



China Compellingly Appears To Be Recalibrating Its Approach To The NATO-Russian Proxy War

Description

If the military-strategic dynamics decisively shift in NATO's favor due to the bloc dispatching more modern arms to Kiev at the expense of its members' minimum national security needs like Stoltenberg implied might happen, then peace would be ruled out and Russia's defeat would become possible. In that scenario, China might arm Moscow in order to maintain its balance of power with NATO despite the maximum sanctions this could prompt the West to impose against it in order to avert the worse scenarios of nuclear escalation or Russia's "Balkanization".

State Of Affairs

China has hitherto done its utmost to remain completely away from the NATO-Russian proxy war that's being waged between them in Ukraine, yet a fast-moving spree of developments over the past few days compellingly suggests that it's recalibrating its approach to the New Cold War's top conflict. The present analysis will begin by highlighting those aforesaid events before explaining the larger context in which they're occurring, which should show the reader that something big is going on behind the scenes.

Diplomatic Developments In This Direction

Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Wang Yi met with Russian President Putin in the Kremlin last week after visiting several countries and participating in the Munich Security Conference. Their talks were significant since the Russian leader rarely meets with anyone who isn't his counterpart, and he wouldn't have made an exception to his informal rule simply to discuss the details of President Xi's upcoming springtime visit.

China then unveiled its 12-point peace plan for resolving the Ukrainian Conflict on the one-year anniversary of Russia's special operation. It was predictably praised by Russia, but what few expected is that it also piqued Zelensky's interest – who said he's eager to meet with President Xi to discuss it–

despite Biden rubbishing it. On the same day, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) then reported that France, Germany, and the UK are considering a NATO-like pact with Kiev to encourage it to resume peace talks.

Less than 24 hours afterwards on Saturday, it was announced that Belarusian President Lukashenko will be traveling to China from 28 February-2 March, following which French President Macron said that he plans to go there too sometime in early April. This fast-moving spree of developments proves that China is serious about negotiating at least a ceasefire to the Ukrainian Conflict, to which end President Xi will likely share his views on this with his two aforementioned counterparts during their visits.

Speculation About Chinese Arms Shipments To Russia

At the same time, however, American officials began warning that China is supposedly seriously considering the dispatch of lethal aid to Russia. Secretary of State Blinken was the first to make this claim after meeting with Director Wang in Europe. Biden and CIA chief [Burns](#) then said the same on Friday, the one-year anniversary of Russia's special operation, though the first said he doesn't anticipate it happening while the second didn't dismiss that scenario.

It's difficult to discern the veracity of those accusations, but America is adamant about convincing everyone that this is a real possibility, which is why it's considering publicly sharing related intelligence according to the WSJ in a report that they published on Thursday. While it's unclear whether the information that they might release would be purely facts, artificially manufactured falsehoods, or a combination thereof, an intriguing development on Saturday sheds some light into Chinese thinking.

The Scandal Surrounding The G20 Finance Ministers' Joint Statement

China sided with Russia in rejecting the third and fourth paragraphs of the G20 Finance Ministers' joint statement after their meeting in Bangaluru. These two parts of that document – which referenced anti-Russian UNGA Resolutions, the difference of opinion over the Ukrainian Conflict within this group, and upholding the principles of the UN Charter – were taken from the G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration that they previously agreed to in mid-November.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zakharova said in a statement that she condemned the efforts of the US, EU, and the rest of the G7 in attempting to destabilize the G20's work by including those two paragraphs in that joint statement, which is why only a summary and outcome document was released. Moscow's stance on opposing the spirit of the same text that it earlier agreed to just a quarter-year ago suggests that it did the latter because it couldn't count on anyone else to support its refusal at the time.

The “New Détente” & Its Unexpected Derailment

In order to not appear “isolated” and prompt speculation about the future of its strategic partnership with China, Russia went along with India's compromise solution that the White House Press Secretary later praised Prime Minister Modi for pioneering. Beijing couldn't be relied upon back then for jointly resisting that deliberately ambiguous (but well-intended from Delhi's perspective) wording since President Xi used that event as the opportunity to initiating a “New Détente” with the West.

