

# China's Diplomacy on the Hot Issues of Middle East: History, Ideas, Experiences and Impact

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**Abstract:** *This article probes the types, impacts of hot issues of Middle East and the concept of diplomacy on international hot issues. Based on these researches, this article studies the historical evolution, central ideas and fundamental experiences of China's diplomacy on the hot issues of Middle East, and analyzes the significance of China's diplomacy on the hot issues of Middle East to the innovation of China's foreign polices.*

**Key Words:** *China; Middle East; Diplomacy on Hot Issues, Innovation of Foreign Polices; Middle East Hot-spot Issues; Typology of Diplomacy*

## I

After reform and opening-up, with the overall development of relations between China and the Middle East, the Middle East area, as an important part of our great regional strategy and the major energy suppliers, has played an increasingly important role in energy security and our international strategy. Mutual dependence between China

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and Middle East countries is increasing. As for China's strategic interests in the Middle East, it can be divided into following levels. At the political level, the Middle East is an important strategic support. In deal with international affairs, China is inseparable from the support and cooperation of the Arab Islamic world; at the economic level, the Middle East is the largest overseas energy supplier, the major export area of commodity and labour, and the important project contracting market. At the security level, "three evil forces of extremism", through Central Asia, South Asia, penetrated into western China, which formed a potential threat to stability in China's western border area; at the international system level, the hot issues in the Middle East are important issues in which the Great Powers competed with each other under the framework of the United Nations. Therefore, the Middle East has been the stage where China shapes its international image of a responsible country. However, with the further expansion and transition of the relation between China and the Middle East, with the increasing participation in the Middle East, various potential conflicts have become acute and constitute a major constraint in China's diplomacy on the Middle East. How to solve the hot issues in the Middle East through effective diplomatic participation is an important issue of China's diplomacy on the Middle East.

As we all know, the Middle East is an area where the most world's hot issues concentrate. China actively participated in solving the Middle East hot issues. It embodies that China, gaining the rising international status, response to the appeal of international community and regions, then take more international responsibilities. In addition, it is an inevitable requirement of protecting China's increasing interests in the Middle East, of strengthening the cooperation with related countries on the basis of mutual benefit. Against this background, China recently has intensified its effort in participation in hot issues in the Middle East, initially formed its own characteristics in the Middle East policy, and accumulated valuable experience. But China is also confronted with a lot of pressure and challenges. In view of this, this article will summarize, analyze, and rethink the historical evolution, the core concepts and basic experience

of China's diplomacy on the Middle East hot issues. It will promote China's mature diplomacy to the Middle East hot issues. However, problems in China's diplomacy on the Middle East hot issues and how to solve it, which cannot be ignored. The author will discuss it in another paper due to the limitation of article's length.

"Hot spot"(international hot issues) is also called hot issues in China. In foreign countries, scholars prefer to call it "crisis". In view of the two major historical trends (peace and development), international hot issues should be a direct or potential threat to national, regional and global security (peace) and economic prosperity (development) in certain period, arousing extensive concern in the international community, inducing conflicts (or potential conflicts) or crisis which is coordinated, mediated or intervened by international organizations, the Great Powers (Great Group). The hot issues in the Middle East are diverse and various, almost covering all types of the world hot issues. They are summarized as follows:

1) International hot issues caused by a country's internal conflicts. Such issues have various forms: it may be conflict between different political factions, or conflict between the government and the anti-government forces, or conflict caused by ethnic minority groups' or cross-border ethnic groups' seeking for autonomy and independence, such as the Lebanese civil war, the current Darfur issue, Kurds problem plaguing Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and other issues.

2) The regional crises or conflicts occurred in different countries (nations). Because such conflicts involve territorial and security issues, they are the most persistent and difficult conflicts, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the history of the Iran-Iraq war.

3) Because of the great power's military intervention, internal conflicts, regional conflicts upgraded to regional wars, for instance, the Gulf War in 1991, the Afghanistan War in 2002, the Iraq War in 2003. This type of issues often involves the legitimacy of the war, the international collective security mechanism, post-war reconstruction and other complex issues, and these issues have a significant impact on the international system and international order.

