

FMSO's Military DIME (M-DIME) Research Project

Tracking Russian and Chinese military influence in states around the world

Instruments of Chinese Military Influence in Uganda

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MAY 2025

**U.S. Army
Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO)
Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) G-2**



OVERVIEW OF FMSO'S M-DIME RESEARCH PROJECT

The Military DIME (M-DIME) Research Project is a dynamic effort from researchers at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO). Its goal is to provide Army leaders with a clear, comparative understanding of how China and Russia employ instruments of national power to obtain military influence around the world. The M-DIME framework is derived from the "DIME" concept, which classes instruments of national power into four types: Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic. Based on this concept, the M-DIME framework gives more narrow attention to the instruments that China and Russia employ to gain military influence in third-party countries.

The M-DIME framework's purpose is to track and analyze the military influence of "Benefactor" countries (i.e. China and Russia) in select "Recipient" countries in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia. Benefactor countries are assumed to engage in activities that result in them having increased military influence in Recipient countries to gain leverage over global rivals, competitors, and adversaries; for China and Russia, this means the United States. Within this framework, "military influence" is defined as the ability of a Benefactor country to shape or alter the attitudes, behaviors, and capabilities of actors within—and entities associated with—the armed forces of Recipient countries.

The M-DIME framework identifies 12 distinct instruments of national power employed by Benefactor countries to gain military influence in Recipient countries, three for each of the DIME categories. They are as follows:

DIPLOMATIC INSTRUMENTS

- D1 Defense-Related Diplomacy
- D2 International Military Education and Training
- D3 Soft Power Activities

INFORMATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

- I1 Cultural and Media Outreach, Collaboration, and Alignment
- I2 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Support
- I3 Cooperation in Military Intelligence and Communications

MILITARY INSTRUMENTS

- M1 Formal Bilateral Military Engagements
- M2 Shared Informal/Multilateral Military Engagements
- M3 Defense/Security Pacts and Agreements

ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS

- E1 Arms Transfers
- E2 Technology-Sharing and Joint Production Agreements
- E3 Trade and Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors

M-DIME analysis is based on qualitative assessments of Benefactor influence in Recipient countries along each of the 12 M-DIME instruments of influence. These assessments are made for the Benefactor's **Current Influence** (assessed as Very High, High, Medium, Low, Very Low, or Unobserved) and **Projected Influence** (assessed as Increasing, Steady, Decreasing, or Unknown). Current assessments are made based on activities from 2012 to the present, while future assessments are three-year forecasts.

The bulk of activities considered in the M-DIME Research Project involve members of the armed forces or defense sector personnel in both Benefactor and Recipient countries. Such activities include formal and informal military-to-military diplomacy, security cooperation engagements, and arms transfers. However, the M-DIME Research Project also tracks and analyzes Chinese and Russian activities that employ non-military instruments of influence but ultimately bear on the decisionmaking and capabilities of the Recipient country's armed forces. Such activities include Chinese and Russian collaboration with Benefactor states in media, communications technology, and strategic sectors.

The M-DIME Research Project's findings are derived from open-source research. Each M-DIME product is produced with the collaboration of analysts from across FMSO, frequently with the assistance of non-Department of Defense subject matter experts coming from academia, think tanks, and the private sector. Given its basis in open-source research, the M-DIME Research Project has an inherent limitation. It cannot track Chinese and Russian military influence activities that are deliberately kept secret. Consequently, assessments of Chinese and Russian influence based on instruments for which secrecy is important or where information would typically be classified by the Benefactor or Recipient countries—for instance, military-technology sharing or intelligence collaboration—are acknowledged to be made with low confidence. Assessments of

Projected Influence, unless otherwise stated, are also made with low confidence given pervasive information gaps and the potential for bilateral dynamics to quickly shift. In certain cases, assessments are not made where open-source data is considered inconclusive

In sum, the M-DIME Research Project is a tool for U.S. Army and U.S. Government personnel to better understand the instruments of national power employed by China and Russia to gain global military influence and the impact these activities have on U.S. national security interests. Over time, FMSO will expand the body of research and assessments based on this framework, increasing its comparative value across Benefactor and Recipient countries.

