

From A By-stander to A Constructor: China and the Middle East Security Governance

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Abstract: *In the 21st century, Middle East conflicts can generally be classified into four types, namely, conflicts between outside powers and Middle East countries, between Middle East countries themselves, between different political parties and religious sects within a sovereign country, as well as transnational and cross-bordering conflicts. The mode of China's participation in Middle East security governance includes the political, security and social conflicts. There are three categories of domestic mechanisms in Chinese practice, specifically, the special envoy mechanism by Chinese Foreign Ministry, the procession and peace-keeping mechanisms by Chinese Defense Ministry and the foreign aid mechanism by Chinese Ministry of Commerce. The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the UN and other international organizations constitute the major international regimes for China's*

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security governance. China's Middle East security governance creates not only "public goods" for the region, but also a means for China to build constructive great power relations with the US, EU and Russia, among others. The styles of Chinese and Western security governance in the Middle East vary, and the Chinese side places more emphasis on improving the Middle East people's well-being at the top of the agenda, following "up-bottom" roadmap, and seeking an incremental, consultative, inclusive, and selective governance in the Middle East conflict resolution.

Key Words: *Diplomacy; Global Governance; Middle East Security Governance; China's Middle East Diplomacy; Mediation Diplomacy*

I. Introduction

Governance is capability building, and it is an important research area of interdisciplinary studies, involving economics, management, diplomacy, political science, and sociology. It can be divided into different categories including corporate governance (Pierce, C., 2008), state governance^①, regional governance and global governance. Since the twenty-first Century, with the relationship between domestic and foreign affairs becoming close-knit, the boundaries among the above-mentioned four types of governance are increasingly blurred. The modernization of China's national governance and China's participation in regional and global governance in the new era has an important linkage.

Global governance aims at resolving global public issues. The hidden logic of global governance is that great powers provide public

^①See United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Innovations in Governance in the Middle East, North Africa, and Western Balkans: Making Governments Work Better in the Mediterranean Region*, New York: United Nations, 2007; Tom Najem and Martin Hetherington, *Good Governance in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*, London: Routledge, 2003; Abbas K. Kadhim, *Governance in the Middle East and North Africa: a Handbook*, London: Routledge, 2012; Sai Felicia Krishna-Hensel, *Religion, Education and Governance in the Middle East: Between Tradition and Modernity*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

goods in the forms of security, economy and social order to the weak countries and the countries under governance are usually the source of “problems”, i.e., the threat or challenge to the international community. In the context of international relations, global governance is constituted by ideas, mechanisms and behaviors of the international community in order to solve common affairs, that is, “a new kind of rules, mechanisms, methods and activities to manage public affairs under the guidance of the general theory of human beings and the common interests, and through equal dialogue, consultation and cooperation, and joint-effort on global challenges of multitude actors” (Cai, T., 2004: 95-96).

Global governance forms a sharp contrast to the traditional geopolitical rivalry. Different from the balance of power and geopolitical logic which features the “zero-sum game”, global governance has the following features: first, its goal is to resolve international hot issues and prevent escalation of international conflicts, which serves the common interests of all members of the international community; second, the main actors that participate in the regional hot issues are diverse, including sovereign countries, international organizations, regional organizations, NGOs and other political factions. For example, since the Middle East revolts, various tribes, religious sects, political parties and social groups also become the new actors of global governance, including organizations such as Iraqi Kurdish forces and Shiite militias (Magen, A., 2013: 18), which form an united front against the “Islamic State”. In the process of solving the global and regional hot issues, these actors have formed a “flat” structure, which supersedes the top-down “hierarchical” power structure of sovereign nations that has existed for thousands of years in the international politics. Third, in the process of problem solution, international actors often form certain norms and principles, and these norms and principles become the code of conduct in the process of conflict resolution (Wang, H. & Rosenau, J., 2009: 5-6). Fourth, the participants in global governance are all stakeholders, and they all voluntarily discuss and solve the problems concerning international hot issues through consultation.

The Middle East governance is an interdisciplinary research issue covering disciplines of sociology, economics, management, law, diplomacy and political science, which is also related to Middle East society, economy, ethnicity, politics and international relations. Although China has rich practical experience in participation in Middle East governance, studies on China's regional governance in the region by Chinese and overseas scholars are sparse. The current theoretical and empirical studies focus on the governance practice of the US, Europe and other western countries. In contrast, there are very few case studies on the emerging powers' participation in the Middle East governance. In addition, there are biased interpretations about the motivation of China's participation in the Middle East. The current relevant literature can be divided into the following five categories:

The first school relies mainly on the concept and theory of global governance. These studies focus on the definition, types, causes, mechanism and performance of regional governance, usually using qualitative and quantitative research methods. The second school focuses on the theory and practice of Chinese participation in global affairs, including climate change, financial restructuring, nuclear non-proliferation, global health and some other fields, but pay less attention to China's participation in Middle East governance in particular (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007). The third school analyzes the practice of international, regional and non-governmental organizations in the global and regional governance, including the UN, the Arab League, the African Union and multinational corporations, usually through historical approach and case studies. The fourth school is mainly about outside powers and the Middle East countries' participation in hot issues and their specific approaches to solving the problems in the Middle East during the new era.^① The fifth one is devoted to China's participation in

^①See Abbas K. Kadhim, *Governance in the Middle East and North Africa: A Handbook*, Routledge, 2012; Hensel Krishna and Sai Felicia, *Religion, Education and Governance in the Middle East: Between Tradition and Modernity*, Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012; Mustapha K. Nabli, *Breaking the Barriers to Higher Economic Growth: Better*

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political mediation, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and anti-piracy campaign in the Middle East.

