

China's Non-intervention Policy Meets International Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War Era: Focusing on Cases of Illegal Intervention

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Abstract

China has long taken the principle of non-intervention as its diplomatic dogma and major rhetorical instrument. However, its non-intervention policy is flexible in facing certain international interventions. This article attempts to explain why the behavior of China's foreign policy varies in its degree of consistency with the principle of non-intervention by examining China's attitude and behavior toward different cases of illegal intervention. China's response to a specific intervention is prudent decision making intertwined with strategic considerations at the international level and with national interests at the domestic level. A theoretical framework based on the IR theory of neo-classical realism is developed to explore the causal mechanism underlying China's non-intervention policy. Three cases, namely, NATO's bombing of the FRY regarding Kosovo, the Iraq War, and the Russian intervention in Ukraine over Crimea, are examined to test the arguments.

Introduction

The principle of non-intervention in the domestic or territorial jurisdiction of other states has been taken as an international norm enshrined in international statements and declarations. However, interventionist activities are hardly uncommon in world politics as intervention is an endemic feature of contemporary international arrangements (Bull, 1986, p.181). Experts have concluded that intervention is the "modern social practice" in the history of international relations (IR).¹ Military intervention is the most extreme and most coercive form

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of intervention, and it has been prevalent on the international scene. Scholars have long wrestled with the normative and empirical issues of military intervention, focusing on who have the legitimate power and the right to intervene in whom for what reason. In the post-Cold War era, international military interventions (IMI) take place for various reasons, such as human rights, regional and international stability, and the value of liberalism. The majority of these interventions have been justified as benevolent and positive actions, making them widely accepted by sovereign states. However, some interventions are strikingly controversial and have been identified as illegal because of the aim of the intervention or the measures adopted by the intervening states.

Discussions on military intervention are important, and the field of IR never lacks literature on IMI. Scholars have investigated the motivations of intervening states. Some of them emphasized the interest and ideology of intervening countries (Morgenthau, 1967), and others discussed the influencing factors, including ethnic affinities between intervening states and targets (Saideman, 1997; Gleditsch, 2007), regional and international order (Regan, 1998; Little, 2013), types and longitude of the issue attracting foreign interventions (Pearson, 1974), and their comprehensive combinations (Mullenbach & Matthews, 2008). Research applying statistical methods has focused on the domestic political systems of intervening states and target states to explore the correlation between regime characters and interventions (Bélanger, Duchesne, & Paquin, 2005; Kisangani & Pickering, 2008; Koga, 2011).

Examining cases of illegal intervention is significant in IR. First, reconsidering illegal intervention, particularly illegal acts that conform to moral justification, will “contribute to the moral improvement of the international legal reform” and thus promote the development of international norm (Buchanan, 2001, p.676). Scholars of international law have debated on the normative issue of the legality of using force, especially in the case of humanitarian intervention (Gray, 2008; Peevers, 2013; Sampford, 2013). Most of their studies have focused on specific cases, such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Tesón, 2005; Weller, 2010). Second, the foreign policy formulations of different countries can be clearly investigated through their responses to these interventions. However, discussions on the foreign policy of various states toward illegal intervention are far from rich.

This article adopts the latter meaning and focuses on China’s case. China is

1. See discussions in the special volume surrounding intervention and the ordering of the modern world in the academic journal *Review of International Studies*, Volume 39, Issue 05, December, 2013.

distinct because it is one of the permanent members (P5) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and its decision affects whether or not the use of force will be legitimately instigated. In addition, China frequently holds opposite opinions to the interventionist initiatives of Western countries, and its responses to IMI *prima facie* appear dramatically intransigent and critical. However, China's responses to different military interventions are not identical. Rather, China astutely practices the non-intervention policy in dealing with various international interventions. Therefore, the examination of China's reactions to IMI demonstrates its normative judgment, consideration of cost and benefit, and preference and perceptions when facing a possible intervention.

Previous works on China's non-intervention policy toward IMI emphasize China's peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and activities for protecting its overseas properties and nationals (Gill, 2007; Gill & Huang, 2009; Karlsson, 2011; Duchâtel, Bräuner, & Hang, 2014). However, comparatively little research has focused on China's non-intervention policy toward the singular category of military interventions, that is, illegal intervention. This article attempts to fill this gap and explain why the behavior of China's foreign policy varies in its degree of consistency with the principle of non-intervention in different cases of illegal intervention. By doing so, the following questions need to be solved: Under what conditions is China tolerant to interventions and in what situations is China reluctant or even resistant to interventions? What factors determine or affect China's attitude and behavior in various illegal interventions?

Contrary to the assumption that China's domestic problems are the determinants of its foreign policy, this article applies the IR theory of neo-classical realism to examine China's non-intervention policy and argues that its foreign policy toward international intervention is mainly motivated by international factors and simultaneously constrained by domestic incentives. The analysis is designed as follows. First, this article begins with a brief introduction to IMI and illegal intervention after the Cold War. Second, China's reactions to IMI, illegal intervention, and other attendant interventions are discussed. This section concludes with the implications and provides a theoretical framework to analyze China's non-intervention policy. Third, three cases are analyzed to confirm the arguments based on the theoretical framework.

Interpreting IMI and Illegal Intervention

An oft-cited definition of IMI formulated by Person and Baumann (1993) is

that “international military interventions are the movement of regular troops or forces (airborne, seaborne, shelling, etc.) of one country inside another, in the context of some political issue or dispute.” This definition is inclusive of military activities with various purposes, even a war through which the intervening state aggressively annexes the target state. Based on the IMI dataset, Figure 1 shows the main characteristics of military interventions that have taken place in the post-Cold War era.² Although the standard established by Person and Baumann is operationally convenient, the types of skirmishes of two states for disputed issues and one state’s annexation of other sovereign states’ territories are rarely categorized into the concept of conventional interventions.³ According to the IMI dataset updated in 2005, compared with the military interventions during the Cold War era, overall military intervention rates have increased in the post-Cold War period (Pickering & Kisangani, 2009, p.596). Moreover, major power interventions have risen with the increase in number of conflicts and armed forces used among non-major power actors (Kisangani & Pickering, 2008).

