



**Gulf Research Center**  
Knowledge for All

# China - GCC Relations



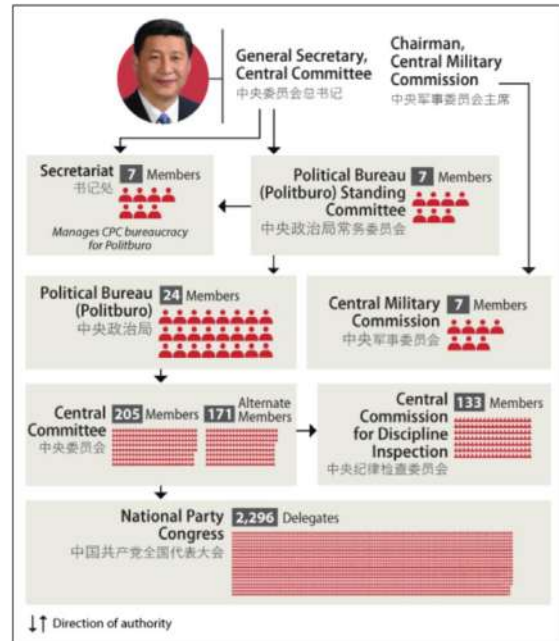
## Key Domestic Developments

China's international behavior is driven chiefly by domestic factors. In the past two decades, China has reemerged as a major power, with one of the world's largest economies and an increasingly capable and advanced military. This has allowed Beijing to increasingly assert itself in an effort to regain its centrality in the international system.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is China's dominant political institution. President Xi Jinping leads the CCP and has served since 2012 as its General Secretary and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, which oversees the Party's armed wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The CCP has led China for 74 years, since 1949, and now has 98 million members, nearly 7% of China's population. The Party's highest institution is the Central Committee, led by the General Secretary and composed of a 24-person Political Bureau (Politburo) and a 7-man Politburo Standing Committee. President Xi has augmented his own authority and systematically centralized decision-making power across all policy areas, preserving and enhancing the CCP's capacity to dominate policy-making and expanding his own authority to drive China's policy agenda. With this top-down strategy, the Party hopes to unite the country and the government and fulfill President Xi's ambitions of strengthening China's supremacy. President Xi strives to maintain the regime by strengthening central control over economic decision-making and argues that only he and the Party can lead China toward a more ambitious and nationalistic set of modernization goals. In order to enable a united and centrally controlled strategy to handle global dangers and accomplish national goals, President Xi has also reorganized the foreign policy decision-making infrastructure.

In March 2023, China witnessed the long-awaited retirement of Li Keqiang as premier of the National People's Congress and the appointment of Li Qiang, a longtime ally of President Xi Jinping and the former Shanghai party secretary. The year was, however, also characterized by shifts in major leadership positions including allegations of corruption in the country's nuclear weapons program.

## China's Political System



(Photo Source: [Congressional Research Service](#), 2024)

By administering more than three billion immunizations, China managed to prevent a massive outbreak that would have overwhelmed



its healthcare system, even though there were about 100 million confirmed illnesses and 121,000 deaths by December 2023. After China's abrupt scaling back of its zero-Covid restriction in 2022, much of the public was struggling to cope with the mental trauma following the three years of frequent lockdowns. As many as 20% of health workers, patients and members of the public suffered from post-traumatic disorder and nearly one-third of those quarantined at home displayed symptoms of depression, anxiety and insomnia. During this period, there was increased overall frustration among the population over the government's highly restrictive Covid policies with Chinese citizens rallying in protest, and some even calling on President Xi to step down.

On the economic front, China faces high rates of youth unemployment, persistent debt problems in the property market, and other persistent difficulties that have stood in the way of a return to pre-pandemic normalcy. While the IMF projected 5.4% GDP growth in 2023, the forecast for 2024 is more pessimistic suggesting a continued overall slowdown. Over 20% of young people were unemployed, which is twice as high as it was five years ago and concerns about the housing market persisted. In addition, numerous small businesses encountered the same predicament. Major developers announced a loss of approximately \$6.7 billion in the first half of 2023 and warned that this would likely continue into the next five years. In November 2023, a former deputy head of the national statistics bureau was quoted by state media as saying China's entire population of 1.4 billion would not be enough to fill all the empty apartments across the country. To prevent an oversupply, the government has already implemented a "de-stocking" strategy across the country. This strategy includes encouraging developers to drop housing costs in order to increase demand and decreasing the rate at which land is sold in cities.

