The Principle of Non-interference and China's Role in International Conflict in the New Era

China in Sudan and South Sudan, Syria, and Afghanistan

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Abstract

Nowadays, China has made great efforts to make international hotspot issues peacefully settled in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. One challenge China faces on its road to global prominence is how to balance the increasing international responsibility and the established foreign policy principles that have been upheld for decades. The thesis attempts to answer why China sticks to the non-interference principle, how it deals with the contradictions between the international responsibility and the non-interference principle.

The thesis adopts a combined methodological strategy, including content analysis and case study. To examine China's position on sovereignty and non-interference, I attempt to make a content analysis of Chinese leaders' speeches at the General Assembly of United Nations and Chinese representatives' statements on the selected intra-state conflicts and civil unrest. The thesis tries to find out how China mediates the antagonist parties in the three civil conflicts mentioned above, and whether the mediation practices abide by the non-interference principle. The thesis selects China's mediation practice in Sudan and South Sudan, Syria, and Afghanistan as cases to make deep investigation of China's mediation strategy and approaches, and the main reason to choose these cases is that they are quite relevant with sovereignty and the principle of non-interference.

To answer why China does not abandon the seemingly old-fashioned non-interference principle when the principle seems no longer practical or in line with Chinese national interests, I refer to David Welch's theoretical framework which includes organization theory, cognitive and motivational psychology, and prospect theory.

Key words: mediation, China, conflict resolution, responsible power, non-interference principle
Words: 18683

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1   Introduction

1.1   Research Puzzle

Recently, China seems to have changed its long-standing low profile on world stage and get engaged actively in international conflict resolution. Until May 2014, China has vetoed, alongside Russia, four United Nations Security Council draft resolutions on Syrian escalating civil war, which accounts for four ninths of its entire veto records since 1971. Meanwhile, China attempts to promote peaceful negotiation between the rebel groups and the Syrian government. In Afghanistan, China takes part in the peacebuilding process and endeavors to bring about the reconciliation between the Taliban and the Afghan government. In addition, China is noticeable in the Iran nuclear talks and international mediation of South Sudan civil war.

    The increasing number of appointed special envoys (see Appendix A) in the past decades is also a good evidence of China's transformation in foreign policy.

    However, the Chinese government still emphasizes its notable non-interference commitment, usually perceived to restrain China from shouldering greater international responsibility. Here comes my puzzle: *how would a country sticking on non-interference policy make constructive contributions to international conflict resolution*? It is not coherent with the belief that mediation means a third party taking measures to change and influence disputants' perceptions or behavior, to end the conflict peacefully (Bercovitch, 1992: 7). In addition, a most significant development recently is China's contact with both government and rebel groups at the same time. It seems to run contrary to the non-inference policy. It is worth discussion *whether China has altered or even given up gradually its long-standing principle, and if not, what is the reason behind it and how China would make mediation and non-interference compatible.*

1.2 Research Question

According to the research puzzle mentioned above, my research question is how China accommodate mediation activities with its established principles, especially the non-interference principle. Specifically, the thesis tries to answer two relevant sub-questions: a) how does China acts as a mediator in international conflicts,

with reference to the empirical materials of China's mediation strategy in Sudan, Syria and Afghanistan? and b) do such practices abide by the non-interference principle or do they suggest a change in China's foreign policy?

Mediators are supposed to propose a fair solution, to use their own power and prestige to change the payoff structure of the antagonist sides, and to leverage them to accept and implement a negotiated settlement. In this case, mediation practices have conflict with the non-interference principle. Therefore, this paper also tries to answer why China has not abandoned the non-interference principle even though the principle cannot offer guidance for China diplomacy in practice, and what factors have exerted their influence on China's insistence on the non-interference principle.

1.3   Literature Review

Relevant research in this field consists of three main parts: general mediation theory, case study of China's involvement in specific conflicts in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, as well as systematic research on China's grand strategy.

1.3.1 Mediation theory

Western scholars have made great contributions to mediation theory, from both mediators' and antagonists' perspectives. The rational-actor approach is widely accepted to understand mediator's motivation, arguing that actors make decisions with cost-benefit calculation. The third-party mediator is supposed to have his own payoff structure rather than being a disinterested outsider (Schelling, 1980: 44; Stevens, 1963: 123; Bercovitch, 1992). In view of the considerable investment of political, moral, material resources and the potential risks, mediators' motives in domestic and international self-interests must be found as much as in humanitarian impulses (Zartman, 2008a: 156). The self-interested motives could be either defensive or offensive. When a continuing conflict threatens the mediator's interests, the mediator acts defensively, and even their rival powers get engaged in joint mediation (for example, US-Soviet cooperation on the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 and on Kosovo in 1999). Offensive mediator wants to extend and increase influence and to gain gratitude of one or both disputed parties (Zartman, 2008a: 156-7). Beardsley (2011) distinguishes between public and private interests that a mediator may have. Public interests refer to the collective benefits such as a more stable international society and reduction in negative externalities of intense conflicts, while private benefits usually relate to decrease in spillover effects to the mediator, such as trade disruptions and refugee flows (Beardsley, 2011). Besides the interest-driven approach, humanitarian concerns are also an important factor that lead to the third-party mediation (Zartman, 2008a).

Mediators play a crucial role in the process of conflict resolution, such as providing relevant information, bargaining with bullets, enforcing an agreement, changing hostile attitudes etc. (Duursma, 2014). However, what mediators do, can do, or are permitted to do in a dispute resolution, depend on who they are, who the disputed parties are, what the broader context of the conflict, and what resources and capabilities they have (Bercovitch, 1992:4). A successful mediator is traditionally supposed to be impartial or unbiased, otherwise it cannot be accepted as a mediator if it has preferences over the issue in dispute, but recently there has been controversy about whether a biased or unbiased mediator is more successful in reaching a negotiated settlement (Kydd, 2003; Svensson, 2007; Rauchhaus, 2006). Kydd (2003) says that only mediators who are perceived "on your side" will be believed if they advise one side to exercise restraint.

To resolve conflict, mediators employ various strategies to remove the obstacles that prevent antagonists from negotiating directly or reaching peaceful solution. According to the different strategies, mediation could be divided into three categories: good offices or facilitative mediation (providing indirect negotiation channels, or create opportunity to direct negotiation), formulative mediation (proposing a balanced and fair solution), and manipulative mediation (to change the rivals' payoff structure through "Carrot and Stick" approach) (Chen, Xiao and Zhao, 2008:134-136). Carment *et al.* believe that manipulation has the strongest influence on the likelihood of reaching a peace agreement, but facilitation is the most effective on increasing the prospects of long-lasting tension reduction (Duursma, 2014: 92).

From the perspective of antagonists, under what conditions will they accept the mediation offer? Zartman (2008b: 22) argues that when the disputants find themselves stuck in a "Mutually Hurting Stalemate" (MHS) where they can neither escalate to victory nor quit after suffering countless loss, both are thus forced to seek an alternative or "Way Out". Beardsley proposes another two distinct motives: firstly, mediation in intrastate conflicts might be used by rebellion parties to gain recognition; secondly, mediation might be used as a tactic to gain time to regroup and reorganize, which allow combatants to take an advantageous position in later negotiation (Duursma, 2014: 84).

Above all, existing mediation theories provide a sound foundation for my research, whereas most of research focus is about the U.S. and other Western countries. As a distinct civilization, China adopts a divergent approach to end international conflict and its experiences might be a good addition to existing knowledge of mediation theory.

1.3.2 Case studies of China's involvement in specific conflicts

Korean nuclear crisis and Darfur crisis are two cases which are well studied by Chinese scholars. In Korean nuclear crisis, researchers focus on China's role as the main mediator, its motives, influence, and challenges. Getting involved in multilateral mediation of Korean nuclear crisis is a turning point in China's

diplomatic history. Since 2003, as the main mediator, China has launched and chaired six rounds of Six Party Talks.

China's participating actively in Korean Peninsula crisis was driven by historical sentiments, political economic interests, strategic security concern, and increasingly rising international responsibility (Lin, 2006). The basic policy of China is to maintain peace and stability of Korean Peninsula and to play a strategic balanced role (Cui, 2006). Through a quantitative analysis of the China's involvement in the nuclear issue, K. Li (2007) concludes that China is an intermediary and crisis-saver in this issue, but the final resolution is only decided by the U.S. and North Korea. About mediation strategies, Zhu (2006) argues that China's activities were just keeping the negotiating process ongoing, with limited capabilities to promote substantive compromise. The biggest obstacle was disagreement about fundamental principle and core interests, which cannot be solved by good offices, and there is no strong institutions or powerful states that can manipulate the negotiation process.

Research on Darfur crisis in Chinese academia is mainly focused on the sources of the conflict, China's role and participation strategy, challenge and opportunities of China's foreign policy etc.

About the source of conflict, Jiang and Liu (2005) argues that the violent conflict was driven by the Sahel drought which led to the Arab nomads in Northern Sudan going to the south and robbing the non-Arab settlers (e.g. Furs). The racial factor was both the result of the earlier conflict, but also the cause for later conflict. China advocated to solve the issue by dialogue and negotiation, development and cooperation, and the successful political solution proved that China's constructive role in this issue is vital and effective (He, 2007). To solve the Darfur conflict, China adopted three approaches: multilateral cooperation (with UN and African Union), bilateral coordination (with U.S. and Sudan government), and the complementary role played by Chinese enterprises in Sudan (Sun and Jin, 2009). Darfur conflict implicated the development dilemmas China is facing: security of overseas interests and Go global strategy, participation in international affairs and non-interference commitment, and state image building (Wang, 2005).

Despite abundant research in this area, many other cases are still not mentioned, such as China's role in Afghan peace building process, in Iran nuclear negotiation, in South Sudan civil conflict and many other hotspot issues. My research will dedicate to a systematic analysis of China's characteristic mediation strategy and its implications for world peace.

1.3.3 China's grand strategy

While many other countries talk more about thematic interests and changing contexts for their foreign policy positions, China often sees the world in terms of a "grand strategy" which provides a coherent, overarching ground strategic view of foreign policy and the world outside China.

One strategic principle guiding China's foreign policy in the past three decades was called "tao guang yang hui, you suo zuo wei", or translated as "keep a low profile in world affairs and do something". It was put forward by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1990s in the context of the upheaval in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, of Western countries' sanctions against Beijing because of the Tiananmen Square incident, of some developing countries' calling for China to take the lead in forming a united front against the West (Wang, 2011a). To maintain coordination and stability of domestic and international environment, the spirit of "tao guang yang hui" required China's diplomacy to remain vigilant of the West's political intention and simultaneously to avoid confrontation with them, to concentrate on its domestic economic and social development as well as to take its due responsibilities such as promoting establishing a new international political and economic order and participating in peacekeeping operations. China's comprehensive capabilities have improved significant after three decades' insistence on Deng's far-sighted strategic thinking.

However, there is substantial debate about China's foreign policy and grand strategy as a response to the significant transformation in China's power and the international environment. Discussion about whether "tao guang yang hui" is still appropriate to serve China's interests.

According to Wang Jisi (2011b), one of the most renowned Chinese scholars in China's strategy and foreign policy, if an organizing principle must be established to guide China's grand strategy, it should be the improvement of the Chinese people's living standards, welfare, and happiness through social justice. This notion was clearly stated by President Xi Jinping at the Politburo Standing Committee Members' meeting with the press in November 2012, that people's yearning for a good and beautiful life (including better education, more stable jobs, better income, more reliable social security, medical care of a higher standard, more comfortable living conditions, and more beautiful environment) was the goal for Chinese government to strive for.

2   Theoretical Framework

Existing mediation theories explain mediators' motivation to mediate antagonist parties, disputants' acceptance of mediation offers, different mediators' roles such as providing relevant information, changing hostile attitudes, and enforcing an agreement etc. They provide a theoretical framework for understanding China's role as a third-party mediator.

David A. Welch refers to three theories – organization theory, cognitive and motivational psychology and prospect theory – to explain why radical foreign policy changes are rare and under what conditions foreign policy change is expected (Welch, 2005:31-45). In line with his thought, I also apply the organization theory and political psychology approach to my research in the development of China's non-interference policy.

2.1   China as a Third-party Mediator

2.1.1   Motivation of China to Be a Mediator

Conflict resolution means all the efforts combining social, economic and political levels and activities concerning mediation, negotiation, peace-building, state building, reconciliation and structural change. Among all the conflict resolution, third party involvement is common when the parties to the conflict are unable to solve the dispute in a non-violent way.

Unlike bilateral negotiations, the occurrence of mediation requires both a third party sufficiently motivated to offer mediation and antagonists willing to accept an offer of mediation by a specific third party. Mediation requires the availability of a willing outside party to assist the antagonist parties in managing their conflict. Although this third party might be neutral in the dispute, it must have sufficient interest in the conflict, the parties, or the effects of the conflict to be willing to offer its help to the two sides (Greig & Diehl, 2012: 61).

