

Gulf oil producers¹⁶. While Asia is becoming the centre of the emerging global economic order, the Middle East is becoming its primary source of energy¹⁷. China is no exception; it is drawn to the Middle East because of its thirst for oil. When it became evident that China's energy production was insufficient to meet its growing needs, Deng Xiaoping extended its trade relations and economic ties with Middle Eastern and North African countries, including Saudi Arabia in the 1980s, and Iran and Sudan in the 1990s.

China considers the Middle East as a viable source to secure its energy imports, relies heavily on the Middle Eastern oil, and wishes to establish durable economic ties with Middle Eastern states on the long-term¹⁸. Yet, the 9/11 attacks and the context of the war on terror have given China a sense of vulnerability regarding its oil imports from the Middle East and forced the political leadership to consider new energy sources to ensure China's energy security. Furthermore, Zhao points out that China used to receive most of its energy supply from the Middle East and the Asia Pacific region, but the shift of Indonesia from an oil exporter to an oil importer in 2004 has left a gap among China's usual suppliers¹⁹. Therefore, China's spread of economic ties with the oil-rich countries of North Africa is driven by a desire to further diversify its oil supply. It should be noted that before the emergence of ISIS, almost half of the oil Iraq was exporting was destined for China. President Xi Jinping

condemned the horror attacks in Paris. The terror group brutally murdered 129 people in Paris (November 2015). He vowed to step up the fight in the wake of the "barbaric" attacks by militants linked to ISIS. Xi's comments have led to speculation that China is set to bomb the terrorists to oblivion in Iraq and Syria. China's leaders see terrorism—as well as separatism and extremism—as posing significant potential threats to a wide range of China's national security interests. These interests include almost every one of China's "core" interests such as social stability, national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and sustained economic growth. However, it also includes several of China's emerging interests like protecting its citizens abroad, energy security, maritime security, and China's ability to shape an international environment that is conducive to pursuing China's national interests. China pursues a broad range of bilateral and multilateral efforts in support of its counterterrorism objectives. This includes the strengthening of cooperation through multilateral organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure. China also cooperates, including with the United States, on issues such as port security, trafficking in international materials, and money-laundering to help support the development of conditions in the international environment that make it difficult for terrorism to thrive. This cooperation supports the U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. China is also pursuing wide-ranging bilateral security cooperation. This includes meetings of law enforcement and intelligence leaders, military exercises, security force training, border security agreements, and agreements for some Chinese partners to remove anti-PRC terrorist groups from their soil²⁰.

¹⁶ Sager, A. (2010) "GCC-China Relations: Looking Beyond Oil-Risks and Rewards," in *China's Growing Role in the Middle East: Implications for the Region and Beyond*. Eds. A. Sager and G. Kemp. Washington, DC: The Nixon Center. (2010)

¹⁷ Olimat Muhammad S., *China and the Middle East: From Silk Road to Arab Spring*, Reprint Edition, New York, Routledge, 2015. Pp. 65

¹⁸ Wu. 2007. Pp 45

¹⁹ Zhao, H. "China's Oil Venture in Africa." *East Asia* 24.(2007)

²⁰ Tanner Murray Scot and Bellacqua James. *China's Response to Terrorism*, U.S.-China Economic and Security