In response, China's leaders emphasized the importance of concentrating on high-quality growth and outlined a nine-point strategy that included increasing domestic demand, bringing in more high-level foreign investment, reviving agriculture to increase food security, and integrating technological innovation into the industrial system.

## Key Economic and Social Data

Foreign investment inflows into China at the beginning of 2023 amounted to RMB 127.7 billion, a year-on-year increase of 14.5%.


- GDP: \$18.533 trillion (2024)
- GDP per capita: \$13,136 (2024)
- Annual Growth Rate: 5.4% (2023)
- Inflation: 0.2% (2024)
- Population: 1,425,131,456 (2024)
- Unemployment Rate: 5.2% (2023)
- Credit Rating: A1, several notches below the top level of Aaa, but still in the middle of what the agency considers "investment grade" debt

Despite many difficulties, the Chinese economy still performed better than anticipated in 2023 although within Asia, emerging and developing nations continued to be the key drivers of global growth rather than China. China is projected to grow 4.6% in 2024, an upward revision of 0.4 points, but still below the 2023 growth estimate of 5.4%.

## China's Foreign Policy

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence reflect China's long-standing foreign policy: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in one another's domestic affairs, equality, reciprocity, and peaceful cohabitation. All foreign policy begins at home, but China's is particularly based on domestic concerns, the most important of which is the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) legitimacy. Although Beijing's interpretation of "core interests" is open-ended, it basically encompasses everything the CCP views as an existential threat.

Building a strong military, gaining technical dominance and strategic independence, and creating new markets and value chains through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are goals focused on security and prosperity at home. However, gaining the ability to act outside the boundaries of US "interference" is a prerequisite for fulfilling this guiding mission.



In the fight against US dominance, strengthening the alliance of developing nations that look to China for leadership is an underappreciated priority for Beijing. China's latest white paper on international development cooperation, which focuses mostly on the Belt and Road Initiative, reads as a declaration of Beijing's goal to spearhead the "rising rest" against the West. Beijing will place even greater importance on these nations—dubbed the "third world" during the Cold War—as Beijing experiments with strategic independence from the US.

A key aim of China's foreign policy is to re-shape global governance institutions which it considers as Western-dominated and reflective of past world order. President Xi Jinping has called for China to "lead the reform of the global governance system," transforming institutions and norms in ways that will reflect Beijing's values and priorities. Beijing's long-standing goals in this endeavor include shielding itself from threats to its sovereignty, including, for example, preventing criticism of China's human rights policies. China is pushing forward to advance a new international governance framework in line with its own model of political and economic development. This growth model combines a mix of market-based practices and statism in key economic areas, as well as broad governmental influence over politics and society.

In terms of the Gulf and the Middle East, China's Middle East policy is multidimensional, with its main aim being to put significant emphasis on diplomacy. This strengthens Beijing's soft power in the region and increases its engagements in the Middle East, specifically in the Gulf region. Beijing understands that any regional escalation between countries in the Middle East will not be beneficial to China. China relies on regional stability, especially in terms of oil flow from the Gulf to its shores via the Hormuz Strait and other maritime chokepoints, as a vital strategic interest. In addition to this, China has billions of dollars in Belt and Road investments in the region, and its overall trade with the Middle East and East Asia reached \$507.2 billion in 2022.

While acknowledging the positive strides made in economic cooperation and strategic partnerships,

there's a shared belief among the GCC states that China could play an even more influential role in regional stability. In the bigger picture, China is seeking to revise its traditional policy of a balancing act in the region, and in the foreseeable future, maintaining stability and security in the Arabian Gulf to ensure consistent energy flows will remain one of the few areas of convergence between China and the GCC. Although China's increasing engagement in the region is not intended to replace the US, the Gulf states have growing tendencies to involve China in regional affairs, given Beijing's increased diplomatic role.

