

# The Rise of GCC's Soft Power and China's Humanities Diplomacy

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**Abstract:** *Since the establishment of the GCC, its member states have been making an effort to strengthen the GCC's political integration on the basis of the members' active practice of promoting security and economic integrations. During this process, there is a trend that the GCC's soft power is continuously rising, which is embodied in the following points: strengthening the GCC's religious and political influences; getting discourse power in the Arab-Islamic affairs; gaining political influence through involvements in regional hot issues; transforming into an Arabic-Islamic alliance of monarchies. On this basis, the article analyzes the major causes of the rise of the GCC's soft power and puts forward some recommendations for China to deal with it.*

**Key Words:** *GCC; Soft Power; Middle East Upheaval; Sino-Arab*

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## **I. Signs of the Rise of GCC's Soft Power**

Established in 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) includes six member states, namely: the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. In December 2001, Yemen was admitted into the GCC's ministers' councils for health, education, labor, and social affairs, and began to participate in some aspects of the GCC's work. In 2011, Jordan and Morocco were invited to join the GCC as member states.

Since its establishment, the GCC's member states have made efforts to strengthen its political integration on the basis of their active promotion of security and economic integrations. During this process, the GCC's soft power has continuously been rising, as can be seen through the following points:

First, Saudi Arabia is consolidating its religious prestige, seeking to appeal to Muslims worldwide, through its special status in Islamic pilgrimage, and trying to transform this prestige into GCC's religious and political influences.

Islam regulates that each and every Muslim must pay a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his lifetime (which is called Hajj in the Islamic world), as long as conditions permit him to do so. This Islamic pilgrimage includes two categories: "formal pilgrimage" (hajj) and "informal pilgrimage" (u'mra). The formal pilgrimage refers to the annual world-scale Islamic ceremony of pilgrimage held in Mecca at different months each year. During this formal pilgrimage, millions of Muslims shall perform all the Islamic religious rituals in regulated time. The informal pilgrimage refers to a mini-pilgrimage outside the

period of formal pilgrimage. Saudi Arabia, with the two major Islamic holy lands (Mecca and Medina) located on its territory, has established its supreme status as the “Leader of the Islamic World” through its activities of organizing and sponsoring the annual formal Islamic pilgrimage. Huge crowds of countless Muslim pilgrims swarm into Saudi Arabia each year, symbolizing a worldwide recognition of its special status in the Islamic world. Now the income made from commercial activities related to Islamic pilgrimages has become one of the most important sources of Saudi Arabian national revenue, and laid a solid financial foundation for Saudi Arabia’s religious diplomacy. In fact, the “pilgrimage economy” and the Saudi Arabia’s religious diplomacy have formed an internally interactive complex that plays an active and positive role for consolidating Saudi Arabia’s religious prestige. Moreover, Saudi Arabia is one of the major initiators and benefactors of the GCC, and the GCC’s secretariat is established in Saudi Arabia’s capital Riyadh. Thus, the rise of Saudi Arabia’s religious prestige will inevitably consolidate the GCC’s religious influences. Most Gulf countries are ruled by Sunni Muslims, and Sunni Muslims account for a majority of the populations of the Gulf countries, except in Bahrain. This means GCC and its member states will gradually establish more far-reaching religious-political influence over Sunni Muslims, who make up the absolute majority of the Muslim population globally. Recently, the GCC seems to be participating more actively in Arab-Islamic affairs, attempting to take a leading role in these affairs.

Second, Qatar has won its own say in Arabic-Islamic affairs through the Al Jazeera television station, and making an effort to converting this power into the GCC’s resource advantages for its soft power.

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Joseph Nye points out that, as an important symbol of national soft power, the capacity to conduct international communication is regarded as a power of information, a power that transcends national boundaries but has an effect on the politics, economies, military affairs, and cultures of various countries. However, the current advantageous condition of Western media make non-western countries (and particularly Arab-Islamic countries) unable to convey their own message. This imbalance is rooted in the serious imbalance between Western soft powers and the Arab-Islamic soft power, especially in the huge disparity between western material basis for their media and that of Arab-Islamic world. A survey of Brand Channel indicates that Al Jazeera television station, which gained its reputation through its reports of the Iraqi war in 2003 and its exclusive disclosure of confidential files of Al Qaeda, ranked as the fifth most influential brand of global media. Robin Ruth, the editor-in-chief of the Brand Channel, thought that the unanticipated fame of Al Jazeera was founded on its unique sources of news that could provide different opinions. He argued that: "Many people want to know the news about Afghanistan, Iraq, and anti-terrorist war, but major sources of news about these affairs contain Western biases. However, Al Jazeera is able to provide a different perspective on these affairs, so people enjoy seeing its TV programs and its website." During the international media competitions for reporting the war in Iraq, Al Jazeera gained the upper hand over those Western mainstream media such as CNN, and broke Western media's discourse monopoly. In this way, it managed to broadcast Arab people's own voice and gained a wide popularity in the Arab-Islamic world, creating the "Al Jazeera effect" of a "small country, big media". Furthermore, it creates a magnetic field of public opinions that influences the social behaviors of Muslims

