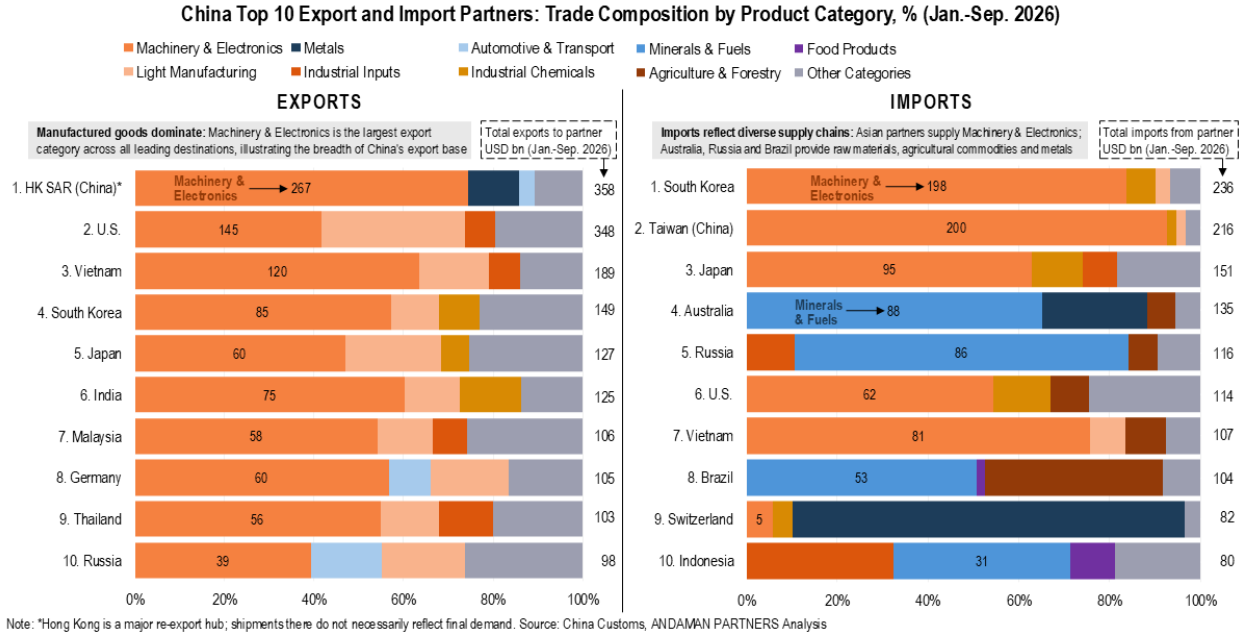
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China's Exports and Imports Reveal Contrasting Roles in Global Supply Chains

Machinery & Electronics dominate exports, while imports reflect demand for technology, industrial commodities and precious metals



China's trade relationships reveal two distinct sides of its role in the global economy: a major supplier of manufactured goods and a vast market for industrial components, raw materials and technology. Data for January to September 2026 show how differently these relationships operate across China's leading trading partners.

Exports are remarkably consistent in composition. Machinery & Electronics form the largest category across all ten leading destinations, including USD 267 billion shipped to Hong Kong, USD 145 billion to the U.S. and USD 120 billion to Vietnam. These flows reflect China's extensive manufacturing capabilities and its central position in regional production networks, where components and finished goods move between countries at different stages of production.

Imports reveal a much more diverse picture. South Korea and Taiwan (China) supply predominantly Machinery & Electronics, with shipments of USD 198 billion and USD 200 billion, respectively. Australia and Russia are major sources of minerals and fuels, while Brazil supplies both mineral resources and agricultural commodities. Switzerland stands out for its precious metals trade, with gold accounting for approximately USD 70 billion of China's USD 82 billion in imports from the country.

Perhaps most revealing is the importance of two-way industrial trade. South Korea and Vietnam are both major buyers of Chinese manufactured goods and important suppliers to China, illustrating how closely interconnected Asian production networks have become.

China is far more than just an export manufacturing centre. It is also a major source of demand for technology, equipment and commodities, with opportunities shaped by the distinct strengths of its trading partners.

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