### Key Foreign Policy Initiatives

- **One Belt, One Road Initiative(BRI).** This ambitious strategy aims at developing two new trade routes connecting China with the rest of the world. China views the BRI as vitally important in securing its borders on the Asian mainland.
- **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).** The AIIB is a multilateral development bank that provides financing for infrastructure projects in Asia. It's mission is to improve social and economic outcomes in its region, Asia, and beyond.
- **New Asian Security Concept (NASC).** A plan for a new regional security architecture not based on any formal alliance system, but rather bringing together a tighter network of existing organizations and entities and bending them toward China's desired strategic goal.
- **New Type of Great Power Relations (NTGPR).** This initiative was designed to create a strategic space in which Beijing's foreign policy can operate in order to build up cooperative partnership.
- **2+7 Cooperation Framework for China-Southeast Asia Relations.** The proposed cooperation framework represents two political consensus and seven areas of cooperation between China and the ASEAN. It is part of China's new vision for enhancing the relationship with ASEAN.





- **Dual Track Approach in the South China Sea.** This proposal was initiated by Brunei and advocated by China, involved in focusing on specific disputes to be peacefully resolved through consultation by parties directly concerned, and stability in the South China Sea to be jointly maintained by China and the ASEAN.
- **Community of Common Destiny in relation to the South China Sea region.** This initiative was intended to focus on the broader relevance of China’s policy to global affairs, pointing to the need for interconnectedness and mutual development among nations, and for cooperative security.



(Photo Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China](#), 2016)

### China Trade in Goods with GCC Countries (USD billions) 2022

Source: [UNCOMTRADE](#)

Countries	Export (USD Billion)	Import (USD Billion)	Grand Total (USD Billion)
<b>Bahrain</b>	1.77	0.25	2.02
<b>Kuwait</b>	4.97	26.51	31.48
<b>Oman</b>	4.21	36.24	40.45
<b>Qatar</b>	3.99	22.56	26.55
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	37.99	78.05	116.04
<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	53.86	45.41	99.27
<b>Total</b>	106.79	209.01	315.80

### ***Establishment of Diplomatic Relationships:***

- Saudi Arabia (1990), Kuwait (1971), United Arab Emirates (1984), Bahrain (1989), Oman (1978), and Qatar (1988).

### ***Key Research Centers and Think Tanks***

- Center for China and Globalization (CCG): <http://en.ccg.org.cn/>
- Shanghai Institute for International Studies: [https://www.siiis.org.cn/en/index\\_en.jhtml](https://www.siiis.org.cn/en/index_en.jhtml)
- China Institute of International Studies (CIIS): <https://www.ciis.org.cn/english/>
- China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations: <http://www.cicir.ac.cn/NEW/en-us/index.html>
- Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS): <http://www.cssn.cn/>
- Development Research Centre of the State Council of the People's Republic of China: <https://en.drc.gov.cn/>

### ***Selected Key Regional Experts***

- Dr. Sarah Almutairi, Political Science Department, Kuwait University
- Mohammed Al Hajri, Ph.D. Researcher, Birbeck, University of London
- Mohammed Turki Al-Sudairi, Research Fellow, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies,
- Jonathan David Fulton, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Zayed University, UAE
- Degang Sun, Professor and Deputy Director, Middle East Studies Institute, Shanghai International Studies University
- Gafar K. Ahmed, Member of the Institute of Arab-Islamic Culture Studies, Peking University,
- Chen Lijun, Professor and Director, Institute for South Asian Studies, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences

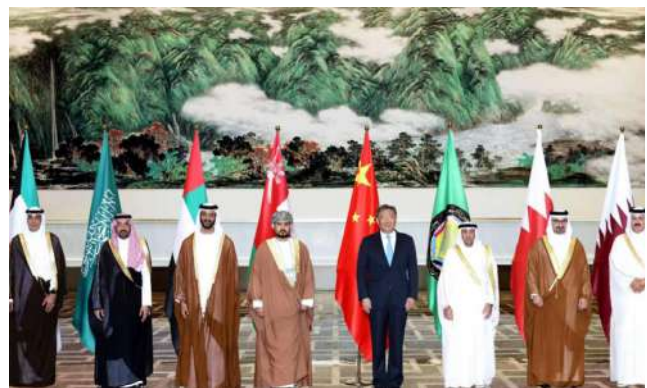
- Jin Liangxiang, Senior Research Fellow, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies

