

# Wall Street Journal – Middle East

## **Saudi Arabia, China Sign Nuclear Cooperation Pact**

BY SUMMER SAID

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia—Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia said Monday it inked an agreement with China to enhance cooperation between the two countries in the development and use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

The deal, signed Sunday, sets a legal framework that strengthens scientific, technological and economic cooperation between Riyadh and Beijing, according to a joint statement. It seeks to enable cooperation in areas like maintenance and development of nuclear power plants and research reactors, manufacturing and supply of nuclear fuel elements.

The pact with China is the fourth nuclear agreement signed by Saudi Arabia following similar deals with France, ...

### China to Help Saudis With Novel Nuke Power

Susan Kraemer | January 19th, 2012

In the wake of a **6-day trip by China's Premier Win Jiabao to Saudi Arabia**, China and Saudi Arabia have forged an alliance on developing nuclear power. Saudi Arabia has signed an agreement with China for assistance in the development of **nuclear power**, using the last of its oil wealth to invest in the most controversial form of a low carbon energy future for its energy hungry nation.

In 2010, the Kingdom established the **King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KACARE)** to develop low carbon sources of energy, prompting us to ask: **Who's Going Nuclear in the Middle East?**

Then in June of 2011, at the annual **Gulf Environment Forum**, the Kingdom announced plans to commit more than \$100 billion over the next 20 years to develop a civil nuclear program.

The Kingdom plans to build 16 nuclear reactors at a projected cost of \$7 billion each, according to an announcement by Abdul Ghani bin Melaibari, **KACARE** Coordinator of Scientific Collaboration.

We covered it in a previous story: **The Middle East Nuclear Power Boom Without Toxic Waste Strategy.**

The Saudis could not have picked a better partner than China, which is working on the most ambitious plans in the world to boost its nuclear energy capability by 2035 is so far beyond other nations, that it bears no resemblance to its 2008 levels.

When China plans a move into a low-carbon form of energy it does not hesitate. It is already the world leader in hydro, and recently overtook the US to become the world leader in wind power.

It has begun building 27 nuclear reactors and will have 100 or more by 2030, which would amount to nearly a quarter of the 432 reactors in operation now.

**China is pursuing alternatives to the traditional uranium-fueled nuclear power – such as reactors that run on thorium fuel, or that use unconventional designs such as fast neutron, molten salt and pebble bed.**

**Some nuclear experts believe that these new unconventional designs are potentially safer and more efficient than the traditional water cooled uranium-fueled reactors that have remained unchanged since the nuclear age.**

Previously Saudi Arabia has been in talks with the French on developing the more traditional uranium power.

**Official sources from Saudi Arabia say that they plan to get 20% of their electricity from nuclear, even while domestic demand is growing at an estimated 8% over the next ten years.**

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**The Middle East Nuclear Power Boom Without Toxic Waste Strategy**

Last week, the government of [Saudi Arabia](#) announced that it would go ahead with its nuclear energy ambitions and invest more than \$100bn in building 16 nuclear reactors over the next two decades. At a time when other countries like [Japan](#) or Germany are looking for exit strategies from nuclear energy production, Saudi Arabia and its rich GCC neighbors, as reported by Green Prophet, continue to push on with their nuclear program.

Given that most are seven to ten years away from actual power generation, GCC governments view nuclear power as a way to reduce domestic oil and gas consumption. According official sources from Saudi Arabia, the new planned reactors will cover 20 per cent of its electricity needs, as demand in power grows at an estimated 8 per cent during the next ten years.

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## **Saudi Arabia taps China for nuclear**

With its energy consumption surging and its own power supply under threat, Saudi Arabia will rely increasingly on nuclear generation. To help it along, it has turned to the country that is emerging as the world leader in nuclear technology: China.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) reports that the two countries have agreed to jointly develop nuclear power plants, reactors, fuel and maintenance. The agreement follows a 6-day visit to Saudi Arabia by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.