

The Strategic Engagement of Great Powers in The Russia-Ukraine War

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Abstract— Global politics has focused on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, while the international system is undergoing significant changes, with the United States, China, and Russia emerging as major players in the current world order. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has become a tipping point in the relationship between the great powers, as they have engaged in strategic competition that has far-reaching implications for international stability and security, so that the Russia-Ukraine conflict cannot be separated from the strategic engagements of the great powers either directly or indirectly. This paper examines the strategic engagement of the three great powers in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and confidence-building measures to reduce tensions. Based on qualitative research, the paper evaluates the ineffectiveness of confidence-building measures adopted by the US, China and Russia in promoting stability and preventing conflict.

Keywords— Strategic Engagement, Great Power, Russia-Ukraine War, Confidence Building Measures.

I. INTRODUCTION

The international system is undergoing significant changes, with the United States, China, and Russia emerging as the main players in the current world order. The Russia-Ukraine War has become a critical juncture in the relationships between these great powers, as they have engaged in a strategic competition that has far-reaching implications for international stability and security.

The United States, China, and Russia have been identified as the major players in the current world order, with their actions shaping the direction of international relations and the stability of the global system (Zakaria, 2008). Their strategic engagement during the Russia-Ukraine War is particularly significant, as it highlights the complexities of their relationships and the challenges they face in managing their interests and influences in a rapidly changing international environment.

The Russia-Ukraine war represents a significant challenge for the international community as it threatens to destabilize the region and disrupt the balance of power among the great powers. The strategic engagement of these great powers in the Russia-Ukraine War highlights the complexity and fluidity of international relationships in the 21st century. It also underscores

the importance of understanding the motivations and priorities of great powers in shaping the international system and addressing global challenges.

The United States, China, and Russia have unique interests and objectives that drive their strategic engagement in the conflict. The United States, as a leading global power, is concerned with maintaining stability and upholding international law, including the right of nations to choose their own alliances (Nye, 2017). China, as a rising power, prioritizes its own security and economic interests, including access to energy and other natural resources (Wong, 2015). Russia, on the other hand, aims to assert its influence in its near abroad and protect its strategic interests in the region (Kortunov, 2017).

Understanding the strategic engagement of great powers in the Russia- Ukraine War is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the changing nature of global power and its implications for the future. It also provides valuable insights into the ways in which great powers interact and engage with each other in the context of major international conflicts.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Strategic Engagement Concept

The concept of Strategic Engagement has been widely studied and analysed within the academic and scientific community. This field of research seeks to understand how nations interact and engage with each other in pursuit of their national interests and objectives.

One key aspect of Strategic Engagement is the changing distribution of power in the international system. Scholars such as Joseph Nye (2017) have argued that the rise of new actors, such as China and other emerging powers, is challenging the dominant position of traditional great powers like the United States and leading to a more multipolar world. This shift in power dynamics has significant implications for how nations engage with each other and pursue their interests.

Strategic Engagement is the interconnected nature of international relations. This perspective, exemplified by the work of Agung, A., Perwita, B., & Yani, Y. M. (2006) state that the occurrence of International Relations is a must as result of interdependence and the increasing complexity of human life in the international community, hence interdependence does not allow for a state to be closed off from the world. The relationship or interaction between states is the most basic thing to understand. These interactions between states are carried out by each state through state actors and non-state actors due to the many complexities faced by the international community called Patterns of International Relations Interactions that take place in the association of the international community and create dependence between one state and another. Zakaria (2008), also emphasizes the interdependence of nations and the ways in which the actions of one state can have far-reaching consequences for the rest of the world.

The role of international institutions and norms in shaping Strategic Engagement is another topic of interest in this field. Research by Yvonne Wong (2015) has explored how institutions such as the United Nations and international legal frameworks can influence the behaviour of nations and impact their Strategic Engagement with each other.

2.2. The Great Power Concept

The concept of "The Great Power" has been widely debated and discussed in both academic and scientific circles. This term refers to a state or a country that possesses significant military, economic, and political influence in the international arena.