worldwide, and successfully establishes its own discourse power on the Arab-Islamic affairs. Ever since the founding of the GCC, its summit is held in the capitals of its six member states on a rotating basis, so as to strengthen the coordination and cooperation between the member states for political, economic, and defense affairs and to promote the Gulf regional integration. Playing the role of mouthpiece for Qatar, the Al Jazeera always transforms the annual GCC summits into major news issues. Actually this can be viewed as a measure adopted by the GCC to upgrade its own soft power through Al Jazeera, the internationally-recognized authoritative news platform. So the communication advantage of Al Jazeera has been utilized by the GCC to increase its own soft power.

Third, some GCC core member states, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, try to gain political influences through their active involvements in burning issues in their region, and develop their influences into GCC's responses to the dramatic situational changes of the Middle East.

Samuel Huntington points out in his world-famous book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, that one of the reasons that the Arab-Islamic countries lag behind the process of globalization is due to the absence of core states in that region. Currently those Arab-Islamic international organizations, such as the GCC, are actively involved in regional and international affairs, and are playing an increasingly important role in global governance, because Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been rising as the "core states" of the Arab world and playing an important role in the recent dramatic political changes in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia and Qatar exert substantial influences over the major events of the Middle East political changes in the past several years, such as the military

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interventions in Bahrain, the overthrow of Qaddafi's regime, the leadership in the transfer of Yemen's government power, the efforts to internationalize the Syrian crisis, and the responses towards Iranian nuclear issue. Nevertheless, the collective interests of the GCC and major Western powers over the issues of containing Iran and its allies, has to some degree transformed the GCC into an instrument for the US to enforce its "Neo-interventionism" in the Middle East, which has considerable influences over the political processes of Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria. In some sense, even Al Jazeera has become an instrument for conflicts of religious factions and enters a political metamorphosis. Therefore, the geopolitics of this region has been largely complicated by the interactive games between the politics of religious factions and power politics, and the complexity of the hot issues have worsened. The rise of the GCC core states, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, adds many uncertainties to the social transformations of Arab countries, which reflects the reality that the GCC's core states are substantially uplifting their political influences.

Fourth, the GCC is converting itself from a cooperative organization of religious factions into an Arab-Islamic alliance of monarchies, through its enlargement and transformation, and its influences are spilling over to countries outside the Gulf region.

The declaration of GCC summit publicized on May 10, 2011 says that "Jordan and Morocco share common ancestors, common roots, and common fates with GCC member states. They and GCC member states share similar institutions and enjoy very close relations. So GCC welcomes the applications made by these two countries for participating into GCC." On May 18, 2011, during an interview with journalists of the *The Motherland* newspaper, Bahraini foreign minister Khalid said that GCC's enlargement is not for a strengthening of

military power to defend themselves against Iranian influences and interference over Arab affairs. He argued that Morocco had proposed to join the GCC long before, and that it only planned to establish a kind of partnership inside GCC, without intending to become a full GCC member. He further commented that Jordan would be accepted as a full member of the GCC because it not only borders the occupied Palestinian territory, but it also plays an important role in the Middle East peace process (Wang, B., 2011: May 19). This was the first time that GCC made an enlargement in the past 30 years since its founding, which was pushed and shaped by a multiple of reasons. As a matter of fact, the GCC's sudden enlargement was not only heavily influenced by the disruptive and turbulent situational changes of the Middle East in recent years, but also propelled by the Iranian factors. It seems that the GCC intends to establish a kind of "alliance of monarchies" through the acceptance of Jordan and Morocco, which are located outside the Gulf region. It might aim at "sustaining the hereditary rulings of monarchies through a political alliance of monarchies that can provide themselves with mutual supports so as to consolidate their regimes and get through difficulties." (Wang, B., 2011: May 14). In addition, Saudi Arabian king Abdullah proposed on the opening ceremony of the 32th GCC summit on December 20, 2011 that GCC shall be transformed from a "cooperative organization" into a "unified alliance". His proposal was accepted by participants and written in *The Riyadh Declaration* in the form of resolution. After that summit, GCC decided to set up a special committee to take in charge the work of "transformation" so that the proposed "unified alliance" can be successfully established once conditions have matured. Therefore, through such measures as enlargement and transformation, the GCC will take more actions in the Middle East peace process and

