

# WORLD

## ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

**Editor's note:** As Feb 24 marks the one-year anniversary of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, China Daily is reviewing how it has reshaped geopolitics, impacted the global economy and aggravated the energy crisis.

# China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis

China released a paper stating its position on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis on Friday. The following is the full text.

1. Respecting the sovereignty of all countries. Universally recognized international law, including the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, must be strictly observed. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries must be effectively upheld. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community. All parties should jointly uphold the basic norms governing international relations and defend international fairness and justice. Equal and uniform application of international law should be promoted, while double standards must be rejected.

2. Abandoning the Cold War mentality. The security of a country should not be pursued at the expense of others. The security of a region should not be achieved by strengthening or expanding military blocs. The legitimate security interests and concerns of all countries must be taken seriously and addressed properly. There is no simple solution to a complex issue. All parties should, following the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and bearing in mind the long-term peace and stability of the world, help forge a balanced, effective and sustainable European

security architecture. All parties should oppose the pursuit of one's own security at the cost of others' security, prevent bloc confrontation, and work together for peace and stability on the Eurasian Continent.

3. Ceasing hostilities. Conflict and war benefit no one. All parties must stay rational and exercise restraint, avoid fanning the flames and aggravating tensions, and prevent the crisis from deteriorating further or even spiraling out of control. All parties should support Russia and Ukraine in working in the same direction and resuming direct dialogue as quickly as possible, so as to gradually deescalate the situation and ultimately reach a comprehensive cease-fire.

4. Resuming peace talks. Dialogue and negotiation are the only viable solution to the Ukraine crisis. All efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis must be encouraged and supported. The international community should stay committed to the right approach of promoting talks for peace, help parties to the conflict open the door to a political settlement as soon as possible, and create conditions and platforms for the resumption of negotiation. China will continue to play a constructive role in this regard.

5. Resolving the humanitarian crisis. All measures conducive to easing the humanitarian crisis must be encouraged and supported. Humanitarian operations should follow the principles of neutrality and impartiality, and humanitarian issues should not be politicized. The safety of civilians must be effectively protected, and humanitarian corridors should be set up for the evacuation of civilians from conflict zones. Efforts are needed to increase humanitarian assistance to relevant areas, improve humanitarian conditions, and provide rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, with a view to preventing a humanitarian crisis on a larger scale. The UN should be supported in playing a coordinating role in channeling humanitarian aid to conflict zones.

6. Protecting civilians and prisoners of war (POWs). Parties to the conflict should strictly abide by international humanitarian law, avoid attacking civilians or civilian facilities, protect women, children and other victims of the conflict, and respect the basic rights of POWs. China supports the exchange of POWs between Russia and Ukraine, and calls on all parties to create more favorable conditions for this purpose.

7. Keeping nuclear power plants safe. China opposes armed attacks against nuclear power plants or other peaceful nuclear facilities, and calls on all parties to comply with international law including the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) and resolutely avoid man-made nuclear accidents. China supports the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in playing a constructive role in promoting the safety and security of peaceful nuclear facilities.

8. Reducing strategic risks. Nuclear weapons must not be used and nuclear wars must not be fought. The threat or use of nuclear weapons should be opposed. Nuclear proliferation must be prevented and nuclear crisis avoided. China opposes the research, development and use of chemical and biological weapons by any country under any circumstances.

9. Facilitating grain exports. All parties need to implement the Black Sea Grain Initiative signed by Russia, Türkiye, Ukraine and the UN fully and effectively in a balanced manner, and support the UN in playing an important role in this regard. The cooperation initiative on global food security proposed by China provides a feasible solution to the global food crisis.

10. Stopping unilateral sanctions. Unilateral sanctions and maximum pressure cannot solve the issue; they only create new problems. China opposes unilateral sanctions unauthorized by the UN Security Council. Relevant countries should stop abusing unilateral sanctions and "long-arm jurisdiction" against other countries, so as to do their share in deescalating the Ukraine crisis and create conditions for developing countries to grow their economies and better the lives of their people.