Generally, national interest and power are the most common approach that has been used by scholars to analyze China's foreign policy and its changes (Pan & Du, 2015). China has been less reluctant to talk about its "national interests", as demonstrated in its recent white paper of China's Peaceful Development. China's power as a re-merging country has corresponded with expanding national interests overseas, and in turn, an increasingly large global presence. As the second largest economy in the world, China shares close economic links with most countries,

including those stuck in intra-state unrest or inter-state conflict. To avoid disastrous outcome caused by conflicts, it is understandable that China becomes more willing to provide mediation offers and make conflict settled peacefully.

Secondly, China's internalization of and engagement with international institutions redefines its attitude towards norms such as the "responsibility to protect" (Pan & Du, 2015). Since China is acquiring a new identity as a responsible power, Beijing needs to gain international legitimacy by embracing more rules and norms than simply sovereignty and non-interference. Even though China is still sensitive to international institutions that demand the sacrifice of national sovereignty, it has become more comfortable to endorse the norm of "responsibility to protect". As the while paper of China's Peaceful Development said, "China is a member of over 100 intergovernmental international organizations, a party to over 300 international conventions, and an active participant in building the international system" (China's Peaceful Development, 2011, The Information Office of the State Council).

China's identity as a responsible power redefines how it manages various international problems. "A responsible power" was created by then US Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick, and thereafter internalized by China (Pan & Du, 2015) against the "China threat theory". China's Premier Wen defined China as "a responsible, large developing country" in 2008, and Chinese President Xi Jinping has reiterated that China will play a responsible role in world affairs. This identity meets domestic expectations of China's rejuvenation, as well as the developed countries' expectations of China's taking more international obligations (Pan & Du, 2015). To protect its image as a responsible power in international affairs, China must play a more proactive role in international conflict resolution such as mediation and peacekeeping operations.

2.1.2   Contradiction Between Mediation with Non-interference Principle

Mediators are supposed to propose a fair solution, to use their own power and prestige to leverage the parties to embrace and implement a negotiated settlement (Sisk, 2009: 4), and to change the rivals' payoff structure through "Carrot and Stick" approach. While mediating practices may be helpful for China to create a new image of responsibility to the international community, it will inevitably hinder China in application of its non-interference principle universally. Meanwhile, the non-interference principle is "not a credible policy for a nation that wants to be respected as a responsible global power" (Jakobson, 2007).

2.2   A Theory of Foreign Policy Change

Why China still insist on the seemingly old-fashioned non-interference principle when the principle seems no longer practical or in line with Chinese national interests? Why did not Chinese foreign policy makers replace the passive non-interference doctrine with a more activist one? To answer the questions, I refer to David Welch's theoretical framework explaining why significant foreign policy change should be rare. Welch (2005) examines three bodies of theory in his book *Painful Choices: A Theory of Foreign Policy Change*, which are organization theory, cognitive and motivational psychology, and prospect theory.

2.2.1 Organization Theory

Governments are complex organizations, and while relatively small number of people may be involved in making important foreign policy decisions. They do so in an institutional setting that influences what they know, how they frame foreign policy problems, and what they believe about their options. There is much greater stability in this institutional setting than there is in the international environment, which contributes to stability in what leaders think about the world, and how they deal with it (Welch, 2005: 31).

The bureaucratic politics explanation helps to understand why there is often a considerable lag between changes in the international environment and decision makers' responses, and why decision makers will feel pressure not to deviate radically from the status quo (Welch, 2005: 31). The number of institutions of government, structure, and strategies can and do change over time, but resource constraints, transaction costs, internal politics, and the domestic environment in which the organization operate all generate pressures that reduce the pace, nature, and extent of change (Welch, 2005: 32).

The formal and informal rules of procedure, behavioral norms, tasks, rituals, perceptions, shred memories, and shared beliefs further contribute to the stability of the organizational setting of policy.

The stability may also be reinforced by the fact that different organizations and institutions of the government often have different priorities and perspectives. Competing pressures on policy from different directions tend to generate compromises, costly struggles and debates. Organizational interests typically hinder foreign policy from changing rapidly and increase the stability of policy.

2.2.2 Cognitive and Motivational Psychology

Cognitive psychologists study how everyday information-processing affects our perceptions, judgments, and choices. Motivational psychologists study how our perceptions, judgments, and choices and influenced by stress, emotion, and the drive to satisfy basic, deep-seated psychological needs.

According to cognitive psychology, people do not readily alter their beliefs about the world and do not easily confront their own mistakes. We rely heavily upon our prior beliefs to help us interpret new information and makes sense of an

ambiguous world (Welch, 2005: 37). Normal human psychology contributes to policy stability.

Motivational psychology focuses on satisfaction of basic human needs – the need to avoid fear, shame, and guilt; the need for self-esteem; the need for social approval; and the need for effective control (Welch, 2005: 39). These needs bias information processing and result in some errors that cognitive psychology describes.

2.2.3   Prospect Theory

Prospect theory is a behavioral alternative to rational choice theory. Unlike rational choice theory which tells us how we ought to make decisions, prospect theory accounts for inconsistencies between the normative ideals and peoples actual choice behavior. Prospect theory believes people generally consider losses more painful than gains pleasurable. In other words, people tend to be loss-averse, risk-acceptant when facing prospects of loss, and risk-averse when facing prospects of gain (Welch, 2005: 42).

Specifically, the "endowment effect" – people regularly demand more to give up something than they would be willing to pay for it in the first place – explains that people's expectations tend to converge on the status quo over the long run, since forgone gains are less painful than perceived losses (Welch, 2005: 42).

3   Methodology

To answer the questions of a) how does China act as a mediator in international conflicts, and b) whether such practices abide by the non-interference principle, the thesis adopts a combined methodological strategy, including content analysis of Chinese statements on sovereignty and non-interference, and case studies of China's mediation practices in Sudan and South Sudan, Syrian conflict and Afghanistan reconstruction.

Specifically, content analysis will be mainly used to examine Chinese discourses on sovereignty and non-interference, through analyzing Chinese leaders' speeches at the UN General Assembly and Chinese statements at the United Nations Security Council. Case studies will be used to find out how China mediates the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan, Syrian and Afghanistan, its motivation to provide mediation offer as a third party, the characteristics of its mediation strategy, and the challenges it has met.

3.1   Content Analysis

To examine China's position on sovereignty and non-interference, I attempt to make a content analysis of China's statements on several intrastate conflicts and civil unrest. These conflicts are domestic unrest in Sudan and South Sudan, civil conflict in Syria, and political reconciliation in Afghan reconstruction process. Through content analysis, I would like to examine principles and statements the Chinese government has declared at multilateral platforms, especially at the General Debate at the United Nations General Assembly of the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council.

In this part, KH Coder, a text mining tool, will be used to do content analysis and text mining. It functions well in examining word frequency, co-occurrence network of words (which tells us what words tend to appear together) and searching specific word.

Word frequency is a very important variable in research on word processing. Word frequency analysis is a starting point to figure out to what themes Chinese officials most frequently referred, which gives us a clue to the issues that the Chinese government has attached significant importance. Co-occurrence network of words enables us to draw a network diagram that shows the words with similar appearance patterns, such as with high degrees of co-occurrence, connected by lines. This function is helpful for us to formulate a whole picture of the text,

showing what topics have been discussed and which actors play important role on the issue. By combining the term frequency with co-occurrence network of words, we can conclude features of Chinese statements on the selected conflicts.

Data for content analysis include 16 speeches (from 2000 to 2015) given by Chinese leaders at the General Debate of the UN General Assembly, and 67 pieces of Chinese representative's statements at the Security Council meetings and international conferences regarding specific conflict (26 pieces for Sudan and South Sudan issues, 21 pieces for Syrian conflict, and 20 pieces for Afghan reconstruction issues). These speeches and pieces of statements systematically show China's position on international affairs and selected conflicts.

3.2   Case Study

After conducting content analysis of the speeches and statements of Chinese leaders and representatives on Sudan and South Sudan issues, Syrian conflict, and Afghan post-conflict reconstruction, case studies will examine the practical mediation strategies and approaches in the three cases. This part aims to figure out how China mediates the antagonist parties in the three civil conflicts mentioned above, and whether these practices abide by the non-interference principle in reality.

When finishing analyzing the 16 speeches by Chinese leaders at the General Debate of the UN General Assembly, I find out that the hotspot issues China pay great attention to can be divided into four categories: a) inter-state conflicts (e.g. Palestine- Israeli conflicts), b) intra-state conflicts (conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, and Syria), c) post-conflict reconstruction (e.g. Afghan and Iraqi state-building process), and d) non-proliferation issue (Iran nuclear issue). Among the four categories, intra-state conflict and post-conflict reconstruction are closely related with the sovereignty, independence and non-interference problem. Therefore, the cases selected for further study include the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan, Syria, as well as the reconstruction process in Afghanistan.

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of Chinese representatives' activities in dealing with the antagonist sides, mainstream newspaper coverage, government reports, interviews with special envoys, and ambassadors' biography related to the cases are the main sources of reference. In addition, the collection of academic literature will be also helpful for the case studies.

4   Content Analysis of China's Statements on hotspot issues

To have a comprehensive understanding of China's mediation in international conflicts, this chapter examines principles and statements the Chinese government has declared at multilateral platforms, especially at the General Debate at the United Nations General Assembly of the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council (or the UNSC). In this part, KH Coder is used as tool to do content analysis and text mining.

4.1   Study of Chinese Leaders' speeches at the UN General Debate

To examine the Chinese government's attitude and principles in dealing with hotspot issues, the paper selects 16 speeches delivered by Chinese leaders at the General Debate at the UN General Assembly.
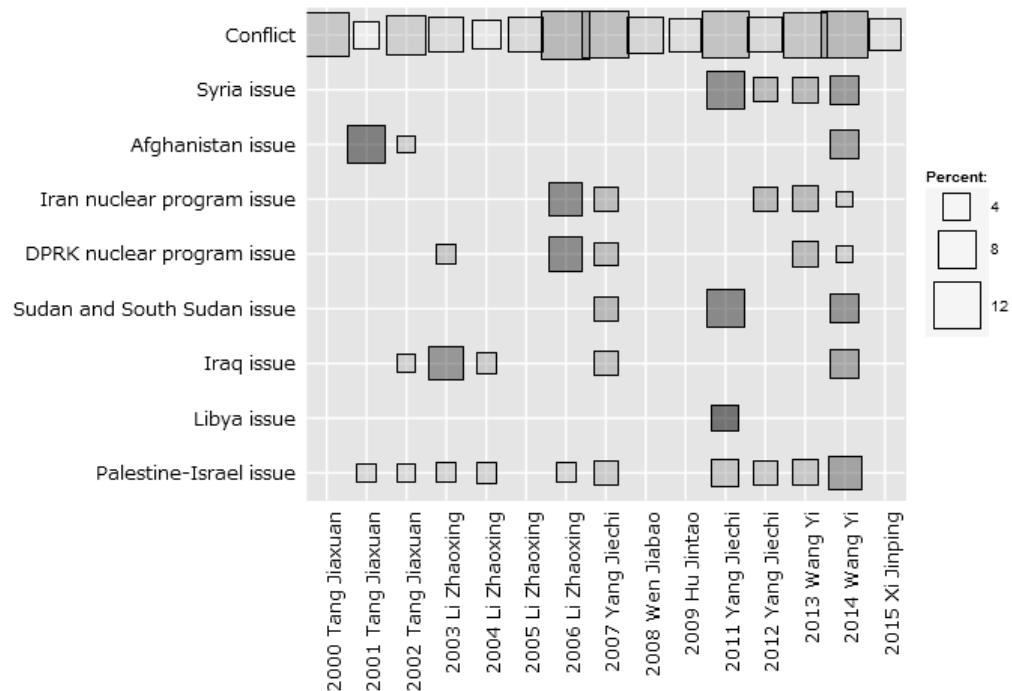
Figure 4.1 Percentage of hotspot issues referred to by Chinese leaders at General Debate

Figure 4.1 presents seven hotspot issues which are frequently referred to by Chinese leaders in the 16 speeches. Percentage shows the ratio of each code (see Appendix B) to the number of paragraphs.

According to Figure 4.1, the Chinese government has always attached great importance to the issue of conflict and peace at general debates. Horizontally, China are becoming more increasingly evolved in the conflict resolution after the year of 2008, which is in line with China's willingness to shoulder more international responsibility after the financial crisis. Vertically, not all the conflicts were given the same attention throughout the period. Palestine-Israeli conflict is the most frequently cited, which is largely due to the persistence of the conflict; while Syria and Libya issue appeared in Chinese ministers' speeches since 2011 in accordance with the breakout of civil conflicts in these two countries. The rest conflicts, such as Afghanistan issue, non-proliferation issues, and Sudan and South Sudan issues, were referred to from time to time according to their evolvement.