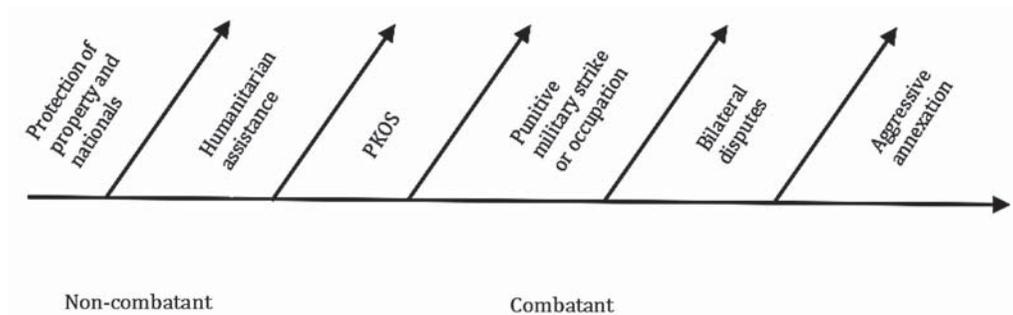


Figure 1. Spectrum of IMI

Source: made by the author based on the IMI dataset.

Despite the restraint of using force in international law and politics, certain IMIs are acceptable.⁴ The United Nations (UN) Charter implies the prohibition of all uses of military force, excluding the military activities for self-defense or those authorized by the UNSC. Intervention by the UN has legitimacy and is widely

2. The IMI dataset is housed in *Inter- University Consortium of Political and Social Research* collection at the University of Michigan.

3. The demarcation between military intervention and aggressive war is ambiguous in most of cases. Under the condition that one state aims at annexing another sovereign state’s territory, these corresponding military actions are seen as aggressive war instead of intervention.

4. According to the UN Charter, it prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

seen as proper and even desirable (Luard, 1986, pp.157-158). The three types of activities on the left side of the spectrum in Figure 1 are less contentious than the three on the right side. Using force to evacuate nationals of intervening states is practically permissive, and these actions can be supported by the consular protection written in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.⁵ Dispatching non-combatants to conflict-affected countries is largely acceptable to provide humanitarian assistance and to maintain the political order of the target states. The peacekeeping activities mandated by the UNSC are seldom legally polemic because of the explicit rules of PKOs.⁶ Use of force in target states is greatly controversial, and this type of intervention usually causes international strife.⁷ The illegal military intervention discussed in this article can be classified into the category of military strike on the target state.

Illegal intervention in this article refers to the intervening state's military actions that use combatant force in the target state to compel the target state to obey the political purpose of intervening states without the support of international law or international customary law.⁸ In other words, this military intervention is implemented without the authorization of UNSC.⁹ Illegal intervention can be unilateral activities, such as the Iraq War waged by the US, or multilateral behavior, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) bombing of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) regarding Kosovo. Some illegal interventions are carried out under the condition that UNSC member

5. This does not mean that this type of intervention has not been debated. The US justified its military intervention in Panama in 1989 by protecting its nationals. This case is taken as US' pretextual intervention by some observers. This behavior of the US has been discussed in the academia of international law and politics.

6. PKOs also need UNSC authorization, and they usually do not initiate debates in the sense of international law. Nevertheless, some UNSC members have blocked certain PKOs, for example, China's vetoes against the proposed PKOs in Guatemala and Haiti.

7. This article is not meant to discuss the normative issue of illegal intervention and is thus guided by whether or not the behavior violates the international law.

8. Despite the fact that the targets of international interventions include states, organizations, and individuals, illegal interventions generally aim at the incumbent regime in the target country. As far as the counter-terrorism is concerned, the UNSC has adopted resolutions to deal with particular organizations or individuals that are suspected of being associated with terrorist. International interventions targeting particular individuals and organizations are not controversial and hence are viewed as legitimate.

9. It is notable that although countries have different perspectives on specific international actions, the illegal intervention in this discussion is not judged by interpretations of individual countries. Under the condition that interventions have no legal base, such as the UNSC resolution or relevant international covenant, the interventions are viewed as illegal.

countries disagree with the use of force in addressing specific issues and conflicts, and other illegal interventions are not discussed under the UNSC framework. Illegal intervention is not isolated. It is associated with other types of interventions that deal with a specific international issue, such as UNSC sanctions. In this sense, the discussion on the cases of illegal intervention in this article includes not only the illegal intervention per se but also the attendant negotiations and interventionist resolutions in the UN framework.

The term illegal intervention has rarely been applied in previous academic works. First, illegal intervention seldom takes place after the Cold War because states usually do not set themselves up on a high-risk and costly road to a unilateral military intervention in other states' conflicts unless they do so for their own sake. Purely self-serving interventions in some cases are hardly justified, and the intervening countries may face potential punishment from the international society. Second, assessing the nature of illegality of certain interventions is an after-the-act evaluation and is thus difficult to operate in practice. Some interventionist initiatives have been discussed in the UN system or other international organizations. Intervening states usually conduct military actions after recognizing the international dissent. Note that some military actions can be justified by reasons of universal value or regional and international order. The extents to which countries are convinced of the justification of military interventions are different because of the diverse perspectives of countries. Failure to persuade is a probable cause for illegal intervention. Therefore, examining the comprehension of countries, particularly the perceptions on military interventions of great powers, is necessary. This article attempts to elucidate China's case to explore the non-intervention policy of this non-Western emerging power.

Assessing China's Non-intervention Policy toward IMI

China's Responses to IMI

China has long taken the principle of non-intervention as its diplomatic dogma and major rhetorical instrument. It generally does not rhetorically approve of coercive measures to be imposed on sovereign states. Although China has been involved in many interventionist actions, it has restrained itself from conducting military interventions since the post-Cold War period started.¹⁰ As Lawson and

10. China has launched military interventions in the Cold War period, such as the involvements in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Moreover, China also conducted various types of interventions; see Cohen (1973), Ren (2013).

