

June 6, 2013

“China and the Middle East”

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“Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission”

Precisely a month ago, two prominent Middle Eastern leaders that represent to many (the Chinese included) the core regional problem, visited China. Mahmoud Abbas (known as Abu Mazen), President of the Palestinian National Authority, and Binyamin Netanyahu (known as Bibi), Prime Minister of Israel, were in China at the same time by invitation. To a great extent these two visits, to be discussed in more detail below, reflect Beijing’s policy in the Middle East, trying to steer a mid-course between different and occasionally contradictory situations and dilemmas while promoting what they perceive as their main interests in the region. It should be underscored right at the beginning that international affairs are NOT a top priority for the Chinese leadership. In fact, a glance at the reports, speeches and other documents of the most recent CCP congress and NPC demonstrates that foreign issues are marginal and occupy ten percent or less of the text. Among these issues, the Middle East – despite China’s heavy reliance on its oil – is by no means one of China’s “core interests” although it is indirectly related to them.

There are a number of definitions of the “Middle East”. The one adopted here follows the Chinese use of the term as reflected in the structure of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. The Middle East is handled by the Department of West Asia and North Africa that also covers Iran and Turkey. While these countries, some created artificially by Western colonialism, are all Muslim (save Israel), they represent different political systems; ethnic identities; economic development; international orientations; as well as religious inclinations within Islam. Beijing has to juggle among them using acrobatic diplomacy much more complex than ever before. This requires a more intimate understanding of the Middle East that has to rely increasingly on research institutes and intelligence (in the dual sense). Interpreting Middle Eastern affairs in black and white (as was done in Mao’s time when all regional problems were related to “imperialism” or “social-imperialism”) is over. Beijing has to become more sensitive to “fifty shades of grey”...

According to conventional wisdom, China’s main incentive in its Middle East policy is the pursuit of crude oil to fill the growing gap between oil production and consumption. While this is undoubtedly a major consideration in China’s foreign relations in general, and especially in the Middle East, Beijing’s international activities are still determined primarily by its strategic outlook and global power politics. In this perspective, there is an intriguing continuity between Mao’s China and post-Mao’s China. Despite its impressive growth and emergence as a great power (some believe already a superpower), Beijing is still concerned about “encirclement” (less by Russia and more by the US) and displays lack of self-confidence and time-honored legacies of reluctance to become more active in

world affairs – all the more so in the Middle East perceived as too complicated and full of contradictions that present China with tough dilemmas.

Heading the list is US-China relations. On the one hand, the US is a potential rival which appears to lose ground because of China's emergence. Given the long legacy of bilateral hostility (with the possible – and brief – exception of the 1980s), Beijing is vigilant and obviously suspicious about US presence in the Middle East. Some Chinese commentators consider US presence – almost in Maoist style – as the ultimate source of Middle Eastern instability. Yet there are indications that Beijing, at least implicitly, does believe that the US presence helps preventing a further deterioration in the Middle East. More concerned about US presence in the Asia-Pacific region, their backyard, the Chinese may have come to terms with the US presence in the Middle East, far away from their “core interests”. To give one example, despite its consistent backing of Iran on its nuclear program, Beijing reduced its oil import from Iran to get an exemption from the US-imposed sanctions and, at the same time, increased oil import from Saudi Arabia, reportedly “recommended” by the US. The bottom line: ultimately, relations with Washington are far more important to Beijing than relations with Iran.

Given the Middle East diversity, it is commonly assumed that China's primary interest in the Middle East (and elsewhere) is maintaining stability. Any disruption of the prevailing order would be detrimental not only to China's economic interests but also to its political and strategic presence as it may entail increased intervention by other parties, notably the US. Nevertheless, occasional instability serves Chinese interests as it drives away most of its competitors (e.g. in Sudan, Iran, Syria), especially in the energy sector. Following the turmoil in Libya, for example, the role of Chinese oil companies has increased while that of Western ones (that represent countries that had been actively involved in the civil war) has diminished. Similarly, despite concerns about the US alleged attempts to monopolize Iraq's oil sector, China has emerged as the primary winner, at least among all foreign oil companies. Instability and unrest sometimes pay, also by offering Beijing an opportunity to play a political role using its membership in international organizations and extensive diplomatic network, as well as to sell arms and military equipment. Beijing's arms sales and the spillover of Chinese-made or designed weapons to terrorist organizations, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, further *increase* Middle Eastern instability.

