

July 2020

med dialogue series | no. 27

Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean



China's 'Health Silk Road' Diplomacy in the MENA

Yahia H. Zoubir^{1}*

The Corona Virus, or Covid-19, identified first in China, became a pandemic. Once they contained it successfully internally, China followed a 'Health Silk Road'¹ diplomacy where Chinese authorities reportedly extended aid to 150 countries and four international organizations, while Chinese medical experts held video conferences with their overseas counterparts to share infection treatment and control experience with more than 170 countries. They also sent teams of medical experts to 24 countries.² In a lengthy press conference, Foreign Minister Wang Yi sought painstakingly to reject essentially Western accusations that China was seeking through this assistance geopolitical and economic interest or that it affixes any political strings to such aid. In June 2020, in the document, "Fighting Covid-19 China in Action,"³ Chinese authorities confirmed Wang's declarations and disclosed that as of 31 May, they had dispatched 29 medical expert teams to 27 countries. They revealed that the medical teams based in 56 countries were directed to aid in their locations, to advise and provide health information to the inhabitants as well as to Chinese living overseas. By the time of publication of the document, they had organized more than 400 online and offline training sessions on Covid-19. A review of China's aid to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries tends to corroborate the statements in the "Fighting Covid-19 China in Action."

Most news media, political commentators, and officials suggested that China has used the pandemic to advance its soft power, leverage, and influence and that helping others during the pandemic is no more than a propaganda tool that Beijing has used to establish its world domination and thus supplant the United States and other rivals. The pandemic and China's assistance to other countries in fighting the virus generated mostly in Western countries major political debates regarding how to counter China's economic and political influence.⁴ In the United States, although countering China had been on top of the Trump Administration's agenda prior to the pandemic,⁵ Covid-19 has exacerbated those tensions and rivalry. Predictably, these hostilities will certainly not abate before the US presidential election of November 2020 nor afterwards. One can surmise that whichever candidate is elected, US rivalry with China will continue⁶ and will have global implications.

Responses in the MENA to Covid-19 in China

Unlike the negative reactions in the West, in the entire MENA, attitudes toward China's aid on Covid-19 have not generated anxieties or anti-Chinese sentiments. On the contrary, the perceptions regarding China's role during the pandemic have been quite positive and indicated, in most cases, the perspective of even closer ties in the post-Covid-19 era despite US warning to MENA states against developing

¹ Yahia H. Zoubir is Professor of International Relations at KEDGE Business School, Marseille, France, and currently Visiting Fellow at Brookings Doha Center, Qatar.

* The author is indebted to Dr. Emilie Tran from Hong Kong Baptist University for her constructive comments and valuable suggestions to an earlier draft of this article.

closer ties with China.⁷ Actually, the positive reactions to China's aid to fight Covid-19 in MENA were reminiscent of those in Africa in 2014 when China provided considerable aid in fighting Ebola.⁸

A Community of Common Destiny: China's New Approach to the World

The reciprocal aid between China and many countries illustrates China's new approach to the world order, which it views as a community of common destiny. It claims that its approach, reminiscent of the Kantian 'generalized' reciprocity,⁹ is different from the power politics that has characterized other great powers hitherto. Chinese officials reject the notion that the international system must be viewed inevitably from a zero-sum game and that a rising power will inescapably challenge a well-established hegemonic power (the so-called Thucydides Trap).¹⁰ Hence the concept of community of common destiny or community of shared future, supported by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and other new initiatives,¹¹ suggesting that not only can nations live in harmony but they can also achieve common prosperity, which President Xi Jinping included in a speech he gave at the Boao Forum for Asia in 2015.¹² The adoption by the 55th UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD) of a resolution calling for support for the building of "a human community with shared destiny,"¹³ had certainly comforted China in its conviction of the righteousness of this approach. China's policy during the Covid-19 crisis falls within the context of this conception of its attempts at erecting a new world order, in which the development of a "global health community" has become ostensibly one of the tasks of China's diplomacy,¹⁴ dubbed "mask diplomacy"¹⁵ after China supplied millions of masks and medical equipment (from both the central and provincial governments, and private sector) globally.

