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“A THOUSAND MILES” AND “A THOUSAND TASKS”: CHINA’S DIPLOMATIZATION OF MULTIFACETED RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT AND GLOBAL SECURITY ***

Resume

The People’s Republic of China’s (PRC, China) unflinching stance throughout the ongoing Russian-Ukraine conflict has raised many eyebrows and provoked diverse reactions. The lingering question in different quarters is why China acts as it does and with what intentions. Once again, one troubling international turmoil was laid at the Chinese doorstep, almost turning into “China’s dilemma”. The starting assumption is that PRC’s conduct shows an unswerving strategic orientation toward “building a community with a shared future for mankind” (建设人类命运共同体) through persistent diplomatization. Diplomatization is a distinct process of containing grave security problems by making them a matter of diplomacy. Current analysis falsifies this starting proposition through conceptual inquiry into key actions and documents in China’s diplomatic and political relations with Ukraine in the period from the establishment of the strategic partnership in 2011 up to the head-start of diplomatization of the convoluted Russia-Ukraine conflict by the Global Security Initiative in April 2022. A strong diplomatization pattern is found, showing that China’s stand regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict

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is a case of diplomatized security concerns as a trigger for the head-started diplomatization of global security. China consistently pursued conceptualization and persuasion to dispel insecurities and contain warfare and ensuing global disturbances through conversation and deliberation focused on boosting major joint leaps for transforming obsolete modes of governance structures to becoming aligned to the manifest direction of epochal change. Furthermore, China's global security outlook is firmly anchored in the national security concept.

Keywords: China, Ukraine, war, diplomacy, diplomatization, China's national security concept, China's global security outlook, China's Global Security Initiative, peace, epochal change

INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China's (PRC, PR China, China) diplomatization of security, i.e., the pursuit of making global security a matter of diplomacy, has been intensified by its efforts to diplomatize the resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Considering the military engagement of Russia, which is PRC's comprehensive strategic coordination partner "for a new era" (China [MFA] 2021), against Ukraine, which is PRC's strategic partner, being detrimental to both of its partners, to global development agenda and own ideas, ideals, inclinations, interests, and integrity (face) China has head-started diplomatization of global security.

Why and how has China tried to diplomatize the convoluted Russia-Ukraine conflict and practiced diplomatization are two questions aimed to be answered by undertaken research. The article ventures from theoretical clarification of diplomatization as a distinct process of making issues and problems a matter of diplomacy. Primarily within the article's subject scope, the making of security issues a matter of diplomacy matters. The inquiry is posited on the premise that PR China's consistency in diplomatizing the multifaceted Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrates its unflinching stance toward the diplomatization of the challenges of unfolding global changes.

The first part of the article uses a diplomatic theory relational lenses to critically identify the Chinese privileging of security challenges as a part of the diplomatic discourse. This move is needed to clearly discern the PRC's genuine conceptualization of diplomacy and security from the "thinking fog" of the vehemently laying responsibility for mounting insecurity at its door. The current hollowing out of the

international order is almost turned into a “China’s dilemma” as a new adage to the “China threat theory”. The second part addresses the People’s Republic of China’s foregrounding diplomatic moves preceding the eruption of Russia’s direct military engagement in Ukraine. The third part analyzes China’s relationship with Ukraine and the actions the PRC has taken related to the multifaceted Russia-Ukraine conflict. Analysis of China-Ukraine diplomatic and political relations is going to be centered on the period from establishing a strategic partnership in 2011 up to the launching of the Global Security Initiative (GSI - 全球安全倡议 – *quanqiu anquan changyi*) on April 21st, 2022. The GSI is the cornerstone of the PRC’s diplomatization of global security intensified by the intricate Russia-Ukraine conflict and ensuing global disturbances. China embarks on containing and mitigating them through the instigation of joint conversation and deliberation. The linchpin of the PRC’s efforts to diplomatize the multifaceted Russia-Ukraine conflict and head-start diplomatization of global security is the unique Chinese seeing of the directions of the flows of changes and working in the direction of those flows giving shape to China’s ideations, intents, interests, involvements, and integrity (face). The concluding remarks point out key relations that China deems necessary to be the foundation for global security, and firm anchoring of the Chinese global security outlook in the national security concept.

A STEP TOWARDS DECIPHERING CHINA: UNDERSTANDING THE CHINESE WAY OF DIPLOMATIZATION

So many bits and bytes have been spent on alarming people across the planet after the end of the Cold War, determined by “incongruences between real power in the global community and formalized power in institutions of global governance” (Stefanović Štambuk 2008, 34), that China is challenging the world order. Those who find in China’s every move or rest in acting its determination to change the distribution of power in the international system, revise the foundational tenet of global governance and take the reins of normative and institutional development of international relations in the ongoing systemic change, do warn that China intends to be a new world hegemon. That is the gist of the “China threat” theory.

