

**THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE:
CHINA'S RESPONSE AND IMPLICATIONS**

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Executive Summary

1. China's reactions to the unfolding crisis in Ukraine can largely be described as relatively muted and cautious, guided by the objective of not taking sides and not offending any country.
2. China has avoided taking the side of the European Union (EU), the US and Ukraine in condemning Russia's actions in Ukraine, including its annexation of Crimea.
3. China does not wish to offend Russia. In fact, it wants to strengthen ties with Russia which have been described as "one of the most important in the world" and also "the best one between major powers".
4. China has also refrained from endorsing Russia's actions as it would damage China's relations with the EU, the US and Ukraine.
5. The US is central to Chinese President Xi Jinping's efforts to build a new model of big powers relationship. The EU is important to China's efforts to build a multi-polar world. The two are also working towards an investment agreement.
6. As for Ukraine, China wants to deepen its relations in key areas such as agriculture, energy, resources, infrastructure, and aviation and aerospace. Ukraine's importance to China goes beyond its small size.
7. While adhering to a balanced approach, there were noticeable shifts in emphasis in China's position as events in Ukraine unfolded.
8. Before Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich fled Kyiv in February 2014, China's stance was for various political players in Ukraine to sort out their differences amicably and restore normalcy.

9. When pro-Russian forces began to take over key installations in Crimea in late February 2014, China stressed more of its non-interference policy while calling on the relevant parties to work towards a political settlement.
10. China's appeal to non-interference is a reaffirmation of its long-standing position of not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries.
11. It can further be regarded as an implicit criticism of the EU's efforts to sign an association agreement with Ukraine to draw Ukraine into the EU camp. It can also be interpreted as a veiled criticism of Russia's intervention in Ukraine.
12. A key lesson from the Ukrainian crisis is that China would need to build up a strong military and be prepared to use it should the situation warrants just as Russia has demonstrated in Crimea.
13. Furthermore, just as China has emphasized its principle of non-interference in Ukraine, it would also expect other countries to adhere even more closely to the same principle of non-interference in China's internal affairs.