

International Law and Institutions in Helping Resolve Tensions Between Great Powers

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Abstract: This paper aims to provide a variety of methods to help solve tensions between great powers by using international law and institutions. It is widely acknowledged that many global tensions between great powers will significantly influence the whole world and must be solved instantly. We still know little about resolving tensions by using international law and institutions. By analyzing current global events and the functions of international institutions like the WTO and the UN Security Council, the paper points out the flaws in international organizations and the need for improvements. The article also views the significance of states as a middle power to resolve tensions. This paper presents an important message that there are plenty of weaknesses in the international system; the conflicts between great power would be dealt with more efficiently and effectively if international institutions and international law made some refinements.

Keywords: International law, international institutions, tensions

1. Introduction

International relations have been shaped by the interactions between great powers, and conflicts between these powers have been a significant driver of global instability. Previous research shows that members of the international community work to reduce these tensions. However, reforms are still necessary to achieve peace. To minimize conflicts between great powers more effectively, the paper is intended to provide specific measures in various sectors by analyzing three main areas: international institutions, specific fields, and intermediary states. The importance of these areas in solving the tensions between powers is discussed, and the solution is addressed in this paper. The paper includes (a) the reform of the WTO, the United Nations Security Council, and the United Nations General Assembly; (b) specific actions in artificial intelligence and economic sanctions; (c) the role of intermediary states.

2. Flaws and reforms of the WTO

2.1. Introduction to the WTO and U.S.-China trade war

The outbreak of the U.S.-China trade war in 2018 has reshaped the global economic order and revealed flaws in the WTO system. As a pivotal organization of international society, the WTO has become less influential and needs to be reformed urgently.

The WTO is a global forum used for deliberation, negotiating, monitoring, and enforcing rules on trade policies that have caused adverse cross-border spillovers [1]. A rudimentary goal of the WTO is to reduce conflicts between States. Nevertheless, the WTO has not done its job as an umpire in the U.S.-China trade war [2].

During the U.S.-China trade war, the two States have implemented unilateral measures on each other against the WTO rules [3]. Although the WTO has made some efforts to settle the trade war, the outcome is pessimistic.

2.2. Efforts taken at the WTO to resolve the U.S.-China trade war

Before 2018, the WTO made contributions to resolving the U.S.-China trade war. For instance, China was ruled against by the WTO in 2008, requiring the elimination of the offending tariffs. In September 2009, China suffered an unsuccessful appeal and abolished its content-based auto import trade policy [4].

After 2018, both States brought litigations to the WTO. The U.S. brought litigation against China to the WTO system about protecting intellectual property in March 2018 [5]. China has also brought two cases of the U.S. to criticize its tariff measures [6]. However, the retaliations and counterretaliations have been taken by both States without recourse to the WTO [7].

The poor efforts illustrate the WTO's weaknesses and its reform urgency.

2.3. The flaws of the WTO underlying the U.S.-China trade war

The breaches of the WTO rule by each State and little efforts made by the WTO have revealed several weaknesses in the WTO during the U.S.-China trade war.

2.3.1. Ambiguous Definition of developing country status

During the trade war, the U.S. has shown dissatisfaction with China's developing country status and SDT and complained about the WTO's unclear standards of developing countries [8].

SDT denotes that advanced emerging economies can provide less than full reciprocity in negotiations of trades and offer more freedom for them to utilize specific trade policies than countries with high income [9]. Through SDT, developing countries like China can gain more benefits than developed countries.

The WTO has followed the practice of 'self-designation' wherein members self-identify as developing countries [10]. However, this measure is unlikely to adapt to the current international society.

2.3.2. Inadequate monetary compensation

As a result of the deficiency in monetary compensation in the WTO, both States must take action against the WTO rules to prevent further economic loss [11].

The negotiated compensation in the WTO is too limited. The loss of economy suffered by the complainant before the problem was raised at the WTO and during the pendency of the trial before its final decision cannot be corrected [12].

2.3.3. Crisis of the Appellate Body

The WTO Appellate Body came to a demise in December 2019 because of the denial of the U.S. to appoint new WTO Appellate Body members by claiming the Appellate Body had executed its mandate [13]. This results in many proceedings during the U.S.-China trade war or other disputes hanging in the air.