We can also see the difference between foreign ministers' speech and presidents' ones. Generally, foreign ministers use the General Debate as an important platform to proclaim government's position on specific issues, while presidents and premiers often use the highest forum of the UN to discuss "momentous issues such as preventing war, achieving development plan,…making the world a better place, and enhancing the role of the UN so as to point the way forward for the world as well as the UN" (China's Position Paper on the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations, September 21, 2015). Therefore, it is understandable that Chinese presidents or premiers did not talk about specific conflicts in their speech.

The hotspot issues in Figure 4.1 may be divided into four categories, which are inter-state conflicts (e.g. Palestine- Israeli conflicts), intrastate conflicts (conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, and Syria), post-conflict reconstruction (e.g. Afghan and Iraqi state-building process), and non-proliferation issue (Iran nuclear issue). Among them, interstate conflict and post-conflict reconstruction is closely related with the sovereignty, independence and non-interference problem. Therefore, the next part will focus on the case of Sudan and South Sudan, Syria, and Afghanistan.

4.2   Study of Chinese Representative's Statements at the UN Security Council

To get detailed information about China's position on intra-state conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction, the thesis attempts to study Chinese representatives'

statements at the UN Security Council meetings, specifically on the issue of Sudan and South Sudan, Afghan reconstruction and Syrian civil conflict.

The paper selects Chinese representative's statements at the Security Council meetings and examines the word frequency on each issue. Table 4.1 shows 30 words with the highest frequency (except the meaningless numbers, articles, auxiliary verbs, pronouns, and prepositions etc.).

By combining the term frequency list with the co-occurence network of words (see Appendix D), we can conclude several features of China's statements on the listed conflicts.

Sudan and South Sudan		Syria		Afghanistan	
Words	**Term Frequency**	**Words**	**Term Frequency**	**Words**	**Term Frequency**
Darfur	193	Syria	155	Afghanistan	390
Sudan	131	syrian	131	China	181
China	115	China	118	Afghan	139
political	98	political	90	international	118
peace	81	international	82	development	98
process	75	humanitarian	73	peace	94
Council	74	effort	64	community	93
issue	70	party	61	country	92
international	63	country	60	security	91
African	58	community	59	effort	86
effort	58	Council	57	process	73
Union	57	people	56	people	68
party	56	United	55	national	67
resolution	52	resolution	53	Government	66
South	51	Nations	52	stability	63
Security	50	issue	46	reconstruction	60
situation	50	situation	46	assistance	56
Nations	47	settlement	45	economic	50
community	44	solution	41	reconciliation	49
United	42	Mr	38	role	49
humanitarian	40	other	31	election	47
Mr	36	process	29	cooperation	46
development	36	terrorism	29	United	43
question	36	assistance	28	Nations	42
Sudanese	33	Security	27	Mr	39
government	33	Annan	26	situation	38
stability	33	crisis	26	support	38
Government	32	relevant	26	UNAMA	36
assistance	30	special	25	regional	36
deployment	29	question	24	party	34

Table 4.1 Top 30 Words with the Highest Term Frequency in Chinese Representatives' statements

4.2.1   Sudan and South Sudan Issue

On the Sudan and South Sudan issue, Chinese government has paid great attention to the Darfur issue, peacekeeping operation, International Criminal Court (ICC) issue, Southern referendum, and the mandate of United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

To improve the humanitarian situation in Darfur and achieve peace and stability in the two Sudans, China supports a greater role of the United Nations and the African Union, calls for the international community to make more efforts in Sudan political process, and is willing to play a constructive role itself.

Meanwhile, China insists that a political solution to the Darfur and Southern issues would be impossible without the full cooperation of the Sudanese Government, thus it disagrees with the indictment of the Sudanese leader proposed by the ICC (Wang Guangya, July 31, 2008). China's consistent position on the ICC issue is that the proposed indictment of Sudanese leader would definitely undermine the atmosphere of mutual political trust and cooperation between the UN and the Sudanese Government, fuel the arrogance of the rebel groups not willing in the political process, and harm the fragile stability in Darfur.

China's position in Sudan and South Sudan issues is in accordance with its belief that the Responsibility to Protect lies first and foremost with the State, and that the international community cannot replace the State's role in the implementation of the norm.

4.2.2   Syrian Conflict

On the Syrian conflict, the Chinese Government has focused on the humanitarian situation and refugee issue, chemical weapon, Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the mediation by Joint Special Envoy.

China insists that a political solution is the only viable way to resolve the Syrian issue, and that military means would achieve nothing. The international community should fully support and cooperate with Joint Special Envoy Annan's mediation, urge all relevant parties to achieve an immediate ceasefire, and promote the implementation of the UNSC resolutions and Geneva communiqué of the Action Group for Syria (Li Baodong, April 24, 2013).

On the humanitarian issue, China supports the UN's efforts to ease the humanitarian situation, provides large amount of humanitarian assistance to Syria and the neighbouring countries, and urges all parties (not only the Syrian Government) in Syria to make efforts for the improvement of the humanitarian situation. Meanwhile, China reiterates respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, maintains that the future and fate of Syria should be independently decided by the Syrian people, rather than imposed by outside forces (Li Baodong, July 19, 2012).

4.2.3   Post-Conflict Reconstruction of Afghanistan

On the post-conflict reconstruction process of Afghanistan, the Chinese government has discussed about Afghan peace reconstruction, economic and social development, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)'s role, humanitarian situation and civil casualty, regional cooperation, especially the role of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as well as the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

Regarding peace reconstruction, China believes that inclusive reconciliation led by the Afghan people is the correct direction to ensure Afghanistan's progress towards national unity and lasting peace. China is ready to provide necessary assistance and facilities for the peace and reconciliation process (Wang Min, March 16, 2015). Economic development is the basis and guarantee to Afghanistan's lasting peace and stability. China is willing to assist the Afghan Government based on its own development strategies in stepping up construction related to infrastructure, mining, agriculture and water projects.

International and regional cooperation is necessary for Afghanistan to create a favorable environment for national stability and development, especially the hard work of UNAMA and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The Chinese government emphasizes the necessity to respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, supports the Afghan-led and Afghan-managed process, respects the path of development chosen by Afghan people in accordance with their national reality (Wang Min, September 18, 2014).

5 China's Mediation Practice in Intra-State Conflicts: Evidence from Sudan, Syria and Afghanistan

The previous chapter discusses the statements of the Chinese government on Sudan and South Sudan issues, Syrian conflict, and on Afghan post-conflict reconstruction, this chapter will examine the practical mediation strategies and approaches in the three cases.

5.1 Sudan and South Sudan Issues

It is beneficial to have a glance at the evolvement of Sino-Sudanese relations, before we directly discuss China's stance on Sudan and South Sudan issues. There have been four significant milestones in the history of Sino-Sudanese relations: 1) the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1959; 2) Sudanese President al-Bashir's visit to China in 1995 during which he expressed the hope that Chinese oil companies help Sudan explore and exploit its oil; 3) China's participation in the diplomatic mediation of Darfur crisis in 2006; and 4) the independence and establishment of South Sudan in 2011. Based on the events, Sino-Sudanese relations are divided into four periods.

Stage One: From 1959 to 1995

Sudan established diplomatic relations with China in 1959, as the fourth African country to establish diplomatic ties with new China (Xu, 2007). Bilateral relations are similar with China's exchanges with other African countries during this period. The shared colonial history and their pursuit for national independence and liberation brought political and ideological consensus. It was "politically correct" (Zhang & Hardy, 2015) to build friendship between China and African countries, but cooperation beyond the political field was limited.

Stage Two: From 1995 to 2006

China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) won the tender of exploration of Block 6 in Muglad Basin in 1995 . During President Omar al-Bashir's visit to China in September, the two signed "Production Sharing Agreement", which opened a prelude to the oil production between China and Sudan (Jiang & Xiao, 2011). China has helped Sudan build oil refineries, a 3,000-km pipeline and oil

fields producing thousands of tons oil annually. Sudan established a complete petroleum industrial system, becoming an oil- exporting country from the one heavily dependent on oil imports. As a key medium, oil greatly promotes bilateral cooperation in economy and trade, with trade volume growing from $ 350 million in 1998 to $ 3.35 billion in 2006 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, National data). Prosperity and economic and trade cooperation has enhanced political mutual trust, China-Africa cooperation has become a model of South-South cooperation.

Stage Three: From 2006 to 2011

Under international pressure, China began to cooperate with the Sudanese government on peace and security issues and conflict resolution. Since the conflict in Darfur upgraded in 2005, Western governments, non-governmental organizations and Hollywood celebrities criticized that China-Sudan oil trading enabled the Sudanese government to carry out "genocide" in the Darfur region. The western logic is that the Sudanese government would use the oil dollar to buy weapons, to kill people in Darfur, which is equal to that China kills people in Darfur and supports massacres. In spite of being reluctant to be involved in other countries' domestic affairs, China was forced to participate in the process of conflict resolution in Darfur. The Darfur issue has become an important issue in bilateral relations; Zhai Jun then Assistant Foreign Minister made many visits to Sudan as China's special envoy; in 2007 Ambassador Liu Guijin was appointed as the Special Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs, focusing on the Darfur issue; China sent peacekeeping forces to UN Mission in Sudan (see Appendix E.1 Bilateral exchanges between China and Sudan).

During this period, China made efforts to balance the insistence and flexibility of the non-interference principle. From beginning to end, the Chinese government never wavered its adherence to the non-interference principle, stressed on many occasions that it listened the opinions and took into account the concerns of the Sudanese government. Political and economic relations between the two countries has not been affected in 2011, bilateral trade soared to $ 11.53 billion (National Statistics Bureau of China, National data).

Stage Four: From 2011 til now

After the establishment of South Sudan on July 9, 2011, the Chinese government immediately announced its recognition of the new country and establish diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level (*People's Daily*, May 15 2007). Actually China has kept in contact with the southern Sudan since the Sudanese government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (on behalf of the southern Sudan) signed the "comprehensive peace agreement" in 2005. The Chinese government expand exchanges with southern Sudan under the premise of respecting Sudan's sovereignty.

Soon after South Sudan's independence, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi visited Sudan and South Sudan, indicating that China pursued a balanced strategy of diplomatic relations with the two countries (see Appendix E.2 the bilateral exchanges between China and South Sudan). Similar to Sino-African relations, China provided South Sudan with a great amount of developmental aid. China's priority over developmental aid comes from China's own experience of reform

and opening up, as well as its belief that the root of the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan is the lack of economic and social development. However, it was successful to solve the challenges of security through economic development, but in South Sudan the development policy was difficult to implement effectively due to special political and economic situation. Soon in the end of 2013, South Sudanese ruling party factional struggles and domestic tribal grudges led to civil war, China gradually adjusted its development/business oriented policy towards South Sudan and participated in the mediation process.

5.1.1 China's Role in Darfur Crisis in Sudan

Since the the Reform and Opening up, the Chinese government has paid most of its attention to domestic economic development and has been reluctant to be involved in other countries' domestic affairs. Darfur issue was essentially internal affairs of Sudan, therefore China tried to keep a distance from the conflict. Before long, the Chinese government was pushed to rethink its policy on Darfur issue because it was condemned of enabling Khartoum to suppress the armed opposition through its petrodollars. China began good offices and mediation in Darfur due to the international pressure, morality, and international responsibility.

China attempted to ease the tensions between the Sudanese government and the international community, and to safeguard its traditional friendship with the Sudanese government. As a result, China insisted a balanced "dual track" strategy – peacekeeping and political process should be promoted simultaneously. China made efforts to persuade the Sudanese government to accept the deployment of the UN – AU hybrid peacekeeping force, accordingly, the influential countries and international organizations should urge the opposition groups to participate in the negotiation with the government.

Due to the lack of contact with the opposition groups, the Chinese government paid most attention to the Sudanese government. China tried its best not to leave an aggressive impression on the Sudanese government. In the mediation process, the Special Representative Liu Guijin communicated with his Sudanese counterparts as equals, analyzed the situation the Sudanese government was facing, and convinced Sudanese officials that acceptance of UN peacekeepers was serving its national interests. The Special Representative admitted that China would never wish to make use of its economic leverage to achieve its mediation goals.

Some observers believed that China abandoned the rigid principles of non-interference principle and adopted a more flexible strategy. This was the first time for China to change another country's foreign policy, even though it was not completely voluntary. But we must not ignore the important rules that China observed in the mediation process, which are 1) the deployment of peacekeeping operations must be authorized by the UN and the AU jointly, and the Sudanese government must be finally agreed; 2) the UN Security Council should win the consent and cooperation of the Sudanese government in drafting relevant resolutions; and 3) Sudan's sovereignty and integrity must be respected. In the

sense of legitimacy, respect for sovereignty is written in the Charter of the UN and is in line with China's non-interference principle; in the sense of feasibility, consent and cooperation of Sudanese government is indispensable to make UN peacekeeping operations work.

To conclude, the non-interference principle still stayed at the top of priority list of China's foreign policy.