Tardelli (2003, p.1248) observed, "China's military interventions have been more limited in frequency and scope than those performed by other Great Powers." The IMI dataset attests to this observation (Pickering & Kisangani, 2009, p.597). China has incrementally changed its strict interpretation of and approaches to IMI. China has objected vehemently to any kind of IMI enacted by the so-called Western countries.¹¹ With the expansion of China's overseas interest (Wang, 2013, pp.78-82; Duchâtel, Bräuner, & Hang, 2014), it has loosened its staunch insistence on the principle of non-intervention and began to engage in military interventions, such as the protection of its nationals and properties abroad (Duchâtel, Bräuner, & Hang, 2014), cooperation with other countries in UNSC sanctions (Carlson, 2006; 2010), and participation in PKOs (Gill, 2007; Gill & Huang, 2009; Karlsson, 2011).¹²

The norm of non-intervention undeniably enjoys strong domestic salience in China.¹³ Therefore, China's rhetorical responses to the use of force are relatively consistent. It opposes the use of force and advocates that military intervention is counterproductive in gaining the cooperation of target countries to solve problems. It asserts that certain military interventions infringe on international norms through diplomatic pronouncements and comments. Moreover, China uses its local media to denounce the "actual purpose" of some countries' military intervention. From China's perspective, some intervening countries force a target state to follow their value and political systems and eventually to serve their national interests, and they may use an authorized UNSC intervention to overthrow a local government and to acquire the obedience or compliance of the target state.

China tends to cast negative votes, including abstention and veto, on certain initiatives of military intervention put to the UNSC agenda. China has seldom vetoed against interventionist initiatives in the UNSC, but it has threatened to wield veto power to hinder staunch interventions or to achieve the compromise from countries advocating the military intervention in the process of the negotiation. China is inclined to acquiesce to international intervention by casting

11. The term "West" or "Western" refers to the coalition of states, primarily located in Western Europe and North America, taking the lead in promoting international interventions.

12. China's approach to PKOs has changed from initial condemnation and skepticism to gradual participation.

13. The concept of domestic salience of norm derived from the IR theory of constructivism, which refers to an international norm has been accepted and achieved legitimacy by one state. The mainstream constructivists presume that "when states regularly refer to the norm to describe their own behavior and that of others, the validity claims of the norm are no longer controversial even if actual behavior continues to violate the norm" (Peevers 2013, p.45; Risse-Kappen, 1994).

abstention in the UN system to disassociate itself from other Western countries and expresses its preferences, perspectives, or attitude. Making a compromise to the intervention through abstention reflects China's concerns about its relations with the great powers¹⁴ and the impact of a specific military intervention.¹⁵

Although China's disapproval of several military interventions may not hinder the interventionist actions beyond the UN framework or dissuade other countries from performing interventions, its responses to illegal interventions show nuances in terms of discourse and behavior. This article summarizes the three possible outcomes of China's foreign policy based on the degree of the country's responses to cases of illegal intervention. *Tolerance* indicates that China does not condemn and strongly opposes a specific illegal intervention. *Reluctant compromise* indicates that China does not use a veto or threaten to use the veto from interventionist resolution in the UN framework, although it expresses its strong disapproval of the intervention in diplomatic discourse. *Resistance* indicates that China is intransigently against the intervention with strong condemnation and threatens to wield veto power or cast a veto in the UN. China's response to a specific IMI is prudent decision making intertwined with strategic considerations at the international level and with national interests at the domestic level. The causal relations based on neoclassical realism explain why China has different responses to specific interventions.

Causal Mechanism Underlying China's Non-intervention Policy

Neoclassical realism assumes that systemic factors powerfully pressure the foreign behavior of states and that states respond to the international system by seeking to control and shape their external environment (Wohlfoth, 2008). Systemic dynamics are derived from the distribution of powers under U.S. unilateralism in the sovereign states system. Nonetheless, the dynamics affect the foreign policy behavior of particular states only through the mediating effect of unit-level variables, namely, decision-makers' perceptions of international situations and domestic constraints. In other words, "states conduct foreign policy

14. Great powers in this article refer to the countries possessing strong political power have the legitimacy to decide agenda and rules in international organizations, and whose foreign policy greatly influences other countries' decision-making. In the UN, great powers specifically stand for the five permanent members of the Security Council.

15. Through casting abstentions with ambiguous attitudes, on the one hand, China avoids the criticism from the advocates of intervention and simultaneously expresses its dissatisfaction without changing the consequence; on the other hand, it does not reverse its commitment to non-intervention.

based on their assessment of relative power and other states' intentions" but are constrained by domestic concerns (Taliaferro, Lobell, & Ripsman, 2009, p.26). In the causal train of states' foreign policy behavior, the intervening variable is the decision makers' perceptions of national interest. Neoclassical realism takes the concept of state power into account when considering the domestic factors.¹⁶

Table 1. The theoretical assumptions and logic of neoclassical realism

View of international system	View of units	Causal logic of neoclassical realism				
		Independent variable	→	Intervening variable	→	Dependent variable
Important	Differentiated	Systemic Incentives	→	Decision-makers	→	Foreign Policy
				↑		
				Domestic constraints		

Source: Ren (2014, p.265).

State power is closely associated with state autonomy and state legitimacy. In China's case, maintaining the political survival and legitimacy of the existing regime is the crucial objective of its reigning elite. On the international stage, the international order based on sovereign rights and the collective security system established by the UN are beneficial to China to a larger extent. Maintaining this order and promoting China's reputation are the guarantees for the regime survival of the country. The goal of self-preservation forces the Chinese government to maintain absolute control and to keep economic development at a high rate in the post-Cold War era (Ren, 2013, p.39). Potential foreign intervention may threaten China by empowering dissident groups inside the country, such as those pushing for the independence of Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia, among others. Moreover, threats to China's economic interest in the world are part of its domestic concerns. Therefore, the high vulnerability of the Chinese government that embodies its regime survival, economic development, and domestic issues is an important element that influences the country's ability to respond to international interventions. In sum, this article provides the explanations of China's non-intervention policy that lie in neoclassical realism. As Table 2 depicts, the distribution of power under the American unilateralism in the international system is the independent variable. The relations between state and society are

16. State power refers to the ability of state leaders to determine foreign policy free of or out of domestic political constraints. On factors that affect the degree of state power, see Taliaferro (2006).

taken as intervening variables. The three possible outcomes of China's foreign policy, namely, tolerance, reluctant compromise, and resistance, are dependent variables.

Table 2. Motivation of China's non-intervention policy

Systemic incentive		Internal factors		Outcomes (toward interventions)
<i>Distribution of power under us unipolarism</i>	→	<i>State –societal relations</i> (Regime survival; Economic development; Domestic issues)	→	Tolerance Reluctant compromise Resistance

Source: Ren (2014, p.267), adjusted by the author.