KEY ASSESSMENTS












DIPLOMATIC / INFORMATION				MILITARY / ECONOMIC				
	D1	Defense-Related Diplomacy			M1	Formal Bilateral Military Engagements		
	D2	International Military Education and Training			M2	Shared Informal/Multilateral Military Engagements		
	D3	Soft Power Activities			M3	Defense/Security Pacts and Agreements		
	I1	Cultural/Media Outreach, Collaboration, Alignment			E1	Arms Transfers		
	I2	Information/Communications Technology Support			E2	Technology-Sharing, Joint Production Agreements		
	I3	Cooperation in Military Intelligence/Communications			E3	Trade/Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors		
CURRENT DEGREE OF INFLUENCE				PROJECTED FUTURE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE				
Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	None/Unobserved	Increasing 	Steady 	Decreasing 

Figure 1. M-DIME Overview

China's current M-DIME influence in Uganda is assessed as Low. Some of the most important instruments contributing to China's current military influence in Uganda include:



International Military Education and Training (D2). China has provided extensive professional military education for senior military officials, as well as for junior officers and enlisted personnel. This allows the Chinese military to influence Ugandan military doctrine and Chinese military officials to develop close relationships with their counterparts.



Information and Communications (ICT) Support (I2). China has funded the construction of an extensive fiber-optic cable network and the development of 5G and other internet service technologies. In addition, Chinese companies have supported rural satellite television and digital literacy initiatives and have collaborated extensively with the Ugandan police services on cybersecurity and surveillance initiatives.



Trade and Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors (E3). China has collaborated extensively with Uganda on the extraction and transportation of oil and is currently Uganda's largest importer. China's role as a trade partner may allow China to exert political influence in Uganda, including over the military.

China's projected M-DIME influence in Uganda is assessed as Increasing. Some of the most dynamic instruments informing China's projected military influence in Uganda include:



Defense-Related Diplomacy (D1). In recent years, China and Uganda have engaged in two high-level bilateral meetings and discussed signing a joint memorandum on peacekeeping operations. Although the levels of defense-related diplomacy remain very low, recent increases suggest China may be using this instrument as a predicate condition for the increased use of other instruments.



Soft Power Activities (D3). The recent assignment of a Chinese military attaché to the Chinese embassy in Kampala portends increased defense-related diplomacy between China and Uganda. China's use of this instrument remains low but is likely to increase, potentially paving the way for closer alignment on strategic military issues.



Technology-Sharing and Joint Production Agreements (E2). In April 2024, China and Uganda broke ground on joint production facilities in Uganda for unmanned aerial vehicles and explosives. Bilateral collaboration on arms and materiel development and production remains low, but the projected increase in China's use of this instrument may lead to greater collaboration and interoperability between the Chinese and Ugandan militaries.

INTRODUCTION TO CHINA-UGANDA RELATIONS

After Uganda gained independence in 1962,¹ China and Uganda did not enjoy close military relations, with China only providing limited material support in the 1970s and 1980s. Uganda's early years of independence were politically tumultuous, starting with General Idi Amin seizing power in January 1971.² In 1978, Uganda invaded Tanzania, leading to the collapse of the Amin regime in 1979 when Tanzanian forces invaded Uganda in response.³ Seeking military assistance, Tanzania appealed to China, which provided arms and materiel.⁴ During the Ugandan Bush War (1980-1986), China supported the National Resistance Army led by Uganda's current president, Yoweri Museveni, but the extent of Chinese material support is unclear.⁵ While military cooperation between the two countries was limited, bilateral cooperation in other areas expanded. China has provided project aid to Uganda since the 1960s, including bilateral health cooperation and educational exchanges.⁶ Chinese officials made frequent visits to Uganda during the Cold War, and ties between their respective militaries remain close today.⁷

Senior Ugandan military officials have recently studied at the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Command College in Nanjing,⁸ and China currently exports a significant quantity of arms to Uganda.⁹ The two countries have cooperated on developing new military technologies, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs),¹⁰ and the proliferation of Chinese infrastructure projects across Uganda under the auspices of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) may lead to the establishment of a Chinese military base in Uganda,¹¹ potentially at Entebbe International Airport.¹² Chinese engagement in Uganda is motivated by its desire to carry greater influence across the continent. While the BRI is ostensibly centered on promoting economic development in Africa,¹³ it serves China's security interests by developing infrastructure that may be useful for the Chinese military¹⁴ and facilitating access for Chinese companies to strategic natural resources.¹⁵ In Uganda, China has used the BRI to develop military infrastructure¹⁶ and gain access to oil.¹⁷ Broadly, the United States cares about the BRI because it challenges U.S.-led development initiatives,

limits the United States’ influence, and allows the Chinese military to expand its overseas presence.¹⁸

