

## On the Mid-East Situation

# China's Diplomacy in the Middle East Highlights the Chinese Characteristics

By Professor Liu Zhongmin

Middle East Studies, Shanghai International Studies University

Building a major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is an all-dimensional and multi-fields systematic project. The Mid-East is the most complex and volatile region in the world today, and is also the one China's diplomacy faces the most opportunities and challenges in recent years. Therefore, to promote China's diplomacy in the Mid-East diplomacy must be closely combined with the regional reality, shaping a diplomacy concept, foreign policy and diplomatic mechanism with not only the distinct Chinese characteristics, but also compatible with the actual situation in the Mid-East.

**First, carrying forward the "peaceful cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning, mutual benefit and win-win progress"--** the spirit of the Silk Road, and actively strengthening cooperation on the "Belt and Road" construction between China and Mid-Eastern countries

The Mid-East is the intersection of the "Belt and Road", and an important hub connecting Europe, Asia and Africa. Among more than 60 countries along the "Belt and Road" routes, more than 1/4 countries belonging to the Mid-East countries. Therefore, doing a good job in the Mid-East to promote the "Belt and Road" construction work has very importance bearing to realize the overall goal of the "Belt and Road" construction. In recent years, to promote the "Belt and Road" construction work in the Mid-East has recorded big achievements, China and Arab countries have formed a "1+2+3" cooperation pattern with the energy cooperation as the main shaft, the infrastructure construction, trade and investment facilitation as the two wings, and the three high-tech fields of nuclear energy,

space aviation & satellites, and new energy as new breakthroughs.

Undoubtedly, the biggest challenge for the Chinese to promote the "Belt and Road" construction in the Mid-East is a security risk, and China will not get stalled because of security risks, but will take precise measures and policies and continue to promote the "Belt and Road" construction in the Mid-East according to the different risks in Mid-East countries. Relatively stable countries such as GCC countries, Turkey, Iran, and Israel will be the focus countries for China in the Mid-East to promote interoperability, facilitate trade and investment, carry out financial cooperation, and production capacity cooperation, with high speed railway, new energy, aerospace, nuclear energy, high-end manufacturing industry becoming important areas of cooperation. Arab countries in transformation such as Egypt, Tunisia have gradually become stable, China will focus on promoting the economic, trade and investment cooperation projects closely related with people's livelihood, and accompanied with the appropriate economic assistance and preferential loans, vigorously promote social stability of the Arab countries in transformation. For other countries such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya in turmoil, while promoting peaceful talks politically, China shall actively support and participate in their economic reconstruction, and encourage Chinese enterprises to invest in these countries industrially as the security environment allows. In the field of humanities, China will uphold the "Silk Road" spirit of "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning, mutual benefit and win-win progress", and promote the exchanges and

cooperation between the two sides in the fields of culture, education, media, tourism, youth, think tanks, and religion, etc. and continue to strengthen the "people heart-to-heart linkage", and enhance China's soft power in the Mid-East.

**Second, firmly upholding international fairness and justice, promoting the democratization and the rule of law of international relations,.**

The Mid-East is the region ridden with worst legacy of colonial history, is a key area for the United States and other Western powers to frequently carry out new interventionism and exporting democracy, is the region meeting extremely difficult transformation process to explore the development path, and is in a period of emerging contradictions inside the Mid-East countries, contradictions between the states, and contradictions of big-countries game-play. Therefore, China must hold high the banner to maintain fairness and justice in the world, take the Mid-East as an important platform to promote democratization and legalization of international relations, and occupy the moral high ground; dare to express its moral stance on the Mid-East issues, emphasize that colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism are the root causes for forming the Mid-East problems while working with the regional countries, and some relevant countries should assume more responsibility; in the process of participating in the Mid-East affairs, advocate values of "emphasizing credibility, focusing friendship, advocating justice, establishing moral", and then win the public opinion foundation for the Mid-East. Therefore, to support the founding of the Palestinian state and the Palestinian-Israeli peace process should be the moral high ground of China's Mid-East policy, which is the strategic foundation for China to win the trust of the Arab world.

**Third, creatively using the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs,** actively advocating peacemaking through negotiations, and promoting a political solution to the Mid-East problems, daring to put forward "China's program", "China's platform", etc.

The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs is still the cornerstone of China's participation in the Mid—East affairs, and it is the fundamental guarantee for China to win the trust of the Mid-East countries and to maintain the initiative of China's diplomacy. But China should increase participation in a political solution to the Mid-East issues, play the constructive role more in facilitating

talks and promoting peace process, and maintaining security and stability in the Mid-East region. In diplomatic practice, China should dare to propose to the parties more feasible solutions conforming to the international morality, but also continue to follow the principle of imposing no interference in the internal affairs, and handle well the non-interfere in the internal affairs and constructive intervention. Currently, the political settlement of the Mid-East problems has become consensus of the international community, the regional countries and most of the Western powers, and China should take it as an opportunity to increase policy declaration, also put forward "China's program", and "China's platform" to solve some hot problems as the conditions are ripe. In this sense, the Mid-East constitutes an important test field for China's creative use of non- interference in internal affairs.

**Fourth, actively promoting comprehensive governance and providing governance concepts** and governance mechanisms featuring treatment of both symptoms and root causes so as to solve the new and old Mid-East problems, and to promote the Arab countries to solve the problems in their development and transformation process.

On the Mid-East hot issues, paying attention not only to the newborn hot issues, and neglecting no original regional hot spot issues of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute either, giving particular attention to the interactive effects of old and new hot spots problems, advocating comprehensive governance. In the process of adhering to the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and negotiation, both respecting the history and also taking into account the reality in order to strive for fair and reasonable solution to the disputes. On advocating multilateralism, attaching importance to both the role of the United Nations Security Council in the maintenance of world peace, and to regional organizations ideas by the Arab League and the African Union, etc. In dealing with relations with the West, resolutely opposing the new interventionism, and maintaining communication and coordination with them in order to reach consensus and create a good external environment for the peaceful settlement of disputes. From the perspective of promoting economic aid, focusing both on the current humanitarian aid, and long-term economic cooperation, but also supporting regional countries to explore the development path in line with their own characteristics, and creating conditions in order to achieve long-term stability.