In truth, the “China threat” theory is hardly a theory. It is more of a label for a body of thoughts, less theoretically based, and vastly ideologically biased, put up to inform, activate, and issue a rallying call

to close ranks behind the US and tighten the sense of (Western) identity around its core values allegedly under jeopardy from Chinese ambitions to ignite the joint re-evaluation of the decaying base of international politics. The critical security studies scholarship has been helpful in clarifying that although security is differently conceptualized it is not an “empty signifier” (Fierke, 2015). From the variously conceptualized security of states the core meaning of security could be found to be “the absence of threats to acquired values” (Wolfers 1952, 485).

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) corroborated this by singling out for the first time the PRC as a security challenge. At the NATO summit held in Madrid, the heads of the states and governments endorsed on June 29th, 2022, a new Strategic Concept to make this military alliance of 30 countries in the next ten years fit and resourceful. The allied leaders declared that the PRC by “stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values” (NATO 2022, point 13). They noted diverse fields and the means China employs running counter to their values and interest including: “[T]he deepening strategic partnership between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order” (NATO 2022, point 13). These utterances ranked China discursively as a threat to the United States of America (U.S., America) and by that fiat to its formal allies and close friends throughout the world. China by being talked about, talked into, and talked over throughout is made a primary security threat. The U.S. securitization of China with the helping hands of others worked “miracles” for NATO. It has now two threats to deal with.

Discovery of China-related threats, colored in the red as existential ones to the U.S. and the world at large, has not been “the result” of any of the purported “explanatory” theories”. Actually, they are closer to “battle cries” vying to elicit immediate policy actions to be set on the inevitable course of securitizing the PRC. There is nothing thus far away from the truth than the several strands of thinking, posturing as “theories”, supposedly unearthed the “China threat”. Neither “power transition theory” (Thompson 2009) nor “theory of the Soviet Union successor-state image” (Kaplan 2005) did any theorization. Power transition theory since A.F.K. Organski’s (1958) work, proclaimed that it achieved the status of “one of the most successful structural theories in world politics” (Lemke and Tammen 2003, 269) is simply recycled the Gibbon’s (2001) argument in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Both its claims that China will wage war with the United States, either to overtake it or to displace it as global hegemon, are devoid of the shred of truth.

David Shambaugh (2004-5), renown Chinese specialist, did disagree on key claims of “power transition” theorists. He noticed that China of their descriptions is nowhere to be seen and there is no evidence for their “theories”. Based on historical analogies, closer to myths than to systemic and structural comparison, such thinking is peddling the “China threat” which actually projects the fear of the American scholarly class of their country’s decline. Instead of finding facts of China’s rise and its concocted plans to take the helm of world leadership they need the Chinese threat to stay in the business of theorizing, satisfying the U.S. metrics of academic achievements and having the ear of political class. As for the other “theory” of successor-state image there is no need to use many words to dismiss its reasoning even in regard to China’s socialism.

A theoretical explanation of the political application of the “China threat”, and its ending on the securitized part of the spectrum of public issues placements is the securitization theory in the study of security. Securitization theory was a disciplinary saving device when the Cold War ended making security studies an “endangered species” whose survival was nearly threatened with extinction. Several scholars in security studies wisely reached out to the speech act theory, introduced in the 1960s by John Langshaw Austin (1962) and furthered by John Searle (1969) and Bach and Harnish (1979), resulting in the construction of securitization theory. It posits that the leaders, be they political, intellectual or societal, through talking about security issues in categories of existential threats against something which is valued “referent object” (Buzan 1997, 14) could align the public and effectuate political support for measures outside established political bonds justified by the actions required to counter existential threats.

China in terms of its inter-subjectively established salience as an existential threat is being talked about being such a foremost menacing force to the America’s present and future security. The U.S. President, Joseph Biden, after a two-hour phone conversation with China’s President, Xi Jinping, on February 10th, 2021, purported in his conversation on February 11th, with US Senators how the Chinese must be contained and the US victorious in out-competing them or else, “they are going to eat our lunch” (Biden 2022a). On March 3rd, 2021, the newly sworn US Secretary of State in the President Biden administration, Antony Blinken, enlarged and deepened talking the talk about China to press into the public mind how the PRC is the gravest challenger. He presented it as the country posing the greatest threat to the U.S. The main emphasis is on that China has “the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system – all

the rules, values, and relationships that make the world work the way we want it to, because it ultimately serves the interests and reflects the values of the American people” (Blinken 2021). Thus, the relationship with the PRC for the U.S. is “the biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century” (Blinken 2021). The culled strategic approach epitomized that America will manage this relationship to “be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be” (Blinken 2021) having always as “the common denominator...the need to engage China from a position of strength” (Blinken 2021).