China's health cooperation with and aid to developing countries already dates back to the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁶ It has sent doctors abroad to run clinics, established malaria prevention and treatment centers, built hospitals and other health facilities, offered medicines and equipment, as well as trained in China medical staff from developing countries. This health diplomacy has been an important part of China's South-South cooperation, particularly in Africa.¹⁷ China is among the few countries in the world that dispatch government-paid medical personnel to work and remain in Africa for prolonged periods of time. In general, other medical organizations are not funded by governments; they receive donations from charities or private groups.¹⁸ Therefore, China's approach to addressing Covid-19 in the MENA, like in the rest of the world, reflects its foreign policy and the theory of international relations and philosophy that it has unfolded for two decades. Thus, it has committed to offer aid to countries in need to fight Covid-19, endorsing the concept of one human community with a shared future.¹⁹

China's Health Diplomacy in the MENA

The thinking

In 2020, China's health diplomacy in the MENA region has been noteworthy, not least because of the level of trust, an important, albeit neglected, dimension in International Relations,²⁰ that has characterized the growing relationship but also the commitment to expand and/or enhance ties. Unlike the mistrust that dominated European discourse on China's aid, most MENA countries exhibited no such misgivings. In recent years, China-MENA relations have grown considerably, particularly in the areas of trade, business, energy, technology and economics. For different reasons, both China and the MENA countries decided to expand their relations bilaterally and within multilateral organizations, which resulted in the signing of Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships (Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and UAE), Strategic Partnerships (Sudan, Iraq, Morocco, Qatar, Jordan, Djibouti, Kuwait, and Oman), Strategic cooperation relationship (Turkey), and Innovative Comprehensive Partnership (Israel).²¹

Soon after becoming president and launching the One Belt, One Road, renamed BRI in 2015, President Xi indicated at the Ministerial Meeting of the CASC in 2014 that "the establishment of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum was a strategic step the two sides took for the long-term development of the China-Arab relations."²² This was followed two years later by the publication of the Arab Policy Paper, which stressed that China would maintain its long-established friendship with the Arab states and

promote cooperation at all levels, reiterating the strategic nature of those relations whose aim is ostensibly to promote peace and stability.²³ Therefore, by the time Covid-19 struck China, Beijing had already enhanced its relations with virtually all MENA, including the non-Arab states (Iran, Israel, and Turkey).

Most MENA governments came to China's aid soon after the epidemic had surged. Indeed, whatever their capabilities, MENA countries sent millions of masks and other medical equipment to Wuhan, the city most afflicted by the virus. While fighting the virus on their territory, Chinese authorities clearly linked their response to the pandemic to the necessity to "remind[s] the world that, in the era of globalization, all countries' interests are closely interconnected and human society has one shared future," and global society must thus "continue building the community of common destiny." President Xi insisted that, "China hopes to step up public health cooperation with the world to interpret the true essence of building a community with a shared future for humanity...."²⁴ This was precisely the policy that he presented to the world on 18 May 2020 during the 73rd World Health Assembly, reiterating that, "Mankind is a community with a shared future."²⁵

The content

In the beginning of the outbreak, MENA states helped China by sending significant medical supplies and equipment (See Table) and expressed their solidarity. For instance, Beijing was touched by the way the Emiratis supported China not only materially, but also morally: "When Burj Khalifa, ADNOC Headquarters, and other UAE iconic landmarks lit up the colors of the Chinese national flag and slogans in solidarity with China on 2nd February, many Chinese living and working here in the UAE were moved to tears."²⁶

Once China began to recover and as the pandemic reached the MENA, Beijing unfolded its health diplomacy, relying on various sources: central and local governments, state enterprises and private companies, foundations, individual donations from Chinese in China and Chinese nationals residing in the MENA. The support they offered (see table below) consisted mainly of medical supplies and at times cash, but it also included medical advice and scientific knowledge transfer to treat patients, and trade deals to purchase medical supplies from China.

TABLE: MENA-CHINA & CHINA-MENA MEDICAL AID²⁷

	MENA's aid to China	Chinese aid to MENA
Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships		
Algeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500,000 three-layer masks • 20,000 goggles • 300,000 gloves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical supplies • medical team composed of 13 doctors and 8 virologists
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 million medical masks • 10 tons of medical equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first four-ton shipment of medical supplies, including 20,000 N95 masks, 10,000 protective medical suits, and 10,000 COVID-19 testing kits • another four-ton shipment composed of 70,000 COVID-19 testing kits, 10,000 masks, 10,000 protective medical suits • 30-ton delivery containing a million masks, 150,000 N95 masks, 70,000 COVID-19 test kits, 1,000 temperature screening devices, 70,000 protective

