Abacha's rule. The score started as a five in 1993, but fell to a six in 1994 and to a seven in 1995. The main causes were suppressions of free speech, press, and assembly along with massive human rights violations. Abacha's regime shut down newspapers and arrested journalists. When labor unions went on strike Abacha's security forces arrested union members. Additionally, security forces often treated union members violently, at times even killing union
members for protesting. Moreover, Abacha dissolved the labor unions and refused to reinstate their leaders when ordered to do so by Nigerian courts. Under Abacha's regime, Nigerian law continued to not recognize marital rape as a crime and child labor remained common, hindering both women's and children's rights respectively. Police and military violence was common, especially in the Delta region. Oil companies played a role in this violence throughout the period and continue to do so. Abacha often responded with violence to protests at the request of oil companies such as Shell that noted security concerns impacting production. Additionally, oil companies failed to use their economic leverage to help political prisoners, such as Ken Saro-Wiwa.

During Abacha’s rule China had very little impact on Nigeria's Freedom House scores or influence on political rights and civil liberties in the country. At the time China imported no oil from Nigeria, save for 1995, and was not active in Nigeria's oil industry. However, China did follow its policy of non-interference in other states' domestic affairs. When a General Assembly resolution condemning the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa came to a vote at the UN, China voted no. China would likely have opposed any international efforts to sanction Nigeria for its political and human rights abuses. China's non-interference policy would have had the most impact at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) where China, a permanent member, could have prevented a resolution from being passed with its veto alone. However, China was not alone in its opposition to sanctions; the United Kingdom and France, also permanent UNSC members, opposed sanctions due to economic ties with Nigeria as well. The severity of any possible effect China's opposition to sanctions may have had on Nigeria's Freedom House scores would
have been mitigated by the UK and France's opposition, both capable of preventing a resolution’s passage with a veto.

Unlike China, the United States was a major actor in Nigeria's oil industry during Abacha’s rule. The US had the most economic and diplomatic influence on Nigeria as the US was the largest importer of Nigerian oil, US oil companies were heavily invested in Nigeria's oil industry from 1993 through 1998, and the US provided Nigeria with military and foreign aid. Although the US suspended all military aid, eliminated foreign aid (except that which was channeled through non-governmental organizations), revoked Nigerian visas, withdrew its ambassador, and expelled Nigerian officials from the US, called for economic sanctions in response to Abacha’s dictatorship and human rights abuses, the US failed to seriously consider, much less employ, its most influential tool, an oil embargo. With the US importing nearly half of Nigeria's oil exports, which accounted for 80 - 90% of the Nigerian government's revenue, the US had strong financial influence over Abacha's regime. While the United States did not have a direct impact on any of the factors that worsened Nigeria's Freedom House scores, the US's and Britain’s failure to exert its financial leverage over Abacha through an oil embargo make it the foreign actor most influential toward Nigeria's behavior.

When Nigeria's political rights scores improved in 1998 and 1999, it was a direct result of the transition to and implementation of a civilian government. Abubakar’s handover to civilian government was the greatest reason Nigeria’s political rights score improved in 1999. The transition allowed for the formation of political parties, etc. As the head of the caretaker government established upon Abacha’s sudden demise, Abubakar allowed the creation and registration of new political parties and initiated steps toward a
national election, resulting in the election of Obasanjo as president. Political freedoms remained fairly robust throughout Obasanjo’s presidency (1999 – 2007). However, Nigeria’s political rights score could not improve above a four due to fraudulent elections in 1999 and rampant corruption which improved minimally and remained problematic throughout Obasanjo’s term as president. Although the Nigerian legislature managed to pass anti-corruption legislation, the bill’s weak language and enforcement failed to help Nigeria’s political rights score to improve. Nigeria’s civil liberties score rose from 1998 – 2007 as well. This improvement was also a direct result of Abubakar’s transition program and the Obasanjo administration’s policy changes. Abubakar eased restrictions and prosecutions against the press. During Obasanjo’s presidency freedom of speech, press, and assembly were generally upheld. Like its political rights score, Nigeria’s civil liberties score did not improve above a four either. The causes for the score’s stagnation were domestic. Fewer restrictions on freedom of religion allowed for the creation and implementation of Shari’a law in northern Nigeria. However, this change in itself was perceived by non-Muslim as a threat to freedom of religion as Shari’a law was perceived as negatively impacting women’s rights, as women were treated differently than men under Shari’a and often received harsher legal punishments in Shari’a courts, notably in adultery and extra-marital sex related cases. Additionally, eruptions of violence between Muslims and Christians, many times over the implementation of Shari’a law, and violent police and military responses prevented Nigeria’s civil liberties score from improving. Political assassinations and violence were also common. Finally, human trafficking remained a significant problem in Nigeria throughout the period under review.
Much of the violence in Nigeria was related to the poverty and inequality which resulted from the disparate distribution of wealth associated with Nigeria’s oil industry. In the Delta region, violence broke out when local, armed rebel groups attacked oil infrastructures and kidnapped oil workers, acts which were often met with violence by Nigerian security forces. Despite the violence, multinational oil companies, including Chinese national oil companies, continued to invest in Nigeria’s oil industry. Between 1998 and 2007, Chinese oil imports and overall imports from Nigeria increased, resulting in a correlation between Chinese economic involvement and Nigeria's Freedom House scores. However, China had little impact on Nigeria's scores. Despite increased oil imports from Nigeria, China remained a minor player in Nigeria's oil industry and in Nigerian trade. For several of the years during this time period, China imported less than 1% of Nigeria’s total exports (see Appendix Table A1). China became more economically involved through diplomatic relations as it increased foreign aid to Nigeria, specifically regarding infrastructure projects, during this time. If China had any impact on Nigeria's Freedom House scores it would have been a negative one, as China failed to use its small, but growing, economic and diplomatic influence to pressure the Nigerian government to institute good governance and address corruption reform.