The realist theory is one of the most prominent perspectives in international relations that addresses the concept of "The Great Power." According to this theory, states are the primary actors in the international system, and they are driven by their self-interest to accumulate power and maintain their dominant position in the international arena (Waltz, 1979). In this context, "The Great Power" refers to a state that has achieved a dominant position in the international system, as a result of its military, economic, and political strength.

On the other hand, the neoliberal institutionalist theory provides a different perspective on the concept of "The Great Power." According to this theory, international institutions play a crucial role in shaping the behaviour of states, including "The Great Powers" (Keohane & Nye, 1977). According to this perspective, international institutions provide a framework for cooperation and coordination among states, reducing the incentives for conflict and promoting peace. In this context, "The Great

Power" refers to a state that wields significant influence in international institutions, shaping the rules and norms that govern the behaviour of other states.

Based on the constructivist theory offers yet another perspective on the concept of "The Great Power." According to this theory, the norms, values, and beliefs of actors play a crucial role in shaping international relations, including the behaviour of "The Great Powers" (Wendt, 1992). According to this perspective, "The Great Power" refers to a state that is able to shape the norms, values, and beliefs of other states, influencing their behaviour and shaping the international system.

2.3. The Relationship between Strategic Engagement and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)

Strategic engagement and confidence building measures are closely related and often used in combination to achieve specific policy objectives. Strategic engagement can be used to create a conducive environment for the implementation of confidence building measures, while confidence building measures can enhance the effectiveness of strategic engagement. For example, diplomatic engagement can be used to build trust and create the conditions necessary for the implementation of confidence building measures, such as security guarantees or economic incentives. Confidence building measures, in turn, can help to build trust and reduce tensions, making it easier for actors to engage in strategic engagement activities (DeYoung, 2014).

There are several approaches that can be used to see the relationship and linkages of strategic engagement with confidence building measures. The rationalist approach to international relations provides one perspective on the relationship between strategic engagement and CBMs. According to this perspective, states engage in strategic behaviour in order to achieve their objectives and secure their interests (Waltz, 1979). In the context of strategic engagement, CBMs can be seen as a means of building trust and reducing the risk of conflict, thereby facilitating cooperation and achieving shared objectives.

The constructivist approach provides a different perspective on the relationship between strategic engagement and CBMs. According to this perspective, norms, values, and beliefs play a crucial role in shaping international relations, including the relationship between strategic engagement and CBMs (Wendt, 1992). In this context, CBMs can be seen as a means of establishing shared norms and values, building trust, and shaping the identity of states and the international system.

The peace studies approach offers yet another perspective on the relationship between strategic engagement and CBMs. According to this perspective, CBMs are an important tool for promoting peace and reducing the risk of conflict (Galtung, 1969). In this context, strategic engagement can be seen as a means of fostering cooperation and promoting peace through the establishment of CBMs that help to build trust and reduce tensions between states.

2.4. Russia

In the conflict, Russia has been a major player, supporting separatist groups in eastern Ukraine and annexing Crimea. As reported by Eugeniusz Smolar (2019), Russia considers Ukraine a buffer zone against the expansion of NATO and is striving to maintain its influence in the region. By engaging in this conflict, Smolar argues, Russia has been able to project its power and challenge the dominance of the West.

In the view of Samuel Charap and Jeremy Shapiro (2018), Russia has used the conflict to demonstrate its military capabilities and assert its position as a great power. In their analysis, the authors argue that Russia is driven by a number of factors, including domestic politics and nationalism, along with strategic interests. Shapiro and Charap claim that Russia's involvement in the conflict is the result of the country's political and economic weakness, which has led to its use of military force to assert its influence.

2.5. China

The Chinese government has remained neutral during the conflict, but has kept a close eye on it. It is noted by Vassily Kashin (2020) that China perceives the conflict as a result of Western intervention in Ukraine and aims to maintain good relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Kashin contends that China has adopted a policy of strategic ambiguity, avoiding taking sides and instead seeking to gain economic advantages from the current situation.

