MEMORANDUM

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SUMMARY

SOUTH AFRICA SEEKS TO APPEAL COURT RULING ON NUCLEAR DEAL

South Africa's Department of Energy may appeal the High Court's judgment on the planned nuclear deal declaring the 2014 agreement with Russia's state nuclear corporation Rosatom for the construction of nuclear power plants unlawful and subject to cancellation.
The agreement provides for a strategic partnership for the development of the nuclear power industry of South Africa. It envisions not only the construction of nuclear power plants, but also development of various areas of nuclear industry in general, in particular construction of a multipurpose research reactor under the Russian technology and training of South African specialists in Russian universities.
The document aroused sharp criticism of the opposition in South Africa, which considered that it violated the national legislation, as it obliges the government to work exclusively with Rosatom without holding any tender, allegations which have since been denied by the Russian state nuclear corporation and South Africa's Energy Department.
Last week, the High Court of South Africa's province Western Cape ruled to cancel a 2014 intergovernmental agreement with Russia for the construction of eight nuclear reactors in that country.
Kelvin Kemm, chairperson of the Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa termed the move as an attempt of the anti-nuclear lobby to ruin the project. He however clarified that they would carry on cooperating with the Russian organizations.
Last week, Rosatom confirmed its plans to bid on construction of nuclear power plants in South Africa despite the decision of the country's court to cancel the relevant intergovernmental agreement.
Viktor Polikarpov, Vice-President of Rosatom for Sub-Saharan Africa, clarified that the corporation Rosatom was responding to Eskom's request to grant tender information for the construction of nuclear power plants with a total capacity of 9.6 GW.
Four companies from China (State Nuclear Power Technology), France (EDF), Russia (Rosatom) and the Republic of Korea (KEPCO) are main bidders for construction of the NPP in South Africa. South Africa's energy monopoly Eskom is the project's operator and owner of future nuclear power plants (CRO 03-05-2016)

ANGOLAN FINANCE MINISTER SAYS NATIONAL CURRENCY WILL BE DEVALUED

The Angolan currency, the kwanza, will have to be devalued "sooner or later" to "maintain the stability of foreign reserves," Finance Minister Archer Mangueira said in statements made in Washington according to Angolan newspaper Valor Económico.

"This is not the best time, otherwise it could aggravate inflation," the minister told financial news agency Bloomberg, justifying the possibility of future devaluation of the currency with the need to discourage imports, thereby promoting, "one of the government's main objectives."

The minister also said that the government is developing a "special programme to tackle the supply side that has to do with the negative impact that led to the shortage of foreign currency to import food products and raw materials for industry."

The programme includes a set of measures to reduce the secondary effects of devaluation, so that the readjustment of the exchange rate is not an isolated measure.

"The government's objective is to make the foreign exchange adjustment as soon as the programme that is being drawn up is in the application phase," said Mangueira, without giving a timeframe.

The official exchange rate of 168 kwanzas per dollar, in place for over a year is considered administrative because it is set by the National Bank of Angola (BNA) and is not established by supply and demand fluctuations.

In order to maintain the exchange rate, the BNA sells foreign currency in primary market auctions and it is this process that affects foreign reserves. (04-05-2017)

BANCO BPI REDUCES POSITION IN BANCO DE FOMENTO ANGOLA

Angola was a “fantastic investment” but Portugal’s Banco BPI bank will progressively withdraw from Banco de Fomento Angola (BFA), in order to comply with the recommendations of the European Central Bank said the bank’s new chief executive, Pablo Forero.

The new CEO noted the figures, which, he said, are public, “BPI has invested 3.3 million euros, received 1 billion euros in return and still has a position worth 450 million euros on the balance sheet.”

Forero said that the disinvestment process in Banco de Fomento Angola would be carried out in the “long-term” and added that it will be a reduction in the current 48.1% stake to a percentage that will satisfy both BPI’s Board of Directors and the European Central Bank.

The loss of control of Banco de Fomento Angola has already taken BPI’s from a profit of 45.8 million euros in the first quarter of 2016 to losses of 122.3 million euros in the same period of 2017.

The impact of the sale of a 2.0% stake taking its stake down to 49.1% and consequent loss of control of the bank was a negative 212.3 million euros, and without this impact BPI would have seen a positive result of 90 million euros.

The sale of the stake, due to the European Central Bank’s recommendation, “led to Banco de Fomento Angola ceasing to be consolidated in the accounts of Banco BPI, becoming recogniszed only by the equity method.” (28-04-2017)

RUSSIAN MINING COMPANY NORILSK NICKEL TO SUE BOTSWANA

Russian mining company Norilsk Nickel is to sue the Botswana government to recover more than $277m, excluding damages and costs, because of "reckless trading" of state-owned Botswana Copper (BCL) and the failed sale of the Nkomati nickel mine in SA.

Botswana is African country rated highest in annual mining surveys conducted by Canada’s Fraser Institute.

"The government has displayed a complete disregard for the fair, frank and reasonable dealing with outsiders that BCL’s insolvent circumstances demanded," said Norilsk Nickel Africa CEO Michael Marriott.

"Botswana has a reputation as one of the safest and best places to invest in the whole of Africa and it has earned the strongest credit rating on the continent on that basis.

"The way that the government of Botswana has acted over BCL brings the validity of that reputation into question."

Copper and nickel producer BCL said in October 2014 that it had agreed with the world’s largest nickel producer, Norilsk, to pay $337m for its 50% stake in Nkomati which it shared with JSE-listed African Rainbow Minerals, as well as 85% of Tati Mining that Norilsk owned in Botswana.

The price tag was later reduced at the request of BCL and the Botswana government.

However, by October 2016, BCL said it could no longer afford to pay for the transactions and moved into liquidation after shutting its unprofitable operations in Botswana.

Norilsk, which acquired the Nkomati and Tati assets when it took over LionOre in 2007, had wanted to dispose of these assets to focus on its best mines, while BCL wanted Nkomati's nickel to supply its processing plants in Botswana.

According to Norilsk's statement on Friday, it was claiming $271m from the Botswana government for the failed Nkomati sale and $6.4m for the Tati business.

Norilsk says it had discovered through media reports in October that BCL, which relied on the Botswana government for financial support, 'had been placed into provisional liquidation by the government in an apparent attempt to avoid its obligations to Norilsk'

Norilsk served the notice that "it intends to commence legal proceedings in Botswana against the government of Botswana in respect of its involvement in the reckless trading of BCL Limited and BCL Investments Proprietary Limited" on the attorney-general of Botswana, the minister of mineral resources, Green Technology and Energy Security, and the minister of finance.

Norilsk said it had discovered through media reports in October that BCL, which relied on the Botswana government for financial support, "had been placed into provisional liquidation by the government in an apparent attempt to avoid its obligations to Norilsk".

"Since then, Norilsk has tried on numerous occasions, and through numerous channels, to reach a satisfactory and amicable resolution, but none has been forthcoming."

Reuters reported in February that an interested party in the Middle East was possibly interested in buying the suspended BCL operations, which included underground nickel mines that were among the most expensive to run in the world at a time when nickel prices were uncertain.

Norilsk said it would try to block any agreement the Botswana government reached to sell BCL if it did not secure payment for the failed deal.

"In this regard, Norilsk expects its rights to be recognised by the government in its negotiations and in any agreement ultimately reached in relation to BCL, failing which Norilsk reserves its rights including to challenge any such agreement."(BD 02-05-2017)

UGANDA, EQUATORIAL GUINEA SIGN PACTS ON OIL MANAGEMENT

Uganda and Equatorial Guinea on Wednesday entered a number of agreements that will see the two countries expand their ties in oil and gas management.

The agreement was reached at Uganda's State House, Entebbe, when President Yoweri Museveni held bilateral talks with visiting Equatorial Guinea President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who is on a two-day state visit to Uganda at the invitation of Museveni.

President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo arrived in Uganda this afternoon.

The two leaders led their respective countries' delegations in bilateral talks aimed at bolstering cooperation between Uganda and Equatorial Guinea.

The bilateral meeting focused on areas of interest between both countries, including the establishment of joint missions, consultation on issues of common issues and economic, cultural and technical cooperation.

Museveni called upon Africans to embrace pan Africanism, work together and ensure security and development on the continent.

“Our pan Africanism is not sentimental. It is for prosperity, security, and historical and cultural reasons. We look at Africa as Africa. We do not care whether the country is Francophone or Anglophone,” he said.

Museveni also observed that if African countries worked together they could ensure security on the continent and negotiate better trade deals with countries like India and China.

President Nguema Mbasogo in reply called for more cooperation between African countries, if they are to develop.

“There is little solidarity among our African countries. We forget that we are Africans. Things are not moving in the right direction for our countries, and it is not that Africa is not self-sufficient, but Africans look at ourselves as people who cannot develop ourselves; yet we have many resources. Africans think all civilisation lies in the Western world,” he said.