The United States invests over \$1 billion annually in Uganda.¹⁹ Starting in 1962, the U.S. began to provide development assistance to Uganda through U.S. Agency for International Development, specifically for agricultural and educational development.²⁰ The United States and Uganda severed diplomatic relations in 1973 when General Amin took power but re-established them following the collapse of his government in 1979.²¹ The United States is

invested in security cooperation with Uganda, as evidenced by collaboration between the AFRICOM-supported CTJF-HOA and the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia.²² As part of this effort, AFRICOM has transferred significant arms and materiel to Uganda since 2013.²³ The U.S. trained over 500 Uganda People’s Defense Forces²⁴ (UPDF) soldiers through the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership in 2016.²⁵ The U.S. military and the State Department see Uganda as a competent and reliable partner for promoting regional stability and assisting with multilateral peacekeeping missions.²⁶

UGANDA AT A GLANCE	
Capital	Kampala ²⁷
Population	49,283,041(2024 Estimate) ²⁸
GDP per Capita	\$2,300 (Real, 2022 Estimate) ²⁹
Head of Government	President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni ³⁰
Head of State	President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni ³¹
Minister of Defense	Minister Vincent Ssempijja ³²
Chief of General Staff	General Muhoozi Kainerugaba ³³
Military Expenditure (total)	\$976.7 million (2023 Estimate) ³⁴
Military Expenditure (% of GDP)	1.98% (2023 Estimate) ³⁵
Armed Service Branches	The Ugandan Peoples’ Defense Forces consist of the Land Forces, Air Force, Special Forces Command, and Reserve Force ³⁶
Active Armed Forces Personnel	45,000 Active, 35,000 Reserve (2021 Estimate) ³⁷

Figure 2. Uganda at a Glance.

D - Diplomatic Instruments

China's use of diplomatic instruments to gain military influence in Uganda is mixed, with significant variation among sub-instruments. While high-level defense-related diplomacy has been infrequent, China's recent posting of a defense adviser in Kampala may lead to greater diplomatic engagement. In addition, Uganda hosted the Third South Summit of the G77 and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2024, both of which featured China as a key participant and may lead to further instances of high-level diplomacy. Most importantly, China is an integral military education and training partner of Uganda, providing professional military education opportunities to personnel of all grades both in China and Uganda.



D1: Defense-Related Diplomacy

Current Influence: Very Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***There has been limited high-level defense-related diplomacy between Uganda and China in the past few years.*³⁸**
 - » Between 2003 and 2016, a National Defense University database recorded eight relatively high-level interactions between Chinese and Ugandan officials.³⁹
 - » In June 2024, Ugandan Chief of Defense Forces General Kainerugaba met with a significant delegation of Chinese officials from NORINCO, a leading Chinese state-owned defense corporation, to discuss research and development collaboration.⁴⁰
- ***Given the recent posting of a Chinese military attaché to Uganda (D3), defense-related diplomacy is projected to increase between the two countries.***



D2: International Military Education and Training Programs

Current Influence: Medium

Projected Influence: Steady

- ***China has recently provided professional military education opportunities for senior Ugandan military officials. One of the reasons for such a relationship is President Yoweri Museveni's admiration for Mao Zedong.*⁴¹**
 - » Senior Ugandan commanders have studied at the PLA Command College in Nanjing in recent years through the International Military Education Exchange Center.⁴²
 - » These senior officials include Ugandan General Fred Mugisha, who commanded the African Union Mission to Somalia.⁴³ Ugandan Minister of State for Internal Affairs David Muhoozi, who previously was Chief of Defense Forces, attended the PLA's National Defense University.⁴⁴
 - » General Kainerugaba, the Ugandan Chief of General Staff and son of President Museveni, wrote that his father was partial to the political and military theory of Mao Zedong.⁴⁵ Museveni's adoration of Zedong is one of the reasons that China is a frequent provider of professional military education to general officers in the Ugandan military.⁴⁶
- ***China has also supported professional military education for junior officers and enlisted personnel of the UPDF through short- and long-term training programs.***