As stated by Pavel K. Baev (2018), China is pragmatically focused on the conflict and wishes to maintain stability in the region in order to protect its economic interests. By refraining from taking sides in the conflict, Baev argues that China sees the conflict as a test of the West's commitment to the international order.

2.6. United States of America

In addition to supporting Ukraine, the United States has imposed sanctions against Russia since the conflict began. The U.S. views Russia as a threat to international order and is seeking to contain its influence, as stated by Kapur and Saradzhyan (2019). In their article, the authors argue that the United States has adopted a policy of strategic patience that involves supporting Ukraine, while avoiding direct military interventions. Military aid has also been provided by the United States to Ukraine, in the form of weapons, ammunition, and training.

The United States has used the conflict to demonstrate its commitment to its allies in Europe as well as to deter Russian aggression, Robert S. Litwak (2018). As Litwak points out, the United States views this conflict as a proxy war between Russia and the West. The purpose of this measure is to prevent the annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of Ukraine. For the United States to remain credible as a global leader, it is necessary to continue to support Ukraine.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this paper is a qualitative descriptive research method. This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive research method, where the researcher serves as the main tool in collecting data. This type of research combines various data collection methods and employs an inductive approach to data analysis (Sugiono, 2010). Descriptive research, on the other hand, aims to address a problem through the collection and examination of data. The analysis process of descriptive research includes presenting, evaluating, and interpreting the data obtained (Achmadi, 2015).

The researcher focused on using a case study research design, which Creswell (2013, p. 97) describes as "a type of design in qualitative research that can be the object of research, as well as the product of inquiry. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which researchers explore a real-life, finite contemporary system (a case) or multiple finite systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and report case descriptions and case themes".

3.1. Data Collection and Analysis

Throughout the paper, data will be collected from academic, scholarly, sources and analysed thematically. An analysis of great power interactions, CBMs, and conflict resolution will be conducted in order to identify patterns, trends, and key insights.

3.2. Expected Results

A key objective of this paper is to provide a deeper understanding of the strategic engagements of the three major powers and their implications for international relations. Moreover, the paper will examine the ineffectiveness of CBMs in defense cooperation and diplomacy, as well as their role in managing and enhancing security levels both at the regional and global levels. Through the paper, authors will gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities for great power interactions and conflict resolution in the context of the Russia- Ukraine conflict.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The Role of Russia

4.1.1. Russia's Position on the Conflict

Based on Russian perspectives, it is an internal Ukrainian conflict, in which pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine are defending their rights against the Ukrainian government that it views as illegitimate. It has been claimed by Russia that the West is supporting the Ukrainian government in the conflict and that it has no direct involvement in the conflict. In response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, sanctions were imposed on the Russian government.

4.1.2. Russia's Involvement in the Conflict

Several accusations have been made against Russia for providing weapons, funding, and troops to the separatists in eastern Ukraine. As a response to these allegations, Russia has stated that any Russian citizens who have fought in eastern Ukraine are volunteers rather than military personnel. Aside from the annexation of Crimea, Russia has also been accused of supporting separatist movements in eastern Ukraine, which has led to international condemnation and sanctions.

4.1.3. Russia's Involvement in CBMs

As part of several CBMs aimed at resolving the conflict, Russia has participated in the Minsk agreements in 2014 and 2015. A ceasefire was agreed to, heavy weapons were withdrawn, a constitutional reform was implemented, and local elections were held. The conflict has continued despite repeated violations of the agreements. The Russian government has also been active in diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the conflict, including talks with Ukraine, Germany, and France in accordance with the Normandy format.

4.1.4. Impacts of Russia's Engagement on the Conflict and CBMs

CBMs and the conflict have been significantly impacted by Russia's involvement in the conflict. Due to Russia's military support for the separatists, the conflict has continued, and the annexation of Crimea has resulted in a significant decline in relations between Russia and the West. In terms of participation in CBMs, Russia has had a mixed record. Despite participating in diplomatic efforts and agreeing to the Minsk agreements, Russia has violated them repeatedly, raising concerns regarding its commitment to a peaceful resolution.