The critical security studies scholarship clarifies how comes that the scope of U.S. power was found lacking to amount to lasting U.S. hegemony or even to an U.S. empire due to its own incapacities and set of changes in governance of global commons unique in history in dispersion of power from the state down to society, and up to international institutions, and laterally across borders (Stefanović Štambuk, 2010; Baumann and Dingwerth 2015). Also via securitization theory it is clear how through historical analogies, political myth, and allegedly scientific theory, as three dominant modes of discursive securitization, China has been securitized (Song 2015). It is far-fetched to discover as the main hindrance to U.S. world preeminence the concurrent rise of China to global power and its supposed expansionism (Bijian 2005; Brown 2000; Buzan 2010; Christiansen and Maher 2017; Economy 2022; Goodhart and Xu 1996; Huang 2022; Ikenberry 2008; Kim and Gates 2015; Kristof 1993; Lemke and Tammen 2003; Mahbubani 2022; Mearsheimer 2014; Meijer 2022; Nye 2011; Posner and Yoo 2006; Rosecrance 2006; So and Chu 2015; Thies 2015; Wang, 2004). If we talk in terms of China’s rise to power it is still rising (Mahbubani 2022a; Mastro and Scissors 2022; Yang 2022) despite some disagreeing foresight (Roach 2022, Brands and Beckley 2022).

The core of fixations on how China acts and what her true intentions are, must be admitted, that they are not only made of the U.S. imagined fears. Some fixations are of Chinese own making. “The rise of China”, prefacing “the rise” with attributive peacefulness or not, is a major disservice the Chinese have done to themselves. They dipped into the shallow pond of America’s representationalism instead of working in the main direction of the flow of the thought today to relational ontology and ontology which is China’s own forte (Wang 2008) were sadly disregarded.

If relationality of Chinese worldview is taken seriously, the diplomatization which China practices now will be studied more and understood better. Most of the time practitioners of diplomacy exactly

practice bringing in security matters out of the confines of securitization. They keep them up as a matter of diplomacy by “privileging the dialogical where war, and we may add, militarizing securitization, privileges the monological” (Neumann 2020, 18). What makes diplomacy “indeed an alternative to war and securitization” (Neumann 2020, 18), are its travails and trials “to maintain normal, dialogical politics” (Neumann 2020, 18). That is veritably what diplomacy is and should be. Yet, diplomatization is insufficiently understood among the wider public. Paradoxically, Neumann contends that “[O]ne thing students of diplomacy may learn from students of security, then, is to conceptualize how and when something becomes a matter of diplomacy – that is, how a phenomenon becomes diplomatized” (Neumann 2020, 18).

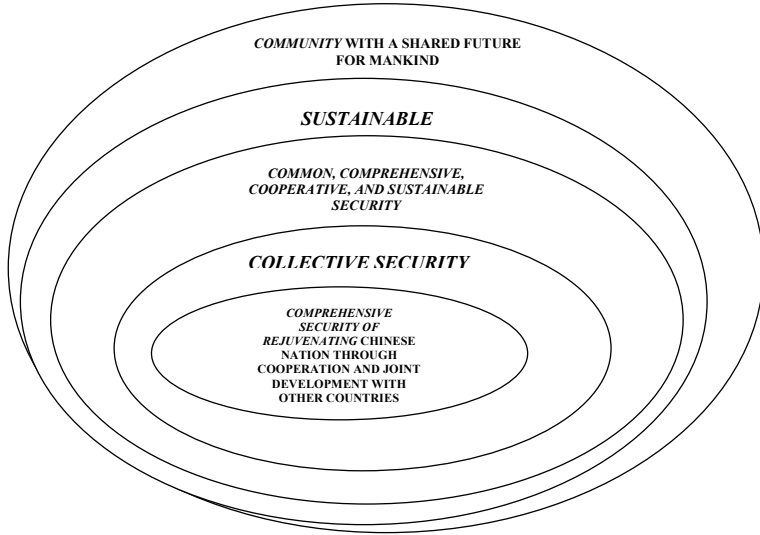
Students of history of European diplomacy made conceptualizations of how to make something a matter of diplomacy under different names throughout the times. They thought how to make something become a matter of dialogical exchange across borders and differences instead of monologues of war. This bifurcation of times passing and the new times coming, diplomacy is in the process of acquiring the new name “governancy” (Stefanović Štambuk 2022). Global governance (Rosenau 1992) has already negotiated its new meaning and practices. Still, the habituated name diplomacy, even for systemically novel developments, is widely applied. Therefore, diplomatization, and not governcialization (Stefanović Štambuk 2022), refers to how something becomes its matter, i.e. “how a phenomenon becomes” (Neumann 2020, 18) really governcized (Stefanović Štambuk 2022), but named still as diplomatized.

