# Making Money or Pursuing Hegemony?

## China and the Middle East

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# Abstract

As China rises and the former glory of the U.S. hegemony slowly fades, the rest of the world is watching closely. Opinions and analyses on whether it will have a peaceful outcome or not are many and various. This study investigated contemporary Chinese foreign policy in an attempt to argue that economic objectives are too important for the Chinese Central Leadership to consider military aggression against the U.S. It examined Chinese Foreign Policy by looking at two ongoing Middle Eastern events; the Arab-Israeli conflict and the "war on terror". The research was carried out in form of a multiple case study based mainly on qualitative material in the form of government documents and media archives but also on quantitative data in the form of official statistics. A foreign policy analysis seen through the lens of four different theories of International Relations provided the theoretical basis of the data analysis. The findings of the study supported the author's argument that great power China is, in fact, seeking to make money not pursue global hegemony.

*Keywords:* Foreign policy, hegemony, economic growth, conflict, China, Middle East.

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# Introduction

When countries or regions are in a state of conflict and instability, they are often viewed as a potential security threat by other states. But while the uncertainty about the future of a region in most cases will cause concern and insecurity it will also bring considerations about the emergence of new strategic opportunities in terms of both economic cooperation and diplomatic alliances. The fall of a regime may lead to a shift in a country's stance on issues that have earlier been a barrier to cooperation and when choosing a stance on an unresolved conflict, be it voluntarily or not, it will affect a state's international relationships and dealings. The conflict struck region in the Middle East is no exception. It has been widely argued that the main reason for the foreign presence in the region is the alluringly vast amount of natural resources that it possesses. The constantly evolving Arab-Israeli conflict is the source of many a political quarrel between states across the globe. And in the wake of the American led "war on terror" following 9/11, came transitions in the involved Middle Eastern countries that have caused old alliances to blossom and new ones to form. The rise of China following the economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping have caused a dramatic increase in its international interactions sparking anxiousness about the consequences and nature of a great power China, some arguing that China will rise peacefully and some that it will end in conflict as it will seek to end American hegemony. This thesis will argue that China's rise will be peaceful. It will argue that due to globalisation, cooperation and interdependence a violent outcome is improbable as no state would benefit from such a scenario. It will argue that although China may seek to increase its leverage in international politics, its expansion in relations with the Middle Eastern countries is not a part of a grand scheme to win global hegemony, but rather to sustain domestic development. Therefore, it will argue that the main objective of China's expansion in the Middle East, as in other parts of the world, is making money, not pursuing hegemony.

# Purpose, Aim and Research Question

As China rises as a new major power, the world is watching closely and anxiously, and many different opinions on the intentions of the "Rising Dragon" have been formed. The "China Threat" and foreign policy of contemporary China is a frequently discussed subject in both international politics and academia. While plenty of research on Chinese foreign policy in general exists and numerous studies have been conducted on China's presence in other regions of the world, the African continent in particular, the pool of previous research on China in the Middle East is shallow. Searching for material concerning China and the Middle East on both the Lund University and Copenhagen University databases came up with surprisingly few results, and the content of these articles and books seemed to point towards a trend that much of the research that has been conducted on Sino-

Middle Eastern relations in context of the cases presented in this thesis is either outdated or biased. This goes especially for material concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict, where research dated after 2000 is hard to come by and in almost all cases is written by supporters of either the State of Israel or the State of Palestine and therefore clearly biased. The "war on terror" is a contemporary issue, which has been extensively researched, but little has been said about the Chinese policy towards the conflict and the involved parties. Research coming from within China is also very limited, and although it does exist the bias is very clear. This thesis will try to fill this gap by attempting to assess the Chinese motivations and intentions by examining the Chinese presence and possible areas of special interests in the Middle Eastern region in context of addressing both domestic issues and international opportunities. Hence, it will attempt to answer the following research question:

- *To what extent is China's foreign policy towards the Middle East influenced by domestic issues and to what extent is it guided by a pursuit for increased global political influence?*

by looking at the following sub-questions:

- *How have international relations (IR) theories (realism, liberalism, constructivism and post-structuralism) been used for understanding foreign policy?*
- *How has Chinese foreign policy developed since the end of the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC)?*
- *What are the key features of Chinese contemporary foreign policy?*
- *What factors – internal and external – play the most important part in the formation of Chinese foreign policy?*
- *How has the Chinese policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and the "war on terror" developed, and how are these factors and features manifesting themselves?*
- *What would a foreign policy analysis in relation to the questions mentioned above look like through the lens of realism, liberalism and constructivism?*

Although significant events have occurred in the Middle East recently such as the so called "Arab Spring", this thesis will not be dealing with these issues in any detail unless it is relevant for an argument or analysis. As these events are very young and still rapidly developing it is the author's judgement that conducting a substantial analysis is a near impossible task due to the frequency of new developments and the uncertainty of the situation versus the amount of words allowed and time

allocated for this thesis.

# Methodology

## *Design*

This thesis is built upon a multiple case study. The initial nature of the case-study can be said to be both exploratory and explanatory, in the sense that it will seek to both explore and explain China's foreign policy towards the Middle East, through two case studies using collected data to explore and the theoretical approaches to explain. The advantages of conducting a multiple case study, according to Robert Yin, is that it makes the overall study more robust. Although a multiple case study is more time consuming, conducting a single-case study is similar to putting "all your eggs in one basket".[1] The two cases selected for this thesis are: the Arab-Israeli conflict (referring mainly to the Palestine Question) and the "war on terror" (referring mainly to the American strikes against Al-Qaeda following 9/11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003). The cases were chosen based mainly on the fact that they are both ongoing events that highly influence the situation in the region and the foreign policies of external actors. In addition they can both be seen in light of Chinese domestic and foreign policy. As the case studies will show, they both pose a challenge to the CCG in terms of balancing internal and external concerns, as well as political and economic concerns. China maintains close economic cooperation with both the Arab countries and Israel and acknowledges both Israeli and Palestinian statehood. Both sides of the conflict have resources that China needs in order to conquer domestic issues, but international pressure due to the complexity of the conflict arguably has a certain amount of influence as well. Similarly, the Chinese policy towards the "war on terror" faces the same challenge, as economic and political interests conflict with international pressure in the sense that  China seems to be seeking improved relations with the U.S. and the Arab countries simultaneously. One of the main criticisms of China coming from the Arab world – their treatment of the Chinese minorities belonging to Islam –  conflict with their own "war on terror" against the Muslim separatists in Xinjiang and the benefits that increased cooperation with the U.S. may bring in this regard.

   For China, who is increasingly and extensively involved in both diplomatic and economic relations with both the West and the Middle East, its policies towards the two cases are constant balancing acts, where staying on friendly terms with all involved parties is crucial.

   Through looking at these two specific cases, a foreign policy analysis will be conducted and the Chinese involvement in the region will be investigated from the perspective of four IR theories.

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[1]    Yin, 2003, pp. 46-53.

Realism and liberalism, being the two major classical theories have been picked in order to highlight the research from the conventional IR perspective, and as the rise of China has been extensively discussed by scholars belonging to these two schools of thought. But in order to broaden the theoretical framework and to seek beyond conventional theories, constructivism and post-structuralism have been added to the list as well, as these two theories offer alternative approaches to what influences state behaviour that go beyond focusing on sovereign nation-states as the principal actors in contemporary international relations. As these four theories rest upon different epistemological and ontological foundations, the case studies are looked at through four different theoretical approaches rather than through the use of a theoretical framework.

## *Method of Data Collection*

The research builds mainly upon qualitative data. However, in order to establish a general picture and identify the trends of the Chinese presence in the selected cases, quantitative data has been collected as well. Relevant background data was found through international organisations such as the United Nations (UN). But as the main focus is Chinese foreign policy, the primary sources were Chinese institutions such as the Foreign Ministry of the PRC (FMPRC), the Ministry of Public Security of the PRC (MPSPRC) and the Ministry of Commerce of the PRC (MCPRC), and although its neutrality and accuracy can be questioned it does provide a clearer picture of what the Chinese Central Government (CCG) wants to project. The quantitative data has been converted into graphs and diagrams in order to showcase the tendencies which they indicate more clearly.

  Qualitative data (documents, quotations from interviews and related research) have been collected for the purpose of conducting a foreign policy analysis. These include general policy papers and information on contemporary issues of special concern published by the CCG and official documents and reports on the issues and relevant subjects found through CCG resources, such as ministries and embassies. But they also include newspaper articles and news reports from online media sites, mainly of Chinese origin such as Xinhua and People's Daily archives, but occasionally also from international media resources of various origin. As most of the qualitative data was in Chinese, it had to be translated before being used in the analysis. The original text in Chinese is provided in the footnotes. The translated text has been used in order to illustrate the historical background of the cases, but primarily to analyse the Chinese stance on them seen through the lens of the theoretical approaches described in detail below.

## *Limitations, Challenges and Ethical Considerations*

In the process of looking for data, the researcher encountered several challenges. Access to

informants with sufficient knowledge of, and authority on, the issues was very limited due to geographical distance, security reasons and willingness to participate in interviews. The lack of experts and researchers on the subject of Sino-Middle Eastern relations affiliated with Peking University was surprising and did pose a challenge, but at the same time it validates the existence of a research gap relating to the topic that the author is trying to fill. Before being introduced to a professor whose work was specialised within this particular field of research, the author was met by many sceptical remarks from the academic staff at Peking University about the feasibility of the research. Furthermore, and as mentioned above, finding unbiased data was not without difficulties. In many parts of the West, the Middle Eastern region is associated with security threats and undesirable regimes, so much of the existing research on the region, coming from Europe and the U.S. in particular, does not express a view that advocates non-interference – which is quite contrary to Chinese foreign policy, that strongly builds on noninterference and respect for sovereignty. In addition, as the conflicts in the Middle East are so deeply rooted in cultural and religious beliefs and differences, these issues are very sensitive and had to be treated with care. Neutrality from the researcher's side is key, and being neither Jewish, Christian, Muslim or of any other religion and not being able to identify with or fully support either of the involved parties was an advantage that very few researchers of the topic have enjoyed in the past. However, remaining entirely neutral may prove to be difficult as the researcher is a young, white, female European who has been taught all her life to believe in Western conceptualisations of democracy, tolerance, peace and human rights. All of these are concepts that do not necessarily apply or receive priority in the foreign policies of the involved countries and the author's cultural background may challenge the neutrality of the research. It thus becomes key to keep in mind to ensure that all collected data is treated equally and is observed through an equally critical lens, in order to prevent any biased opinions from influencing the research as well as keeping the research itself as neutral as possible. In addition, territorial disputes, especially in relation to China, pose a challenge, as treating certain territories as either part of China or as independent will be viewed as taking sides. Finally, when conducting this research it was essential to stay focused on the initial subject, as the author does acknowledge that the subject studied is very large and complex and to study it more deeply would require more time and space than allocated for this thesis.