4) The global non-traditional security issues. Such issues mainly include terrorism, proliferation of mass destruction weapons, trade and financial issues, environmental issues, resources and population, refugee, human rights, drugs, AIDS, information security and other non-traditional security issues. In the Middle East, the most prominent issues above contain terrorism, proliferation of mass destruction weapons (such as the Iranian nuclear issue), refugees, water disputes and so on.

Hot issues have a direct or potential threat to the peace and development of the world, and have a significant impact on current international system and international order. Their main influences include:

1) Leading to some state power, legitimacy and survival of the government facing severe threats. The internal conflicts in some countries, such as confrontation between government and anti-government forces (national separation forces, religious extremist forces), confrontation between the main ethnic and ethnic minority, often result in a internal crisis the legitimacy of government and threatening survival of the government. From the outside, these countries are often branded by Western countries as the "humanitarian disaster", the "failed state" by a failure governance, and become a "humanitarian intervened" or "regime changed" object. The typical examples are American enforced transformation of Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, and the current international pressure on Sudan.

2) Leading to a direct destruction or potential threats to the stability of the international community. Many hot issues in the Middle East, such as Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Iran-Iraq war, have caused a direct devastating impact, for example, large-scale casualties, refugees, and economic destruction. Some hot issues, especially nuclear crisis, such as Iran's nuclear problem, constitute a potential threat to the international security system. Thus, these issues arouse concerns of international community and intervention of the great powers and international organizations.

3) Impacting on the current international system and international

order. The solving of the Middle East hot issues, to a large extent, has constituted the main elements of global governance under the current international system. The solution to them get involved in the complicated game among dispute party, the world's major powers, international organizations, regional organizations and other state actors. Therefore, a series of disputes, such as the nature of sovereignty, diplomatic or military solution, unilateralism or multilateralism, has had an impact on current international system and order. The disastrous consequences of the Iraq war have fully proved this point.

## **II The Historical Development of China's Diplomacy on the Middle East Hot Issues: 1950s-1990s**

This article argues that diplomacy on hot issues can be understood at two levels: from the narrow perspective of diplomacy, the diplomacy on hot issues refers to diplomatic activities and diplomatic means about the goals, policy of solving the hot issues, which is carried out by the world's major powers, parties, international organizations, regional organizations. From the broad perspective of diplomacy, it refers to a diplomatic stage where bilateral diplomacy and multilateral diplomacy overlap each other, and diplomatic activities and international relations about the object, principle, means and method of solving the hot issues, which is carried out by major powers, parties, international organizations, regional organizations. This paper mainly focuses on researching China's diplomacy on hot issues. Thus, the concept, "hot issues diplomacy", is mainly used in narrow sense and national diplomatic policy level. However, it is inevitable that the diplomacy on hot issues has a complex relation with other world's powers and international organizations. The broad sense of its concept will be adopted in discussion. This article believed that China's diplomacy on hot issues is a collection of policies and views, diplomatic mechanism and diplomatic means. It adheres to the purpose of the Charter of Organization of United Nations and guideline of international law,

implements under the principle of the basic principles of China's foreign policy and overall diplomatic strategy, carried out for achieving the peaceful settlement of hot issues and easing the tense regional and international situation.

In fact, before reform and opening up, China's diplomacy on the Middle East had been involved in hot issues. At that time, the Middle East hot issues have two main types. The first is the Asian and African anti-colonial national liberation movement problems, such as the national liberation movement in the Middle East and North Africa. The second type is ethnic disputes, such as the Palestinian issue. In 1950s to 1970s, under the Cold War system, the ideological struggle had great impact on China's position and policies on Asian and African national liberation movement, ethnic disputes and other issues. Mao Zedong, in 1956, the Eighth Party Congress, pointed that: "we must give positive support to national independence and liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin American countries, as well as all the peace movements and just struggles in the world." (Liu, 2009). Therefore, as for the Middle East issues, in view of the objective of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-hegemony under the Cold War system, China mainly gave moral support and economic assistance to national liberation movement, supported the Palestinian struggle for national liberation, and adopted the completely reject attitude to Israel, the Western ally.