Readers can learn more about everything that China and the US did in pursuit of exploring a series of mutual compromises aimed at establishing a “new normal” in their ties from then up until the eve of the

balloon incident in early February by reviewing the preceding hyperlink embedded above. It's beyond the scope of the present piece to explain that concept at length but simply enough in this context to reference it so that folks understand why Russia didn't object to the last G20 document's wording.

The unexpected derailing of the "New Détente" brought about by the aforementioned balloon incident, which readers can learn more about in detail [here](#) and [here](#), appears in hindsight to have decisively shifted China's "deep state" dynamics in the direction of more confidently challenging the US. Regardless of whoever one believes was responsible for that black swan event, it abruptly worsened bilateral ties and suddenly placed them on the trajectory of seemingly inevitable intense competition.

Stoltenberg's Statement Of Relevance To China's Changing Calculations

While work on China's peace plan far predated the balloon incident, the latter appears to have inspired Beijing to do its utmost in ensuring that this document lays the basis for a tangible process instead of remaining a public relations stunt like it otherwise might have been if the "New Détente" was still viable. Two statements in between that incident and the unveiling of its peace plan from NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and Zelensky added a sense of urgency to China's efforts in this respect.

Regarding the first, he belatedly admitted that his bloc is in a so-called "race of logistics"/"war of attrition" with Russia, which suggested that the US-led West's Golden Billion might seriously consider dispatching even more arms to Kiev at the expense of their own minimum national security needs. They can't sustain the pace, scale, and scope of their armed support to that proxy army without doing so, but NATO might take this risk in order to avert the scenario of Russia soon dealing a decisive defeat to Kiev.

If NATO dispatches more modern arms to its proxies at the expense of its members' own minimum national security needs, then it could shift the military-strategic dynamics away from Russia's favor where they've recently been for the past few months. The scenario of Russia's ultimate defeat and subsequent "Balkanization" like former President Medvedev warned would happen in that case couldn't be ruled out then, thus spiking the chances of a dramatic escalation (including nuclear) to avert that.

For its part, China wants to avert the scenario of either side becoming desperate enough that they dramatically escalate the conflict in order to stave off the scenario of their crushing defeat, hence why it's very serious about promoting its peace plan at this precise moment in time. If it's unsuccessful in doing so, then Beijing might actually dispatch lethal aid to Russia in order to restore the balance of power between it and NATO, which would raise the odds of a stalemate instead.

Zelensky's Statement Of Relevance To China's Changing Calculations

This possibility directly leads to what Zelensky said around a week after Stoltenberg's belated acknowledgement of the true military-strategic dynamics of this proxy war that the Golden Billion had tried to cover up until that point. The Ukrainian leader declared that "if China allies itself with Russia, there will be a world war", which coincided with Blinken introducing this scenario into the global information ecosystem.

Large parts of Zelensky's country, both that which his side still controls as well as what it lost to Russia but still claims, have already been destroyed by this conflict. He knows very well that the rest of it would suffer a similar fate in the event that this proxy war rages on, which he likely expects to happen if

Russia isn't decisively defeated by NATO's potential influx of modern arms that might soon be dispatched out of desperation at the expense of its members' own minimum national security needs.

From his perspective, the only way that Russia wouldn't lose in this scenario is if China starts dispatching lethal aid to its strategic partner irrespective of whether it's equivalent in pace, quality, scale, and/or scope to what NATO could soon give Kiev. Nevertheless, after the unexpected derailing of the Sino-American "New Détente" due to the balloon incident black swan, Zelensky might have assessed this as more likely than ever since Russia's possible loss could directly lead to China's maximum "containment".