### ***Key Recent Literature***

- [Chinese Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East](#)
- [China's International Communication and Relationship Building](#)
- [Chinese Regionalism in Asia - Beyond the Belt and Road Initiative](#)
- [The Geopolitics of China's Belt and Road Initiative](#)
- [Security of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor \(CPEC\)](#)
- [Chinese Grand Strategy in the 21st Century - According to Plan?](#)
- [Discourse, Rhetoric and Shifting Political Behaviour in China](#)
- [China's Carbon-Energy Policy and Asia's Energy Transition](#)

### ***Key Developments in China-GCC Relations***

- On October 22, 2023, the China-GCC Economic and Trade Ministers' Meeting was held in Guangzhou. H.E. Mr. Wang Wenato, Minister of Commerce, H.E. Mr. Jasem Albudaiwi, GCC Secretary-General, and heads of economic and trade departments of the GCC countries attended and addressed the meeting. Mr. Li Fei, Vice-Minister of Commerce, led the delegation from the Chinese side.

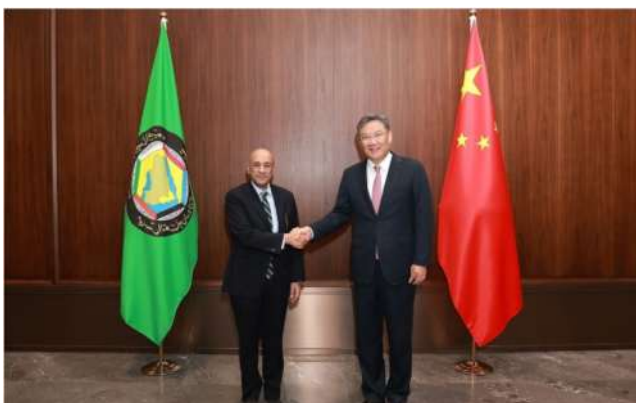


(Photo Source: [Ministry of Commerce People's Republic of China, 2023](#))



- Focusing on the implementation of the economic and trade measures of the first China-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit, the meeting formed a consensus on issues such as jointly safeguarding the multilateral trading system, promoting two-way investment, deepening cooperation in industrial and supply chains, improving the level of connectivity and promoting energy transformation, and it adopted the Joint Statement of Economic and Trade Ministers of People’s Republic of China and Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council on Deepening Economic and Trade Cooperation.

- The Belt and Road Initiative, which was put in place by China and announced in 2013, as a global infrastructure development scheme to invest in 150 countries and international organizations. All members of the GCC have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to participate in this initiative; Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates on July 1 2018, Kuwait and Oman on May 1 2018, Qatar on January 1 2019, and Saudi Arabia on August 1 2018. This agreement supports significant investments in ports, infrastructure and logistics which are aimed at enhancing connectivity and trade routes that rely heavily on the Gulf region.



(Photo Source: [GCC](#), 2023)

- During the meeting of H.E. Mr. Jasem Al-Budaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with H.E. Mr. Wang Wentao, Minister of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, on the sidelines of the first session of the Commerce and Industry Ministers’ Meetings of the GCC countries and China, held on October 21, 2023, in Guangzhou City, China, both sides emphasized the common desire of the GCC and Chinese parties to increase economic and trade relations, diversify them, and work to cement them in all fields.
- Both sides also highlighted that one of the most important tools that can be used to strengthen trade relations between China and the GCC is the free trade agreement, which the two sides are currently reviewing with the hope of signing in the near future.

Overall, the GCC and China have increased their effort to expand their relations as evidenced by the first China-Arab States Summit and the China-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit held in 2023. The more immediate goal is to reach an agreement on the China-GCC free trade deal. A notable and consistent expansion in diplomatic ties toward increased cooperation and mutual understanding is also being witnessed at the bilateral level.

### China-Saudi Arabia

- In August 2024, Saudi’s sovereign Public Investment Fund (PIF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 6 Chinese financial institutions, which include the Agricultural Bank of China (ABC), Bank of China (BOC), China Construction Bank (CCB), China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation (SINOSURE), Export-Import Bank of China (CEXIM) and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC). These investment agreements totaled \$50 billion in order to strengthen financial and business ties between the two nations. This amount is estimated to represent 1.5 times China’s total foreign direct investment inflow. According to the MoU, incentives for both countries to encourage a two-way capital flow by means of debt and equity. This deal also aligns with PIF’s initiative to promote bureaucratic partnerships globally.

