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## Position Paper of China

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**Topic:** The Middle East after the Territorial Elimination of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

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The Middle East has always had a unique and important place in China's foreign policy. We are all developing countries, we have similar historical experiences and we share the goal of revitalizing our nations. Hence, the people of China and Arab countries have been close friends and strong partners. Meanwhile, China is deeply concerned about the regional disputes in this area and seeking for peaceful settlements for said conflicts. As a steadfast supporter of, and facilitator for, peace in the Middle East, China has been working actively for a peaceful political settlement of the questions in Syria, Yemen, Libya, among other hotspots, with a view to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East at an early date.

### Peaceful Settlement of the Syrian Crises

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has always played an active and constructive role in promoting a proper settlement of the Syrian issue. China's appointment of the special envoy on Syrian issue aims at better promoting peace talks, more actively contributing China's wisdom and proposals, and more effectively strengthening communication and coordination with all relevant parties. It is also the concrete embodiment of the increased efforts on advancing peace of the international community under the current situation, which will inject "positive energy" to the political settlement of the Syrian issue.

With regard to the specific solutions to the Syrian issue, the agreement between the parties on the cessation of hostilities is holding. Progress has been achieved in the field of humanitarian relief and the peace talks in Geneva are on track. The international community should continue to support the UN and make the following efforts.

- First, it should support United Nations relief agencies in their efforts to expand humanitarian relief activities. The countries concerned should strengthen communication and coordination with the Government of Syria to facilitate the process;
- Secondly, it should ensure that all the Syrian parties will continue to abide by the agreement on the cessation of hostilities so as to continue to ease the situation;
- Thirdly, it should promote progress in the peace talks in Geneva and encourage the parties to follow the principle of moving from the easy to the difficult, starting with the issues where consensus exists in order to produce a timely result and promote confidence-building;
- Fourthly, it should step up the international fight against terrorism and join hands in combating the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist organizations listed by the Council. The Chinese Government appointed Ambassador Xie Xiaoyan as its Special Envoy for the Syrian crisis. As always, China will promote the political process for a settlement of the Syrian question.

To be noted, China has all along supported the Syrian people in determining the future of Syria on their own and we support a political settlement of the issue of Syria. That is why the Chinese side voted for the UN Security Council's resolution calling for a political solution to the Syrian issue. We support a process owned and led by the Syrian people and believe that as long as all the political forces, parties and groups can sit down together and truly bear in mind the fundamental and long-term interests of the nation and people of Syria, a way will be found to solve the issue. No difficulty is insurmountable, so long as the parties are willing to go beyond the selfish interests of their own party or group. External forces should provide necessary support for and play a constructive role in the Syrian people's effort to solve the issue on their own.

China sees that many countries have been involved in the issue to various degrees. To our knowledge, Russia has been officially invited by the Syrian government to join in the process of solving the Syrian issue and to fight the extremist and terrorist forces in Syria. It is fair to say that terrorist forces in Syria have been contained to a certain degree thanks to the joint efforts of Russia and other parties concerned. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to have this new round of peace talks or to conduct any humanitarian assistance. The peace talks are in difficulty recently and the ceasefire has been challenged by various factors. Under such circumstances, it is all the more necessary to stay firm in pushing forward the peace talks and encourage all countries outside this region to play a

positive role. China's position has been consistent and clear, namely, it is important to follow the path of political settlement, because only a political solution can serve the fundamental interests of the people and nation of Syria.

Regarding international intervention issue, China believes the local people know the best what happens there and they have the best say on that. Other countries should be cautious in making any judgment on this matter. On what criteria China adopts in this regard, in specific terms, on how to view a country's entry into the territory of another country for a military operation, we mainly have two criteria: first, the operation must have the prior consent of the country concerned or must be carried out at its invitation; second, the operation must comply with international law and basic norms governing international relations. China follows these two criteria in forming its views on military operations, no matter it is in Syria, Iraq, Yemen or any other places.