		medical suits, and 70,000 medical gloves
Saudi Arabia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ultrasound machines non-invasive ventilators defibrillators patient monitors infusion/injection pumps continuous renal replacement therapy 1,159 medical devices 300,000 standard masks 1,000 protective suits 60 ultrasound machines 30 non-invasive ventilators 89 defibrillators 277 patient monitors 500 infusion pumps 3 dialysis machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> team of eight medical specialists from various areas of expertise, including virus testing, infectious disease, respiratory disease, intensive care, and traditional Chinese medicine masks, protective suits, nucleic acid testing kits and infrared thermometers \$265 million deal to supply Saudi Arabia with 9 million Covid-19 test kits, 500 specialist technicians and six test laboratories.
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 million surgical masks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chloroquine Phosphate medicine N95 masks disposable medical masks financial donations, medical supplies, such face masks, goggles, protective garments and ventilators 500 prefabricated rooms with beds, desks and chairs 15 tons of medical supplies that included 1512 boxes of diagnostic kits, oxygen-breathing apparatus, body temperature monitors, hospital disinfectants, ordinary and N95 masks, clothing, gloves, and protective glasses, COVID-19 detection kits, oxygen generators, and anti-coronation drugs
United Arab Emirates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face masks Gloves humanitarian program to defend healthcare personnel in China who working to contain Covid-19 launch a new gigantic-throughput lab in the UAE to enable testing and diagnosis of Covid-19, the first in the world of this level to operate outside China, to perform tens of thousands RT-PCR tests daily 	

Strategic Partnerships		
Sudan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 400,000 medical masks • 35th Chinese medical team in Sudan exchanged information with Chinese expert medics on COVID-19 prevention and control • 34 meetings, conducted on-site guidance seven times, trained 18 times, and trained more than 2,200 people; those experts visited hospitals and isolation centers throughout the country
Iraq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seven-member team of experts in disease control and prevention to stay in Iraq for one month to assist with testing, healing and follow-up care • diagnostic kits, medical materials, and traditional Chinese medicine • masks, protective clothing, goggles and nucleic acid testing kits
Morocco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150,000 surgical masks • 900,000 medical gloves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15,000 medical gloves, 20,000 N95 masks and 2,000 medical protective suits • four distinct flights delivered large shipments of medical supplies
Qatar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300-ton medical supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 million medical masks and 640,000 disinfectants • one million pairs of medical gloves and 7,000 sets of protective clothing
Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks (donated by Jordanian residing in China) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several shipments of medical supplies • materials valued at \$US1.2 million • 10,000 medical protection suits, 60,000 face masks, 10,000 gloves, 200 forehead thermometers and 20,000 testing kits, etc.
Djibouti		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12-member medical team • Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and Jack Ma's foundation include face masks, more testing kits, items of protective clothing and sets of face shields • multiple batches of medical supplies and funds from Chinese government
Kuwait	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$US 3 million for the purchase of medical supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • many tons of medical supplies, including diagnosis and treatment devices, and repatriated citizens and logistical equipment • eight-member medical team of experts specializing in domains

		including virus testing, infectious disease, respiratory disease, intensive care, and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)
Oman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> medical materials and equipment from China increase the medical supplies reserve donations by Chinese in Oman of infrared thermograph thermometer to Muscat Airport, offered testing kits to the MoH money + medical supplies 100,000 masks
Strategic Cooperation Relationship		
Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 93,500 masks 500 medical protective glasses 10,000 non-sterilized pieces of equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200,000 medical masks from the Turkish Exporters Assembly 65,200 surgical masks 5,000 protective suits 10,000 surgical head covers Money + medical supplies
Innovative Comprehensive Partnership		
Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical supplies and protective gear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange of information from Chinese epidemiologists to Israeli physicians through an online program Over a million surgical masks 500,000 protective uniforms for medical teams Additional protective equipment and testing supplies Collaborated with an Israeli medical tech company to establish a testing lab in Gaza
No Strategic Partnerships		
Bahrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face masks 	
Palestine		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,000 coronavirus test kits and ventilators Other medical equipment and devices 10-member medical team Video-conference meetings between Chinese and Palestinian medical professionals
Libya		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 medical experts 834 nucleic acid diagnostic kits 5,000 medical protective suits 15,000N95 masks 100,000 surgical masks 5,000 goggles

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,000 pairs of medical gloves
Syria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,016 Covid-19 test kits • Medical gear
Lebanon		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600 + 1,600 + 1,320 protective goggles • 300 PCR testing kits • 200 manual thermometers • 3,000 kits • Over 1 million masks+17,500 masks • 20,000 + 1,500 protective gears • 1,000 shoe covers • Information on prevention and treatment
Mauritania		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20,000 test kits & more • 100,000 masks • 1,000 protective medical suits • Respirators,
Yemen		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,000 facial masks • Other, unspecified humanitarian aid.