# Theoretical Approaches

## *International Relations Theory and Contemporary Chinese Foreign*
## *Policy*

**Conventional IR Perspectives – Security, Sovereignty and the State**

Liberalism and Realism, arguably the two major IR-theories, have very different views on how the realm of international relations works. According to Jack Donnelly, realism emphasises that while a hierarchical political rule restrains the selfish behaviour within a state due to the presence of an authority in the form of a government, the international system lacks such an authority and as a consequence states interact in anarchy, and human nature becomes the dominating driving force in international relations.[2] Guidelines for state conduct in an international context are often grouped under the *Raison d'État* doctrine, prescribing a method of managing foreign affairs in a way that safeguards national interests. As the international system is anarchic, the state, serving as the key actor in international relations, must keep the pursuit of power central.[3] As survival is the most fundamental concern of states, they are forced to be capable of some kind of military offense and hence, they constitute a permanent threat to each other. As a result of the permanent threat, states can never trust each other and the security dilemma will therefore always be a significant factor in foreign policy as any state will always be deliberating on beating the other to the punch so as to avoid being the victims of an aggression that may or may not be looming. The security dilemma is also the reason why international agreements remain weak. The risky environment of the competitive anarchic system causes states to choose self-interest and survival over cooperation. The state's sovereignty, after all, is at stake, and protecting it is vital as it is the most basic precondition for the legitimacy of statehood. Therefore, as states are rational, they are constantly thinking about how to survive, which requires a certain amount of suspicion. Suspicion is caused by the unpredictable intentions of other actors, which are a result of power competition and national interests. It will in most cases result in a conflict between one or more states and in the worst case scenario it may lead to war.[4] A unipolar system will always be unstable, as balancing powers will eventually rise and seek to challenge the hegemon which may cause the system to change into a bi- or multipolar one. That bi- or multi-polar system, and the rise of competitors will provoke the former hegemon which may result in a new unipolar system and so on.[5]

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[2]   Donnelly, 2009, pp. 31-32.
[3]   Ibid., p 51.
[4]   Mearsheimer, 1994/1995, pp. 10-11.
[5]   Donnelly, 2009, pp. 40-41.

Since the economic reforms of Deng, China has experienced a significant, steady economic growth as well as an increase in international political activities. This new found strength has caused both an increase in China's self confidence, but also an increase in other states' concerns about the nature and intentions of the new great power and its ability to balance or even overthrow U.S. hegemony. As a result, the CCG keeps stressing their *Independent Foreign Policy of Peace* (独立自主和平的外交政策) and emphasising their peaceful intentions.

In the opening statement of a debate with realist Zbigniew Brzezinski, John Mearsheimer, another realist, seems convinced that China's rise will not be as peaceful as its leaders strive to project. His argument is that if the intense development of the Chinese economy continues, Sino-American military and security competition will increase causing arms proliferation, which then in turn makes violent conflict a highly probable outcome. He further argues that the ultimate goal for any major power is to pursue national interest and gain as much power in international relations as possible. As a rising China will threaten to decrease American power and as the U.S. will try to defend it, a violent conflict of some sort is inevitable.[6] Brzezinski, on the other hand claims that China's economic interests are far more important than challenging U.S. hegemony. He brings up the 2008 Olympics and the Expo 2010 and argues that the efforts put into organising these events reflect a pursuit for international acceptance and economic opportunities rather than malign intentions of world domination. That being said, he does not write conflict off completely, as acts of balancing power, which may very likely lead to friction, can be identified. Military aggression is, however, highly unlikely.[7]

Liberals believe that human nature is inherently good and informed by rationality in the sense that states possess the ability to pursue self-interest but also the ability to act according to law and moral values rather than acting according to instinct.[8] This interpretation of human nature facilitates the argument that international cooperation is not only possible, but highly probable, especially if a harmony of interest can be identified, as two actors with similar interests are highly unlikely to engage in conflict with each other. In Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) view, republican liberal democracies are unlikely to engage in war with each other because they have the same fundamental interests and will therefore gain more through cooperating with each other. Liberal and authoritarian states, however, do not necessarily share the same values and interests and may therefore provoke conflict.[9] This view is also reflected in Francis Fukuyama's (1952-) article *The End of History?,* in which he argues that the end of the Cold War was a clear indication of the inevitable victory of

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[6]   Mearsheimer, 2004.
[7]   Mearsheimer & Brzezinski, 2005.
[8]   Kant, 1970, pp. 41-43.
[9]   Ibid., p 100.

capitalism over communism and liberal democracy over authoritarian regimes.[10] Faced with a question on the nature of the rise of China during a speech at the University of Sydney, Fukuyama argues, that the contemporary international system is different from the one which dominated international relations 30 years ago, and that military conflict caused by the rise of China is highly improbable due to globalisation, interdependence and economic development as well as the negative impact such a conflict would have on all involved parties.[11]

  Although sovereignty is the defining characteristic of the nature of the state, states are not seen as the only significant actors in contemporary international relations. Multinational corporations, international organisations, social movements and transnational groups, that have emerged as globalisation has progressed, are now as important actors in contemporary international relations as the sovereign state. The result of globalisation and the rise of transnational actors in addition to the increasing number of liberal democratic states around the globe has given rise to a theory of *complex interdependence*, formulated by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. Complex interdependence theory further argues that military aspects are no longer the only main focus of foreign policy, as it has been gradually replaced with economic objectives. As a result, the line between domestic and foreign policies has become increasingly blurred, but it also leads to a decline in the chances of aggression between states in whose relationship complex interdependence prevails. However, as not all countries are intertwined in the cobweb of complex interdependence, military means may still be used between rivaling blocks of allies.[12]

  Although liberals, like realists, perceive the international system as anarchic, international agreements still constrain state behaviour significantly. The UN, for instance, serves as a barrier for great powers to do as they please in the sense that they tend to go through the UN Security Council (UNSC) before they enter into a conflict. However, it does not mean that they will completely abandon their plans if the UNSC votes negative on the resolution, as was the case of the American led coalition war in Iraq.

  Threats to a state's security can arise from a variety of places and in various shapes and sizes. The concept of sovereignty, however, is often argued to be the key to the security of a state. Sovereignty asserts both the state's ultimate authority within its national borders and its membership in the international community, but it is essential to point out that it does not mean *absolutum dominium* or a complete freedom of action, especially within the contemporary

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[10]  Fukuyama, 1989, p 3.
[11]  Ibid., 2008.
[12]  Keohane & Nye, 1998, pp. 83-85.

international arena.

Sovereignty is and has always been very influential in the Chinese foreign policy, although the need for China to compromise its strong notion of the concept has become more frequent as its enmeshment in the international arena has increased. for example, when Iran embarked on a nuclear programme, China had to make this compromise. Even though China perceived the actions of the international community as a violation of Iran's sovereign rights it did not veto the proposed sanctions in the UNSC. Instead, China opted to push for a relatively non-binding statement, claiming that fear of alienation from the strong opposed states would harm China's national security as being viewed as an aggressor or be antagonised is not a desirable scenario for China.[13] In relation to the *Taiwan Question* (台湾问题), however, China's stance on sovereignty remains very strong and has influenced many if not all of the Chinese vetoes cast on UNSC resolutions.[14] Upholding the *One China Policy* is already a source of disagreement between China and parts of the international community and therefore, sticking to the principle of respect for sovereignty is vital in order not to lose legitimacy. In addition, having such a strong stance on sovereignty eases relations with partner states that are in conflict with each other. It also makes China a desirable trading partner as it, in contrast to many Western countries, pursues a so-called "no questions asked" policy, where it seldom comments publicly on the domestic affairs of its partners.[15]

**Constructivist Perspectives – Norms, Values and National Identity.**

For constructivists the international structure and its influence on state behaviour is key. While rationalist theories are actor-based and focus on the material (power and wealth), constructivists seek to investigate international structures in terms of the social (meaning and social value). States are embedded in dense networks of international social relations whose perceptions of a state play a large part in shaping a state's perceptions of the world it is part of. It is necessary to start by examining these social relations rather than the actors, as the state and its interest is informed by socially constructed values and norms of what can be considered good and appropriate. State leaders and their decisions are highly influenced by this normative context, and as that normative context is changing over time, as internationally held norms and values shift, state interest is inevitably changing as well and external threats or demands can therefore not be identified as the only factor in redefinitions of state interest.[16] As mentioned earlier, international institutions play a large part in this process, as they generally represent internationally held norms and values. The UN

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[13] Kemp, 2010, pp. 78-79.
[14] UN, 1997.
[15] Kemp, 2010, p 65.
[16] Finnemore, 1996, pp. 2-3.

and the IMF, for example, have guidelines or charters formulated, that dictate acceptable conduct for their member states. These guidelines or charters reflect the socially constructed general consensus of what constitutes appropriate behaviour as they are formulated in a forum of representatives from the member states and not by the institution itself. States themselves set these norms and values and adhere to them in order to remain part of the society and legitimise their actions. This so-called *logic of appropriateness* coexists with a *logic of consequences*, which also informs state behaviour based on their concerns for costs and benefits.[17] Seen in context of the *Independent Foreign Policy of Peace*, these two logics seem to be represented very well. The policy stresses not only China's peaceful intentions, but also its loyalty towards the norms and values of the international community – or what can be deemed *appropriate*. The "soft power" approach that China has taken in its international relations embodied mainly by their policy of non-intervention and respect for sovereignty has allowed China to increase their political and economic influence in various regions of the world, while at the same time contrasting themselves to the U.S. and their "hard power" approach by opposing hegemonism and power politics and advocating peaceful negotiations rather than military intervention as the main strategy in conflict resolution.[18] This has caused China to become a more desirable partner for cooperation with certain states that find the "no questions asked policy" appealing and within certain fields that benefit the objectives of Chinas national interests – leading to beneficial *consequences*.