Case Studies

This article presents three cases, namely, NATO's bombing of the FRY regarding Kosovo, the Iraq War, and the Russian intervention in Ukraine over Crimea, to test the arguments discussed in the previous section by using archival evidence and secondary sources. It is appropriate to explore the three cases for examining China's non-intervention policy. First, they are not only quintessential illegal interventions but also typical military interventions conducted by great powers in the post-Cold War period. The three cases have been given international attention and are controversial both in the academic and in the practical fields. Second, China acted differently when facing similar cases. For instance, in terms of issue area, the cases of the Kosovo Crisis and the Crimean Issue are similar. However, China showed opposite responses to the two cases. Regarding the strategic context, the cases of the Kosovo Crisis and the Iraq War are alike. China's foreign policies in the two cases were different. Third, China trapped between many competing interests in facing these three cases. Therefore, the extent of China's reactions to the three cases is different, signifying its interest in and perception of a specific intervention underlying the decision-making process.

Case One: The Kosovo Crisis (1998-1999)

The Kosovo War was the first time that Western countries attacked a sovereign country for humanitarian purposes in the post-Cold War period. This case is significant in observing China's foreign policy as China extremely opposed the West-led military interventions. The crisis posed a challenge for China at that time. On the one hand, China had been negotiating with the US to join the World Trade Organization (WTO). Supporting the Serbian government obviously seemed

irrational for China, which stood on the opposite side of the US. On the other hand, the humanitarian interventions in Kosovo contradicted the principle of non-intervention by which China has abided. China disagrees with any military intervention in a sovereign state to support secessionist movements. Therefore, exploring China's responses to this crisis can explain the factors determining and affecting its foreign policy.

The Kosovo crisis was caused by ethnical conflicts between Albanians and Serbs in Serbia. Kosovo, which is mainly populated by Albanians, an ethnic minority, used to be a province of Serbia. The proportion of Albanians in the total population was approximately 90 per cent during the Kosovo crisis. The ethnical conflict was historically rooted, and it continued for more than half a century. The conflict intensified because of the revival of the Greater Serbian nationalism and ethnic policies, particularly the removal of the autonomy of Kosovo in 1989 that was implemented by Slobodan Milošević, the former president of the FRY. Inspired by the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, Kosovar Albanians started to pursue a formal statehood. They held a referendum on independence and elected Ibrahim Rugova as their unofficial president (Ker-Lindsay, 2009, p.11). The international community did not recognize the political pursuits of the Kosovar Albanians until the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) launched the first attack against a Serbian police patrol in 1996. The KLA, which was composed of separatist Albanian guerrillas, was initially labeled as terrorists by the US (BBC, 1998). It intensified the fights with Serbs and eventually controlled parts of the province.

Although Milošević insisted that the Kosovo issue was a domestic problem of Serbia, the international community decided to be involved in the crisis when it realized that this intra-state violence could become a civil war and spread to neighboring Macedonia. In 1998, the UNSC adopted three sanction-related resolutions against the FRY concerning Kosovo (Table 3). However, the civil war did not ease under the UNSC resolutions. In March 1999, NATO launched a bombing campaign against Serbia after the failure of negotiations and mediations initiated by the intervening countries between the Serbian government and the secessionists.¹⁷ This military action did not achieve the UNSC mandate and thus invoked numerous normative problems and debates. NATO members justified this military action as a humanitarian intervention, but some countries, particularly Russia and China, remained skeptical about the true intention behind this

17. Milošević rejected the Rambouillet Accord in early 1999.

Table 3. Voting records regarding the Kosovo Crisis in the UNSC (1998-1999)

Date	Resolution	Voting Summary	China's vote	Contents of the resolution
Mar. 31, 1998	1160	14, 1, 0	Abstention	To impose arms embargo against FRY including the Kosovo area.
Sept. 23, 1998	1199	14, 1, 0	Abstention	Call for ceasefire and dialogues among the parties concerned, and to require the Yugoslavian army to immediately stop all actions on civilians and to allow the EU watch group to conduct effective monitoring in Kosovo.
Oct. 24, 1998	1203	13, 2, 0 (China and Russia)	Abstention	The UNSC demands Yugoslavian government and Kosovar Albanian leadership to comply fully and swiftly with Resolutions 1160 and 1199 and cooperate fully with the OSCE Verification Mission in Kosovo and the NATO Air Verification Mission over Kosovo.
May 14, 1999	1239	13, 2, 0 (China and Russia)	Non-voting	To invite the UNHCR and other international humanitarian relief organizations to extend relief assistance to the internally displaced people in Kosovo, the Republic of Montenegro and other parts of the FRY, as well as other civilians affected by the ongoing crisis.
June 10, 1999	1244	14, 1, 0	Abstention	To approve of the agreement between Yugoslavia and NATO.

Source: Wu, (2010, p. 77), adjusted by the author. Official Document System (ODS) of the United Nations; UN Bibliographic Information System (UNBISnet).

Note: voting is written as "aye, abstention (non-voting), and veto."

military attack.

China did not support the international interventions in Kosovo when the UNSC put this issue on the agenda. The Chinese delegations to the UN denied the international character of the situation in Kosovo and emphasized that the UNSC interference did not conform to its principled position: "Kosovo crisis should be resolved through negotiations between both parties concerned on the basis of the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the FRY" (UNSC, 1998a). China repeated this opinion regularly in the UN and sequentially cast abstentions from the voting of all UNSC resolutions relevant to Kosovo. It doubted the intervening states' pretext of dealing with a humanitarian crisis (UN General Assembly, 1998, p.22) and was concerned that the outcome of the involvement would set a bad precedent in the future for intervention in

secessionist movements of sovereign states under the guise of humanitarian purpose (UNSC, 1998b). The Kosovo crisis is strongly associated with China's domestic concerns that movements of secessionists, such as the Tibetan and Uyghur separatist, would likely result in foreign interventions and would challenge China's sovereignty. Despite China's sympathy for the FRY, the unanimity of the international community softened China's intransigence on the UNSC sanctions over the Kosovo crisis, as exemplified by Resolutions 1160 and 1199.

