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31 January 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD (CIA China Desk)

SUBJECT: Beijing's Middle East
Proliferation Activities (U)

Since the Gulf crisis, China has sharply stepped up its diplomatic activities in the Middle East, participating in the Arms Control in the Middle East (ACME) process, pledging to observe the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and promising to accede to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Despite its more active role in Middle Eastern arms control forums, however, Beijing has been obstructive in such forums

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SUBJECT: Beijing's Middle East Proliferation
Activities (U)

We believe the Chinese hope, through their participation in various arms control and other negotiating forums, to protect their arms markets in the Middle East, at least in part by subtly impressing upon Washington China's ability to facilitate or complicate the regional situation. Accordingly, China can be expected to continue to be diplomatically more active in the Middle East, occasionally obstructive of US policy goals, and insistent on a *quid pro quo* for its cooperation with US initiatives. The key question is how the Chinese leadership will weigh its desire for less acrimonious relations with Washington against arms export revenues. [Redacted]

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We believe the Chinese will for the foreseeable future cultivate all sides in the Middle East, balancing their recent normalization with Israel and their relations with the Arab states and Iran. Despite the fact that such an approach to the region will open Beijing to more pressure from both sides, the Chinese have in the past demonstrated an ability to juggle such problems.

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