China was not alone in this position. Once Nigeria returned to a civilian government the United States quickly restored foreign aid, military aid, and diplomatic relations despite ongoing political and civil rights abuses. Additionally, the United States continued to be the largest importer of Nigerian oil. Because of their investment in Nigeria’s oil industry, the United States and Great Britain, more than any other foreign countries, were in a position to influence Nigerian political and civil rights. While the US
urged Nigeria to promote good governance and transparency and worked with Nigeria in anti-terrorism efforts, the US remained publicly silent regarding Nigeria’s human rights abuses. The United States’ silence on this issue resulted in a lack of meaningful pressure on the Nigerian government to address human rights concerns. In this regards, US foreign policy in Nigeria was nearly identical to Chinese foreign policy.

Nigeria’s political rights score dropped to a five in 2008 and 2009. The presence of previously existing factors, namely corruption, caused the score to remain a four in 2007. The decrease in 2008 and 2009 was a direct result of widespread electoral fraud in the 2007 elections and the consolidation of power by the PDP as a result of the fraudulent election outcomes. The score remained a five until 2010 when Nigerian courts overturned several of the PDP’s most questionable election victories, slightly decreasing its consolidation of political power. However, corruption remained an issue through Yar’Adua’s and Jonathan’s presidencies, despite reform attempts. Nigeria’s civil liberties score did not change at all from 2007 – 2010. Many of the same factors as before prevented the score from improving. While freedom of speech, press, and religion were generally respected the press continued to be attacked for printing or airing negative reports on the government or politicians. Moreover Shari’a law remained in place in several Nigerian states continuing to negatively impact women’s rights and harshly punishing homosexual behavior. Women and children also continued to be at risk for human trafficking or child labor and the practice of FGM continued. Lastly, violence between religious groups was common, as was police and military brutality.

Violence was also prevalent in Nigeria’s oil industry in the Delta. Rebel groups and gangs continued to fight for greater shares of oil revenue and civil society pushed for
better environmental protection. Police responses to rebel attacks were often times violent. Despite the violence and subsequent instability in the Delta, China continued to import Nigerian oil and invest in Nigeria’s oil industry. China agreed to build three new oil refineries and a petrochemical plant in Nigeria to improve the country’s production and refining capacity. Along with this investment, China invested in Nigeria’s infrastructure and provided Nigeria with technology assistance. Although Chinese economic involvement in Nigeria increased and is seemingly correlated with worsening political rights scores in 2008 and 2009, China had little impact on Nigeria’s Freedom House scores. China still imported only a tiny fraction of Nigeria’s oil. China’s greatest impact would be in selling Nigeria’s government military equipment such as boats and arms which could be used to suppress rebel groups in the Delta. However, as in previous years, US had a larger economic involvement in Nigeria than China. The United States continued to offer foreign aid and assistance to Nigeria, including military aid and training. It also remained the largest importer of Nigerian oil. The United States continued focused its diplomatic efforts in Nigeria encouraging improvements on corruption, political reform, and security in the Delta region. The US failed to publicly pressure Nigeria to address human rights abuses, despite State Department reports detailing human rights violations in Nigeria. The US policy in Nigeria continued to resemble China’s non-interventionist policy in practice.

This study reminds us of the misleading nature of using statistical analysis as a sole means of determining casual relationships between variables. While increasing Chinese economic involvement is correlated to improved Freedom House scores in Nigeria, there is no causal relationship. Chinese economic involvement did not promote
political and civil liberties in Nigeria, nor did it directly hinder them. Both Chinese
economic activity and Nigeria’s Freedom House scores could only increase and improve
during the time period covered in this case study. The changes in Nigeria’s scores were
direct results of domestic factors. The foreign actor with the most economic influence and
thus the most probable influence on the Nigerian government was the United States. The
US failed to employ oil sanctions against Nigeria or to publicly criticize the elected
civilian regimes in order to pressure the Nigerian government to end human rights
violations. China’s silence on human rights violations in Nigeria would have had no
greater weight than the United States’. In light of this and the influence of domestic
factors, this thesis finds that not only was the hypothesis wrong, but that Chinese
economic involvement had no direct causal effects on Nigeria’s Freedom House scores.
Moreover, in this case study, since Chinese and American policies were very similar in
practice, it is unlikely that would have a direct effect on Nigeria’s Freedom House scores
even if had China been the major or only importer of Nigerian oil. In the future, should
Nigeria return to military rule, the US’s policy would probably remain the same. While
the United States may strongly criticize a military coup and possibly suspend foreign aid,
it is unlikely the US would threaten Nigeria with an oil embargo to force a return to
democracy.