5.1.2   China's Role in the South Sudanese Civil War

China's efforts to help resolve a conflict in South Sudan mark a "new chapter" in Beijing's foreign policy that it will seek to engage more in Africa's security. The Darfur crisis gives China an opportunity to learn how to deal with a conflict that has been going on, but it is in the civil war of South Sudan did China realize the importance of positive conflict prevention. China had been focused on economic cooperation with South Sudan before the civil war broke out, not aware of the potential conflict situation in the new born country. Now the situation in South Sudan has become one of the most important issue on the list of China's foreign policy agenda, due to its high relevance to China's economic and diplomatic interests in this area. Beijing has invested billions of dollars in the country's oil sector, deployed more than two thousand troops to serve as UN peacekeepers, and committed considerable diplomatic resources to help resolve the ongoing civil war.

This mediation attempt in South Sudan could be seen as an example of China trying to step into the role of a big player in the crisis. When the civil war in South Sudan broke out at the end of 2013, China again had to evacuate workers and has since stepped in to support mediation efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). China's position on Sudan issues can be summarized in three points: First, to calls upon both parties to effectively implement the ceasefire agreement and peacefully settle their differences; second, to support IGAD to be a leading role in the good offices of the South Sudanese conflict; third, to provide substantial humanitarian assistance and developmental aid to South Sudan.

One significant progress in China's diplomatic mediation is that the Chinese government established positive relationship with the opposition side. Comparing with the Darfur crisis, this time China did not mention sovereignty and non-interference principle. On September 23 2014, at the invitation of China's Foreign Ministry, a delegation headed by Dhieu Mathok Diing Wol, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the South Sudan opposition party arrived in China for a visit. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Ming met with the delegation, and exchanged views mainly on peacefully resolving the current South Sudan conflict. On January 12 2015, China organized its own talks between the various South Sudanese belligerents in Khartoum, Sudan. Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with representatives from both sides of the South Sudan conflict as well as officials from the IGAD. China's Foreign Ministry called the meeting a "China-brokered Special Consultation in Support of the IGAD –led South Sudan Peace Process, (中方发起的支持伊加特南苏丹和平进程专门磋商)" which impressively manages to both put China front and center and yet

insist on IGAD leadership (Tiezzi, 2015). "This Consultation is held to continue with the support for the mediation efforts by IGAD on the South Sudan issue, [and to] encourage conflicting parties of South Sudan to proceed with dialogue and negotiation in addressing disagreements and conflicts and restore peace and stability to South Sudan at an early date," (Foreign Ministry's Regular Press Conference, January 12, 2015) Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei explained.

China's involvement in Sudan, South Sudan and other African countries is driven by its desire to be seen as a "responsible power" in Africa and the world, but also by domestic pressure in China for the government to protect its citizens abroad. Chinese workers have suffered successive terrorist attacks, which underscores the need for greater emphasis on peace and security in China's engagement with Africa. China's own interests in South Sudan and a lack of any other major powers with an incentive to step in are combined to force Beijing to play a more active role and make greater efforts to persuade the two sides to agree to a ceasefire.

When asked whether China has interfered in Sudan's internal affairs, Chinese ambassador to South Sudan defines China's engagement in the peace process and UN peacekeeping as a contribution to a multilateral peacemaking initiative. China's activities in South Sudan should not be regarded as interference, since China does not push so-called values of Western democracy, does not push for regime change but for stability (Su, 2016). During the Second Sudanese Civil War, China was often seen as the enemy, working with Khartoum to take oil and giving guns to Bashir, but this time China learned from their mistakes and engaged with both sides.

Table 5.1 demonstrates the driving forces, principles, approaches, and outcomes of China's mediation efforts on Darfur Issue and South Sudan civil war.

	Driving Forces	Principle	Approach	Outcome
Darfur Crisis	International pressure	Non-interference principle; Consent of the Sudanese government	▪ Mediation by China's Special Representative; ▪ Support AU and IGAD's mediation efforts; ▪ Development	▪ Successfully persuaded the Sudanese government to accept the deployment of peacekeeping operations;
South Sudanese Civil War	Economic relationship; International reputation	Development is the only way to eradicate the source of conflicts	▪ Mediation by China's Special Representative; ▪ Special consultation between Kiir and Machar convened by Chinese government; ▪ Supporting IGAD's leading role in	▪ Did not bear much fruit; ▪ Successive conflicts break out between the government and opposition side

			mediation, coordinate positions with UN, AU, the US, and EU countries;	
			▪ Sending combat troops to the UN Mission in South Sudan;	
			▪ Developmental aid	

5.2   Syrian Conflict

China's stance on the Syrian conflict is eye-catching for its vetoes against the UN draft resolutions regarding the conflict in Syria. Chinese government has made efforts in persuading the Syrian government and the opposition groups to participate in dialogue and negotiation. This part will analyze China's motivation to veto the resolutions and its mediation efforts to resolve conflicts in Syria.

5.2.1   China's Motivation to Veto

Though widely interpreted as the anti-western duo in the UN Security Council, China and Russia in fact have different calculations for casting their respective vetoes on the UN resolution for Syria. There are many plausible explanations regarding Russian interests in Syria: traditional military engagement, symbolic presence for maintaining its influence in the Middle East, and reassurance about authoritarian presidents in the post-Soviet space. However, the reasoning on the Chinese side is not as clear. There are certainly tight economic ties: China became Syria's largest supplier of imported products and invested Syria's oil sector. Given the scale of the Syrian economy and oil production, such economic interests are not significant enough for China to protect the Assad's government.

China's official stance on Syria throughout the crisis could reveal more about China's intentions. Firstly, since the very beginning of the Syrian conflict, China has always insisted that political settlement is the only realistic way out of the crisis. All relevant parties in Syria should properly resolving internal differences through dialogue and negotiation. Secondly, the UN Security Council should act according to the principles and spirit of the UN Charter, i.e. respecting the sovereignty of all nations, and non-interference in the internal politics of sovereign states. Thirdly, the "unbalanced" content of the drafted resolutions seek to put pressure on only one party, which would encourage the opposition side to further enhance its ability to combat the government and aggravate the turmoil. At last, the draft resolutions jeopardize the unity of the Security Council and would

seriously erode international trust and cooperation on the issue. During consultations the sponsoring countries failed to show any political will or cooperativeness and refused to make revisions (Li Baodong, July 19, 2012).

In addition, China's vetoes are closely relevant with the lesson China has learned from the case of Libya. When China abstained from the resolution on Libya's no-fly zone, the military action by NATO went far beyond what China expected. Now it faces a similar situation in Syria. The West insists the resolution will only authorize further non-military economic sanctions against Syria. China and Russia instead claim that the plan would open the path to "external military involvement in Syrian domestic affairs", and that the "unbalanced" content of the drafted resolutions pursue regime change in Syria, like what happened in Libya.

The emphasis on UN principles not only fit in with China's official doctrine of non-interference, but also indicates that China will carry out this foreign policy strategy within the UN framework, an act that appears legitimate in the international arena.

China's uses of vetoes are quite revealing when put in historical context; since the People's Republic of China entry into the UN in 1971, the country has only used the veto nine times (UN website). Repeated uses of veto suggest changes in China's foreign policy strategy, and that that China will henceforth become more active in international affairs. China is concerned about another western-led military intervention in the region.

5.2.2　　　China's Mediation Efforts in Syria

Geographically, China is far removed from the Syria conflict. Unlike regional states and the EU, China is not confronted with the influx of refugees from the war-torn country. Nevertheless, Beijing has started to actively engage with both the Syrian government and opposition leaders in an apparent effort to mediate the conflict. The reasons for China's new approach are a mix of geostrategic interests and the desire to be seen as an influential and responsible actor on the international stage. The region's stability is one of Beijing's core concerns, not only because the Middle East is among its main oil suppliers, but also because its grand initiative of Silk Road aims to connect Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe through a wide-ranging infrastructure network. The second reason is to respond to the growing regional expectation of China's greater role in regional affairs and to build a good international image of responsible state.

While China vetoed four draft resolutions of the UN Security Council, China's leadership does not wish to be regarded as an all-weather protector of Assad. It also understands that taking sides within the political disputes of the Middle East inevitably leads to unforeseen costs, China has been trying to engage both the Syrian government and opposition side (see Appendix E.3 Bilateral exchanges between China and Syria). On December 24, 2015, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi hosted his Syrian counterpart Walid al-Moallem in Beijing. Shortly thereafter Khaled Khoja, the president of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, who was invited by the Chinese People's

Institute of Foreign Affairs, arrived on January 5 for a visit. Foreign Minister Wang urges the opposition forces to seize the opportunity, to support and cooperate with the UN's effort to make peace in Syria, and to participate in dialogue and negotiations with no preconditions (People's Daily, January 8, 2016). Beijing had never gone beyond making rhetorical calls for a peaceful solution, explaining that its reluctance to engage was out of respect for Syria's sovereignty.

China has participated in the Action Group for Syria, the major framework for Syrian issue, but refused to participate in Friends of Syria conferences, which are dominated by the US, France, Britain and the Gulf countries. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei explained that China did not attend the meeting due to the need to "further study the purpose, function, and mechanism of the meeting" (China's Foreign Ministry Regular Press Meeting, February 27, 2012). Russia had announced that it would not attend the meeting, China would be isolated on the meeting and its opinion would not be heard. It was understandable for China to make such a decision. Selective participation in the Action Group for Syria means China would only join committees in which it has agenda-setting power. Although the Action Group for Syria was coated in the UN framework, it is in fact a compromise among the powers: the US excluded Iran's participation, and in retaliation Russia barred Saudi Arabia's participation. This places the 5 permanent members of the Security Council in a more important position, transforming the UN into a wrestling ground for big powers. On the Geneva meeting of the Action Group on Syria, all participants signed an agreement to call for "all parties to immediately re-commit to a sustained cessation of armed violence, to fully cooperate with UN monitors, and to implement the six-point plan put forward by Mr. Annan", the group also agreed on a series of principles and guidelines for a Syrian-led political transition that "would meet the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people." (UN website, June 30, 2012)

To rebuild its reputation in the region, China also made efforts to maintain a good relationship with regional states. China's active engagement with the opposition responds to the regional criticism of being free rider and the rising expectation for it to become an active player in regional affairs. In addition, China increases economic diplomacy with regional states such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iran etc. Most of the regional states hold diverse opinions with China, therefore, China must strengthen their economic ties to make sure the divergence on Syria would not fundamentally threaten the bilateral relations.

From the start of the Syrian civil war, Beijing has argued that stability is essential and political negotiation between competing parties is preferred. Until an environment arises where peace talks can make progress, Assad's government is the legitimate authority in Syria for China. If China takes on the responsibility to mediate in a country like Syria, in which it has little stakes, in theory it will have the responsibility to mediate in future more important international conflicts (Shen, 2012). Active mediation conflicts with China's stance of non-interference in the internal politics of other states. Engaging a government and its opposition on equal terms violates what China insists as the UN principle for respecting the sovereignty of that particular government. China itself faces an internal opposition

movement; if China's stance on Syria is taken as precedent, in theory the international community could apply the same rules to China.

5.3   Post-Conflict Reconstruction of Afghanistan

China seems to be more active in Afghan post-conflict reconstruction process in recent years, which is also in accordance with [Figure 4.1](). From 2003 to 2013, China has kept silence on the Afghan reconstruction issue in the General Debate at the UN General Assembly. 2014 is a special year to Afghanistan, when the U.S. withdrew its armed forces from Afghanistan, and hereafter the Afghan people and its government are supposed to lead the peace process. In the same year, China hosted the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan to give fresh support to Afghanistan.

5.3.1   Afghan-China Relations

As a neighboring country of China, Afghanistan historically receives less attention in China's foreign affairs. From 1950s to the Soviet Union's withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan has been the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. The Taliban regime seized the state power in 1996 which was not recognized by the Chinese government. After the US launched the war in Afghanistan, the US and European countries played a leading role in the Afghan political transition, military security and economic reconstruction and other issues. In October 2014, the US combat troops were withdrew from Afghanistan. From the outbreak of Afghan war in 2001 to the withdrawal of the US combat troops in 2014, China always kept a low profile, although it positioned itself as an active participant. Neither did China have the space to play a major role in Afghanistan, nor did it have the intention to be a junior partner of the Western countries.

China's low-key stance does not mean a low level of the bilateral relations. Since the establishment of the Transitional Government of Afghanistan, China has maintained its close and friendly exchanges. President Karzai has made 6 visits to China since he took office in 2002. During his terms of office, Afghanistan became the Shanghai Cooperation Organization observer country, and the relationship between Afghanistan and China has been lifted to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. In 2014, the newly elected President Ghani came to China to attend the the fourth Foreign Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan. But we need to note that China's heads of state and/or heads of government have not been to Afghanistan.

In addition to the bilateral track, leadership of the two countries often meet and exchange views at the multilateral level, especially within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization framework. Before accepted as the SCO observer state, Afghanistan had been an important issue at the SCO agenda for its significance to

regional security. There would be no stability and security in Central Asia without a stable and secure Afghanistan.