   As the institutions are not the direct actor behind formulating these sets of norms and values it can be argued that the closest things to a higher authority than the sovereign state, are the norms and values that shape actor's interactions with each other. The international system is therefore still regarded as anarchic, but the anarchic system becomes whatever the states chose to make of it. Alexander Wendt (1958-) argues that states act towards objects, including other states, based on the meanings that they attach to them. Reality is shaped by socially constructed ideas and perceptions, such as sovereignty and human rights, rather than things whose existence is independent on human agreement, such as human nature or self-interest.[19] In addition, the state itself is a constructed entity as its features change with its actions, which are informed by its surroundings. The construction of the national identity of a state thus depends on the internationally held norms and values that it chooses to accept and adhere to.[20] In *China's Path to Great Power Status in the Globalization Era*, Samuel S. Kim argues that the debates on the "Rise of China" need to take into account the importance states attach to global citizenship. "Great power status", for instance, implies a certain

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[17]   Barnett, 2008, p 163.
[18]   White Paper 2011, part III.
[19]   Wendt, 1992, p 135.
[20]   Barnett, 2008, p 169.

level of responsibility. The fact that China keeps stressing its identity as a responsible great power indicates that they attach quite a substantial amount of importance to the nature of their global citizenship, which as it is socially constructed by the international consensus, constrains their behaviour in international relations.[21]

  According to Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, the construction of Chinese national identity rests on its ability to simultaneously claim membership of the developing world and great power status. As this dual status plays a central part in Chinese national identity it is also, in turn, key to Chinese foreign policy.[22] Before Mao, China was quite extensively engaged in trade relations with other parts of the world, and until Mao came to power and embarked on an isolationist road where these relations to a large extent were ignored, internationally held norms and values had to be adhered to in order to maintain good and beneficial relations with its partners. This is also the case for post-reform China, as opening up to the world has again made it necessary to keep up appearances. Democracy, for example, is a value accepted by most countries in the West, and is increasingly being implemented in various parts of the world. Indeed, when looking at official documents issued by China, it seems like the CCG is very keen to project an image of being on the road to becoming a democratic country.[23]


**Post-Structuralist Approaches – Deconstructing Concepts and Discourses.**
Post-structuralism adds a dimension to the theories discussed above in the sense that it seeks to problematise the interpretations of the concepts central to the approaches. Nothing is inherent in events or objects that can determine the correct way of representing them, and therefore the way these events or objects are subject to human consciousness and individual interpretative choices, which shape our perceptions and depictions of the world.[24] While post-structuralism adopts themes from conventional IR-theories, it rests on a divergent ontological and epistemological foundation in the sense that it revises these themes through genealogy and deconstruction, replacing the term "truth" with "competing perspectives".[25] The dominant position of sovereignty in our comprehension of international relations, for instance, has become a barrier to our political imagination. In order to fully comprehend international politics it is necessary to look beyond the mainstream paradigms of sovereignty and take into account the transversal nature of international politics and the deterritorialisation that has come in the wake of the dramatic increase in political,

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[21]  Kim, 2003, pp. 53-54.
[22]  Dittmer & Kim, 1993, p 283.
[23]  White Paper, 2011, part II.
[24]  Devetak, 2009, pp. 190-191.
[25]  Ibid., pp. 186-187.

economic and cultural activities caused by globalisation.[26] In other words, challenging the sovereign state as the main determining factor in understanding the character and location of politics is central. But stable concepts, such as democracy and security, also need to be deconstructed. The impact of democracy cannot be understood unless taking into account a country's culture, history and society, and if one assumes that democracy has universal potential, it is bound to fail.[27]

  According to Peter Hays Gries et. al. the same goes for nationalism. In *Patriotism, Nationalism and China's US Policy: Structures and Consequences of Chinese National Identity* it is argued that due to historical and cultural differences, American and Chinese nationalism cannot be put in the same category. American assumptions about the nature and consequence of expressions of Chinese national identity are therefore rarely valid. As an example, the American display of Stars and Stripes following 9/11 is brought up as a gesture which may be interpreted as an expression of loyalty towards the U.S. Meanwhile, the flag could also be interpreted as American support for the invasion of Afghanistan or a nationalist desire to dominate. The question is, how

>"should Americans understand the flag-waving displays of Chinese […] during the Olympic torch relay
> of spring 2008? Was it a benign expression of patriotic loyalty to China, or a malign expression of a desire to dominate over China's foreign critics, from
> CNN to free Tibet activists?"[28]

If one neglects the meanings, values and practices or the historical and cultural context, events or concepts can easily be misinterpreted. Going back to the definition of democracy, if one looks at the 2011 Chinese White Paper and the democratic aspirations reflected in it, it is interesting to note that the Western definition of what democracy is, is not followed blindly. While China makes great efforts to adhere to them, it also challenges the assumption that the dominating Western thinking and views of the world are universally applicable and superior.[29] In terms of economic practices, for example, Western models have been the mainstream, but since China opened up their economic growth has been impressive, it challenges the conventional model. In addition, the Chinese ideology, on which their policies rest, is described by the CCG as *Socialism with Chinese Characteristics* (中国特色社会主义),[30] which from a post-structuralist perspective can be argued to be a demonstration of the importance of taking notice of meanings, values and practices that define the national identity of a state, which the traditional Western Enlightenment thinking tends to neglect.

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[26]   Campbell, 1996, p 20.
[27]   Friedman, 2002, pp. 59-60.
[28]   Gries et. al., 2011, p 16.
[29]   McEwan, 2002, pp. 127-128.
[30]   People's Daily Online, 8/10-2008.

In terms of the transversal nature of international relations, looking at whom China has a history of identifying themselves with is interesting. Postcolonial identity has played a large part in the Chinese Foreign Policies of the last century, and during Mao, hostility towards the West as a result of years of colonisation was frequently displayed in the Chinese foreign policy.[31] The Chinese support for the decolonisation movement in the global south played a large part in the transfer of the Permanent Seat in UNSC from the Republic of China (ROC) to the PRC in 1971 which would arguably never have come through without the support of these countries. Hence, China has since been very keen on identifying itself with the group of former colonies, and often appears to prefer to be put in the category of developing countries.[32] But the difference between Maoist China and contemporary China is great, and some would argue that China today belongs to the category of developed countries. This, then, leads to the question of what the true status of contemporary China is, as it changes as one shifts the lens through which it is viewed. As Gries points out,

> "Chinese are neither innately pacifist nor hardwired for conflict. Instead, history and culture shape how individual Chinese will construe the events of world politics. The social psychology of intergroup relations can then help explain whether they will choose cooperation or conflict in a given situation."[33]

Therefore, from a post-structuralist perspective, the outcome of the rise of China and contemporary Sino-American relations is unpredictable as it depends on individual agency.

## *Foreign Policy Analysis*

**What is meant by *foreign policy*?**

As globalisation and interdependence are progressing, the line between the domestic and international spheres becomes more and more blurred. A policy initially directed towards an international issue is in many cases highly influenced by domestic affairs and domestic policies are increasingly put under pressure by international demands. Answering questions about why states do as they do in their dealings in the international arena based solely on external or internal factors is therefore insufficient as an approach. However, it is reasonable to classify a policy as *foreign* if its main target is to be found outside the realm of the state itself – for instance concerning the signing of an international agreement, which may have secondary consequences for the people of the state in question. Conversely, if a policy's main aim is addressing internal issues it is to be categorised as *domestic* – as it would be the case with for example an environmental law that primarily affects the everyday lives of the citizens of the state, even though it may also have international consequences

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[31]    Mao 1967, p 155.
[32]    He, 2007, p 18.
[33]    Gries, 2005, p 257.

in terms of, for instance, foreign trade agreements.[34] Applying this to Chinese policies would then mean that the internet regulation policies are domestic as they are essentially targeting the domestic sphere in terms of its limitations on internet access within Chinese territories, but as it influences foreign companies and individuals access to the Chinese population it is, in a way, foreign as well. Conversely, the much criticised Chinese policy towards the COP15 Summit in Copenhagen in 2009 would be considered mainly foreign, but it was directed towards the domestic realm as well in the sense that the failure to agree to sign the final agreement was due to the negative consequences that agreement would have on sustaining Chinese domestic development.

As touched upon earlier, another concern regarding the line between foreign and domestic is territorial disputes.[35] for example, *The One China Policy* (一个中国政策)[36] is heavily contested, and although a separate visa is required for foreigners wishing to visit Tibet, its independence is denied by the CCG. Hence, in relation to issues concerning these areas, questions may arise over whether they are part of China or not and therefore whether they can be considered domestic or international. The *Taiwan Question*, however, has been such an important factor in almost all of China's dealings with the international society since the establishment of the PRC in 1949, that it is relatively safe to treat it as a foreign issue, regardless of whether Taiwan is to be considered part of China or not.

**Who makes foreign policy?**

When speaking of foreign policy it is also necessary to determine who the actors behind the actions are. Essentially, the state is responsible for its actions abroad. The actors behind the decisions that affect the state's foreign behaviour are the government that resides within the state, government institutions and officials. Even though multinational companies or other actors may perform foreign actions, they do not count as foreign policies. They may occasionally play a large part in the decision making of the state, but as an influential factor rather than an actual actor.[37] But as foreign policies are often the result of a multilayered decision making process, non-governmental actors, such as multinational companies, organisations or institutes should not be automatically excluded from any considerations concerning who actually makes foreign policy, although identifying them is not necessarily an easy task. Furthermore, governmental actors involved in the process of formulating a foreign policy does not necessarily have to be at the national level, they can be found on more local levels as well.[38] In the case of China, policy making is indeed a very complex process

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[34] Beasley et. al., 2002, pp. 3-4.
[35] Ibid., p 4.
[36] CCG, undated.
[37] Beasley et. al., 2002, p 5.
[38] Kubálková, 2001, pp. 16-17.

and the actors involved are many and various. Finally, foreign policy outputs are often the result of tough negotiations between multiple stakeholders, from the boards of state-owned companies to government or Party officials. However, identifying all of the involved actors in these negotiations is an impossible task for any outsider, as the amount of accessible information is very limited due to secrecy. In addition, although the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the PRC are in theory two separate institutions, all major positions on all governmental levels in China are held by officials who simultaneously holds a similar position in the Communist Party of China. Due to the above reasons, the term "China" or "the Chinese state", when used in this thesis will (unless stated otherwise) refer to the CPC/PRC conglomerate or the appointed officials acting on its behalf. Whenever other actors can be identified, they will be mentioned separately.

**What main factors influence the making of foreign policy?**
Although the different factors that influence the foreign policies of a state are many and diverse they can generally be divided into two categories – internal and external. Internal factors can refer to the domestic political system and the citizens and organisations within it. The belief of the CCG plays a large role, and as China is a one-party state with leaders who since the establishment of the PRC have become more and more reform oriented, debates about proper policy making are increasing within the pro-modernisation and the conservative wings of the Party and efforts to balance economic prosperity with ideological concerns are rising as a result in order to keep the party relevant.[39] Meanwhile, public opinion or the views of society as well as groups within society of, for instance, one particular religion, are also internal factors that may constrain or trigger certain foreign policies. Even in authoritarian states such as China, these have been influential factors in high level policy making as keeping the people content enough to refrain from public protests is a key element in, for example, the measures taken by the CCG to end corruption on both national and local levels. Furthermore, economic interests of certain groups within society have been known to play a large part as well, as their interests may be damaged or promoted in the wake of certain political decisions. External factors incorporate the characteristics of the organisation of the contemporary international system and interactions within it – directly or indirectly including the state which forms the object of analysis. There is no consensus about the precise structure and nature of the international system and as became clear in the previous section, different IR-theories have very different interpretations of the way the system and the actors within it work. As examples of external factors influencing Chinese foreign policy can be named the international decision to impose sanctions on China following the Tian'anmen Event in 1989 or the more recent reluctance of the international society to add the Chinese Yuan to the IMF currency basket. The former caused

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[39]   Ripley, 2002, pp. 128-32.

a setback in China's Open Door Policy as a reaction to the international community's interference in Chinese domestic affairs and the latter has played an important role in the Chinese willingness to lend money to crisis struck states in, for instance, Europe.

## *Central Concepts*

### Power and Hegemony

The concept of *hegemony* can be defined as the condition "where one state or group of states determines the external conduct of all others".[40] As the theoretical approaches have different ontological foundations, their interpretations of the concept differs as well.