From 1980s to 1990s, due to the basic state policy of reform and the national development strategy (taking economic construction as the priority), there is a significant adjustment in China's diplomatic policy on the basis of Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. It is reflected in the establishment of idea of peace and development, in transcending the differences of the ideology and building the idea of national interests, in endowing the principle of independence with new contents, in proposing establishing a new international economic and political order, etc. Adapting to the adjustment, China's diplomacy on hot issues has changed as follow:

First of all, understandings of international hot issues become one of criterion of the international situation. The overall international

situation is easing, but the hot issues still remain and become a threat to world peace. In 1987, the report of the Party's Thirteenth National Congress firstly used the concept "hot spot". It pointed that: "hot spot" has not been eliminated, and the conflict in some areas still has a risk of escalation. The international situation has not been truly eased, and it will experience a long, difficult and complicated period in which people in the world still need to make constant efforts." (Zhao Ziyang). In 1992, the report of the Party's fourteenth National Congress specified the concept. It highlighted the specific forms of "ethnic conflicts", "territorial disputes", "and religious disputes". Moreover, it pointed that: "currently, international situation is still unrest. Various conflicts in the world are deepening. Ethnic conflicts, territorial disputes, religious disputes in many countries and regions are prominent, or even lead to bloody conflicts and local wars." (Jiang Zemin, *Reports on the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*). In 1997, the report of the Party's fifteenth National Congress contained a similar expression: "the local conflicts, caused by the ethnic, religious and territorial factors, arise now and then. The situation of the Middle East, especially Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf crisis and the Gulf War, is the important proof for making the previous judgments.

Secondly, the diplomacy on hot issues gradually become more pragmatic, and serves the development of China's foreign relations and the improvement of international environment. China's diplomacy on hot issues is less ideological, and focuses on securing China's position and policies according to the actual situation. For instance, on the Palestinian issue, according to the change of the Middle East situation after the Camp David Peace Treaty and the adjustment of China's own foreign policy, China firstly recognized the sovereignty of Israel in late 1980's. It built a bridge for the establishment of diplomatic relations between them. In 1990-1991 Gulf crises and the Gulf War, on one hand, China clearly opposed that Iraq annexed Kuwait. On the other hand, China insisted on resolving the crisis by peaceful means and opposed the US and Western military action against Iraq. According to this principle, China voted to the

decision that the United Nation Security Council, through political, diplomatic and economic means, forces Iraq to withdraw. But China gave a abstention to the Resolution 678 which authorized the United States to use force against Iraq. As for Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979, China believed that: "the ideology, social system should not become an obstacle to the development of bilateral relations. China implements a policy of non-interference in Iran's internal affairs, and does not support and participates in sanctions against Iran."(An, *China and the Middle East Friendly Relations and Cooperation Have Stable Development*). In two Iran-Iraq wars, "generally, China indicated its position and did not intervene. Meanwhile, China opposed the involvement and intervention of external forces, and hoped to solve it by their own countries through peaceful means (Xiao, 1998: 435).

Thirdly, China has more explicit and comprehensive policies and propositions on the Palestinian issue, the core of the Middle East issues. Toward the problem of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, China changed the extreme "one-sided" attitude in the past. In 1988, Foreign Minister of China, Qian Qichen, solemnly declared China's five proposals to resolve the Middle East issues: the Middle East issues should be resolved through political means; the occupied Arab territories should be returned, the Palestinian people's legitimate rights should be restored, and Israel security should also be guaranteed; supporting the Middle East international peace conference in which the Council's five permanent members participate; Supporting various forms of dialogue among the Middle East parties and mutual recognition of the Palestine and Israel (Peng, 2001: 368). In 1991, meeting held in Madrid symbolized that the Middle East peace process has made significant progress. China actively supports new development of the Middle East peace process starting from the Madrid meeting, and makes the ongoing effort to promote the Middle East peace. In December 1997, Vice Premier Qian Qichen visited the Middle East. During this period, he systematically expounded Chinese government's five proposals on the Middle East peace process: under the basis of relevant UN's resolutions, following the "land for peace" principle, promote the Middle East peace dialogue; conscientiously



fulfilling the reached agreements; opposing any forms of terrorism and violence; strengthen regional economic exchanges and cooperation, gradually establishing mutual trust between the Arab and Israel, and achieving common development and prosperity; the international community has a responsibility to achieve comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and China is ready to make its own contribution to it (People's Daily, 1997: December 26).