The two leaders pledged to promote both countries as tourist destinations. (APA 26-04-2017)

THE GROUNDED GOALS OF AFRICA'S SPACE AGE

The continent is enjoying a boom in space activity, putting it to a wide range of earthly uses - including fighting Boko Haram

Across Africa, countries are increasingly turning to the skies to solve problems on the ground. "Africa has experienced something of a boom in space activity over the last few years, with several countries establishing national space agencies," said Peter Martinez, a professor of space studies at the University of Cape Town.

A number of countries have declared their growing space ambitions with projects in recent years. In January, Ethiopia announced plans to launch a satellite in three to five years to better predict weather conditions.

In 2013, the Kenyan government reported it had found two aquifers that could supply the country with water for 70 years via satellite. Nigeria aims to put an astronaut in space by 2030 and has used satellites to assist in locating Boko Haram insurgents.

You can tell the robustness of a country’s space programme by looking at what is on the ground, not what is in the skies.

But this boom is not the space race of yesteryear, when the US and then Soviet Union competed for prestige. Rather, Martinez said, this space rush is largely fueled by much lower barriers to entry than ever before. "In the Cold War days, the main actors were super-powers. They were the gatekeepers to which countries got into space," he said.

Now, as more countries recognise the importance of satellite technology, the prevalence of space technology in modern society makes it much easier to launch satellites.

Calestous Juma, a Harvard professor who specialises in space programmes in developing countries, cautions against picturing fantastical and lofty projects when discussing African space projects.

"The space programmes are largely about satellite technology and not sending humans into orbit," he wrote in an e-mail. "It is important to clarify this because … it makes it look like Africans are wasting money on lofty projects that should be left for the rich countries. This image is as wrong as it is misleading."

Indeed, most space agencies today do not focus on putting a person on the moon or flying someone to Mars; instead, countries use satellites to mine data that can be used to benefit their citizenry. "Satellites are used to support sustainable development in a number of ways," Martinez said.

He offers the example of disaster relief. "In the immediate response to a disaster, the infrastructure is probably wiped out so satellites provide the only means for communication and navigation," he said.

For more day-to-day practicalities, satellites allow countries to develop better policies across a range of fields. "The changing climate, weather, resource and environmental mapping, security and telecommunications are among the reasons for the growing interest," Juma said.

If Kenya can use its satellite data to better predict and ameliorate future droughts, then the savings in human lives could outweigh present financial costs. Space programmes can also provide valuable, well-paying jobs in building infrastructure and research, as well as stimulate interest in science and technology for young people, which can yield unforeseen future advances, according to Juma.
Velcro is famously the result of work done by Nasa. Said Juma: "You can tell the robustness of a country's space programme by looking at what is on the ground, not what is in the skies." (TMG Digital 28-04-2017)

FOREIGN WORKERS IN ANGOLA CAN BE PAID IN FOREIGN CURRENCY ONCE AGAIN

Non-resident foreign workers in Angola can once again be paid in foreign currency, not just in kwanzas, according to presidential decree 78/17, of 24 April, repealing another decree from 6 March.

The new decree stipulates that "the value and currency of the remuneration of foreign non-resident workers are freely agreed between the employer and the worker," in compliance with the general principles set out in the General Labour Law and new legislation.

The decree of 6 March indicated that Angolan companies could only hire non-resident foreign workers for a maximum period of 36 months, with payments made exclusively in kwanzas, with the central bank deciding on the amount of transfers abroad.

Non-resident foreign worker are citizens of another nationality, "not residing in Angola, with professional, technical or scientific qualifications in which the country is not self-sufficient, hired in foreign country to pursue their professional activity in Angola for a time. " (28-04-2017)

EGYPT LEADS AFRICA IN BUILDING THE MOST HOTELS


Emaar's Vida Hotels and Resorts is developing the Vida Marassi Marina in Egypt

Egypt is currently building the most hotels of all countries in Africa, according to an industry database. With 53 hotels currently under construction, Egypt comes ahead of Morocco (50) and Nigeria (34) and is building more than twice as many hotels as the country that comes fourth in the top 10, Kenya, which is building 24.

The data has been gathered by the Tophotelprojects.com database, and is reported by industry news site, Hospitality Net.

It says the new hotel construction pipeline for Africa “has begun to look healthier than it has in many years”, 336 new hotel construction projects underway among African countries.

Among the hospitality schemes planned in Egypt is the Vida Marassi Marina (pictured), developed by Emaar Hospitality Group’s Vida Hotels and Resorts brand.

The current top 10 hotel-building countries in Africa are as follows:

1. **Egypt:** 53
2. Morocco: 50
3. **Nigeria:** 34
4. Kenya: 24
5. **Ethiopia:** 23
6. South Africa: 16
7. **Algeria:** 12
8. Cape Verde: 12
9. **Tanzania:** 11
10. Tunisia: 10

(CGR 03-05-2017)

NAMIBIA TO LEARN FROM ZIMBABWE’S LAND REFORM PROGRAMME

Visiting Namibian President Hage Geingob said he is in Zimbabwe to learn from President Robert Mugabe about how to implement his own country’s land reform programme.

Speaking during a banquet held in his honour at State House in Harare on Wednesday night, Geingob said part of his mission during the state visit to Zimbabwe was to exchange notes with Mugabe on the key success factors and challenges for implementing land reforms.

“We will be holding a conference on land reforms in Namibia in September and I want to learn from my dear comrade Robert Mugabe on the process of implementing our own land reforms,” Geingob said.

He said it was unacceptable that 27 years after independence, Namibia remained one of the most unequal countries in the world, with the majority of the people landless and without access to means of production.

Land redistribution is a topical issue in Namibia where white commercial farmers own vast tracts of land while the majority blacks are crowded in communal areas.

Zimbabwe’s controversial land reform programme saw Mugabe forcibly taking farms from more than 4,000 white commercial farmers in the first decade of the 2000s.

The move however backfired as the newly resettled black farmers lacked knowledge to produce food on a commercial basis. This led to a drastic drop in food output and a rise in prices. (APA 27-04-2017)

AID REACHES NEW PEAK, OECD REPORTS

The latest official data released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) show that development aid reached a new peak of US$142.6 billion in 2016, an increase of 8.9% from 2015 after adjusting for exchange rates and inflation. Although increased aid for refugees in donor countries boosted the total, the Organization notes, when stripping out refugee costs aid still rose by 7.1%, having doubled in real terms (up 102%) since 2000. Despite this progress, the 2016 data show that bilateral aid to the least developed countries (LDCs) fell by 3.9% in real terms from 2015, and aid to Africa fell 0.5%, as some DAC members backtracked on a commitment to reverse past declines in flows to the poorest countries, the report notes. Humanitarian aid rose by 8% in real terms in 2016, to US$14.4 billion.

Overall, total net ODA rose in 22 donor countries in 2016, with the biggest increases in the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Spain. ODA fell in seven countries, with the largest declines seen from Australia, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden. The Netherlands decline brought its ODA level below the UN target of 0.7% of GNI, while Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the UK met the target. Of the several non-DAC members who report their aid flows to the OECD body, the United Arab Emirates posted the highest ODA/GNI ratio in 2016 at 1.12%. OECD says contributions by DAC donors to multilateral organizations rose by nearly 10% in real terms, which makes the share of multilateral aid to bilateral aid approximately 50%-50%.

Upon the release of the data, DAC Chair Charlotte Petri Gornitzka expressed hope the rising trend will continue, but said much of the latest increase is in humanitarian aid and spending on refugees in donor countries. While these are highly important, she said, “we must ensure that we also maintain financing of long-term development programmes, especially in the least developed nations.”

ODA spending to host refugees inside donor countries jumped by 27.5% in real terms from 2015, which equates to 10.8% of total net ODA, up from 9.2% in 2015 and 4.8% in 2014. Australia, Japan, Korea and Luxembourg did not count any refugee costs as ODA in 2016, but 11 countries spent over 10% of their ODA on refugees. Among them, Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy used over 20% of ODA for refugee costs.

A 1988 DAC rule allows donor countries to count certain refugee expenses as ODA for the first year after their arrival. Noting that many donor countries “have seen unprecedented inflows of refugees” in the last two years, the OECD announced that the DAC is currently working to clarify its ODA reporting rules to ensure that refugee costs “do not eat into funding for development.”

OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said ODA makes up more than two thirds of external finance for LDCs, and the DAC is pushing for it to be better used as a lever to generate private investment and domestic tax revenues in poor countries, in order to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. He noted “cause for concern” about recent signals from some donor countries on future aid levels, but observed that “major donor nations have committed to refocus their efforts on the LDCs,” and invited countries to turn these commitments into action. OECD 11-04-2017)

[OECD Press Release] [Detailed text on 2016 ODA data] [Complete data tables] [In-donor refugee costs in ODA reporting]

MOZAMBIQUE TESTS MAGNETITE TRANSPORT BY TRAIN TO THE PORT OF MAPUTO

A magnetite transport train that has been tested on the Ressano Garcia railway since 1 April has made it possible to reduce the number of trucks that arrive daily at the port of Maputo, said Mozambique’s Minister of Transport and Communications.

The train, consisting of 75 wagons of 60 tonnes each, carrying 4,500 tonnes of magnetite per trip “is not only contributing to reducing congestion of National Road Number Four (EN4), but also improves the logistics chain,” said minister Carlos Mesquita.