Russia has played a critical role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, through its military support for separatists, as well as its annexation of Crimea, which has prompted international condemnation and sanctions. However, Russia's actions on the ground have undermined the diplomatic efforts and CBMs aimed at resolving the conflict, prolonging it.

4.2. The Role of China

4.2.1. China's Position on the Conflict

In relation to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, China has maintained a relatively neutral stance, emphasizing the need for dialogue and a peaceful settlement. According to Chinese officials, all parties should avoid actions that would escalate tensions and should support Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Chinese representatives abstained from voting on a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Russia's annexation of Crimea in February 2014. The Chinese government, however, supported a Security Council resolution confirming Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in March 2014.

4.2.2. China's Engagement in the Conflict

As part of its limited involvement in the conflict, China has provided humanitarian aid to the affected populations. A total of \$6 million was provided in aid to Ukraine in 2015, and another \$4 million was provided in aid to the eastern part of Ukraine in 2016.

Diplomatic efforts have also been undertaken by China to resolve the conflict. In 2015, China hosted a meeting between Ukrainian and Russian officials, and in 2017, it participated in Normandy format talks aimed at resolving the conflict.

4.2.3. China's involvement in CBMs

The Chinese government has participated in several CBMs aiming at fostering peace and stability in the region. A four-point plan was proposed by China in 2014 for the resolution of the conflict, which included a ceasefire, dialogue, constitutional reform, and regional security. As well as urging the implementation of the Minsk agreements, China has supported the OSCE's efforts to monitor the ceasefire.

4.2.4. Impacts of China's Engagement on the Conflict and CBMs

There has been a limited impact of China's limited engagement in the conflict on the conflict and the CBMs. In line with the international community's stance, China emphasizes the need for a peaceful solution and supports Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

By participating in diplomatic efforts and CBMs, China can contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in the region. Due to China's limited economic and strategic interests in the region, it may be unable to significantly influence the outcome of the conflict.

The role that China has played in the Russia-Ukraine conflict has been relatively limited. The focus has been on providing humanitarian aid and supporting diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the conflict. The Chinese position on the conflict aligns with that of the international community, but because of its limited economic and strategic interests in the region, China may not be able to significantly influence the outcome of the conflict.

4.3. The Role of U.S

4.3.1. US's Position on the Conflict

In regard to the conflict, the United States supports Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty and believes that Russia's annexation of Crimea is illegal. In response to Russia's actions in Ukraine, the US imposed sanctions on the country and provided economic and military assistance to it.

4.3.2. US's Involvement in the Conflict

Economic and military assistance has been provided by the United States to Ukraine, including non-lethal aid such as vehicles, communication equipment, and medical supplies, as well as lethal aid such as anti-tank missiles. Military advisors from the United States have also been sent to train Ukrainian forces. Also, the US has been involved in diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, including talks with Russia, Ukraine, Germany, and France in the Normandy format and participation in the Minsk agreements.

4.3.3. US's Involvement in CBMs

In 2014 and 2015, the US participated in several conflict management mechanisms aimed at resolving the conflict, including the Minsk agreements. Ukraine has also received economic and humanitarian assistance from the United States, including funding for reforms as well as humanitarian assistance for civilians affected by the conflict.

4.3.4. Impacts of US's Engagement on the Conflict and CBMs

Both the conflict and CBMs have been significantly impacted by the US's involvement in the conflict. In addition to helping the Ukrainian government resist Russian aggression and defend its territory, US economic and military assistance has also contributed to the militarization of the conflict. A key role has been played by the United States in diplomatic efforts and CBMs, with the United States playing a leading role in negotiations and funding economic and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. While these efforts have been made, the conflict has continued despite them, and the US' relationship with Russia has deteriorated significantly as a result.

Accordingly, the US has played a significant role in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, with its economic and military assistance to Ukraine contributing to the continuation of the conflict. Although the US has contributed to diplomatic efforts and CBMs aimed at resolving the conflict, its actions on the ground have often been at odds with its rhetoric, contributing to the conflict's complexity and persistence.