### **III. The Basic Ideas and Experience of China Hot Issue Diplomacy on Middle East since the New Century**

During 1980s and 1990s, based on the overall development strategy which takes economic construction as the center and limited by the strength of China and the experience of multilateral mechanisms, China's Hot Issue Diplomacy has a relatively detached characteristic. It is embodied that China only has a stand and exerts influence within the framework of the United Nations, and our participation and involvement are very limited on some hot issues which are not relevant with national interests. This does not only adapt to the social transition as the first priority should be developing but also reflected Deng Xiaoping's "hide one's capacities and bide one's time", "never take the lead" and other foreign military strategies since 1989. At the same time it is also related with the limits of the international development of China's national interests. However, with the continuous improvement of China's international status and national strength, as well as the deepening integration into the international system, the international community expects more of the international responsibility of China. As China's national interests continue to spill and the "going out" strategy has been established (such as it has an important bearing on China becoming an important part of the Darfur issue), the strategic importance of co-ordination of the international and domestic situation has become increasingly prominent. It is a necessity for China to increase its involvement in and participation of the international hot issues.

Since the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Chinese government has a new high understanding of the relationship between China and the world. The party's congress report spoke highly of this new awareness: "the relationship between contemporary China and the world has undergone historic changes. China's destiny is more closely linked with the future of the world." (Hu Jintao, *Reports on the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*). Just based on this understanding, China gives its solemn commitment to the world that China will unswervingly follow the road of peaceful development, and will be committed to "establish a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity." President Hu Jintao clearly states at the United Nations 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit that: "China will always put their own development together with its common progress of mankind. We take full advantage of the opportunities that the world peace offered to develop our own and take its own development to better safeguard world peace and promote common development. China will continue to abide the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, actively participate in international affairs and fulfill its international obligations." (Hu Jintao, *Speech on the Summit Meeting of the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations*). His speech shows to the world that China will take more international responsibility which adapts to our ability.

China's policy on the international hot issues should be clearer and more comprehensive with more emphasis on mechanisms and capacity building. As the speech of President Hu Jintao in the United Nations 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit puts it: "We should encourage and support peaceful efforts to consult and negotiate to resolve international disputes or conflicts; we should work together to oppose acts of violation of the sovereignty of other countries and fight against the forcible interference to a country's internal affairs and the arbitrary use of force or threat of force; we should strengthen cooperation against terrorism, address both symptoms and root causes, focus on eliminating root causes, and resolutely attack terrorism; we should promote fair, rational, comprehensive and balanced arms control and disarmament to prevent nuclear proliferation, and actively promote

the international nuclear disarmament process and safeguard global strategic stability. "(Hu Jintao, *Speech on the Summit Meeting of the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations*). The above propositions advocate a more comprehensive reflection of the China's international hot issues policies. The report of the 17th Party Congress further clarified that "China is committed to peaceful settlement of international disputes and hotspot issues" (Hu Jintao, *Reports on the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*), which expresses China's fundamental ideas and determination to participate in settlement of international hotspot issues.

Diplomatic concept is the persistent values in foreign strategy, foreign policy and diplomatic practice. This paper argues that the pursuit of peace, cooperation and win-win situation, as well as harmonious tolerance constitute the core ideas of China's Hot Issue Diplomacy. All these ideas rooted in traditional Chinese culture and values, and also deeply reflected in China's peaceful development strategies. The White Paper of "China's Peaceful Development Road" said: "Peace, openness, cooperation, harmony and win-win are our propositions, our ideas, our principles, and our pursuit." (*White Paper on China's Peaceful Development Road*, 2007). President Jiang Zemin held talks with the Moroccan King Mohammed VI in Rabat on October 28, 1999 and expounded Chinese government's views on the Middle East peace process and principled position. He also emphasized that: "We promote peace rather than resorting to force, promote cooperation rather than confrontation, and will be compatible rather than exclusive." (Wang & Wang, 1999: October 29). This concentrated the basic concept of China dealing with international hot issues. The foreign concept of "harmonious world" advocated by Hu Jintao upholds multilateralism to realize common security; adheres to mutually beneficial cooperation and realizes common prosperity; adheres to the spirit of tolerance and builds a harmonious world to increase the height of peace, cooperation, tolerance and other ideas to the ideal of universal human values. The followings are China's basic foreign policy experience with the Middle East hot spots.

1) The fundamental purpose of China's foreign policy hot issue is

to peacefully settle international disputes through dialogue and negotiations.