The introduction of this train, which links South Africa to the port of Maputo, along the Ressano Garcia line, has, so far, reduced the number of trucks on the EN4 by at least 140 per day and 700 per week in one direction, according to daily newspaper Notícias.

At the moment there are five trains per week and increasing their frequency depends on improving conditions of both the line and the port of Maputo itself.

A return to traditional rail cargo, which is currently transported on the road system, allows for improved traffic flow along the EN4, as well as contributing to an increase in revenue collected by state-owned port and rail company CFM through the increased use of Ressano Garcia line.

By the end of the year the port of Maputo is expected to receive about 4 million tonnes of magnetite from the Ressano Garcia line, reversing the current situation where most of the processed cargo is transported by road.

The port of Maputo became even more competitive in regional and international markets, following the recent completion of dredging of the access channel, from 11 to 14 metres deep, allowing access to the port by ships carrying up to 120,000 tonnes. (28-04-2017)

IS CHINA THE WORLD'S NEW COLONIAL POWER?

The rising superpower has built up enormous holdings in poor, resource-rich African countries — but its business partners there aren't always thrilled.

Every weekday before dawn, a morning migration takes place near the desert on Africa's southwestern coast. At 5:30 in the Namibian enclave Swakopmund, whose century-old buildings still bear the imprint of German colonization, solitary men in khaki uniforms emerge from houses and apartment complexes, the white reflective strips on their pants flashing as they walk briskly through the darkness. They are not African but Chinese. No one else is stirring in the Atlantic Coast town as the men converge on a tidy house on Libertina Amathila Avenue, the only one in the neighborhood with its lights ablaze.

Dylan Teng, a boyish 29-year-old engineer with a brush cut and wire-rimmed glasses, is among the last to arrive. Just as he has done nearly every day since landing in Namibia three and a half years ago, Teng joins the others in wolfing down a breakfast of steamed buns and rice porridge. He picks up a packed lunch prepared by a company chef and at precisely 6 o'clock, with stars still glimmering overhead, he boards a bus emblazoned with the letters C.G.N. — China General Nuclear, a state-owned behemoth that owns the biggest Chinese project in all of Africa.

An hour later, as the sun clears the horizon, the bus winds through a craggy moonscape and descends to the Husab Uranium Mine, a $4.6 billion investment that is the second-largest uranium mine in the world. Teng has made this trip nearly a thousand times, but Husab always seems like a mirage: a virtual city stretching seven miles across the desert floor, from two vast open pits being gouged out of the rocky substratum to a processing plant that, on the last working day of 2016, produced its first drums of U_3O_8, the yellowcake that can be used to generate nuclear power (and also to make weapons). "We had a big ceremony that day," Teng says.

One of the few university graduates from his village in China's southwestern Sichuan Province, Teng is keenly aware of Husab's significance. It is not simply a lifeline for Namibia's struggling economy, one that the country estimates will increase its gross domestic product by 5 percent when the mine reaches full production next year. The uranium itself, almost all of which will go to China, will also help turn Teng's homeland into a world leader in nuclear energy and reduce its dependence on coal. In Beijing, where he worked before coming here, Teng lived under the gray blanket of coal-generated pollution that hangs over much of eastern China. Now he is working for the future — his own and his country's — under an endless African sky of cobalt blue. "I never imagined," he says, "I would end up halfway around the world."

China's gravitational pull can be felt today in every nook of the globe. Few countries feel the tug more strongly than Namibia, a wind-swept nation with a population of 2.4 million — barely a tenth the size of Beijing's — some 8,000 miles away from the Chinese capital. The desert where the Husab mine has materialized in recent years used to be known only for the presence of Welwitschia mirabilis, the short, droopy national plant that grows just two leaves — and can live for more than 1,000 years. Now, in little more than 1,000 days, China's reach has spread far beyond the uranium mine.

The Money Issue

Just north of Swakopmund, a Chinese telemetry station sprouts from the desert floor, its radar dishes pointing skyward to track satellites and space missions. Twenty-five miles south, in Walvis Bay, a state-owned Chinese company is building an artificial peninsula the size of 40 baseball fields as part of a vast port expansion. Other Chinese projects nearby include new highways, a shopping mall, a granite factory and a $400 million fuel depot. Chinese trade flows through the port: shipping containers filled with cement, clothing and machinery coming in; tiles, minerals and — in some cases — illegal timber and endangered wildlife heading out to China. The activity is so frenzied that rumors of a proposed naval base in Walvis Bay, though vehemently denied by Chinese officials, do not strike locals as implausible.

This small outpost offers a glimpse of what may be the largest global trade-and-investment spree in history. Driven by economics (a hunger for resources and new markets) and politics (a longing for strategic allies), Chinese companies and workers have rushed into all parts of the world. In 2000, only five countries counted China as their largest trading partner; today, more than 100 countries do, from Australia to the United States. The drumbeat of proposed projects never stops: a military operating base, China's first overseas, in Djibouti; an $8 billion high-speed railway through Nigeria; an almost-fantastical canal across Nicaragua expected to cost $50 billion. Even as China's boom slows down, its most ambitious scheme is still ramping up: With the "One Belt, One Road" initiative — its name a reference to trade routes — President Xi Jinping has spoken of putting $1.6 *trillion* over the next decade into infrastructure and development throughout Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The scheme would dwarf the United States' post-World War II Marshall Plan for Europe.

China's relationship with Africa goes back to the 1960s, when Chairman Mao Zedong promoted solidarity with the developing world — *"Ya Fei La,"* as he called it, using the first syllables for Asia, Africa and Latin America. Though it was poor and mired in the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, China won new allies in Africa by finishing, in 1976, a 1,156-mile railroad through the bush from Tanzania to Zambia. Aid continued to trickle in, but there were no other big projects for nearly 30 years, as China focused on building up its domestic economy, following its leader Deng Xiaoping's prescription to "hide your strength and bide your time." That ended in the 2000s, when Beijing, recognizing the need for foreign resources and allies to fuel its economic growth, exhorted the nation's companies to "go out" into the world.

Today, if you take the red-eye flight from Shanghai to Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, chances are you'll be seated among Chinese workers heading to a construction site in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea, a cotton-processing plant in Mozambique, a telecom project in Nigeria. China's trade with African nations has increased fortyfold in the past 20 years. The workers and migrants carrying out China's global vision are now so ubiquitous in Africa — as many as a million of them, according to one estimate — that when my wife and I wandered into a Hunanese restaurant in Addis, the red-faced workers devouring twice-cooked pork blurted out: *"Ah, laowai laile!"* "Foreigners have come!" It seemed rude to point out that they were foreigners, too.

China's advances have come as the West seems to be retreating. United States engagement in Asia, Africa and Latin America declined after the Cold War, when the regions served as proxies for superpower rivalries. China's rise and the wars in the Middle East also pulled away resources and attention. And now, with Washington raising doubts about global agreements on issues like free trade and climate change, Beijing has more leverage to push its own initiatives and show its capacity for global leadership. President Trump's disdain for the Trans-Pacific Partnership has already made Beijing's trade proposals, which exclude the United States, more appealing. "In certain parts of the world, the relative inattention of the Trump administration is definitely creating an opening for China to fill," says David Shambaugh, director of the China Policy Program at George Washington University and author of the 2013 book "China Goes Global." But "China remains very much a partial power — and *only* offers other countries an economic relationship."

Still, for a nation like Namibia, China's pitches can be irresistible partly because they're rooted in historical solidarity. Beijing backed the black nationalist movement's liberation struggle against apartheid and its white South African overlords. Sam Nujoma, the leader of the South West Africa People's Organization (Swapo), visited Beijing in search of guns and funds in the early 1960s. When Namibia finally claimed independence in early 1990, with Nujoma as president, China became one of its first diplomatic allies, pronouncing the two countries "all-weather friends." (Beijing was also desperate for allies to break its diplomatic isolation after its violent crackdown on the 1989 democracy movement.)

In addition to offering its own history as a model for climbing out of poverty, China provides no-strings financing that, unlike Western aid, is not conditional on such fine points as human rights, clean governance or fiscal restraint. "We welcomed China very much because, for the first time, it gave us a real alternative to a Western-driven agenda, whether it was South Africa or the Western world," Calle Schlettwein, Namibia's minister of finance, told me. "The Chinese say, 'We want you to be masters of your own destiny, so tell us what you want.' " But they have their conditions, too, he says. "They want de facto total control over everything, so it's difficult to bring about a situation that is truly beneficial."

China's leaders insist that its influence is entirely benign, a global exercise in what they call "win-win cooperation." And indeed, many of the projects Chinese companies are pursuing — roads and railways, ports and pipelines, mines and telecom networks — might never be built without them. China's investment in the Husab uranium mine, in which C.G.N. subsidiaries hold a 90 percent stake and the Namibian government owns 10 percent, is doing its part to stave off a recession. "We helped Namibia gain its political liberation," Xia Lili, a former Chinese diplomat who now works as an executive at a Chinese company in Windhoek, the Namibian capital, says. "Now we're helping it fight for economic emancipation."