- » China sponsored the Oliver Tambo Leadership Academy in Kaweweta,⁴⁷ which trains UPDF personnel through 4- to 6-month courses.⁴⁸ This school is part of a Chinese initiative to influence political-military education in Africa.⁴⁹ The academy promotes a vision of the armed forces as subordinate to the ruling political party, rather than the state (the PLA is under the command of the CCP, not the Chinese state).⁵⁰
- » Recently, Ugandan officers have trained at Chinese military academies, but there is little open-source data on how many.⁵¹
- ***While Ugandan military officers and enlisted personnel frequently attend professional military education courses in China, there is no evidence to suggest there will be an increase in such attendance. In addition, while the Chinese-sponsored politico-military education may lead to a greater demand by Uganda for Chinese professional military education, there is not currently any open-source evidence to suggest such a development is imminent. Therefore, Chinese influence is projected as steady.***



D3: Soft Power Activities

Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***China recently established a military attaché office in Kampala,⁵² 6 months after establishing such an office in neighboring Rwanda.⁵³***
 - » Prior to the establishment of the military attaché office in Kampala, Ugandan Minister of Defense and Veterans Affairs Jacob Oboth and Chinese Ambassador to Uganda H.E. Lizong discussed African security matters in July 2022.⁵⁴ The two officials discussed the prospects for a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on joint peacekeeping missions.⁵⁵ There is no evidence the MoU was ever signed.
 - » In July 2024, the UPDF's Joint Chief of Staff, Major General Bakasumba, met with the first-ever Chinese military adviser to Uganda, Colonel Zhang Hao.⁵⁶
 - » While the role and influence of the military adviser cannot yet be determined, Colonel Zhang Hao pledged to enhance bilateral military cooperation,⁵⁷ specifically regarding the Ugandan defense industry.⁵⁸
- ***China and Uganda have engaged in non-combat capacity-building activities, including engineering training for the Ugandan military.***
 - » In August 2017, Ugandan military engineers attended a 3-month course on railway construction in Hebei Province,⁵⁹ led by China Harbour Engineering Corporation, a Chinese state-owned entity involved in infrastructure development in Uganda.⁶⁰
- ***China and Uganda have participated in at least one recent shared military-technical forum and one recent military-diplomatic athletic event. In addition, in 2024, Uganda hosted two summits focused on Global South issues, in which China was a major participant.***
 - » In October 2019, personnel of the UPDF participated in the Seventh Annual World Military Games in Wuhan.⁶¹

- » In August 2023, Chinese and Ugandan officials held a bilateral meeting during the Third Annual China-Africa Peace and Security Forum.⁶²
- » In January 2024, Uganda hosted the Third South Summit of the G77 Group in Kampala, in which China actively participated.⁶³ In September 2024, Uganda hosted a summit for the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.⁶⁴
- ***Given the recent posting of a Chinese military attaché to Uganda, it is projected that the Chinese use of soft power activities for military influence will increase.***

I - Informational Instruments

China's use of informational instruments to gain military influence in Uganda is mixed. China has supported cultural and media collaboration and alignment by establishing cultural and language institutes in Uganda and by providing media training for Ugandan journalists. Of greater significance, China has funded the construction of fiber-optic cables, supported the development of rural internet and 5G services, and promoted digital literacy. While Chinese companies have collaborated with Ugandan security services on cyberwarfare and surveillance initiatives, there are no reports of collaboration in military intelligence and communications technology.