In the new century, the peaceful settlement through dialogue and negotiation has been clarified and strengthened in the recognition, ideas and practice of the hot issues.

Both the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Party National Congress continue to emphasize the international hot spots caused by the ethnic or religious contradictions and border or territorial disputes, at the same time, proposed a new thesis that "traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats are intertwined". In the diplomatic philosophy and policy level, the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress proposed a diplomatic idea which is "going with the historical tide and safeguarding the common interests of mankind"; advocated to establish "a new security concept of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation to resolve disputes through dialogue and cooperation instead of resorting to force or threat of force."(Jiang Zemin, *Reports on the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*). The report of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress raised a diplomatic idea which is "sharing development opportunities and jointly coping with challenges" and "promoting establishment of a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity "; advocating "mutual trust on security and to strengthen cooperation, as well as to persevere in our efforts to solve international disputes by peaceful means rather than wars to jointly safeguard world peace and stability"; committing to "peaceful settle the international disputes and hotspot issues and promote international and regional security cooperation against all forms of terrorism. "(Hu Jintao, *Reports on the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*). The above discussion shows that the Chinese government has more profound understanding of the international hot issues impact on the international situation, and puts the peaceful settlement of international disputes into China's new security concept and within the framework of the international political and economic new order and the "harmonious world" idea, which plays an important guiding role on the diplomatic theory and practice with Chinese characteristics.

The peaceful settlement of international disputes through dialogue and negotiation has been clearly reflected in diplomacy in practice of the Middle East hot spots diplomacy. On the Middle East Peace issue, China stands for relevant UN Security Council resolutions and resolving Middle East issues through dialogue on the basis of the land for peace principle; China has always stressed that peace negotiations is the correct way to resolve disputes during bilateral visits and consultations with Pakistan and Israel; since September 2002, China set up and appointed Middle East envoy, and we have conducted a series of bilateral and multilateral diplomatic activities, and actively working for the reconciliation of the parties and promoting the talks of peace, and has close contact and consultations with the Arab parties and other relevant parties in the international community (*China Has Taken Steps to Promote Middle East Peace Process*, 2005). On the Iranian nuclear issue, on one hand, China has promoted cooperation between Iran and the IAEA and supported the negotiations between Iran and the European Union to prevent the escalation of the situation; on the other hand, we have involved in the six-country consultations and supported the relevant resolutions of the Security Council on Iran and urged Iran to implement Security Council resolution to suspend uranium enrichment and related activities to solve outstanding issues earlier (Zhao, 2008). On the Darfur issue, one important part of through China's four proposals is to promote a political settlement by dialogue and equal consultations; China has tried to narrow differences and promote dialogue on equal footing by the heads of state visits, sending special envoy, phone-call, exchange of communications and coordination at the United Nations and other occasions; the Chinese government believed that equal consultation and dialogue is the right way to solve problems instead of pressure and sanctions.

2) Promote multilateralism, emphasis on the United Nations role in maintaining world peace and abide by the universally recognized norms governing international relations.

In recent years, China is an active advocator of multilateralism and attaches great importance to the United Nations role in the

maintenance of the world peace in solving all international affairs including hotspot issues. The 16<sup>th</sup> Congress report stressed that "we will continue to actively participate in multilateral diplomatic activities in the United Nations and other international and regional organizations " (Jiang Zemin, *Reports on the 16<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China*); The 17<sup>th</sup> Congress further clarified that "we will continue to actively participate in multilateral affairs, undertake corresponding international obligations, and play a constructive role in promoting the international order to a more just and equitable development." (Hu Jintao, *Reports on the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China*). The first point to emphasize in the speech of President Hu Jintao at the UN 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit in 2005 is to "uphold the multilateralism and strive for common security" and to advocate "a fair and effective collective security mechanism to prevent conflicts and wars, and safeguard world peace and security." (Hu Jintao, *Speech on the Summit Meeting of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations*).