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adopt more measures to improve the political institutions of Arab monarchies. Viewed from this perspective, "a unified Gulf Arab entity that evolves from GCC will play a more significant role in international affairs." (Huang, P., 2011: December 21).

In fact, in his elaborations about the idea of "soft power", Joseph Nye argued that the three major sources of a nation's soft power are culture (that can attract foreigners), political value (that shall be adhered to by that nation in its domestic and foreign affairs), and foreign policies (that shall be regarded as legitimate and morally prestigious by foreign countries), which have also been used as important indexes to measure the soft power of international organization. GCC has accelerated its process of political integration on the basis of its existing achievements of security and economic integrations. To be specific, on the foundation of joint identifications with their common language, culture, national identity, religion, and even religious factions, the six member states of the GCC increasingly rely on the organizational structure of GCC as a whole entity to participate in international and regional affairs, enforce their pluralized diplomacy, and maintain a balance between world powers. On important international and regional issues, they adopt common unified stands and bring into full play of GCC's collective role so as to reflect the commonality and solidarity of the six member states in their foreign policies. In this way, the principle of neutrality and nonalignment, which has always been upheld by the six GCC member states in their diplomatic practices, is emphasized as an outstanding way and creating substantial effects through their mild and pragmatic measures. Generally speaking, in comparison to other Arab-Islamic international organizations, such as the League of Arab States, the Muslim World League, and the Organization of the Islamic



Conference, the GCC has received more attention from the international community because of its cultural attraction, its adherence to its political value, and its effective foreign policies.

## **II. The Major Causes of the Rise of GCC's Soft Power**

An international organization that has characteristics of international behavior is usually defined as a permanent institutionalized body that is composed by member states (or other form of entity of international law) for common political and economic purposes, organized in accordance with multilateral treaty or other forms of formal legal documents, and operated on the basis of certain rules and regulations. Therefore, analysis shall be made over political, economic, security and cultural factors if an explanation is to be made over the causes of the rise of GCC's soft power.

Accounting for over 65% of all the oil reserve of the world, the oil reserve of the Gulf region is the largest in the world, and this region's annual oil output accounts for 30% of the total annual global oil production. Every year, the Gulf countries' oil export takes a one-third share of the world's total of oil exports. Every day, 4 million tons of crude oil is transported through the Strait of Hormuz to various parts of the world. So it is no doubt that the Gulf countries will remain a major energy source of the world in the next half century. The Gulf oil that is continuously delivered to different parts of the world becomes indispensable "blood" for the economies and industries, and also creates enormous amounts of oil dollars to Gulf countries, which offers substantial financial sources for Gulf states to make spectacular achievements in their economic developments and social and cultural constructions. In recent years, the fiscal revenue of the Gulf States has

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increased considerably due to the soaring prices of oil in the international markets. GCC member states have enjoyed outstanding positions in OPEC, the League of Arab States, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In the past they played important roles in the international politics through their "oil weapons". Since 2008, the Gulf countries have successfully defended themselves against the negative consequences of the US financial crisis, owing to their huge reserves of petro dollars. Furthermore, Gulf States attach great importance to their relations with the US and other Western powers, and have formed many strategic relations with Western powers based on their common demands related to energy and military powers. However, Gulf states' foreign relations are largely limited by their heavy reliance on the international system of energy supply and demand, and by their alert to the "Shi'a Crescent" led by Iran. Under such circumstances, their foreign policies are centered on security and relying on interventions by external powers, and they inevitably depend on Western powers, such as the US, to protect them, so their security issues have been highly internationalized (Fernández, 2011: March 9). As a matter of fact, the financial supports offered by oil dollars have solidified GCC's capacity to implement its resolutions, while the security supports provided by US and other Western powers strengthen its momentums and initiatives to get involved in regional and international affairs. In brief, their energy advantages and external security supports lay a solid material foundation for the rise of GCC's soft power.