Let’s stay with the old words diplomatization and diplomatized for now. And name as diplomatization, the distinct process of lifting global security out of general political discourse and privileging it as the part of “the diplomatic one” (Neumann 2020, 19), thus making it the “subject to diplomatic practices” (Neumann 2020, 19). China’s discourse of global security has at its core the national security concept. Xiong Guangkai (2009, 96) stated that China has put forward a new security concept, with “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and coordination”. He explained that mutual trust is the foundation of the new security concept, mutual benefit its objective, equality its guarantee, and coordination the way it operates (Xiong 2009, 96). It stems from the concept of security as a relational one in the highly interdependent world of today where active cooperation is the only way to ensure mutual security (Xiong 2009, 96; Popović 2018). Now is the age for human commonality and community of understanding through dialogic and dialectic entanglements of mutuality and non-violent encountering of differences to contain global insecurities

and war. It then becomes clearer that governcialization names better the process of making global security its own matter in a web of interlocking institutions of global governance (Stefanović Štambuk 2009) and modes of diplomacy – plural diplomacies as Cornago (2013) aptly observed. The matter of diplomacies (Medeiros and Fravel 2003), must be a mutual relating anew of humans as a species – sobered by climate emergency, pollution, biodiversity loss, and a plethora of crises rising out of these three in the shadow of nuclear weapons and nuclearity threatening the existence of Earth. All these on the planet damaged by humans through their enmity to nature, to other species, to each other and to the future. This is diplomatization of today. And to diplomatize now means not solely to make all these matters a matter of “governcy”, but to make them its sole prerogative. In other words, it is the “ending of the global regime of unsustainability” (Fry 2009) by redirective futuring practices toward humanity in peace with relationality of life itself on the planet that is the entangled relationality.

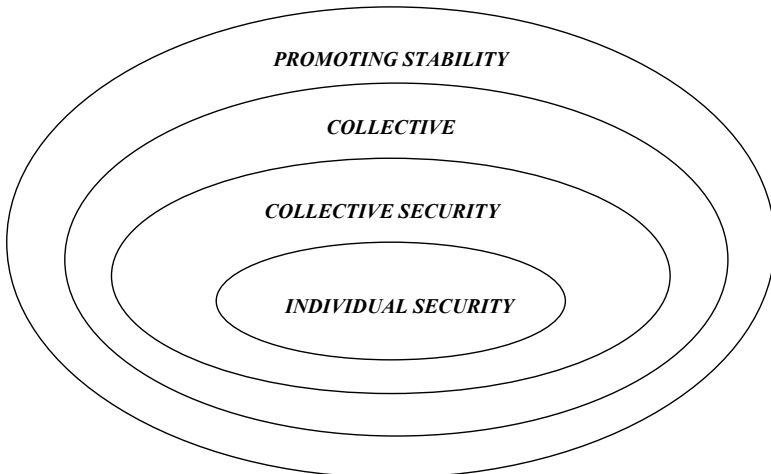
China is a traditional homeland of relational thinking all the way through coupled with relationality of the Marxist worldview. That is way and how it was able to diplomatize the Russia-Ukraine convoluted conflict by diplomatization of global security through reframing the “four rings” of ideational cooperative security (Cohen and Mihalka 2001). This conceptualization of cooperative security as a matter of diplomacy after the end of the Cold War served its purpose. It is no long applicable today. Chinese attempts to conceptualize a cooperative security which is common, comprehensive, and sustainable in diplomatization of global security by the GSI of April 2022 served as a foundation for the success of diplomatized Russia-Ukraine conflict. This initiative launched by the President Xi is clearly presented in comparison to the “old” conceptualization of cooperative security by the following diagrams.