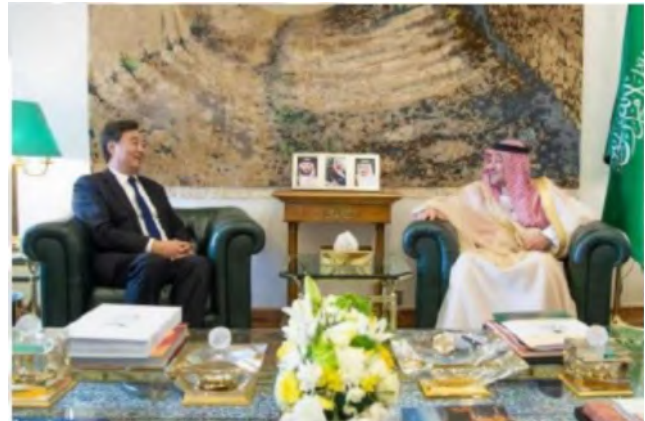


- Between May 20-22 2024, in Beijing, Minister of Finance Mohammed Aljadaan, and the Chinese equivalent, Lan Fo'an, concluded the nations' discussions on the reinforcement and strengthening of their collaboration on aspects which consist; of artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and smart cities. The Saudi Minister emphasized how these developments economically transform and possess growth and development potential in the Kingdom. Participants of these meetings also negotiated the macroeconomic circumstances as well as related policies and bilateral and multilateral cooperation. On the sidelines of these meetings, Minister Aljadaan met with Chinese experts, including ministers, investors, and such leaders, to discuss topics of common interests surrounding economic and financial developments. In light of Chinese investment potential and initiatives, like China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which align with the Kingdom's 2030 Vision.
- In December 2023, the Future Investment Initiative Institute (FII) Hong Kong Summit, held in partnership with the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing (HKEX) convened business and finance leaders from around the world. This followed the signing of a cooperation agreement between HKEX with Saudi Arabia's stock exchange operator Tadawul to launch an exchange-traded fund that tracks equities in the Gulf state.
- In December 2023, efforts from China in the region were also made apparent during the first meeting of the China-Saudi Arabia-Iran trilateral joint committee, which took place in December 2023. China hopes to take advantage of this trilateral summit as a chance to strengthen ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran and offer additional assistance for Middle Eastern peace and stability. During this meeting, China put forward three suggestions for continuing to advance the process of improving relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The first proposal emphasized the importance of firmly upholding the reconciliation strategy decision.
- In November 2023, the Saudi Foreign Minister, H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan led a group of ministers from Arab and Muslim countries and visited China as the first leg of a tour that aims to end the war in Gaza. The tour was the first step for the Islamic Ministerial Committee to carry out decisions reached at the Arab-Islamic Summit that was held in Riyadh earlier in November 2023.
- Special Envoy of the Chinese Government on the Middle East, Zhai Jun, visited Saudi Arabia on October 26, 2023, and met with Deputy Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Waleed Al-Khuraiji, in which both sides discussed China-Saudi relations and the current crisis in Gaza.
- In September 2023, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources held meetings with a range of officials and business leaders during a tour in China. As well as the meetings, H.E. Minister Bandar bin Ibrahim Alkhorayef chaired the Saudi delegation and participated as a guest of honor in the China-Arab State Summit, and met with H.E. Mr. Jin Zhuanglong, China's minister of industry and information technology, held discussions around strengthening cooperation and partnership between the two countries in the industrial sector. Additionally, the Saudi minister held talks with Peng Qiming, president of the Mining Association, and Gi Honglin, president of the China Nonferrous Metal Industry Association.
- In March 2023, the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, brokered by China, was announced. By making China part of the equation, the stakes have increased for Beijing to ensure that Iran remains accountable for the "respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in internal affairs of states," as mentioned in the trilateral agreement.