2.3.4. Unclear limitation of national security exception

During the trade war, the U.S. argued that China had threatened the national security of the U.S. and, therefore, used the national security exception as the legitimacy of imposing tariffs [14].

There is neither a precise range of the national security exception nor enough case law to demonstrate the proper use of the exception, which leads to a possibility for WTO members to abuse the national security exception [15].

2.4. Suggestions on the WTO reforms

According to the flaws above, the WTO reform is of great urgency. The reform should consider the following suggestions.

2.4.1. An Alternative of the Appellate Body

Because it is impossible to revive the Appellate Body quickly, the WTO needs to find a replacement for the Appellate Body [16].

The WTO can establish an arbitration tribunal as a formal negotiation platform [17]. In this way, The WTO may limit dispute settlement to one stage, the single-stage process [18]. The NAFTA has already set up an arbitration tribunal to solve the disputes in investment, which can be an exemplification for the WTO [19]. By setting up another dispute-solving system, cases hanging in the air can be solved, and the dispute settlement process in the WTO can be accelerated.

2.4.2. Improving transparency of information

The WTO should improve its transparency by encouraging greater use of cross-notification and assisting WTO members in collecting data [20]. Through the reform, the WTO can help its members collect more complete information about each other. This way, litigations about the lack of notification will decrease, and the relationship between WTO members will be more harmonious.

2.4.3. Retrospective financial compensation

By putting a retrospective financial compensatory remedy into the WTO dispute settlement mechanism, the economic loss of the complainant before the problem is put forward at the WTO can be compensated [21,22].

Providing countries with retrospective monetary compensation can increase equity for the international economic order. It provides access to developing countries to receive adequate reparation instead of using weak retaliation against concrete unilateral measures taken by developed countries. Also, the prestige of the WTO will improve, as fewer countries will use unilateral actions because of more compensation.

The retrospective financial compensation has already proved its feasibility. Some FTAs have incorporated it as a remedy in their agreement, which significantly references the WTO [23]. Besides, the WTO's former arbitral award of retrospective monetary compensation against the U.S. in favor of the European Union [24] also illustrates the possibility and willingness of the WTO to apply this

remedy.

2.5. Conclusion to reforms of the WTO

The WTO has revealed flaws in its rules and the dispute settlement system during the trade war. The article has come up with three solutions to cover these flaws. An arbitration tribunal and more transparent information will compensate for the temporary stop of the Appellate Body; the retrospective financial compensation would form a more beneficial and stricter compensational system. All these solutions can increase the WTO's credibility and its operation's effectiveness.

3. UN Security Council's Structural Reform

3.1. Introduction to UNSC

During the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the council's role was often doubted. Russia vetoed the board's resolution, and council members claimed it was "deplorable but inevitable." In this case, the UN security council could not eliminate the raging war and crisis.

As the security council was set in 1946, having the primary obligation of "maintaining international peace and security [25]." Even though it adopted some of the points that led to the lack of success of the League of Nations, like there had to be one representative of each country at the UN to resolve emergencies, it still had some serious issues that needed to be fixed. It has failed several times in history to promote world peace. Therefore, the failure of the UNSC to address the Russia-Ukraine war is evidence of the need for structural reform of the Council, and the reform should be focused on adjusting the veto and the membership of the members who are not permanent.

3.2. The NSC's failure to address the Russia-Ukraine war

The failure of the Security Council during the Russia-Ukraine conflict was directly related to the veto of Russia. It was claimed that the drafted solution of ending the confrontation, even though it "was backed by ten of fifteen of the council members" and "Four members abstained [26]", meant that no country was in favor of the actions of Russia despite Russia itself. However, as Russia vetoed the whole efforts against the war, all the opinions of the other countries were omitted. This resulted in the proposal not being brought into action, thus leading to the situation.