To sum up, the present types of research on the theory and case study of the great powers participating in Middle East governance are mainly from three perspectives. The first is a diplomatic perspective, including the general theory of governance from the perspective of crisis management, conflict resolution and preventive defense in the Middle East; the second is from a practical point of view on the relationship between China and the Middle East, which is a comparative analysis on the regional governance of different units in the Middle East including the UN, the Arab League, the African Union, GCC, NGOs, the US, Russia, EU, Japan, Qatar, Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, disclosing those actors' motivations, mechanism, resource allocation, agenda setting and specific tactics in participating in Middle East governance; the third focuses on main tools, goals, and mechanisms (bilateral and multilateral) of China's Middle East diplomacy.

Those aforementioned research findings have the characteristics of diversity and innovation in research methods, and novelty of the research perspective. However, they also have flaws. The present studies mostly investigate patterns and experience of Western countries as well as sovereign states, like Qatar and Algeria, and international organizations, such as the UN, the Arab League and the African Union, but have apparently ignored China's governance in recent years. In particular, academic analysis on China's practice and participation in Middle East governance is sparse. This article attempts to explore the causes, mechanisms and features of China's participation in Middle East governance from an interdisciplinary angle, filling the gap of academic research in the field.

In the twenty-first century, China has participated in many aspects of conflict resolution in Middle East, covering traditional

Governance and Deeper Reforms in the Middle East and North Africa, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2007; Tom Najem and Martin Hetherington, *Good Governance in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003.

security management, political and social governance. However, the establishment of database is still at the initial stage. Finally, the existing research results have insufficient emphasis on the community and differences between the governance practices of China and Western powers in the Middle East, which leaves room for further research. This article takes the conflicts in the region as an example to analyze the types, mechanisms, styles, and the implications of China's practice in global governance.

II. Type of the Middle East Conflicts and China's Response

Regional conflicts are characterized by unpredictability, uncertainty, linkage, destruction and urgency, which exert a far-reaching impact on international order and regional stability. The important task of the world's major actors in global governance is to solve international conflicts, which belongs to international crisis management. This article defines global governance as "the behavior, mechanism and idea to solve the problems of regional hot issues".

The Middle East is an important arena in the governance of regional conflicts. Peter Wallensteen called West Asia and North Africa the "composition of regional conflicts". He stresses that localized regional conflicts will connect countries in the Middle East and influence each other (Wallensteen, P., 2007: 194). Based on different subjects, the Middle East conflicts can be roughly divided into four types: the first one relates to conflicts between Middle East countries and countries outside the region, such as the Iranian nuclear issue (the US and Iran were the main parties involved), the Syrian crisis (Western countries, the Gulf states, Turkey and the Assad regime are the focus of conflict); the second is territorial, border, sectarian, and ethnic conflicts, such as the Palestine-Israel conflict, the Western Sahara issue (Morocco, the Polisario Front and Algeria are involved), the Sudan and South Sudan conflicts (border disputes between Sudan and South Sudan), Yemeni conflict (Houthi armed forces, the Sunnis in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Iran); the third regards internal conflicts among/between different sects, ethnic groups, and

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tribes within a sovereign country, such as Sudan’s Darfur issue, the Afghan civil conflicts since 2014 and sectarian conflicts in Lebanon (Shiite Hezbollah, Sunnis and Maronite), the Libyan civil war (conflicts between religious and secular factions); the fourth are transnational conflicts, such as the struggle between the international community and the Islamic State (involving Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, the US, UK, and France^①), and the fight of the international community against the Al Qaeda and its branches (involving Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen and Algeria). With the improvement of China’s comprehensive strength and the expansion of China’s interests in the Middle East, it could be difficult for China to maintain detachment and noninvolvement policy; China’s ability and the willingness to participate in the Middle East conflict resolution is just a case in point.

Table 1: Types of China’s Security Governance in the Middle East

Issues	Main Actors	Type of Conflicts	States/Organizations that Participate in the Conflict Resolution	Level of Chinese participation
Iranian Nuclear Issue	US and Iran	Regional and Outside States	Permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany	High

^① On March 8, 2015, the “Boko Haram” declared allegiance to the “Islamic state”.

Syrian Crisis	US, EU, GCC, the Bashar Regime, Syrian oppositionists	Regional and Outside States	The UN, the Arab League, the US, Britain, Russia, France, China	Medium
Palestine - Israel Conflict	Israel and Palestine	Between Middle East Countries	UN, US, Britain, France, Russia, China	High
Western Sahara Issue	Morocco, Mauritania, Western Sahara, the Polisario Front	Between Middle East Countries	UN	Low
Sudan and South Sudan Conflict	Sudan, South Sudan	Between Middle East Countries	UN, African Union, China	High
Yemen Conflicts	The Houthi Armed Forces, the Sunni in Yemen, GCC and Iran	Between Middle East Countries	GCC Members such as Qatar and Oman	Medium
Sudan's Darfur Issue	The Government of Sudan, the Arabians, and the Black in Darfur, "the Sudan Liberation Army" and "the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)"	Within a Sovereign State	UN, African Union, China	High