Governments or non-governmental players form various types of international organizations "in pursuit of common political and economic goals", and their "commonalities" are constructed on series of "common perceptions and identifications". The GCC's member states share multi-level "common perceptions and identifications" on

the issues of national identity, religion, religious faction, language, and geopolitics, and their common identifications on their belongings of religious faction are the most outstanding ones. Largely shaped by disagreements and historical disputes, the issues of Islamic religious factions “were created by the malpractices in the time of colonialism. At that time, European rulers in Middle East made use of the ethnic and religious diversity and deliberately transferred the commanding powers of colonial military forces and the representative powers of governments to the minorities of that region, for the purpose of maintaining their own interests.” As a result, “those Arab states that were born from colonialism had expected to achieve factional solidarity under the banner of Arab nationalism, but they finally deepened factional prejudices in religion as they themselves turned into cynic dictatorships and suffered defeats on both battlefields and governmental administrations.” (*New York Times*, 2011: August 27). Particularly, the British authorities deliberately propped up ethnic and religious minorities’ ruling over majorities in the Middle East during their colonial ruling. In this way, they not only shifted the original confrontations between them and local peoples, but also made local rulers heavily dependent on British support to sustain local rulings. Owing some large concentrations of Shi’a Muslim populations, each country of the Gulf region, except Iran, has some kind of potential dangers of Shi’a riots. Faced with such circumstances, the GCC member states manage to protect their common interests of religious factions in the Gulf region through sustained and fierce factional struggles against Iran and its “Shi’a Alliance”, and then increase the effectiveness of their collective involvements into regional and international affairs through their organized activities and unified stands. All these developments reflect that GCC owns a solid

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foundation of widespread popular supports. In brief, the multilevel “common consensus” becomes a very important social basis for GCC to establish its good organizational image and strengthen its attraction to the outside world.

In addition to the deliberate instigations orchestrated by Western colonialists in the past, US involvements in Middle East in pursuit of its own strategic interests have further complicated the factional conflicts between Arab-Islamic countries. In the first half of the 20th century, the Sunni countries of the Middle East could be roughly divided into Pan-Arab states (such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Libya) and monarchies (such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain), which took a dominating role in the Middle East geopolitics. However, since the beginning of the Iranian “Islamic Revolution”, the powers of the Shi’a faction have been on an upward trend and the political strengths of this faction have made successful re-insurrections in Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. In the past 20 years, the US has been promoting a policy of supporting Sunni Arab regimes and regarded these supports as one of its fundamental Middle East strategies, due to the anti-American upheavals that originated from the Iranian “Islamic Revolution”. As a result, most Sunni countries, such as Saudi Arabia, have become US allies or the beneficiaries of US assistance, while some Shi’a states, such as Iran, became part of the US-defined “axis of evil” in the geopolitical pattern of this region. This divide further aggravates the confrontations and conflicts between the two major factions of Islam. For example, the Shi’a Muslims account for 65% of the total Iraqi population, but the cruel suppressions made by the Saddam’s regime created much hatred between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims in this country. After the 2003 Iraqi War, the US began to support the Iraqi Shi’a Muslims and suppress Sunnis, and made Shi’a

and Kurds take control of the new Iraqi government. In this way, the religious-ethnic hostilities again became a major barrier to a smooth reconstruction of Iraq, and Iran unexpectedly became the largest winner of that 2003 Iraqi war, which in turn damage US strategic interests in that region to a large extent. Now Iran is an enemy that the US pledges to defeat. On the other hand, the factional disputes and hostilities stirred up by the Iranian “Islamic revolution” have become an incentive to the Iran-Saudi Arabia conflicts. The Shi’a Muslim’s theocracy in Tehran is in confrontation with the ultra-conservative Sunni Muslim monarchy in Riyadh, competing for the predominance of the region that has the largest oil reserves in the world (Shrek, M., 2011: March 19). Iranian hegemonic ambition in this region supported by its nuclear rise poses a serious threat to Gulf Sunni Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, so it has become a major enemy of Saudi Arabia. In this sense, the GCC and Western powers share a “common enemy”: Iran. Owing to the frequent hot debates and discussions of western academics, politicians, and media, the Iranian nuclear issue has been increasingly internationalized. Against this background, the factional conflicts between the GCC and Iran are being gradually uplifted to the moral high ground of protecting non-nuclearization of the Middle East and containing regional hegemony. In the name of defending Middle East against the “Shia Alliance”, the GCC has won a great deal of popularity from the Arab-Islamic world, and manages to establish its worldwide influences as a transnational organization through the overwhelmingly superior platforms of media and communication of the western world. Viewed from these situational changes, it seems that the GCC’s foreign policies have gained more moral righteousness during the process of the internationalization of the Iranian nuclear issue, and its soft power is thus strengthened continuously.