Nevertheless, China's opposition to NATO's proposal of military intervention in Kosovo was adamant, and its resistance was explicitly expressed when its argument was shared by Russia, another great power. Before the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1203, which avoided an outright threat to use force against the FRY, China and Russia threatened to veto a resolution that would have permitted military action by NATO (Ibrahim, 1998). During the UNSC debate on Resolution 1203, China explained its position as follows: "NATO's threat of military action constituted unlawful interference in the FRY's internal affairs, and it condemned NATO for acting without consulting with or seeking the authorization of the UNSC" (Davis, 2011, p.248). Even if the easing language about the threat of using force mollified the two countries, China and Russia still abstained from voting on Resolution 1203. For China, the resolution "does not entail any authorization of using force or threatens to use force against the FRY" (UNSC, 1998c).¹⁸

China immediately condemned NATO's bombing campaign in the FRY in March 1999. Through a strongly worded front-page commentary in *People's Daily*, the Chinese media considered NATO's military action to be "brazenly and brutally trampling on the UN Charter and violating its own principle of self-defense" (Mowbray, 1999). The Chinese government resonated the comments and denounced NATO's intervention as a violation of the accepted international law in the March 24, 1999 UNSC meeting (UNSC, 1999a). Unlike the Russian opinion of the NATO strikes being an "open aggression" as stated by former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, China criticized the illegality of the intervention that bypassed the UNSC and the Western propensity to power politics, that is, the strong bullying the weak (UNSC, 1999a). Moreover, China was in favor of a UNSC draft resolution proposed by Russia that declared NATO's strikes as a violation of the UN Charter and "demanding an immediate halt to NATO's attacks and the resumption of negotiations," but this draft resolution was rejected through a vote

18. Qin Huasun, the Chinese delegate to the UN, made this statement after his abstention.

of 12 to 3 (UNSC, 1999b; *Waikato Times*, 1999). During the Kosovo War, the Chinese media sided with the FRY and focused on the suffering of the Serbs caused by the NATO's bombing (Poole, 1999).

China's denunciation of NATO's intervention in Kosovo culminated on May 7, 1999 when the US bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, leaving 3 journalists dead and 20 Chinese citizens injured. China then directed its anger toward the US. Anti-American protests intensified across the country shortly after the bombing. The Chinese government did not restrain this sentiment. Former Premier Li Peng even instigated animosity among the public by declaring that "the whole Chinese people is united in hatred of the common enemy— the US" (Yahuda, 2002, p.199). China then suspended all military exchange and human rights talks with the US (Kucharski, 2012, p.67). Almost all Chinese scholars attributed the motive of NATO's military intervention in Kosovo to US geopolitical interest. They pointed out that the military intervention in Kosovo was never a contingency (Guo, 1999; Zhai, 1999). Rather, it was a US conspiracy that used NATO to carry out hegemony and to impair Russia's geopolitical influence on the Balkans in the name of humanitarian intervention (Feng, 1999; Kong, 1999).

It should be noted that China played a marginal role in resolving the Kosovo crisis although its rhetoric was particularly striking. Russia's response to this specific issue affected China's perception and decision-making. Russia has centuries-old religious and cultural ties with the Serbs (Goshko, 1998). The Balkans is a historically "turbulent frontier" that Russia and European countries became embroiled in with interventions and conflicts.¹⁹ On May 14, 1999, when the UNSC used Resolution 1239 to invite humanitarian organizations to extend relief assistance to the refugees in the area, both China and Russia did not vote to express their disagreement. China did not participate in the negotiations among the concerned parties during the Kosovo crisis. Russia attended the mediations but failed to deter the NATO's military attack. In May 1999, Russia continued the mediation between the FRY and the intervening countries through the G8 and dialogues with Milošević. Moscow made a compromise to other intervening countries, and it successfully persuaded Serbia to withdraw all forces from Kosovo and allow the UN civil mission and the Kosovo Protection Force, which was controlled by NATO, to enter the province. Thus, Russia cast an affirmative vote on the consequential UNSC Resolution 1244. Without Russia's support, China

19. Woodward (2013) applied this concept of the "turbulent frontier" to describe foreign interventions in the Balkan theatre. The concept was originally used by Galbraith (1960) to explain the British imperial expansion in the mid-19th century.

Table 4. Causal mechanism of China's foreign policy to the Kosovo Crisis

International factor		Domestic factor		Outcome	Instances
International consensus	→	Regime survival (security and reputation)— indirectly concerned Domestic issues (ethnic secessionists)— directly concerned	→	Reluctant compromise	Res. 1160, 1199, 1244.
International dissent (NATO led by US VS. Russia)	→	Regime survival (security and reputation)— directly concerned Domestic issues (ethnic secessionists)— directly concerned	→	Resistance	Res.1203, 1239; draft resolution proposed by Russia.

Source: made by author.

abstained from voting on the resolution but kept its fierce disapproving position in rhetoric.²⁰

China's response to the interventions in Kosovo was unprecedentedly vehement and its discourse was consistent, insisting on the principle of non-intervention. As China has a similar domestic problem to that of Kosovo, it was wary of establishing a precedent that would legitimately permit foreign interventions in affairs of states caused by ethnic problems.²¹ From China's perspective, the military intervention in Kosovo posed a threat, at least a potential threat, to its sovereignty and security. However, it also made a compromise to certain international interventions, such as UNSC sanctions, as consensus had been reached in the international community. China's attitude became recalcitrant to the interventions when seconded by Russia. China's reiteration of the illegality of the NATO military interventions revealed its concern about the decreased authority of the UN challenged by the power politics of Western countries. China's criticism directly shifted to the US since the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. China was not tolerant to the US behavior that not only challenged the security system in which China enjoyed great power status but also harmed China's reputation and the security of Chinese citizens. Comparably, the economic factor played a small role in China's decision-making process as China intensely

20. Shen Guofan stated in the UNSC meeting, "NATO created an extremely dangerous precedent in the history of international relations...In essence, the 'human rights over sovereignty' theory serves to infringe upon the sovereignty of other States and to promote hegemonism under the purposes and principles of the UN Charter" (UNSC, 1999c).

21. The Chinese delegate highlighted the scope of issues addressed by the UNSC in the meeting after the Resolution 1244 has passed, "Fundamentally speaking, ethnic problems within a State should be settled in a proper manner by its own Government and people, through the adoption of sound policies. They must not be used as an excuse for external intervention, much less used by foreign States as an excuse for the use of force" (UNSC, 1999c, pp.8-9).

opposed the US even with the risk of potential economic loss during the negotiation on China entering the WTO. This crisis consequently prompted and deepened the strategic cooperation between China and Russia.