Figure 1. Cohen’s “cooperative security four rings” of the strategic system of cooperative security



Source: Cohen, Richard and Michael Mihalka. 2001. *Cooperative Security: New Horizons for International Order*, The Marshall Center Papers 3, Garmisch-Partenkirchen: The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, (Cohen and Mihalka 2001, 10)

Figure 2. “Five rings” of China’s diplomatized vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security (共同, 全面, 合作, 可持续安全) in the Global Security Initiative



Source: Processed by the authors

THE CONTEXT OF A RENEWAL OF THE BAFFLING “CHINA’S PUZZLE”

Despite heavy COVID 19 restrictions at the start of the third year of the global pandemic, on the night of February 4th, 2022, the magnificent opening ceremony of the XXIV Winter Olympic Games stunned the world with artistic ingenuity intertwined with holographic and 3D technology. It was staged at Beijing National Stadium, known as the “Bird’s Nest”, constructed for the 2008 Summer Olympics the first time held in China. The chilly temperature, restricting the ceremony to run just a bit more than an hour and a half, was forgotten, at least for the duration of the event, amidst only 150 000 spectators present due to precautionary epidemic measures. The beginning of the Chinese Season of Spring (立春 – lichun) with its first pentad (东风解冻 – dong feng jie dong – “east wind” thaw), celebrated on that date, presented the warmth of nature’s tremendous energy of self-renewal and budding life cycle. This was represented through the enmeshment of 3000 dancers of all ages from all walks of life with lasers, brightening lights, pyrotechnics, and 40,000 LED modules, projected on the world’s largest LED screen of 10,552 sq meters (or 113,580 sq ft).

The Game’s slogan “Together for a Shared Future” (一起想未来 – yiqi xiang weilai) palpably promoted the spirit of Olympic sport diplomacy and the Chinese sport diplomacy tradition, of which the “ping-pong” episode during the Cold War is a well-known example. This time, China again tried to diplomatize heightened global tensions. These tensions even spiked, on the pretext of PR China’s human rights record, in a “diplomatic boycott” of the ceremonies of the Games Beijing hosted, both the Winter Olympics and Paralympic later in March. With the “simple, safe and splendid” organization of the gathering of 2834 athletes from all over the world, the message has been sent of unimpeded contact, communication, collaboration, and mutual openness within humankind that make global peace as Othering of war, not of humans Othering each other.

On the same day of February 4th, several hours before the official start of the Winter Olympics, the President of the People’s Republic of China and the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), Xi Jinping threaded the same diplomatized message through talks with the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin. The two leaders issued in the Joint Statement on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development (Putin and Xi 2022),

and voiced in common that “the international and regional security situation is complicating and the number of global challenges and threats is growing from day to day” (Putin and Xi 2022). The main thrust of their argument on the ongoing momentous global change was how the “trend has emerged towards redistribution of power in the world” (Putin and Xi 2022). They concluded that “the international community is showing a growing demand for the leadership aiming at peaceful and gradual development” (Putin and Xi 2022).

On that very day it seemed that Putin’s and Xi’s joint diplomatization effort might bear the fruit as they called:

“on all States to pursue well-being for all and, with these ends, to build dialogue and mutual trust, strengthen mutual understanding, champion such universal human values as peace, development, equality, justice, democracy and freedom, respect the rights of peoples to independently determine the development paths of their countries and the sovereignty and the security and development interests of States, to protect the United Nations-driven international architecture and the international law-based world order, seek genuine multipolarity with the United Nations and its Security Council playing a central and coordinating role, promote more democratic international relations, and ensure peace, stability and sustainable development across the world” (Putin and Xi 2022).

Although China was sympathetic to and expressed support for the offer “put forward by the Russian Federation to create long-term legally binding security guarantees in Europe” (Putin and Xi 2022), the train of developments that should have such outcome achieved peacefully, led to the opposite.

Mounting confrontations in Ukraine were dealt with in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), at the official Ukrainian request from February 18th, 2022. Tragically, the situation deteriorated. Russia recognized the independence of Ukraine’s regions Luhansk and Donetsk, referred to as the “Luhansk People’s Republic” (LPR) and the “Donetsk People’s Republic” (DPR). This decision was justified as the necessity to “protect” and “preserve” their residents, and then sent “peacekeepers” in the Russian manner of application of “The Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) doctrine. Further on February 24th, the Russian Federation proceeded to a full-scale military attack on Ukraine while the UNSC deliberated the worsening situation. Bewilderment, fear, disappointment, and outrage shook the world. Reactions of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and the United States of America and Canada were immediate, unanimous, and harsh in condemning Russia for violating the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of an independent European state. Their pronouncements expressed regret for the shattering of the post-Cold War security and peace architecture in Europe by the Russian Federation aggression against neighboring Ukraine. The Chinese reaction to Russia's actions, dubbed as a "special military operation", from that day, and since has been "puzzling" for many in the international community.