Impact of China's health diplomacy in the MENA

Overwhelmingly, China's health diplomacy was hailed by individual MENA states despite a couple of mishaps with the shipments to Turkey. China's deliveries on 9 April of medical supplies with a label referring to Ararat Mountain (the controversial territory bordering Turkey) troubled Ankara;²⁸ however, the Turkish government seemed content with Beijing's clarification and neutrality of the issue.²⁹ One can surmise that the mutual aid during the pandemic, coupled with other geopolitical interests, will likely strengthen Sino-Turkish relations.³⁰

Some of the medical equipment imported from China was defective.³¹ This was particularly the case in some European countries, the United States, and Canada. In the MENA, only Turkey reported some defective medical material from China.³² This occurred when many of the countries lacked such supplies that only China could provide, and they thus rushed to import them. Covid-19 resulted in a worldwide scramble for medical supplies, particularly, masks, gowns, ventilators, testing kits, most of which produced in China. Because of those complaints regarding the faulty medical equipment and the negative impact they could have on China's image, Beijing decided to address the issue swiftly and drastically. Indeed, Chinese officials decided to scrutinize each batch of N95 respirators, ventilators and other medical supplies for quality issues, ensuring they respect national and international standards before they could be exported. The government introduced new rules which involved China's exports in 11 types of all medical equipment: respirators and surgical masks, protective clothing, infrared thermometers, ventilators, surgical caps, goggles, gloves, shoe covers, patient monitors, disinfection towels and disinfectants.³³ In view of counterfeiting and unlicensed companies producing medical material,³⁴ China also required domestic certification as well as foreign licenses for medical products shipped abroad.³⁵

The Covid-19 crisis provided an opportunity for China and **Algeria** not only to express their gratitude for aiding each other but also to reiterate the solidity of their long-lasting relations, which will undoubtedly be enhanced and taken to a higher level, to boost their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and cooperating further within the framework of the BRI to which Algeria is a party. Faced with a political and socioeconomic crisis, Algeria will certainly need Chinese investment; because it has

resisted borrowing from the IMF,³⁶ Algeria will certainly rely on China for loans and greater economic cooperation. China, for its part will certainly need countries like Algeria to heighten its image in the MENA region, especially when Western countries, the United States in particular, have decided to counter China's power and to demonize China's policies.³⁷

China, which called for the lifting of economic sanctions, and **Iran** have reiterated their strong friendship and ties and committed to continue their cooperation. Iran's ambassador declared that, "...both countries are managing their relations based on win-win cooperation, acknowledgement of their sovereign rights and independence and mutual respect for each other's different social and governance systems."³⁸

In April, **Qatar** had also participated in the activation of the Sino-Arab mutual aid in the areas of preparedness and monitoring and China's initiative on Sino-Arab collaboration in the health sphere.³⁹ Chinese Ambassador to Qatar Zhou Jian declared that, "We will never forget that Qatar Airways has used its global network to deliver supplies to China, lined up on the runway of Hamad International Airport, with their engines roaring, each carrying 300-ton medical supplies is unforgettable for me."⁴⁰

The aid showed an interesting development in China-**Saudi Arabia** bilateral relations. Chinese Ambassador to the kingdom declared that, "despite the distance between the two countries, the genes of solidarity, cooperation, friendship and mutual assistance are inherited in the traditional culture of both peoples, which makes the sincere friendship between the two peoples even stronger in these special and difficult times."⁴¹ More importantly were Saudi attitudes toward China during that period. Saudi media, some of which usually reflect official positions, were particularly laudatory toward China's handling of the fight against Covid-19.⁴² Briefly, they praised China as the only country that has acted competently in handling the crisis and, surprisingly, criticized the United States for blaming China, seen as a helpful US electoral scheme but an unproductive foreign policy, with huge drawbacks. Like other countries in the MENA, Saudis argued that "maybe it [the virus] started in a country before China, but its origin does not concern us as much as overcoming it and returning to 'normal' life,"⁴³ an assertion that echoed Chinese statements. Although some media outlets criticized China (its alleged 'manipulation of Covid-19 statistics,' 'it's infecting the whole world,'), in general, assessments of China's handling of Covid-19 and its economic development have elicited high praise.

An editorial in China's Xinhua news agency pointed out that, "China and **Morocco** have strengthened relations through joint efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. In parallel, their multilayered cooperation in public health, culture and other fields has deepened under the Belt and Road framework."⁴⁴ However, it remains to be seen how Morocco, like other traditional US allies, will be able to balance its foreign relations in the post-Covid-19 era when Sino-US and Sino-European relations might enter severe storm.