For some Namibians, however, the flood of Chinese loans and investments doesn't look so much like freedom as it does a new form of colonialism. The infrastructure is welcome, but as projects made possible by loans — financed by the Chinese — they have saddled the economy with debt and done little to alleviate the nearly 30 percent unemployment rate. Over the last few months, moreover, a series of scandals involving Chinese nationals — including tax evasion, money-laundering and poaching endangered wildlife — has soured locals on a foreign presence that can seem largely extractive: pulling uranium, timber, rhino horns and profits out the country without benefiting a population that, because of apartheid's legacy, ranks among the most unequal economically in the world. In January, a Windhoek newspaper captured the rising sentiment with an illustration on its front page of a golden dragon devouring the Namibian flag. The headline: "Feeding Namibia to the Chinese."

The question of how China is changing the world is often framed as a binary proposition: Is China the savior for developing nations, the only world power investing in their future — or is this the dawn of a new colonial era? The question itself, however, is misleading. In Namibia, as in much of the rest of the world, the narratives live uncomfortably side by side, impossible to disentangle. "You can argue that China is the best thing to happen to Africa — or the worst," says Eric Olander, the co-host of the weekly "China in Africa Podcast." "The beauty is in the complexity."

The sign on the lime green cement wall outside the restaurant, written in Chinese, read *"Ye Shanghai":* "Shanghai Nights." Inside, the lunch crowd was already gone, but six middle-aged Chinese men and women — including James Shen and his wife, Rose, the proprietors — crowded around a table peeling prawns and sucking heartily on the shells. Nobody spoke. Blaring from the flat-screen television on the wall was a special report on CCTV-4, a channel from China's state television broadcaster, breathlessly describing the powers of the People's Liberation Army. When a double row of explosions erupted in the sea, Rose exclaimed, *"Wah*, our China is so strong!"

The couple's restaurant is in Walvis Bay, a port surrounded on three sides by the Namib Desert, which some consider the oldest in the world. James and Rose are part of the early wave of Chinese immigrants who landed in Africa 20 years ago and never left. The Chinese diaspora has a long history of finding a foothold, and then thriving, in some of the world's most remote places: I've bumped into Chinese merchants everywhere from the Arctic tundra of Siberia to mining towns in the Andes. In Africa, entrepreneurs like James and Rose found a new frontier with the space, freedom and opportunities that many early settlers saw in the American West. "My husband came to look at business here, and he fell in love with the wide-open spaces," Rose told me. "But we're still Chinese first and foremost."

Like many Chinese immigrants around the world, the couple began by opening a small mom-and-pop shop, filling the shelves with cheap clothes, shoes and bags shipped by container from China. Their store, James and Rose, still stands at a central intersection of Walvis Bay, even as their ventures have expanded to include a hotel, a restaurant, a karaoke bar, a massage parlor and a trading company. Today there are such Chinese-run stores in nearly every town in Namibia — and thousands more across Africa.

On a recent Sunday in Windhoek's Chinatown, where dozens of shops occupy a series of long warehouses in the city's industrial district, Namibian families strolled the lanes, haggling over everything from knockoff Nikes and plastic children's toys to solar panels and secondhand mobile phones. One man told me he liked the low prices, even as he complained about the goods' poor quality — and the harm they did to the local garment industry. Wu Qiaoxia, a Chinese entrepreneur whose real estate business began with a simple store in the northern town of Oshakati, waves off such criticism. "Many Namibian children didn't even have shoes before we got here," Wu says. "The people here needed everything, and we sold it to them, cheaply."

One of the most influential Chinese immigrants in Namibia, Jack Huang, parlayed a small textile business into a mining, real estate and trade conglomerate. A backslapping 49-year-old native of Nantong, a city located about two hours northwest of Shanghai, Huang moved to Namibia nearly two decades ago. Early on, he helped transform Oshikango, a sleepy town on the Angolan border, into a raucous Chinese trading post anchored by his properties. Angolans made rich by a boom in oil production flooded in to buy things like stereos and S.U.V.s, paying with United States dollars or, at times, diamonds. The collapse of oil prices has turned Oshikango into a ghost town. But Huang, through his Sun Investment Group, has diversified into many lucrative businesses, including a mining venture that has identified other uranium deposits close to Husab.

Huang's success has come, in part, from cultivating connections with Namibia's political elite. Swapo, the guerrilla-group-turned-political-party, has dominated Namibia's elections since its independence — the kind of stability that appeals to China's rulers and to entrepreneurs hoping to make long-lasting connections. Huang has referred to Sam Nujoma, Namibia's founding father, as "my special adviser." During the 2014 election campaign, Huang and the Swapo candidate Hage Geingob (then the prime minister, now the president) attended a gala dinner at which, according to local reporting, the Chinese businessman pledged Geingob's political party a donation of 1 million Namibian dollars — about $90,000. (Huang denies this.)

Huang's friends prefer to emphasize how much he has given back to his host country through his charity, the Namibia-China Loving Heart Organization. (Huang was out of the country at the time of my visit, but he authorized two deputies to speak with me on his behalf.) Over the last seven years, Huang's charity has awarded more than $2 million in scholarships to Namibian students to attend medical school in China (in Nantong, naturally). Some critics, however, claim that a few recipients of Huang's philanthropy were not needy students but children of the ruling elite. Last year, moreover, the local media revealed that before Geingob was elected president in 2014, Huang was the owner of a majority stake in a real estate venture whose only other shareholders are Geingob's family trust and ex-wife. The men tried to distance themselves from each other in the press, and Geingob professed to have no operational control of the company. Still, Huang's friends worry about his courting of the powerful. "I kept warning Jack," says one businessman who occasionally socializes with Huang. " 'Don't get too close to the fire. You'll burn your fingers.' "

The exact number of Chinese living in Namibia remains the subject of contentious debate. No definitive data exist, and the constant ebb and flow of contract workers muddies the picture. Last fall, Namibia's home-affairs ministry raised alarms when it claimed that 100,000 Chinese nationals live in Namibia — a figure that would be equivalent to 4 percent of the population. More conservative estimates run between 10,000 and 20,000. It is clear, however, that in Namibia and all across the developing world, the older generation of long-term immigrants is being eclipsed by China's new diaspora: younger, more educated workers going abroad to get experience — and make a small fortune — before returning to China. "We were among the first ones here," Rose Shen says, "but now there are Chinese everywhere."

The Chairman Mao Zedong high school, donated and built by China, in Otjomuise, a suburb of the capital, Windhoek. Credit George Georgiou for The New York Times

Sean Hao, a young telecommunications engineer in Windhoek, is part of that diaspora. Raised in a cave dwelling in central China's Shaanxi province, he wasn't expected to venture far beyond his village's orchard of jujube trees. But Hao was accepted by a university, a first for his family, and worked after graduation installing networks for a Chinese telecom giant. Renting a room for just $15 a month helped him squirrel away most of his $500 monthly salary, but his savings were hardly enough to buy the apartment he would need to marry. In a country where young men far outnumber women — a legacy of the government's restrictive family-planning policy — an apartment is seen as a prerequisite for attracting a wife and avoiding the fate of a "bare branch" (an unmarried person). But real estate seemed an impossible aspiration for a young man who grew up in a cave.

When a headhunter told Hao about a job in Africa that would pay more than $6,000 a month, Hao figured it was a swindle. "I thought this must be a case of human trafficking," he remembers, laughing. The offer was real, but the job was in Nigeria, which he thought was unsafe. So Hao instead signed a contract to work on building the telecom system in Angola for more than $5,000 a month, more than 10 times his previous salary. After a year in Africa, Hao put a down payment on an apartment in Xi'an, a city in central China, and persuaded his girlfriend's parents that he was financially secure enough to marry their daughter. Hao and his wife soon had a baby girl, but his job in Africa meant that he saw her for only one month out of her first 15. "She didn't even recognize me," he said. His wife and daughter joined him in his new posting in Namibia, but they lasted one lonely year before going home, leaving Hao stuck between his longing to be with his family in China and the opportunity to make money in Namibia.

On a warm Saturday night in late March, Hao joined a dozen Chinese colleagues under the thatched roofs of Joe's Beerhouse in Windhoek. Two of the men were headed back to China after finishing their short-term contracts, and the group was sending them off by knocking back pints of German-style lager. By the time I arrived at the bar, three men had already passed out, their heads planted on the table, and a few others were listing badly. Hao, the designated driver, had barely sipped any beer at all. Celebrating his colleagues' return to the motherland had put him in a contemplative mood. "I'd like to go home, too," he said, "but there are no jobs in China that could pay me even close to what I'm making now."

In the hardscrabble hills of Sichuan Province, the parents of the uranium miner Dylan Teng still work as farmers, growing rice and maize in a hillside hamlet where most families share the same surname. Their village, called Tengjiayan (or Teng Family Rock), had only a primary school, so Teng left to study in nearby Guang'an, the birthplace of Deng Xiaoping, and then went on to college in China's northeast. It was a long road that was about to grow longer. "I never thought I'd go abroad," he says, "so I didn't even try in my English classes."

