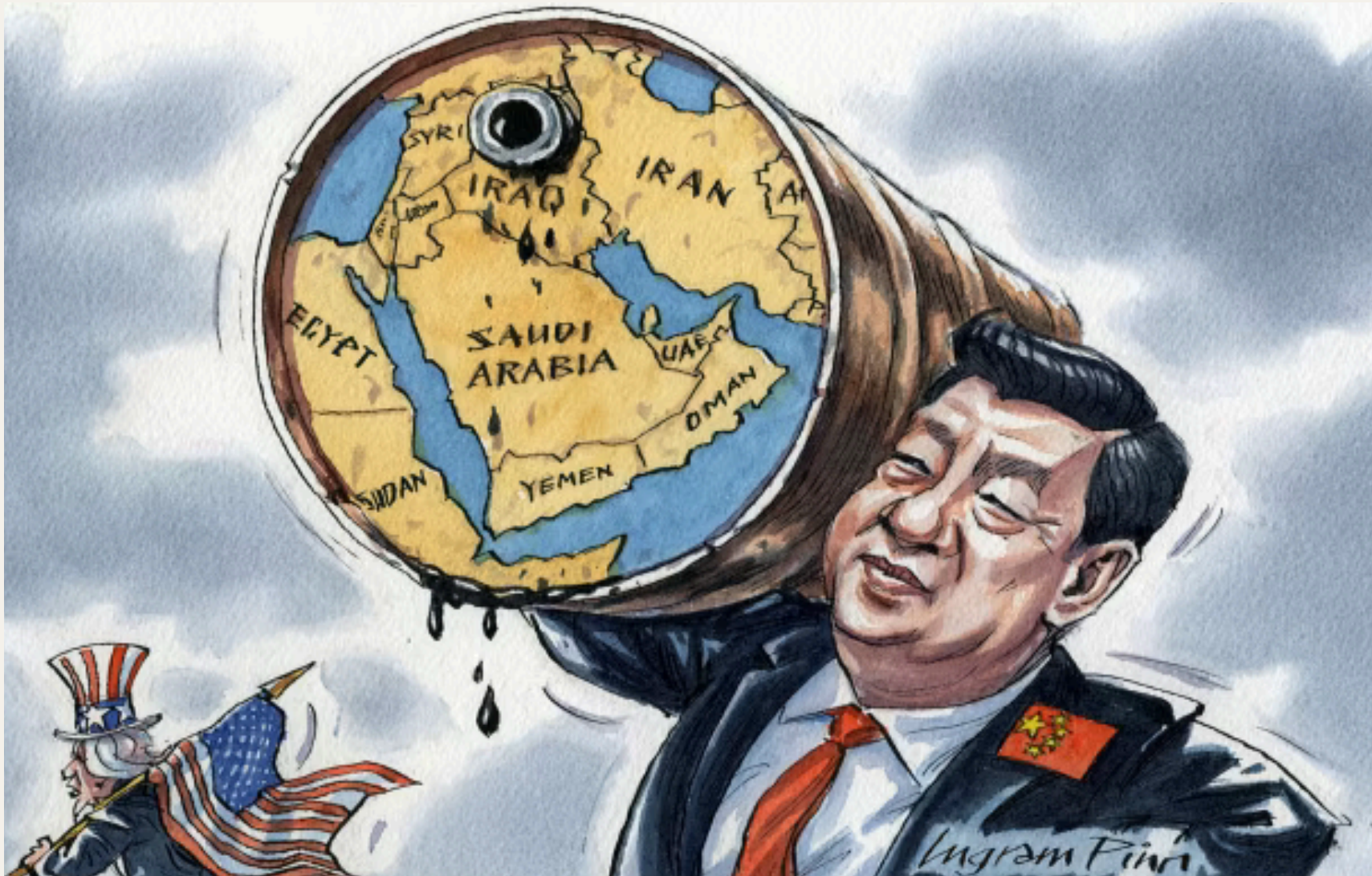


# Creating Peace: Can the People's Republic of China Replace the United States as the Primary Peace Broker in the Middle East?

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*Peace is Precious*



## Introduction

The Middle East has transformed into the latest region of great power competition. A region with an incredibly rich history has, once again, turned into an unstable and unpredictable region, and the United States and the People's Republic of China are two the leading diametrically opposed sides for becoming the primary external actor in the region. Both states have immense interests in the peace and stability in the region, from economic to security considerations, making this front of the great power competition incredibly important for the future of both states.

For much of the post World War 2 era, the United States had unprecedented external influence in the region, and as a result, became the main external broker of peace in the region; significant progress has been made in the establishment of relations between Israel and the Arab world since the Yom Kippur war, and the United States has taken extraordinary military power as an extension of peace diplomacy.

Whilst fragments of progress towards peace have been made, today the Middle East remains unstable and unpredictable. The United States has seen a brisk collapse in its influence in the region, and as a result, has seen a decline in its ability to further the peace initiative in the region.

This research project investigates whether the People's Republic of China can overtake the United States as the primary peace broker in the Middle East, with the essay analysing how the United States was able to garner such much influence; the factors behind the collapse of US influence; the precedent of Chinese peace-making across the region and the wider world; and the potential and limitations of Chinese peace-making capabilities in the Middle East.

## IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

This research project primarily seeks to fill a gap between the theoretical and practical implications of China's rise as a global superpower and understand whether China can replace US primacy in the Middle East peace process. In this, a brief exploration into the consequences of this paradigm shift vis-à-vis stability in the region is most pertinent. The implications of such research is that of how peace across the region can be accelerated, the implications of shifting power dynamics across the region, and its implications for the wider international economic and security environment, all of which serve as crucial areas to investigate in the new age of great power competition.

## METHODOLOGY

- Literature review of the theoretical approach to international mediation
- Understanding the reasons behind the collapse of US diplomatic efforts in the Middle East
  - Understanding China's motivations in the Middle East
- Analysis of China's peace-brokering efforts hitherto in the Middle East, including the Iran-Saudi Arabia rapprochement and the Beijing Declaration.
- Understanding what factors can aid in China's growth as the primary Middle Eastern peace-broker.

## Policy Recommendations

### Israel-Arab Normalisation:

1. Help broker an Arab Peace Initiative II.
2. Continue to develop relations with other Arab nations- such as Egypt and Qatar- to aid in multi-mediator peace discussions.
3. Continue work with Palestinian factions on building a plan for post-war Gaza.
4. Continue to reject the US's aims of spreading liberal democracy across the region- reject militarisation as an extension of diplomacy.

### Iran's Peace with the Region:

1. China should allow- implicitly- Iran to officially develop nuclear weapons.
2. Broker an Egypt- Iran normalisation agreement.
3. Advocate for a bifurcation/ partition of the Yemeni state.
4. Broker an Iranian-UAE agreement over the disputed Abu Musa, Greater Tunbs and Lesser Tunbs agreement.

## Conclusion

The People's Republic of China is evidently feasible to replace the United States as the primary peace broker in the Middle East. The difference in diplomatic strategy, from not relying merely on exerting hard power to pressure sides and its impartiality, provides a unique approach to mediation in the Middle East peace process. Whilst external issues continue to remain, from ingrained ideological and territorial disputes to irrational actions from many sides, China can nonetheless make progressive steps in both the Arab-Israeli normalisation process and Iran's peace with the wider region. As will be shown in the report, China is limited in the Israel-Arab front by the Palestinian question, an issue which China can only make small steps through an international coalition.

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