I1: Cultural and Media Outreach, Collaboration, and Alignment



Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Steady

- **China has supported Chinese-language education in Uganda through civilian and military channels.**
 - » In December 2014, China established a Confucius Institute at Makerere University in Kampala.⁶⁵ In addition to promoting Chinese-language education and cross-cultural connections, Confucius Institutes allegedly support clandestine Chinese military intelligence and research and development activities.^{66 67}
 - » In March 2024, Ugandan Chief of Military Intelligence Major General Birungi announced the establishment of a Chinese-language instructional program at the School of Military Intelligence in Nakasongola.⁶⁸ The language instruction will be supported by the Confucius Institute at Makerere University in Kampala.⁶⁹
- **China has provided media training to Ugandan journalists through programs hosted in China.**
 - » These training courses have occurred a few times recently, including through a 10-month program in 2016⁷⁰ and a 2-week program in 2024.⁷¹ There have been other training programs for journalists from sub-Saharan African countries, but it is unknown whether Ugandan journalists and media professionals were included.⁷²
 - » Multiple organizations, including Reporters without Borders⁷³ and the United States Institute of Peace,⁷⁴ consider the main goals of these programs to influence how Ugandan and other sub-Saharan African journalists perceive the Chinese political system, which has been confirmed by some program participants.⁷⁵
- **While the recent creation of a Chinese language program for Ugandan military personnel may lead to increased cultural collaboration, and continued media training programs for Ugandan journalists may lead to greater media alignment, there is not enough open-source information to project an increase through said instruments.**

I2: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Support



Current Influence: High

Projected Influence: Increasing

- **There has been significant collaboration between China and Uganda on developing internet services, including 5G technology.**
 - » In January 2020, Chinese telecommunications firm ZTE and Ugandan firm MTN Uganda collaborated on the first 5G trial in East Africa.⁷⁶ The full 5G network was activated in June 2023.⁷⁷

- » In October 2023, the Chinese and Ugandan governments signed a formal pact to continue collaboration on internet infrastructure development in Uganda.^{78 79}
 - » Chinese technology firm Huawei Technologies collaborated with the Ugandan government on the National Data Transmission Backbone Infrastructure and Electronic Government Infrastructure projects⁸⁰ to lay an extensive fiber-optic cable network in Uganda.⁸¹ The Export-Import Bank of China provided financial support for the project, including a \$15.3 million loan in 2015.^{82 83} In November 2023, the bank agreed to provide an additional \$150 million loan to support internet infrastructure development.⁸⁴
 - » Huawei's DigiTruck project became active in Uganda in 2023, providing mobile training centers focused on internet literacy for rural villages.⁸⁵ The initiative aims to train more than 10,000 individuals, especially women and children.⁸⁶
- ***Chinese firms have supported the development of rural satellite television initiatives in Uganda.***
 - » From 2018 through 2022, Chinese telecommunications firm StarTimes introduced satellite television in 900 Ugandan villages, reaching more than 100,000 people.⁸⁷ The move resulted from a pledge by the Chinese government at the 2015 Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to introduce satellite television in 10,000 villages in sub-Saharan Africa.⁸⁸
 - » As a component of the initiative, StarTimes trained local engineers to install and maintain the satellite systems.⁸⁹ The televisions connected to the network carry stations from StarTimes TV, a subsidiary of the firm.⁹⁰
- ***China and Uganda have collaborated on cybersecurity and surveillance.***
 - » In July 2017, the China National Electronic Import and Export Corporation (CIEIC), a state-owned enterprise, signed an agreement with the Uganda Communication Commission to support cybersecurity capacity-building initiatives.⁹¹ Ugandan State Privatization and Investment Minister Evelyn Anite was present at the signing in Beijing.⁹² There is no open-source evidence of the impact of the agreement. The CIEIC has been sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department Office of Foreign Asset Control.⁹³
 - » Beginning in 2018, Huawei technicians have been directly embedded with Ugandan police services and have assisted the state security apparatus with intercepting encrypted communications from opponents of the regime of President Museveni.⁹⁴
 - » As of 2019, Huawei has built eleven monitoring centers in Uganda to support police initiatives.⁹⁵ In August 2019, Huawei opened a \$30 million cyber hub in Uganda to coordinate the 5,000-plus security cameras with facial recognition technology.⁹⁶
 - ***The significant ongoing collaboration in information technology and support, including in internet services, 5G technology, cybersecurity, and surveillance, between Chinese firms and the Ugandan government indicates that Chinese influence through this instrument will probably increase.***