3.3. Other examples of UN Security Council failure

3.3.1. US Invasion of Iraq

The UNSC has been failing since a long time ago. In the U.S-Iraq war, the U.S. claimed that Iraq hid weapons of mass destruction and stated that Saddam Huseyn was hiding the AL-Queada members inside Iraq. Despite U.S., Britain, and Spain, all countries voted against the act during the U.N security council meeting. However, the war raged for eight years, causing thousands of people to die. No evidence of mass-destruction weapons was found, and neither does the support from Huseyn. The U.N Secretary General, Kofi Atta Anna insisted that the act of the U.S was illegal [27]. The U.S. invading Iraq was an unlawful war: without the support of most countries around the globe, without the recognition from either the security council or any means of international law. However, the UNSC was still unable to stop the raging war, which caused millions of people to lose their homes. Therefore, it could be indicated that UNSC could not step back for the rights of the minor powers.

3.3.2. Syria

Adding on to that, the Syrian war was also a similar case. During the Syrian civil war, the Security Council also failed to maintain peace in that area. China and Russia vetoed the proposal of the Security Council due to the considerations of their profits [28]. In this case, the opposing side, who had the States on their back, and China backed up the government's army. Both sides were accused of Murders, assassins, executions beyond the law, and tortures. Even though a supervision project is set in Syria to cease the bloodshed, violence is still present in Syria until recent days. This example illustrated that the UNSC was ineffective when dealing with crises within only the range of one country. Therefore, it could be concluded that the power of the UNSC was so limited that it failed to negotiate between the major forces to promote peace in one area.

Therefore, the council needed several ways to reform.

3.4. Proposals for reform

First, veto should be discussed. As vetoes mainly consider the profits of the five permanent members, the goods of the small countries are often omitted. Bans are pretty commonly used: until 2023, there had been 285 vetoes added up in total (the Soviet Union and Russia combined 117 times, U.S. 82 times, Britain 34 times, China 17 times, and France 16 times). This usage of vetoes was closely related to the choices of raging a war: Russia used bans against the peace treaties in the Russia-Georgia war, Crimea, and Syria crises. Also, the war between the United States and Iraq should be considered. The overuse of vetoes seriously harmed the rights of the countries with less military power and voice in the international world. Therefore, there should be restrictions on the number of bans used or the topic within the range of the country that could use the veto. For example, if there was an accusation toward a country, such as Russia, during the Russia-Ukraine war or the U.S. during the U.S-Iraq war, these countries should not be allowed to veto. This action could prevent veto from being used to rage a war forcefully.

Second, the number of countries within the security council should be reformed too. There are only 15 members on the board, yet UN has 196 members. The few states could not correctly represent the need of the members. Even though it was better than the times during 1946-1965, when there were only six non-permanent members within it, it still cannot correctly represent the countries among the globes. Also, there is a significant problem of the unbalanced number of countries' participation for non-permanent members. Countries that were more powerful and had a more critical regional influence, such as Japan (24 times), Brazil (22 times), and Argentina (21 times). These countries have enough power and could use the UNSC to extend their regional influence, thus promoting their benefits. However, for countries stuck in poverty, war, and famine, there is no chance for them to reveal their needs. Countries such as Yemen (2 times), Thailand (2 times), and Liberia (1 time). As the demand of these countries could not be correctly expressed, the urgency of the reformation of the UNSC should be brought up for discussion immediately.

3.5. Conclusion to structural reform of the UN Security Council

Therefore, for all these reasons, the number of states should be increased to an amount in which all the countries- at least most of the countries- rights could be correctly represented, and the right of vetoes should be vigorously restricted. As these processes are done, I believe the UNSC could better promote global equity and peace and meet more of the demands of the more minor powers.

4. the UN General Assembly should be given more powers to address political and military conflicts between countries

4.1. Introduction

The Russia-Ukraine Conflict is the most significant military conflict to erupt on the continent since World War II in the past years. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has caused many global problems, including shortages in the food supply chain [29] and the fastest population movement since World War II [30]. Therefore, mediation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict as soon as possible is an issue of great theoretical and practical significance.

Considering what the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly have done in the past years, the UN Security Council has been limited in some ways. Thus, the UN Security Council cannot act on the Russia-Ukraine Conflict. Thus, given that the SC cannot work on Russia- Ukraine Conflict, the UN General Assembly should be given more powers to address political and military conflicts between countries.