11. Keeping industrial and supply chains stable. All parties should earnestly maintain the existing world economic system and oppose using the world economy as a tool or weapon for political purposes. Joint efforts are needed to mitigate the spillovers of the crisis and prevent it from disrupting international cooperation in energy, finance, food trade and transportation and undermining the global economic recovery.

12. Promoting post-conflict reconstruction. The international community needs to take measures to support post-conflict reconstruction in conflict zones. China stands ready to provide assistance and play a constructive role in this endeavor.

## Energy crisis points new way forward for Europe

By JULIAN SHEA in London  
julian@mail.chinadailyuk.com

"There are decades when nothing happens, and there are weeks when decades happen," Vladimir Lenin once said.

While no one would say European politics have in recent times gone decades without happening, the weeks since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on Feb 24 last year have been arguably the most transformative since the breakup of the Eastern bloc and collapse of the Soviet Union about 30 years ago.

In addition to the devastating human cost and the heightening of international tensions, the biggest impact has been on Europe's energy market, with disrupted supplies affecting the daily lives of millions of people.

Domestic bills have soared, as have manufacturing costs, exacerbating the cost of living crisis and fueling inflation, a blow to countries trying to rebuild in the aftermath of the pandemic.

For years the European Union relied heavily on Russia for natural gas. In 2021, according to official figures, Russia supplied 40 percent of the EU's natural gas, Germany being the biggest consumer. By last August that figure had fallen to 17 percent.

Germany faced a bigger challenge than most, with The Guardian reporting last July that before the conflict 27 percent of its energy use was from natural gas, more than half of which came from Russia.

The Nord Stream 2 pipeline, completed in Sept 2021, was supposed to bolster this, but once the rumblings of the conflict were detected, certification was suspended and the search for alternative supplies began.

Similar national challenges were posed across Europe as countries had to think harder than ever before about where their energy came from and how it was used. Change had to happen, and it did.

According to figures of the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, quoted by the BBC, in 2017 each month the 27 EU member states and the United Kingdom used 32 million cubic meters of gas supplied by Russia. Norway was the next biggest source, at 20 million cubic meters, and liquid natural gas accounted for 7 million cubic meters.

By the end of last year that had changed to a total of 25 million cubic meters of LNG, Norway 20 million cubic meters, and Russia 4 million cubic meters.

### No going back

When it comes to supply, change that would normally take place over decades has happened in less than 12 months, and with sustainable ones more prominent than ever, signs are that there will be no going back to supplier or source.

Assisted by a mild winter — ironically, possibly a result of climate change, caused by fossil fuels — Europe avoided a feared seasonal energy crisis, and the European Electricity Review 2023 published by the



A woman takes photos in a damaged building in Zaporizhzhia on Tuesday. The Ukraine crisis has caused many casualties, displaced numerous people, aggravated geopolitical confrontation in Europe, intensified global energy and food shortages, and undermined regional and international security. DMYTRO SMOLYENKO / ABACAPRESS



Sylvain Krebs, in charge of coal supply, looks out from the coal-fired power station on Nov 29 in Saint-Avold, eastern France. The plant should have been closed permanently at the end of last winter, but the government resumed its operation due to the energy crisis. JEAN-FRANCOIS BADIAS / ASSOCIATED PRESS



(US) Big Oil just reported its profits. Record profits. Last year, they made \$200 billion in the midst of a global energy crisis."

Joe Biden, US president, says in his State of the Union address on Feb 7

energy think tank Ember showed how much impact renewable sources were having, with solar power almost doubling its previous contribution to the EU's electricity supply.

"Europe has avoided the worst of the energy crisis," said Dave Jones, Ember's head of data insights. "The shocks of 2022 only caused a minor ripple in coal power and a huge wave of support for renewables ... Any fears of a coal rebound are now dead."

Simultaneously, Washington's "football game" on the battlefield in Ukraine brings fortunes to war and energy businesses in the United States.

Replacing the military equipment transferred to Ukraine by NATO allies could lead to roughly \$21.7 billion in foreign military sales or direct commercial sales for the US industry, the US Foundation for Defense of Democracies said in a report last month.