Chinese economic "miracle", technological prowess, ideational confidence, political steadfastness, and diplomatic proteanism, so visible in the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Beijing and high-level bilateral talks held on the same day, briefly referred to at the beginning, is the background against which could be clearly seen why China's actions are of utmost importance for the prospects of the global security. The jury is still open about whether the People's Republic of China will become the world leader in realizing the goals of a global transformation. For China, it is a long road of "a thousand miles" (Xi 2022) and with "a thousand tasks" (Xi 2022) of unprecedented epochal change to be traveled. Despite turbulence, turmoil, and hardships the People's Republic of China has achieved impressive overall prosperity. During a rather short time span, its governance is consolidated by intertwining the market economy structure with the communist system. It is astonishing how China's committed pursuit of peaceful development and the way she worked up to gain, fairly and squarely, prominence as a global economic powerhouse, and the Chinese ideational valour have been met from the beginning of this century with the upsurge of starkly contradicting opinions.

Unfortunately, the optimistic side is over-clustered around bragging silos for the contrary advancement and ascendance to "ruling the world", so common for the cultural lining of Martin Jacques, the author of the extremely vitriolic text *When China Rules the World* (Jacques 2009). It became the best-seller in China and inflamed imagination of quite significant numbers of its inhabitants to propound values and behaviors contrary to Chinese worldview of virtuousness and falling as a ripe fruit into the lap of those who were in business to securitize China. The affirmative views of China as a positive force in the fast-changing international environment, capable to be the most pivotal country for providing global public goods, and willing to contribute significantly to enhancing processes of governing world affairs do not need either of the following "clutches".

First, the line of reasoning favoring underpinning thinking of China's merits and achievements by the "China Model" of development, is often equated with the "Beijing Consensus" (Ramo 2004). It straddles two extremes. The first one expands upon Zhang Weiwei's thesis (2012)

of Chinese exceptionalism as a civilizational state of “four supers” – large population, vast territory, long traditions, rich culture – and “four uniques” – language, politics, society, economy – propounding non-replicability of the China’s model of development. But, there are dissenting voices in this regard. Some are pointing out that there is no genuine “China Model”, since China has emulated the development model of other East Asian states (Huat 2017; Kroeber 2016; Liu and Wang 2015; Zhao 2010). Others insist on seeing three distinct China models flowing out in three development waves from specific institutional co-evolving through interactions with economic and political forces (Naughton 2017).

Second, is the line of argumentation of “China’s peaceful rise”. These views oppose the arguments that China is a grave threat to the structure and functioning of the existing U.S.-led international system, and inevitably poised to challenge the United States as the current hegemonic power. Such arguments do great injustice and major disservice since “peaceful” does not assuage qualms of “rise” (Mitrović 2022). Throwing out “development” and taking over “rise” is just the “trap” the nationalists are rarely able to see. They hardly have eyes to think that what they value most be respected. But, it is not their own image of their nation and country at all; it is the image they were molded into as a part of a securitization which others needed. Such an image elicited public support in some countries to establish China as an existential threat and, thereby, effectuate significant political justification of actions and measures outside established procedures of decision-making, control and use of public funding (for instance NATO 2022, The White House 2022). The more nationalists are boisterous and clamoring for roughness, getting greatly excited by the “bravados” and “braggadocio” of the infamous “Wolf Warrior” resent strand in China’s diplomatic culture, the merrier are all those who live on, by and for the securitization of China.

Therefore, the PRC’s choice to diplomatize the multifaceted Russia-Ukraine conflict and to thread it through the diplomatization of global security proves resilience of China’s diplomacy. Even more, it builds “governcy” which is the correct name for the process of jointly creating future where no one nowhere is left behind (Stefanović-Štambuk forthcoming). How China tried to diplomatize budding Russia-Ukraine conflict for when it started is analyzed in the next part.

TENDENCIES IN CHINA DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE FROM 2011 UP TO NOW

Political relations between China and Ukraine were regulated during the last decade of the 20th century by two joint communiques from 1992 and 1995 respectively, and two main declarations, the Joint (Kiev) Declaration from September 6th, 1994, and the Declaration on development and intensification of friendship and cooperation from December 4th, 1995. Furthermore, at the very beginning of the 21st century, relations were guided by Joint declaration on friendship and comprehensive cooperation adopted on July 21st, 2001, and Joint (Beijing) Declaration from November 18th, 2002. In the second decade the joint statement of two countries from September 2nd, 2010, regulated a comprehensive growing of their “relations of friendship and cooperation” (Ukraine 2020), with the biannual Basic Directions of their relations adopted on the same day.

The Joint Declaration on the establishment and development of strategic partnership from June 20th, 2011, gave new impetus to bilateral relations. It was followed by the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed on December 5th, 2013, and to adopting the Joint Declaration and operationalized program for the period 2014-2018. This set of documents might be seen as the highest point in regulating PRC-Ukraine relations. It was marked with a high-level talks between China’s President, Xi Jinping, and then Ukraine’s President, Viktor Yanukovich, held at the Great Hall of People in Beijing. What transpired from their exchange was convergence on four main points stressed by the President of China (China [MFA] 2013).