So far the US and China have not come to a clash over oil and energy policies in
Nigeria. Canada and Mexico remain two of the United States main suppliers of oil.
Chinese NOCs only have a minimal presence in either country. For the time being, it is
unlikely China or Chinese NOCs will obtain or exercise the same level of influence and
involvement as the United States and Great Britain in Nigeria and Nigeria’s oil industry.
However, when projected into the future, the scenario may change. China currently uses less than half the amount of oil the United States uses, but has a population four times greater than the United States. At the same time global population growth and development will result in an ever increasing demand for oil. Both the United States and China have oil policies are similar as they are driven by domestic factors, notably domestic demand. If the Chinese government is to maintain its legitimacy it must be able to sustain the current level and pace of development and growth in China. To do so will require increasing amounts of oil imports. Some calculations project China will overtake the United States as the world’s largest consumer of oil by 2030. If so, it’s extremely possible that China and the US will compete for many of the same oil supplies. It’s important to caveat this forecast by noting that past predictions of imminent oil shortages have not come to fruition as new sources of oil are continuously being discovered.

However, oil is a finite natural resource, and even with new discoveries, it remains a possibility that world oil supplies may not be able to meet the needs of consumers in the future if consumption rates increase. In this event, Chinese involvement in the oil industry may have a more significant impact on US policy objects than it does presently. Additionally, most the oil overseas Chinese NOC’s secure via oil equity agreements ends up in the global market. However, in the future, should China need its oil equity for consumption, available global supplies of oil could diminish, creating greater competition between China and the United States for oil supplies and greater friction between their opposing energy policies.

While this study concluded that China’s economic involvement had no causal relationship with Nigeria’s Freedom House score, this finding cannot be extrapolated to
other cases due to its reliance on factors unique to Nigeria. This study recommends that future research be done to determine the impact of China’s economic involvement on other states’ Freedom House scores. Since China’s involvement in Nigeria’s oil industry was minimal compared to the United States, future research should focus on countries with which China has a higher level of economic involvement. With this in mind, this study recommends that Sudan and South Sudan be examined in future research. Not only does China have a high level of economic involvement in Sudan’s oil industry, but also has close political ties with Khartoum. Such a case study would provide more qualitative data and allow for a more in depth analysis of the effects of Chinese petroleum diplomacy on a state’s Freedom House scores. Moreover, because China was active in the Sudanese oil industry when South Sudan inherited the majority of Sudan’s oil fields upon becoming an independent country, the case would provide insight into China’s non-intervention policy. Notably, a problem arises for China’s non-interventionist policy because, while South Sudan possesses most of the oil fields, the pipeline to export the oil runs through Sudan. Future research should examine whether or not China can remain a non-aligned party in its relations between South Sudan and Sudan.
### VIII

**APPENDIX TABLES**

**A1: Nigerian Oil and Total Export Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Oil Exports To China In USD</th>
<th>Total Overall Oil Exports To World In USD</th>
<th>Total Oil Exports To China In USD</th>
<th>Total Overall Exports To World In USD</th>
<th>Percentage Of Total Exports To China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>529,845</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1,064,257</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>56,633,927</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>59,711,253</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>6,820,653</td>
<td>11,393,896,390</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10,632,028</td>
<td>11,163,923,370</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>17,633,820</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>27,423,348</td>
<td>6,868,921,344</td>
<td>0.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>155,541,697</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>182,483,832</td>
<td>16,123,503,616</td>
<td>1.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>268,861,807</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>307,296,342</td>
<td>27,079,246,652</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>161,478,273</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>227,157,472</td>
<td>18,046,078,734</td>
<td>1.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>86,853,370</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>121,308,269</td>
<td>18,607,065,931</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>27,228,036</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>71,658,792</td>
<td>24,078,329,294</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>411,931,140</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>463,216,342</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>503,894,560</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>526,879,258</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>223,520,128</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>277,747,279</td>
<td>59,215,233,334</td>
<td>0.47</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>461,509,241</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>537,080,321</td>
<td>53,963,110,729</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>273,680,473</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>508,380,981</td>
<td>81,820,518,366</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>713,999,581</td>
<td>42,212,038,172</td>
<td>896,525,833</td>
<td>49,937,459,606</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>564,820,446</td>
<td>60,904,645,725</td>
<td>1,440,809,162</td>
<td>86,567,912,529</td>
<td>1.66</td>
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### A2: Dependent Variable Data for Nigeria

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Freedom House Civil Liberties Rating</th>
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