In **Jordan**, like in other countries in the MENA, this cooperation has positioned "China [as] a trustworthy country," which shared experience and medical equipment.⁴⁵ Trust is a concept that China has sought to persuade most of its partners worldwide to share.

China-**Kuwait** relations, like other Sino-Gulf relations, will certainly continue to flourish, as illustrated in the volume of Sino-Kuwaiti trade, which, amounted to US\$12.7 billion in the first nine months of 2019.⁴⁶

In **Oman**, according to Omani observers, such support "gave China a lot of appreciation as a true ally and friend of these countries [those it aided] and as a *trusted friend* in a time of trouble [Author's emphasis]."⁴⁷ Thus, Sino-Omani relations will certainly expand to many areas, including health.

In **Sudan**, Chinese experts' visit offered the opportunity to reiterate the strong bonds of friendship and oft-repeated mottos of "strategic trust" and "mutual trust, mutual benefit, mutual help and mutual learning." Many Sudanese officials expressed their gratitude to China: "We hope the China-Sudan ties

would continue, and we hope to continue working with the People's Republic of China in its work to support Sudan in its development and in the fields of health, education, agriculture and others."⁴⁸

In **Tunisia**, President Kais Saied acknowledged China's strong assistance for Tunisia's economic and social development, as well as its shipping numerous batches of medical materials. The president expressed his admiration for China's accomplishments and his conviction that he was optimistic about cooperation between Tunis and Beijing, stating that bilateral relations will serve as a model of international relations.⁴⁹

Beijing's health diplomacy provided an opportunity for the **Palestinian Authority** to express its gratitude to China, which has close cooperation with **Israel**, for its support to the Palestinian cause.

Regarding **Syria**, China's aid, its geopolitical position and its need for investments from China for reconstruction, and Damascus weighty role in the BRI, will certainly lead to stronger relations.

Finally, with regards to **Lebanon**, given the latter's participation in the BRI, its dire need for investment and infrastructure development, Sino-Lebanese ties will also be greatly enhanced.

Conclusion

China's health diplomacy is a long-standing one. Apart from the initial glitches with Turkey, China's health diplomacy has certainly strengthened bilateral relations with the MENA states in various ways. When the pandemic affected MENA countries, Beijing helped all of them, donating medical supplies and equipment. While it is true that the MENA, particularly the Gulf region, is important for China, evidence shows that Beijing's actions derive from its evolving conceptions of responsibility⁵⁰ and President Xi's plans to make China appear and act as a global, responsible and benevolent power. Undoubtedly, this health diplomacy, or "Health Silk Road," has contributed to enhance China's soft power and image in the MENA. By providing considerable assistance, China seeks to convince its partners of its commitment and dependability, and to make them overlook its mistakes and responsibilities in the early mismanagement of the crisis. China endeavors to convince developing, as well as European countries that, in the broader context of Sino-American competition, China can help them in this unprecedented health crisis, whereas the United States, severely hit by the pandemic, has adopted an inward-looking posture. Through its health diplomacy, China intends to use the Covid-19 pandemic to promote its companies, its products, but also traditional Chinese medicine (TCM),⁵¹ despite reservations about TCM benefits.⁵²

But China is not the only power practicing health diplomacy. Today, in the MENA alone, Turkey, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar have undertaken similar actions. The United States has deployed this soft power for decades. Incidentally, it is providing \$110 million to help countries in the MENA fight Covid-19, including Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, as well as the West Bank. US companies and charities are also contributing. US funding aims to improve disease detection and prevention, bolster lab capacity, and treat patients.⁵³ In addition, the United States is partnering with humanitarian groups to support water sanitation and hygiene programs. For its part, the European Union launched "Team Europe" in early April, a package of more than €20 billion to support partner countries in the fight against Covid-19 and its consequences.⁵⁴ In the MENA, Jordan and Lebanon will receive €240 million to support their citizens and Syrian refugees.⁵⁵ Iran will get €20 million in emergency support. Refugees in Turkey will obtain small-scale health infrastructure and equipment worth €90 million.⁵⁶ Whereas China's aid during the pandemic consisted primarily of medical supplies and medical expertise, the U.S. and the E.U. have planned on longer-term support. In fighting the Covid-19 and its consequences, both types of help are needed and welcome in the MENA. Now, China has also devised new plans to aid the developing world (debt forgiveness, construction of China-Africa friendship hospitals and CDCs, provision of vaccine to all, financial support to combat the COVID-19...)⁵⁷ Overall, China's health diplomacy in the MENA has been very visible and most of the governments in the region have expressed their public appreciation for the aid it provided. There is no study yet on the general MENA