Multilateralism is the key to realizing global peace, development and cooperation. The multilateral diplomacy and mechanisms are an important stage for China to play a constructive role with great power characteristics. The participation and creation of appropriate multilateral system has become an important part of China's new diplomacy. In the area of multilateral diplomacy, in addition to participation in the multilateral cooperation mechanisms of the global and regional international organizations including founding of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China-Africa Cooperation Forum, China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and other multilateral mechanisms, China actively starts and participates multilateral mechanisms for political solutions of international hot spots, which constitutes an important part of China's multilateral diplomacy. For example, in the Palestinian-Israeli issue, China believes that broad participating, balanced and effective multilateral mechanisms for promoting, monitoring and enforcement are an important guarantee to the peace talks (Yao, 2008: January). We have also increased the participation of multilateral diplomacy efforts through the

establishment of Middle East envoy and wide participation in the Middle East international conference; On the Iranian nuclear issue, since the Iranian nuclear issue has experienced coordination within the mechanisms of the IAEA, the six-nation, as well as the Security Council of UN which are three different but interrelated stages, so China has underlined that the Iranian nuclear issue be resolved within the IAEA framework in the beginning; and then in the six countries framework, China has actively communicated and consulted with the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany; after the United States pushed the Iranian nuclear issue to the Council to discuss, China voted in favor of the 1737 and 1747 resolution on the Iranian nuclear issue, and also insisted that the IAEA and bilateral and multilateral negotiations are still the best choices to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue (Yao, 2008: January). On the Darfur issue, China's consistent position is to play a constructive role in the African Union, the United Nations and other multilateral mechanisms. Through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, China plays an important role in order to promote the United Nations-African Union hybrid force Peacekeeping Plan that is "Annan Plan".

In the process of participating in settlement of international disputes and hotspot issues, China has abided by norms governing international relations and highlighted in upholding equality among nations, respect for sovereignty and the dignity of the parties and so on, which is most evident in the Darfur issue. The reason that the Chinese government can play a unique role on the Darfur issue lies in China's respect for the sovereignty of Sudan and adhering to the non-interference in domestic affairs, and playing a constructive role as a friend. Ambassador Liu Guijin who is responsible for the affairs of the Chinese government in Darfur said many times: "Darfur is Sudan's Darfur, is Africa's Darfur." China has always followed the principle of noninterference in each other's internal affairs to deal with the Darfur issue, which won the full confidence of the government of Sudan (Yu & Wang, 2008: March). The UN Security Council adopted two resolutions of 1556 and 1564 in July and September 2004 which contain the threat of sanctions against Sudan, and China abstained, which was

the practical expression to respect the sovereignty of Sudan.

3) Emphasis on development, stress the importance of economic cooperation and increase humanitarian assistance to improve local people's livelihood and create an environment for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The reason for developing countries and regions to become the frequent and high-prone areas for Hot Issues is the conflict of interest caused by backward economic and social development. Because "development is the maintenance of peace and an important basis for stability and security, there is no sustainable development, there is no lasting peace." (Hu Jintao, *Speech on the Consultative Conference of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*). Thus, for many hot issues, China both emphasized understanding the root of the hot-spot problem from the development and stresses the importance of creating conditions for the settlement of hotspot issues by promoting development for and also pays more attentions to economic assistance and development projects and practices the commitment of "safeguarding world peace and promoting common development by its own development".

On the Darfur issue, China has been always thinking that the essence of this problem in Darfur is development and the fundamental way to solve the Darfur issue is to achieve local economic reconstruction and development; the international community should continue to provide humanitarian assistance as well as the development assistance. Currently China has provided 80 million Yuan of material assistance to Darfur and the African Union and provided 50 million US dollars loan for water supply facilities (Zhao, 2008).

President Hu Jintao visited Sudan in 2007 and announced another 40 million Yuan aid to Sudan. After strengthening economic and trade cooperation between China and Sudan, the living conditions of local people have been improved. Taking Petro China as example, by the end of 2006, Petro China has invested \$ 3.287 billion in the Sudan for social welfare undertakings and direct beneficiaries for the local is more than 1.5 million. In early 2007, when he visited Sudan, President Hu Jintao required Chinese enterprises to adhere to mutual benefit



and common development. He said that they should "be in harmony with the local community, take social responsibility and do more to enhance the capacity of independent development of African countries to help African people improving lives and bringing tangible benefits." (Guangming Daily, 2007: February 4).

In addition, China has supported and participated in the post-war reconstruction in Afghanistan, Iraq and other regions. In 2002, the Chinese government promised to provide \$150 million to Afghan Government, during which, China has supported the Parwan water conservancy, the Kabul Republic hospitals and other projects and provided material assistance and human resources training. In 2006 and 2007, China provided free assistance 160 million Yuan and announced to accept the Afghan 200 professional and technical personnel train in China within two years (Zhao, 2008).