I3: Cooperation in Military Intelligence and Communications

Current Influence: None/Unobserved

Projected Influence: None/Unknown

- ***There is no open-source evidence of collaboration between China and Uganda in cybersecurity or through military ICT agreements.***
 - » China and Uganda have signed an agreement to collaborate on civilian cybersecurity initiatives⁹⁷ and that there has been substantial collaboration between Huawei and Uganda on ICT initiatives, including surveillance technologies that may have military applications.⁹⁸
- ***There is no open-source evidence of cooperation through intelligence sharing or intelligence hardware development.***
- ***The projected influence of cooperation in military intelligence and communications is unknown due to the lack of open-source information.***

M - Military Instruments

China's use of military instruments to gain greater influence in Uganda is currently insignificant. While there is the possibility that China may seek to establish a military base at Entebbe International Airport, to which it has provided debt financing, there is no evidence to determine China's intentions. The recent posting of a Chinese military attaché in Kampala may lead to further military cooperation, but there has been no sustained bilateral or multilateral training between the two militaries. The United States remains Uganda's primary partner for bilateral training, and Ugandan participation in multilateral training is limited to exercises with other members of the East African Community.⁹⁹



M1: Formal Bilateral Military Engagements

Current Influence: None/Unobserved

Projected Influence: None/Unknown

- ***There is no open-source evidence of joint bilateral military exercises, in-country training, or joint campaigns and operations.***
 - » While the extensive bilateral military education relationship is referenced in D2, there is no evidence it has extended to formal exercises or training.
- ***While there is no open-source evidence of basing arrangements between China and Uganda, Chinese investment in Entebbe International Airport may lead to a Chinese takeover of the airport in the event of a Ugandan default on payments.***
 - » This investment is discussed extensively in the Trade and Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors section of this report.
- ***While there is the possibility that the Belt and Road Initiative may eventually lead to China basing military assets in Uganda, the evidence is not strong enough to make a projected assessment.***



M2: Shared Informal/Multilateral Military Engagements

Current Influence: None/Unobserved

Projected Influence: None/Unknown

- ***There is no open-source evidence of contract military forces from China operating in Uganda.***
- ***There is no open-source evidence of joint multilateral exercises including China and Uganda.***
 - » Participation of Ugandan forces in multilateral military training has been limited to exercises organized with the East African Community¹⁰⁰ in 2022 and the United States and Kenya in 2023.¹⁰¹
 - » In June 2024, Uganda participated in the 13th Field Training Exercise for the East African Community in Rwanda.¹⁰² There is no evidence of Chinese support or participation in the exercise.
 - » While China engaged in a joint counterterrorism military exercise with Tanzania and Mozambique in August 2024, there is no evidence that Uganda or any other regional country participated.¹⁰³
- ***There has been limited overlap between Chinese and Ugandan peacekeepers during multilateral UN peacekeeping operations.***

- ***In August 2015, China donated \$5.5 million worth of equipment to Uganda specifically for use in Somalia,¹⁰⁴ including cranes, troop transport vehicles, and water trucks and trailers.¹⁰⁵***
 - » As of March 2024, 96 percent of UN peacekeeping troops and police officers from Uganda are deployed as part of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia, where the Chinese presence is limited to two experts.¹⁰⁶
 - » Chinese and Ugandan peacekeepers participate jointly in the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan.¹⁰⁷ China has made a significant contribution to this operation, with over 1,000 personnel deployed as of June 2024. However, the extent of cooperation between China and Uganda in the context of the mission is unknown.
- ***While the recent assignment of a Chinese military attaché to Uganda¹⁰⁸ may lead to the further integration of Uganda into regional Chinese-organized multilateral training exercises, there is no evidence of such a development at this time. As such, China's projected use of this instrument is unknown.***



M3: Defense/Security Pacts and Agreements

Current Influence: None/Unobserved

Projected Influence: None/Unknown

- ***There is no evidence that China and Uganda have signed any bilateral or multilateral security cooperation agreements or mutual defense pacts.***
 - » Chinese officials have made statements suggesting an intention to strengthen military cooperation with Africa, but there is no evidence that such statements apply to Uganda specifically.¹⁰⁹
 - » Recent calls for greater cooperation between China and Uganda, specifically, have often focused on non-military areas, such as industrial development and economic investment.¹¹⁰
- ***There is no open-source indication that China and Uganda are in the process of considering a bilateral or multilateral security cooperation agreement or mutual defense pact.***

E - Economic Instruments

China's use of economic instruments to gain military influence in Uganda is substantial in certain areas and limited in others. China has been a limited weapons supplier to Uganda, and there is no evidence of trade dependencies in strategic materials. However, there is evidence of increased joint weapons production and development, with the opening of two new facilities in 2024. In addition, China is a vital partner for oil extraction and transportation, and recently China has been Uganda's largest importer. While these economic relationships are projected to develop in subsequent years, it remains unknown whether there will be an increase in Chinese arms transfers or whether the shared relationship around oil will translate to collaboration in other strategic resources.