Apparently, these options do not conform to Beijing's alleged “non-intervention” policy, frequently accepted at face value by Chinese as well as non-Chinese scholars, media and statesmen. According to this policy, the Chinese oppose external intervention (Beijing's included) in the internal affairs of other countries, especially in settling internal conflicts. China also rejects the imposition of sanctions, least of all the use of force. Nevertheless, Beijing applies these principles in a flexible, pragmatic and creative “Chinese” way. In many cases, Chinese passivity or inaction produces action. A notable example is the 1991 US-led offensive against Saddam Hussein that had been facilitated by China's abstention on UN Security Council Resolution 1678. On other occasions, China supported sanctions contrary to its stated policy and tried to convince the respective leaders (e.g. in Sudan and Iran) to comply with UN, EU or IAEA resolutions. Chinese troops also participate in UN peace-keeping forces and Beijing regularly sends a “special envoy” to conflict-infected

countries, less as a trouble-shooter and more on fact-finding missions – of inconsequence operative value. When Beijing does intervene in the Middle East (and elsewhere) – and it does – it is usually done in subtle, indirect and behind the scene ways which may still be effective. China’s non-intervention policy reminds of traditional *wuwei* principles of not exerting oneself and getting all things done.

Beijing’s “non-intervention” policy is occasionally related to, and justified by, its alleged “dependence” on the countries from which China imports commodities, primarily (in this case) oil. According to this interpretation, Beijing is careful not to interfere in the internal affairs of those countries or to play an active role in their outstanding conflicts in order to guarantee the continued supply chain. As conventional wisdom goes, this is why Beijing supports Iran and Sudan. Yet this is a misconception. Precisely to avoid such dependence (based on the bitter memory of the Soviets’ sudden withdrawal from China in 1960), the Chinese have managed to create “counter-dependence” or “reverse dependence” by using accelerated export and investments as well as their voice in international organizations in order to forge long-term relationships beyond their immediate need for commodities and energy. Sudan’s import market is completely monopolized by China. Iran and Sudan are not less dependent now on China than China is on them not to mention the diversification of oil import sources and the constant search for substitutes along the traditional policy of “playing barbarians against barbarians” (e.g. Saudi Arabia vs. Iran).

Still, there is an expectation in the Middle East that China would become more proactive and decisive in its policy (though not necessarily in the Western sense of a “responsible stakeholder”) as befits its growing economic power and perceived global standing. Many in the Middle East (in the words of a May 15, 2010, *Saudi Gazette* editorial) believe that “America’s fall from grace opened the door to a resurgent China to make its presence felt on the international stage in a way it had never done before. [...] China, unlike the US, appears to have no messianic illusions about its role in the world, passing no ideological judgment on its partners. [...] It has intervened in a low-key manner in countries where the level of dysfunction has gotten out of control.” This, however, by no means implies a wholesale Middle Eastern approval of China as a welcome power in the region.

Given its history and the legacy of its relations with the Middle East and its revolutionary activities, China is undoubtedly respected but at the same time suspected. According to a number of public opinion polls, while some (23 percent in 2011) already regard China as the only superpower, only few consider it a worthy place to live or study (Table 1). The share of those in the Middle East who have a favorable view of China tends to decline in several cases (Table 2), but more regard China as the leading economic power (Table 3). A relatively small percentage (15-17) thinks that China has already replaced the US as the leading superpower (the percentage in Western Europe is much higher) though more believe that eventually China will take over (Table 4). Still, most regard China’s growing military power as a *bad thing* (but growing economic power as a *good thing*, Table 5) – despite the fact that the penetration of Chinese capital, goods and services caused a great deal of damage to Middle Eastern economies. Middle Eastern markets, especially in Iran, Sudan and the Persian Gulf, have been flooded with low-quality and “defective” Chinese goods that undermine local indigenous industries.

This is especially true in Turkey whose textile and toy markets are dominated by Chinese products while *all* leather goods manufacturing is under Chinese control. Turkish traders complain about “unjust competition” by Chinese official – and even more so unofficial – import. “Each ship full of Chinese products that docks at the Turkish ports is causing the closure of a Turkish factory.” Criticism of Beijing is not limited to economics. The Arab League condemned China (and Russia) for their use of veto in the UN Security Council resolution that held the Syrian Government responsible for the atrocities and violence. A number of cartoons (attached below) demonstrate Arab misgivings about the behavior of China and Russia in the Syrian crisis. An article published in February 2012 in Turkey’s *Hürriyet* titled “The Gang of Four: Syria, Iran, Russia, China” used harsh words:

The still-communist China is the fourth member of the gang. Here, I don’t even need to explain that “human rights” – including the most basic one, the right to life – means nothing for Beijing. This is simply a mercantilist dictatorship without any principles. “It doesn’t matter whether a cat is black or white,” the late Deng Xiaoping once said, “as long as it catches mice.” Apparently, it doesn’t matter how many innocents die while the cat gets fed.