In May 2007, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi attended a meeting in Egypt and placed emphasis on the importance of supporting the Iraq's political and economic reconstruction by Iraq's neighboring countries, the international community and United Nations; he announced that the Chinese government would offer 50 million Yuan free assistance to Iraq and would like to derate Iraqi debt owed to China. Iraqi President Jalal Talabani visited to China in June 2007, which was the first visit of the Iraqi head of state in Iran since establishment of diplomatic relations in 1958. During the talks, Hu Jintao and other Chinese leaders reiterated China's principled position on the Iraq issue, and said China will continue to support the reconstruction of Iraq and provide assistance within its capacity, including the encouragement and support Chinese enterprises to participate in reconstruction, training much-needed professionals and expand new areas and new ways for mutually beneficial cooperation (Yao, 2008: January).

4) From the international moral perspective, it is conducive for people's fundamental interests in the stated nations and regions to respect the interests of concerned parties and promote the settlement of hotspot issues.

In recent years, there is an important concept of China's foreign policy which is the concept of mutual benefits and co-operation. Jiang

Zemin stressed in the 16th Party Congress report: "(China should) seek converging points of common interests, expand mutually beneficial cooperation and deal with the challenges of human survival and development." (Jiang Zemin, *Reports on the 15<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China*). Hu Jintao also highly stressed in the UN 60th anniversary summit speech the importance of "strengthening international cooperation, promoting common development and achieving win-win" (Hu Jintao, *Speech on the Summit Meeting of the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations*); in the report of the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, he has further stressed that "we should persevere the combination of the interests of the Chinese people and the common interests of people in all countries." (Hu Jintao, *Reports on the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China*).

The Chinese concept of mutual benefit and cooperation has been clearly reflected in the field of Hot Issue Diplomacy. In the Iranian nuclear and Sudan Darfur issue, China does not only pay attention to the reasonable concerns of relevant countries, but also to safeguard the common interests of all parties. We both maintained the status and authority of the United Nations in international affairs and also give full play to its own constructive role, which fully displayed a good image of a responsible country. China's diplomacy in the hot spots won the world-wide recognition. For China paying attention to the interests of all parties in the North Korea and Iranian nuclear issues, Darfur, Myanmar and other issues, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of the United States for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Thomas J. Christensen said: "All of the above shows that China and the United States may establish diplomatic issues of common concern, and to address these issues for common action. The process is complex and difficult, and the results are not satisfactory, but the history of China's diplomatic relations has some understanding of the people will think that these results are very positive. Some people think that China's foreign policy is the main motive in the world the United States weakened the impact of this point of view it is very difficult to set up. Another point is that should be pointed out that in recent years, China's diplomatic activities reflect a change, which exceeded the

previous strictly adherence to the "non-interference in internal affairs of other countries" approach towards a more pragmatic attitude change, and realize that the international community issues of common concern on the value of cooperation and obligations. This is a kind of China's foreign policy and we should certainly continue to support the trend." (Christensen).

#### **IV The Innovation Significance of Hot Issue Diplomacy**

1) China's Diplomacy on the Hot Issues is inheritance and development of the basic principles of China foreign policy, which shows her firm convictions of peaceful development and the building of a harmonious world.

Through active involvement in international and regional hot issues, China not only bears a wide range of international obligations, but also plays a responsible and constructive role. It is the important road and actual expression of China who shows to the world the efforts of promoting the peaceful development road and builds a harmonious world. Nowadays, the main hot issues are mostly in developing countries. With the improvement of China national strength and international status, the international society, especially the developing countries would expect China more in the process of promoting the settlement of hotspot issues. When west countries, especially the United States cannot gain trust from parties of a conflict or have little influence on their government, they also want to get help from the close relationship between China and these parties and promote the issue of progress through China influence; from China's own point of view, as a permanent member of the Security Council, China is obliged to resolve international disputes and is willing to use its influence to play a constructive role in resolving hotspot issues (Zhao, 2008).

