

**CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY
IN 2023**

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Executive Summary

1. In 2023, President Xi Jinping returned to the global stage, after three years of seclusion by the pandemic. The challenging domestic situation did not seem to have slowed down China's diplomatic activities for the year.
2. The United States continued its multi-pronged offensive to delay or stop China's rise. It co-hosted the second "Summit for Democracy" in late March. Apart from continuing Trump's tariffs on Chinese imports, the Biden administration had added most severe and comprehensive restrictions on semi-conductor exports to China while trying to reduce the tension between the two superpowers.
3. China played a delicate game in its Russian ties. The two strengthened their comprehensive ties and bilateral trade exceeded \$200 billion for the first time amid Western sanctions. Xi also spoke on the phone with Ukrainian President Zelensky, offering its mediation in the Russia-Ukraine War.
4. China devoted enormous effort in neighbourhood diplomacy and building ties with the Global South, with "building a community of shared future" and associated connectivity projects as the centrepiece. It hosted the third BRI Summit Forum in Beijing and fostered the expansion of BRICS at the summit in Johannesburg, a major boost to China's South-South strategy.
5. Three characteristics of Chinese diplomacy had emerged in 2023: building a "community of shared future" with various countries and regions as the main strategy; placing a new emphasis on cultural identity and diversity to detract from the dominant Western "democracy versus autocracy" discourse; and adopting an expanded role on the global stage.
6. A first-ever Foreign Relations Law was enacted on 1 July and the fourth "Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference" was held in late December, signifying the consolidation of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy.

7. The year 2024 will be a year of unpredictability, with general elections taking place in countries that cover 60% of the world's population, China's domestic economic challenges and an intensifying US-China rivalry in an election year in the United States.