In Teng's first job after graduation — at the Beijing-based Uranium Resources Company, a C.G.N. subsidiary — he learned about the company's mining interests in Kazakhstan, Australia and Namibia. The rural kid knew nothing about these foreign lands. But soon he was flying off to the most distant of the three to work in one of China's largest and most strategic mines. And one where C.G.N. was fully in control.

As a load-and-haul engineer at the Husab mine, Teng helps choreograph 26 gargantuan trucks whose wheels stand twice as tall as he does. So far, the trucks have hauled more than 100 million metric tons of rock out of Husab's open pits. As production increases this year, far more will be needed to process the 15 million pounds of uranium oxide that the mine aims to produce annually. "The pressure is always on to stockpile enough so the processing plant never runs out of rock," Teng says.

A fabric store that makes wedding dresses, Chinese-owned and staffed by Namibians, in Windhoek's Chinatown. Credit George Georgiou for The New York Times

To feed its hungry economy, China has worked frantically to secure enough resources to keep the juggernaut going. Besides oil and gas, which are a primary focus of its investments abroad, China's state-owned companies have gobbled up mines around the world: copper in Peru, nickel in Papua New Guinea, iron ore in Australia. In Africa, Chinese mining investments have increased 25-fold in just 10 years, from stakes in a handful of mines in 2006 to more than 120 in 2015.

As its economy has slowed recently and commodity prices have plunged, China has sharply reduced some of its imports, causing a few boom areas, like Western Australia, to go bust. Chinese mines in Zambia (copper) and South Africa (iron ore) have been forced to close. It might seem something of a miracle, then, that Husab runs at all. With uranium prices at less than half their level before the 2011 nuclear disaster in Fukushima (and less than a quarter of what they were in 2007), Namibia's two other active uranium operations have stopped digging up rock and process only already-stockpiled material. But Husab forges ahead, hiring many of the hundreds of workers laid off at those other mines. As one Namibian engineer who landed a job there after spending six months unemployed told me, "Husab was my salvation."

There is a simple reason that C.G.N. can afford to ramp up production at Husab: It is selling most of the uranium to itself, the Chinese state, so price is almost irrelevant. (Low prices, in fact, have enabled China both to stockpile uranium cheaply and to buy part of a struggling Namibian uranium mine, Langer-Heinrich.) An even bigger reason is China's ambition both to reduce its carbon emissions and to become a world leader in nuclear power.

Nearly 88 percent of China's energy now comes from fossil fuels, only 1 percent from nuclear power. (Solar, wind and hydropower account for the remaining 11 percent.) To reach its clean-energy goals — and shed the ignominious title of world's biggest producer of greenhouse gases — China has put nuclear power back on an almost impossibly fast track. The country now has 37 nuclear reactors, with another 20 under construction, and it aims to have 110 reactors by 2030. (Beyond that, the goal is to become an exporter of nuclear-reactor technology. China has already built six reactors overseas, and last month, Swakop Uranium, a C.G.N. subsidiary, submitted a proposal to construct a reactor in Namibia.)

This rate of growth, six new plants each year, would catapult China past the United States as the world's top nuclear power, but it also raises concerns. In January, an American consultant to C.G.N. pleaded guilty to charges that he conspired to illegally recruit United States nuclear engineers to help accelerate the design and manufacture of C.G.N. reactor components. Critics at home and abroad also question whether China's safety standards can keep pace with the new reactors. One Chinese physicist, He Zuoxiu, even told The Guardian that the plan is "insane."

C.G.N. did not allow me to visit the mine or interview its managers, claiming that they were too busy increasing production. To get a glimpse of the vast complex, I drove down a dusty back road to the highland plain where the Welwitschia mirabilis grow, near Husab's back gate. Before construction began at Husab in 2013, the company transplanted four rare Welwitschia specimens that would have been destroyed in the blasts — a symbolic gesture in a country that reveres the ancient plant. Since then, C.G.N. has seemed eager to dispel the uncaring reputation that Chinese state-owned companies have earned: It has made donations to drought victims, offered scholarships to local engineering students and, in a first for a Chinese company in Namibia, even invited a local labor union to set up shop at the mine site.

Mass housing for Namibians, constructed by a Chinese company, on the outskirts of Swakopmund, a town on the Atlantic coast. Credit George Georgiou for The New York Times

Independent unions are essentially illegal in China. And the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union had waged a campaign against Chinese state-owned companies, accusing some of paying Namibian workers only one-third of the minimum wage and others of using armies of Chinese workers for unskilled jobs that by law should go to Namibians. So when C.G.N. invited the union's secretary general, Justina Jonas, to China for the mine's inaugural event, she was skeptical. "The Chinese will promise you heaven," she told me, "but the implementation can be hell." Jonas threatened not to go to China if Husab didn't sign a project labor agreement protecting workers' wages, hours and safety. Just days before the trip, C.G.N. signed the agreement, a first for a Chinese company.

For all its public outreach, Husab still operates in a self-contained Chinese universe. Chinese managers often schedule key meetings for the weekend, when it's convenient for them to review and plan — but also when Namibian colleagues are not present, according to local employees. Local workers marvel at how, when a non-Chinese part breaks down, Chinese engineers will sometimes send the specs home so Chinese companies can reverse-engineer replacement parts at a fraction of the cost. This looks different from a Chinese perspective: Just as the mine offers young engineers an opportunity to hone their expertise in vital new jobs, it also gives Chinese companies a chance to show that they can make high-quality vehicles and equipment — at a third of the cost of top foreign brands. Husab still makes companies go through testing and bidding, but as one worker put it: "We have to help and support our brother companies. It's all part of the 'going out' policy."

Mining is hardly China's only interest in Namibia. The land is too arid to sustain the kinds of vast agricultural projects underway in Mozambique and Brazil. But China's state-owned construction companies are burning up their excess capacity building Namibian highways and ports, a Chinese embassy compound and a new military academy in Okahandja. Military relations are close, too. China trains Namibian officers — an echo of its 1960s assistance to Swapo — and supplies weapons. In April, the United States intervened to stop Namibia from paying $12 million to Poly Technologies, a subsidiary of a Chinese company on the American sanctions list for selling banned weapons to Iran, Syria and North Korea. It was a reminder that the United States is still in the background, warily watching China's incursion into Africa.

Husab is a tangible, direct investment, but most Chinese projects in Namibia and around the world are financed by soft loans that carry risks. Last year, China established a new $60 billion fund to finance infrastructure projects in Africa, mostly with Chinese lending. The easy money is alluring, and the projects can be essential. But most of the loans stipulate that a Chinese state-owned company must take the lead, ensuring that the work, skills and profits are kept largely in the Chinese family. Countries like Namibia are left holding the debt. Schlettwein, the finance minister, told me, "I don't think those are real investments, but opportunities latched onto by Chinese enterprises without really adding value to the Namibian economy."

Such criticism irritates Chinese business owners and diplomats, who point out that Chinese companies have invested more than $5 billion in Namibia and now employ more than 6,000 Namibians. "We're here to do business on an equal footing with the locals," says Xia Lili, the former diplomat who is deputy general manager of Jack Huang's Sun Investment Group and secretary general of the Namibia-China Loving Heart Organization. "We bring in money to establish mines and factories. Who benefits? The Namibians. Did the Western powers ever do this? Not nearly as much. So this talk of new colonialism is untrue."

Namibia, though, is starting to push back. Last year the government pulled out of a $570 million loan agreement with a state-owned Chinese company to expand the Windhoek airport. Then in September, as sluggish growth and other foreign loans pushed Namibia's debt to over 40 percent of its G.D.P., the government suspended all new loan tenders. Schlettwein says the freeze was a prudent act of belt-tightening, not a move specifically targeting China. Nevertheless, he says: "It sends out a signal that Namibian interests are not to be trampled on indiscriminately. It sends a signal that our relationship must mature."

A woman buying linoleum from a Chinese-run general store. Such stores can be found throughout Namibia — and across Africa. Credit George Georgiou for The New York Times

One morning in late December, the Namibian conservation biologist Chris Brown was working alone in his Windhoek office when he heard a banging at the gate. Rushing out, he found two angry Chinese men in button-down shirts: the first and second secretaries from the Chinese Embassy. One of them threw a crumpled letter through the gate, Brown says, and shouted: “These are lies! You are making China look bad in the eyes of the world!”

The pages were the same ones Brown hand-delivered to the Chinese Embassy two days before — and then sent to other diplomatic missions, media outlets and international organizations. Signed by 45 local environmental groups, including Brown’s own Namibian Chamber of Environment, the letter blamed Chinese nationals for a sharp surge in the commercial poaching of wildlife in Namibia — and excoriated the embassy for doing little to stop it.

Over the last two years, Namibia has lost nearly 200 elephants and endangered rhinos to poaching. In November, a Chinese smuggler was caught in the Johannesburg airport with 18 rhino horns — all from Namibia. Two months earlier, four Chinese men were sentenced to 14 years in prison for trying to smuggle out 14 rhino horns in 2014. (Rhino-horn powder is an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine that is believed to strengthen the immune system.) Brown had meant the letter to provoke a response, but this visit was unexpected.