Based on this thesis, the paper will focus on the research question: What role could the UN Security Council or UN General Assembly play in resolving the Russia-Ukraine conflict? First, the essay will describe the powers and functions of the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly. Next, the paper will explore the actions of these two organizations in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and assess the impact of their actions. Finally, this essay will provide appropriate solutions to solve the UN's dilemma of resolving the Russia-Ukraine Conflict.

4.2. Description of the difference between powers and roles

As mentioned, the essay will begin by describing the powers, roles, and differences of the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly.

Above all, the central role of the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council is similar. The UN Security Council's primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security, and the function of the UN General Assembly is to discuss and make recommendations on subjects that are beneficial for global security and stability. In addition, both have the power to introduce resolutions or issue statements. However, there are still some differences.

Firstly, the main difference in the role and power of the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly is the range of the matter under their justification. For example, the UN General Assembly has the broadest functions and roles. Still, it does not have the power to make recommendations on disputes being dealt with by the UN Security Council [31], and only UN Security Council has the right to act to maintain global peace and security [32].

Secondly, another difference is the way they introduce resolutions. In the UN Security Council, the five permanent members have a veto. Still, in the UN General Assembly, solutions to critical issues should be decided by more than two-thirds of the member states' votes [33]. Thus, it is rougher for the UN Security Council to introduce resolutions.

Thirdly, the last difference is the legal effect of their resolutions. For example, except for decisions about payments and budgets, members of states are not responsible for solutions of the UN General Assembly[34]. However, issue statements of the UN Security Council under Chapter VII are considered binding [35]. ON THE OTHER HAND, chapter VII of the UN Charter claims that it can deal with problems such as threats to the peace and acts of Aggression with actions [36].

In conclusion, in terms of power and role in resolving international disputes, the UN Security Council, with its permanent members consisting of the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France, and its veto power system, does not have the upper hand, even though its resolutions on international disputes have legal effect. Since the UN General Assembly's resolutions

are not legally binding and do not have the right to act to maintain international peace and security, its intervention in resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is also limited.

4.3. The information on what has been done in the Security Council on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and evaluation

As the order mentioned before, the essay will now explore what has been done by the Security Council on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and evaluate its efficiency. This paper deals only with the resolutions adopted or proposed by the UN Security Council itself.

Since February 24, 2022, the Russia-Ukraine Conflict has not been effectively resolved due to the UN Security Council's inefficient work; the cause of this situation is the composition of its permanent members and its one-vote veto system.

The UN Head of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, updated the Council that 5,718 people had died during Russia Ukraine Conflict until 7 September 2022 [37]. However, Russia still vetoed a resolution about the attempted annexation of the Ukrainian region by the UN Security Council on 30 September [38]. This means that as long as Russia remains one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, it can use its veto to reject any issue statement condemning its aggression.

Therefore, the veto system will be the key to the UN Security Council's efficiency. Indeed, Lesia Dorosh, Olha Ivasechko also suggested that in the past, the veto has been an obstacle to the UN Security Council's duty to maintain international peace [39]. However, it is worth noting that the veto reform also implies limiting the veto power of other permanent members. That's why Lesia Dorosh, Olha Ivasechko said that reform would be long and complex [40].

In conclusion, taking into account what the UN Security Council has done in the past year, it can be said that the UNSC has not introduced any resolution for the Russia-Ukraine conflict and will not make any progress for a long time to come because the veto will not change for a long time to come.

4.4. The information on what has been done at the UN General Assembly on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and evaluation

As the order mentioned before, the essay will now explore and evaluate what has been done in the UN General Assembly on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This paper deals only with the resolutions adopted or proposed by the UN General Assembly.

Over the past year, the UN General Assembly has been active in proposing effective resolutions to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Still, its contribution has been minimal and has had no impact on the process of Russia's aggression, mainly because of the meager legal effect of its resolution. For example, the UN General Assembly adopted an explanation about the "aggression" committed by Russia against Ukraine on Wednesday, 2 March [41]. But unfortunately, it did not stop Russia's step of aggression in the days that followed. However, nothing changed, even though Russia was condemned from all over the world for humanitarian reasons, but since the UN General Assembly's resolution has no legal effect on its member states, Russia did not receive any operational intervention from the UN until today.

