



Illustration: Carlos Latuff/Brazil

What insights does progress in China-Arab cooperation offer?

The cooperation between China and Arab countries has always been a model in China's foreign relations, and this model relationship is entering a new historical starting point. The 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum will be held on May 30. President Xi Jinping will attend the opening ceremony together with four Arab heads of state, namely, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Tunisia's President Kais Saied, and the United Arab Emirates' President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who are paying state visits to China, and President Xi will deliver a keynote speech. The presence of these five heads of state at the opening ceremony of the ministerial conference is unprecedented.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. The forum, which has thrived over the past 20 years, owes its significance and vitality to the tangible achievements it has made. China has steadily remained the largest trading partner of Arab countries for many years. Under the framework of jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the two sides have implemented over 200 cooperation projects, benefiting nearly 2 billion people from both sides. The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum has established 19 important mechanisms, including ministerial conferences and strategic political dialogues, and has issued 85 important outcome documents. It's commendable that while China-Arab bilateral trade has maintained a historical high level of around \$400 billion, a new wave of cooperation focusing on key areas such as technological innovation, industrial transformation, green and low-carbon development, and infrastructure is emerging. China-Arab cooperation has shifted from being primarily focused on economic and trade to the "troika" of economy, security, and culture achieving good development.

This meeting is also the first ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum held after the first China-Arab States Summit in 2022. It serves as a review of the achievements of China-Arab cooperation over the past 20 years and a look forward to the next 20 years, outlining the blueprint for future China-Arab cooperation. According to Chinese sources, the meeting plans to further consolidate consensus between China and Arab states through a series of outcome documents, plan cooperation for the next stage, and issue a joint statement on the Palestine issue. International attention has already been focused on the venue, and the time of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum is about to begin.

At the regular press conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday, an Arab media journalist asked the following question: "We have seen continued progress in the development of China and the Arab world and a decline in the popularity of the US among the Arab states over the past two decades. Can you give us your take on what China has brought to the Arab world?" To be honest, China develops friendly relations with countries of all sizes in the world based on the principles of mutual respect, equality, and mutual benefit. China does not engage in group politics, diplomatic battles, or have any interest in filling any "vacuum," let alone believing that there is a "vacuum" in the Middle East. China-Arab cooperation is simply cooperation between China and Arab countries, driven by inherent logic and mutual needs for both sides to come together and get closer.

Bloomberg believes that Arab countries welcome the establishment of a broader cooperation relationship between China and the Arab world, which exemplifies a reluctance among many emerging-market nations to get caught up in a Cold War between the US and China. They'd prefer to keep the doors open, and the money flowing, with both sides. This statement is only half correct. Arab countries view the cooperation between China and the Arab world with a focus on the present, but also look beyond the present. Through deepening cooperation with China, Arab countries further see that China, unlike the West, does not achieve development through war, colonization, or forming alliances, but through peaceful development. China in particular supports Arab countries in independently seeking development paths suitable for their own national conditions. This further convinces them that "China's development is a growth of peace and progress, and China is a trustworthy friend and partner for Arab countries."

A thousand years ago, despite the distance, it did not hinder the footsteps of China's exchanges with Arab countries. Today, the China-Arab relationship is at its best historical period, rooted in a broad and deep friendship and cooperation foundation. With this opportunity of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, it can be ensured that China and Arab countries will continue to aim to build a community of shared future, uphold the spirit of China-Arab friendship, and create a model of collective cooperation among developing countries for unity and independence.

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Airstrike in Rafah deepens divisions in the West over the Israel-Palestine issue

Spain, Ireland and Norway formally recognized Palestinian statehood on Tuesday, joining around 140 countries that have recognized a Palestinian state, more than two-thirds of the UN. The changing attitudes of more countries toward the Israel-Palestine issue highlight the growing division within the Western camp.

This aligns with the recent wave of condem-

nation in the West following a recent Israeli airstrike on Rafah, a city in the southern Gaza Strip. On Sunday, Israel bombed a refugee camp in Rafah claiming to target Hamas, resulting in at least 45 deaths and over 200 injuries. This action was universally condemned by the international community, including the UN and the EU.

Noticeably, the US has still avoided condemning Israel. According to reports, the Biden administration has decided that the airstrike did not cross the "red line" set by President Joe Biden. Therefore, it will not trigger any serious reprimand from Washington, nor will it change the policy or military aid to Israel. The US' indulgence toward Israel stands out amid widespread global condemnation. As US Media Politico commented, "It's the strongest indicator yet that Israel is conducting a military operation that the administration can accept."

"The international community, including an increasing number of Western countries, is fed up with the current US policies in Gaza, leading to widespread opposition," Li Haidong, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, told the Global Times.

Since the Israel-Palestine conflict began, the death toll of Palestinian civilians has continued to surge, exceeding 35,000. This airstrike has pushed the new round of conflict further into the abyss of disaster.

The human tragedy in Gaza

has surpassed the bottom line for many countries. "In the face of the humanitarian disaster in Gaza, the long-term indulgence and escalation by the US have led to a significant split within the Western camp on the Israel-Palestine issue," Ding Long, a professor with the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times.

"More and more Western countries are showing a different attitude from the US' bias toward Israel and its undermining of international justice and fairness," Ding noted.

On the Israel-Palestine issue and a series of humanitarian disasters, the US' pro-Israel is no secret. It has long provided Israel with substantial financial and military aid, including weapons and munitions. Ironically, faced with election pressures and rising campus protests at home, the US has been compelled to make political gestures such as calling for a cease-fire, pressuring Israel and creating the so-called aid pier. This stark contradiction between its words and actions further underscores its hypocrisy on the Israel-Palestine issue.

Norway, Spain and Ireland all mentioned one word when they issued their statements recognizing the State of Palestine: peace. Undoubtedly, this is the common expectation and call of the international community. The UN General Assembly on May 10 adopted a resolution supporting the Palestinian bid to become a full UN member. The resolution "determines" that a State of Palestine is qualified for membership and should be admitted to membership.

The inherently irresponsible and selfish nature of the US' policies toward the Middle East and Israel has been fully exposed to the world. When it comes to the Israel-Palestine issue, the US is increasingly losing support and becoming more isolated.



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"This whole China 'overcapacity' criticism is just ridiculous... China adopted Western economic theory & has outcompeted the West on industrialization & innovation."

User @shaunrein on X (formerly Twitter) on Wednesday.



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