“You are abusing China’s good nature,” one of the diplomats said, in a raised voice, according to Brown. “Only a handful of Chinese have been involved in poaching.”

“No, Chinese demand is driving all of this,” Brown replied. “I think you are trying to strip all of our resources for China.” When the yelling subsided, Brown says, he invited the men inside. Sitting in his conference room, they leafed through binders filled with photographs of slaughtered rhinos and elephants. “They got quieter and quieter,” Brown recalls. A few days later, he met with the Chinese ambassador, who cautioned him against letting a few “rotten apples” tarnish the entire Chinese community. Brown again insisted it was a more systemic problem. “Listen, we can ratchet up the pressure and make things even worse for you,” he says he argued. “Or we can come together to solve this problem.” The ambassador, he says, agreed to join the antipoaching fight.

One of the most troubling dimensions of China’s global expansion is its reputation for pillaging and pilfering the natural world. China is not the only culprit in the $19 billion illegal wildlife trade. But its growing hunger for the rare, exotic and dubiously curative is devastating worldwide populations of rhinos and elephants, sharks and tigers — and spurring illegal timber operations in rain forests stretching from Congo to Cambodia. Huang Hongxiang, a former journalist from China who investigated ivory and rhino-horn poaching in Namibia, has started a Kenya-based nonprofit organization, China House, to help Chinese companies and communities engage in wildlife conservation as a form of corporate social responsibility. “In a lot of global environmental issues, Chinese are part of the problem,” he says, “so they have to be part of the solution.”

A Chinese telemetry station, for tracking satellites and space missions, just north of Swakopmund. Credit George Georgiou for The New York Times

Poaching is a scourge in Damaraland, an arid region of rocky outcroppings in northwest Namibia. “Locals are enticed into killing rhinos by the China market,” my Namibian guide, Taffy, who tracks elephants and rhinos, told me. “The horns always seem to end up in Chinese hands.” In the past, conservation issues were mostly championed by white Namibians. That is changing. “Blacks used to think whites cared more about the animals than them,” says Shinovene Immanuel, a reporter at The Namibian. “But now that poaching has gotten out of hand, everybody is upset.”

Public anger is also rising over some Chinese business proposals that could do damage to the environment. One Chinese-owned company has sought to clear-cut part of Namibia’s only pristine forest, in the Zambezi region, to create a tobacco plantation nearly double the size of Manhattan, despite the fact that the area's sandy soil is unsuitable. Another Chinese business wants to set up donkey abattoirs to meet China's soaring demand for donkey meat and skin (the latter is considered a curative in Chinese medicine). And a Namibia-based Chinese company filed a request last fall to capture killer whales, penguins, dolphins and sharks in Namibian waters — all to sell to aquatic theme parks in China. Local activists protested for weeks until the Chinese firm withdrew its proposal.

Three months after Brown's letter provoked the indignant response, the Chinese Embassy hosted a much more diplomatic meeting of Namibian activists and some 60 Chinese business leaders. Besides trumpeting China's recent ban on all ivory sales — and airing an antipoaching video featuring the basketball star Yao Ming — the acting ambassador, Li Nan, denounced poaching and lectured Chinese nationals about obeying Namibian law. Li told me in an email that, at Brown's invitation, he will visit the rhinos' habitat in northern Namibia this month. The two countries, he said, are also working to form a joint law-enforcement task force to combat transnational wildlife criminals.

Jack Huang also spoke out against poaching, but a different kind of dragnet was closing around him. On Feb. 1, the tycoon and four others (three of them Chinese) were arrested at Windhoek's international airport for their participation in a supposed tax-fraud scheme that netted nearly $300 million — the largest case in Namibian history. The arrests were part of a two-year investigation into more than 30 Chinese companies accused of concealing illegal earnings. While in custody, Huang reportedly tried to contact President Geingob, but his business partner refused to help. "When my 'friend' was arrested and spent a night in jail, there was no interference or intervention," Geingob told a local paper later. "This is because in Namibia, we uphold the rule of law, the separation of powers, and pride ourselves on the total independence of our judiciary."

Huang, the man with all the connections, now finds himself disconnected. In mid-February, soon after his release on $75,000 bail, he claimed that the tax-fraud case against him was based on outdated information. Xia, his deputy at Sun Investment, told me that Huang actually divested from Golden Phoenix, a company named in the case, more than eight years ago, but that the transaction had not been entered into the official computer system. When this trial is over, Huang may file lawsuits against those who attacked his businesses, Xia says. In the meantime, the gregarious entrepreneur will probably spend more time dining alone. When he invited an old friend out to dinner recently, he was gently rebuffed — the power broker was suddenly a pariah.

Arresting a high-flying Chinese businessman may be a simple matter of law, but it is also one more sign of how the relationship between Namibia and China is being recalibrated. Li Nan wrote to me that he believes that the boisterous local press is "trying to whip up racist sentiments and hatred." The animosity in Namibia, though, is nowhere near the levels that have caused explosive riots at a Chinese coal mine in Zambia, including one in 2012 that left a Chinese manager dead, or that sparked unruly protests against Chinese traders in Kampala, Uganda, last month. (The rising resentment toward the Chinese in Uganda recalls another era, when the dictator Idi Amin expelled an earlier wave of immigrant merchants, from the Indian diaspora, in 1972.)

Dylan Teng, 29, an engineer at the Husab Uranium Mine. "Our real secret," he says, "is that we work 12-hour days while everybody else works eight." Credit George Georgiou for The New York Times

Still, the new tensions between China and Namibia are laid bare at police checkpoints around the country, where Chinese nationals are routinely singled out for inspection. The police say this new policy has already exposed several cases of wildlife smuggling. Jack Huang's associate, Xia, was pulled over at the checkpoint on the airport road last month. The police frisked him, combed through his luggage and scoured his car. "All the while they were yelling, 'Rhino horn, rhino horn, where's the rhino horn?' " Xia recalls. "I was shocked that this could happen in Namibia. This is a country that is supposed to be our all-weather friend."

As the afternoon sun weakens over the Husab Uranium Mine, most of the 2,000 or so Namibian workers return to their desert barracks. Teng and the other Chinese engineers board buses for the ride back through the moonscape to Swakopmund and the little house on Amathila Avenue. After sharing another Chinese meal together, the men disperse. Teng walks back to his apartment, where he will spend a few hours on his computer doing administrative and supervisory tasks. “Our real secret,” Teng says, “is that we work 12-hour days while everybody else works eight.”

It’s a chilly Saturday in April — the antipodal winter is coming — and Teng has worked overtime again. He has missed one of the only diversions here: Saturday-afternoon basketball games at the local sports center. (China now has so many state-owned companies in Namibia that they stage an annual 15-team championship; China Harbour Engineering, the port builder in Walvis Bay, won this year.) Strolling on the Swakopmund waterfront, Teng was no longer clad in his khaki mining uniform. Wearing jeans and a Quiksilver T-shirt and cradling a cappuccino, he looked like any tourist gazing out over the crashing Atlantic surf. During his nearly four years here, Teng has not had too many chances to be a tourist, though he took advantage of a recent holiday to go on a wildlife tour in Etosha National Park.

In their bubble at Husab, Teng and his colleagues are mostly insulated from the tensions between China and Namibia. These huge Chinese projects all over the developing world can seem like spaceships landing on distant planets. Chinese workers often have little incentive — or latitude — to venture out into the alien environment, especially when the state-owned mother ship provides food, lodging and transport. And the exhausting work can sap them of all curiosity about their surroundings. On a plane back to China in April, I sat next to a worker who had just spent two years in Equatorial Guinea — but had no idea where it was.

The tech-savvy Teng, by contrast, can pinpoint his exact location on Google Earth, even though his routine is largely circumscribed by the 43-mile route between Husab and Swakopmund. Saving more in Namibia than he could back in China — thanks, in part, to all those free meals on Amathila Avenue — Teng has built a tidy nest egg. In 2014, when a C.G.N. delegation from China visited Husab, Teng chatted with one of the two women in the group. Online flirting ensued. In January, Teng stunned his Husab colleagues when he returned from a trip to China with a ring on his finger. He’d married the visitor — mission accomplished — joining a handful of others who had done the same thing. Teng’s other goal has not yet been achieved. He wants to see Husab reach its full potential next year, fueling China’s continued rise. “This is an important thing for China, ” he says, “and I want to be a part of it.”

The Chinese migrants who have gone out into the world, the risk-takers who have found spots in Asia, Latin America and Africa, are as diverse as China itself: young and middle-aged, unschooled and highly educated, working for private companies and state-owned enterprises — and even for themselves. They are not a monolith. And yet, in these far-off places, they are connected to one another in a way that they never could be back home in a land of 1.4 billion people. It’s not just the shared food, culture or language — or the solidarity that comes from being thrown together in a harsh environment. What binds these individuals together is an abiding belief that their presence overseas is making China better and stronger. This shared conviction, as much as the state that has nurtured it, is what makes China a colossus, a nation that can be seen by others, in the same instant, as a blessing and a curse.(NYT 02-05-2017)

ETHIOPIA, RWANDA AGREE ON NEW AREAS OF COOPERATION

Ethiopia and Rwanda agreed on new areas of cooperation at a meeting which concluded in Kigali on Wednesday.