E1: Arms Transfers

Current Influence: Very Low

Projected Influence: Steady

- ***The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) documented a single arms transfer from China to Uganda since 2012.***
 - » According to SIPRI, in 2021, Uganda ordered two WZ-551 infantry fighting vehicles from China and took delivery the same year.¹¹¹ The estimated value of the transfer was less than \$1 million.¹¹²
- ***Between 2013 and 2023, Chinese companies are believed to have sold material to the Ugandan police services.***
 - » In February 2016, the Uganda Police Force purchased 35 CS/VP3 armored personnel carriers from Poly Technologies,¹¹³ a subsidiary of a Chinese state-owned enterprise.¹¹⁴
 - » The Uganda Police Force has purchased additional equipment from Poly Technologies in transactions dating back to 2013;¹¹⁵ the specific systems purchased are unknown. The UPDF Special Forces Command has also acquired material from Poly Technologies, but details on specific systems are not available through open sources.¹¹⁶
- ***The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC)¹¹⁷ recorded two years in which there were significant exports of tanks and armored vehicles from China to Uganda since 2012.***
 - » In 2020 and 2021, Uganda imported tanks and armored vehicles from China worth \$13 million¹¹⁸ and \$58.5 million.¹¹⁹ These armored vehicles may have been designed for Uganda police forces. In no other years did tank and armored vehicle exports from China to Uganda exceed \$2 million.
- ***With minimal arms transfer from China to Uganda and nothing indicating direct military related transfers, the projected influence is steady.***



E2: Technology-Sharing and Joint Production Agreements

Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***China and Uganda recently announced the groundbreaking of two joint weapons production and research and development facilities.***

- » In November 2023, Uganda and China announced two joint ventures between Uganda's Ministry of Defense and Veterans Affairs and NORINCO, a Chinese state-owned defense corporation: a workshop for the development and production of UAVs and a production line for Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil, a type of explosive.¹²⁰
- » In April 2024, Uganda's Minister of Defense and Veteran Affairs, Ssempijja, attended the groundbreaking ceremony for both facilities.¹²¹
- » In recent years, Uganda has worked with several different partners on the joint development and production of weapons platforms and equipment, but the Chinese facilities are the first example of a relationship in this instrument between these countries.¹²²
- ***The establishment of two facilities for joint development and production of weapons and weapons systems in the past year suggests that Chinese influence through weapons technology sharing and joint production agreements may increase.***



E3: Trade and Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors

Current Influence: High

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***China and Uganda have recently collaborated on large-scale joint energy infrastructure projects, specifically focused on oil transport and production.***
 - » China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) has worked collaboratively with TotalEnergies, a French privately owned energy company.¹²³ TotalEnergies currently holds a majority interest in Lake Albert oil extraction in Western Uganda, with the remaining shares held by CNOOC and the Ugandan National Oil Company.¹²⁴ The Lake Albert region is estimated to have one billion barrels,¹²⁵ making up a large majority of the 1.4 billion barrels of recoverable oil in Uganda.¹²⁶
 - » In December 2023, Uganda approved the construction of a liquified petroleum gas facility on Lake Albert by CNOOC.¹²⁷ In January 2023, CNOOC began drilling on Uganda's Kingfisher oilfield on the shores of Lake Albert¹²⁸ after being granted the production license in September 2013.¹²⁹
 - » In May 2024, China agreed to provide financing for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline after Western banks, including Barclays (United Kingdom) and BNP Paribas (France),¹³⁰ and the World Bank¹³¹ withdrew from the project.¹³² The 1,400-km pipeline will run from Lake Albert to the Port of Tanga in Tanzania.¹³³ As of June 2024, Chinese funding has not materialized, leading to the implementation of stop-gap measures to keep the project fiscally solvent.¹³⁴
- ***China is investing in the Entebbe International Airport, and it is alleged that the structure of the financing could lead to a Chinese takeover.***
 - » Entebbe International Airport, Uganda's only international airport,¹³⁵ also serves as the headquarters for the Ugandan Air Force.¹³⁶
 - » In November 2021, the Ugandan Civil Aviation Authority declared that some clauses in the \$200M financing agreement that Uganda signed with the Export-Import Bank of China in 2015 may make the airport susceptible to a Chinese takeover if certain loan covenants are not met.¹³⁷ This declaration followed a Ugandan parliamentary probe.¹³⁸ China has publicly refuted these allegations.¹³⁹