While realists tend to operate with hegemony in terms of military and economics as a result of a struggle for power or great power politics, liberals perceive the basis of hegemony as stemming from an enlightened self-interest. To liberals, hegemony is a result of deliberate choice excercised through, for instance, international trade rather than coercion. In order to consolidate its hegemony, and due to interdependence, a state needs to work towards the common interest of all actors (stability), rather than work directly towards an increase in power. From a realist perspective, pursuing hegemony can thus be said to be motivated by relative gains, while liberals believe it to be motivated by absolute gains.[41]

Constructivists view the pursuit for power in terms of "the complex relationship between norms, legitimacy and hegemonic power".[42] The preconditions, causes, meanings, implications, and correct responses to the b*alance of power* is something that states consider, rather than take for granted. The same goes for the concept of s*overeignty*, which is a result of internationally held norms and values rather than something that exists ontologically. Pursuing hegemony, from a constructivist perspective is highly influenced by the meaning they attach to the concept, which in turn is influenced by the international conception of it.[43] Post-structuralists, taking great interest in the projected normalisation of subjectivity, takes deconstructing the meaning of the concept of *hegemony* as a startingpoint. According to Richard Ashley, hegemony is "an ensemble of normalized knowledgeable practices, identified with a particular state and domestic society […] that is regarded as a practical paradigm of sovereign political subjectivity and conduct".[44] Hegemony is projected as a general model of conduct, but from a post-structural point of view, it is by no means natural. Not unlike constructivists, post-structuralists question the ontology of

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[40] Linklater, 2009, p 148.
[41] Burchill, 2009, pp. 66-68.
[42] Reus-Smit, 2009, p 233.
[43] Barnett, 2008, pp. 162-163.
[44] Ashley, 1989, p 269.

hegemony, seeking to explore its historical, cultural and political conditions in order to lift the veil that has been concealing its arbitrariness.

**Making Money**

As mentioned earlier, this thesis will argue that the motivations of the contemporary Chinese foreign policy is to be found in a desire to "make money", rather than pursue hegemony. When it comes to its relations with the Middle East, as this study shows, China seems to be focused mainly on imports rather than exports, and questions may therefore arise about whether China is in fact making money or spending money in the region. However, it is necessary to point out that what is meant by "making money" is directly linked to the importance that China attaches to sustaining socioeconomic development. China's own energy-reserves and technological knowledge is not unlimited, and as it is crucial to obtain and sustain the flow of commodities such as oil and energy-related technology in order to sustain economic growth, in the end, they serve the greater purpose of making money. Therefore, although at first glance it seems like China is spending their money rather than making it, it is arguably the other way around. Exports are a bonus, but not the main focal point.

# Chinese Foreign Policy – External vs. Internal Pressure

The conflict between new found strength and increased external pressure is clearly playing a large part in contemporary Chinese foreign policy. As Xia Liping notes,

> "There are two outstanding characteristics in China's current foreign policy: peace and independence. 'Peace' indicates that China formulates its foreign policy from the viewpoint of whether it is beneficial to international and regional peace and stability, instead of the viewpoint of getting military superiority. 'Independence' indicates that China formulates its foreign policy according to its national interests and the common interests of peoples of all the countries in the world."[45]

The 6 fundamental principles on which the policy rests all underscore this position, covering subjects such as anti-hegemonism, a fair and rational world order, respect for sovereignty, increased interaction and mutual cooperation.[46] Indeed, "independence" and "peace" do seem to dominate contemporary Chinese rhetoric both within the internal and external political realm. While the former has dominated Chinese politics throughout the existence of the PRC from the self-sufficiency policies of the early Mao era to the more moderate proclamations of making

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[45]   Xia, 2001, p. 18.
[46]   "China's Independent Foreign Policy of Peace". Xinhua Archive, 19/1-2003.

independent political decisions without yielding to external pressure, the latter is a concept that was never a priority before the reforms of Deng. On the contrary, Chinese foreign policy during Mao Zedong was of a rather hostile character, stating that "regarding [progressive and just wars] we, the communists, do not oppose them, we actively take part in them".[47] This is a standpoint that is clearly a contrast to that of the contemporary Chinese leadership, whose approach is that "no matter how the international situation changes […] China's foreign policy is to maintain world peace and promote common development."[48]

   Another prominent aspect of Chinese foreign policy within the frameworks of all administrations from Mao/Zhou to Hu/Wen is the principle of nonintervention. Although the rhetoric has changed somewhat, the concern for great power bullies and their interference in other states domestic affairs remains key. In 1964, Mao stated that "all countries subjected to American aggression, control, intervention and bullying should unite and form a broad united front opposing the aggressive and warmongering American imperialist policies."[49]

   In the 2011 White Paper, the core idea remains the same, but the words are different. "[China] does not interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries. It opposes the big bullying the small and the strong oppressing the weak".[50] This standpoint is frequently referred to by Chinese officials when external forces express concern over the rise of China. One example is FMPRC spokesman Qin Gang response to the American Vice President Dick Cheney's comments on Chinas lack of transparency and his argument that the rise of China poses an international security threat in 2007. Qin listed 8 principles of the Chinese diplomatic philosophy all echoing the views of the *Independent Foreign Policy of Peace*, comparing the American government's penchant for sticking their nose in other countries internal business to a nosy neighbour or a stranger in the street demanding others to take off their underwear in public.[51]

 A domestic factor with great influence on the Chinese foreign policy is sustainable development and the *Harmonious Socialist Society* (社会主义和谐社会). In his report at the 17th Party Congress Hu Jintao pointed to the building of a harmonious socialist society as a central element to the

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[47] 我们共产党人 […] 不反对进步的正义的战争 […] 而且积极地参加. Mao 1967, p 54.
[48] 不管国际风云如何变幻，我们始终不渝地奉行独立自主的和平外交政策。中国外交政策的宗旨, 是维护世界和平, 促进共同发展. Jiang, 2002.
[49] 所有受到美国侵略, 控制, 干涉和欺负的国家要联合起来, 结成最广泛的统一战线, 反对美帝国主义的侵略政策和战争政策. Mao, 1967, pp. 153-154.
[50] [中国] 不干涉别国内部事务, 反对以大欺小, 以强凌弱. White Paper 2011, Part III.
[51] Washington Times, 1/3-2007.

*Scientific Outlook on Development* (科学发展观) which has been his signature policy since assuming office in 2002. According to Hu,

> "Scientific development and social harmony are integral to each other […] Building a harmonious socialist society is a historical mission of socialism with Chinese characteristics, as well as a historical process and the social outcome of dealing with various social problems in a correct way based on development. It is through development that we shall increase the material wealth of society, improve people's lives constantly, and guarantee social equality and justice and constantly promote social harmony."[52]

According to Alterman and Garver, the main external goal of the Chinese Middle East policies is "expanding friendly, multidimensional cooperation and relations of mutual understanding and trust with *all* countries in the region, which entails maintaining a degree of neutrality and evenhandedness in conflicts within Middle Eastern states".[53] Of course, befriending certain Middle Eastern states whose relations with the U.S. are not particularly friendly, such as Iran or Iraq, does to a large extent fuel the suspicions of China's benevolence. However, contemporarily befriending states that *do* enjoy friendly relations with the U.S., such as Israel or Saudi Arabia, backs up the argument that the Chinese policy of neutrality and multidimensional cooperation is, in fact, legit.[54] The main internal goal is "channelling Middle Eastern resources – export markets, capital and, above all, petroleum – into China's development drive. To secure access to petroleum resources in the event of crises, Beijing seeks to encapsulate energy supply relations in political relations valuable to the supplier."[55] As the Chinese economy is growing, the need for natural resources follows, and even though China is the fifth largest oil producer and holds around 13% of the global coal reserves,[56] imports have increased dramatically in recent years (See Figure 1), the CCG seems to have become aware of the threat this poses to the domestic socioeconomic development that on the one hand is main catalyst for many of the challenges to Chinese policy making and on the other hand is so important to sustain.

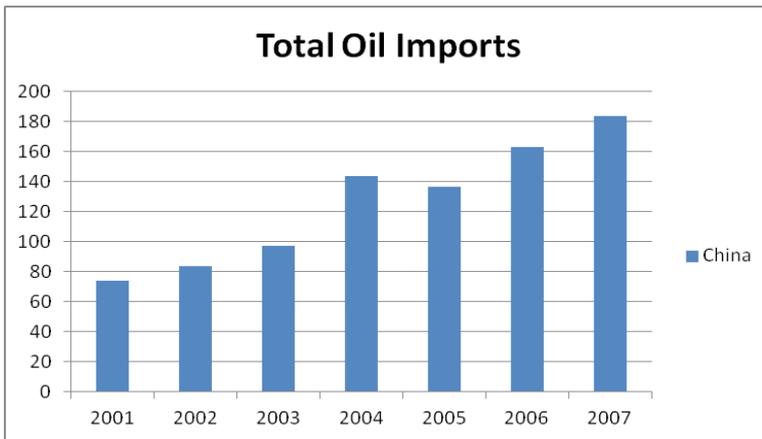**Figure 1: Total Oil Imports 2001-2007 (million tonnes).**

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[52] 科学发展和社会和谐是内在统一的[...]建社会主义和谐社会是贯穿中国特色社会主义事业全过程的长期历史任务，是在发展的基础上正确处理各种社会矛盾的历史过程和社会结果。要通过发展增加社会物质财富, 不断改善人民生活又要通过发展保障社会公平正义, 不断促进社会和谐. Hu, 2007, p 3.
[53] Alterman & Garver, 2008, p 19.
[54] Ibid., p 20.
[55] Ibid., p 19.
[56] Hallding et. al., 2011, pp. 68-70.

**Total Oil Imports**



Source: The MCPRC
http://acs.mofcom.gov.cn/sites/aqzn/cyjzlnr.jsp?contentId=2440435684951. (19/3-2012)

In solving the developmental impasse that China is experiencing, the Middle East, being very rich in natural resources as well as technology, is a key partner. China needs turn to foreign trade to meet its growing demand for oil in order to prevent stagnation of development, and in 2006 the Middle East accounted for 44% of oil flows into China.[57]

In short, sustaining domestic development is key, not only in order to maintain China's leverage in international politics but also in order to maintain national stability. At the same time, maintaining an image as a responsible rising power also seems central, as the anxieties among other states caused by China's rise is an external security issue.