Syria and Iran provide two examples not just of China’s non-involvement policy but also of the sophisticated way by which Beijing leaves the “dirty work” to Moscow. Unlike the other permanent members of the UN Security Council, notably the US and Russia, China has used its veto power sparingly – and not just because it is a relatively latecomer to the UN. Even today, over forty years after its admission to the UN, this tool is NOT Beijing’s first priority in settling outstanding regional conflicts. The Chinese prefer that the parties concerned should settle such conflicts without any intervention. If that option fails, then a regional or professional organization (such as the African Union in the case of Sudan, the Arab League in the case of Syria, or the IAEA in the case of Iran) should try to settle the conflicts on behalf of the parties and based on their prior agreement. Only if this option fails would the Chinese turn, reluctantly, to the UN. The worst option, to be avoided as far as possible, is unilateral intervention by external powers – sidestepping international and regional organizations as well as the parties concerned. China believes that economic relations may help overcome conflicts without undermining sovereignty.

Emphasizing economic growth is not just expediency. To some extent it is a philosophy – some would say an excuse – that the basic human right is the right to live in dignity and enjoy a higher standard of living. This is how Chinese, and other East Asians, rationalize their pursuit of economic growth while ignoring or downgrading human rights. They are not totally wrong. Economic ties can bind together nations that for centuries had been not only different but brutally hostile. The gradual creation of the European Union provides a pertinent example. This may also work in the Middle East. While the Chinese have their own interests in forging economic relations with the Middle East, these activities might benefit other countries. The problem is the asymmetry in size and resources. Except for oil-exporting countries, China has accumulated huge foreign trade surplus, most notably in the case of Turkey (around \$20 billion. Turkey’s overall trade deficit is the highest in the world next to the US). This imbalance in trade is a cause of concern to both China,

but primarily Turkey, officially linked as “strategic partners”. Chinese penetration of the local economy raises the alarm not only in Turkey but also in Iran, swept by cheap goods originated in China.

This represents a Chinese attempt to compensate for its huge import of crude oil. China has a trade deficit with 8 Middle Eastern countries, all of them energy suppliers, with the exception of the United Arab Emirates – by far the biggest market for Chinese export in the region. Despite its dependence on oil, the share of China’s import from the Middle East is less than 8 percent, nearly the share of North America and nearly half the share of Europe. Import from the Middle East accounts for about 60 percent of China’s regional trade, export for about 40 percent. Oil apart, Turkey is China’s leading trade partner in the Middle East, Israel comes second. Yet Israel’s export to China is about the same as Turkey’s and twice that of Egypt – each with over ten times Israel’s population. This is a clue to the outcome of Netanyahu’s recent visit to China.

Indeed, economics play a major role in China’s Middle East policy. Netanyahu’s visit to China is a case in point. Whereas in the past all Israeli officials who visited Beijing raised the issue of Iran’s nuclear program – but failed to convince China to act, this time, while the Iran issue was mentioned, it was done perfunctorily and briefly. It seems that the two parties realized that this issue (or that of Syria or the Palestinians) are not directly related to bilateral relations and raising them would be pointless. Beijing, whose play in Iran has nothing to do with Israel, would not budge while Israel still insists on using force against Iran, if needed something the Chinese regard as an obsession. Thus, downgrading thorny political disagreements, the visit concentrated instead on bilateral relations, technological, scientific and primarily economic.

Initially, there have been rumors about a possible Israeli-Palestinian meeting between the two leaders, under Chinese auspices, unleashing a wave of media reports about Beijing’s “decision” to start playing the peacemaker in the Middle East. These rumors proved to be baseless. In fact, unofficial Chinese sources suggested that Beijing may have not intended to invite the Palestinian president who perhaps forced himself on the Chinese. His visit – though of a higher level (“state visit”) as befits a president – was shorter (just three days) and mainly rhetorical. While Beijing came up with a “Peace Plan”, it was no more than a bunch of slogans. Despite media allegations, Beijing has yet no intention of increasing its involvement in the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this respect – nothing much has changed. In fact, the Chinese seem to have retreated from any such interest. Beijing is aware that there is no symmetry between Israel and the Palestinians (or even the Arabs). The only thing they can get from the Arabs is oil while Israel can provide everything else. While Netanyahu’s visit was of lower level (“official visit”, since, as a prime minister he was invited by Premier Li Keqiang), his visit was longer (five days, exceptional for such visits) and more constructive.