- » In March 2022, Uganda announced that the parliamentary probe was ending, noting that any attempt to withdraw from or alter the financing arrangement would be futile.¹⁴⁰ AidData, a project at the College of William and Mary, has argued that the airport was never at risk of seizure, but that the terms of the loan may impinge on Uganda's sovereignty,¹⁴¹ by controlling how revenue from the airport is spent.¹⁴²
- ***China has been a major source of Uganda imports but receives a very low percentage of Ugandan exports.***
 - » In 2020,¹⁴³ 2021,¹⁴⁴ and 2022,¹⁴⁵ China was the number one source of Ugandan imports. During this period, imports were diversified, with no one category, as defined by the OEC, making up more than 6.0 percent of imports.¹⁴⁶
 - » While there is no evidence of trade in strategic raw materials, some leading categories of Chinese imports recently have had strategic implications. In 2021¹⁴⁷ and 2022,¹⁴⁸ leading categories of imports included broadcasting equipment,¹⁴⁹ delivery trucks,¹⁵⁰ construction vehicles,¹⁵¹ steel,¹⁵² and polyacetals.¹⁵³
- ***The recently signed financing agreement between China and Uganda to support the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline, coupled with the recent start of production at the Kingfisher oilfield, indicates increased Chinese influence through this instrument.***

CONCLUSIONS

China's current M-DIME influence in Uganda is assessed as Low. China exerts influence across three of the four instrument types: Diplomatic, Information, and Economic.

China is a leading provider of military education to Ugandan military personnel (D2). China has been integral to the expansion of internet access in Uganda, and Chinese companies have supported Ugandan cybersecurity and surveillance initiatives (I2). China is Uganda's largest import partner and one of the largest oil producers in Uganda, and it recently agreed to finance the completion of a major oil pipeline in Uganda (E3). China's employment of diplomatic influence instruments is relevant to the United States because it allows China to influence Ugandan military doctrine and develop stronger connections with senior officials. While the United States is currently Uganda's primary bilateral training partner, increased Chinese professional military education collaboration may lead to bilateral training between China and Uganda. China's employment of the information influence instruments is relevant to the United States because the Chinese presence in the Ugandan media may sway public opinion and because China's activities support repression. Lastly, China's employment of the economic influence instruments is relevant because China's significant investments in Uganda's energy sector and a significant trade imbalance may allow China to exert political influence in Uganda.

China's projected M-DIME influence in Uganda is assessed as Increasing. Diplomatic and Economic instruments are projected to be the most dynamic instruments for Chinese military influence in Uganda. Recent high-level meetings, combined with the recent posting of a Chinese military attaché in Uganda, indicates the likelihood of closer military-diplomatic relations between the two countries in the future (D1 and D3). In April 2024, China and Uganda broke ground on production and development facilities for UAVs and explosives. While the timing

of the start and scale of production are currently unknown, the recent groundbreaking indicates a projected increase in Chinese influence (E2). With recent Chinese investments in oil production and transportation facilities and Entebbe International Airport, coupled with an increase in China's lead as Uganda's largest import partner, China's influence is projected to increase. China's projected employment of the diplomatic influence instruments is relevant to the United States because Uganda may formally vote against measures proposed by the United States at the UN. China's projected employment of the information influence instruments is relevant to the United States because an increase will continue to support the authoritarian regime in Uganda and may sway public opinion against the United States. Lastly, the projected increase in China's employment of economic influence instruments may restrict the United States from accessing natural resources in the region.

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