Case Two: The Iraq War (2002-2003)

The Iraq War is undoubtedly an international affair that received considerable international attention. It showed the maximum of the unconstrained power of the US and symbolized neo-interventionism at that time. The military intervention in Iraq did not obtain authorization from the UNSC and lacked advocates except for the UK and a few other countries. The Iraq War caused a dilemma in China's foreign policy. On the one hand, China would likely sacrifice its economic interest if it intransigently resisted the US behavior by advocating the principle of non-intervention, as the US had already strengthened its presence in the Middle East through the war and would probably cut off China's energy supply from Iraq once tension in the bilateral relationship escalated. On the other hand, the Iraq War could cause an insecure and unstable situation in the region, which would eventually affect the economic and security interests of China. Thus, examining how China used the non-intervention policy in the face of the Iraq War and why Beijing had distinct responses to the issue is worthwhile.

The problems of Iraq, including the unwelcome regime and weapons of mass destruction (WMD), had perplexed the US for many years. Former US President George W. Bush planned to use force to oust the Saddam regime when he took office in 2001. The US pushed the UN to interfere in Iraq through the reasons that the Iraqi government possessed WMD and that Iraq did not cooperate with the inspections conducted by the United Nations Special Commission and International Atomic Energy Agency.²² UNSC members engaged in the issue of the Iraqi WMD but were not convinced of the necessity and justification of using force. The efforts of the US and the UK to gain the support of the UNSC to use force in Iraq failed, but it did not stop the two countries from waging war on Iraq in March 2003.

The intensive negotiations and debates continued when the US released the

22. In 1986 an Australian scientist first discovered that the Iraqi government developed WMD. Iraq's WMD ambition was confirmed when Saddam used chemical weapons in Halabjia in 1988. The UNSC interfered in this issue by imposing a series of sanctions to punish Iraq's objective and to force the Iraqi government to eradicate its WMD since the aftermath of the Gulf War (Malone, 2006, pp.152-184).

information that the Iraqi government had continued its WMD program and had likely developed the nuclear capability. The Bush administration was enthusiastic to overthrow the Saddam regime by force, and the US induced the P5 not to hinder the planned military intervention in Iraq in the UN (*The Associated Press, 2002*). However, France and Russia tried to block the UN approval and preferred to address the WMD issue in Iraq through political talks and mediation (Coker, 2002). Recognizing the rift that emerged in the UNSC, Saddam tried to gain P5 support against US military actions. China conveyed its disapproval of the war option after a meeting between former Chinese foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan and his Iraqi counterpart Naji Sabri, and persuaded Iraq to implement the UN resolutions calling for WMD inspections (*Morning Star, 2002*).

China's responses toward the US plan to attack Iraq were relatively moderate, at least not as harsh as those of the Europeans. France, Germany, and Russia rather than China announced their strong opposition to the US proposal after Bush pursued a resolution to conduct a military intervention in Iraq for its failure to disarm before the General Assembly (Paul, 2005, p.65). The US and the UK introduced three resolution drafts to the UNSC in October and November 2002 that implicitly authorized the use of force. France and Russia also issued drafts regarding Iraq in the UNSC.²³ Both advocates and opponents of military intervention made a compromise. The UNSC then unanimously approved Resolution 1441 with ambiguous language but with no threat of using force (UNSC, 2002a).²⁴ No evidence could be found that China used its veto power to threaten the US. China, taking the stance of France and Russia, maintained that the resolution "no longer includes automaticity for authorizing the use of force" (UNSC, 2002b).

Despite a vigorous opposition from the international community, the US insisted on using force in Iraq, asserting that Iraq still possessed WMD, and thus violated Resolution 1441 (Paul, 2005, p.66).²⁵ France, Germany, and Russia respectively released the signals that they would block the military action in the UN (Borger, MacAskill, & Tisdall, 2003; Peel, 2003). China expressed that its position was close to that of France on January 23, 2003 (Ambrose, 2003). On

23. See the relevant archive on the website *UN Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq*, available at <http://www.casi.org.uk/info/scriraq.html>.

24. Note that the two sides harbored different expectations to UNSC involvement and interpreted the Resolution 1441 in different ways. The details see Malone (2006, p.168).

25. Former French President Chirac's personal envoy was given a clear signal that the US was intent on a military solution when meeting with the US National security Adviser Rice (Peel, 2003).

February 10, 2003, China then supported the joint statement issued by these three countries that called for prompting weapons inspection and a concerted effort to disarm Iraq through peaceful means (Finn, 2003). Although the UN's chief weapons inspector Hans Blix confirmed in the UNSC that no evidence of WMD had been found on February 14, 2003, the US, UK, and Spain still drafted a resolution to the UNSC, announcing that "Iraq had failed its final opportunity to comply fully with resolution 1411" (Paul, 2005, p.66). On March 5, 2003, France, Germany, and Russia reacted that they would not pass the proposed resolution that authorized the use of force. China stated the same position as the three countries on the following day (Glennon, 2003, p.18).

China's response to the Iraq War was far from fierce. When the US invasion of Iraq started, China accused the US of "violating the UN charter and norms of international law" and appealed to the US to stop its military action, but it evaded the question of whether China would condemn the US in the UN (*Renmin Wang [People's Net]*, 2003). The Chinese government strictly controlled the public opinions at that time, such as by restraining its media from covering the comments of nationalistic rhetoric that could offend the US and by forbidding a protest against the war (Cheng, 2003). Former Chinese President Hu Jintao publicly set up China's position on the US-Iraq conflict in a high-level meeting that discussed the crisis in Iraq. As President Hu stated, "China was opposed to the US-led war" but "emphasized that China should avoid direct confrontation with the US" (Cheong, 2003). China did not subscribe to the military intervention imposed by foreign countries or international organization to topple the incumbent regime of the target state. Zhang Qiyue, former Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, expressed that China had always maintained that international conflicts should not be addressed through military force (*PLA Daily*, 2004). Nevertheless, China refrained from condemning the US and merely called for a peaceful resolution of the Iraq issue through diplomatic means (Chih, 2011, p.145).

China's discourse on using force in Iraq was consistent. China insisted on addressing the Iraq issue through diplomacy under the UNSC framework to constrain the US and to deprive the US of legitimacy of using force (Nye, 2003, p.66). However, China did not directly challenge the US. In the process of the negotiation on the Iraq issue and the Iraq War, China did not play a significant role and did not lead the opposition, "leaving it to France to head up the awkward squad" (*The Irish Times*, 2003). France was the outspoken country that opposed the military intervention in Iraq. Russia and Germany cooperated with France,

and together they blocked the planning military acts of the Anglo-Saxon alliance. China expressed its preference for diplomatic method and its similar position to France once Paris had the initiative to impede the use of force. China's being in favor of the other major powers and its disagreement with the US military interventions demonstrated its concern about the strengthened unilateralism of the US that would impair the authority of the UNSC and the international order based on the sovereign states system. In short, how the other second-tier major powers reacted to the US military intervention affected China's decision-making process to a large extent.