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Domestic Conflict in South Sudan	The Dinka and Nouvel Tribes in South Sudan	Within a Sovereign State	UN, African Union, China, etc.	High
Domestic Conflicts in Afghanistan	Afghan government, Taliban, etc.	Within a Sovereign State	UN, China, etc.	Medium
Sectarian Conflict in Lebanon	Sunni, Shia, and Christian Maronites	Within a Sovereign State	The UN, Qatar, the Arab League	Low
Libya Conflict	Zaville and Wofana Armed Forces	Within a Sovereign State	The UN, the Arab League	Low
Fight against the "Islamic State"	Syria, Iraq, Libya and the "Islamic State"	Transnational Conflicts	The US, France, UN, the GCC	Medium
Combat Al Qaeda's Affiliates	Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, the Maghreb region, Somalia and other al Qaeda Affiliates	Transnational Conflicts	The UN, the Arab League, GCC	Medium

From 1949 to 1971, China was excluded from the international

community. It was even regarded as the so-called “threat” and “troublemaker” and in fact became the target of sanctions, containment, and “governance” by the Western camp and later by the Soviet Union. In the early 1990s, China still held a negative attitude towards the Western-dominated “global governance” practice, complaining that global governance was a pretext for the great powers to interfere in the internal affairs of the weak countries, and to control the fate of the developing world.

After China’s accession to the WTO in 2001, with the accelerated pace of globalization and the integration of China into the international system, sovereign states are no longer the sole actor of the international community. A large number of international, regional, non-governmental organizations, MNCs and other sub-state actors have become important participants in the international system. The transfer of sovereignty has become a common phenomenon in the international community. In 1977, China was a member of only 21 international organizations; by 1996, China became a member of 51 international organizations; by 2003, China became a member of 298 international organizations and 2,659 regional organizations, which opened the prelude to China’s participation in global governance (Wang, H. & Rosenau, J., 2009: 22).

In the 21st century, as the world’s second largest economy and number one importer and exporter, China has experienced continuous growth in comprehensive national strength and international influence. In 2014, China’s actual foreign investment amounted to \$140 billion, exceeding Chinese use of foreign capital of about \$120 billion. China, for the first time, became a net exporter of capital (Zhang, D., 2015). The majority of developing countries pin high expectations on China for its more active involvement in global governance, and expect China to share its successful experience in national governance. In terms of whether China should actively participate in global governance, there are two completely different views: “responsibility theory” and “free-riding” theory (Xu, J. & Liu, C., 2013: 117). In the new era, China’s participation in regional conflict resolution is not only an important part of China’s involvement in global governance,

but also the reality that China must face in the “One Belt and One Road” initiative. In fact, the construction of “One Belt and One Road” itself is also an important practice of China’s participation in global governance.

The Middle East countries welcome China to participate in the regional conflict resolution. On the one hand, this is because China is the only developing country among the permanent members of the UN Security Council and has never been like the West, which colonized or carried out hegemonic policies in the Middle East. On the other hand, this is also because China keeps “zero-enemy” record with all parties in the Middle East, and it pays more attention to the feeling of the conflicting parties, focusing on balance and compromise between Israel and Palestine, between Arabs and non-Arabs, between the Sunni and Shiite factions, between Iran and Saudi Arabia, between republics and monarchies, between oil producers and oil importers, and between moderate and radical Islamic countries, China keeps friendly ties with all sides, providing favorable conditions for China to participate in the Middle East conflict resolution.

From the Middle East countries’ perspective, introducing China to the region will also contribute to the interests of the relevant parties in the conflict. For example, in the “P5 +1” mechanism on the Iranian nuclear issue, Tehran welcomed China’s involvement to balance against the US and Europe. The GCC countries including Saudi Arabia also welcome China to play a positive role in the Middle East, in order to balance the pressure from the US and Europe on pushing the Monarchies for democratic reform. In 2006, when King Abdullah ascended to the throne, he chose China as the first destination of his foreign visit outside the region. In recent years, although the US is Saudi Arabia’s top security partner, China is undoubtedly the Kingdom’s largest trading partner and number one oil importer; former President Hu Jintao visited Saudi Arabia twice in 2004 and in 2006 (Chen, J., 2011: 6). As of 2015, China has established strategic partnerships with Egypt (1999), Saudi Arabia (2006), Algeria (2004), Turkey (2010), the United Arab Emirates (2012) and Qatar (2014), respectively, which enhances China’s ability to participate in the

conflict resolution in the Middle East (Wu, L., 2014: 9).

The past several years have witnessed close-knit ties between China and the Middle East countries. In 2013, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian President Abbas visited Beijing at almost the same time; in 2014, then Saudi Crown Prince Salman visited Beijing; in May 2014, Iranian President Rouhani visited Shanghai to participate in the CICA Summit; in 2014, CPPCC Chairman Yu Zhengsheng visited Morocco, Algeria, Jordan and Bahrain; in December 2014 and September 2015, Egyptian President Al-Sisi visited Beijing for twice; in April 2015, Algerian Prime Minister Abdel Malek Sellal visited China. This series of high-level visits show that: at present, Middle East countries adhere to the “Look-East” policy. They pay attention to emerging markets, such as China, South Korea, India, and those in Southeast Asia; others implement the “East-West equilibrium” policy. The two types of countries both welcome China to play an active role in resolving the Middle East conflict.