# Case Study 1: The Arab-Israeli Conflict

## *Historical Context*

Although China and Israel did not formally establish diplomatic relations until the 1990's, Israel was among the first Middle Eastern countries to recognise China in 1950. Having just come out of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the newly established state of Israel was in dire need of recognition from the international society, and as neither the communist ideology of China or U.S. concerns were playing a significant role, recognising China rather than Taiwan was at that time seen as the more favourable option as it might pave the way for recognition amongst the Third World Countries of which China at the time was a self-proclaimed patron.[58] Premier and Foreign Affairs Minister Zhou Enlai subsequently expressed his gratitude for Israel's choice of allegiance and bilateral interactions started to take form. However, due to the outbreak of the Korean War, Israel chose to break off

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[57]   Kemp, 2010, pp. 68-69.
[58]   Abadi, 2004, pp. 69-70.

negotiations following U.S. pressure until the mid-1950s when Israel expressed a wish to establish diplomatic relations with China, but at that point it was too late, as the Suez Crisis and the Bandung Conference had brought China closer to the Arab states and a Chinese policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict favouring that side was already in the making.[59]

From the early 1960s, hostility towards the West and their allies played an increasingly large part in Chinese foreign policy making. The revolutionary focus of the CCG during the Cultural Revolution and their moral and financial support for national liberation movements and revolutionary organisations around the globe, among them the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) intensified China's pro-Arab/anti-Israeli policy.[60] In addition, the Six Day War and the Israeli victory brought further tension to Sino-Israeli relations, as this particular event was seen as a provocation from the imperialist U.S. and its puppet Israel who had committed a serious crime against the Arab people.[61] The deteriorating Sino-Israeli relationship caused the Sino-Arab relationship to bloom, and the blooming Sino-Arab relationship caused the Sino-Israeli relationship to deteriorate further and finally come to an end in the mid 1960s.

When the heat of the Cultural Revolution began to fade, the need for domestic reforms in order to rehabilitate and rebuild a very fragile China became more and more pressing. The opportunity to let Western investments in was too great to pass by and as a result the Chinese foreign policy was reevaluated. The improved Sino-American relations sparked new attempts to establish Sino-Israeli relations and as a result the support for the PLO was cut dramatically, with the argument that in order to solve the conflict, military means had to be replaced with peace talks and friendly negotiations.[62] The image of Israel as a U.S. puppet was gradually replaced with that of an independent player after American attempts to pressure the Israeli government to stop settlements in Palestinian territories had failed, and as the PLO made no real progress, it became clear to the CCG that much more was to be gained from engaging in cooperation with Israel than Palestine.[63] Following the *Camp David Accords*, Sino-Israeli cooperation blossomed further, but support for Palestinian independence remained, and in late 1988 China formally recognised the State of Palestine (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Establishment of Sino-Arab Diplomatic Relations**

| Country | Date of establishment |
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[59]  Wang, 2009, p 478.
[60]  Sobin, 1991, pp. 114-115.
[61]  Jabber, 1970, p 62.
[62]  Abadi, 2004, pp. 75-76.
[63]  Ibid., pp. 79-80.

| | |
|---|---|
| Egypt | 30 May 1956 |
| Syria | 1 August 1956 |
| Yemen | 24 September 1956 |
| Iraq | 25 August 1958 |
| Kuwait | 22 March 1971 |
| Lebanon | 9 November 1971 |
| Jordan | 7 April 1977 |
| Oman | 25 May 1978 |
| UAE | 1 November 1984 |
| Qatar | 9 September 1988 |
| Palestine | 20 November 1988 |
| Bahrain | 18 April 1989 |
| Saudi Arabia | 21 July 1990 |

Source: The FMPRC.
http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/pds/ziliao/. (19/3-2012)


Entering the 1990s, Arab-Israeli peace talks were progressing and as a result hostilities between the parties were reduced, and with the Soviet Union out of the picture and improving Sino-American relations, taking part in the Arab-Israeli peace process was seen as an opportunity for China to expand its network and thereby its options for sustaining economic growth.[64] In addition, the sanctions imposed on China by the West in the wake of the Tian'anmen Event in 1989 caused a cut-off in the supply of Western technology, which was crucial for continuing economic development. Israel being a friend in need by supplying the desired technology, may have facilitated the increase in Sino-Israeli dealings which eventually led to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations on January 24th 1992.[65] By then, China had already established formal relations with the majority of Middle Eastern countries belonging to the Arab League (see Table 1), so Chinese support for the restoration of the territorial rights of Palestine continued after the establishment of Sino-Israeli relations, but at the same time emphasising the independence and legal rights of the state of Israel was key in order to balance relations with the two adversaries in the conflict. After the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, efforts to develop Sino-Arab relations were intensified, China took a more active role in promoting Arab-Israeli peace talks, and Chinese diplomats attended more conferences on Arab-Israeli issues than in prior years. During the 1990s, various peace initiatives, such as the Madrid Conference in 1991 and the Oslo Accords in 1993 were met with great support by the CCG, with frequent calls for both the Israelis and the Palestinian militant organisations to renounce violence.[66]

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[64]  Sobin, 1991, p 123.
[65]  Kumaraswamy, 2005, pp. 93-94.
[66]  Wang, 2009, pp. 481-483.

This position continued into the 2000s. Between April 12th -18th 2000, President Jiang Zemin became the first Chinese head of state to visit Israel and Palestine to discuss the peace process. During the visit, he pointed out that in solving the conflict, military means, opposition and mutual rejection had to be replaced by peace talks, cooperation and mutual understanding based on relevant UN resolutions and with the UN as the main mediator.[67] During a conference in Saudi Arabia in 2006, President Hu spoke on the subject of "establishing Middle Eastern peace and constructing a harmonious world society" explaining China's willingness to contribute to the Middle Eastern peace process and expressing a wish to promote Sino-Arab friendship.[68] When the time came for the Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum in Beijing in 2006 Mahmoud al-Zahar, the Palestinian foreign minister and a Hamas representative, was cordially invited.[69] This event was met with a certain level of opposition from U.S. and Israeli sides, but in order to showcase the sincerity of their promises to Palestine, the critical voices were to a large extent ignored by China. However, considering the fact that Hamas was viewed by Israel and the U.S. as a terrorist organisation, the FMPRC later justified their position by stating at a press conference that "the Palestinian government is legally elected by the the Palestinian people and their choice should be respected."[70] In November 2008, President Hu and Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas marked the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Palestinian diplomatic relations by exchanging their gratitude and promises of mutual support.[71] As political relations evolved, Chinese economic relations with the Arab countries increased (see Figure 2), and the Arab countries, known for being rich in natural resources, remain to this day one of the main sources for Chinese oil imports.[72]

Despite the Chinese support for Palestine and its flirts with Hamas and criticisms of Israel's handling of the question of Palestine, Sino-Israeli dealings, especially within the economic realm, continued to evolve in a positive direction (see Figure 2). Since China established diplomatic relations with Israel in the early 1990s, it has become the main exporter of Western technology to China. Up until now it has been mainly a source of advanced military technology that China would not be able to get otherwise due to arms embargoes.[73]

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[67]  Ibid., p 483.
[68]  促进中东和平, 建设和谐世界. "Hu Jintao Delivered an Important Speech at the Saudi Consultative Meeting". People's Daily Archive, 24/4-2006.
[69]  "Li Zhaoxing: Strengthening the Forum will Benefit the Afghan People". Xinhua Archive, 31/5-2006.
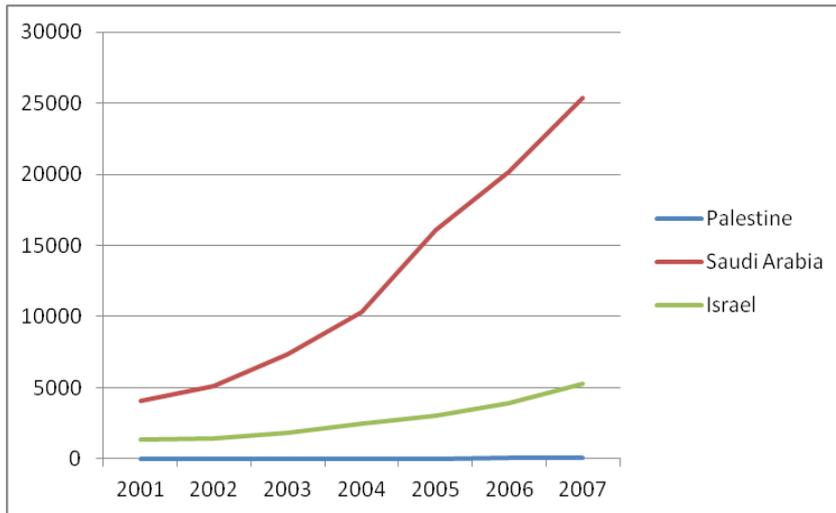[70]  巴勒斯坦政府是巴勒斯坦人民民主选举产生的政府, 应该得到国际社会尊重. FMPRC, 2006.
[71]  "Chinese and Palestinian Leaders Congratulate Each Other on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations". Xinhua Archive, 19/11-2008.
[72]  Alterman & Garver, 2008, p 6.
[73]  Kemp, 2010, p 139.

**Figure 2: Trade Surplus 2001-2007 (Million USD).**[74]



Source: The MCPRC.
http://zhs.mofcom.gov.cn/aa/aa.html (20/3-2012).

What appears to be the main barriers to increased Sino-Israeli cooperation are not China's dealings with Israel's regional enemies. U.S. pressure on Israel has been known to hamper several large-scale dealings with China, such as the Phalcon sale in 2000. In addition, and arguably as a result of U.S. pressure, Israel has been known to engage in arms deals with Taiwan, which is sensitive for China.[75]

In terms of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and in addition to the focus on peaceful conflict resolution in contemporary Chinese foreign policy, simultaneously increasing relations with the two sides have resulted in a policy of peaceful negotiations as the proper way. In a speech in 2000, President Jiang outlined a four point policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Firstly, the historical development of the conflict must be taken into account. Secondly, peace talks, cooperation and tolerance must replace armed conflict, opposition and antagonism. Thirdly, any action must comply with the relevant UN resolutions. Fourthly, the peace process should be based on respect for each country's security, territory and independence. Only then can sustainable peace be achieved.[76] Six years later, his successor President Hu emphasised these points in a speech, but this time with more focus on the implications of the conflict for the rest of the world, stating the importance of the Middle Eastern region in world politics. Hu argued that "without stability and development world peace and prosperity is impossible. Peace in the Middle East serves not only the long-term interests of the

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[74]   *Notes:* Complete trade statistics are only available from the MCPRC until 2007. Later statistics are available but incomplete. However, they do indicate that the 2001-2007 trend continues relatively unchanged until 2011. Saudi Arabia has been used as a sample in this figure as it is the most prominent actor in Sino-Arab trade relations and is therefore likely to be most influential in Chinese Middle Eastern policies.
[75]   Kumaraswamy, 2005, pp. 99-100.
[76]   "President Jiang Visits President Mubarak". People's Daily Archive, 18/4-2000.

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countries and peoples in the region, but also those of the international society."[77] China currently accounts for 4 of the 151 experts on mission in the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO),[78] and continuously votes in favour of most resolutions in the UNSC regarding the peace process in the Middle East.[79] When the Israeli military forces intercepted the Ship to Gaza operation carrying humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, the international community strongly condemned the actions. China followed suit, labeling the actions taken by Israel "military attacks on the international rescue fleet".[80]

As China continues to expand its presence in Middle East, it is highly likely that its Arab partners will call for a more active role in advocating the rights of the Palestinian people. However, China's soft-power diplomacy and expanding economic links in the region suggest that it is likely to stick to the neutral position in the Arab-Israeli conflict as economic benefit has caused the development of Sino-Israeli ties to become increasingly important in China's policy towards the conflict.