China ambiguously responded to the military intervention instead of showing an intransigent opposition. Although the presence of the US in the Middle East could generate an adverse effect on China's reputation and regional interests, the impact was indirect from the Chinese perspective (Zhang S., 2003). Economic development has been on top of China's political agenda, which is closely associated with the legitimacy of the current regime. In terms of resource importation, China was concerned that the US would disregard all the contracts for Iraqi oil exploration signed with Beijing if it antagonized the US. China was hesitant to oppose the US in this issue at the cost of its economic interest. Moreover, the concerns of its domestic issues were precluded. The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US lead to the anti-terrorism movements across the world. It was also a turning point in the Sino-American relations since the Kosovo war. China proactively participated in the movements and cooperated with the US. This participation partly accounted for China suffering from Islamic secessionist insurgents in Xinjiang. The US pursued China's modest stance on the US-led war by "designating the provincial Islamic group as a terrorist organization" (*The Global and Mail*, 2002). Furthermore, China obtained the verbal promise of the US that Washington would not back Taiwan's independence in exchange for China's mild anti-war stance (Ma, 2003). In conclusion, China's domestic concerns, particularly its economic development and domestic issues, constrained its foreign

Table 5. Causal mechanism of China's foreign policy to the Iraq war

International factors		Domestic factors		Outcomes
International compromise and dissent (US and UK VS France and Russia)	→	Regime survival (security and reputation) —indirectly concerned	→	Reluctant compromise
		Economic development (resource import)— directly concerned		
		Domestic issues (terrorism and Taiwan issues)— directly concerned		

Source: author

policy as regards the issue and diluted its divergent attitude on the US.

Case Three: The Crimean Issue (February – June 2014)

The Crimean issue has recently become a focal point in international affairs. Russia's military intervention in Ukraine over the Crimean issue clearly violates the norm of sovereignty, especially the respect for territorial integrity and the principle of non-intervention. However, Russia has justified its military intervention as protecting the Russians and its national interest in this region. China's responses and the underlying factors of its foreign policy in the Crimean crisis and IMI bear scrutiny. China's reactions reveal how it formulates its foreign policy when facing an illegal military intervention conducted by a like-minded great power and an issue intimately related to its domestic concerns. Therefore, the examination of China's foreign policy to the Crimean issues shows the extent to which Beijing adheres to its diplomatic principle of non-intervention and what its diplomatic priorities are.

The Crimean issue in 2014 was directly aroused by the Ukrainian revolution that took place after a series of insurgencies caused by the termination of an agreement on closer trade ties with the European Union (EU) by the Ukrainian government in November 2013. Viktor Yanukovich, the pro-Russian President of Ukraine, was deposed by the parliament and fled to Russia in February 2014. Dissatisfied with the new government, pro-Russian gunmen seized the building of Crimea's parliament on February 27, 2014. On the same day, Sergey Aksyonov, a pro-Russian politician in Ukraine, was selected by the Crimean parliament as the new Prime Minister. He then declared the holding of a referendum on the Crimean autonomy. On February 28, unidentified militants occupied two international airports in the Crimean Peninsula, and Russia dispatched armored vehicles to the region in the name of protecting the security of the Black Sea fleet stationed in Sevastopol.²⁶ Russia's parliament ratified Vladimir Putin's request to employ force on Ukraine to protect Russian interests, which started Russia's military intervention with interior legitimacy in Ukraine. Crimea's secession referendum on whether or not to rejoin Russia was passed with 97 per cent affirmative votes on March 16.²⁷ On March 18, Russia signed the formal bill to

26. Ukraine minister accused Russia of seizing the airports (Sekretarev, 2014). Russia stated that any movements of the Black Sea Fleet "did not require any coordination" (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2014).

27. Russia stated it would support Crimea if the region votes to leave Ukraine. See BBC NEWS- Ukraine Crisis Timeline, available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>.

absorb the Crimean Peninsula to the Russian Federation.²⁸

Despite the fact that the Ukrainian crisis led to the Crimean issue, historical, ethnical, and geopolitical issues complicated the secession of Crimea. Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire in 1783 and remained part of Russia until 1954 when it was transferred to Ukraine under Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev during the commemoration of the 300th anniversary of Ukraine becoming part of the Tsardom of Russia. The severe national policy in the early 20th century caused the tartars, the original residents of Crimea, to be expelled. A large number of Russians immigrated to this area and became the ethnic majority, and ethnic Russians account for approximately 60 per cent of the total population in Crimea. Russian is the daily language in Crimea, and more than 70 per cent of residents consider Russian as their native language. People of Crimea have longed for the return to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union because of their strong ethnical ties to Russia. Thus, Russia played the Crimea card to manipulate its relationship with Ukraine after the Cold War.²⁹ Crimea is strategically significant to Russia because of the Black Sea Fleet, Russia's naval base, stationed in the port of Sevastopol (Schwartz, 2014). Thus, the majority of Russian people widely supported the government's military action to annex Crimea (Pew Research, 2014).

In the aftermath of the military intervention in Ukraine, countries from the international community expressed their diverse concerns. For instance, the US condemned Russia's aggression and imposed sanctions against the persons they considered to have contributed to the situation in Ukraine and threatened the territorial integrity of Ukraine (US Department of State, 2014). The EU and its member countries respectively took similar steps to impose sanctions against Russia.³⁰ The US submitted a draft resolution to the UNSC one day prior to the referendum to call for the recognition of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the invalidity of the referendum without citing Chapter VII of the UN Charter (UNSC, 2014a). The draft resolution was not adopted because of Russia's veto. However, the non-binding draft resolution with similar contents was approved with 100 affirmative votes, 58 abstentions, and 11 vetoes in the UN General

28. This article takes the military act of Russia in Ukraine over the Crimean Peninsula as a military intervention rather an aggressive annexation as the Crimean people decided to join Russia by referendum.

29. Crimea was an autonomous republic under the Ukraine government. It was failed to separate from Ukraine before 2014 majorly because of lacking Russia's support.

30. For reference, see the blog- Russian Sanctions Update by Baker and McKenzie, available at <http://www.bakermckenzie.com/sanctionsnews/>.