Regarding China's motivation to make diplomatic efforts in Afghan reconstruction, two major factors are 1) the fear that religious militancy in Afghanistan will further fuel Islamist insurgency in China's own Xinjiang province bordering Afghanistan; and 2) the hope of extending the One Belt, One Road initiative through the region to Central Asia. There is evidence that militants from the Uighur Muslim minority in Xinjiang have occasionally received support and training in Afghanistan. A stable, secure and prosperous Afghanistan is vital to the stability and security of Chinese northwestern border. The Belt and Road initiatives are efforts by China to build a network of overland road and rail routes, oil and gas pipelines, and other infrastructure projects spanning from West China through Central Asia to Europe, while simultaneously developing ports and coastal infrastructure through South and Southeast Asia all the way to Africa and Europe (One Belt One Road, Caixin Online).

5.3.2   China's Mediation Efforts in Afghanistan

China has participated in the majority of international conferences and events regarding the Afghan issues, such as the International Conference on Afghanistan held in London in 2006, the Afghan donor conference held in Paris in 2008, the International conference on Afghanistan held in Hague in 2009, the three meetings held in London, Istanbul and Kabul in 2010, and the Bonn Conference in 2011. In 2014, China hosted the fourth Foreign Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan (see Appendix E.4 Bilateral exchanges between China and Afghanistan).

The realization of political stability, economic development, improving the people's livelihood and social development in Afghanistan is the ultimate goal of the international community on the Afghan reconstruction, and it is the same to the Chinese government. But China also has its own special concerns and priorities, the biggest of which is the relevance of Afghanistan with the "East Turkistan" movement in Xinjiang. It is no longer a secret that the Taliban provided weapon for the "East Turkistan" movement, trained fighters, and provided shelter for runaway fighters. As a result, the Afghan issue is an indispensable part of domestic stability of northwestern China. China has investment projects and economic interests in Afghanistan, but they are normal business activities, rather than China's core concerns (Zhao, 2012).

China's stance on the Afghan reconstruction is consistent. Politically, to achieve durable peace, stability and development, the reconstruction process must be Afghan-owned and –led; China supports the Afghan government to strengthen its national capacity-building to effectively exercise its authority over its whole territory; China supports progress in building up Afghan police and security forces, thereby upgrading its own capacity to maintain national security; China encourages the Afghan government to advance the peace and reintergration programme to expand the political base for reconciliation. China also calls for the

international community to respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, deliver in earnest and fulfil its commitment to aid the country (Chinese representative, the UN Security Council, September 20, 2012.).

The new Afghanistan strategy of the US brings great uncertainty to the Afghan future, China gradually enhance the diplomatic efforts on the Afghan reconstruction issue. In 2014 China established the position of Special Envoy for Afghanistan, which was the first time in history for China to set a special envoy for one specific country. Special Envoy Sun Yuxi said that China welcomed the US decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, and also supported the US retain some military bases to help Afghanistan fight terrorism. China would "play an important role assisting the Afghan people in economic reconstruction, rather than fulfil the vacuum left by the withdrawal of US troops" (Sun, 2014). Although skeptical about the effectiveness of the Afghan war, China seldom publicly criticized the war. China believes that the US are very important in the Afghan reconstruction and there should be cooperation between China and the US, rather than confrontation.

Previously, China actively participates in the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan, providing financial support and developmental aid, but it does not take Afghan domestic affairs as its responsibility, such as political structure, social system and ideology. China supports the Afghan-led reconciliation process among different political fractions and ethnic groups.

Recently, China is making diplomatic efforts to promote the Afghan reconciliation process. In July 2015, the three countries of Pakistan, the US, and China assisted the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. According to recent reports, the Taliban has sent several secret delegations to China, the latest visit was on July 30, 2016. China even organized a secret meeting between the Taliban and the Afghan government in May 2015 (Wang, 2016). China's representative to the UN said clearly that China is ready to "continue to play a positive role in taking forward the Afghan reconciliation process"(Liu Jieyi, September 15, 2015).

China biggest challenge in promoting Afghan national reconciliation is the divergence between the ideology of the Afghan government and the Taliban. To the Afghan government, the premise of reconciliation is that the Taliban recognizes the existing constitutional and secular government; while to Taliban, they are determined to build an Islamic regime, opposing the political system, ideology, and values that are transplanted from the West. Moreover, the Taliban is not willing to play a minor role in the government (Zhao, 2012). The Taliban agreed to attend the peace talk with the government mainly because it has been affected by the competition from the "Islamic State" and other external pressure. Another challenge is that international cooperation is essential (especially consistency between the major powers) to Afghan reconstruction, and if the geopolitical competition rises, the future of Afghan reconstruction process will become dim.

5.4 Summary of China's Mediation Approach

The following table summarizes the common mediation approach the Chinese government has adopted.

Approach	Concrete Activities
Exchange of views	Keep high-level contact with the government side through state visit, telephone, letters, and sending representative of Chinese President.
Special Envoy's good office and mediation	Special envoys are established by Chinese government for specific issues, with the authorization to facilitate bilateral and multilateral talks for the antagonist sides and concerned powers, cooperating with other countries and international organizations.
Initiation of and Participation in multilateral mechanism	To state China's position, put forward China's proposal, and coordinate the interests of the concerned parties and major powers at the UN Security Council and other multilateral institutions.
Use of economic /political leverage	To persuade one or both sides of the conflict to reduce violence and to reach peaceful coexistence using China's economic and political influence in this region.
Long-term reduction of conflict roots through development	China attempts to improve the economic and social situation by providing development aid and strengthening bilateral economic cooperation.

When comparing China's mediation strategies with existing literatures on mediation theories, we can see that the mediation by the Chinese government does not show significant difference from the Western countries. On one hand, both have their own payoff consideration, and the mediators' motives in domestic and international self-interests can be found as much as in humanitarian consideration. This does not necessarily mean that mediation with self-interest motives is bad, as a successful mediation benefits not only the mediator itself but also brings a more stable international order. China's mediation in Sudan and South Sudan is partly out of protection for Chinese overseas interests, but it also makes contribution to the domestic stability in the two countries. On the other hand, both provide good offices or facilitative assistance, propose balanced and fair solutions, and change the rivals' payoff structure by using economic and political leverage. The only one difference lies in the fact that the Chinese government insists on long-term reduction of conflict roots through promoting economic and social development.

Even though the Chinese government emphasizes on the non-interference principle in the process of mediation, it is necessary to exert the mediator's economic and political influence to make a successful mediation. China's successful mediation on the Darfur issue is a good example. This finding is also in line with the on-going debates on China's grand strategy and foreign policy change, as the non-interference principle cannot be observed strictly in practice any more.

However, Chinese top leaders repeatedly insist on that non-interference principle is one of the most important legacy of China's diplomatic history. Why does China still pursue the seemingly old-fashioned principle when it seems no longer practical to protect Chinese interests? What factors attribute to such a phenomenon? These are what chapter 6 aims to answer.

6 Why Has China not Abandoned the Non-interference Principle?

As the non-interference principle is unable to serve China's national interests, why has China not given up the principle? According to Welch's theoretical framework, organization theory, cognitive and motivational psychology, as well as prospect theory help us understand why radical change of foreign policy is rare.

6.1 Organization Theory

According to organization theory, inter-organizational dynamics combine with structural, cultural, and procedural considerations to reinforce policy stability. Therefore, we should observe significant policy stability in states that are highly bureaucratized; in which larger numbers of organizations weigh in on foreign policy making; and where competing domestic interests have great opportunity to exert pressures on governments (Welch, 2005: 45). It is the case in China's foreign policy making process.
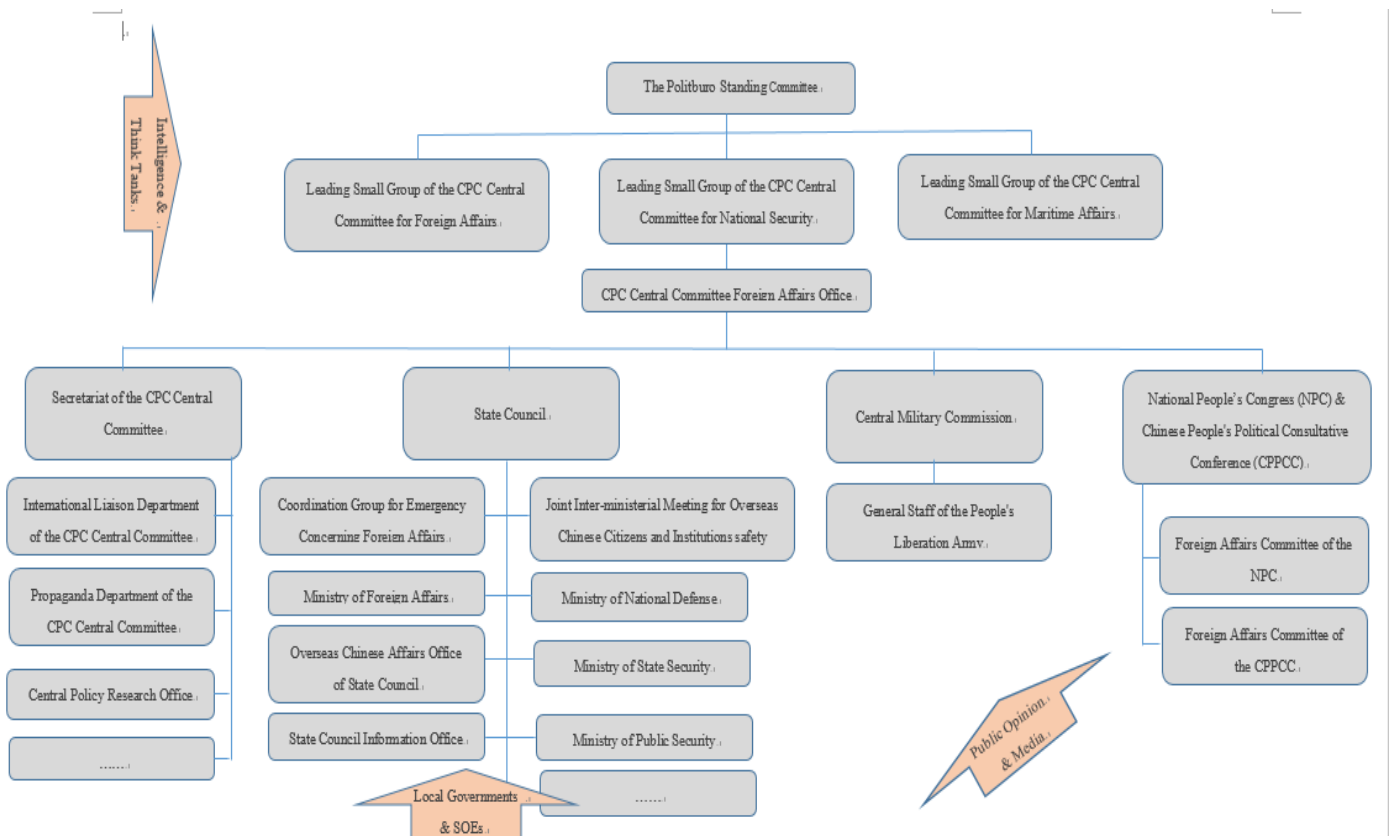
Figure 7.1 China's Foreign Policy-making System (Zhang J., 2013)
There are three main processes of China's foreign policy-making: the decision-making at the top level, the policy-coordination process conducted through the Leading Small Groups (for Foreign Affairs, for National Security, and for Maritime Affairs), and the informational process for foreign policy (Sun, 2013)

6.1.1   Decision-Making at the Top Level

The supreme decision-making authority in China is monopolized and exercised through the "collective leadership" of the Politburo Standing Committee (Sun, 2013). Decisions on strategically important issues must be made based on consensus, which is usually time-consuming.

To avoid the previous disastrous policies, the leadership structure of "collective leadership" gradually replaced the one-man dominance. Throughout Mao and Deng's era, key foreign policy decisions were made primarily by the paramount leader alone. But the following generations of Chinese leaders no longer hold the revolutionary legitimacy and prestige Mao and Deng possessed. Although the Communist Party of China plays the central leadership role in foreign policy affairs, the decision-making authority is distributed among several fractions, such as the National People's Congress, the President, State Council, and the Central Military Commission.

Generally, the more important the issue is, the broader and longer debate would last. Seldom leader wishes to carry sole responsibility for a critical policy change, because his or her career or even worse the legitimacy would be destroyed in case the decision fails. On key foreign affairs, discussions would be held as broadly as needed, to maximize the inputs of all players into the decision-making process and to legitimize the final decision.

The non-interference principle is established by the architect of PRC and obeyed by four generations of Chinese top leaders so far. Unless tremendous change in the international environment and China's capacity occurs, the non-interference principle would be one of the most important pillars of China's foreign policy.

