

The New Silk Road: China's Energy Strategy in the Greater Middle East

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China has arrived in the Greater Middle East and appears determined to stay awhile. Over the past decade, deeming energy security too important to be left to market forces alone, Beijing has prioritized the issue as a matter of national security. From new pipeline and infrastructure projects to increased naval port calls, China is establishing footholds in Central Asia, the "Four Seas" region, and the Persian Gulf, stepping up its military ties to protect this "string of pearls." Beijing has placed particular emphasis on countering Western energy partnerships with regional governments and aligning with pariah states such as Iran and Syria.

In this Washington Institute Policy Focus, Christina Lin examines how Beijing's increasing footprint is affecting U.S. and allied interests. The study offers in-depth assessments regarding the scope and intent of Chinese energy initiatives that stretch from Asia to Europe, including detailed maps of this "new Silk Road." By tracing the recent trajectory of Beijing's political relationships, economic initiatives, and military posture, the study offers recommendations on how Washington can counterbalance troubling trends resulting from Chinese expansion.

THE AUTHOR

Christina Lin is a former visiting fellow at The Washington Institute, with expertise in energy security, Chinese military doctrine, relations between China and the Middle East, and other issues. She has extensive U.S. government experience, having served at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, the Department of State, the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and the federally funded Institute for Defense Analyses. Previously, she worked in the private sector at Lehman Brothers and Goldman Sachs in London.

Dr. Lin has published papers in Israel, Germany, and the United States on the militarization of Chinese energy security policy, Eurasian regional security architecture, and nuclear proliferation. She has also been a key author of the annual China file for Jane's Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Intelligence Centre. Her papers on the nexus between East Asian and Middle Eastern WMD proliferation have been cited widely, including reports in the *Korea Herald*, *Wall Street Journal*, *World Tribune*, and *Jerusalem Post*.

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