

argument can be applied to North Africa, especially in the case of Sudan. Still, concerns have been raised with regards to the Chinese approach, some arguing that democratic values are looked down upon, if not endangered by progressive preference for China's model of economic development and that "Beijing's example illuminates a path around the West"³⁹.

Furthermore, the Beijing Consensus is not only unique, but it is also highly controlled by the state. In fact, although neo-liberal economic policies allow the private sector to flourish, the state is keeping a firm grip on their development, along with a grip on courts, the military, and information flow. According to Halper⁴⁰, China is operating "state-guided capitalism" by ensuring that powerful companies are instruments of the Party's foreign policy. Some fear that market authoritarianism, including its economic liberalization coupled with authoritarianist politics, may be appealing to developing states, thus endangering the Washington's Consensus' agenda⁴¹. Exploring the different national effects of the Consensuses is beyond the scope of this paper but it is important to keep the key characteristics of each consensus in mind, as well as the fact that many MENA states are authoritarian in nature.

- In relation to MENA, there are two key dimensions to China's economic strategy. First, China seeks to expand friendly, multidimensional relations with Middle Eastern states and to remain politically neutral especially with regards to conflicts. China adheres to its foreign policy of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, but at the same time we can observe that China is getting more actively involved in the conflicts in the

region, adopting a certain stance at the UN Security Council and making efforts for intermediation, for instance between Israel and Palestine. China has proactive stance towards political issues in the Middle East, which surely affects its oil business⁴².

Second, China wishes to access Middle Eastern resources by exploiting markets, capital, and petroleum to fuel its own economic drive⁴³. However, the Chinese elite knows that in the last decades, the Middle East has been considered as the United States' economic fief⁴⁴, and therefore, by trading with the Middle East, China exposes itself to closer surveillance by Washington. Further, China perceives American concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and democratization as pretexts for interventions on the ground, accusing the United States from engaging in a "new kind of imperialism" through the control of natural resources.⁴⁵ Yet, China is driven by its wish to become the "friend of all and the enemy of none"⁴⁶ by trying not to directly confront Washington. In the same vain the Silk Road Economic Belt is grand initiative of China in the entire Eurasian region. China's Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative aims to connect Asia, Africa, Europe, and their near seas. The Silk Road promotes China and Middle Eastern States' Common Interests.

⁴² Daojiong Zha and Meidan Michal, China and the Middle East in a New Energy Landscape, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2015. Pg 25

⁴³ Alterman & Garver, The Vital Triangle, China, The United States and the Middle East, CSIS, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC. 2008, Pg 82

⁴⁴ Shen, D. (2006). "Iran's Nuclear Ambitions Test China's Wisdom." *The Washington Quarterly* 29, 2: 55–66. (2006); Salman, Pieper, and Geeraerts, 2015; Li, 2015

⁴⁵ Cited in Alterman, J. and Garver, J. *The Vital Triangle: China, the U.S., and the Middle East*. Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press. (2008), pp.12

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp.4.

³⁹ Ibid. Pp. v

⁴⁰ Ibid., Pp 102

⁴¹ Ibid., Pp.139