6.1.2   Policy Coordination Process

The Leading Small Groups comprise key agency players from the Party and the Government regarding foreign policy making. These informal institutions serve the top leadership in policy consultation, inter-agency coordination, and supervision of implementation of decisions (Sun, 2013).

The leading groups are a reactive crisis-management mechanism, lacking the adequate human resources and professional capability to follow, analyze, and coordinate critical policy change. It is more like an organizer of research and a coordinator of policies.

6.1.3 The Informational Process for Foreign Policy-Making

Information for foreign policy-making is produced primarily by all line agencies involved in foreign affairs, governmental and semi-governmental think tanks and academia. Besides the collection and analysis of information, there is a standard process of screening, organizing, and disseminating that allows information to flow to the top (Sun, 2013).

Line agencies are the primary source of routinely information input on foreign affairs, and think tanks act as additional research arms to do foreign policy studies. When the top leaders decide that a particular issue needs more information and analysis, line agencies, think tanks, and academia are required to submit reports to assist the decision-making.

Usually, the informative agencies and think tanks in the Chinese system are extremely risk-averse, reluctant to report new findings that are not in line with the established principles. There is much tension of the think tanks' dual role between government employees and independent researchers.

Although most Chinese scholars agree that China needs to play a more proactive role in international conflict resolution, the mainstream in academia insists that non-interference principle is still alive and beneficial for China's diplomatic mediation.

6.2   Cognitive and Motivational Psychology

A decision to undertake a significant policy change often implies a recognition that existing policy is somehow containing mistakes, rather than just a response to a significant change in the environment or its rival's policy transformation. It requires policy makers to admit that certain premises of their policy have been wrong, and that their chosen means are ineffective (Welch, 2005: 45). According to cognitive and motivational psychology, it is difficult for people admit errors, take responsibility, and embrace risks.

Although the non-interference principle contradicts China's mediation of international conflict, it could serve China's interests in its international image building. As one pillar of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the non-interference principle is regarded by the Chinese government as a "major initiative in the history of international relations and a historic contribution to the building of a new type of just and equitable international relations" (Xi Jinping, June 28, 2014).

The emerging moral realism in Chinese international relations theory provides an alternative approach to understand China position on the principle. The term of "moral realism" in international theory was put forward by F. Zhang in his review article about the Tsinghua approach. Moral realism still regards hard power as a central factor in international relations but puts greater emphasis on political power, international norms, state morality, and humane authority (Zhang, 2011).

It attempts to answer how a rising state replaces a dominant state, why the dominant state loses its pre-eminence, and how a new international system is shaped. The answer given by moral realism is that the political power of the rising state has surpassed that of the dominant state (Yan, 2014), while morality is a main source of political power and a significant constituent of international leadership.

The wish to be a new type of international leadership is of more significance to motivate China to adhere to sovereignty and the principle of non-interference. As China becomes a new great power, it is willing to improve the current norms and to provide its international leadership which is different from the former British Empire or the United States (Yan, 2013: xii). However, China cannot receive greater international support than the U.S. if it merely follows the path of hegemonic leadership (Yan, 2013: xiii). Therefore, the priority of Chinese foreign policy is to create moral and consistent political values, rather than merely create a favorable international environment for economic development. The core values of American leadership are "equality, democracy, and freedom", comparatively, Chinese values guiding the international relations is "fairness, justice, and civility" (Yan, 2013: xiv).

Chinese government has established the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence Friendship Award" and the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence Scholarship of Excellence", to commend the contributions made by individuals and groups to the principles (Xi, 2014; Xinhua net, 2015). It is obvious that the Chinese government has dug deep into its diplomatic heritage for the core values it can provide for the world, and the principle of non-interference is an indispensable resource.

6.3   Prospect Theory

Prospect theory provides evidence that people are more sensitive to losses than to equivalent gains, that they will avoid risks in the domain of gains, and that they will accept risks to avoid losses. But all foreign policy change is risky, with none of policy makers know in advance about the consequences of their action (Welch, 2005" 46). Obviously, the perception of a significant opportunity for gains provides reasons for policy makers to pursue a substantial policy change, but prospect theory suggests that only prospects of disproportionate gain are likely to motivate foreign policy change. If the potential gains of foreign policy change are equivalent to the losses of keeping the current one, leaders usually tend to choose the status quo.

In addition, there is no strong evidence that the prospects of gains of abandoning the non-interference principle surpass its losses among Chinese analysts. If the Chinese government does not insist on the significance of sovereignty and non-interference, it would not be able to safeguard its national interests in the wake of mutual mistrust between China and the West world.

Despite China's reemergence as the second largest economy and its steady integration into the existing economic order, traditional security concerns about the West's ill intentions remain relevant (Wang, 2011b). Chinese government is cautious about the proposed interference regarding self-determination, separatist movement (Carlson, 2006: 222), and regime change (in the name of responsibility to protect and democratization), because these decisions might be cited by other countries to harm China's sovereignty on issues of Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan, human rights, and domestic political reforms.

For China, the possible gains of abandoning the non-interference principle do not significantly surpass the losses of sticking to it. The best strategy would be sticking to the principle while redefining it. In 2007, through its influence and economic relations, China successfully persuaded the Sudanese government to accept the African Union-United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (Cabestan, 2013). In 2011, China sent military forces to Libya for the first time and evacuated 35,860 citizens and 2,100 foreigners (Yan, 2011). Despite maintaining the diplomatic fiction, Chinese foreign policy makers gradually and partially changed the conservative attitude towards the principle.

7   Conclusion

China's diplomatic efforts in the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan, Syria, and Afghan reconstruction process indicate its ambition to play a greater role in international conflict resolution. Most Western scholars believe that China's diplomatic activity in the mentioned cases contradict its long-held principle of non-interference in other country's internal affairs, and that the non-interference principle is no longer suitable for the protection of its overseas interests nowadays.

However, there are divergent views of this issue in the mainstream of Chinese academia and government agencies. In regard with China's stance on the non-interference principle, the question is not whether China will renounce the principle, but rather how to apply the principle into diplomatic practice that deserves discussion. To accommodate the principle with China's international responsibility, the Chinese government should set preconditions to legitimize specific intervention, like the rules that China has obeyed in UN peacekeeping operations, namely the authorization of the UN, consent of the country concerned, and force as the last resort (Pan & Du, 2015). In addition, the principle of non-interference is merely one of the many principles of China's foreign policy, and it does not remain as the key one in all cases.

The essay suggests that there would be relatively less reference to the non-interference in the statements of Chinese government, with more emphasis on China's international responsibility for world peace and development. China's diplomatic mediation might contradict the strict definition of non-interference, but the Chinese government would never publicly announce that it abandons the non-interference principle. Due to organizational and cognitive factors as well as the uncertainty of prospect, non-interference is still treated as one important guideline of China's foreign policy and a significant contribution to the inter-state relationship.

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Appendices

Appendix A – List of China's Special Envoys for hotspot issue

Position	Ambassador (Year Appointed)	Notes
China's Special Envoy for the Middle East Issues	Wang Shijie (2002), Sun Bigan (2006), Wu Sike (2009), Gong Xiaosheng (2014)	On peace process in the Middle East
Special Envoy for Korean Peninsula Affairs	Ning Fukui (2003), Li Bin (2005), Chen Naiqing (2007), Yang Houlan (2009), Wu Dawei (2010)	On Korean nuclear crisis
China's Envoy for African Affairs	Liu Guijin (2007), Zhong Jianhua (2012)	On Darfur crisis
Special Envoy for Asian Affairs	Wang Yingfan (2013), Sun Guoxiang (2015)	On China-Myanmar affairs
Special Envoy for Afghanistan Affairs	Sun Yuxi (2014), Deng Xijun (2015)	On Afghan reconstruction issue

Appendix B – Coding rule for hotspot issues

Hotspot issues	Code
*Conflict	Conflict | dispute
*Syria issue	Syria | Syrian
*Afghanistan issue	Afghan | Afghanistan
*Iran nuclear program issue	'Iran nuclear' | 'Iranian nuclear'
*DPRK nuclear program issue	'Korean nuclear' | 'DPRK nuclear' | 'North Korea' | 'Six-party talks'
*Sudan and South Sudan issue	Sudan | Sudanese | Darfur
*Iraq issue	Iraq | Iraqi
*Libya issue	Libya | Libyan
*Palestine-Israel issue	Palestinian | Palestine | Israel | Israeli

Note: "|" means "or" in the KH Coder system. For example, the words "conflict" or "dispute" will be recognized as the issue of conflict.

Appendix C – Top 10 Distinctive Words of Each Statements

C. 1 Sudan and South Sudan

July 30, 2004		September 18, 2004		March 29, 2005		March 31, 2005	
situation	.170	rather	.160	however	.107	perpetrator	.177
commitment	.130	Government	.104	difficult	.103	necessary	.174
measure	.130	Sudanese	.104	it	.102	also	.140
draft	.111	sanction	.091	abstain	.100	when	.130
government	.109	view	.091	crisis	.094	justice	.129
make	.102	assistance	.085	Security	.087	trial	.118
believe	.097	particular	.083	reach	.083	gross	.118
honor	.095	offer	.083	view	.083	violation	.111
|	.095	problem	.079	help	.081	human	.105
resolution	.091	make	.077	resume	.077	rights	.105

April 25, 2006		August 31, 2006		July 31, 2007		June 5, 2008	
sanction	.222	AMIS	.180	hybrid	.209	impunity	.208
Council	.120	National	.135	operation	.177	judicial	.182
Security	.111	Unity	.135	resolution	.145	Prosecutor	.143
talk	.108	mission	.122	issue	.135	system	.105
Committee	.100	good	.111	side	.106	Office	.105
affect	.097	decision	.103	be	.098	field	.105
Abuja	.097	as	.102	settlement	.092	domestic	.105
abstain	.086	Council	.100	authorize	.091	communication	.095
member	.077	vote	.100	Nations	.086	ICC	.094
action	.077	government	.097	today	.083	problem	.088

July 31, 2008		March 20, 2009		July 24, 2009		December 4, 2009	
international	.209	OCHA	.167	UNAMID	.186	AU	.125
peacekeeping	.125	provision	.133	very	.156	important	.106
issue	.122	hope	.125	Mechanism	.132	question	.105
country	.108	humanitarian	.111	deployment	.102	report	.097
year	.102	peacekeeper	.095	AU	.100	progress	.093
peacekeeper	.100	order	.095	peacekeeping	.098	year	.088
have	.094	unimpeded	.083	we	.094	trust	.088
be	.093	Director	.083	cooperation	.093	impunity	.086
indictment	.091	Affairs	.083	Security	.088	Security	.085
community	.086	activity	.083	Tripartite	.079	Council	.075

November 16, 2010		December 16, 2010		June 20, 2011		July 13, 2011	
referendum	.200	Southern	.182	North	.294	South	.364
Northern	.133	Northern	.150	Menkerios	.214	Republic	.242
CPA	.129	referendum	.136	President	.174	Sudan	.197
Southern	.121	stability	.116	meeting	.158	people	.136
stability	.113	peace	.113	lead	.158	common	.135
Sudan	.107	outcome	.100	Mbeki	.158	development	.125
question	.105	long–term	.100	Kordofan	.143	strengthen	.114
outcome	.100	join	.091	Blue	.143	its	.111
well	.091	region	.079	arrangement	.143	country	.091
continue	.086	reach	.071	Nile	.143	new	.083

July 29, 2011		May 2, 2012		June 5, 2012		December 13, 2012	
address	.125	road	.182	Document	.125	intertwine	.143

renewal	.111	map	.182	renounce	.111	durable	.143
prosperity	.111	always	.167	realization	.111	Xiaobo	.143
merit	.111	relation	.133	key	.111	Sun	.143
attainment	.111	mediation	.133	truly	.111	Justice	.143
emphasis	.100	South	.125	question	.098	pursuit	.125
UNAMID	.095	AU	.115	Doha	.095	critical	.125
Min	.091	unbalanced	.091	fully	.091	value	.125
consistently	.091	good-neighbourly	.091	ICC	.083	heed	.111
dual-track	.091	Africans	.091	lay	.083	top	.111

June 5, 2013		December 11, 2013		May 2, 2014		June 17, 2014	
Document	.150	other	.121	conflict	.227	deeply	.105
Doha	.120	element	.118	IGAD	.177	reconciliation	.100
basis	.095	key	.095	mediation	.150	judicial	.095
question	.087	seek	.087	South	.132	take	.075
form	.071	position	.077	urge	.115	dialogue	.071
sign	.071	play	.074	displace	.111	Government	.070
signatory	.071	Government	.071	internally	.111	Sudanese	.070
pay	.071	Sudanese	.071	settle	.111	access	.067
tho	.071	Zhao	.071	person	.111	downs	.067
ICC	.069	reunification	.071	difference	.105	change	.067