Assembly in March 2014 (UN General Assembly, 2014a).

China's response to the illegal intervention was calm and ambiguous. It neither condemned Russia's military action nor chose the stand of either Russia or the West. China eschewed commenting on Russia's military intervention by applying the principle of non-intervention (China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs [CFM], 2014). Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that "nothing could be constructed as support for Russia" in a phone conversation with Putin on March 4 (Pei, 2014). In addition, China abstained from voting on the draft resolutions in the UNSC and the UN General Assembly. Liu Jieyi, Permanent Representative of China to the UN, said after its abstention in the UNSC that China "sought a balanced solution to the conflict within a framework of law and order" and called on the relevant parties not to do any actions that would further escalate the conflict (UNSC, 2014b). He underlined China's impartial approach to the issue of Ukraine and its preference for resolving the problem in the manner of dialogues in the UN General Assembly on March 25 (UN General Assembly, 2014b). China's abstentions appeared neutral, but they implicitly demonstrated that Beijing relented to Russia's military actions.

China's political pronouncement was consistent with the principle of non-intervention, but its attitude and behavior were incongruent with the discourse. Its response was also at odds with that to the Kosovo crisis, which is inherently similar toward the Crimea issue. However, China's foreign policy to this issue was rational and flexible. First, Russia's military intervention violated the international norm enshrined in international treaties particularly composed of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Budapest Memorandum.³¹ China was hardly in favor of this infringement, as the public support for Russia must dramatically discredit its pronounced commitment to the non-intervention policy. Second, China could not agree with Russia's use of force, a foreign military intervention to support the ethnic secessionism in other counties. For example, China Central Television (CCTV) did not emphasize the Russian propaganda but highlighted the efforts the US and Germany made to alleviate the situation during the Ukrainian crisis (Francis, 2014). Therefore, China took a cautious approach to Russia's behavior. On the one hand, China was reluctant to side with

31. In 1994, three countries of the US, the UK, and Russia and Ukraine achieved an agreement required by former Ukraine President Kuchma, and the three countries' president or Prime Minister personally signed the Budapest Memorandum. The three countries pledged to "respect Ukrainian independence and sovereignty and its existing borders", and "to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine" (Onyschuk, 2014).

Table 6. Causal mechanism of China's foreign policy to the Crimea issue

International factors		Domestic factors		Outcomes
International dissent (Western countries VS Russia)	→	Regime survival (security and reputation)— directly concerned Economic development (energy demands)— directly concerned Domestic issues— strongly relevant but indirectly concerned	→	Tolerance

Source: author

the West, especially with the US, to alienate Moscow. From China's perspective, the Ukrainian crisis was a consequence of the geopolitical competition between the West and Russia (He, 2014; Zhang W., 2014). Thus, the Chinese officials expressed China's tolerance to the Russian intervention by highlighting the backdrop of the issue and deploring the violence without designating the specific conductors (*Xinhua Wang [Xinhua Net]*, 2014).³²

Domestic factors also affected China's calculation of cost and benefit in the Crimean issue. First, its neighboring countries and the US have pressured China for its assertiveness in claiming the disputed territories in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. A potentially strategic cooperation with Russia will be beneficial for China to deter the US. Second, the importation of natural gas from Russia will ease China's increasing pressure from energy demands. Russia's activities in the aftermath of the Crimean issue have satisfied China's expectations. On May 20, 2014, Putin officially visited China. In the following day, the presidents of the two countries attended the signing ceremony of the cooperation of importing natural gas from Russia to China, an agreement that China and Russia had negotiated for almost 2 decades. Russia made a great concession on the price of natural gas, as Putin was eager to complete this agenda during his visit; this concession depicted Russia's strategic intention of guaranteeing China's moderate position by offering special incentives to attract Beijing.³³ China did not presume that the military action on Crimea would be repeated in China given that Russia needed its political support. China's concern about the potential foreign intervention caused by ethnic secessionism could be excluded.

32. Chinese diplomatic officials used the Chinese words, *shichu youyin* (事出有因) and *qianze baoli* (谴责暴力), to comment the Crimea issue.

33. Although the two countries did not publicize the ultimate price of natural gas, Putin made a joke to China's official who visited Russia that the Chinese negotiators drank a great amount of blood of their Russian counterparts (*International Business Times*, 2014).

Conclusion

China's non-intervention policy has incrementally changed in the post-Cold War period, albeit remaining flexible and pragmatic. Its approaches to military intervention are typical and evident. The scope of acceptable interventions was broadened in China's perception because of its gradually increasing overseas interest. Nevertheless, China did not abandon its non-intervention policy. Rather, it only refrained from participating in military interventions and judged them by applying the principle of non-intervention. China's responses to certain interventions with international controversy or even illegality are prudent. Although China is one of the P5 in the UNSC, it plays a marginal role in addressing certain international affairs to which it does not have a high level of commitment. China can only do so much to counter the military intervention beyond the UN. Nevertheless, because of its growing power, China's attitude also influences the intention of intervening countries.

In general, China does not approve of the use of force in resolving international conflicts and problems. Its political discourse is coherent in facing various illegal interventions. China continuously presents its adherence to the principle of non-intervention and prefers to address international issues through political dialogues. However, China's responses to illegal interventions vary in different degrees, as depicted by its attitude, such as commenting on specific interventions, and its behavior, such as the votes it cast in the UN framework regarding intervention. China's attitude and behavior as regards illegal intervention depend on the responses of the major powers and the correlation of the issue with its domestic concerns. China tends to comply with the international consensus, albeit reluctantly. Under the condition that a rift has occurred in the international community, China's responses will be ambiguous. China's perceptions of how intervention influences its national interests shape the extent to which it will make a compromise.

Three cases have been discussed to prove the arguments in this article. Three cases belong to the category of illegal intervention, but the analyses have not been limited to this characteristic. Discussions on these cases underline the determining role of international factors in forming China's non-intervention policy. The argument and theoretical framework presented in this article have several contributions to the literature. The argument expands our knowledge of China's foreign policy formulation by specifying the conditions under which China is likely to conform to the principle of non-intervention and under which it tends

to override the principle when facing international intervention. The framework of the causal mechanism provided in this article can be applied to examine China's foreign policy. It will help us obtain a clearer picture of China's diplomatic attitude and behavior toward IMI, especially toward illegal intervention. Furthermore, this article advances the application of the neoclassical realism in foreign policy analysis.

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