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**Steps taken by the People's Republic of China to further the Middle East
peace process and to promote the establishment in the Middle East region
of a nuclear-weapon-free zone: national report submitted by China**

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to promoting the Middle East peace process and actively supports efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In accordance with the provisions of the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the People's Republic of China is currently taking the following steps to promote the Middle East peace process and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

**I. Urgently appealing to all the parties involved to endeavour to promote
the Middle East peace process in a spirit of reconciliation**

In dealing with the Middle East question, China upholds the principle of fairness and pursues no self-interest; it has always determined its own position in accordance with the rights and wrongs of any given situation. Acting from the standpoint of fairness, China has always maintained that the spirit of reconciliation should be followed in dealing with Middle East issues, in the belief that "harmony is precious", and it holds that the negotiation of peace is the only viable option for resolving the Middle East question.

In this spirit, China has all along followed developments in the Middle East with close attention: it sincerely hopes to see progress in the Middle East and does not want the achievements of 10 years' of Middle East peace negotiations to be set at naught. China voices its serious concern and dismay at the unending violent conflict between Israel and Palestine, which is bringing an increasingly heavy loss of life. China opposes the conduct of any terrorist activities or extreme violence against civilians and supports all mediation efforts by the international community designed to bring about a relaxation of the tensions in the area. China appeals to both the Israeli and Palestinian sides to exercise restraint and remain calm and urges them to adopt practical measures conducive to relaxing the tensions between them, so as to create the necessary conditions at the earliest possible stage for the revival of peace talks.

This spirit of reconciliation lies at the heart of China's position on how the Middle East question should be tackled. Guided by this spirit, China has made extensive efforts to promote a solution to the Middle East question. The leaders of countries throughout the Middle East have all expressed appreciation for its efforts to calm the dispute between Israel and Palestine and their hopes that China will deploy even greater efforts with a view to relaxing tensions in the area and resuscitating the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

In this spirit, China supports the Arab peace proposal agreed by the Arab League at its fourteenth summit conference in March 2003, and commends Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia on his contribution to this initiative.

II. Promoting resolution of the Middle East question through a wide range of mediation efforts at the bilateral level

With a view to helping all the parties concerned reach a peaceful solution to the Middle East question, China has conducted extensive mediation efforts of different kinds in its bilateral contacts with all these countries, as described below.

1. Bilateral mediation efforts with Israel and the Arab countries, through bilateral summit meetings and exchange visits

China has had numerous exchange visits with all the countries of the Middle East. President Arafat of Palestine has visited China 14 times, President Mubarak of Egypt 8 times, the new King of Jordan has also visited China twice since his accession to the throne. High-level government officials from Israel have also made frequent visits to China. Senior Chinese State officials have also visited all the countries of the Middle East on many occasions. Thus, in April 2000, Chinese Premier Jiang Zemin visited Palestine, Israel, Egypt and other Middle East countries. In April 2002, Prime Minister Zhu Rongji visited Egypt, and the Prime Minister of Lebanon visited China. In January 2003, Chinese State councillor Ismail Amat visited Jordan. In June and December 2002, Deputy Foreign Minister Yang Wenchang visited Israel, Palestine and Syria. The Chinese Foreign Ministry has conducted separate political consultations with the foreign ministries of Egypt, Israel and Syria.

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to the opportunity afforded by bilateral summit meetings and bilateral visits in promoting mediation efforts with all parties of the Middle East. China appreciates the efforts made by all sides in carrying forward the Middle East peace process and encourages them to continue their efforts, to ensure the further deepening of that process. Whenever tensions arise in the Middle East, China consistently advises the parties concerned, pointing out that replacing one form of violence by another form of violence can only deepen mutual hatred and that peace negotiations offer the only legitimate means of resolving the conflict; it appeals to both the Arab and the Israeli sides actively to coordinate the mediation efforts by the international community, to calm the conflict and to return to the path of peace talks.

2. Efforts to relieve tensions in the Middle East through telephone conversations, exchanges of letters and other modalities

In response to developments in the Middle East, the Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan has frequently made telephone calls, either on request or on his own initiative, to the leaders of Palestine and Israel. He has explained the views held by China with regard to the given situation in the Middle East and urged all the parties involved to exercise restraint, to make every effort to prevent any further escalation of the conflict and to maintain stability in the region, so as to set in place an atmosphere conducive to the early resumption of peace talks. Chinese leaders have often exchanged letters with the leaders of countries in the Middle East, setting forth the Chinese position and actively pursuing mediation efforts with all parties.