citizens' opinions about China's medical assistance although research has shown that perceptions in the pre-pandemic period were comparatively positive not only in the Middle East but also in Africa.⁵⁸ It remains to be seen how China will act to preserve that positive image and whether it can maintain it in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Yahia H. Zoubir is currently Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Doha Center, Qatar, and Senior Professor of International Studies and Director of Research in Geopolitics at KEDGE Business School, France. Prior to joining KEDGE in 2005, he taught at multiple universities in the United States, and was a visiting faculty member at various universities in China, Europe, the United States, India, Indonesia, South Korea, and the Middle East and North Africa.

Disclaimer: *The views expressed in this piece of work are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung or its Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean.*

ENDNOTES

- ¹ President Xi Jinping is said to have used 'Health Silk Road,' during a conversation with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in March 2020, when Italy had been hit hard by the Covid-19 epidemic. See, Lily Kuo, 'China sends doctors and masks overseas as domestic coronavirus infections drop', The Guardian, 19 March 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/19/china-positions-itself-as-a-leader-in-tackling-the-coronavirus>
- ² Wang Qingyun, "Saving lives was China's only goal behind global aid, Wang says," China Daily, 24 May 2020, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202005/24/WS5eca2e72a310a8b241157f73.html>
- ³ State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, "Fighting Covid-19 China in Action," June 2020, http://english.scio.gov.cn/whitepapers/2020-06/07/content_76135269.htm
- ⁴ Mathias Döpfner, "The coronavirus pandemic makes it clear: Europe must decide between the US and China," Business Insider, 3 May 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-pandemic-crisis-clear-europe-must-choose-us-china-2020-5?r=US&IR=T>
- ⁵ The White House, "A New National Security Strategy for a New Era," 18 December 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/new-national-security-strategy-new-era/>
- ⁶ Zeno Leoni, *American Grand Strategy from Obama to Trump: Imperialism after Bush and China's Hegemonic Challenge* (N.Y.: Palgrave, 2020).
- ⁷ Bryant Harris, "Intel: US warns Middle Eastern partners against Chinese investment," Al-Monitor, 4 June 2020, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/06/schenker-china-uae-israel-lebanon-coronavirus-covid19.html>
- ⁸ Chen Wang, "China's Aid to Africa's Fight Against Ebola," *South-south Cooperation and Chinese Foreign Aid* (Vienna, Austria: Springer, 2019), pp. 77-93.
- ⁹ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 298-299.
- ¹⁰ Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides Trap?* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).
- ¹¹ Fu Ying, "China's Vision for the World: A Community of Shared Future China's vision is based on three pillars: cooperative security, common development, and political inclusiveness," The Diplomat, 22 June 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/chinas-vision-for-the-world-a-community-of-shared-future/>. Madame Fu Ying was the chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress of China in 2017.
- ¹² Xi Jinping, "Full text of Chinese President's speech at Boao Forum for Asia," China.org, 29 March 2015, http://www.china.org.cn/business/2015-03/29/content_35185720.htm
- ¹³ Xinhua, "Chinese landmark concept put into UN resolution for first time," 11 February 2011, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/11/c_136049319.htm
- ¹⁴ Cao Desheng, "Wang: China will never let foreign forces interfere in domestic affairs," chinadaily.com.cn, 24 May 2020, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202005/24/WS5eca3c5ea310a8b241157fb7.html>
- ¹⁵ Brian Wong, "China's Mask Diplomacy," The Diplomat, 25 March 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/chinas-mask-diplomacy/>
- ¹⁶ Olivia J. Killeen, Alissa Davis, Joseph D. Tucker, Benjamin Mason Meier *Chinese Global Health Diplomacy in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges*, Glob Health Gov, 12(2), 2018, p. 4; see, also, Todd Balazovic and Li Aoxue, "Healing agents," China Daily, 23 August 2013, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/m/chinahealth/2013-08/23/content_21973033.htm