## **Political Settlement of the Iraq Crises**

China is following the situation in Iraq closely. China firmly advocates peaceful settlement of the Iraq issue through political and diplomatic means and within the framework of the United Nations. China respects the sovereignty, territorial integrity and reasonable concerns of Iraq and supports Iraq's efforts in protecting its national independence and sovereignty. China is willing to deepen cooperation at different levels or fields including security.

China will strengthen strategic coordination with Iraq under the framework of the One Belt One Road initiative and help with Iraq's reconstruction such as, energy, power, telecommunication and infrastructure. China also encourages enterprises to join in and invest in large projects in Iraq. China will closely work with Iraq in regional peace and stability. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi arrived in Beijing on Tuesday for a two-day visit, Abadi's first since assuming office in September 2014. During Abadi's visit, China and Iraq issued a joint statement upgrading their relationship to a strategic partnership.

Above all, China supports the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and the efforts made by the Iraqi government to safeguard national stability and combat terrorism. China supports and encourages continued inclusive political dialogue by all factions in Iraq and promotion of the political reconciliation and economic reconstruction process in the country. On the issue of counter-terrorism in Iraq, the international community needs to build consensus and synergy, pay attention to the linkage among regional hotspot issues, and work for comprehensive governance. China denounces outside interference while calling for a comprehensive and earnest dialogue to confront the threats that endanger the security, stability and unity of Iraq.

## **Solution to the Humanitarian Crises (Refugees) in the Middle East**

At present, the world is faced with the most severe refugee crisis since the end of World War II. The conflicts and terrorism in Iraq, Libya, Syria and elsewhere have displaced millions of civilians, many of whom lost their lives and loved ones when fleeing from their home countries. After arriving in the developed world, which always flaunts human rights and humanitarianism, these refugees often have to face increasing discrimination, xenophobia and in many instances state brutality, excessive use of force and degrading treatment. As a matter of fact, more and more people have come to realize that the root cause of the current humanitarian crisis is the policy of new interventionism carried out by certain western countries under the banner of human rights and humanitarianism. Unfortunately, these western countries, instead of taking responsibilities for their own actions, continue to accuse the victimized countries of violating human rights. This is totally unacceptable.

More specifically, China is a responsible major country and a friend of the Arab people. We care deeply about the refugees and try to help them as much as we can. First of all, we appeal to the world to pay more attention, show more support and take action to resolve the refugee crisis. Secondly, China itself has provided several batches of humanitarian assistance. In the past two years, we have provided 680 million yuan of emergency supplies to help refugees in Syria and elsewhere. Early this year, President Xi Jinping announced a new aid package of 230 million yuan. Not long ago in London, China pledged 10,000 tons of food assistance to meet the urgent need of the refugees.

On the other hand, we think it necessary to address both the symptoms and root causes. We must find the underlying causes of the refugee issue in order to fundamentally remove its breeding ground. People know very well how the refugee issue has come about. You have countries in chaos, governments in disarray, wars and conflicts breaking out, and the rise of extremism and terrorism. People suffer immensely and have no choice but to flee their homes. So, to resolve the refugee crisis, the current hotspot issues must be resolved. Only when normal governance and sound state institutions are in place, will it be possible for the refugee issue to be thoroughly resolved with the help of the international community.

## **Israeli – Palestinian Conflict**

The issue of Israeli – Palestinian Conflict is at the core of the Middle East question. It bears on the conscience and justice of mankind and we cannot afford to let it drag on. China is highly attentive to the Palestinian-Israeli question and has always made constructive efforts to advance the Middle East peace process. The Middle East peace process is now in deep stalemate and the tensions between Palestine and Israel persist. We call upon the international community to redouble its efforts to help Palestine and Israel to end the cycle of violence and return to the correct track of peace talks. We call upon the Security Council to effectively assume responsibility for the Palestinian-Israeli question and to play its due role. China is willing to join the relevant stakeholders within the international community in their common efforts, and will continue to play a constructive role in promoting a just and lasting settlement of the

question of Palestine.