- President Xi Jinping concluded his first visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in six years, at the China-Arab Summit in Riyadh in December 2022. As part of efforts to boost China's relations with the Gulf region, President Xi met with King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and attended two summits with Arab and Gulf leaders. The visit followed an invitation from Saudi Arabia's King Salman "to bolster historic ties and strategic partnership between the two countries." President Xi expressed his optimism, stating that already "practical cooperation between the two countries yielded fruitful results in [various] fields."
- As part of the December 2022 visit, Saudi Arabia and China signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership agreement" in addition to 34 investment agreements in areas such as green hydrogen, solar energy, information, cloud services, transportation, logistics, medical industries, housing, and construction. The agreed partnership welcomed more Chinese companies to take an active part in the industrialization process of Saudi Arabia, including the construction of major infrastructure and energy projects, and enhance cooperation in such areas as the automobile industry, science and technology, chemical industry, and mining.



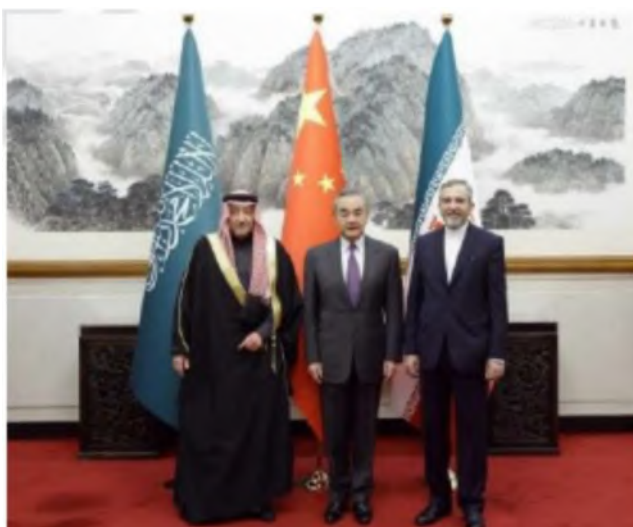
(Photo Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China](#), 2023)



(Photo Source: [Arab News](#), 2023)

### China-United Arab Emirates

- In July 2024, the nations agreed to increase bilateral air traffic rights after years of static travel growth. Flights have been capped at 56 services per week for each country, a decision that would boost trade and tourism between both countries.
- On May 30, 2024, UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, attended a state visit to the Republic of China, initiated by the Chinese President Excellency Xi Jinping. President Xi acknowledges that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the countries, further emphasizing the important juncture of China-UAE relations. During this visit, His Highness discussed bilateral relations and the potential for further economic partnership in the economic, developmental, and cultural aspects. These discussions occurred within the Comprehensive



(Photo Source: [Global Times](#), 2023)



Strategic Partnership framework agreed by the two nations, targeted at the sustainable development and economic growth for both countries. Throughout this meeting, the Chinese President ensures support on several aspects, which include long-term bilateral relations, the UAE's pursuit of an independent development path and safeguarding its national sovereignty, and is willing to strengthen political mutual trust and cooperation to collectively build a community with a contribution to the future of humanity. Moreover, President Xi supports the stance to further promote the high quality Belt and Road agreement with the intention to push for more results in bilateral cooperation.

- Throughout this meeting, His Highness expressed support for the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative introduced by China, as well as continuing to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative. The UAE also continues to work closely with China in multilateral coordination to promote peace, development, and prosperity. On that note, the two countries also communicated their views on the Palestinian-Israeli war. The Chinese and Emirati Presidents have the same stance, where an immediate ceasefire and cessation of bloodshed to ease the humanitarian crisis, as well as a two-state solution, needs to be negotiated and supported by international organizations.
- On August 4, 2023, UAE foreign minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi held a phone call in which both sides discussed ways to improve bilateral cooperation between the two countries. China is ready to work with the United Arab Emirates to deepen the synergy of development strategies, strengthen two-way investment, and deliver more high-level cooperation outcomes to jointly deepen and consolidate China-UAE relations, the Chinese foreign minister said
- In August 2023, China and the UAE conducted their first-ever combined fighter jet drill in China. China's Ministry of Defense announced that

based on a previous agreement with the UAE, the air forces of both countries will conduct their first joint air force exercise called "Falcon Shield 2023" in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

- In February 2023, China announced that it had signed a contract to export its domestically developed L-15 training fighter jets to the UAE. The UAE Ministry of Defense said it planned to purchase 12 L-15s with an option for an additional 36 of the same type in the future. The L-15, or a supersonic fourth-generation fighter, is also known as the JL-10.