The new areas of partnership are in the fields of education, tourism and mutual legal assistance, Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Senior officials from Rwanda and Ethiopia began meeting on Monday as the two countries identified new opportunities and areas to strengthen their bilateral cooperation ties.

"Cooperation between Rwanda and Ethiopia remains strong, and significant results have been achieved in the areas of defence, aviation and capacity building, among others, which continues to benefit the people of our two countries," the statement said.

Last year, the two countries signed an agreement to open their airspace, allowing their national carriers to operate without restrictions.

In July 2012, Rwanda and Ethiopia signed three bilateral agreements, including one setting up the Joint Permanent Commission to strengthen bilateral cooperation, a general cooperation agreement to shape and expand cooperation in the political, economic, trade and investment, education, health and other fields, as well as another strategic partnership on issues of defence and security.

Under the general cooperation agreement, the parties had reaffirmed their commitment to the objectives and principles of the African Union, and undertook to further strengthen bilateral relations, the statement noted.

They agreed to shape and expand their cooperation in the political, economic, trade and investment, scientific, educational, health technical and other fields on the basis of the principle of sovereign equality of states.

Under the Strategic Partnership Agreement, the countries agreed to cooperate in areas, including diplomacy, defence and security affairs; and in economic and social affairs such as investment and education.

They have also agreed to collaborate in trade and investment to be undertaken through business reforms and customs cooperation, trade and investment information-sharing, among others. (APA 26-04-2017)

KENYA: FARMERS CASH IN ON HIGH APPETITE FOR DONKEY MEAT

The price of donkeys in Kenya has doubled following the legalisation of trade in and consumption of donkey meat.

Before donkey meat consumption was legalised in 2012, the prices for the draught animals has risen steadily, driven by market outlets like abattoirs that are licensed to slaughter and export donkey meat.

There is increased demand for donkey meat in China, and two specialised abattoirs one each in Baringo and Nakuru Counties, have been built.

"Before the government licensed the two abattoir to slaughter and export the donkey meat, the traders and farmers used to sell animals at Ksh6,000 ($60) each but they are now fetching more than Ksh20,000 ($200), each" said Richard Kiptoo, a donkey trader.

A new business opportunity has emerged with traders buying donkeys from farmers in Kajiado, Naivasha and Turkana for sale to the abattoirs.

The trade has also elicited interest in Tanzania, where some farmers have reported theft of donkeys that they believe are being smuggled to Kenya.

Mike Baker, chief executive officer of the Donkey Sanctuary, said the high demand for donkey meat had led to increased poaching. Brooke East African, an association that deals with the welfare of donkeys, reports that donkey theft has increased since the business to export donkey meat picked up in Kenya.

Cases of theft of donkeys have increased in various parts of the country with the association saying about 170 and 140 donkeys were stolen in Kajiado and Nakuru Counties respectively last year.

Before trade in donkey meat was legalised in Kenya in 2012, unscrupulous traders at popular meat eateries around Nairobi would routinely fend off claims that they were dealing in the commodity.

Farmers in places like Naivasha and Limuru would wake up to find their beasts of burden missing only for skeletons to be found in bushes long after the steak had been taken to unmarked outlets. Now, some butcheries list donkey meat on their menu.

According to the Kenya Meat Control Amendment Act of 2012, meat from donkeys and horses is listed as fit for human consumption despite it being a taboo in most Kenya communities to eat donkey meat.

Only a few communities in the north of the country traditionally ate donkey meat.

Health and veterinary experts say the certification followed a study that found the meat was not harmful to human health.

However, most of the meat is slaughtered and exported to China and Vietnam, where it is believed to have medicinal attributes against cancer, insomnia and clogged blood vessels.

China is now targeting Kenya and South Africa as potential suppliers of the commodity after Niger and Burkina Faso, who were its main suppliers, banned exports.

The countries were concerned that indiscriminate slaughter of donkeys was hurting transport of goods, mostly in remote regions.

Last year, Egypt increased export of donkey meat to China after the two countries signed an exports deal.

The Kenyan government has supported construction of abattoirs in Naivasha and Mogotio towns in Nakuru and Baringo counties respectively where donkey meat will be packaged for export.

The Baringo abattoir, which was constructed at a cost of Ksh350 million ($3.5 million) processes about 100 donkeys a day whereas the Naivasha one targets 150 donkeys a day.

Livestock Principal Secretary Andrew Tuimur said farmers were now being sensitised to the donkey economy, including proper husbandry.

"The setting up of abattoirs should set a precedent to farmers to venture into this business. I encourage farmers start their own breeding farms for export and tocreate wealth," Dr Tuimur said (The East African 01-05-2017)

FACTORY IN ANGOLA COVERS 30% OF COUNTRY'S DAIRY PRODUCT NEEDS

At least 30% of Angola's dairy product needs will be covered by the start-up of a dairy factory in the city of Lubango under a contract signed on Friday between the Technical Unit for Private Investment (UTIP) and the Silvestre Tulumba group, Angolan news agency Angop reported.

Construction of the factory started last March, and the equipment, some of it imported from New Zealand and Germany via the port of Namibe port is scheduled to be installed in May.

One of the plant's directors, Paulo Ferreira, said that in May the unit will start producing about 36,000 tonnes of milk, 4.4 tonnes of milk powder, 500 tonnes of cheese, two thousand tons of butter, 23,000 tonnes of yoghurt and 1 tonne of condensed milk per year.

The factory will process 60,000 litres of milk per day on five production lines and Ferreira said that in the first year the milk will be imported from New Zealand," while we work to find local suppliers."

"From an economic point of view, the project will contribute to increasing domestic production capacity, positioning itself as a viable platform for the distribution of domestic products," said Norberto Garcia, president of UTIP.

This project has a German partner, and is the first investment agreement between UTIP and an investor in the province of Huíla. (02-05-2017)

ONE OF AFRICA'S MOST EXPENSIVE COUNTRIES JUST GOT COSTLIER: BOTSWANA INTRODUCES $30 TOURIST TAX

Botswana offers one of the best - but costliest - safari experiences in the world

Botswana has overcome opposition from its tourism bosses to introduce a $30 (about £23) tax on all tourists entering the country in an effort to raise money to support conservation in the safari hotspot.

The Tourism Development Levy (TDL) was on the cusp of being introduced last year but stalled after opposition from the African nation's Hospitality and Tourism Association (Hatab).

But now the Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO) has said the fee will be owed by any visitor to Botswana's airports and border posts from June 1, payable at the point of entry. Residents of countries within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which counts 15 members, will be exempt from the charge.

"The levy is purposed to support the growth of the industry and broaden the tourism base, resultantly improving the lives of the people of Botswana," said the BTO.

"The objective of the levy is to raise funds for conservation and national tourism development in order to support the growth of the industry and broaden the tourism base."

Hippos are one of the draws in the west African country

Last year Hatab complained that it nor other stakeholders had been consulted on the potential tax.

Botswana, which welcomes some 1.6million visitors a year, of which 42,000 are British, stands to make around £34.1million a year from the tax, taking into account the 190,000 SADC visitors.

The country in southern Africa is popular with British tourists seeking to spot the Big Five on safari in the continent, as well as for visits to the Okavango Delta, one of the Seven Natural Wonders of Africa. Graham Boynton, writing for Telegraph Travel in 2014, said the country boasted one of the best safaris in Africa. It has more elephants than anywhere else in the world.

He also noted the importance of tourism to the country's economy, in part because the country's safari offering is one of the most expensive.

"Botswana is by far the most expensive safari destination on the continent: visitors can expect to pay up to £1,600 a night in high season at the top wildlife lodges," wrote Boynton. "I spent a couple of nights at Wilderness Safaris' famous Mombo Camp; it was full, and all but two of the guests were extremely wealthy Americans: corporate lawyers, international financiers, business tycoons. One family of six New Yorkers had booked in for almost a week at a cost close to £55,000 – and they didn't blink."

Payment of the levy can be made in cash, debit and credit card. Once a TDL stamp is acquired it is valid for 30 days and can be used for multiple entries.

British visitors to Botswana are allowed to stay in the country for up to 90 days without a visa.

The introduction of tourism taxes to support sustainable development is also common in Europe. The Balaeric Islands imposed an "eco-tax" on holidaymakers last April, while many cities on the continent, including Rome, Florence and Dubrovnik, also charge visitors extra. (The Telegraph 02-05-2017)

JAPAN PAYS TO REBUILD ROAD BRIDGES IN MOZAMBIQUE

The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) plans to provide US$31 million for the National Road Administration to launch tenders to rebuild three bridges in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado, a JICA representative said.

"This is one of the ways that JICA can contribute to the activation of the local economy, increase national income and promote employment," said Katsuyoshi Sudo, the agency's representative, quoted by Mozambican state news agency AIM.