III. Modes and Mechanisms of China’s Security Governance

China’s participation in Middle East conflict resolution is an important component of its global governance in the new period. At the beginning of the 21st century, with the rise of emerging powers as a group, the subjects of global governance are increasingly diversified, and regional powers like China, Brazil, Russia, India, EU, ASEAN, the African Union, the SCO, and the GCC have all become actors of global governance; with the influence of the G20, the US dollar’s traditional hegemony has been challenged, and the international influence of the RMB has increased. China’s horizon has also expanded from the Asia-Pacific region to the whole world. Its participation in global governance is a symbol of the global power center shift, i.e., from the western power center to multi-polar centers. China’s participation in the Middle East conflict resolution is also an important symbol of the rising powers in the new era. Historically, the transfer of international power usually comes with violence. However, China’s participation in

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the conflict resolution in the Middle East is inclusive, which emphasizes that the actors of global governance should have a broad representativeness, and should include the US, the European Union, China, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and other regional and global powers.

Since the end of the cold war, especially since the outbreak of “the Arab revolutions” in late 2010, the conflict in the Middle East has become a “new normal”. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Beijing highlights that it would provide international public goods and would contribute its wisdom and strength to addressing regional conflicts. China’s participation in the Middle East conflict resolution can be divided into three domains.

The first is political governance, such as China’s participation in the UN peacekeeping operations in southern Sudan, Lebanon, and Sudan’s Darfur region, as well as China’s participation in resolution of the Syrian crisis. The UN peacekeeping mission is an important mechanism. In 1988, China joined the special committee of the UN peacekeeping operations. In 1990, China dispatched military observers to the Middle East for the first time, and dispatched military liaison officers, consultants and engineering troops to the UN Truce Supervision Organization and the UN-Kuwait observation mission (Zhang, H., 2009: 26). The 2013 China’s *White Paper* on National Defense pointed out that as of 2012, China had implemented UN peacekeeping missions in nine regions. Within the framework of the UN, China dispatched engineers and medical teams of 335 people to Lebanon, 338 personnel to UN South Sudan mission, and 315 people to the UN/AU Darfur mission (Sun, D., 2014: 23).

The second is conflict governance, such as China’s participation in terrorism governance in the Middle East under the framework of the UN. In the Security Council, China supports international community to combat “Islamic State” although China itself dispatched no troops to raid the terrorist group. In 2015, China called for resolving the crisis in Yemen through peace and dialogue; China got involved in the nuclear proliferation governance since the early 21st century; China also sent convoy fleets to the Gulf of Aden to strike Somali pirates.

The third is social governance, such as China's participation in the refugee governance in West Asia and Africa, including providing humanitarian assistance to refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Somalia and other areas. Since 2014, China participated in the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip together with other global and regional powers.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, conflicts in the Islamic world have occurred mainly in countries along the Silk Road. Some are directly related to China's national security and social stability, such as sectarian conflicts in Afghanistan; some are linked to China's energy, investment and trade interests, such as the Iranian nuclear issue, the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan, and the international anti-"Islamic state" campaigns; others are connected with China's international obligations, such as China's involvement in the solution to the crisis in Syria and Yemen. As the only "southern" country representing Africa, Asia, and Latin America among the permanent members of the UN Security Council, China's participation in regional conflict resolution is not only an important guarantee to uphold its overseas interests, but also an important means for Beijing to build an image of a responsible power relieving regional conflicts. It is an important starting point for Beijing to build a new type of great power relations with the US, Russia, and the EU.

Nowadays, China has rich experience in the Middle East conflict resolution and has revealed its unique characteristics. It maintains China's energy, investment and trade interests in the Middle East, enhances Beijing's international discourse, consolidates its political position, improves its image, and becomes an important means for China to expand its political influence, diplomatic affinity and moral appeal, using the Middle East conflict resolution as a springboard.

To summarize, Beijing's motivation to participate in regional security governance in the Middle East is first of all driven by its growing energy, investment and trade interests. Second, China promotes the relaxation of the Middle East conflict and enhances diplomatic discourse in order to prevent the Western powers from dominating the Middle East with a view to promoting

democratization of international relations. Third, China's participation in the Middle East security governance is driven by its goal of establishing a cooperative great power relationship for the establishment of strategic partnership between China on one side, and Russia, the US and Europe on the other. Fourth, China's participation in the Middle East conflict resolution intends to show a national image of justice and peace in the world, in order to enhance China's soft power.

In the conflict resolution of the Middle East, the above four factors are often intertwined and influence each other. For example, after the outbreak of the Iranian nuclear crisis, China took an active part in the "5+1" negotiation mechanism, actively promoting peaceful settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue. On the one hand, this is because Iranian oil is vital for China's economic development and energy supply. Iran is China's important trading partner, while China is Iran's largest trading partner for several consecutive years. The two sides have bilateral cooperation projects in the field of energy, infrastructure, investment, economy and trade, with great potential for future cooperation (Djallil, L., 2011: 227). On the other hand, involvement in the Iranian nuclear issue was a crucial way for China to expand its political discourse into the Middle East, displaying its responsible power status and striking a balance of power. In contrast, China has less realistic interest in Western Sahara, and it is not very necessary for great powers to interact on this issue. Therefore, the Chinese pooled more foreign resources into the region where China's interest is concerned. Because of the cooling down of Cyprus issue in recent years, China has not yet carried out intensive mediation diplomacy.

Outside powers usually take a role in regional conflicts based on formal and informal mechanisms. Since the early 21st century, China has combined domestic, regional and global mechanism for the Middle East security governance, and has focused on important areas. From the perspective of domestic mechanism, China's diplomacy is the extension of its domestic politics. It often coordinates different agencies at home to maximize a favorable outcome. For instance, in terms of the global AIDS governance, China's Ministry of Health,

Public Security, Justice, Education, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, the All-China Women's Federation, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, National Health and Family Planning Commission all worked with the UNAIDS, for a joint effort (Cai, T., 2004: 102). This is also the case for China's involvement in Middle East security governance; its domestic mechanism includes the following ones.