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The dramatic rise of GCC's soft power in current political changes of Middle East might be attributed to many reasons on a variety of aspects, but the GCC's timely and appropriate responses to the emerging challenges brought about by the social transformations of the Arab countries seem to be playing a major role for uplifting its influences and increasing its soft power, which are both active and effective. The GCC's practice of policy makings and enforcements can provide precious experiences that might be categorized as the "Arab Model" in contrast to the "Iran Model" and the "Turkey Model". Furthermore, it may also offer enlightening and refreshing knowledge and skills for other Arab-Islamic countries to integrate themselves into the process of globalization and to involve them into the frameworks of global governance.

### **III. Recommendations for China to Deal with the Rise of the GCC's Soft Power**

On May 27, 1981, the third day since the birth of GCC, Chinese foreign minister at that time, Mr. Huang Hua, telephoned its first secretary-general to congratulate him on GCC's birth. Since then China established long term political and economic connections with the GCC. In the field of politics, Chinese foreign minister makes regular group interviews with foreign ministers or representatives of the GCC's six member states and the GCC secretary-general in New York on each annual UN assembly ever since 1990. During these group interviews, Chinese foreign minister usually exchanges ideas and opinions with them over international and regional issues on which China and the GCC share common interests. In recent years, the Chinese government attaches great importance to its close contacts

with the GCC over regional hot issues so as to strengthen political mutual trust. In the field of economy and trade, there is a great complementarity between China and the GCC member states. As a special region that has the highest level of per capita consumption on tourism and daily goods of the world, the Gulf region have enormous demands on China's exports of consumer goods. On the other hand, at least 40% of China's oil imports are from the Gulf region. Even in the year 2011, when the Middle East was entrapped in upheavals of political changes, the China-GCC bilateral trade still increased substantially. In the meantime, the negotiations for China-GCC free trade area are proceeding orderly, and the China-GCC strategic dialogue mechanism further strengthens the long term effects of their cooperation. On May 3, 2011, after taking part in the second round of the China-GCC strategic dialogue, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi commented that the GCC member states have become China's important cooperative partners in the fields of politics, economy, trade, and energy, because their bilateral relations were developing at a very fast pace in an all-around way due to their constantly strengthened mutual political trusts and their increasingly matured bilateral collective cooperative mechanism. He said he was pleased to see a consolidated basis for China-GCC bilateral friendly cooperation. He said that, in the future, "both China and the GCC shall increase mutual understandings, deepen political mutual trusts, and continue to understand and support each other on the issues related to both parties' core interests and major concerns". He said: "We shall further strengthen bilateral coordination and collaborations over international and regional affairs, protect our common interests, and deepen our pragmatic cooperation over energy and trade issues, so that our energy group dialogue mechanism can be bring into full play and our

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cultural exchanges can be developed forward. In this way, our friendship can be consolidated" (Yang, J., 2011: May 3). In the future, how shall China's foreign policy makers deal with the rise of the GCC's soft power? The author of this paper proposes the following advice:

First, China should emphasize its diplomatic stand that the issue of Syria shall be handled in a "de-factionalizing" way, so that China-Arab friendship will not be damaged by the Syrian change, and that China's good will on the Syrian issue cannot be deliberately smeared by other countries' leaders with malicious intentions.

In the recent turbulent political upheavals of Middle East, "interventions over the situational changes of Arab countries have been made by a variety of external entities, including international organizations (such as UN), regional organizations (such as NATO, the League of Arab States, the African Union, and the GCC), and major western powers and regional powers (such as Turkey and Iran)." (Zhu, W., 2011: December 30). Among these versatile entities, the League of Arab States and the GCC have intensified their involvements in the regional affairs of the Middle East and Gulf region, but it seems that they have been used as instruments because of the historically accumulated hostilities and the interventions of Western powers. Consequently, the Middle East geopolitics has been further complicated by the games between the religious politics of this region and the politics of hegemony, which are inflamed by the internationalization of the issue of Syria. Faced with all these situational intrigues, China shall continue to emphasize its stand of "non-interference in domestic affairs of foreign countries", which is regarded as the principle of China's peace diplomacy, on both official and non-official levels. At the same time, China shall also intensify the



explanations over its diplomatic stand of “de-factionalizing” the issue of Syria. In this way, the China-Arab traditional friendship can be protected from being damages or smeared by some malicious interest groups.

