

# China engagement in Egypt

<sup>1</sup>Mohammed Saif Saeed Musawa, <sup>2</sup>Yang Chen

<sup>1,2</sup> Shanghai university

---

**Abstract:** On May 30, 1956, Egypt was the first Arab and African country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. The two nations have a common solid will to strengthen and develop their participation and coordination on all fronts. There is most likely that the merging in arrangements will enable further strengthen relations. The two nations support an arrangement of non-interference in their foreign relations, call for win-win participation among countries, and reject double standard models in managing worldwide dangers, for example, terrorism. The two nations likewise call for change of universal organizations, for example, the UN Security Council, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Egypt likewise invites China to venture up its part in tackling the issues in the Middle East. At the point when President Xi Jinping reported the Belt and Road Initiative, the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, in 2013, Egypt was one of the first nations to welcome the initiative. Egypt is likewise an establishing individual from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. China, on its part has indicated solidarity with Egypt in the previous years. On the other hand, China is strengthening its relations with Arab countries aimed at strengthening its political, economic and cultural ties within the framework of a Chinese strategy to strengthen relations with so-called neighboring countries including Central Asian countries and the Middle East. China shows importance to the Arab countries, which is to end US hegemony over the region and achieve a political, economic and military balance. Egypt's large population provides a consumer market for inexpensive Chinese products and the country's strategic assets can also further China's interests in the region Egypt in return can offer China economic and geopolitical influence in Africa and the Middle East. As a traditionally influential player in the Arab world a closer relationship with Egypt could give China political goodwill in the region.

**Keywords:** China, Egypt, diplomatic, Egyptian-Chinese relations, dimensions.

---

## 1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This paper inspects the fast development of China's bilateral ties with Egypt, in order to understand the extent of economic engagement, high-level diplomatic exchanges, and emerging strategic alliances, and rising vital cooperation. Chinese-Egyptian relations have turned out to be a standout amongst most the bilateral relations in the Middle East and North Africa. Egypt is a noteworthy territorial power with a vital and compelling part in the Sunni and the Arab world, and in addition a key partner of the U.S, in this manner additionally it assumes a vital part for the U.S. in accomplishing its more extensive points in the Middle East.

This paper's main research question revolves around the identification of the form, content, and nature of the Egyptian-Chinese relations in all different fields and their impact on the strength and depth of these relations. Therefore, we find that this question seeks to answer this sub questions:

1. What is the nature of Egyptian-Chinese relations?
2. What it's the dimensions of Egyptian-Chinese relations?
3. What is china's stance on Arab world issues?
4. Is the U.S losing Egypt to China?

## 2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

China seeks to capitalize on the advantages enjoyed by Egypt, including the huge market of some 90 million consumers, as well as the gateway to more than 1 billion consumers in countries where goods produced in Egypt, such as the EU, COMESA, Arabic and the United States. Egypt's strategic and political benefits from closer relations with China include the establishment of a strategic partnership between Egypt and the world's second largest economy, paving the way for many projects to set Egypt as a pivotal country in the Middle East and North Africa, Along the Suez Canal axis to maximize the utilization of the Chinese Silk Road and the new Suez Canal in activating the trade movement with the countries of the world.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 DETERMINANTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP STRATEGY

The Egyptian-Chinese relations have witnessed continuous development in all fields over the past six decades. These relations have proved their ability to keep abreast of international, regional and internal transformations. The two countries have pursued consistent policies in terms of seeking and working for peace in all parts of the world, Political and economic fair and just based on respect for the specificity of each country as well as each other's understanding of the core issues of the other. The two countries adhere to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of any country and seek to resolve disputes through peaceful means. Egypt has also adopted a position in favor of the choices made by the Egyptian people during the last five years and has repeatedly declared its rejection of any external interference. In the Egyptian context and in the following lines, clarify the determinants that make relations between the two countries a strategy.

#### 3.1.1 An Important Strategic Location for The Two Countries

China has a strategic position in Asia, with an area of 20% of the continent, in addition to its common border with 14 countries, a record that makes China a continent. Egypt is located in the north-east of the African continent and in the extreme south-west of Asia, bordered to the north by the Mediterranean Sea, most of its territory is located in the African continent, but an important part of its territory is located on the continent of Asia, it shares borders from the west with Libya, from the south with Sudan and from the north-east with Palestine. It overlooks the Red Sea from the east, passing through its territory the Suez Canal, which separates the Asian part from the African part.

#### 3.1.2 Large Population Size

Egypt has a population of 90 million by the end of 2015, while China's population is about 1.4 billion.