The first is the special envoy mechanism within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In September 2002, the Chinese government for the first time established a special envoy mechanism for the Palestine-Israel issue. Thus, China started its participation in the establishment of regional conflict resolution mechanism. After thirteen years, domestic mechanism on governance of regional conflicts started from scratch, continuously groping for development in practice, and opened up a new domain. The special envoy mechanism has continued to expand, including the Palestine-Israel issue, Sudan issue, Iranian nuclear issue, Somalia issues, Libya and Syria internal conflicts, etc. As of 2015, China has nominated four special envoys for the Korean Peninsula affairs (Wu Dawei), for African affairs (Zhong Jianhua), for Middle East affairs (Gong Xiaosheng), and for Afghan affairs (Sun Yuxi), which covers three Islamic countries. This also indirectly indicates that the Islamic region has become an important arena for China to manage bilateral and multilateral relations with other powers in the Middle East security governance. In 2013, under the joint efforts of the members, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2118 for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons. China sent the "Yancheng Vessel" to closely cooperate with Russia, Norway, Denmark and other countries to execute escort mission for Syria chemical weapons. This is the first time that China sent a warship to perform this task, and is a response to the UN appeal to address the crisis in Syria; China also invited Syria opposition party--National Dialogue Coalition--to visit Beijing; Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi thereafter proposed the "five points" to resolve the Syrian crisis (Yao, K., 2014).

The second is the international peacekeeping and the Somali

escort mechanism, which is under the administration of the Ministry of Defense. West Asia and Africa are the key areas for China's participation in UN peacekeeping operations, especially in Sudan and South Sudan where China has substantial energy and investment interests. China's international peacekeeping forces on the one hand have promoted the country's national image as a responsible power for political influence. On the other hand, peacekeeping also has consideration of safeguarding China's practical interests in the conflict areas. In 1990, during China's first participation in the UN peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, it sent 5 observers to the UN Truce Supervision Organization (headquartered in Jerusalem). Since then, in nearly 20 international peacekeeping missions, China has sent a total of 20,000 peacekeepers. In 2013, China's contribution to the UN peacekeeping missions ranked 6th in the world, and ranked the first among developing countries. As of 2014, about 2,000 Chinese peacekeepers were serving the international peacekeeping missions under the UN Framework (Andersen, L. & Yang, J., 2014: 38-39).

In recent years, China's participation in UN peacekeeping operations in the Middle East conflict is mainly in five places, namely: "the UN Truce Supervision Organization in Jerusalem; "the UN Interim Force in Lebanon" (located in Ismail Haniyeh in southern Lebanon) (Ling, B., 2007: 2); "the UN mission in the Sudan" (located in South Sudan); the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur; and the UN Mission on Referendum in Western Sahara.

The third is China's international aid program and economic assistance mechanism under the administration of Ministry of Commerce. China has so far invested billions of dollars in South Sudan, and this area has become an important area for China's interests in West Asia and Africa. With regard to providing aid and humanitarian assistance, the Ministry of Commerce actively participates in the Middle East conflict resolution (in coordination with the Ministry of foreign affairs). In 2013, when South Sudanese parties were in conflict, China, together with the US, UK and Norway, tried to persuade all parties to sit at the negotiating table, and provided \$1 million to the international monitoring mechanism in

order to supervise the ceasefire of the South Sudanese parties, and \$2 million for south Sudanese refugee resettlement through the UN agency (Andersen, L. & Yang, J., 2014: 31). In October 2014, the Gaza Reconstruction Conference was held in Egypt, Cairo, and China's special envoy Gong Xiaosheng attended the conference. The Chinese government promised \$5 million aid to the Palestinians. After the US, UK, France, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan carried out air strikes against the "Islamic State", refugees in Iraq and Syria suffered from miserable living conditions, a humanitarian crisis. In December 2014, the Chinese government provided 30 million yuan of emergency humanitarian aid to the Iraqi Kurds, including medical supplies, tents, etc (*People's Daily Overseas Edition*, 2014: December 11). China also provided humanitarian assistance to refugees in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and North and South Sudan in other forms through Ministry of Commerce.

In addition to the domestic mechanism, China's participation in the governance of regional conflicts also includes a series of bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. For instance, China signed cooperation agreements with the GCC, League of Arab States, and the African Union and their regional organizations, such as senior officials consultation meeting under the framework of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and other related mechanism; the permanent and *ad hoc* cooperation mechanisms of China, the US, Russia, and Europe under the framework of the UN. These are important mechanisms for China to participate in Middle East security governance.

IV. Styles of China's Participation in the Middle East Security Governance

The process of China's participation in the Middle East conflict resolution is actually the process of interaction of the Chinese and Western diplomatic ideas. In the new period, the governance concepts of China and other major powers are in convergence, such as the enhancement of global power status and the spirit of internationalism;

outside powers all highlight the concepts of rule of law, increasing political transparency, and promoting governance capabilities of the transitional countries such as Egypt, Iraq, and Libya to manage the Middle East conflicts. The West has also started to value China's proposal in Middle East conflict resolution. That is, solution to the regional crisis should be based on improving people's well-being and should respond to humanitarian crisis. The Chinese government in particular accepts some of the Western governance ideas, such as combining domestic governance with global governance, and Middle East countries should establish a more inclusive government in the conflict areas, and promote political reconciliation and democratization under the UN supervision. This being said, China and the West still have different styles in the Middle East governance.