4.4. Comparison of the strategic Engagements of the US, China and Russia

Several years ago, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine attracted the attention of major powers, including the United States and China. Research, analysis, and comparison have been conducted on the strategic engagements of the great powers in relation to the conflict, focusing on their positions toward the conflict, involvement in the conflict, engagement in CBMs, and impact of engagement on conflict and CBMs:

TABLE 1 COMPARISON OF THE STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS OF THE US, CHINA AND RUSSIA

Criteria	US	China	Russia
Position on the Conflict	Supports Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, imposed sanctions on Russia	Calls for peaceful resolution through diplomatic channels	Supports separatists in eastern Ukraine, annexed Crimea
Involvement in the Conflict	Provided economic and military assistance to Ukraine, sent	Not directly involved, called for peaceful	Provided military and economic support to

	military advisors to train Ukrainian forces, participated in diplomatic efforts and CBMs	resolution through diplomatic channels	separatists in eastern Ukraine, annexed Crimea
Involvement in CBMs	Participated in several CBMs aimed at resolving the conflict, including the Minsk agreements, and provided economic and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine	Not directly participated in CBMs, called for peaceful resolution through diplomatic channels	Involved in CBMs, but actions on the ground have often undermined the agreements
Impacts of Engagement on the Conflict and CBMs	Helped Ukraine resist Russian aggression and defend its territory, but contributed to the militarization of the conflict. Participation in diplomatic efforts and CBMs has been significant, but the conflict has continued despite these efforts	Neutral stance has allowed China to maintain its relationship with both Russia and Ukraine, but has not led to significant progress in resolving the conflict	Involvement in the conflict and annexation of Crimea have had significant impacts on the conflict and CBMs, leading to ongoing conflict and deterioration of relationship with the US and other Western powers

On the basis of the data in the table, this study analyses and compares the strategic engagements of the US, China, and Russia in the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In this paper, the authors discuss their positions on the conflict, their involvement in the conflict, their involvement in CBMs, and the impacts of their engagement on the conflict and CBMs. Russia has been sanctioned by the United States for its support of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. In contrast, China has taken a more neutral stance, calling for a peaceful resolution through diplomatic channels. While Russia supports the separatists in eastern Ukraine, it has annexed Crimea, claiming it as its own territory.

As part of its active role in the conflict, the US has provided economic and military assistance to Ukraine. As well as sending military advisors to Ukraine, the country participated in diplomatic efforts and CBMs in the country. Unlike China, which has not been directly involved in the conflict, the Chinese government has called for a peaceful solution through diplomatic channels. A direct link between Russia and the conflict is the fact that it has supplied military and economic support to separatists in eastern Ukraine as well as annexed Crimea.

In order to resolve the conflict, the United States has participated in a number of CBMs, including the Minsk agreements in 2014 and 2015, and has provided economic and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Despite calling for a peaceful resolution through diplomatic channels, China has not participated directly in CBMs. There has been the involvement of Russia in CBMs, but its actions on the ground have undermined the agreements, resulting in continued conflict.

By participating in the conflict, the United States has helped Ukraine resist Russian aggression and defend its territory, but has also contributed to the militarization of the conflict. While the US has been actively participating in diplomatic efforts and CBMs, the conflict has continued despite these efforts. It has been possible for China to maintain its relationship with both Russia and Ukraine by maintaining a neutral stance, but this has not resulted in any significant progress in resolving the conflict. There has been a profound impact on the conflict and CBMs due to Russia's involvement in the conflict and its annexation of Crimea. Thus, there has been an ongoing conflict and deterioration in relations between the US and other Western powers.

Based on the paper's findings, the US, China, and Russia have differing positions and actions concerning the Russia-Ukraine conflict. For lasting peace to be achieved, all major powers must work together to reach a peaceful and diplomatic settlement.