Therefore, the lack of legal effect and its authoritative nature are the main reasons why the UN General Assembly resolution has been unable to reduce the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Many scholars call the UN General Assembly a chat room [42]. This is due to the contradictory nature of the UN Charter itself, as Jung-Gun Kim & John M. Howell suggest, while Articles 10, 11, and 12, and Articles 62 and 73 generally seem to announce that the United Nations, without any limitations, but Article 2 claims that it does not have [43]. Therefore, the legal effect of UN General Assembly's resolution has been one of the most debated issues in international jurisprudence.

Although the UN General Assembly has proposed many resolutions, its lack of legal and mandatory character has led to its never really being obeyed or bringing profound effects to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. At the same time, it will be difficult to clarify or redefine the legal nature of the UN General Assembly's resolutions due to the confusing nature of the UN charter itself.

4.5. Proposal to give the General Assembly more authority to address peace and security

As mentioned, reforming the UN Security Council will be long and arduous. As for the UN General Assembly, it is challenging to pursue its legal effect, so it would be a better choice to start from the characteristics of the UN General Assembly itself.

Amplifying the "world opinion" quality of UNGA's resolution is the best choice [44]. Roger Fisher has written that governments have to accept standards of behavior if they suffer lots of pressures

(1) the possibility of direct retaliation by the governments directly affected.

(2) the likelihood of an adverse reaction among allies and the nations less closely involved in the issue at hand.

(3) political criticism from a government's constituents [45].

The above three articles are reflected in the resolution of the UN General Assembly, which has 193 member countries, and every resolution adopted requires the approval of more than two-thirds of the countries. Therefore, each key represents a mainstream "world opinion", and when a government chooses not to follow this "world opinion", it needs to consider the above three consequences.

In conclusion, the UN General Assembly can emphasize the importance of "world opinion" to improve its resolutions' authority by giving more powers and, firstly, using this power by stirring up the emotions of the member countries and the psychological pressure caused by the strong resistance and violent reactions of other countries in the UN General Assembly. Secondly, using this power, as F. Blaine Sloan emphasizes, issuing the UN General Assembly's resolution can be transformed into a collective conscience to some extent [46], much like some customary laws in international law, such as avoiding genocide. This is a way to internalize the "world opinion" of the country's population and to put some pressure on the government of that country, as Gregory A. Raymond said it is easier to mobilize the body when a widely accepted rule is violated [47].

Gabriella Rosner Land noted that such programs have had success in the past. For example, direct attempts by the Soviet Union to extend its authority have been ever more strongly resisted by other UN members. This resistance has had a significant effect on the development of the Soviet Union [48].

4.6. Conclusion

Due to the veto power of the UN Security Council, it is necessary to give more power to the UN General Assembly. The best way is to amplify its property of "Natural opinion" to exert enough pressure and internalize the idea, which helps help international events such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

5. The imposition of economic sanctions is both illegal and counterproductive to resolving significant power conflicts

5.1. Introduction

Sanctions are measures the international community adopts through consultation, not punitive measures; sanctions are mandatory. However, from my point of view, I don't think sanctions play a role in maintaining international relations. On the contrary, sanctions usually aggravate the relations between countries and even intensify contradictions. This paper will start with the definition of

sanctions, discuss the ways of sanctions in different countries, compare the international contradictions in this period, and conclude that sanctions have not solved disputes in the international community.

5.2. Sanctions are not compatible with international law

5.2.1. The legal justifications for the Use of Sanctions in international law

Economic sanctions refer to a monetary policy or measure adopted by a state to restrict and slow down the financial activities of some actors (primarily financial entities), to reduce their economic interests or political influence. A country takes a non-punitive measure after negotiation with a specific actor in a certain way without punishing the actor. This is different from other sanctions, for example, military action.

Economic sanctions, as a relatively broad concept, involve not only specific financial entities. It usually covers trade, investment, finance, etc., but does not limit the power or influence of these actors themselves. The international capacity of another party may be affected by the imposition of economic sanctions against it; Its position and interests in the international community can be affected by the imposition of sanctions.

Economic sanctions in international law mainly refer to the UN Security Council resolution or the domestic legislation of the relevant country, which interferes with the behavior of a country's government in international affairs and thus imposes economic sanctions on that country. , for example, the UN Security Council on Kosovo.