Second, China should look squarely at the political transformation of Al Jazeera television station, and promote all-dimensional exchanges and cooperation with diverse media of the Arab-Islamic world.

During its operations in the past 15 years, the Al Jazeera television station has already constructed a set of pan-Arabic press discourses focused on anti-external interventions and anti-domestic dictatorships”, which offers Arab peoples with a special media channel to release their huge frustrations for both internal and external failures of the Arab world. The interactions between the press discourses and the failures in reality have helped Al Jazeera to successfully build a principle of press objectivity based on local popularity. However, as the surging political reforms and upheavals become widespread in the Middle East, the social turbulence is approaching the press discourses, blurring the border between discourses and realities. At this moment, Al Jazeera is also faced with the severe tests for its practices that might mix popularity with objectivity, and blur the limit between press discourses and truths (Lian, C., 2011: March 11). A document most recently provided by the Wikileaks indicates that, in a document sent to US state department, US ambassador to Qatar remarked that Qatar’s monarchy used the Al Jazeera television station as a bargaining chip for its deals with foreign countries. Under such circumstances, one might conclude that a priority in China’s concerns for improving China’s position in Arab-Islamic public opinions shall be a policy making for China to

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strengthen its all-dimensional exchanges and cooperation with the diverse Arab-Islamic media. Only in this way could it be possible for China to maintain its discourse power in Middle East affairs.

Finally, China should promote its cultural exchanges with the GCC, which shall include both bilateral and multilateral activities on official and non-official levels, so as to develop the China-Arab strategic partnership for “all-around cooperation and common development”.

On the one hand, China shall continue to develop its bilateral relations with the GCC. China shall not only intensify mutual visits and summits for bilateral top leaderships, but also develop mutual exchanges with various political, religious, and ethnic factions, diverse interest groups of social elite, and local youth, so as to establish emotional ties and expand consensus. On the other hand, China shall consolidate its connections with the multilateral diplomatic platform of the GCC. Particularly, China shall not take advantage of local factional disputes for its own interests and shall not get involve in local factional politics because its involvements might complicate Middle East conditions. China shall construct a variety of cultural exchange projects with the GCC in conformity with the current complex cultural conditions of the Middle East and the existing basis of China-Arab cultural communications. In addition to China's present non-official religious exchanges with Saudi Arabia, which are based on Chinese Muslims' pilgrimages to the Islamic holy lands in Saudi Arabia, China should also develop other projects of cultural cooperation with the GCC, such as inter-civilization dialogues, Confucius institutes, sister cities' connections, media cooperation, and dialogue on environmental protections. Extensive bilateral or multilateral social contacts shall be led and managed by governments,

and operated by governments as well as non-government organizations. In other words, both governmental and non-governmental resources shall be mobilized to promote the China-GCC cultural exchanges. It shall be emphasized that only in this way could it be possible to constantly develop the China-Arab strategic partnership for “all-around cooperation and common development”.

Table: The number of Chinese people went Saudi Hajj(2006-2011)

Year	Number of People
2006	7000
2007	10318
2008	11800
2009	12730
2010	13500
2011	13700

Statistics of the table is according to website of State Administration for Religious Affairs of P.R.C and Chinese Islamic Association

Table: Communication of press between China and Arab states After establishment of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (from 2004 until now)

Year	Event
2004	The Middle East branch of “China Today” (the only Arabic magazine in China) was founded in Cairo
2008	The first China-Arab press cooperation was hold in Beijing

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2009	Arabic channel of CCTV was launched
2010	The second China-Arab press cooperation was hold in Manama
2010	Middle East central station of CCTV opened in Dubai
2010	Arabic journalist training class was hold in China
2010	Editor in chief of Xinhua news agency visited Saudi and Qatar
2012	The third China-Arab press cooperation was hold in Guangzhou
2013	Xinhua' president visited Jordan and Emirates

The table is according to xinhuanet and people.com.cn

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