Under the agreement signed on Friday in Maputo by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Nyeleti Mondlane and Katsuyoshi Sudo, the work will be carried out along the 380 national road between Sunate and Oasse, with two bridges (60 and 45 metres long) over the Messalo River and another on the Mapuede River (45 metres long).

The deputy minister said at the end of the ceremony that reconstruction of the three bridges, in addition to boosting the economy of the province, will develop the road network between the centre and north of the country, as well as neighbouring countries, along the Nacala Corridor in the northern province of Nampula.

The funding to rebuild the bridges is the result of agreements reached during the visit of President Philippe Nyusi to Japan last March. (02-05-2017)

AIR AUSTRAL ET SON AMBITIEUX PLAN DE VOL POUR DEVENIR LEADER DE L’AERIEN DANS L’OCEAN INDIEN

Après avoir frôlé la faillite, la compagnie régionale a convaincu en montrant sa capacité à se restructurer

Le transporteur réunionnais, Air Austral a été choisi pour relancer Air Madagascar, empêtrée dans de graves difficultés financières. Un premier pas pour devenir un acteur incontournable dans l’océan Indien.

L’encre de la lettre d’intention signée au début d’avril avec les autorités malgaches est encore toute fraîche. Et pour Marie-Joseph Malé, PDG d’Air Austral (345 millions d’euros de CA en 2016), entrée en négociation exclusive pour devenir le partenaire stratégique d’Air Madagascar pour dix ans, et ainsi acquérir 49 % de son capital, c’est une nouvelle bataille qui s’engage.
Ce sont 40 millions de dollars qu’il lui faut trouver au mieux d’ici au 31 mai auprès d’investisseurs et de bailleurs de fonds malgaches et internationaux pour amorcer la première phase d’un redécollage en trois ans de la compagnie nationale malgache.
Le redressement opéré par Air Austral a clairement montré que ses dirigeants disposaient de toutes les compétences requises pour aider Air Madagascar.
Sortie de la liste noire des compagnies aériennes de l’Union européenne (« l’annexe B ») en juin 2016 au prix de nombreux efforts, Air Madagascar est empêtrée depuis des années dans de graves difficultés financières et managériales. Alors qu’une filiale sera créée pour porter l’investissement dans Air Madagascar, « tous les comptes seront remis à zéro », assure le dirigeant d’Air Austral, qui n’aura donc pas à supporter le poids du lourd passif de la compagnie nationale malgache, laquelle restera aux mains du gouvernement de la Grande Île. Les conditions de l’apurement sont en discussion.

Restructuration

Sélectionnée à la mi-mars contre toute attente face au géant des airs Ethiopian Airlines, la compagnie régionale réunionnaise aura avant tout convaincu les autorités par la capacité qu’elle a eue à se restructurer elle-même à partir de 2013, époque où elle avait frôlé la faillite. « Le redressement opéré par Air Austral a clairement montré que ses dirigeants disposaient de toutes les compétences requises pour aider Air Madagascar », avait indiqué en mars à Jeune Afrique Jean-Marc Bourreau, directeur d'exploitation du cabinet IOS Partners, mandaté par la Banque mondiale pour conduire le processus de sélection.

Présente sur les lignes long-courriers entre la Réunion et Paris (un tiers de son trafic) depuis 2003, Air Austral accusait alors un déficit de 180 millions d'euros. Sa remise à flot était passée à l'époque par une thérapie de choc : des suppressions de postes, l'abandon de dessertes déficitaires de villes de province de France métropolitaine et de sa ligne vers l'Australie – dont le lancement fut un échec commercial –, une renégociation des contrats de catering et de maintenance, l'annulation de la commande d'un Airbus A380 de 840 places…

Elle aura ainsi réussi à baisser ses charges d'exploitation en renouvelant notamment sa flotte avec des appareils plus performants (2 Dreamliner), à monter en gamme en misant sur les cabines affaires, se renflouant et renouant avec les bénéfices depuis 2014.

Synergie

Tout cela en créant avec succès en 2013 une filiale, Ewa Air, basée à Mayotte, déjà bénéficiaire et qui profite du développement des échanges dans le canal du Mozambique, où de nombreux gisements de gaz ont été découverts. Une baisse des coûts qui demeure le mantra de Marie-Joseph Malé pour Air Madagascar.

Même si nos flottes long-courriers sont un peu différentes, nous avons tous les deux des Boeing et des ATR. Air Austral envoie actuellement ses avions en métropole pour la maintenance, elle pourrait le faire par exemple à Madagascar, où il y a les compétences.

Si l'audit de la compagnie nationale malgache est toujours en cours, notamment dans l'évaluation de ses ressources humaines (1 400 employés pour 10 avions), et s'il se refuse à détailler les contours de sa stratégie future, son PDG entrevoit déjà « des convergences évidentes où des synergies peuvent être opérées, en matière de maintenance et de stock de pièces détachées ». « Même si nos flottes long-courriers sont un peu différentes, poursuit-il, nous avons tous les deux des Boeing et des ATR. Air Austral envoie actuellement ses avions en métropole pour la maintenance, elle pourrait le faire par exemple à Madagascar, où il y a les compétences. »

La seule alternative aujourd'hui pour assurer la viabilité d'une compagnie, ce sont les partenariats, les fusions

À peine relevé de ses turbulences, Air Austral aura-t-elle les reins suffisamment solides pour porter la relance de son partenaire malgache ? « Quand on travaille en synergie sur la maintenance, par exemple, on augmente les recettes de la structure qui la gère. C'est le meilleur moyen de faire baisser les coûts, d'augmenter la productivité des personnels, d'optimiser l'utilisation des appareils, de mieux négocier les contrats divers. Cela permet surtout d'offrir à ses clients de nouvelles connexions, des tarifs proches de ceux de la concurrence et, surtout, de minimiser les risques », souligne Didier Bréchemier, spécialiste du transport aérien au sein du cabinet Roland Berger, pour qui « la seule alternative aujourd'hui pour assurer la viabilité d'une compagnie, ce sont les partenariats, les fusions ».

Au rang des économies, l'approvisionnement en fuel, moins cher dans le département français qu'à Madagascar, apparaît comme une des pistes de mutualisation. Des synergies commerciales sont également à l'ordre du jour, notamment avec l'exploitation commune de dessertes de la province malgache – où les deux compagnies sont actuellement concurrentes –, le développement des correspondances et des partages de code.

Il est plus facile de remplir un avion de 260 sièges à deux que tout seul

Comme l'illustre déjà le lancement en février de la première ligne en commun Tananarive-La Réunion-Canton en remplacement du Tananarive-Bangkok-Canton, assuré jusque-là par « Air Mad ». « Il est plus facile de remplir un avion de 260 sièges à deux que tout seul », explique Marie-Joseph Malé, qui dit ne pas souhaiter une vassalisation d'Air Madagascar par Air Austral, mais au contraire le maintien des deux hubs, Tananarive aux côtés de Saint-Denis-de-La-Réunion, avec un développement des vols domestiques, régionaux et internationaux, en visant le potentiel touristique dont regorge Madagascar.

Latitude

Par ailleurs, comme l'affirme le PDG d'Air Austral, en plus du renforcement envisagé des lignes vers l'Afrique du Sud, il est prévu d'ouvrir une liaison Tananarive-Johannesburg via La Réunion. De même, un partenariat est sur le point d'être noué avec Kenya Airways (qui fut aussi en lice pour devenir partenaire d'Air Madagascar) pour développer des liaisons vers l'Afrique de l'Est et l'Afrique de l'Ouest.

Air Austral volant déjà vers Bangkok, en Thaïlande, et Chennai, en Inde. Le rapprochement entre les deux compagnies des îles Vanille est d'autant plus stratégique que, rudement concurrencée sur son

propre marché par Air France, Corsair, XL Airlines et bientôt la low-cost long-courrier French Blue sur un trafic qui progresse modestement, Air Austral se sent un peu à l'étroit.
Sur un marché devenu surcapacitaire, le nouvel ensemble aura donc toute latitude pour offrir un portefeuille varié de destinations touristiques. Et, pourquoi pas, d'après les experts, se fondre un jour avec Air Mauritius ou Air Seychelles pour créer un acteur local important dans l'océan Indien. Et baisser les coûts pour voler encore plus haut.

Marie-Joseph Malé, cost-killer

PDG depuis avril 2012 d'Air Austral, qu'il a réussi à redresser au prix d'une drastique baisse des coûts, Marie-Joseph Malé arrivera-t-il à appliquer la même recette à Air Madagascar ? Ce polytechnicien de 56 ans, diplômé des Ponts et Chaussées, né au Cameroun dans une famille originaire du sud de l'Inde et qui a grandi à Madagascar, possède une expérience certaine dans les activités d'audit interne et de gestion des risques, acquise comme directeur général d'Air France Consulting puis chez Air France-KLM.
Un profil qui aura sans doute convaincu les autorités malgaches. D'autant plus que, un temps membre de l'état-major d'Air France, il a aussi enchaîné de nombreux postes prestigieux à l'international (directeur États-Unis et Asie-Pacifique d'Air France). Il a ainsi été, en 1999, le premier directeur général de l'alliance SkyTeam (JA 03-05-2017)

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