It is proved that the role China played in the dialogue and negotiations to promote a political settlement of international hotspot issues have gained appreciation and recognition of the parties and international community. Even the United States also has recognized

the active role of China in many hot issues. For example, Thomas Christensen, the United States Deputy Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs on March 18, 2008 delivered a report entitled "Through diplomatic channels affect China's global choice" in US-China Economic and Security Review Commission. He took a positive view on the rising global influence of Chinese diplomacy and advocated strengthening strategic dialogue of the United States in global and regional issues. He particularly spoke highly of the China's role on the North Korean nuclear issue, the Iranian nuclear issue, the Darfur issue and the Myanmar issue. On the Darfur issue in Sudan, he said: "China's recent involvement in resolving the humanitarian crisis in Darfur and the start of multilateral efforts to forcefully that the United States and China in Asia outside contact with the hot areas of great significance." (Christensen).

2) China's Diplomacy on the Hot Issues shapes the international image of China as a responsible country and is conducive to enhancing China's soft power.

Although there has been controversies on elements of soft power in educational circle, in terms of diplomacy, the achievement of one's soft power depends largely on international acceptance of its foreign concept in a non-mandatory way and the active role it plays on shaping the international system and world order. Causes of international hotspot issues have been complicated and involved a wide range facts, so the hot issue diplomatic field is not only the intersection of current conflicts of interests, but is also a stage of foreign concepts which are important manifestations of soft power, which directly affects the rise and fall of national soft power. The serious damage of the US's soft power especially the international image is closely related to unilateralism, regime change, democratic export in its hot issue diplomacy.

As mentioned above, China's Diplomacy on hot issues follows the core concept of pursuit of peace, cooperation and win-win, the harmony and tolerance. It not only caters to the international community, particularly the developing countries' expectations on China's greater role on the hot issues, but also adapts the Western

powers requirements for China to take on more international responsibility. More importantly, the theory and practice of the China's Hot Issue Diplomacy plays an important constructive role in the conflict mitigation and suppression and properly handling the interests of all parties as well as promoting the peaceful settlement of hotspot issues. It also has a positive impact on shaping China's international image and strengthening China's soft power. Although the West still has accused China, after all, China's idea attracted the attention and reflection of the West. For example, despite their criticism to China's Darfur policy, the West has recognized that "in China's view, the root causes of conflict and economic backwardness have relations with poverty, so the key issue is to promote development." "the role of China in Sudan's Darfur crisis and investment policies in Africa have already incurred a lot of criticisms and reservations, but the actual underlying causes of problems is that there is a fundamental difference of view between China and the West. "China denied the existence of a universal political model, which requires the international system to achieve diversification. China lets us know that it is not necessarily wrong to have the practice which is different from the Western countries. "(Rios, 2008: August 26).

3) China's Hot Issue Diplomacy is help to promote China's transition process in the international system and push China to integrate better into the international community, and order the international system to the a fair and reasonable direction.

The current international system is undergoing profound transformation and its contents are covering the structure of international actors (state and non state actors), the international power structure (in particular the rise and fall of great powers), the international order (international system and global governance) and other areas. To some extent, the international hot issues have focused on all problems of the international system in transition: the relationships between the state and non-state actors (such as national sovereignty and international intervention and so on); the changing relations between major powers (particularly the relationship between the emerging great powers and the traditional hegemonic ones); the

unilateral and multilateral policy, hegemony and democracy problems in global governance. Therefore, in the problem-solving process, it is undoubtedly one of the core issues of China's diplomacy to deal with hot issues and play a constructive role in the transformation process of the international system.

Practice shows that China's Hot Issue Diplomacy in the Middle East has well handled various conflicts and has a positive impact on China's integration into the international community, and has pushed the international system and order toward a just and rational direction.

In the level of actors, China has insisted the premise of the principle of national sovereignty, well understood and practiced the principle of non-interference and dealing more maturely with the relationships between the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; in the level of the power, China and the United States search for common ground and interests on hot issues, properly handle differences and conflicts, which makes the West know China as a "responsible stakeholder" in this system; in the international institution level, China actively "broadens the mind, opens more channels and involves as well as creates the appropriate multilateral system". "By deepening the multilateral dialogue mechanism, China will 'guide' the world's concerns"(Shen, 2007); China has become a major player and active builder of the international system.

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*China's Diplomacy on the Hot Issues of Middle East: History, Ideas, Experiences and Impact*

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