First, the West emphasizes "democratic governance", while China values "people's livelihood governance". China and the West have different understanding of the causes of regional conflicts: the West believes that the root cause is the lack of democracy, i.e., the so-called "Middle East democracy deficit" (Elbadawi, I. & Makdisi, S., 2010). Therefore, the key to fundamentally solve conflicts is democracy, the rule of law, and the improvement of human rights. However, China believes that the root causes of Middle East conflicts are economic and social contradictions, and thus the key to good governance is to promote economic and social development. The Chinese believe that the West's regional governance reflects the Western style in focusing on the "symptoms". Therefore, China's position in conflict areas reflects the idea of "cure the disease by keeping the body fit". The West, on the contrary, emphasizes the establishment of pluralist democracy instead of promoting economic and social development.

Second, the Western approach is "bottom-up", while the Chinese approach is "top-down". The West's Middle East security governance reflects the "bottom-up" feature, often paying attention to the role of civil society, such as human rights organizations, religious groups, think tanks, and so on. They are good at finding political organs and the agents in the Middle East that are in favor of their interests or accept their ideology, cultivating opposition forces in conflict areas,

and even providing arms to the opposition. As in the Syrian crisis, the US and EU countries supported the Free Syrian Army to fight the Bashar al-Assad regime. China follows the path of “top-to-bottom”. Although it keeps contact with oppositionists in the conflict countries (such as Taliban in Afghanistan), it mainly works with the central government. China stresses the principle of noninterference in other’s internal affairs, and usually keeps in contact with the government. It will not support internal opposition forces intent on splitting the country or jeopardize independence, nor will China cultivate or press any sides in the conflicts, because China believes that it will not only interfere in the target’s internal affairs, but also lead to escalation of conflicts. For example, in Iraq, Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen and other countries, China called for respect of the sovereignty of these countries. On the one hand, China has understood the inevitability and rationality of global governance, and has increased the awareness and strength to participate in international affairs. On the other hand, China is dubious about US-led military operations beyond the UN framework; China is suspicious of foreign intervention and non-governmental/civil society organizations in participation in security governance (Cai, T., 2004: 99).

Third, the Western style of “radical” governance vis-à-vis China’s “incremental” governance. The western approach to the regional conflict resolution embodies the “radical” features, expecting to solve all the problems in a short term. In contrast, China’s regional conflict governance highlights a “progressive” (or incremental) manner. For example, in 2014, during the “5+1” negotiations on the Iranian nuclear issue, the US demanded that the Iranian government stop the majority of centrifuges in a given time, yet Iran required the US to completely lift all sanctions against Iran immediately. The negotiation reached deadlock. The Chinese representative proposed that Iran remove centrifuges step by step, and meanwhile the US gradually lift sanctions against Iran, and thereafter brought up the “five proposals” to solve Iranian nuclear issue, which were eventually accepted by all parties. Chinese diplomats are more cool-headed and patient than western negotiators. They usually have more profound understanding

and better anticipation on complexity of the conflict in the Middle East, and put forward a constructive and incremental solution to the Middle East crisis.

Fourth, the “coercive” western regional conflict resolution versus the “consultative” Chinese regional conflict resolution. The US and the European powers are often stakeholders, and they are conflicting parties, but China usually acts differently. Under the banner of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the US resolutely opposes Iran and other anti-American countries to obtain nuclear weapons. In terms of Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Iraq and other hot issues, the US holds the banner of democracy, freedom, human rights, and that the US has a special mission to promote democracy abroad. It even puts violence into use to overthrow the Islamic governments of Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, and carried out military containment against anti-American countries, such as Iran and Syria. Thus, its regional governance is compelling. China often considers the practical interests of the parties in the conflicts, instead of promoting ideologies of democracy, freedom, and human rights. China proposes to find common ground while putting aside differences, offers suggestions to all the parties, but does not force any party to follow its suggestions, so its governance belongs to a consultative type. For example, in the Sudan and South Sudan conflicts, China had important oil interests, but China only offered non-binding suggestions to all the parties.

Fifth, Western governance is a “comprehensive”, but China’s is a “selective”. Western governance of regional conflicts reflects their diversified interests, which belongs to the “full participation”; China’s participation in the security governance depends on its own capabilities, which belongs to “selective participation”. Due to the complicated domestic decision-making structure and the multiple liaison mechanism, China has higher cost of time in participating in the governance of the Middle East. Therefore, its willingness to get involved in the security governance is weaker than the developed countries, and sometimes even weaker than other members of the BRICS, such as Russia, India and Brazil. China invests a lot of resource in the International Monetary Fund for agricultural development and

participates in the global governance in this field, but in terms of global governance on drug, crime, labor standards, global health, and humanitarian assistance, Beijing seems to be more cautious (Wang, H. & French, E., 2013: 90-91; Wang, H. & French, E., 2013: March 12). In the Middle East, the West has multiple geopolitical and geo-economic interests, while China has only energy and trade interests in the areas, which is the main reason for the differences between the two sides. Although China has become the second largest economy in the world since 2010, there are still disagreements at home in China's participation in the Middle East governance. China insists that as a developing country, it is not a revisionist state, and its participation in regional conflict resolution should be within its capabilities and be selective intervention (Huang, C., 2013: 68). In resolving the Lebanese sectarian conflict, in the fight against al Qaeda affiliates and the "Islamic State", in mediation of the conflicts of factions in Somalia, in the reconciliation of Bahrain's government and the oppositionists, in solution to the problem of Western Sahara, in mediation of island dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates, China does not take initiative to participate in the mediation, but instead, played an indirect role through the UN. China and other members of the UN Security Council worked together and passed resolutions 2170 and 2178 on striking the "Islamic State" on August 16 and September 25, 2014. China called on the international community to earnestly implement the resolutions, but it did not participate in the joint-military operations led by the US, Europe, the GCC and Turkey (Yao, K., 2014).