#### 3.1.3 Economic determinants

China recognized the importance of economic geography at the expense of geopolitics. In 2007, the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held, representing the continuity of the system of government under Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin. The greatness of socialism with Chinese characteristics, openness to the outside world, the stimulation of scientific development and the promotion of social harmony. At the party's congress in November 2012, the Communist Party Constitution was amended and the concept of scientific development was introduced to coordinate China's economic and social development. The policies of the transition to a capitalist market economy under former President Mubarak were strengthened, and they tried to spread their relations to serve their economic interests. It headed eastward towards the Asian countries to expand the geographical base of Egyptian exports and to take advantage of the enormous capacity and absorptive capacity of that region, high population rates, rising incomes in some countries and technological progress, which developed relations with countries including India, China and Japan.

#### 3.1.4 Historical determinants

The Chinese Revolution in 1949 affirmed three main goals: the first was nationalism, independence was aimed at foreign influence, the second was unification under a national goal that controlled central authority, and the third was the radical change of economic and social conditions. Egypt was the first country to recognize the People's Republic of China in 1953. In August 1955, the Egyptian Minister of Industry visited China and the two sides signed a trade agreement according to which each party has a commercial office of the other party Said diplomatic relations between the two

countries were established in May 1956, an important step for China to establish close ties with Arab and African countries. Following Gamal Abdel Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal in July 1956, China supported the resolution in August 1956. The Chinese government issued a statement condemning the tripartite aggression against Egypt and its support for the struggle of the Egyptian people to protect Egypt's national independence. Despite the internal circumstances of China beginning in 1966, when the country was devastated by the Cultural Revolution, it declared its full support for all the positions taken by the Arab Republic of Egypt in repelling the triple aggression against Egypt. And coincided with massive demonstrations in the three-day event in Beijing support of the struggle of Egypt and the Arab peoples and exchanged visits between leaders and officials of the two countries on an ongoing basis. During the period from 1965 to 1970, there were no high-level visits between the two countries and the rate of trade declined. During the Cultural Revolution, China withdrew all its ambassadors from the Arab region with the exception of its ambassador to Egypt. This confirms Egypt's position in China's foreign policy. This position was reflected in China's position on the October 1973 war, which declared its full support for the Egyptian efforts to regain its occupied territories.

### 3.1.5 External determinants

Means the regional and international factors that play a role in the development of relations between countries, after 2003 and the occupation of the United States of Iraq and the imposition of hegemony over the Gulf region and imposed sanctions on Iran and used the human rights file to intervene in China, we found Egyptian-Chinese relations affected by these international and regional developments during the rule of President Mubarak. China called for the establishment of a new international order based on the principles of peaceful coexistence. Hu Jintao's first visit to Japan in 2004 was his visit to Egypt, which reflects the two countries' orientation. During the period 2003-2011, relations between the two countries were influenced by the nature of Egyptian-American relations. After the revolution of January 25, 2011 and the Egyptian economy subjected to many economic problems, Egypt headed to strengthen its relations with other international parties. China was one of the first countries to visit former President Mohamed Morsi. And the current president Alsisi also focused on strengthening relations with China during the visits of 2015.

## 3.2 POLITICAL RELATIONS

### 3.2.1 The era of Abdel Nasser

Egypt was one of the first countries to enthusiastically support China's right to regain its legitimate seat in the United Nations. The Egyptian Revolution leadership expressed its surprise at the United States' disregard for the People's Republic of China. In 1953, China bought 45,000 tons of Egyptian cotton. In 1953, trade between the two countries reached about US \$ 11 million, compared with US \$ 1.7 million in 1951 and 800,000 in 1950. In 1954, the Chinese side accepted an Egyptian proposal for a trade representative An Egyptian residing in China on an informal basis. Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and Chinese Prime Minister met in Burma, and from April 18 to 24, 1955, an African and Asian summit was held in Bandung, Indonesia, to discuss ways of solidarity and cooperation between them. An Egyptian delegation headed by Gamal Abdel Nasser participated in the conference. China also participated in a delegation led by Premier Xu Enlai, who called for the adoption of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as a fundamental principle in the relations between the countries of the world. On May 30, 1956, the Egyptian and Chinese governments issued a joint statement on the establishment of diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level between the two countries, which represented an important turning point in the map of international relations, considering Egypt's Arab, African and Islamic status and opening the door for China to establish official relations with Arab and African countries. Following the decision of the President Gamal Abdel Nasser on 26 July 1956 to nationalize the Suez Canal Company and make it an Egyptian joint stock company, China supported this decision on August 4, 1956. Chinese government explained that China fully supports the nationalization of the Canal Company Suez. On August 15, the Chinese government issued a statement on the Suez Canal issue, in which it affirmed the support of the Chinese government and people for the step taken by the Egyptian government to protect the sovereignty and independence of the state. In September, China reaffirmed its position on the nationalization of the canal in a new memorandum it handed to the Egyptian government. It also rejected the British, French and US attempts to wage a war against Egypt to force it to withdraw from the plan. On November 1, 1956, the Chinese government issued a statement condemning the triple aggression against Egypt by Britain, France and Israel, describing it as barbarous and barbaric, and affirmed its steadfast stance in support of the just struggle of the Egyptian people for the protection of state sovereignty and national independence. When the Indian-Chinese War broke out in 1962, Egypt sought to mediate in the conflict. President Nasser was in constant contact with India's Prime