### China-Qatar

- As of June 4, 2024, talks surrounding the sovereign wealth fund of Qatar has agreed to buy a 10% stake in China's second-largest mutual fund company, China Asset Management Co (ChinaAMC), as Beijing's ties increase with the Middle East in midst of growing tensions with the West. This is to deepen and maintain political, economic, and financial partnerships. If this deal was approved, the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) would be the third-largest shareholder in ChinaAMC, which manages over \$248 billion of assets, as well as provides mutual and exchange-traded funds to retail and institutional investors.
- In May 2024, it was found that Chinese companies looked to Qatar as an entry point to the Middle East as an alternative to the West. According to the head of the Qatar Science and Technology Park, this would mean Doha will be the first stop for various Chinese businesses as they seek Middle Eastern or African markets. This move indicates stronger corporate ties between the states as China steers away from Western markets and closer to emerging regions.
- The nations also agree on the supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG). In late April 2024, Qatar and China signed a \$6 billion agreement under which 18 LNG vessels will be transported from China to Qatar.



- 2023 marked 35 years since China and Qatar established diplomatic ties. Chargé d’Affaires Chen Yue at the 74th National Day & the 35th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and Qatar: “The two countries have set benchmarks and made breakthroughs in various fields including economy, trade, investment, energy, infrastructure, high-tech industries, and green initiatives”
- In June 2023, Qatar signed a 27-year gas supply deal with China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), the Gulf nation’s second major gas supply deal with a Chinese state-controlled company in less than a year.
- In July 2023, during talks between Minister of State of Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi and Beijing’s special envoy on Middle East affairs Zhai Jun, the Qatari state minister told the Chinese special envoy that Qatar hopes to strengthen ties with China and work together on easing regional tensions. Zhai said China attached importance to Qatar’s “unique and important role” in regional and international affairs and was willing to make joint efforts to maintain peace and stability, according to Chinese state news agency Xinhua.



(Photo Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China](#), 2023)



## China-Oman

- In May 2024, a diplomatic mission from Oman’s General Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, led by the Vice Chairman, Engineer Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb and attended by Oman’s Ambassador to China, Nasser Mohammed Albusaidi, met with Chinese business experts operating in the green, iron, technology and chemicals industries in Beijing. This meeting took place to discuss investment opportunities.
- In October 2023, Oman and China stated that they are working on expanding their naval defense and military cooperation. In this context, the Secretary-General at the Omani Ministry of Defense Mohammad Bin Nasser Al-Zaabi visited China on October 10, 2023.
- On April 28, 2022, Oman’s Deputy Prime Minister for Defense Affairs Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, held talks with China’s State Councilor and Minister of National Defense Wei Fenghe. Both sides discussed military cooperation between the two countries and ways to serve both countries’ interests. During the visit, Fenghe also met with Oman’s Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Hamad al-Busaidi as both sides reviewed the developments in relations between Oman and China. Fenghe stated that China appreciates Oman’s unique and positive role in promoting the political settlement of regional issues and that China is ready to work with Oman to enrich the bilateral strategic partnership.



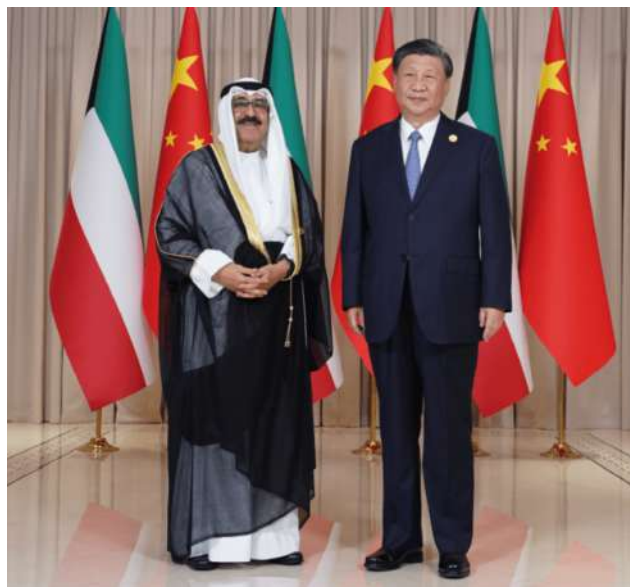
(Photo Source: [Asharq Al-Awsat](#), 2022).





