



UAE Looks to China in Post-COVID Economic Future

OE Watch Commentary: The coronavirus seems likely to accelerate the UAE's fast-moving ambitions of becoming a regional hub of the digitally powered global economy. The UAE has invested significantly in AI-driven domains, which are poised to become growth sectors in an otherwise dismal economic landscape. The UAE government was recently restructured "in a drive to create a more agile government" that can optimally respond to "this new phase in history." The restructuring is part of a broader plan to help the UAE become "the fastest country in recovery" from the COVID-19 crisis. The projected recovery plan, if implicitly, will rely largely on the UAE's position as a transport, logistics and distribution hub in China's "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI). China is already the UAE's leading trade partner in non-oil commodities.

In June, the UAE and Egypt - another country which stands to benefit economically from the BRI - participated in a "BRI Ministers" videoconference focused on

"Combating COVID-19 with Solidarity." In a joint statement, the ministers agreed on the importance of re-establishing and strengthening "cross-border and trans-regional transport and logistic passages" and encouraging "interoperable and multi-modal transport." The BRI transport and logistic passages will in theory be powered by new technology and linked via a digital communications network that, as of now is informally referred to as the "Digital Silk Road." For the UAE, the BRI is an opportunity to capitalize on its investments in digital technology and its strategic focus on controlling access to ports and strategic locations throughout the Arab region. China's BeiDou satellite navigation system, which became fully operational in June, will likely be used to guide movement along the BRI's high-tech trade corridor (see: "China Completes Global Deployment of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System" in this issue of *OE Watch*). Tunisia and Saudi Arabia have already sought to position themselves as early adopters of this new system, with the UAE and Egypt likely not far behind.

The Emirates see themselves as a bridge between China and the West, cooperating with both but beholden to neither. As summarized in the accompanying passage from *The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research*, a local think tank: "China today is a great economic and military power. Strengthening cooperation with China, especially economic, is in the interest of Arab countries, as it allows them to balance their relations between East and West and to diversify their options and mix between different models." **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation participants. (2019).

Source: President of Russia, <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/photos/big2x/7L3BE2AgFAia2dowMxUGeAKU1DKK7xev.JPG>, CC by 4.0

“Strengthening cooperation with China, especially economic, is in the interest of Arab countries...”

Source:

"UAE Cabinet reshuffle appoints new ministers and merges departments," *The National*, 5 July 2020. <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/uae-cabinet-reshuffle-appoints-new-ministers-and-merges-departments-1.1044316>

التعاون الصيني العربي يتطلع لمستقبل مشترك أرحب على أساس التطورات المثمرة السابقة

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Prime Minister and Vice President of the UAE, merged ministries and departments in a Cabinet reshuffle on Sunday in a drive to create a more agile government... The goal was for a government that was quicker in its decision-making, effectively adjusted to changes and better seized opportunities in dealing with this new phase in history – “an agile government quick in solidifying the achievement of our nation”, he wrote on Twitter... “Anyone who thinks that the world after Covid-19 will be the same as the one before it is mistaken,” he said on May 13 after a three-day meeting of senior officials. “The goal is to draw up a plan for the UAE after the Covid-19 virus crisis, a plan that will ensure that we are the fastest country in recovery.”



Continued: UAE Looks to China in Post-COVID Economic Future

Source: “Ministers of ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ issue joint statement on combating COVID-19,” *Emirates News Agency*, 20 June 2020. <http://wam.ac/en/details/1395302850046>

... We support comprehensive and multi-modal infrastructure connectivity and sustainable transport system. We encourage countries to enhance their air, land and sea links through interoperable and multi-modal transport. We recognize the importance of cross-border and trans-regional transport and logistic passages, which include land, air and sea routes as well as transport infrastructure projects, in delivering vital medical supplies, equipment, food, critical agricultural products, and other essential goods, securing supply chains and promoting international trade, and meeting the needs of people’s livelihood and economic development. We will cooperate to keep those passages open or resume operation as soon as the situation permits.

Source: “Chinese-Arab Cooperation Looks to a Common Future Based on Past Fruitful Developments,” *China in Arabic*, 6 July 2020. <https://www.chinainarabic.org/?p=54396>

In terms of space, five Arab countries, including Egypt, Algeria, the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan, have cooperated with China in several ways in the field of space, including communications satellites, building assembly and installation centers, and testing and building space cities. In this context, the first Chinese-Arab center for the BeiDou system for satellite navigation was established in Tunisia, while China signed an agreement of intent to cooperate with Saudi Arabia on advancing the construction of a Chinese-Saudi center for the BeiDou GNSS. A growing number of Arab countries have made their space dreams come true on the wings of Chinese technology.

Source: نحو تعاون عربي-صيني أوسع يعزز السلام العالمي
 “Toward Broader Chinese-Arab Cooperation to Strengthen World Peace,” *The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research*, 8 July 2020. <https://tinyurl.com/yajuvtqv>

China today is a great economic and military power. Strengthening cooperation with China, especially economic, is in the interest of Arab countries, as it allows them to balance their relations between East and West and to diversify their options and mix between different models, especially in the field of modern technologies and the elements that it needs in the context of its endeavors to achieve a renaissance and catch up with technological developments, as well as to protect its markets from being monopolizing for the benefit of a specific entity or conglomerate or a specific product, whether it comes to raw or manufactured materials.

Fangs of the Lone Wolf

Chechen Tactics in the Russian-Chechen Wars 1994-2009

Dodge Billingsley
with Lester Grau

Fangs of the Lone Wolf is about combat experience in urban, mountain and fairly open terrain. It is not a comprehensive history of conflict. This book is a series of snapshots — of vignettes — describing the difficulty, the hardship, the victories and the defeats of the participants. It is an examination of the raw data of combat in a foreign land, and is aimed to advance the professional military study of conflict.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/195587/download>