Minister. In December 1963, Xu Enlai visited Egypt, during which he held talks with President Gamal Abdel Nasser. During the visit, the Chinese premier announced the principles adopted by China in its relations with Egypt and the Arab countries, which affirm China's support for the national independence of these countries and the refusal to interfere in its internal affairs. The relations between the two countries continued through the exchange of high-level visits and the exchange of student and cultural delegations and others. In July 1965, a delegation from the Egyptian Ministry of Industry visited China. In 1966 and 1967, the development of events between the two countries led to a low level of exchange. In 1966, the Cultural Revolution began in China, and in Egypt the country was subjected to the aggression of June 5, 1967. But despite its domestic conditions, China declared its full support for all the positions taken by Egypt during this aggression, and expressed the support and solidarity of the Chinese people with Egypt and condemnation of aggression against them. When Egyptian territory came under Israeli aggression on January 22, 1970 on the factory of Abu Zaabal, China sent a cable of support to Egypt saying: "The Chinese people will remain a sincere friend of the people of the Egypt, the Palestinian people and the Arab peoples in the common struggle."

### 3.2.2 The era of Sadat

This period was a special stage in the history of Egypt and China. During this period, China withdrew all its ambassadors in the region to participate in the Cultural Revolution movement, with the exception of its ambassador in Egypt. This was a very clear indication of Egypt's position in China's foreign policy. This position of Egypt was exemplified by the Chinese position on the October 1973 war, in which it declared its full support for the Egyptian efforts to regain its occupied territories. In the second half of the seventies, Egypt devoted its efforts to reconstruction and strengthening economic capabilities, since the adoption in 1974 of the policy of economic openness and began a new phase in the history of Egypt. In April 1976, Vice President Mohammad Hosni Mubarak headed a high-level delegation to China, during which he held important talks with the Chinese leadership, and President Mao Zedong met the delegation himself in recognition of Egypt's importance and the importance of China-Egypt relations. At the same time, the Cultural Revolution in China ended in 1978.

### 3.2.3 Mubarak era

On the 5th of January 1980, the Vice President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, visited China, heading a high-level delegation to exchange views among the leaders of the two countries in light of the rapid international changes. In 1983, former President Hosni Mubarak paid an official visit to China, becoming the first Egyptian president to visit China. The 1990s were a very important period in Egyptian-Chinese relations. The exchanges at all political, economic and cultural levels intensified. Travel and tourism between the two countries increased to establish strategic partnership in 1999 during the Egyptian president's visit to China. On July 2, 1991, Chinese Premier visited Egypt. On October 8, 1991, China Airlines began flights between Beijing and Cairo. In Cairo, in October 1993, Cairo hosted a symposium on Arab-Chinese dialogue organized by the Egyptian Committee for African Solidarity. In April 1994, the Egyptian president visited China. In 1999, the strategic cooperation agreement was signed between the two countries. The mutual understanding and political coordination between the two countries has been reached. This is reflected in the numerous meetings and visits of senior officials, in addition to the annual meeting of the foreign ministers of the two countries on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and other international forums. Egypt was placed on the list of Chinese tourist destinations in July 2000, and in January 2001 a memorandum of understanding was signed for direct flights between the two countries. Cooperation and constant coordination between the two countries was intensified after the establishment of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, as was announced in 2004 in Cairo on the establishment of the Arab-China Cooperation Forum during Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Egypt. Political relations were characterized by relative activity in the first decade of the 21st century, especially in 2007-2008, to coincide with Egypt and China celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The visit witnessed many activities, the most important of which was the bilateral visit of President Hosni Mubarak to China in November 2006 and the visit of Premier Wen Jiabao to Cairo in June 2006. The visits witnessed the signing of a large number of agreements and memorandums of understanding between the two countries in various aspects Political and economic development.