Unlike earlier visits that had reached a dead end because the two parties could not agree on issues such as Iran and the Palestinians, this time it appears that Israel and China came to realize the futility of these policies and decided to put aside thorny political issues. In any case, these issues are not related to bilateral Sino-Israeli relations. It is this awareness

and mutual disillusionment about each other limitations that set the tone for Netanyahu's visit. Beijing realized that Jerusalem could by no means defy Washington by selling arms and military technology to China. Jerusalem realized that Beijing has its own interests in Iran and would not influence Tehran to stop its nuclear program, certainly not in public. Under these circumstances the two parties decided to do business and increase bilateral economic activities. China, that already has a foothold in Israel's chemical industry, may invest even more. One expected project is a railroad from Eilat, a port city on the Red Sea in southern Israel – to the north. Planned to be built by Chinese companies, this railroad would provide China with a continental bridge that could bypass the Suez Canal in case it is blocked by unrest in Egypt. China is also a potential client for Israel's offshore natural gas. Chinese construction companies finished the building of tunnels underneath Mount Carmel ahead of time (in 2002 Israel was the fifth market in the world for Chinese labor export).

Israel appears to be less concerned about China's arms sales to the Middle East (although more about Russia's). Since the 1980s, when nearly *all* Chinese military export had been delivered to the Middle East, Beijing has become a marginal military seller to the region whose share in its arms sales from 2000 to 2012 was around 19 percent reaching no more than 2.5 percent in 2012 – and zero the year before. Indirectly, however, China's military presence in the region could be harmful. In July 2006, a Northrop Grumman-built Israeli corvette was attacked by a Chinese made (or designed) C-802 anti-ship missile handed to the Hezbollah by Iran. The vessel suffered damage but managed to survive. Additional Chinese weapons (rockets) and war materials – some intercepted – found their way to the Hamas and fired against Israel. Obviously embarrassed following the publicity as well as Jerusalem's protests, Beijing asked Israel to keep a low profile on this issue and probably reprimanded Tehran as the *end user* of its military shipments. Indeed, the last thing China wants is to become directly embroiled in the conflict. Since the 1980s China has avoided supplying arms to parties that immediately threaten Israel, ignoring the fact that Israel has been supplying advanced weapons to its adversary India.

Although Israel's military transfers to China had stopped completely by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to US pressure, the two parties have been searching for loopholes in the US objection so as to resume at least part of this relationship. Thus, the Chinese Chief of the PLA General Staff visited Israel in August 2011 – after he had been invited to the US – and in May 2012 the Israeli Chief of the General Staff went to China. Three PLA Navy ships visited Israel in August 2012 and China's People's Armed Police Force sends its troops to Israel for training. Most of these exchanges, however, have mainly symbolic value. Yet Beijing is still interested in Israel's military technology and innovations trying to get them occasionally through third countries. China maintains more extensive military relations in the Middle East with Iran and Turkey, especially in missile technology. But the Middle East is extremely important for China's military not because of arms import or export but for other reasons.

For years China has been watching the Middle Eastern military confrontations, including and primarily those involving Israel, long before the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations. Chinese military journals discussed Israeli air battles and military technologies

in detail as early as the 1970s, if not before, and their success in coping with Soviet arms that also confronted China. More than any other region in the world, the Middle East has become a huge lab for studying the performance of Chinese-made weapons sold earlier to the region and even more so of state-of-the-art military technologies, primarily of US and Western origin. Consequently, Middle Eastern military confrontations, especially those in the Persian Gulf (the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-87, the first Gulf War of 1991 and the second Gulf War of 2003) as well as the second Lebanon War of 2006, offered China invaluable lessons, ideas and incentives that have been incorporated in its defense modernization.