His ominous prediction might have been interpreted by the People's Republic as signaling a desire to seriously explore a peaceful solution for averting this scenario that would likely result in his country's further destruction, however, which could have emboldened Beijing to double down on its peace plan. Behind-the-scenes diplomacy between them in the run-up to China's unveiling of its 12-step proposal might have in hindsight been responsible for Zelensky's interest in it and in meeting with President Xi.

After all, the Ukrainian leader's reaction was completely unexpected for most observers, which instead predicted that he'd dismiss China's peace plan outright just like Biden did. Seeing as how Belarus previously hosted last spring's talks that were sabotaged by the UK at the US' behest, it makes greater sense why Lukashenko announced a day after Zelensky's interest in this proposal that he'll be visiting Beijing next week to discuss the "international situation" according to his country's official media.

The Possible Convergence Of French/European & Chinese Interests

Macron's interest in China's peace plan directly stems from Zelensky's, without whose potential participation nothing of tangible substance can be accomplished, but also from his country's national interests too. If the People's Republic dispatches lethal aid to Russia and thus averts the scenario of its strategic partner's defeat in the event that NATO first sends a lot of modern arms at the expense of its members' minimum national security needs as was earlier explained, then the EU could seriously suffer.

A protracted conflict risks further retarding its already very slow economic recovery and could potentially even plunge it into a full-blown recession, which might possibly entail far-reaching socio-political consequences, especially from the existing elite. This strategic assessment also helps explain the WSJ's recent report about the French-German-British NATO-like security pact that they're considering extending to Kiev to encourage it to resume peace talks likely to avert that aforesaid scenario.

That said, the timing of his planned trip sometime in early April reveals a lot about how China and the EU view the evolution of the military-strategic dynamics in this conflict. NATO-backed Kiev and Russia are both reportedly planning large-scale offensives, which are each expected to commence sometime in the next in the weeks preceding Macron's visit to Beijing. By then, all parties will have a clearer idea of whether the military-strategic dynamics have shifted or if the stalemate appears likely to remain.

From there, France can either lead the EU's efforts to encourage Zelensky to seriously entertain China's peace plan or eschew doing so, whether unilaterally, due to US pressure, or because Beijing decided to dispatch lethal aid to Russia in the event that the military-strategic dynamics decisively shifted against it. In the best-case scenario that Macron decides to support President Xi's proposals,

then the latter might then soon embark on a trip to Moscow and Kiev to meet with his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts.

Bullet Point Review

A lot of insight has thus far been shared in the present analysis, which might understandably be overwhelming for most readers, hence the need to summarize everything to enhance comprehension. What'll thus follow are two bullet point lists, with the first chronologically ordering the many events that were touched upon in this analysis, while the second will detail the gradual recalibration of China's approach to the NATO-Russian proxy war. A six-paragraph wrap-up will then conclude the analysis.

- * **15-16 November:** President Xi initiates his envisaged “New Détente” by meeting with his American and other Western counterparts at the G20 Summit in Bali to discuss repairing their troubled ties.
 - * **2-4 February:** The balloon incident, which actually began in late January, becomes public and abruptly derails the “New Détente” after Blinken indefinitely postpones his planned trip to Beijing in response.
 - * **13 February:** NATO chief Stoltenberg belatedly acknowledges that his bloc is engaged in a so-called “race of logistics”/“war of attrition” with Russia.
 - * **14-22 February:** Director Wang travels to Europe and Russia to promote China's forthcoming 12-point peace plan for ending the Ukrainian Conflict.
 - * **19 February:** Blinken introduces the scenario of China dispatching lethal aid to Russia into the global information ecosystem.
 - * **20 February:** Zelensky ominously builds upon Blinken's narrative by predicting that China arming Russia could trigger World War III.
 - * **22 February:** Director Wang meets with President Putin at the Kremlin, which represents one of the extremely rare instances where the Russian leader hosted someone who wasn't his counterpart.
 - * **23 February:** The WSJ keeps Blinken's narrative alive by reporting that the US might publicly share related intelligence alleging proving that China is seriously considering sending lethal aid to Russia.
 - * **24 February:** China unveils its peace plan; Russia praises it; Zelensky signals interest; the WSJ reports on leading EU states' NATO-like pact proposal with Kiev; and Biden & Burn speculate on Chinese arms.
 - * **25 February:** Lukashenko announce that he'll travel to Beijing next week; Macron says that he'll follow in early April; and China joins Russia in rejecting part of the G20 Finance Ministers' joint statement.
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Now here's how the abovementioned sequence of events shifted China's strategic calculus:

- * **True Neutrality:** The latest phase of the New Cold War that began after Russia was provoked into launching its special operation saw China initially take a truly neutral stance towards it.
 - * **"New Détente":** The combination of globalization's consequent destabilization, growing US "containment" pressure, and economic slowdown at home inspired China to reach out to the US.
 - * **Uncertainty:** The unexpected derailing of the "New Détente" after the balloon incident prompted uncertainty about Sino-US ties, thus leading China to wait for signals from the US before proceeding.
 - * **Peacemaker:** Anti-Chinese hardliners' rising influence convinced Beijing that the "New Détente" is dead while the NATO chief's "race of logistics" quip convinced it to seek peace in Ukraine pronto.
 - * **Anti-NATO Ally?:** If its peace efforts fail, China might evolve into Russia's anti-NATO ally by arming the latter to avert its defeat and preempt it from escalating (including via nuclear means) in that event.
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Concluding Thoughts

China assesses that NATO might dispatch more modern arms to Kiev at the expense of its members' minimum national security needs out of desperation to prevent its proxy's defeat after the conflict's military-strategic dynamics shifted towards Russia's favor over the past months. That could decisively flip the aforesaid dynamics in NATO's favor, thus risking the scenario of Russia's defeat, its "Balkanization", China's further "containment", and Moscow's possible escalations to preempt this.

The unexpected derailing of the "New Détente" after the balloon incident, which led to anti-Chinese hardliners exerting more influence over the US' policy formulations, convinced China that it'll never succeed in negotiating a series of mutual compromises aimed at establishing a "new normal". Realizing that NATO's possibly successful "containment" of Russia will inevitably lead to that bloc and its collection of "Balkanized" proxy states focusing on China in that scenario, Beijing decided to act first.

Director Wang promoted his country's 12-point peace plan during his latest European trip, including in a rare private meeting with President Putin, while other Chinese diplomats operated behind the scenes to brief Zelensky about it and ensure that he doesn't publicly dismiss it outright after its unveiling. The Ukrainian leader's unexpected interest in this proposal directly led to Macron announcing his upcoming trip to Beijing in early spring, which follows Lukashenko's next week.

The time between these two visits will almost certainly see Russia and NATO-backed Kiev's reportedly planned large-scale offensives commencing, which will in turn provide greater clarity about the state of military-strategic affairs between them, particularly whether they decisively shifted or not. A continued stalemate or decisive Russian advance could convince Zelensky to seriously consider a ceasefire, after which President Xi might soon thereafter visit Moscow and Kiev to help negotiate this right away.

If the military-strategic dynamics decisively shift in NATO's favor due to the bloc dispatching more modern arms to Kiev at the expense of its members' minimum national security needs like Stoltenberg implied might happen, then peace would be ruled out and Russia's defeat would become possible. In

that scenario, China might arm Moscow despite the maximum sanctions this could prompt the West to impose against it in order to avert the worse scenarios of nuclear escalation or Russia's "Balkanization".

China truly doesn't want to become a party to the Russian-NATO proxy war, but it'll practically have no choice if its strategic partner faces the credible scenario of defeat since the People's Republic would have to preemptively ensure its national security needs related to averting Russia's "Balkanization". It's impossible to predict how else the Golden Billion might react in that scenario apart from imposing maximum sanctions against China, but it would definitely lead to clearer divisions in the New Cold War.

by Andrew Korybko

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