December 12, 2014		June 29, 2015	
find	.105	involvement	.200
concern	.100	s	.143
UNAMID	.083	!	.143
Prosecutor	.083	join	.143
ongoing	.083	rebel	.130
Crimes	.083	slow	.125
media	.083	refusal	.125
holding	.083	Xu	.125
handling	.083	adhere	.125
Thabit	.083	external	.125

C. 2 Syria

April 14, 2012		April 21, 2012		July 19, 2012		August 30, 2012	
mediation	.200	he	.191	draft	.196	humanitarian	.165
advance	.188	Supervision	.167	UNSMIS	.188	relief	.133
supervision	.188	progress	.154	Annan	.186	Syria	.103
mission	.188	Mission	.143	s	.163	they	.100
launch	.188	Annan	.129	resolution	.145	–	.097
team	.188	create	.118	–	.128	!	.096
Annan	.177	respect	.118	!	.127	situation	.093
deployment	.158	always	.111	not	.123	be	.091
cessation	.150	fully	.105	mandate	.122	s	.091
violence	.138	UNSMIS	.100	Council	.111	Nations	.086

October 15, 2012		January 23, 2013		April 24, 2013		September 27, 2013	
lead	.158	January	.143	stage	.200	issue	.149
means	.154	applaud	.143	currently	.200	weapon	.143
military	.133	sincerely	.143	hostility	.167	chemical	.143
integrity	.111	S/_/2012/_/522	.143	viable	.143	war	.095
territorial	.111	intensify	.143	critical	.143	settlement	.092
stability	.100	fire	.143	S/_/2012/_/523	.143	more	.091
base	.100	whole	.125	launch	.125	be	.091
external	.100	urgent	.125	step	.111	syrian	.087
escalation	.100	Arab	.125	April	.111	maintain	.083
restraint	.100	understanding	.125	syrian–led	.100	China	.082

October 22, 2013		February 22, 2014		July 14, 2014		July 22, 2014	
elimination	.400	question	.171	humanitarian	.178	problem	.250
II	.250	humanitarian	.147	actively	.125	player	.111
inspection	.200	improvement	.125	issue	.111	Ambassador	.111
chemical	.174	continue	.120	assistance	.109	Ramzy	.111
!	.167	situation	.113	other	.102	Ezzeldin	.111
Mission	.154	Syria	.113	way	.091	feel	.111
aim	.154	common	.103	new	.088	cooperation	.100
opportunity	.143	settlement	.097	Nations	.087	Staffan	.100
ready	.143	make	.093	United	.085	side	.100
Joint	.130	suffering	.091	action	.083	enhance	.100

March 6, 2015		March 27, 2015		April 21, 2015		April 24, 2015	
chemical	.167	terrorism	.292	Russia	.143	assistance	.140
weapon	.167	Middle	.282	fit	.143	have	.135
OPCW	.154	East	.250	exert	.143	its	.118
further	.143	extremism	.177	affected	.143	country	.101
position	.133	community	.134	restore	.143	humanitarian	.099
Chemical	.133	they	.118	swift	.143	syrian	.095
Weapons	.133	ethnic	.118	steadfast	.143	need	.095
relevant	.121	civilization	.114	other	.143	Nations	.085
resolution	.091	measure	.114	positive	.133	solution	.085
earnest	.091	be	.098	fifth	.125	United	.083

July 23, 2015		August 7, 2015		December 18, 2015		November 16, 2015	
question	.207	investigation	.154	have	.100	base	.125
play	.182	OPCW	.133	we	.097	terrorist	.111
participation	.182	De	.125	political	.096	terrorism	.109
active	.143	weapon	.111	opposition	.093	various	.098
role	.138	use	.111	it	.092	its	.092
seek	.133	Mistura	.105	people	.092	so	.083
appropriate	.111	role	.094	party	.092	wish	.083
unwaveringly	.091	play	.077	Nations	.082	become	.083
unconditional	.091	Envoy	.077	United	.081	United	.075
broadest	.091	Investigative	.077	syrian	.079	ease	.075

December 22, 2015	

give	.143
cross-border	.143
December	.133
suffer	.125
relief	.120
people	.097
implement	.077
work	.071
relieve	.071
hope	.071

C. 3 Afghanistan

May 23, 2002		July 19, 2002		April 6, 2004		August 25, 2004	
loya	.214	very	.167	!	.355	election	.136
jirga	.214	situation	.119	conference	.171	process	.095
rebuild	.125	humanitarian	.118	Berlin	.167	it	.086
have	.098	crisis	.103	ongoing	.091	great	.083
interest	.075	problem	.103	transitional	.071	presidential	.073
work	.075	Brahimi	.103	declaration	.071	Secretary-General	.067
enthusiasm	.071	Conference	.091	commitment	.070	security-sector	.065
build	.070	have	.089	impact	.069	make	.063
conflict	.069	they	.082	general	.069	violent	.063
local	.067	Bonn	.081	presidency	.069	report	.063

March 14, 2006		March 19, 2009		December 22, 2010		December 19, 2011	
not	.103	situation	.100	need	.120	he	.082
reconstruction	.088	increase	.097	durable	.083	Mr	.078
national	.074	security	.075	advance	.074	review	.077
peace	.073	country	.075	still	.074	decision	.074
new	.071	poppy	.071	Afghan	.073	good-neighbourly	.074
Compact	.071	Eide	.071	process	.070	Mistura	.074
better	.071	reduce	.069	peace	.069	Minister	.069
basic	.071	future	.069	lead	.065	reintegration	.069
neighbouring	.071	military	.069	effectively	.061	December	.069
endorse	.071	stabilize	.069	order	.061	like	.065

September 20, 2012		December 12, 2012		March 19, 2013		June 20, 2013	
s	.088	promotion	.081	continue	.086	achieve	.108
realize	.083	security	.061	assistance	.076	positive	.098
–	.082	welcome	.058	mandate	.073	provide	.089
!	.080	electoral	.057	basis	.068	Afghans	.088
s	.079	stability	.056	Afghan	.067	party	.086
fully	.073	increase	.056	Security	.067	smooth	.086
!	.073	China	.055	Council	.067	lasting	.083
cooperation	.071	reconciliation	.055	party	.066	develop	.073
support	.063	effort	.055	enhance	.065	regard	.073
security	.062	critical	.054	Mission	.061	government	.071

September 19, 2013		December 17, 2013		March 17, 2014		June 25, 2014	
stage	.088	be	.095	transition	.140	realization	.108
register	.071	it	.081	represent	.094	relevant	.087
party	.070	ready	.080	–	.085	durable	.086
support	.065	carry	.079	!	.082	rebuilding	.086
country	.065	manner	.079	s	.081	stable	.075
wish	.065	concern	.077	common	.081	presidential	.073
region	.063	China	.076	various	.077	security	.073
preparation	.063	responsibility	.070	which	.073	its	.072
enter	.063	s	.069	effectively	.073	China	.072
successful	.063	give	.067	regional	.073	election	.071

September 18, 2014		March 16, 2015		June 22, 2015		September 17, 2015	
peaceful	.098	new	.127	Decade	.107	cooperation	.118
enhance	.087	economic	.119	Transformation	.107	strengthen	.117
relevant	.085	government	.118	comprehensive	.100	positive	.113
we	.084	base	.109	Government	.094	sector	.108
communicatio							
n	.081	s	.100	advance	.088	challenge	.089
people	.079	Afghanistan	.095	country	.086	Afghan	.088
role	.066	support	.092	hope	.086	continue	.085
also	.063	people	.090	create	.083	remain	.083
so	.061	!	.090	promote	.080	Pakistan	.081
round	.061	s	.086	hold	.079	respond	.081

Appendix D – Co-occurrence Network of Words

D. 1 Sudan and South Sudan

D. 2 Syria
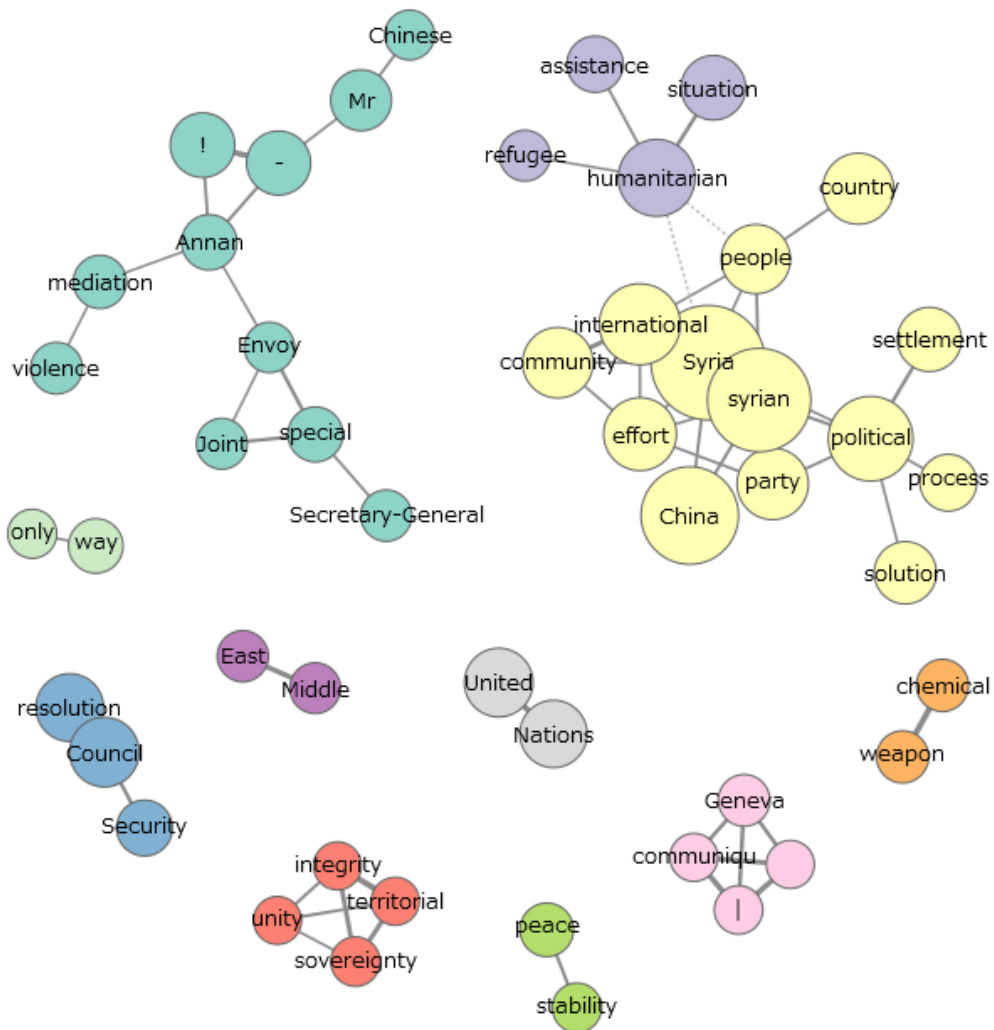
color: | Communities: betweenness ⌐ | Config | N 49, E 60, D .051 | Save | Close

D. 3 Afghanistan
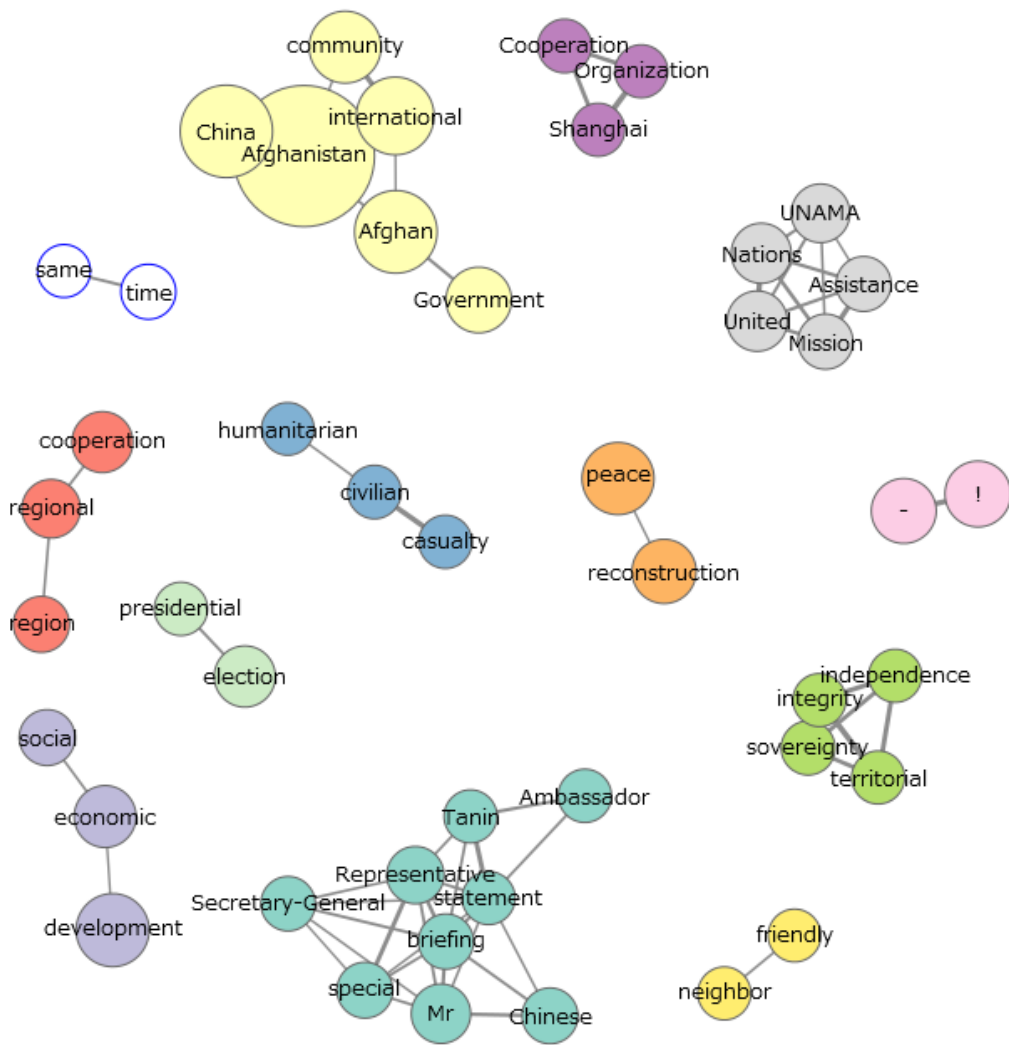
color: Communities: betweenness   Config | N 46, E 60, D .058   Save   Close