Sanctions *stricto sensu* under international law can be defined as coercive measures taken [in response to a violation of international law in the execution of a decision of a competent social organ, i.e., an organ legally empowered to act in the name of the society or community that is governed by the legal system [49].

5.2.2. US view of Sanctions

Financial sanctions with "American characteristics" are usually unilateral, highly enforceable, and destructive. As the United States has been the world's largest economy for a long time and has a hegemonic position in the global financial system, which accounts for over 40% of international payment and settlement and over 60% of international reserve currencies, its strikes on the targets of sanctions are more precise and powerful.

A robust legal system of extraterritorial jurisdiction

The National Emergency Act and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act are the primary legal bases invoked by the United States to initiate financial sanctions. Then, 45 days after the 9/11 attacks, the United States issued the Patriot Act, landmark legislation, judicature, and enforcement of economic sanctions against the United States. On the one hand, the Act defines the "long-arm jurisdiction" of the United States from the legislative level for the first time, which provides solid legislative support for the United States to implement secondary sanctions in the future and expands the jurisdiction of financial sanctions. On the other hand, it also authorizes the president of the United States to impose sanctions by executive order in the face of a significant threat to the nation.

(2) Precise sanctions

The U.S. Treasury Department is the functional department mainly responsible for financial sanctions, and its subordinate OFAC was the past leading implementer of economic sanctions. Among the sanction lists issued by the Department, the "Specially Designated Nationals List" (from now on referred to as "SDN List") is the most core list of foreign financial sanctions by the United States up to now. As long as entities or individuals are included, all "Americans" must freeze their assets. As of

24 June 2021, 311 Chinese individuals, commodities, and organizations have been placed on OFAC's sanctions list.

On June 3, 2021, US President Joe Biden issued Executive Order No. 14032, according to which the latest sanctions list includes 59 Chinese entities on the so-called list of Chinese military complex enterprises. Compared with the original list, 33 new enterprises and entities were added. The relevant sanctions will not be limited to securities trading within the US. Still, they will also pose a risk of sanctions for securities trading involving military complex list entities conducted outside the US.

The financial sanctions imposed by the United States include but are not limited to cutting off the channels of settlement, settlement, and payment, freezing their assets in the United States, and forcing them to pay huge fines; Blocking Chinese companies from financing in the US; Confiscate the property of the sanctioned person within the jurisdiction of the United States and take it as his own; Restricting the foreign financial transactions of the approved state; Extending sanctions on third-party countries, entities and individuals that trade with the sanctioned State's goods and services; short the stock and bond markets of target countries; The use of capital to a quick lead to the currency of the sanctioned country devaluation.

(3) Precise and complementary two-level sanctions

Us sanctions are mainly divided into primary sanctions and secondary sanctions. First-level sanctions specifically refer to sanctions imposed on Americans or related subjects with "U.S. factors", including two types: one is to prohibit Americans from participating in transactions involving countries under full sanctions; The other would bar Americans from dealing with those on OFAC's sanctions list. Because the United States has a broad interpretation of the "American person" and "American factor" in terms of financial sanctions, and according to OFAC's 50% rule, the initiation threshold of first-level sanctions is low. If a Chinese company is added to the SDN list, domestic banks can no longer provide any dollar-related services to the company to avoid first-tier sanctions. Violating the first-level sanctions may result in criminal penalties or administrative fines, depending on the circumstances.

Secondary sanctions mainly target non-US entities, individuals, and other objects under extraterritorial jurisdiction. The "specific behavior" to be sanctioned has greater discretion and uncertainty among the sanction subjects of the US. Once the US determines that the specific behavior harms the national security or economic interests of the US, it can be included in the secondary sanctions. Violations of secondary sanctions result in the freezing of all property and goods in property owned or controlled by the sanctioned person or entity in the United States or by U.S. persons (including U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, entities established under U.S. laws, and other organizations located in the United States), and such property control must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entity in which the sanctioned person and entity directly or indirectly owns 50% or more of the stock will be authorized. OFAC generally prohibits all transactions (including transactions transiting the United States) involving any property or interest in the property by U.S. persons or within the United States concerning sanctioned persons and entities unless authorized by a general or special license issued by OFAC or otherwise exempted [50].