-
- ¹⁷ Li Anshan, "Chinese Medical Cooperation in Africa With Special Emphasis on the Medical Teams and Anti-Malaria Campaign," Discussion paper 52, Nordiska Afrikainstitute, Uppsala 2011, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:399727/FULLTEXT02.pdf>
- ¹⁸ "Health Diplomacy: In Africa, China's Soft Power Provides a Healing Touch," Knowledge@Wharton, 22 November 2011, <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/health-diplomacy-in-africa-chinas-soft-power-provides-a-healing-touch/>
- ¹⁹ Wen Qing, "Shared Answers for Shared Problems-Renewed calls for global efforts to contain COVID-19 pandemic," Beijing Review, 20 March 2020, http://www.bjreview.com/Current_Issue/Editor_Choice/202003/t20200323_800198186.html
- ²⁰ Torsten Michel, Michel, T. "Trust and International Relations", Oxford Bibliographies, 28 September 2016), <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0192.xml>; Jan Ruzicka, J., and Nicholas J. Wheeler, "The puzzle of trusting relationships in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty", *International Affairs* 86(1), 2010: 69–85.
- ²¹ Degang Sun, "China's partnership diplomacy in the Middle East," *Asia Dialogue*, 24 March 2020, <https://theasiadialogue.com/2020/03/24/chinas-partnership-diplomacy-in-the-middle-east/>
- ²² Xi Jinping, "Promoting the Silk Road Spirit and Deepening China-Arab Cooperation," speech at the opening ceremony of the 6th Ministerial Meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, 5 June 2014, http://www.china.org.cn/report/2014-07/14/content_32941818.htm
- ²³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 'China's Arab Policy Paper', 13 January 2016, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1331683.shtml
- ²⁴ "Commentary: In war against COVID-19, vision of community with shared future shines," *Xinhua*, 11 March 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/11/c_138866546.htm
- ²⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, "Fighting COVID-19 Through Solidarity and Cooperation-Building a Global Community of Health for All," Statement by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China At Virtual Event of Opening of the 73rd World Health Assembly Beijing, 18 May 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1780221.shtml
- ²⁶ Lin Yaduo, Chargé d'affaires at Chinese Embassy in Abu Dhabi, cited in, "UAE's gestures of support moved Chinese to tears: Envoy," *Emirates News Agency*, 6 February 2020, <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395302821822>
- ²⁷ The figures are extracted from dozens of MENA and Chinese sources.
- ²⁸ Fan Lingzhi, "Slogans on Chinese donation to Armenia sparking Turkish discontent not official stance: analysts," *Global Times*, 14 April 2020, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1185511.shtml>
- ²⁹ Siranush Ghazanchyan, "Turkey asks China to clarify aid packages to Armenia, *Public Radio of Armenia*, 12 April 2020, <https://en.armradio.am/2020/04/12/turkey-asks-china-to-clarify-aid-packages-to-armenia/>
- ³⁰ Rupert Stone, "How coronavirus pandemic could expand China's footprint in Turkey," *Middle East Eye*, 21 May 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-coronavirus-pandemic-could-expand-chinas-footprint-turkey>
- ³¹ By Alice SU, "Faulty masks. Flawed tests. China's quality control problem in leading global COVID-19 fight," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 April 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-04-10/china-beijing-supply-world-coronavirus-fight-quality-control>
- ³² Ragip Soylu, "Coronavirus: Turkey rejects Chinese testing kits over inaccurate results," *Middle East Eye*, 27 March 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/coronavirus-turkey-faulty-chinese-kits-not-use>