Sixth, the Western "elite governance" versus Chinese "civilian governance". The West's Middle East conflict resolution is a kind of elite governance, which reflects the logic of "jungle rule", namely, a few Western powers have obligations to "treat" the so-called failed states and problematic countries. However, China's governance is "civilian governance", namely, developing countries and developed countries, as well as all parties in the conflicts, should work together on security governance and openly and sincerely solve the issues on an equal footing. It calls on all parties to work for the democratization

of international relations through multilateral global governance. In March 2015, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi pointed out at a press conference, "the general direction is to promote democracy of international relations and international governance by rule of law. In particular, efforts should be made to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the vast number of developing countries, so that the world can be more equal, harmonious, and secure" (*People's Daily*, 2015: March 9). Different from the idea of "elite governance" in the US and Europe, China's "civilian governance" idea will actually perceive all parties in the conflicts as problem fixers instead of trouble makers, as in the cases of Sudan, South Sudan, Syrian and Iranian government.

Seventh, the West is more "closed", and China is more "open" in building a coalition for security governance. Western security governance is a type of "close-door" governance, which rejects other countries to participate, such as the Quartet on Palestine-Israel issue and the so-called "Friends of Syria Conference". China's security governance is more open, and it welcomes other major and regional powers, advocating resolving international conflicts through multilateralism.

Eighth, western countries focus on ideology, but China stresses morality. In the process of the Middle East conflict resolution, the West emphasizes security interests and political ideology, while China attaches great importance to economic interests and morality. The West often examines the conflict in the Middle East from a geopolitical point of view, and promotes the Western values of freedom, democracy and human rights. China often examines the Middle East conflict from a geo-economic point of view, while emphasizing the moral responsibility as well as taking into accounts the concerns of all parties. China plays a greater role in global governance, applying traditional Chinese philosophy to a world system (Pang, Z. & Wang, R., 2013: 68). Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2013, China has stressed that "only both focus on righteousness and interests can we gain righteousness and interests; only balance between justice and benefit can we obtain both justice and benefit" (Yao, K., 2014). China adheres to the oriental concept of

morality, which is the unique soft power for China to participate in Middle East security governance.

Table 2: Styles of Chinese and Western governance in the Middle East

Features	Western Powers	China
Governance Ideas	Priority on Democratic Governance	Priority on Livelihood Governance
Approach	Bottom-to-Top	Top-to-Bottom
Agenda Setting	Radical	Progressive
Way to Solve Problems	Mandatory	Consultative
Level of Involvement	Full Participation	Selective Participation
Partner Selection	Elite Governance	Civilian Governance
Mechanism	Close	Open
Pursuit of Interests	Security Interest and Political Ideology	Economic Interests and Morality

V. Conclusion

Since the beginning of the 21st century, actors of global governance have expanded from the developed countries (G7 and OECD as the core) to both developed and developing countries, sovereign states and intergovernmental organizations, government and social forces. Emerging powers such as the BRICS countries, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, South Korea, Indonesia, Argentina, and Mexico have become new members of global governance, and global governance itself becomes increasingly diversified. China's participation in the Middle East security governance is a symbol of emerging powers to

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participate in global governance in the new era. With the increase of China's soft power and the ability to set agenda in particular, and with the increase of China's economic presence in the Middle East, China's ability and willingness to participate in regional governance in the Middle East continue to grow. Through the Middle East security governance, China has enhanced its status as an emerging global power and has consolidated its great power relations with others. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China is increasingly playing a positive role in regional conflict resolution, makes it a bridge connecting all parties, as well as all the mediators.

In the new period, China's participation in the Middle East conflict resolution not only safeguards China's own interests, but also contributes to international justice. There are two reasons. First of all, China's participation in the conflict in the Middle East focuses more on balance of power. The US is the first foreign power to participate in the Middle East conflict mediation. As early as 1973 when the Yom Kippur War ended, Kissinger carried out shuttle diplomacy between Egypt and Israel, and later promoted the Camp David Accords between the hostile countries, which marked the prelude to the Middle East peace process. But the flaw in US involvement in the Middle East is its bias against the Palestinians. For example, from 2000 to 2011 during the Middle East upheaval, the US vetoed 11 resolutions in the UN Security Council, of which 10 vetoes were in defense of Israeli interests. For example, in 2011 the Security Council demanded that Israel immediately and completely halt the construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, but the Obama administration vetoed the resolution (Zurich, E., 2011: 3). China is more balanced between Arabs and Israelis. In September 2006, then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announced that the Chinese government decided to dispatch 1000 peacekeepers to Lebanon. It was the first time that China sent such a large peacekeeping force. Lebanon and other Arab countries were reluctant to have pro-Israel Western countries to send out peacekeeping forces to the region, and Israel said it would not let Islamic countries send troops to the region either. China was on good terms with both Arab countries and Israel. Therefore, an increase of

China's peacekeeping force in the Middle East country was welcomed (Zhao, L., 2009: 71).

