

Beat: Politics

China and the Policy of Passive Neutrality towards Gaza War?

Political

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China emerged as a rising economic power after the end of the Cold War, as it transformed from an Asian regional power to a global power based on economic growth. This power provided it with options and opportunities, and expanded its diplomatic potential.

Consequently, China became one of the main players in the current international system, and its international weight increased at a rapid pace, raising expectations that it will become, in the next few years, a parallel power to the United States of America, or perhaps the Super power in the world. Accordingly, Chinese foreign policy has witnessed major transformations and witnessed notable developments, at the same time China has become an important factor in the international diplomatic game. After China has a presence in all regions of the world, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, especially since China is linked to the Middle East region with vital interests, most notably energy security and other strategic interests.

Despite the existence of historical relations between China and the Arab world, Arab region has not been the focus of attention in Chinese strategy as it is today. The Chinese role remained limited to trade and cultural exchanges, and China did not seek a dynamic presence in the region.

Although Chinese orientations have actually changed towards the international challenges and crises taking place in the Middle East region in general and the Arab region in particular, and the exacerbation of crises that these challenges have produced has put the entire Arab region in a state of political and social instability, the most dangerous of which is Gaza war, but its foreign policy specifically towards Arab world is still within the framework of the (policy of passive neutrality).

China has crystallized the determinants of its foreign policy towards the region according to what serves its vision and to exploit what is happening in the region in order to achieve its interests as a super power .Consequently, we can understand what are the factors supporting the Chinese role and influence in the Arab region and its impact on Arab regional security, especially Arab world constitutes a strategic depth for major powers aspiring to compete for world leadership.

On the other side of the story, since China is one of the five major permanent members of the Security Council, it has taken a positive stance towards many Arab issues. It supports the Arab and Palestinian issue by pressuring Israel to respond to Palestinian and Arab rights, especially those related to the necessity of ending the Israeli occupation or putting an end to the attacks on the Palestinian people, but at the same time it seeks to achieve balance with the American presence in the region.

Especially since today's Gaza war will result from changes that are no longer limited to the Middle East region, but will affect the structure of the international system, the future of international relations, and the nature of the vital parties in the structure of this system.

Therefore, we need to ask some questions about the Chinese position towards Gaza war? We will try to answer the questions briefly as follows:

The First Question: What is China's position on Gaza war? What is the criterion that governs its reaction to this war?

A/ The reality is that the criterion that governs the Chinese position towards Gaza War is the standard of Chinese-Israeli relations. China always seeks to improve its diplomatic relationship with Israel, because this will find great resonance in American circles, especially the Jewish lobby, which plays an important and effective role in the American Congress.

In addition to China's access to advanced technology and modern military techniques. In the same context, China was able, by consolidating its diplomatic relationship with Israel, to cancel the economic sanctions imposed by the United States of America in 1983, which included a ban on the export of wired and wireless technology from the United States of America to China. On the other hand, the political decision-maker in Israel is aware of the future importance of China.

The Second Question: What is the nature of the role that China will play in this crisis in the future, in a way that makes it compete with the American role?

A/ Despite China's support for a historic settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it deliberately avoids entering directly into the details of this issue, because it considers the Palestinian issue to be under the guardianship of the United States of America.

Thus, there are limits to what China can accomplish in this crisis, and the most that China did was that it was a supporter in the United Nations ceasefire meetings between Israel and Hamas. In September 2023, Chinese Foreign Minister discussed with American officials the dimensions of the conflict between Israel and Hamas, amid fears that the circle of this conflict would expand, which might lead to a regional war.

The Third Question: What is the impact of Gaza war on Arab-Chinese relations?

A/ Definitely, Chinese-Israeli relations have had and still have a negative impact on the path of Arab-Chinese relations. Despite the large volume of trade exchange between China and Arab world, China avoids providing any aid or direct military support to Arab country, because Israel considers any support Military action by Arab countries leads to imbalances in the region and a direct threat to their security. Accordingly, since 1991, China has followed a specific strategy in its policy towards its relationship with Arabs in a way that serves its own interests.

The Fourth Question: According to (1, 2, 3), what is China's position on the Palestinian issue in general?

A/ Perhaps there is almost consensus that China is one of the countries that possesses all the elements that qualify it to occupy a strong position on the international scene, and it pursues an independent, peaceful foreign policy with the aim of protecting its independence and preserving the integrity of its territories. It also seeks to build a new international economic and political system. However, it follows political determinants towards Arab countries. From the Chinese point of view, the Palestinian issue stems from its vision of the Palestinian resistance, with its broad background and long history, as China believes that the Palestinian resistance has not provided tangible action in the pattern of a massive popular revolution that can change the balance of power in the Arab world.

In the same context, Chinese position on the Palestinian issue reflects its foreign policy priorities as required by its interests. Therefore, the basic dilemma of this negative stance towards the Palestinian issue reflects the secretions of socialist imperialism represented in Chinese ideology, while Beijing always claims that it seeks to crystallize and formulate a vision that is consistent with the magnitude of the changes in the region, which forms part of the Chinese vital field.

Accordingly, there is ambiguity in the determinants of contemporary Chinese policy towards Arab countries, especially in the Palestinian issue, with China adopting a special vision to solve the problems of Arab countries based on adopting diplomatic channels in implementing the policy of (passive neutrality), provided that China not getting involved militarily in Arab countries. This is offset by differences in defining the foundations of Arab policy towards China, defining the principles of Arab foreign policy, and indicating the extent to which China is affected by any measures or policies that cause instability.

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