### 3.2.4 The January 25th revolution and the transition period

During the period of political transformation witnessed by Egypt after the revolution of January 25, 2011, China confirmed its respect for the will of the Egyptian people and their rejection of any external interference in the internal affairs of Egypt and did not decline the Chinese investments in Egypt, but the opening of a number of Chinese projects

according to schedules that were planned in advance. The Egyptian Cultural Bureau was inaugurated in China in November 2011, the first cultural office to be opened abroad after the January 2011 revolution, which underlines the importance of the cultural factor as a bridge between the two countries, exchanging experiences and providing new opportunities for cooperation to achieve mutual benefits for both peoples.

### **3.2.5 The era of Morsi**

Former President Mohamed Morsi paid a visit to Beijing on August 28-30, 2012, the first visit of an Egyptian president following the revolution of January 25, 2011. He witnessed the signing of seven bilateral agreements in the fields of economic and technical cooperation. He also accompanied 80 Egyptian businessmen to develop and attract Chinese investments to Egypt. A number of Chinese officials also visited Egypt following the revolutions of Egypt, including Deputy Foreign Minister in March 2011, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in May 2011 and Vice Minister of Commerce Fu Zedong in May 2012, during which he signed an economic cooperation agreement under which China offers a grant to Egypt Estimated at \$ 90 million and an additional grant of 700 police cars and two container inspection vehicles.

### **3.2.6 The era of Sisi**

On February 22, 2014, a delegation of Chinese businessmen visited Egypt, the first official visit to a delegation of Chinese investors following the June 30 revolution. Investors expressed their desire to inject new investments into Egypt in the sectors of construction, infrastructure, decoration and communications. They described the Egyptian market as the largest market in the Middle East. On 22 December 2014, President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi made an official visit to China. Within the framework of the visit, the comprehensive strategic partnership document, as well as several agreements and memorandums of understanding between the two countries, were signed in many fields including economic cooperation, transport, supply of medical equipment, civil aviation, education and the environment. President Sisi also welcomed the Chinese president's initiative to restore the 65-nation land and sea Silk Road. President Sisi also visited Sichuan Province, the largest Chinese province, and held a meeting with the China-Egypt Business Council. President Sisi visited Chengdu, which is the hub of the world's largest and largest Chinese enterprises and a center of economy and investment, especially in the fields of logistics, electronic and automobile industries. On September 1, 2015, President Sisi paid a visit to Beijing to participate in China's celebration of the National Day of Victory and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and met with Chinese President Xi Jinping to congratulate on the occasion in the Great Hall of the People. The Chinese president welcomed the presence of the Sisi President of the celebration, referring to the participation of the Egyptian armed forces in the military parade which was held on this occasion in light of the excellent strategic partnership relations launched by the two countries during the first visit of the Sisi to Beijing in December 2014.

## **3.3 China stance in the Arab world**

### **3.3.1 International determinants**

China has realized many of the challenges posed by the international environment. Among these challenges is the pressure that the United States can exert on Arab oil. This situation has put pressure on China in its access to Arab oil, reflecting the US control of the most important determinants of China's development. On the Arab-Chinese relations, the determinants of China-US relations can be defined as they enter into the parameters of Arab-Chinese relations. In general, Sino-US relations govern a set of determinants, perhaps the most prominent of which are: a) Strategic need: Mutual relations between the two parties the importance of the other party and his need for him even if they disagree with him, and this may explain the level of cooperation after each dispute witnessed by the relations of the two countries. China has a problem in Xinjiang province as the people of the province are of Turkish origin and are denigrated by Islam and it should be ensured that the Muslim countries in the Middle East will not become promised to the opposition groups of China. China needs to exercise the rules of the political game with the United States of America, as the United States is playing the Taiwan card to pressure China. In return, China should play the Middle East paper for the Washington scourge. The essence of China's policy in its relations with the Arab countries, With the amendment of the method of implementation of this policy in accordance with international developments, while focused many studies and research of Arab academics on the importance of dealing with China from the perspective of special interests and China's political and economic interests in the Arab countries focused on the support of its objectives and interests in the first place, Not in China's policy towards the Arab positions compared to what it was the policy in the past, in the light of China sought to establish relations with the positive participation of the United States. China's support for the Arab countries in its struggle

against colonialism: China called for armed struggle against Israel and condemnation of Israeli positions as well as support for the Palestinian cause. China recognized the Palestinian liberation plan in 1965.