## *A Balancing Act*

As Chinese relations with the involved countries are increasing rapidly, there can be no question about the fact that China is making a move in the Middle East, at least in terms of economics (see Figure 2). Seen from a realist perspective, this can be interpreted as a pursuit for outbalancing the U.S. presence and become a more powerful player in the region. However, China's policy towards the conflict and increasing relations with the involved parties can be traced to both internal and external factors. Both oil imports from the Arab countries and technology imports from Israel are crucial for China in the future, and without them China would be facing major problems in sustaining domestic socioeconomic development, which would pose a rather substantial security threat. Had China supported only or mainly the Arab countries in the conflict, it would antagonise the U.S. and its Western allies, harming its relations with its number one trading partners. Supporting only Israel in the conflict, would have antagonised its Arab League allies and subsequently harmed the oil imports which remain so crucial for domestic sustainability. On the other hand, being neutral and thus projecting an image as a responsible great power to the rest of the world through strongly advocating peaceful negotiations in finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, is arguably a result of international concerns about the capabilities of a rising China, that put pressure on the CCG. The arms embargo and the back door that Israel has become for supplying

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[77] 没有中东的稳定和发展，就没有世界的和平与繁荣。一个和谐的中东符合本地区各国和各国人民的长远利益，也是世界的共同期盼. "Hu Jintao Delivered an Important Speech at the Saudi Consultative Meeting". People's Daily Archive, 24/4-2006.
[78] UN, 2012.
[79] UN, 2007, part 1.
[80] 以军袭击国际加沙救援船队. "Military Attacks on the International Rescue Fleet in Gaza". People's Daily Archive, 01/06-2010.

China with advanced technology is obviously viewed as a security concern in the U.S., and the fact that no statistics on these dealings are available from either the MCPRC or the Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel can easily be attributed to the controversy of these dealings, especially in relation to U.S. worries about the potential scenario of China using these technologies against them or their allies in Asia (mainly Taiwan). In turn, U.S. concerns about China's intended use of this technology arguably poses a security threat for China, who cannot be sure of the extent to which the U.S. will act on its anxieties.

A liberal would argue, that international cooperation and complex interdependence is in fact the main reason for China's neutral position. It is not in line with Chinese national interest to antagonise any of the involved parties (Israel, the Arab League or the U.S.) as it would harm the economy too much. Neither would it be in the interest of China's partners to antagonise China, as it may cost them a major trading partner and their economies would suffer as well. China may have a communist authoritarian regime which increases the chances of conflict, but since they adopted a liberal market economy, they have become too intertwined in the cobweb of international economic relations, that conflict is not a favourable position to be in for any of the parties. Had Israel and the Arab League been equally involved in trade relations, there would arguably be no conflict. However, due to the long history of the conflict, such relations have never been established, and therefore they do not share the same fundamental interest and have little incentive for cooperating. The fact that China tends to vote in favour of relevant resolutions in the UNSC supports the argument that China believes in international cooperation and the role of the UN.

In terms of China's strong stance of sovereignty, it is interesting, that no vetoes on the matter have been cast from the Chinese side since 1972.[81] Normally, when it comes to international intervention, China tends to veto or at least abstain from voting in order to keep its arguments against international meddling in the *Taiwan Question* legit. International intervention is arguably a violation of Israel's sovereign rights, but as China also recognises Palestine, Israeli occupation is arguably also a violation of Palestine's sovereign rights, which cannot go unnoticed. Abstaining from voting on the resolutions would then seem to be the obvious path to take. However, even though China has been known to abstain on several occasions, it could be interpreted as an act of indifference to the solution of the problem, and as China strongly advocates peace and cooperation, voting in favour sends a better message to the international society and helps supporting China's image as a responsible great power.

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[81]    Global Policy Forum, undated.

Through the lens of constructivism, the balancing act of China's Palestine policy should also be seen in relation to international norms and values as well as China's national identity. During Mao, when China staunchly supported Palestine and opposed Israel, its national identity was that of a revolutionary patron of post-colonial independence movements. As China opened up it gradually started adopting the norms and values of the international society and incorporated them into its policies. Due to their shared postcolonial identity with the Muslim countries, China has always supported the rights of the Palestinians and is still doing so in order to maintain its close diplomatic relations with the Arab countries, who are rich in oil and natural resources, which is essential for sustaining the Chinese economy. On the other hand, the goal of achieving sustainable development is becoming more and more important to the CCG, so China's standpoint on the conflict is not as tendentious as it used to be as the benefits for development that comes with having relations with Israel are many.[82] As the Chinese economy today is closer to the Western liberal market economy than to the Soviet model used in the Mao era, supporting the claims of Israel alongside those of the Arab countries has become a necessity. The contemporary Chinese national identity has been infused with internationally held norms and values that originate in the West, which has led to an ability to identify with states that it would never have been able to identify with earlier.

During the 1990s, as China's engagement in international relations accelerated, some seemed inclined to think that underneath the pragmatic policies of multilateralism, the CCG was still to some extent biased towards supporting the Arab side of the conflict in an attempt to counterbalance American power in the region, due to the lingering focus on developing country identity in Chinese foreign policy. In reality, however, China's policy towards the conflict since Deng has been very much in line with the international consensus, stressing the role of the UN as a mediator and the internationally held norms and values of using peaceful negotiations and cooperation rather than violence and antagonism in solving the conflict. This view is quite explicitly expressed in almost every single official statement or document relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict issued by the CCG.

The Chinese voting history in the UNSC and its implications for the image as a responsible great power is also relevant in terms of the internationally held norms and values, which the UN arguably represents. According to the UN Roadmap to a solution of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the only way to successfully achieve a two-state solution is

"through an end to violence and terrorism, when the Palestinian people have a leadership acting decisively against terror and willing and able to build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty, and through Israel's

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[82]   Alterman & Garver, 2008, p 3.

readiness to do what is necessary for a democratic Palestinian state to be established, and a clear unambiguous acceptance by both parties of the goal of a negotiated settlement."[83]

The Chinese position on the conflict clearly reflects this view. The fact that China puts such a significant effort into conforming to internationally held norms and values in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict points to a desire to be perceived as acting in accordance with what the international consensus deems *appropriate*. Such conduct limits the negative factors that possible trading partners in the region take into account when considering dealing with China, and thus increases the positive *consequences* for domestic socioeconomic development. China's tendency of voting in favour of relevant resolutions reflects its "soft-power" approach and contrasts it to the U.S., who frequently uses its veto power to block resolutions regarding Palestine.

Balancing dealings with two to sides of a conflict without being enmeshed in political dilemmas is something that China has been very good at in the past,[84] and if they are able to do so in this particular conflict and maintain their shared postcolonial identity bonds with the Arab countries as well as reassuring the West of their good intentions by developing their ties with Israel and their Western allies, the chances of being able to enjoy both the oil of Arab countries and Western technology for renewable energy can be greatly increased.

Using the post-structuralist approach, a key element in balancing China's Palestine policy is taking into account the differences in the  discourse of the conflicting parties. "Intifada" in Arabic means "resistance", but seen from the Israeli point of view it is an act of terrorism. What Israel has called the "separation wall", the Arab side calls a "segregation wall". Similarly, clashing views of Israel's invasion of Gaza in 2008 as an act of self-defense or aggression also exist. The Chinese response to this particular event shows China's efforts to balance these conflicting discourses. The Chinese representative, Liu Zhenmin, expressed during an emergency meeting in the UNSC that

"The international community must take immediate action to prevent a further deterioration of the situation. As a first step to ease the humanitarian crisis, we call upon Israel to put an immediate end to all of its military operations in Gaza, to lift its blockade and to open all crossing points so as to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian supplies to Gaza."[85]

Meanwhile, he also emphasised that

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[83]   UN, 2003, p 1.
[84]   Alterman & Garver, p 20.
[85]   国际社会必须立即采取行动, 阻止局势恶化。作为缓解人道危机的第一步, 我们敦促以色列立即停止在加沙的军事行动和封锁, 全面开放过境点, 以便利对加沙的各类人道物资的供应. UN, 2009.

"[China understands] Israel's security concerns and are opposed to any attacks that target innocent Israeli civilians. However […] 'answering violence with violence' and 'imposing collective punishment' will not provide security for anyone or contribute to the resolution of issues; they can only aggravate the confrontation and spark mistrust between the two parties, which in turn will cause further suffering to both peoples. Continued armed conflict between the two parties will worsen the prospects of Israel and Palestine as two independent States living in peace."[86]

On the one hand, support for the Palestinian people is expressed and Israeli actions are condemned, securing the trust of the Arab countries in China's good will towards their cause. The support of China, a P5 member of the UNSC, is of some importance, as Israel has already secured the support of the Americans. On the other hand, Israel's situation is acknowledged and the terrorist activities on the Palestinian side are condemned, expressing support for their cause as well.

It is clear that a lot is at stake for China in managing its relations with the two opposite sides of the Arab Israeli conflict. Economic benefits from trading with both sides, as well as maintaining an image of being a responsible great power by not taking sides is clearly a priority in the Chinese policy towards the Question of Palestine. Whether Palestine really matters to China, however is questionable. Chinese trade with Palestine (see Figure 2) is not very impressive, and China does not seem to have any interest in Palestine as such. However, by supporting Palestine, it gains trust from the Arab League and benefits from their natural resources as well as their need for importing Chinese manufactured products. By supporting Israel's case it gains access to highly desired advanced technologies. It truly is a balancing act of a policy towards an extremely infected conflict, and so far, China has managed not to fall off the edge.