In addition to maintaining a balance between the parties of conflicts in the Middle East, China also strikes a strategic balance among the US, Europe and Russia. In May 2012, China and the US reached a consensus at the fourth round of strategic and economic dialogue. They decided to negotiate on the Middle East affairs. In August, 2012, the two sides held the first round of dialogue on the Middle East affairs in Beijing. In June 2013, the two sides held the second round of dialogue on the Middle East in Washington, DC. China and the US established a mechanism for dialogue and consultation in the Middle East conflict resolution. The Middle East security governance has become an important task for Beijing and Washington to form a new type of great power relations and maintain regional peace. At the same time, China and Russia have expanded their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in recent years (Wu, B., 2013: 48). In March 2013, after Xi Jinping became president, his first foreign visit was to Russia. The two sides have agreements on the Iranian nuclear issue, the Syrian crisis, on Libya and Afghanistan issues. They both promote the ability of emerging powers to participate in the Middle East conflict resolution. Balancing outside powers and balancing regional powers in the Middle East reflect China's diplomatic wisdom in the new period.

Second, China adheres to diplomatic principles and meanwhile maintains policy flexibility in conflict resolution in the Middle East. China is opposed to settling disputes by violence, to the Western powers' regime change, to violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Middle East countries, to unilateral action against the other side which bypasses the UN, to bias against any side, to interference in other's internal affairs, and to harming the target country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. At the same time, China's participation in Middle East conflict resolution has more emphasis on flexible means and a pragmatic approach (Wang, Y., 2013). For example, China voted in favor the UN Security Council to support the international community to raid the "Islamic State" and

the al-Nusra (Resolution No. 2170), and at the same time stressed the need to respect the sovereignty of Syria and Iraq.

In the new era, China's participation in Middle East security governance also needs further improvements. To begin with, China should further strengthen its capacity on crisis management in the Middle East. In 2006 and 2008, the Chinese government issued the "China's Policy Paper on Africa" and "China's Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean Sea", which sketched China's basic foreign policy, principles and strategic objectives in the 21st Century to the two regions. However, so far Chinese government has not yet released a white paper or policy documents on the Middle East. China's participation in the Middle East lacks a top-level design (Liu, Z., 2012: 20). So far, after the outbreak of the conflicts, the overall planning, internal coordination and communication among agencies within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries are relatively weak. China has so far insufficient experience and ability to formulate plans for emergencies. After the outbreak of the crisis, Chinese diplomats usually have limited power enforcement from the upper levels, which affects their creativity and imagination in the negotiations. Therefore, at the key moment, the initiative of China's agenda-setting is usually not strong enough. In the Syrian crisis, for example, after the outbreak of the chemical weapons crisis in Syria in 2013, Russia raised a proposal of "abandoning chemical weapons for peace", a creative measure; at the beginning of 2015, the Russian government invited representatives of the Bashar al-Assad regime of Syria and the oppositionists to Moscow. The two sides issued the "Moscow Manifesto", another creative endeavor; in April 2015, 10 countries led by Saudi Arab launched air strikes against Houthi armed forces in Yemen, causing serious humanitarian crisis. Russia pressed the Security Council to hold urgent consultations, requesting Saudi Arabia and other countries to suspend air strikes in Yemen (*Xinmin Evening News*, 2015: April 5). Russia's creative involvement in the conflict resolution in the Middle East sets a good example for China.

Next, from the domestic perspective, the necessity and urgency of

China's participation in the conflict in the Middle East is still questioned. Some people from Chinese academia and the media argue that China does not have to assist the West on the issues that are related to the vital interests of the West, which is irrelevant to Chinese interests, such as the Iranian nuclear issue and the crisis in Syria. In fact, this view ignores the fact that the Middle East conflict resolution is often a new area of strategic cooperation between major powers, and is helpful to the establishment of a more stable cooperative relationship among the US, Europe, Russia and China, and is also conducive to the realistic interests of China. After the upheaval in the Middle East, China's interests in the Middle East are simply summarized as energy security, commodity market, contracting projects and labor market, etc. However, there is no analysis from a perspective of global governance strategy to examine China's participation in the Middle East conflict resolution and its long-term significance (Li, W., 2012: 13).

Third, knowledge reserve, talent pool and information database to support China's participation in the Middle East conflict resolution need to be improved. In participation in the governance of the Middle East, China has experienced several roles: stranger (passive bystander) -- messenger (passive participant) -- facilitator (active mediator). As a newcomer, China's own national power is still at the duding stage. There is a gap between the expansion of China's interests in the Middle East and its ability to maintain these interests which is difficult to solve in a short term. The current focus of Chinese think tanks and the academic research is still Western powers, Japan, South Korea, Russia and other great powers, which has ignored the areas of the "Wild West", namely, countries along the "One Belt, One Road". In particular, China lacks in-depth research in area and country studies, particularly the Middle East. China's ability to participate in regional conflict resolution in the new era is thus confined (Hua, L., 2014: 9).

In short, China's participation in the Middle East conflict resolution is the process of "changing itself and affecting the world", and is a process of continuous learning, adjustment and accommodation. China's participation in Middle East security

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governance does not mean “to reject” or “overthrow” the existing international system, but to put forward more creative and valuable global governance concept and ideas under the existing international restructuring (Pang, Z. & Wang, R., 2013: 68). China’s participation in the Middle East security governance has experienced stages from negative cognition to positive evaluation, from passive response to active participation, from waiting for chance to creating opportunities, from non-interference in others’ domestic affairs to assuming obligations of a responsible power, which will help safeguard China’s vital interests and national security in the Middle East. This is also conducive to the improvement of China’s international discourse, moral appeal and political influence, and will enrich the connotation of the theory and practice of China’s diplomacy.

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