-
- ³³ Keith Bradsher, "China Delays Mask and Ventilator Exports After Quality Complaints," New York Times, 11 April 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/11/business/china-mask-exports-coronavirus.html>
- ³⁴ Alexandra Stevenson and Tiffany May, "China pushes to churn out corona gear, yet struggles to police it," New York Times, 27 March 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/business/china-coronavirus-masks-tests.html>
- ³⁵ Elise Mak, "China tightens grip on med-tech exports to plug loopholes after complaints," 2 April 2020, Bio World, <https://www.bioworld.com/articles/434160-china-tightens-grip-on-med-tech-exports-to-plug-loopholes-after-complaints>
- ³⁶ Yahia H. Zoubir & Anna Jacobs, "Will COVID-19 reshape Algeria's political system?" Brookings, 10 May 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/will-covid-19-reshape-algerias-political-system/>
- ³⁷ Colum Lynch and Robbie Gramer, "U.S. and China Turn Coronavirus into a Geopolitical Football," Foreign Policy, 11 March 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/11/coronavirus-geopolitics-china-united-states-trump-administration-competing-global-health-response/>; Joseph de Weck, "China's COVID-19 Diplomacy is Backfiring in Europe," Foreign Policy Research Institute, 21 April 2020, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/04/chinas-covid-19-diplomacy-is-backfiring-in-europe/>
- ³⁸ Xie Wenting, "Iranian ambassador hails China for its help during battle against COVID-19," Global Times, 19 April 2020, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1186068.shtml>
- ³⁹ Qatar Ministry of Public Health, 9 April 2020, <https://www.moph.gov.qa/Admin/Lists/News/DispForm.aspx?ID=138&ContentTypeld=0x01004E4C8582BF71EB4D926E9057BB49E794>
- ⁴⁰ Gulf Times, "China will never forget help from Qatar: envoy," 3 April 2020, <https://www.gulf-times.com/story/659942/China-will-never-forget-help-from-Qatar-envoy>
- ⁴¹ Saudi Arabia and China sign \$265m deal to fight coronavirus," Arab News, 27 April 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1665366/saudi-arabia>
- ⁴² Andrew Leber, "China and Covid-19 in Saudi Media," 23 April 2020, Texas National Security Review, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/china-and-covid-19-in-saudi-media/>
- ⁴³ Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, "Coronavirus a Test for the World," Asharq el-Awsat, 19 March 2020, <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2188616/abdulrahman-al-rashed/coronavirus-test-world>
- ⁴⁴ Xinhua, "How China, Morocco support each other in fight against COVID-19," 1 June 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-06/01/c_139105827.htm. On Sino-Morocco relations, see, Yahia H. Zoubir, "Expanding Sino-Maghreb Relations: Morocco and Tunisia," Chatham House Research Paper, February 2020. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/expanding-sino-maghreb-relations-morocco-and-tunisia>
- ⁴⁵ Xinhua, "Roundup: Cooperation in fight against COVID-19 deepens China-Jordan relationship," 5 June 2020, <http://en.brnn.com/n3/2020/0605/c416051-9697754.html>
- ⁴⁶ Xinhua, "Chinese ambassador says ties with Kuwait at best level in history," 25 December 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/25/c_138655499.htm
- ⁴⁷ Professor Mohammad Al-Muqadam cited in, "Oman-China ties to prosper under BRI after COVID-19, say experts," Xinhua, 9 June 2020, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2020/0609/c90000-9698832.html>
- ⁴⁸ "Sudanese officials praise Chinese medical team's support in fight against COVID-19," Xinhua, 12 June 2020, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2020/0612/c90000-9699944.html>
- ⁴⁹ Xinhua, "Tunisian president thanks China for anti-epidemic assistance," 8 June 2020, https://www.focac.org/eng/zfgx_4/zjzw/t1787002.htm

- ⁵⁰ Pichamon Yeophantong, Governing the World: China's Evolving Conceptions of Responsibility, The Chinese Journal of International Politics, Volume 6, Issue 4, Winter 2013, Pages 329–364, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pot013>
- ⁵¹ Xinhua, "Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Promoting the Inheritance and Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine," 26 October 2019, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-10/26/content_5445336.htm
- ⁵² South China Morning Post, March 23, 2020, "Beijing Pushes Traditional Chinese Medicine as Coronavirus Treatment despite Questions over Benefits," <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3076500/beijing-pushes-traditional-chinese-medicine-coronavirus>
- ⁵³ U.S. Embassy in Georgia, "U.S. help counter COVID-19 outbreaks in Middle-East and North Africa," 4 May 2020, <https://ge.usembassy.gov/u-s-helps-counter-covid-19-outbreaks-in-middle-east-and-north-africa-may-4/>
- ⁵⁴ European Union External Action, "Coronavirus: European Union launches "Team Europe" package to support partner countries with more than €20 billion", 8 April 2020, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/77326/Coronavirus:%20European%20Union%20launches%20
- ⁵⁵ European Union External Action, "Team Europe" - Global EU Response to Covid-19 supporting partner countries and fragile populations," https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/77470/%E2%80%9Cteam-europe%E2%80%9D-global-eu-response-covid-19-supporting-partner-countries-and-fragile-populations_en
- ⁵⁶ Przemysław Osiewicz, "EU-MENA Relations in a time of pandemic," Middle East Institute, 28 April 2020, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/eu-mena-relations-time-pandemic>
- ⁵⁷ "Keynote speech by President Xi Jinping at Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19," Xinhua, 18 June 2020, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202006/18/WS5eeabf83a310834817253d02.html>
- ⁵⁸ Jörg Friedrichs, "Explaining China's popularity in the Middle East and Africa," Third World Quarterly, Vol., Issue 9 (2019), pp. 1634-1654.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

Thomas Volk
Director
Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean
Tunis, Tunisia
www.kas.de/poldimed
info.poldimed@kas.de



The text of this publication is published under a Creative Commons license: "Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike 4.0 international" (CC BY-SA 4.0), <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>