## Case Study 2: The War on Terror

### *Historical Context*

Historically, acts of terrorism within China's borders have been relatively scarce. However, the reforms of Deng in the late 1970s, and opening up to the outside world increased the amount of foreign influence on Chinese society and subsequently also acts of terrorism within Chinese borders, which have been inspired by similar incidents or aided by similar groups abroad. Initially these acts were referred to as criminal activities rather that terrorist attacks, and it was only in the

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[86] 我们理解以色列对维护自身安全的关切, 反对任何袭击以色列平民的行为。但"以暴易暴""集体惩罚"不能给任何一方带来安全, 不能促进问题的解决, 只会加剧双方的对立与隔阂, 给双方人民带来更多灾难。如果双方的武装冲突持续下去, 以色列和巴勒斯坦两个独立国家和平共处的前景, 也只会越来越远. UN, 2008.

wake of the East Turkestan Movement (ETM) in Xinjiang in the early 1990s that the Chinese authorities began using the term "terrorism" to describe this kind of violent actions.[87] Until 1989 the movement's activities within Chinese borders were few, but the chaos in the Middle East following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the emergence of Taliban and Al-Qaeda caused new links between radical organisations in the Middle East and Xinjiang.[88] The independence of former Soviet states and the *Tian'anmen Incident* sparked Uyghur ambitions to become independent and the ETM increased their activities in the region with the help of its Middle Eastern links.[89] Between 1990 and 2001, the Uyghur's have been responsible for 200[90] attacks mainly in the Xinjiang region but occasionally also major cities in the East, such as Beijing. Most of these attacks were related to separatist movements targeting the Han majority as a result of government development policies, which have caused an increase in ethnic Han Chinese people living in Xinjiang and a subsequent widening social gap, as the living standards of the two ethnic groups differ quite substantially.[91] The PRC's concerns during the 1990's regarding Xinjiang were composed by a number of events relating to the unravelling of the Soviet Union and the newly found independence of the Central Asian states as well as events involving Islamic fundamentalist elements, especially the fall of Kabul to Taliban in 1996 which they feared would spread within their borders.[92] As a result, Chinese authorities began formulating an anti-terrorism strategy focusing on the ETM uprisings in Xinjiang and in June 2001, after establishing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), China signed a cooperation agreement to strike against terrorism, separatism and extremism – what has become known in Chinese politics as "The Three Evils" (三 害).[93]

  In the wake of 9/11, Chinese engagement in international counter-terrorism efforts has increased. China had earlier been focusing mainly on regional cooperation, but following the Al-Qaeda attacks in New York and Washington DC the paradigm changed as Beijing saw an opportunity to put its battle with separatists in the west in an international context and make it a part of a common international struggle against terrorism.[94] President Jiang was very quick to immediately condemn the attacks and join the chorus of world leaders expressing their willingness to support the American led global counterterrorism efforts by expressing sympathy to President Bush, the U.S. government and the American people as well as declaring their condemnation of all forms of

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[87]  Pan, 2004, pp. 523-524.
[88]  Sun, 2010, pp. 196-197.
[89]  Ong, 2006, pp. 101-102.
[90]  *Note:* As the definitions of "terrorism" are many, this number may be disputed.
[91]  Chung, 2002, pp. 8-12.
[92]  McNeal, 2001, p 2.
[93]  "Xie Hangsheng: We Must Safeguard the Legal Interests of the Overseas Chinese". Xinhua Archive, 11/3-2012.
[94]  Chung, 2002, p 10.

terrorism.[95] And in October both President Jiang and Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan arrived in Washington DC to attend a high-level meeting on counterterrorism, followed by a delegation of Chinese counterterrorism experts with the purpose of aiding U.S. experts in their efforts. During the visit, Foreign Minister Tang set out criteria for U.S. military response by stating that China would support counterterrorism measures and actions based on objective and substantial evidence, which complies with the UN Charter and has the support of the UNSC. Although no concrete preconditions for Chinese support were present among the criteria, Chinese officials had earlier expressed a hope for American support in their own battle with terrorists.[96]

   During the months after the attacks, President Jiang exchanged numerous telephone conversations not only with President Bush, but also with the other P5 countries in the UNSC, discussing international opposition to terrorism as well as the war in Afghanistan and the Taliban problem.[97] On January 20th 2003, Foreign Minister Tang spoke at meeting in the UNSC on the terrorism issue, reaffirming the Chinese view on terrorism. He pointed out that

> ”safeguarding peace and security for all of humanity is the core of anti-terrorism. Universal development and common prosperity is the basis of anti-terrorism. Strengthening intercultural communication safeguards anti-terrorism and promoting and deepening international cooperation is the key to antiterrorism. Terrorism is a global challenge, and China, being a responsible country, cherishes peace and the maintenance of peace. We firmly support and will actively participate in the international fight against terrorism.”[98]

Another paradigm that shifted somewhat in the wake of 9/11 was the Chinese voting behaviour on UNSC resolutions relating to the ”war on terror”. As China is notorious for opposing, abstaining from voting and even vetoing resolutions that can be accused of interfering with sovereignty, it is interesting to note that in 2001 positive votes were cast on both resolution 1368 expressing

> ”[the Council’s] readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations”[99]

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[95]  中国政府一贯谴责和反对一切恐怖主义的暴力活动. ”President Jiang Phones President Bush”. People’s Daily Archive, 12/9-2001.
[96]  Glaser, 2001, p 30.
[97]  Wang, 2009, p 494.
[98]  维护人类和平与安全是反恐的核心[...] 普遍发展与共同繁荣是反恐的基础[...] 加强文明之间的沟通与融合是反恐的保障[...] 推动和深化国际合作是反恐的关键. ”Tang Jiaxuan Speaks at a Foreign Ministers’ meeting on Counterterrorism issues in the Security Council”. People’s Daily Archive, 21/1-2003.
[99]  UN, 2001a.

and resolution 1373, deciding that "all States shall prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts"[100] despite the fact that they do actually interfere with state sovereignty by telling them what they have to do.

As China increased its efforts in international cooperation on battling terrorism, advocating cooperation and dialogue with the Arab states increased as well. Following 9/11, Chinese officials held meetings with a variety of leaders from the Arab League, including conversations between the Secretary General to the Arab League Amr Moussa and Foreign Minister Tang in October 2001 and meetings between President Hu and King Abdullah II of Jordan in January 2002, expressing a wish to strengthen Sino-Arab counter-terrorism cooperation and stressing the importance of including the Arab countries in international efforts.[101] China had been facing criticisms from the Arab League regarding the treatment of the 30 million Muslims living in China, so staying on friendly terms with the countries in the Middle East by acknowledging and supporting their importance as a player in international cooperation was arguably quite an important move.

Shorty after 9/11, coalition forces invaded Afghanistan on a mission called Operation Enduring Freedom. The Taliban regime was removed from power and the Democratic Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was founded and an interim government was created. The International Security Assistance Force was established by the UNSC in order to secure Kabul. The force is currently controlled by NATO. Most of the Taliban leaders, including Osama Bin Laden, fled to Pakistan.[102]

Fortunately for China, the UNSC never voted on legitimising the American invasion Afghanistan following the events of 9/11. China would not have been able to vote in favour of such a clear violation of Afghanistan's sovereignty, nor would they have been able to veto, as it would have been perceived by some forces in the international community as an act of obstruction which would have led to a questioning of its sincerity in claiming to be a responsible and peaceful nation. Abstaining would have sent out an image of an indecisive China, which would not have been a

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[100] UN, 2001b.
[101] Wang, 2009, p 495.
[102] New York Times, 19/12-2001.

favourable outcome either.

However, Foreign Minister Tang expressed during a 6+2 Group meeting at the UN headquarters in New York that "we cannot interfere in the sovereignty, internal affairs and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, the Afghans should be the real drivers, rather than sitting in the driver's seat while others manipulate the throttle and brake."[103] Similarly, the Chinese reaction to the U.S. coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003 following American allegations against the Saddam Hussein regime and its supposed links to terrorist organisations, reflect a concern for Iraqi sovereignty. China had voted in favour of resolution 1441 which granted UN weapons inspectors the permission to investigate Iraq following their failure to cooperate on earlier occasions.[104] However, the American invasion was seen as an act of violating the international consensus and hampering the peace process in the Middle East. On March 21th 2003, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee issued a statement stressing that

"Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected and maintained [and calling] for the countries concerned to comply with the appeal of the international community, stop military actions and continue to seek a political solution to the Iraq issue within the UN framework."[105]

In early May 2011, Osama Bin Laden, the head of Al-Qaeda was killed in Pakistan by U.S. troops, marking "the most significant achievement to date in [U.S.] effort to defeat Al-Qaeda. Yet his death does not mark the end."[106] The killing of Osama Bin Laden was generally received with relief by the international community as well as a large amount of countries worldwide, including China.[107] The Chinese response to Osama bin Laden's death did not come as promptly as the response to 9/11.  The FMPRC issued a statement on May 2nd, which expressed that the killing of Osama Bin Laden  was "a milestone and a positive development for the international anti-terrorism efforts [and that] the international community should step up counterterrorism efforts".[108]

The delay of the statement may be attributed to the fact that on the one hand the killing of Osama Bin Laden was a very welcomed event in relation to China's battle with the ETM, but on the other hand American forces had intervened on Pakistani territories and thereby arguably violated their

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[103] 不能干涉阿富汗的主权, 内政和领土完整, 阿富汗人应成为名副其实的司机, 而不是他们坐在驾驶座上, 由别人操纵油门和刹车. "Why spend lots of money to aid Afghanistan? - Interview with Arab Affairs Ambassador". Xinhua Archive, 29/1-2002.
[104] UN, 2002.
[105] Permanent Mission of the PRC to the UN, 2003.
[106] The White House, 2/5-2011.
[107] Reuters, 2/5-2011.
[108] 这是国际反恐斗争的重要事件和积极进展 [...] 国际社会应进一步加强合作, 共同打击恐怖主义. "Foreign Ministry Spokesman Answers Questions from the Press Following the Killing of "Al-Qaeda" Leader Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan". People's Daily Archive, 03/05-2011.

sovereignty. Pakistani authorities had not authorised the operation beforehand and as a result the rhetoric of U.S.-Pakistani relations following the event was rather harsh.[109] China being a staunch ally of Pakistan due to a mix of its tepid relations with India and its support for Pakistan in its rivalry with India, was naturally concerned about this possible violation of Pakistan's territorial integrity.[110]

   Despite the significance of Osama Bin Laden's death for the "war on terror", the international consensus does not seem to be that the war has ended. The U.S., the CCG, the UN and NATO have emphasised that terrorism is not a closed chapter. Al-Qaeda still exists, albeit their leader has been eliminated, and like the U.S., who are still facing a threat embodied by Al-Qaeda, the Chinese authorities are still battling the ETM in Xinjiang. It is therefore highly likely that China will continue its position towards and engagement in international counterterrorism efforts.

## *A Balancing Act*

As was the case in the policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, the policy towards the "war on terror" also poses a challenge in terms of balancing Chinese foreign policy. China's national interest in solving the conflict was outlined by ambassador Wang during the Tokyo conference in 2002, and is a clear example of the interests at stake. First, assisting and supporting developing countries is an essential part of China's foreign policy. Second, China, being a P5 member of the UNSC and one of Afghanistan's neighbours, is sincere in its efforts in achieving lasting peace and development in Afghanistan as it will also help crack down on Taliban in the region. Third, during the Taliban regime, Al-Qaeda supported the Uyghur separatists and posed a threat to domestic peace and stability in the Xinjiang region, therefore China is also a victim of terrorism. Finally, aiding Afghanistan's development is helpful to future Sino-Afghan economic cooperation and may help boosting the development of Chinese enterprises in the Afghan market.[111]

   In terms of realist perceptions of the security aspect of national interest, peace in the region and the development of Afghanistan is important. The years of instability in the region and eliminating Taliban in Afghanistan, one of the main goals of the American "war on terror", benefited China in the sense that it, to a large extent, cut off one of the ETM's main sources of weapons and moral support. On the other hand, it stirred up trouble in close vicinity to Chinese borders which was not something that China would be very interested in, considering that it might spill over and cause even more unrest in the unstable western Chinese regions of Tibet and Xinjiang.[112] In addition,

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[109]  The Guardian, 4/5-2011.
[110]  "Bin Laden's Family Expelled by Pakistan". Xinhua Archive, 18/4-2012.
[111]  People's Daily Online, 29/1-2002.
[112]  Roy, 2002, pp. 515-517.

focusing on the role of the UN could be seen as an attempt from the Chinese side to keep the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) away from its borders. China holds a P5 seat and enjoys a substantial amount of power in UN decision making, but has no real say in NATO, so UN presence in unstable border regions would be a more preferable option than having NATO interfere in the region.