**The conflict between Palestine and Israel poses the danger of continuous escalation, with the spillover effect also on the rise. A comprehensive and fair solution to the Palestinian question is in the interests of all sides. China would like to see peaceful settlement of Israeli – Palestinian conflict, to that end China proposes the following aspects for the international community to take swift action and focus its efforts:**

- First, we must stay the right course: establishing an independent State of Palestine and peaceful coexistence between Palestine and Israel. Establishing a Palestinian State with full sovereignty, based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people as well as the key to resolving the question of Palestine. Intra-Palestine reconciliation could facilitate the establishment of the State of Palestine.
- Secondly, peace talks, as the only way forward, must continue. If they stall, this could exacerbate differences, incite hatred and drag Palestine and Israel into a vicious circle of escalating violence in which both sides would pay a heavy price. The use of force is never a solution. The earlier the peace talks start, the sooner the people of Palestine and Israel will benefit. It is only by resuming negotiations at an early date that it will be possible to achieve peace and stability between Palestine and Israel and the region. This is in the fundamental interests of both sides.
- Thirdly, in promoting the peace process we must abide by the principle of land for peace, the two-State solution, the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant United Nations resolutions. These are important outcomes achieved by the international community following difficult negotiations and serve as important guidance for advancing the peace process in the Middle East. On this basis, all sides should stay the course and help to promote a political solution.
- Fourthly, both Palestine and Israel should take specific steps to move the peace process forward. Israel must first demonstrate its sincerity by taking practical steps to stop its settlement activities, cease the demolition of Palestinian properties and stop the violence against innocent civilians. It should lift the blockade on Gaza so as to create conditions conducive to the resumption of talks. At the same time, the legitimate security concerns of the States of the region should also be respected.
- Fifthly, in order to advance the peace process, the international community should provide vital guarantees. The international community recently intensified its efforts to resolve the Palestinian question, with new ideas and innovative thinking, including creating an international support group, convening an international peace conference on the Palestinian question, and cultivating forces for peace in the Middle East. The international community should strengthen coordination, turn the positive momentum into concrete action and make every effort to achieve realistic and operable results. The Security Council should respond positively to the legitimate demands of the Palestinians and the Arab States and give serious consideration to draft resolutions on providing international protection to the Palestinian people and ending the expansion

and construction of settlements. It should take the necessary actions to promote the relaunching of peace talks.

- Sixthly, the international community should do its best to improve the humanitarian situation in Palestine and continue to advance its economic reconstruction. China calls upon Israel to cooperate with the international aid efforts by completely lifting the blockade on Gaza. All parties should respond positively to the United Nations aid plan for Palestine and scaled-up assistance to Gaza. They should engage economic cooperation with Palestine so that the humanitarian situation and the climate for survival on the ground will improve and the Palestinian people will be able to see hope.

## **Kurdish Issue**

China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, is not going to avoid Kurdish issues which relate to regional security and stability, and it is also a matter of national law and international moral norms, involving Chinese interests and national security. Dealing with Kurdish issues is indeed a new topic, but also a challenge.

There are two points which should be taken into consideration:

Firstly, the basic policy of China to handle the Middle East hotspot is to promote peace talks. The fundamental purpose of handling hotspot is adherence to a fair and reasonable settlement of disputes through dialogue and negotiation. Put emphasis on the role of the United Nations Security Council in maintaining peace in the world. Put emphasis on the peaceful settlement of disputes through economic cooperation and to increase humanitarian assistance to improve people's livelihood so as to create a favorable external environment.

Secondly, China firmly adheres to safeguard the sovereignty of Iraq and establish mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit on the basis of bilateral relations. China actively supports political reconciliation in Iraq and its counter-terrorism efforts in fighting against "Islamic State". China firmly supports Iraq's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and advocates the adoption of a political process in a peaceful, democratic way to resolve differences to achieve security and stability in Iraq.