5.3. Sanctions make the conflict worse rather than resolve the conflict

5.3.1. Russia-Ukraine Conflict

First, sanctions have failed to act as "containment". Since the outbreak of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the international community has imposed several rounds of sanctions on Russia. Zhang Ming believes that this is because the United States and other Western countries, on the one hand, do not "verbally" recognize Russia's sovereignty over Ukraine, but on the other hand, they continue to support it in practice in Ukraine. "Its real purpose is to weaken Russia further and put the Russian

economy in a more difficult situation; it is a brake on Russia's economic development." Zhang Ming analyzed that the purpose of the sanctions imposed by the United States and other Western countries is to "suppress" the Russian economy, it has to some extent become the trigger of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. However, the sanctions did not substantially impact the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which shows that Western countries do not use sanctions to "contain" Russia's economic development but hope to promote their own economic development through sanctions. "In the long run, this is one of the main reasons for the deterioration of relations between the West and Russia," he said.

Second, the sanctions have far-reaching effects. Zhang Ming pointed out that since the outbreak of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the sanctions imposed by Western countries on Russia have been mainly for political purposes and have achieved specific effects in the short term. "Sanctions have had positive and negative effects, but overall, the negative has outweighed the positive." Zhang Ming believes that from a positive point of view, Western countries, through sanctions on Russia economic sanctions have produced a specific effect. "The West hopes Russia will give in, but it is not.

The financial sanctions imposed by the United States have had a particular impact on Russia's economy but have had no substantial effect on its military and economic development. Although Germany has imposed many sanctions, it has not reversed the downward trend of its domestic economy.

Third, sanctions make war and conflict worse. The situation in Ukraine is deteriorating fast. Ukrainian officials say their troops have lost more than 200 men since Russia announced its special military operation. Russian and Ukrainian forces have exchanged fire in the Donbas region for the past two weeks. Russia has used bombers, cruise missiles, and artillery in multiple areas to strike Ukraine's critical infrastructure and strategic facilities. The West has condemned the Russian military's actions, but the West has not condemned Russia's military actions. NATO leaders initially expressed support for Russia's special military operation. The sanctions prevent Ukraine from buying weapons and equipment from Russia and other countries. The West will restrict Russia's trade with the rest of the world, which could reduce the Ukrainian government's revenue and potentially collapse its economy. But with Ukraine still able to wage war and Russia unwilling to give up its weapons on the road, a continued escalation of the conflict is inevitable. Ukraine has descended into a "humanitarian disaster".

Food, fuel, and medicine shortages have reportedly been worsening for the past two weeks, leading to low morale among Ukrainian military personnel. In the meantime, many civilians have been evacuated to safer areas. As a result of Ukraine's use of chemical weapons during special military operations, its civilian population has suffered severe injuries. The World Health Organization estimates that about 52,000 children have illnesses. The war in Ukraine has brought growing challenges to the Ukrainian government.

Since the conflict began, the Ukrainian government has spent more than \$200 billion dealing with the economic fallout. Government budgets have been slashed, and about 2,000 troops and 2,500 civilians have been sent to the front line, up from everywhere a million before the war broke out. Ukraine's economy has slowed, with gross domestic product falling 4 percent since 2021. The conflict has divided Kiev politically. Some politicians have accused Russia's military actions of undermining their democratic process.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian people are suffering greatly from the war. Millions of people could be affected as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine escalates into a protracted war. Nevertheless, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia is an integral part of Ukraine's sovereignty and a strategic one. Neither Russia nor the West wants the match to continue.

According to Parker (2000), focusing on the financial costs of sanctions clouds the situation

because they usually have a minimal overall impact on a big sender economy. A better approach, he argues, is to look at the effectiveness of the sanctions compared to the political cost to the sender government.

6. Middle powers in international diplomacy

6.1. Introduction to middle powers in international diplomacy

Middle powers have frequently been vital to international diplomacy because they can view disputes from both perspectives and leverage relations to encourage peaceful settlements [51]. International institutions need to use intermediary states to their advantage in seeking peace. For example, intermediary states like Turkey can play a critical role in aiding efforts to resolve significant power conflicts like the Russo-Ukrainian war through bilateral diplomacy, economics, and military actions.