1. Consensus building on main bilateral issues in a timely manner by strengthened exchanges on the highest level and enhanced mutual trust in strategic regard.
2. Earnest promotion of practical cooperation in the fields of agriculture, energy resources, infrastructure construction, finance and high-tech through advancement of major cooperation projects and creation of a conducive environment for operation of Chinese businesses.
3. Unhindered expansion of people-to-people communication and exchanges in the areas of science and technology, education, culture, health, sports and tourism, especially of their personnel and children, as main actors of deepening mutual understanding.
4. Closer cooperation on issues of international and regional

importance recognizing Ukraine’s location on “the way that the Eurasia Continental Bridge must pass” (China [MFA] 2013), and its important contribution “to communication between the Eastern and Western civilizations” (China [MFA] 2013) for jointly promoting “establishment of a fair and reasonable new international political order” (China [MFA] 2013), and coping together “with global challenges in order to safeguard common interests” (China [MFA] 2013).

In 2014 tensions caused by the change of Ukrainian Government through people’s uprising led to the decision of Ukraine’s autonomous Crimea region, invoking the right of self-determination by referendum on March 16th. Diplomatic efforts to diffuse the crises failed to produce de-escalation. The last attempt to solve the problem was taken by the UNSC at its 7138th meeting on March 15th. The drafted resolution urged UN member states not to recognize planned referendum results or any alteration of the region’s status, but was vetoed by Russia. China abstained. China’s permanent representative to the UN at that time, Ambassador Liu Jieyi, expressed the view that the draft resolution is not a step in the right direction since only a political solution to the crises in Ukraine would “truly maintain peace and stability in the region” (China UN 2014). He accentuated how problems resulted from entwinement “of historical and contemporary factors” (China UN 2014) having “elements of the inevitable, and therefore calls for a comprehensive and balanced solution” (China UN 2014).

It was clear that China was trying to diplomatize situation. The emphasis was on the search for a solution in Ukraine “within the framework of law and order, seeking an early solution to the differences through dialogue and negotiations, with due respect for the legitimate rights and interests of all those in the various communities and regions” (China UN 2014). The PRC was determined to continue to mediate playing a more significant role in needed engagement for a resolution of the crisis. China’s effort was to diplomatize it by proposing the “establishment as soon as possible of an international coordination mechanism, comprising all the parties concerned, in order to explore means for the political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis“ (China UN 2014). Also, the Chinese proposed that “all parties should refrain from taking any action that may further escalate the situation” (China UN 2014). The third proposition called for engagement of international financial institutions on examining “how to help to maintain the economic and financial stability of Ukraine” (China UN 2014).

Closely following Chinese proposal for diplomatization of Ukraine's crisis the heads of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization during a meeting in Tashkent on September 12th, 2014, pronounced their support for "early restoration of peace in Ukraine and continuation of the negotiation process in order to achieve a comprehensive solution to the crisis in that country" (SCO 2014). Being in favor of diplomatization they welcomed the Peace Plan initiatives of the President of Ukraine and the President of Russia in the process of the implementation started with the signed Protocol on September 4th, 2014, of the consultations of the Trilateral contact group on joint steps (SCO 2014).

During the 2015 annual winter meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos the prime minister of the PR China, Li Keqiang, met with the then President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko. Keqiang confirmed China's respect of the "national sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine" (China [MFA] 2015). Diplomatization is highly visible in the expressed support for Ukraine's decision for a path of development of its own choice and the willingness of China "to continue practical cooperation with Ukraine in various fields on the principle of mutual benefit and win-win outcome to benefit the two peoples" (China [MFA] 2015). The stance to diplomatize Ukrainian crisis is reconfirmed by underlining political resolution in which China "will continue to play an active and constructive role" (China [MFA] 2015), based on an "objective and just standpoint" (China [MFA] 2015). Ukraine's President expressed hopes for such engagement with China in resolving the "Ukrainian issue" (China [MFA] 2015) by political means as Ukraine highly values its relations with China and continuation of bilateral cooperation.

China's pursuit of diplomatization centered on making the Ukrainian crisis a matter of diplomacy was intensified by the inclusion of Ukraine in the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) though signing of a joint action plan to develop the new Silk Road on December 27th, 2017. (OBOREurope 2017).¹ In the following year, the institutionalization of the inclusion of Ukraine in BRI was formalized by establishment of the "Belt and Road" Trade and Investment Promotion Center in Kyiv (May 2021).