In terms of liberal perceptions of the economic aspects of national interest, peace and development in the region would help expand the Chinese Middle Eastern market which in turn would benefit its domestic socioeconomic development. Trade with Afghanistan has begun to blossom since 2001 and, similarly, trade with Iraq has been rehabilitated since the dramatic decrease since the American invasion in 2003 (see Figure 3). Eliminating terrorism would therefore benefit China economically in terms of an increase in trade. In addition, cooperation with the U.S. and other international actors in battling terrorism is beneficial for all parties. Eliminating terrorism would eliminate a global security threat, and hence there is an incentive for multilateral cooperation.

Figure 3: Trade Surplus 2001-2007 (Million USD).
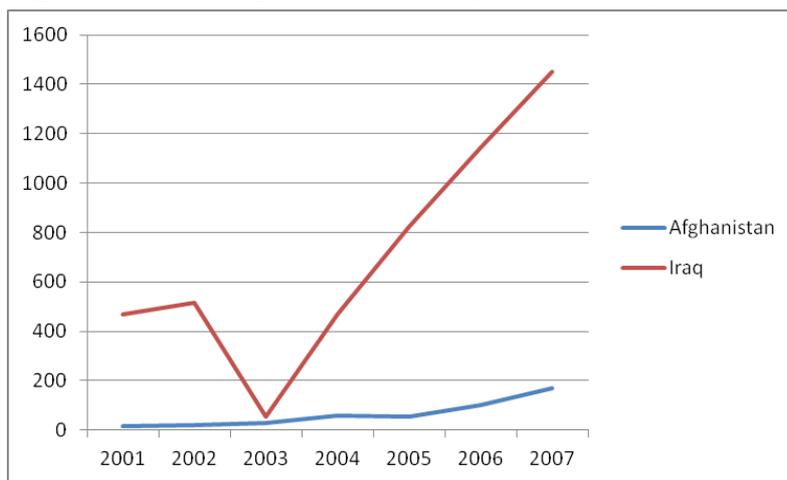


Source: The MCPRC.
http://zhs.mofcom.gov.cn/aa/aa.html (20/3-2012).

In relation to national identity, seen through the lens of constructivism there is a need for balancing China's relations with the developing countries and the West. China identifies with the developing countries in the Middle East and supports their cause and their continued development, but also wants to send an image to the West as being a responsible great power. It is made clear that China seeks to help the involved countries in the Middle East, but at the same time they also identify with the West in terms of being victims of religious extremist terrorist groups, embodied by or supported by Taliban and Al-Qaeda. In addition, internationally held norms and values have also played a large part in the Chinese "war on terror" policy. The fact that the consensus of UN and the

international community was ignored by the U.S. when they invaded both Afghanistan and Iraq, and that the war in Iraq was later deemed illegal, was arguably seen as an act of superpower chauvinism as well as a violation of the territorial integrity of the involved Middle Eastern countries. The UN and therefore the international community and the norms and values that they represent were not adhered to and, according to China, counted as breaking the rules. China, having always been very particular about stressing their own commitment to these rules, saw this as an opportunity to emphasise their own position. But in addition, the most powerful nation in the West, who had been part of making the rules in the first place, had also been the one to break them. This helped in legitimising China's image as a responsible great power with friendly intentions, an image that the U.S. had been a frontrunner in questioning the sincerity of. In a statement released by the FMPRC shortly after the invasion of Iraq it was stressed that

> "the Chinese government advocates, as always, a policy that complies with the framework of the UN in solving the war in Iraq, demanding that the Iraqi government act in compliance with the relevant UN resolutions; meanwhile, Iraqi sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected by the international society."[113]

Adhering to international norms and values are, as always, the key to solving any conflict. But the statement also reflects the balancing act between Middle Eastern and Western allies, calling upon all parties to respect the international consensus as well as Iraq's sovereignty.

In order to deal with the Chinese policy towards the "war on terror" in the context of post-structuralism it is necessary to first look at different definitions of the term. According to a draft bill issued by the MPSPRC, terrorism is defined as "acts intended to induce public fear or to force state organs or international organisations through violent means, sabotage, threats or the like […] In addition, funding or assisting these activities also counts as acts of terrorism."[114] According to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CIA), "'terrorism'" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents".[115] The UN does not have a legal definition of the term, and although a draft bill has been made, member states were not able to agree.[116] While definitions vary according to different governments with different objectives, the closest thing to an international consensus about what constitutes

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[113] 中国政府一直主张在联合国框架内政治解决伊拉克问题,要求伊拉克政府全面,切实地执行安理会有关决议; 同时认为伊拉克的主权和领土完整应该得到国际社会的尊重. MFPRC, 2003.

[114] 采取暴力, 破坏, 恐吓或者其他手段制造社会恐慌, 胁迫国家机关或者国际组织的人 [...] 煽动, 资助或者以其 他方式协助实施上述活动的, 也属于恐怖活动. "Chinese Legislation in Defining Terrorism Caught Foreign Media's Attention". Xinhua Archive, 26/10-2011.

[115] CIA, undated.

[116] UN, 2005.

"terrorism", is arguably that, as it usually harms innocent civilians, it is an act of evil. In a statement released after 9/11, Osama Bin Laden stated that

> "God Almighty hit the United States at its most vulnerable spot […] What the United States tastes today is a very small thing compared to what we have tasted for tens of years. Our nation has been tasting this humiliation and contempt for more than 80 years. Its sons are being killed, its blood is being shed, its holy places are being attacked, and it is not being ruled according to what God has decreed."[117]

Clearly, if viewed through the eyes of Al-Qaeda, 9/11 was not an act of evil, but a righteous act of God's will against the real terrorists – the Americans. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.

China is a victim of Al-Qaeda sponsored terrorism in Xinjiang. But they are also battling separatists in Tibet and, in their view, Taiwanese separatists, and therefore the Chinese definition seeks to legitimise not only 9/11 but also other acts that are not necessarily defined as terrorist acts by other states. The Chinese definition clearly condemns international terrorism, as it was seen in the case of 9/11. But as the American definition does not clearly condemn all of the groups that China would like to label "terrorists", Western discourse is challenged and not necessarily seen as the most accurate.

A more obvious example is found in the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and of Iraq in 2003, which from Chinese side (apart from being seen as an American attempt to establish oil hegemony and strategic domination) was seen as a clear example of how the West perceived their form of democratic government to be superior with total disregard for cultural, historical, or traditional differences.[118] The basis of the American invasions was, apart from hunting terrorists, to establish democratic governments. Although China in its White Paper puts a clear emphasis on its democratic ambitions, the democracy that they seek to establish is not necessarily equal to that of European countries or the U.S., mainly because it does not take into account the history and cultural background of China. The same would go for Iraq and Afghanistan. Establishing a Western style democratic system in either country would ignore their heritage and would be bound to fail. Acknowledging the culture and history of the Middle Eastern countries while supporting the Western battle against a common evil is central to the Chinese policy towards both the "war on terror" and the Middle Eastern peace process as a whole.

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[117] BBC News, 7/10-2001.
[118] Alterman & Garver, 2008, pp. 14-15.

## Cross Case Reflections

Although China's presence in the Middle East is increasing, and although it is highly likely that China, like most states, bases its foreign policy on realist assumptions of security dilemmas, it seems unlikely that it should end in a violent conflict with the U.S. China seems very preoccupied with projecting an image as a responsible great power with peaceful intentions, and while this is most likely due in part to the fact that the CCG does not wish to trigger foreign aggression against China, such reactions seem as improbable as China turning malign overnight. The liberal argument, that the world has changed since the Cold War and that complex interdependence has made cooperation a more favourable option than war seems quite valid in context of the Chinese Middle East policy. China is no longer the isolationist communist state that it used to be under Mao, and as Deng's reforms have caused a shift in both domestic and foreign Chinese politics towards a more economic focus, China is now able to identify with the West to an unprecedented extent. The fact that China is a staunch supporter of the UN as the main mediator in international conflicts supports not only liberal arguments concerning international cooperation, but also constructivist arguments stressing the importance of socially constructed international norms and values. As this thesis has shown, China frequently emphasises its own adherence to the rules of the international society and its commitment to its role as a global citizen. The two case studies reflect a certain level of concern both for what is deemed appropriate (opposing terrorism and violence, respecting sovereignty and protecting innocent civilians) and what the consequences of its international actions are (increased access to natural resources, more leverage in international politics and enjoying friendly relations with as many other actors as possible). As the two cases demonstrate, the nature of the Chinese foreign policy appears to be rather opportunistic. The post-structuralist approach to meanings and values as forms of Rorschack tests where beauty is in the eye of the beholder, can easily be applied to the Chinese Middle East policies. Conflicting discourses are frequently seen in both the Arab-Israeli conflict and the "war on terror", something that China seems to be quite aware of, often taking into account that the meaning of a concept may vary according to different actors with different historical and cultural backgrounds. All in all it is quite possible to view Chinese foreign policy through the lens of all the above theories, though it would seem that liberalism, constructivism and post-structuralism holds merit over the likelyhood of a realist outcome.

## Conclusion

The Chinese policies towards both the Arab-Israeli conflict and the "war on terror" are, as have been demonstrated earlier, balancing acts, in which material gain is given a central role. Domestic

development must be sustained, and as China modernises, the need for natural resources as well as advanced technology increases. The "no questions asked" approach that China has adopted in its relations with trade partners reflects its pursuit for economic growth. Domestic development and economic growth go hand in hand, and as the former cannot be sustained without the latter and vice versa, the Chinese approach seems to be to support whoever is a more valuable partner in terms of economic gains. Israel and the U.S. (representing the West) have become vital trade partners for China, and although post-colonial bonds with the Arab countries prevail, ideology seems to play little if any part in the Chinese Middle East policy, and one may be inclined to question whether China's concern for its relations with the Arabs would be as strong had they not been as rich in natural resources as they are.

Taking into account the issues discussed in this thesis, internal and external factors seem to play fairly equal parts in the Chinese Middle East policy. Internal pressure embodied by the challenge of sustaining socioeconomic growth is a major driving force behind Chinese foreign policy, but at the same time external pressure, in the form of the international society's perceptions of China, has increased as China has become a more powerful actor in international relations, and must be taken seriously in order to sustain China's international trade. The two case studies presented both suggest that what unites internal and external factors is economic interest. While China has a lot to gain in the Middle East in terms of international image and trade, evidence that indicates that overthrowing U.S. hegemony is given priority by the CCG is extremely scarce. Pursuing hegemony in a globalised world in which China is becoming more and more enmeshed would gamble everything that Deng's reforms have achieved. It would jeopardise both the Chinese domestic socioeconomic development and security environment. Had the Cold War not ended and the world not been as globalised as it is today, pursuing hegemony and balancing the U.S. would arguably have been quite probable. But in contemporary international relations it is simply too risky and the negative consequences that would come in the wake of hampered economic relations would be too great for all involved parties. China's socioeconomic development rests on too fragile a foundation to engage in power politics and military confrontation.

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