China's Sino-Arab relations are negatively affected by Sino-Israeli relations as well as China's relations with the United States, bearing in mind that Israel is one of the most important sources of advanced military technology and agricultural technology of China and one of the sources of investment. On the other hand, the area of cultivated land in China compared to its population, where the area of agricultural land accounted for 7% of the total area of agricultural land in the world, while the population of China accounted for 22% of the world's total population. Israel's ongoing efforts to strengthen its military ties with China have been aimed at creating strategic interests with China to gradually affect its position on the Middle East, or rather to achieve the balancing element between Sino-Israeli interests and Sino-Arab interests. As well as reducing its military cooperation with other countries such as Iran and Syria. Israel has succeeded in closer ties with China, regardless of the development of the peace process. This success has been achieved by the Chinese political circles, the growing interest with Israel has led to a positive trend in the relations between the two countries, which has definitely had a negative effect on the Arab-Chinese relations to the extent that Israel's visit to the agenda of a Chinese official to the Middle East, China and the visits of academic researchers, training programs and airlines. As the only Israeli company in the region with a direct flight line with China, Al-Al is also noteworthy for Israel's attempts to find common factors in the history of relations between the China and Israel have suffered from the historical dimension of suffering in the two countries where Chinese and Jewish nationalism have shared a common cause that their students are fascists. China has also provided refuge for displaced Jews in a certain period of time, although historical discoveries in some provinces in China show that Jews lived at peace with the Chinese people inside China for long periods. Despite China's support for the Arab position on the peace process, China's general approach is in keeping with the problem, balancing its relations with the Arab countries and its relations with Israel, However, China is only issuing statements and statements calling on the two sides to resume the peace process and the importance of pushing forward the negotiations and ending of violence.

### 3.3.2 Egypt china and USA

The relationship between Egypt and China fluctuated in the era of President Hosni Mubarak. The Egyptian regime aimed at strengthening its relations with the United States. The relationship with China was affected by the improvement of relations between Egypt and the United States of America. Therefore, external factor was greatly influenced in the relationship between Egypt and China in the period 2003-2011. In 2003, the United States of America destroyed Iraq and imposed its hegemony over the Arab and Gulf countries, It imposed numerous sanctions on Iran, while the human rights issue in China was used as a pretext to interfere in China's policy; therefore, we will find that Egypt's relations with China have been increasing and decreasing according to its relationship with the United States throughout the period of the rule of President Mubarak .The second objective was not to be achieved from the point of view of the political leadership except by reaching a solution to the Palestinian issue and settling the problems of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In another period the security of the Gulf was added as a requirement to secure a stable regional environment. Again, the American partner and the relations with the Arabs were the two pillars that the Egyptian foreign policies rely on to solve the major issues. In any case, China has not, had a distinct position within both objectives .We can say that the Egyptian border on its relationship with China is clear. It results in a vision of the internal and external factors, and the same vision is facing difficulties in its implementation. The difficulties are primarily due to the lack of a fundamental cornerstone of the vision The Egyptian.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Finally, the future of Egypt-China relations is characterized by a wide range of opportunities, including the continued cultural exchanges between China and the Arab countries, and the increasing bilateral agreements and joint statements between the various Arab countries and the People's Republic of China, which emphasizes the need for strategic cooperation between the two parties. In addition to the increasing volume of informal relations between the two parties, where the Communist Party established relations with more than 30 Arab parties and many others, but this cooperation is bound by a number of challenges to develop those relations, which dimming developed largely on the Arab capabilities through a comprehensive and unified Arab policy toward China.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] Jihad Hamdi Hijazi. Democratic Arabic center. 2ND NOV 2016
- [2] Cairo - Al Wafd Gate - Randa Al Tuni. 21 JAN 2016.
- [3] The gulf news. Youssef Salahuddin. 22 Feb 2017
- [4] The gate of pyramids. Amr Hassan. 22 Dec 2014
- [5] Mubtada WEB. Mohammed Abdulmuhsen. 2ND AUG 2017
- [6] HUFFPOST. 3RD AUG 2016.
- [7] ALFAJIR. Shaimaa Ahmed. 14TH JAN 2016.
- [8] Rubin center research in international affairs. Mordechai Chaziza. 25 Dec 2016
- [9] Ahram online. Ahmed El-Sayed Al-Naggar , 24 Jan 2016
- [10] Middle East institute. Kyle Haddad Fonda . 1ST Aug. 2017