In addition, the greater Middle East has offered China unique opportunities – some would say excuses – to train its armed forces in long-range operations. These include naval and airlift evacuation of over 30,000 Chinese workers from Libya and Egypt; the deployment of naval forces to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in the joint international fight against piracy; the participation, at Ankara's invitation, of PLA's Air Force fighters in Turkey's Anatolian Eagle aerial military exercise held in September 2010 (after the US withdrawal protesting against Israel's exclusion); and a joint exercise of Chinese and Turkish Special Forces in counter-terrorism and assault tactics held in the mountainous parts of Turkey in November 2010. These were the first occasions ever of Chinese defense operations on a NATO member soil, definitely an important military educational experience, not to say a political coup of symbolic value and a snub at the US. In sum, the Middle East plays an outstanding and exceptional role in China's military perspective – another example that instability is occasionally beneficial to Beijing.

China has been more ambivalent about two other issues associated with the Middle East: terrorism and Islam. Although the two are separated, in the Chinese mind and in scores of Chinese books and articles, they are interconnected not just between themselves but also with the Middle East. Apparently, Muslims should not be a problem for Beijing. For one thing, at around 25 million their share in China's population is less than two percent. For another, while nearly all are *Sunni*, they are split into at least ten different ethnic groups that display little solidarity and a much historical animosity. Indeed, for many years the Chinese had not been terribly worried about their Muslims. *Haj* (pilgrimage) missions to Mecca had begun in the 1950s, long before the establishment of diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. Stopped by the mid-1960s due to the Cultural Revolution, they resumed in the late 1970s. As post-Mao China opened to the outside world, Beijing has become more concerned about its Muslims and their relations with Central Asia and the Middle East. In the 1990s Beijing warned Iran and Saudi Arabia not to interfere in China's internal affairs by distributing Islamic literature and financing the building of mosques. Indeed, for over 15 years these activities ceased – but they were resumed more recently, undoubtedly with Chinese approval. These Middle Eastern contributions are channeled primarily to Muslim communities of Han stock (*Hui*) mainly in Ningxia-Hui Autonomous Region, Gansu or Yunnan Provinces and to a lesser extent in Xinjiang.

About half of China's Muslims live in Xinjiang (whose population is half Muslim), most of them of Turkic stock. This is China's westernmost province with close ethnic, cultural, linguistic, historical and religious relations with Central Asia and the Middle East. China is particularly concerned about the lethal combination of Islam, nationalism and terrorism

in this region. While Islam in Xinjiang is relatively moderate and even eclectic, it is open to external more extremist influences from Central Asia and the Middle East. Jihadi blogs and websites occasionally criticize Beijing treatment of its Muslims, primarily Uyghurs, and advocate the establishment of an Islamic *shari'a* emirate in northwestern China. The Chinese are depicted by Arabs who joined Al-Qaeda as enemies of Islam aiming to clean Xinjiang of its Muslim communities and obliterate its Muslim identity. Still, the official Middle East, unlike North America and Western Europe, is careful not to express support for the Uyghur national claims or condemnation for their persecution and suppression by China. A rare exception was the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's angry response to the July 2009 riots in Urumqi that looked to him "like genocide". This was a brief episode. Shortly afterward Sino-Turkish relations returned to normal. Other regional leaders kept quiet. It is not only that they recognize and respect China's territorial integrity but also that many of them (Turkey included) face similar challenges of separatism and terrorism and by no means want to create a precedent – or to upset Beijing.

As mentioned above, it is possible that the Chinese have been changing their attitudes on Islam as a religion in order to win the goodwill of Muslims at home and abroad. Whereas the Chinese no longer need the political support of Muslim countries, goodwill is always good for business. This is an indication of a growing Chinese self-confidence and greater social control capabilities. But the Chinese still do not have the courage to offer Uyghurs and Tibetans greater and real autonomy that may undermine their separatist claims while upgrading Beijing's international image. Muslims are a dilemma for China, an asset but also a liability, especially with regard to terrorism.

There is no doubt that Beijing is deeply concerned about terrorism – a term that began to be used widely only since the mid-1990s and much more so after September 11. Before, terrorist acts had been dealt with as criminal acts. Yet, China's concern is reflected first and foremost in its domestic affairs, as evident in the 2008 Olympic Games. Otherwise, the Chinese contribution to the fight against terrorism worldwide is marginal (see State Department *Country Report on Terrorism 2012*, May 2013). Moreover, three of the four states defined as sponsors of terrorism are not only in the Middle East but also Beijing's close allies (Iran, Sudan and Syria). In addition, China does not recognize organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist and indirectly, and perhaps unwillingly, assist them. A lawsuit against the Bank of China (Los Angeles branch) revealed that since 2003 it provided the Hamas with financial services, including money transfers, breaching the US sanctions regime. For China, terrorism is a liability yet occasionally an asset.