Many cooperative projects were started and fully implemented, while even more were planned and pondered to enhance Ukraine's infrastructure, advance its development and spur trade between two

¹ At that time of signing the Initiative had the official name One Belt one Road (OBOR), later changed to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

countries. Undertaken amelioration of business environment for operation of Chinese companies in difference sectors of Ukrainian economy in need of both China's state financial support and private capital investments proved its worth. There were some hiccups in the implementation of projects. Yet, the overall trend of bilateral relations was stable, proving that China's diplomatization of the “Ukraine issue” yielded benefits to both countries and making the road opened to joint finding of a political solution within diplomatic formats framed for that purpose.

During the pandemic solidity of the strategic partnership was tangible. That was stressed in the telephone conversation held on July 13th, 2021, between the President of China, Xi Jinping, and the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, marking the occasion of the first decade of the strategic partnership. The Chinese President's continuing diplomatization underlined PRC's willingness for furthering the partnership, deepening mutual understanding, and reinforcing practical cooperation with the intention for using “the next year commemoration of 30 years of diplomatic relations as another opportunity to actively promote mutual relations and achieve developmental goals” (PRC Embassy 2021).

An optimistic outlook of Xi Jinping for the smooth sailing of the bilateral relations with Ukraine through consistent diplomatization of the “Ukraine issue”, including on the track with Russia, was significantly challenged with the outbreak of violence and full-scale deployment of Russia's military force against Ukraine on February 24th, 2022.

Nevertheless, on a number of fronts, China continued to diplomatize the breakup in European security order. First, it was within the UN setting to make the Russia-Ukraine conflict a matter of sustained diplomatic dealing. The Chinese protean diplomatization in this key multilateral framework saw the day on February 25th, 2022. In explaining China's abstention in the vote in the UNSC on the draft resolution on Ukraine, permanent representative of PRC to UN, Ambassador Zhang Jun, elaborated the essence of Chinese approach to diplomatize Russia-Ukraine conflict by taking it as a matter of conversation and deliberation, instead of “blindly exerting pressure and imposing sanctions” (PRC UN 2022). He contended that doing otherwise “may only lead to more casualties, more property loss, more complicated and chaotic situations, and more difficulties in bridging differences” (PRC UN 2022). What would become clear only after two months is that Ambassador's Zhang Jun speech presented the outline of Chinese's fully-fledged global security outlook on how to make the mounting global insecurity a matter of diplomacy. The essence is to have a conversation and dialogue about

the joined-up boost to major joint leaps for transforming obsolete modes of governance structures to become aligned to the manifest direction of epochal change.

CONCLUSION

The People's Republic of China has been acting unswervingly to diplomatize the convoluted Russia-Ukraine conflict and head-start diplomatization of global security. For China, the multifaceted Russia-Ukraine confrontation is a case of the intervention that arose from the undermining of the constitutive principle of equal and indivisible security and the United States of America's and the European Union's securitization of the Russian Federation. Hence, the Chinese well-considered opting to diplomatize the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It was not taken for the mere reason that the PRC has been securitized by the U.S.

Leading reason for China to diplomatize the Russia-Ukraine conflict and initiate diplomatization of global security was astute recognition that the "spinning wheel" of the vicious cycle of securitization threatens to spin out of control, thus needing joined-in work to arrest such calamity from happening by joint conversation and dialogical deliberation on global security. Therefore, Chinese diplomatization of global security, being understood as a development precondition, and for all of "the humanity... living in an indivisible security community" (Xi, 2022), is initiated to enable the Russia-Ukraine conflict to be fully diplomatized. The most dangerous path for this conflict is choosing to allow it to run its entire military course till the undoubtful defeat of one or the other side. Only then will diplomacy be let in just to "hammer out" military victory into the peace settlement, which bodes ill for the future.

The PRC's choice amidst bifurcation in world politics within the unprecedented "changes of the world, of our times and of history" (Xi 2022) is to discern the directions of flows and work with the direction of the mainstream of flows. Consequently, the diplomatization of global security is head-started underpinned by China's commitment to "the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security (共同, 全面, 合作, 可持续安全)" (Xi 2022) as a precondition for sustainable development and mitigation of the four most dangerous global challenges – "terrorism, climate change, cybersecurity and biosecurity" (Xi 2022) – and overarched by Chinese concept of "building a community with a shared future for mankind" (人类命运共同体 – renlei mingyun gongtongti).

Critical review of the key official statements, initiatives, and decisions of the PRC taken in the bilateral formats and some relevant multilateral settings and actions related to different facets of the raging conflict in and around Ukraine has shown the pattern of consistency and coherence in Chinese diplomatization of global security issues. The findings corroborated the main assumption that China’s diplomatization of the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine is devoted to paving the way for dialogue and consultations towards the consensus on achieving common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security impelled by the fast-forwarded disordering of global security governance.

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