## China-Kuwait

- In May 2024, Kuwait re-engages with China to re-establish the Gulf Port Project. This initiation means for Kuwait to act as a primary trading hub for the northern end of the Gulf.
- In September 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Kuwait and China during His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to China. The State of Kuwait and China signed seven MoUs in a ceremony attended by His Highness the Crown Prince and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The two leaders agreed to further cement relations and cooperation at higher levels; which included signing a cooperation plan for the years 2024-2028.
- On December 15, 2022, Ambassador Zhang Jianwei met with Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State of Youth Affairs H.E Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi. Ambassador Zhang briefed the minister on the guiding principles of the 20th CPC National Congress, saying that China will advance national rejuvenation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization and that China will endeavor to boost high-quality development and continue to deepen reform and innovation and promote high-standard opening up.
- On August 22, 2023, Ambassador Zhang Jianwei met with the Governor of Hawali Governorate Ali Al-Asfar. They exchanged opinions on efforts to enhance China-Kuwait relations and expand sub-national cooperation between the two nations. During this meeting, Ambassador Zhang affirmed that China and Kuwait have deepened political mutual trust and made solid gains in promoting exchanges and cooperation on various fronts.



(Photo Source: [Arab Times Kuwait](#), 2023)

## China-Bahrain

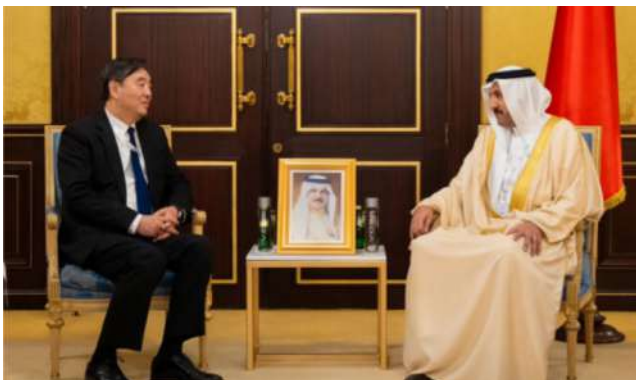
- In May 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa met in Beijing to implement a comprehensive strategic partnership, enhancing bilateral relations. This year marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the countries. President Xi affirms China's support for Bahrain's 2030 Economic Vision and its diversified development strategy. Moreover, in alignment with the Belt and Road Initiative, China's willingness to tighten cooperation with Bahrain in fields of energy, investment, infrastructure, and digital economy in order to achieve more outcomes.
- On November 17, 2023, Special Envoy of the Chinese Government on the Middle East Zhai Jun met with Bahraini Undersecretary for Political Affairs Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa during his attendance at the 19th IISS Manama Dialogue in Bahrain. The two sides had an exchange of views on bilateral relations and the Palestine-Israel conflict. Zhai Jun said that China and Bahrain have deep traditional friendship and that China is ready to work with the Bahraini side to implement the important common





understandings reached by leaders of the two countries and promote new positive progress in relations between the two countries.

- On October 2023, A high-level Bahrain delegation headed by Minister of Industry and Commerce Abdulla bin Adel Fakhro completed an official visit to China To strengthen economic ties and attract high-impact investment projects to Bahrain. Organized by the Ministry of Industry & Commerce (MOIC) with the support of the Bahrain Economic Development Board (Bahrain EDB), the delegation comprised senior representatives from Bahrain’s public and private sectors and spanned the three cities of Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Beijing.



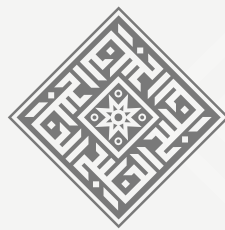
(Photo Source: [Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Montenegro](#), 2023).

### GRC Materials

The Gulf Research Center produces various publications through its research programs, projects, and Gulf Research Meetings. The GRC’s publications can be accessed on its website via [this link](#), and the commentary and analysis can be found [here](#).

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- [Gulf Investments in China: A New Era of Strategic Partnerships Published in ISIPI Dossier On ‘Investing Eastward: The Gulf’s Strategic Partnerships in Asia’ By Chiara Lovotti](#) - Layla Ali, Gulf Research Center, July 2024

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