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## Woodruff explores China and its global grasp

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Off Camera

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China Inside Out: Bob Woodruff Reports

Tonight at 10 on ABC/7

**Reason to watch** Woodruff - who speaks Mandarin - on a subject he knows intimately.

**What it's about** China's growing sphere of influence, from Angola, where it gets oil as part of a loan payback; to Brazil, for soy used to feed livestock; to Cambodia, where it once supported the Khmer Rouge; and finally Main Street/Wall Street USA, where China's impact needs little introduction.

China must feed 1.32 billion three squares a day and grow its economy. How? In Angola, for example, China's rebuilding a country devastated by civil war but has set few preconditions on loans, unlike the West, which balked at the endemic corruption. China, meanwhile, has established ties with "48 of 53 countries in Africa in order to gain access to resources."

In Brazil, the bulk of the burgeoning soy crop - which is also consuming the Brazilian rain forest - is shipped to China, while Woodruff visits a soy farm that stretches to the horizon (a treeless one, by the way). Cambodia? Here, a Chinese official tells Woodruff that his country wishes to extend "friendship" to a country in its immediate sphere of influence. Experts are consulted throughout, including Chicago Tribune Beijing bureau chief Evan Osnos, whom you may recognize from, of all places, "The Colbert Report," where he appears on occasion. Osnos says that if the Chinese ate and consumed like we did, "We'd need another planet" of resources to accommodate them.

**Bottom line** Mostly excellent, engrossing and revelatory. Woodruff - maybe doing the finest work of his career 2 1/2 years after he was nearly killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq - brings no hysteria to the subject, while he explains clearly and concisely what the issues are. He doesn't skirt the hard questions, either (though it's debatable whether he gets good answers). The program, however, could use another hour - the section on the United States feels rushed and simplistic. "Inside Out" is best when it explores terra incognita, like Angola.

**Grade:** B

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