As for the energy industry, US President Joe Biden admitted in his State of the Union address on Feb 7: "Big Oil just reported its profits. Record profits. Last year, they made \$200 billion in the midst of a global energy crisis."

## EU cuts gas use by almost 20 percent

Europeans have greatly reduced their consumption of natural gas after the cost of the fossil fuel surged largely as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The European Union's statistics agency, Eurostat, said this week that gas consumption in the 27-member bloc was 19.3 percent lower between August and January than it was in the corresponding period in the preceding five years.

The drop was probably partly driven by householders and businesses wanting to cut costs, partly because of an unusually mild weather, and partly because consumers wanted to show they did not need Russian gas supplies, the EU's main source before the Russia-Ukraine conflict began, the agency said.

Reuters quoted Jacob Mandel, a senior associate at Aurora Energy Research in Oxford, England, as saying, "Weather has definitely played a very big role."

The EU, which had asked consumers to cut their consumption by 15 percent to help ease its transition away from Russian gas, greeted the 20 percent fall as good news.

Consumers cut consumption the most in Finland, where the amount of gas used during the period was 57.3 percent less than usual. Lithuania and Sweden also greatly cut consumption, Lithuania by 47.9 percent and Sweden by 40.2 percent.

The think tank Bruegel in Brussels said consumption in Germany, the biggest consumer of gas in the EU, fell last month alone by 27 percent among companies, and by 25 percent among households.

The EU imported 155 billion cubic meters of gas from Russia before the Russia-Ukraine conflict began, but, with the bloc switching away from Russian gas it is set to import only 20 billion cubic meters this year, Bloomberg said.

EARLE GALE

## Cease-fire a top priority, envoy tells UN session

By MINLU ZHANG at the United Nations  
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

A Chinese envoy to the United Nations on Thursday told a resumed emergency special session of the UN General Assembly that facilitating a cease-fire in Ukraine is a top priority, and the international community should work together to promote peace talks.

"China's position on the Ukraine issue is consistent and clear. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected. The purposes and principles of the UN Charter should be upheld," said Dai Bing, charge d'affaires at the Chinese Permanent Mission to the UN.

"The legitimate security concerns of all countries should be taken seriously, and all efforts conducive to the peaceful resolution of the crisis should be supported," he said.

The 11th emergency session of the General Assembly resumed on Wednesday two days before the anniversary of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

"The top priority is to facilitate a cease-fire and a cessation of hostilities without delay," Dai emphasized, adding that conflicts and wars have no winners. "The longer the brutality, the greater the human suffering."

He called on the parties to the conflict to remain rational, restrain their impulses and prevent the crisis from getting worse or even out of control.

Dai reiterated that nuclear weapons cannot be used.

"Nuclear war cannot be fought. All parties should join together against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, prevent nuclear proliferation and avoid a nuclear crisis," he said.

### Only viable way

Dai said dialogue and negotiation are "the only viable way to resolve the Ukraine crisis."

"The lessons of history tell us that crises can ultimately be resolved peacefully. No matter how difficult it is, the door to a political solution cannot be closed," he said.

"We support Russia and Ukraine in resuming direct dialogue as soon as possible, bringing their legitimate concerns into the negotiation, setting out feasible options, and giving a chance to an early end of the crisis and the rebuilding of peace."

The deep cause of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is the expansion of NATO, and "the Russians are reacting to the West's attempt to make Ukraine a western bulwark on Russia's border," John Mearsheimer, political science professor at the University of Chicago, told Xinhua News Agency.

During the Munich Security Conference concluded on Feb 19, there was "palpable frustration among some leaders from African and South American nations" over the protracted conflict, which "was consuming the time, money and attention of the West at the expense of other pressing problems," the Financial Times observed.

"We don't want to go on discussing who will be the winner or the loser of a war," said Colombia's Vice President Francia Marquez. "We are all losers and, in the end, it is humankind that loses everything."

Xinhua contributed to this story.