Appendix E – Bilateral exchanges between China and the Four War-torn Countries

E. 1 Bilateral Exchanges between China and Sudan

Date	Activity
May 11, 2006	Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing attended the foreign ministers' meeting at the UN Security Council, appealing to the international community to strengthen the capacity of AU mission in Sudan, pointing out that the consent and cooperation of the Sudanese government is a prerequisite for the deployment of UN peacekeepers in Darfur.[1]
September 18, 2006	Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing met Sudanese President Bashir in New York, saying China supported Sudan to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity. President Bashir said the Sudanese Government advocated the extension of the mandate of African Union Mission in Sudan, and rejected the UN to take over the mission.[2]
November 2, 2006	President Hu Jintao met Sudanese President Bashir in Beijing, exchanging views on bilateral relations and the Darfur issue, saying that China understood the concerns of Sudan, hoping all parties to strengthen dialogue and coordination.[3]
January 11, 2007	State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan met with Mr. Natsios, the U.S. President Special Envoy to Sudan, to discuss the Darfur issue.[4]
April 8, 2007	President Bashir met with the special envoy of Chinese government, Assistant Minister Zhai Jun. Zhai investigated situation in Darfur, saying China side hoped the Sudanese government to reflect flexibility on deployment of peacekeeping forces, to improve the humanitarian and security situation, and to speed up the political process.
May 19 – 23, 2007	China's Special Representative for Darfur Affairs Liu Guijin completed his first visit to Sudan after he was appointed, establishing contact with Sudanese side, exchanging views, and investigating situation in Darfur.
June 13-24,	Special Representative Liu Guijin visited South Africa,

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[1] People's Daily, May 11, 2006, p. 003.

[2] People's Daily, September 20, 2006, p. 003.

[3] People's Daily, November 3, 2006, p. 001.

[4] People's Daily, January 12, 2007, p. 004.

2007	Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan, and the headquarters of the African Union and Arab League, explaining China's views and coordinating relevant parties' positions.
September 4-11, 2007	Special Representative Liu Guijin visited the US and the UN, met with Mr. Negroponte, US Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Natsios, the U.S. President Special Envoy to Sudan, US senators and congressmen, representative of "Save Darfur Coalition", famous director Steven Spielberg, UN Deputy Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General, and the African ambassadors to the UN.
October 23-24, 2007	Special Representative Liu Guijin talked with Sudanese President assistant Mr. Nafie and Foreign Minister Karti, discussing deployment of hybrid peacekeeping forces and Darfur political process.
February 21-27, 2008	Special Representative Liu Guijin visited the Great Britain and Sudan and discussed the Darfur issue with President Bashir.
July 29, 2008	Vice President Xi Jinping met with special envoy of Sudanese President and exchanged views about prosecution of President Bashir by International Criminal Court.
August 31, 2008	President Bashir met with the special envoy of Chinese government and Assistant Minister Zhai Jun, discussing bilateral relations, Darfur issue, especially prosecution of President Bashir by International Criminal Court.

E. 2 Bilateral Exchanges between China and South Sudan

Date	Activity
December 21, 2013	President of South Sudan, Mr. Kiir urgently summoned Chinese ambassador to South Sudan, Mr. Ma Qiang, informing current situation, position and proposals.
December 24, 2013	Ambassador Ma Qiang had an urgent appointment with Foreign Minister Mr. Benjamin, exchanging views of situation of South Sudan and trying to promote peace there. Ambassador required efficient security measures to protect Chinese engineers and technicians in oil-producing regions.
December 29-30, 2013	China's Special Representative for African Affairs Zhong Jianhua visited South Sudan, exchanged views of current situation in South Sudan with President Kiir, Mr. Donald Booth Special Representative of the US, Susan Page US ambassador to South Sudan, and Mr. Alexander Rondos EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa. Zhong said China would support the South Sudanese government's efforts to ease the tension, cease hostilities, and to carry out unconditional negotiations. China would support mediation efforts by IGAD.
April 1-3, 2014	Special Representative Zhong Jianhua visited South Sudan, exchanged views of current situation and bilateral relations with President Kiir and Vice President James Wani Igga. Zhong also met with Hilde F. Johnson Special Representative of UN Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and representative of IGAD.
April 9, 2014	Chinese ambassador Ma Qiang had an urgent meeting with Foreign Minister Benjamin of South Sudan, discussing current situation in South Sudan and trying to promote peace talk.
September 17, 2014	Special Representative Zhong Jianhua met in Ethiopia with IGAD's chief mediator for South Sudan peace talks, Seyoum Mesfin, and negotiator of the rebel side Taban Deng Gai, discussing current situation and mediation process in South Sudan.
September 18-19, 2014	Special Representative Zhong Jianhua visited South Sudan, met with President Kiir, and exchanged views with Ellen Margrethe Løj Special Representative of UN Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS, Mohammad Amin Chairman of IGAD Joint Technical Committee.
September 23, 2014	At the invitation of China's foreign ministry, a delegation headed by Dhieu Mathok Diing Wol, chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the South Sudan opposition party arrived in China for a visit. They met with Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Ming. Both sides exchanged views mainly on peacefully resolving the current South Sudan

	conflict.
December 18-20, 2014	Special Representative Zhong Jianhua visited South Sudan, met with President Kiir, discussing transition government and peace talks

E. 3 Bilateral Exchanges between China and Syria

Date	Activity
October 28, 2011	China's special envoy for the Middle East Affairs Wu Sike visited Syria, met with Syrian Vice President Sarre and Foreign Minister Muallem, discussing on the current situation in Syria and exchanged in-depth of views.
February 18, 2012	The special envoy of the Chinese government, Vice Foreign Minister Zhai Jun visited Syria. During the visit, Zhai met with Syrian President Bashar al Assad, Foreign Minister Walid Moallem, and held talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Mekdad and Anos. Zhai also met the director of opposition groups in Syria.
August 13, 2015	Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Ming met with the Syrian delegation of "National Dialogue Alliance" which was invited by the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs.
December 24, 2015	Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with visiting Syrian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Moallem, discussing a political settlement of the Syrian issue with comprehensive and in-depth exchange of views.
January 8, 2016	Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets Khoja, the President of the Syrian National Coalition, who was invited by the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs. He urges the opposition forces to seize the opportunity, to support and cooperate with the UN's effort to make peace in Syria, and to participate in dialogue and negotiations with no preconditions.[5]
March 29, 2016	China appointed its first special envoy for the Syrian crisis. Xie Xiaoyan was appointed as the first special envoy.
April 21, 2016	Special Envoy Xie Xiaoyan visited Syria, met respectively with Syrian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Walid Moallem, and Syrian President political and media advisor Dr. Shaaban. The two sides discussed the current situation in Syria and exchanged in-depth of views.

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[5] People's Daily, January 8, 2016, p. 003.

E. 4 Bilateral Exchanges between China and Afghanistan

Date	Activity
July 19, 2002	Zhang Yishan, Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, said at a meeting of the Security Council on Afghanistan that the international community should help maintain stability in Afghanistan.
May 27, 2003	Vice President Zeng Qinghong held talks with visiting Vice President of Afghanistan Mathura SHAHRANI, expressed support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, with $15 million grants, $100 million in cash, and support for the regular budget of the Afghan government.
December 21, 2003	Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah met with visiting Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Lu Xinhua, said that Afghanistan would cooperate with China to combat the "East Turkistan" terrorist organization.
April 1, 2004	Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing attended the Third International Conference on Afghanistan held in Berlin, held talks to the press on Afghan issues.
June 16, 2004	Vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Lu Yongxiang, held meeting with the Afghan delegation of Ministry of Justice led by Minister of Justice Abdul Rahim Karimi. Both sides discussed the development of bilateral relations, exchanges between bilateral political parties and regional situation.
April 26, 2005	State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan met with visiting Afghan delegation led by Afghan Vice President Halili.
September 30, 2005	State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan met with visiting Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz.
December 5, 2005	Vice Minister Wu Dawei attended the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference in Kabul, addressed the keynote speech at the meeting, saying China would provide more constructive assistance to Afghan reconstruction.
January 31, 2006	Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing attended the London Conference on Afghanistan, and made four commitments: 1) in 2006 Chinese would provide Afghanistan grants of 80 million yuan, promising zero tariff treatment for the majority of Afghan exports to China; 2) to support the Afghan government's efforts to combat terrorism and to enhance training for Afghan police and defense forces; 3) to participate in international cooperation, and implement the "Kabul Declaration on Good Neighborly Relations", in support of the SCO to establish anti-drug "safety belt" around Afghanistan; 4) to support capable businesses with good reputation to participate in Afghan reconstruction, to invest in the field of infrastructure, electricity, mineral resources and

	transportation.
June 18, 2006	Invited by President Hu Jintao, Afghan President Hamid Karzai arrived in Beijing for a state visit, during which President Hu Jintao, members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress would hold talks and met with him. In addition, Karzai would also visit Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.
June 20, 2006	China and Afghanistan issued a joint statement, agreed to establish a comprehensive cooperative partnership.
January 19, 2007	Jia Qinglin and Wu Bangguo met with the President of the House of Elders of Afghanistan.
August 20, 2007	State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan met with visiting Afghan foreign minister SPANTA
November 12, 2007	Vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, State Councilor and Minister of Defense Cao Gangchuan met with the Chief of Staff of Afghan National Army Bismillah Khan.
November 14, 2007	Afghan President Karzai and Foreign Minister Spanta met with visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.
June 11, 2009	Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi held talks with visiting Afghan Foreign Minister Spanta.
January 28, 2010	Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi attended the International Conference on Afghanistan in London and delivered a speech, stressing international efforts to increase support and assistance of the international community, to strengthen the sovereignty, autonomy and development capacity of Afghanistan.
March 24, 2010	President Hu Jintao talks with visiting Afghan President Karzai.
July 20, 2010	Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi attended the International Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul and delivered a speech.
May 10, 2011	Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi held talks with visiting Afghan Foreign Minister Rasul at the Diaoyutai State Guest House.
December 5, 2011	Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi attended the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn, and expounded China's position on Afghanistan, pointing out that the peaceful reconstruction should be "Afghan-owned and -led".
June 8, 2012	President Hu Jintao met with visiting Afghan President Hamid Karzai who came to attend the SCO summit. The two sides issued the establishment of Sino-Afghan strategic cooperative partnership.
September 27, 2013	President Xi Jinping held talks with Afghan President Karzai, put forward a Five Point Proposal for the development of bilateral relations.
February 7, 2014	President Xi Jinping met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Sochi, Russia, saying China "is willing to host the Fourth Foreign Minister Conference of Istanbul Process on

	Afghanistan, and willing to promote the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to play a greater role on Afghan issue".
October 28, 2014	President Xi Jinping held talks with Afghan President Ghani. Xi congratulated him on his inauguration as President of Afghanistan and welcomed him to choose China as the first visiting country. The two presidents witnessed the signing of the agreement on economic and technological cooperation between the two governments and other documents and issued a joint statement on deepening bilateral strategic cooperative partnership.
October 31, 2014	Premier Li Keqiang and President of Afghanistan Ghani attended the opening ceremony of Fourth Foreign Minister's Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan in Beijing. Li delivered a speech, in which elaborated China's Five Point on the Afghan issue.
July 2015	China, alongside Pakistan and the U.S. to facilitate the negotiation between the Afghan government and Taliban.
December 9, 2015	Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the Fifth Foreign Ministers' meeting of the Istanbul Process in Afghanistan