3. Appealing for a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict, through the issuance of statements by spokesmen setting forth the Chinese position

The Chinese Foreign Ministry pays very close attention to developments in the Middle East situation and, through the medium of statements issued at the appropriate time by its spokesmen, it sets forth the Chinese Government's position on any given situation in the Middle East, condemns any abusive use of force, appeals to all parties involved to renounce the use of force and to seek a resolution to the Middle East question through peaceful negotiations.

III. Appointment of a special envoy on Middle East issues, and his active participation in international efforts to promote peace

In September 2002, in response to appeals by the countries concerned in the Middle East region, in particular the Arab States, China established a post of special envoy on Middle East issues and appointed an official to that post. In November, the Chinese special envoy on Middle East issues visited Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel and Palestine and also held separate meetings with the special representatives of the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, the "quadrupartite" group, who were in the Middle East at that time. In these meetings, the special envoy explained China's position on ways of promoting the Middle East peace process and indicated its support for and readiness to participate in all international efforts designed to restore peace and stability to the Middle East region and its willingness to play an active role in the international conference convened for that purpose. China's efforts have been welcomed and are highly valued by all the parties involved. The Chinese special envoy on Middle East issues is currently maintaining close contacts and pursuing consultations with both the Arab and the Israeli sides and with other members of the international community concerned with the issue, and will make further visits to the Middle East as and when necessary.

IV. Using the framework of the United Nations as a means of calming the violence in Israel and Palestine and of promoting the Middle East peace process

China has always advocated and supported active use of the United Nations and, in particular, its Security Council as the means of solving the Middle East question and, in fulfilment of its responsibility under the United Nations Charter, calming the violence between Israel and Palestine and preserving peace and security in the Middle East region. China advocates a political solution to the Palestine-Israeli conflict through peace negotiations, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the principle of “land for peace” decided upon at the Madrid Conference. Only if all the parties involved conscientiously implement the agreements and understandings already reached will it be possible to establish trust and stabilize the situation, thereby bringing closer fulfilment of an important precondition for long-term peace.

The Chinese Government has undertaken its own efforts to promote the peace process in the Middle East and to put an end to the violent conflict between Israel and Palestine. When, at successive sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, the issue of the Middle East has been debated and when the Security Council considered the draft resolution sponsored by the Non-Aligned Movement on the deployment of United Nations military observers, China has always given its active support and participated in consultations to reach unanimity or voted in favour. China has always supported and actively participated in efforts by the United Nations to resolve the Middle East question. For many years, China has regularly contributed to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and has done everything in its power to help Palestinian refugees. On 12 March 2002, when the Security Council adopted its resolution 1397 (2002) on the situation in the Middle East, China actively participated in the adoption process and voted in support of the resolution.

V. Support for efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

China has long since undertaken unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones and has always supported efforts by the countries of the regions concerned, on the basis of voluntary consultations, to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. In 1992, in its statement upon accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, China made the following solemn appeal: “All nuclear-weapon States should undertake to support the proposed establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, should respect the status of such zones and should enter into corresponding obligations.” We continue to advocate that those States in the Middle East region which are not yet members of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty should urgently and unconditionally accede to the Treaty and accept the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system.

China fully endorses the provisions of article 7 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which states: “Nothing in this Treaty affects the right of any group of States to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories.” It also supports resolution 49/71 of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted in 1994, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East and the relevant stipulations regarding a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East contained in

the resolution on the Middle East question adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference. China is of the view that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is conducive to the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is also fully aware that the risk of nuclear proliferation is all the greater in areas of tension. China has always maintained that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East will be conducive to relaxing tension in that region and promoting the resolution of the Middle East question and, for that reason, from the very outset, it has unequivocally supported the proposed establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The United Nations has adopted numerous resolutions calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, and on each occasion China has always supported the resolution by voting in its favour. At the same time, China is also taking active steps at the bilateral level to promote the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In high-level meetings between China and the leaders of all the Middle East countries, China invariably conveys its appreciation for the efforts made by all countries to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and at all times has consistently maintained a very clear position on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It is China's intention, together with the international community, to continue its efforts and its contribution to the attainment of peace in the Middle East region and, at the earliest possible stage, the establishment in that region of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

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