4.5. Impacts of the Strategic Engagements of the US, China, and Russia

US, Chinese, and Russian strategic engagements have had a significant impact on the conflict and CBMs during the war in Russia-Ukraine by providing military and economic assistance to Ukraine and participating in diplomatic efforts and CBMs, the US has contributed to Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression and defend its territorial integrity. In addition to militarizing the conflict, the US has also contributed to its prolongation. The conflict has continued despite US diplomatic efforts and CBMs, illustrating the limits of the United States' influence in the region.

China has maintained its relations with both Russia and Ukraine by maintaining a neutral stance on the conflict. Despite China's efforts, no significant progress has been made in resolving the conflict as a result of its position. There has been little involvement by China in CBMs, and it has primarily advocated a peaceful resolution through diplomatic channels. It is true that China has economic interests in the region, but it has not had a significant impact on the outcome of the conflict or on the promotion of peace in the region.

A significant impact has been brought on the conflict and CBMs by Russia's involvement in the conflict and annexation of Crimea. Conflict in eastern Ukraine has been primarily driven by Russia's support for separatists and annexation of Crimea. The involvement of Russia in the conflict has also undermined diplomatic efforts and CBMs, resulting in a largely unsuccessful outcome of the Minsk agreements. Efforts to resolve the conflict have been further complicated by the deterioration of Russia's relations with the United States and other Western powers.

There has been a substantial difference between the US, China, and Russia's strategic engagements in the Russia-Ukraine war in terms of the impact they have had on the conflict and CBMs. As much as the US has been actively involved in the conflict and has engaged in CBMs, its contribution to the militarization of the conflict has also contributed to its protracted nature. As a consequence of China's neutral stance, no significant progress has been made towards resolving the conflict or in promoting peace, while Russia's involvement has been one of the primary factors contributing to the conflict and has undermined diplomatic efforts and the CBM process.

V. CONCLUSION

In regional conflicts, the role of the major powers may have a significant impact on the course and outcome of the conflict. The main driver of the conflict has been Russia's involvement, while the US's involvement has contributed to its militarization and China's neutral stance has hindered progress toward resolution.

CBMs can serve as an effective tool for managing regional conflict and promoting peace, but their success is reliant on the willingness of all parties to engage in dialogue and compromise. In contrast, CBMs tend to be less effective when it comes to great powers such as the United States, China, and Russia when it comes to promoting stability. There is also a lack of trust between these great powers which contributes to the limited effectiveness of CBMs. It is well known that the United States, China, and Russia have faced geopolitical competition and conflict in the past. Because of this, there is a sense of mistrust between them, which makes it difficult to establish meaningful trust.

There is evidence that the strategic engagements of great powers can have broader geopolitical implications beyond the immediate conflict, contributing to a greater sense of insecurity and instability in the region. Ultimately, the Russia- Ukraine conflict illustrates the challenges of managing conflicts in a multipolar world and the need for continued efforts to promote peace and stability through diplomacy and dialogue.

In a multipolar world, diplomatic efforts are essential to managing regional conflicts. It highlights the importance of continuing diplomatic efforts in order to promote peace and stability in the region. Among the findings of the study is the importance of strategic cooperation between great powers in the resolution of regional conflicts. In order to promote peace, China, Russia, and the United States must work together. According to the study, it is also necessary to develop a nuanced understanding of the role of great powers in regional conflicts. In order to ensure global security and regional stability, great powers must consider the long-term effects of their actions.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The study emphasizes the need to increase investment in CBMs in order to prevent regional conflicts from escalating. Taking such measures can facilitate the development of dialogue, compromise, and trust between the conflicting parties. Moreover, the study stresses the importance of transparency when it comes to strategic engagements between great powers. It is important to communicate openly and transparently so as to foster trust and prevent misunderstandings and errors. It is evident from the study's implications that further efforts must be made to resolve disputes peacefully in a multipolar world. In order to promote regional stability and global security, greater diplomatic efforts, strategic cooperation, investment in CBMs, transparency, and a nuanced understanding of the role of great powers are needed.

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