Beijing's perceived links between terrorism, Islam and the Middle East shed light on its skeptical and doubtful attitude toward the so-called "Arab Spring". In fact, Beijing had become aware of domestic state-society tension, the problem of unfair wealth distribution and deepening social gaps long before demonstrations in the Arab world erupted. The call for democracy was not only meaningless for China, but the Chinese media also slighted the significance of the so-called "democratic revolution" saying that history shows that all such political upheavals ended in authoritarian Islamic governments, essentially anti-Western. China couldn't care less about the "Arab Spring", regarded as an internal affair in which no one should interfere anyway. Therefore, there has been no change in China's

policy toward the Middle East, but there has definitely been a change in China’s domestic policy of “social management” (introduced before the “Arab Spring”) that catered for the public good, on the one hand, and on the other hand enforced stricter control of society, the Internet and the media, and gradually increased the budgets for internal security that over the last three years exceeded those of national defense.

To conclude, while the Middle East is still marginal to China’s “core interests” and while Beijing is still reluctant to become more actively involved in the region’s problems, there is no doubt that China’s profile in the Middle East – economic, military and political – is unprecedented. To some extent this is an outcome of Beijing’s own policies and growing activism worldwide. Yet to some extent this is an outcome the behavior of other powers, first and foremost the US. Washington’s refusal to sell missiles to Riyadh had opened the door to the Sino-Saudi missile deal and to diplomatic relations. Similarly, the US refusal to sell weapons to Turkey helped to shape the Sino-Turkish strategic partnership and to the Chinese participation in military exercises together with a NATO member. Also, the withdrawal of US and Western oil companies from regions of unrest and conflict based on US Presidential Executive Orders, had paved the ground for the entry of Chinese oil companies (e.g. in Sudan, Iraq and Libya) – that was later criticized. The upcoming visit of China’s President Xi Jinping to the US, that starts tomorrow, is a good opportunity to *mutually* recognize each other’s global role and share responsibilities. There is simply no escape: the US and the PRC, interdependent unlike the earlier bipolar world must learn to live together – and let others live together.

**Table 1: Opinions about China in Arab Countries**  
(in percent and rank)

Year	As One Superpower		As a Place to Live		As a Place to Study	
	Per Cent	Rank	Per Cent	Rank	Per Cent	Rank
2011	23	1	11	4		
2009	14	3	9	4	3	Last
2008	13	3	8	4	4	
2006	16	2	7	5	4	5
2005	13	2	2	7	1	
2004	13	2	2	7	1	Last

Source: *Annual Arab Public Opinion Survey* (various years), Univ. of Maryland.

**Table 2: Favorable View of China by Middle Eastern Countries**  
(in percent)

Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Egypt	-	63	65	59	52	52	57	52
Israel	-	-	45	-	56	-	49	-
Jordan	43	49	46	44	50	53	44	47
Kuwait	-	-	52	-	-	-	-	-
Lebanon	66	-	46	50	53	56	59	59
Morocco	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	-
Palestine	-	-	46	-	43	-	62	-
Tunisia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69
Turkey	40	33	25	24	16	20	18	22

Source: adapted from PEW Global Attitude Project.

**Table 3: Middle Eastern Perceptions of China as a Leading Economic Power (in percent)**

Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Egypt	27	25	37	-	39
Israel	-	26	-	35	-
Jordan	31	29	50	44	44
Lebanon	22	32	36	37	44
Palestine	-	32	-	28	-
Tunisia	-	-	-	-	29
Turkey	7	9	12	13	22

Source: adapted from PEW Global Attitude Project.

**Table 4: Middle Eastern Perceptions of China As a Leading Superpower (in percent)**

Country	Has already replaced the US	Will eventually replace the US	Total has or will replace the US	Will never replace the US
Turkey	15	21	36	41
Palestine	17	37	54	38
Jordan	17	30	47	45
Israel	15	32	47	44
Lebanon	15	24	39	54

Source: adapted from PEW Global Attitude Project.

**Table 5: Middle Eastern Attitudes toward China's Growing Military and Economic Power (in percent)**

Country	Growing military power		Growing economic power	
	Good thing	Bad thing	Good thing	Bad thing
Turkey	9	66	13	64
Jordan	28	52	65	28
Lebanon	24	57	57	29
Palestine	62	29	66	24
Israel	19	66	53	30

Source: adapted from PEW Global Attitude Project.

