

## 'China is not an enemy of Israel, it uses Iran against US'

Expert says China not Israel's enemy or ally of Iran and Russia, only using those countries to challenge US hegemony; Gaza war part of US-China race for dominance in the Mideast

Yuval Sade, Calcalist / Apr. 19, 2024

China is not an enemy of Israel nor is it an ally of Iran, according to **Dr. Ori Sela, a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)** and Israel-China Policy Center. China, he says, is motivated by opportunism.

Sela, who is an expert on the history of Early-Modern and Modern China, has researched China's military history and its foreign relations among other subjects.

"One must be careful not to affiliate China with one particular global axis or alliance because that would indicate a wide range of common interests, which are not applicable in this case," Sela says. "China seeks to be a global leader and not part of an existing group. The Chinese do not consider Iran or Russia to be equal partners. Beijing uses both those countries to achieve its own aims.

**How does China use them?** "First of all economically. Since both Russia and Iran are under extensive sanctions, which the Chinese do adhere to, China is able to purchase oil from both at low prices. On the strategic level, Iran is the main obstacle to U.S. policies in the Middle East, and Russia is the U.S.'s main adversary in Europe, so by cooperating with them, China advances its primary goal, which is to weaken the United States' world hegemony, while also diverting the world's attention from what it is doing in its part of the world."

**Is China's support for Iran as extensive as America's support for Israel?** "There is no comparison. China does not maintain such relations. In the 1980s, the Chinese sought to grow their economy, and while Iran was involved in a war with Iraq, the Chinese supplied both sides with weapons. Perhaps China even assisted in Iran's nuclear program. As its economy grew, and with it the need for more energy, Iran became a major oil supplier."

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*For full interview:*

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