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With great power comes great responsibility

China, Sudan and the Crisis in Darfur

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Abstract

The crisis in the Sudanese region of Darfur, which began in 2003, is one of world's biggest challenges in the beginning of this century. Between the years 2006 and 2008 the ongoing conflict in Darfur received overwhelming attention from the world media. This was caused by two facts. First, Sudan's main ally was China, which in the last few decades experienced an unparalleled economic growth that made it one of the most important countries in world politics and second, in the year 2008, China was scheduled to organise the world's largest sporting event, the Summer Olympic Games. But the widespread human rights abuses happening in Sudan put China under intense pressure from human rights organisations and activists groups that demanded greater Chinese action in pressuring its ally and stopping the ongoing violence in Darfur. As the negative campaign threatened the success of the approaching Beijing Olympics, China was forced to reevaluate its core principle of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in domestic affairs of other countries and pressure the Sudanese government to accept the United Nations peacekeeping mission on its territory. In the end, China managed to pressure the Sudanese government to accept the UN peacekeeping mission, at the same time uphold its foreign policy principles, protect its investments in Sudan and organise successful Olympic Games.

Key Words: China, Sudan, Darfur, conflict, Africa, oil, international humanitarian intervention, UNAMID, Olympic Games, UN

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