This section will examine the effectiveness of middle power diplomacy by defining the parameters of what counts as a central power or intermediary state, delving into three prominent examples of Turkish influence as a middle power on Russo-Ukrainian relations, and investigating how international institutions can use middle powers to advance global peace.

6.2. Definitions of Intermediary States and middle powers

Middle powers and intermediary states can be defined as a country or state that is not great but still has significant influence and international relevance due to their economic, political, and or military capabilities. These powers may have a more nuanced foreign policy than great powers due to their greater freedom to collaborate with other countries to promote their interests and influence international affairs [52]. Some examples of middle powers include Australia, Canada, India, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, and Turkey.

6.3. Middle Powers in bilateral diplomacy

Firstly, middle powers can impact significant power conflicts by acting as a platform for international organizations to work with less risk of escalation. Due to their unique socio-political status between great powers, intermediary states can more effectively engage in bilateral diplomacy [53]. This is because they are not as publicly surveilled as great powers, allowing them to be more flexible and agile in their diplomatic approach while still having enough resources and influence to pursue their national interests, which is becoming increasingly valuable as international polarization exacerbates between Western and Communist Blocs [54].

For example, through intermediary states like Turkey, international institutions like NATO and the EU can open channels for peaceful negotiation in conflicts between great powers such as Ukraine and Russia. Whereas confrontation from international organizations such as the EU or NATO is significantly more likely to escalate disputes due to the political connotations of engagement, institutions can seek aid by supporting middle powers in negotiations [55].

6.4. Middle Powers in economic interventions

Intermediary states like Turkey can also aid in resolving significant power conflicts through economics by leveraging their economic ties with conflicting parties to promote trade, investment, and economic cooperation, which can create mutual interdependence and reduce tensions. Building dependencies also creates leverage opportunities and increases the costs of future warring.

Like Turkey's stance in the cold war [56], Turkey can use its economic ties with Russia and Ukraine to facilitate dialogue and cooperation by hosting projects that benefit both countries, such as infrastructure investments and joint ventures in energy production. By doing so, Turkey could

encourage Russia and Ukraine to work together, building trust and promoting peaceful relations [57]. Turkey has already been able to make several attempts at peace talks between Russia and Ukraine due to their economic and political ties to Russia, in combination with various vital trade links to Ukraine.

6.5. Middle powers in support through military

Finally, intermediary states can also impact significant power conflicts by using their military power to support or intervene. By doing so, they can either escalate or de-escalate the conflict. For example, during the Korean War, Turkey sent troops to fight alongside the United Nations forces, which helped in preventing the conflict from spreading beyond the Korean Peninsula [58].

Turkey has also sent UAV drones in support of Ukrainian forces, especially during the initial onset of the war. These efforts similarly aided Ukraine in holding off Russian forces, narrowing the expanse of Ukrainian territory occupied. Additionally, drones have provided Turkey with diplomatic advantages by winning them great Western approval [59].

6.6. Conclusion to middle powers in international diplomacy

In conclusion, it is essential that international organizations are aware of the power of intermediary states to drive their efforts toward de-escalation rather than inciting more conflict. International law and institutions could better utilize intermediary states like Turkey by providing them with more resources and support to facilitate mediation and negotiation while incentivizing their involvement through diplomatic recognition and economic cooperation. Although it requires resources and commitment, it is essential to support intermediary states, as they are vital to procuring well-intentioned peace negotiations due to their diplomatic, economic, and military advantages in influencing conflict.

7. Conclusion

The research findings have led to the conclusion that there are weaknesses in different aspects of international law. However, improvements and reforms can be made to solve the tensions and conflicts between great powers effectively. The WTO failed to resolve the tensions between the U.S. and China during the trade war, while the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly have shown flaws in dealing with the Russia-Ukraine conflict. International institutions need to make reforms to help better countries resolve their disputes. Besides, the imposition of economic sanctions would worsen the matches, so it is better to prohibit them. Finally, middle powers also play a significant role in solving disputes between great powers; international law can use them to support mediation and negotiations between powers.

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