

Securitisation of Russia's war against Ukraine by US officials and the return of Cold War narratives

Content-analytical study on the perception of Russia's threat potential and a new Cold War

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Abstract: Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine marks a critical moment in international security policy. This study analyzes U.S. perspectives on the conflict, addressing two questions: Is the war framed as a threat to the U.S.? Are Cold War narratives employed in this framing? Using speeches from key American politicians, the study compares Russia's actions in Afghanistan (1980s), Georgia (2008), and Ukraine (2014, 2022). Content analysis reveals patterns of threat communication and Cold War rhetoric. The findings contribute to the debate on whether global security is reverting to Cold War bipolarity or forming new blocs requiring updated definitional frameworks.

INTRODUCTION

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which violated international law, marked a 'turning point' in international relations (Adomeit and Krause, 2022). The annexation of Crimea and partial occupation of Donetsk and Luhansk in 2014 can be viewed as a starting point of this changing dynamic (a. o. Meier-Walser, 2018; Simons and Kukartseva, 2019).

This war as well as the resulting economic war between many of the OECD countries and Russia can be seen as a turning point with far-reaching consequences for several markets, multiple crises in numerous regions and the return of the threat of nuclear warfare (Breuer, 2022).

According to Putin's ideas of a return to a Russian empire (Ford, 2023) - also in complete disregard of political reality - show that international relations are facing the beginning of a new Cold War (Adomeit and Krause, 2022). This is also reflected in the perceptions of the EU on the one hand and the USA on the other. However, when it comes to the severity of threat perception, a somewhat different picture emerges. The USA officials underline the importance of international law and the stability of the international order. The UK, France and the USA also perceive this war as a threat to their national security, which requires strengthening commitments to Ukraine and their own security policy. Securing Ukraine's democracy, sovereignty and independence was called as "America's goal" (Biden, 2022 (in New York Times)).

Russia, on the other hand, takes the feeble view that the military intervention in Ukraine is a security mission for Russian citizens who are being oppressed and that the annexation of Crimea and the territory in eastern Ukraine is a matter of domestic policy (Hellmann, 2015).

NATO, with the USA in the lead, is committed to protecting Ukrainian sovereignty, but initially supports by providing military support without actively intervening itself. Nonetheless, a large quantity of infantry weapons, including heavy weaponry, is being sent to Ukraine from the European and American side (ISPK, 2022). This strengthens the risk that Russia's aggressive stance could result in military advances against NATO members as well as Russia's use of strategic nuclear weapons. As a result, the threshold for a direct confrontation is becoming ever lower. At the same time, it is important to note that the USA has clearly stated its position on the issue and has also specified current American objectives (Rudolf, 2022).

- Military support for defence of Ukraine.

- No assurance of backing in the event of attacks on Russian territory.
- The Russian government should not be overthrown.

This shows the balancing act that the USA faces in his decisions; on the one hand, it is willing to support Ukraine militarily, but on the other, it wants to prevent the conflict from escalating into a war between USA and Russia. What the situation complicates even further is the fact, that there is no clarity where are exactly Putin's "red lines". (Rudolf, 2022, p. 1)

At this point the USA is adopting a position that it must defend vis-à-vis its own population and the international community; this is taking place in the context of American securitisation against Russia. The consequences of a military defeat in Ukraine would be far-reaching for the security interests of the USA and NATO. This research examines how US top politicians communicate the threat posed by Russia in terms of a threat to the nation by answering the questions:

1. Is the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine being communicated as a potential threat to the USA by American government officials?

2. Does the securitization of Russian war against Ukraine by the USA officials indicate the return of Cold War narratives?

To this end, a text analysis is carried out in form of a content analysis of statements of American government politicians, which provides evidence for it. The analysis also looks for evidence that Russia, with its aggressive policy, is once again being perceived as an adversary as it used to be during the Cold War until 1990, or that it is currently redefining itself.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of the research is orientated towards the use of Cold War rhetoric narratives in speech acts by American officials in government positions by means of a content analysis of selected sources. The aim is to analyse how the USA's officials comment on the Ukraine war. In the core analysis, it is important to filter out statements, declarations and opinions on the war in Ukraine. The focus is on the content of the communication on a Russian threat on the part of the responsible American government officials, which is underpinned by certain narratives.

METHODOLOGY

TERMINOLOGY OF COLD WAR

The terminology of 'Cold War' has been used repeatedly in the discussion about threats, security and security measures, as well as ultimately securitisation as a political imperative since the start of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2014. There is talk of a 'new Cold War' or 'Cold War 2.0'. The use of narratives and references to the Cold War and an aversion to a threat to the USA are therefore determining the selection of sources. So, when this term reappears more frequently, it is necessary to find out whether it continues to be implemented in securitisation recognition as a determining and unchanged term, or whether it is redefined.

In the last 10 years, however, relations between USA and Russia have deteriorated once again, culminating in Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022. There is growing concern about a possible resurgence of bipolar power blocs, as views on this conflict are divided around the world. China and India, two important countries in geopolitical structure, are not fully supporting either side and presenting themselves as neutral parties, while the USA, the EU and the NATO countries are siding with Ukraine (Rudolf, 2022). This situation has led to speculation and discussions as to whether the world is now in a 'Cold War 2.0' (Bönker, 2022). To this end, it is important to clarify how the Cold War was and is defined and communicated to the outside world until 1990, as well as the frequently used term 'Cold War 2.0'.

Comparing the Cold War with the current situation makes it possible to identify parallels and/or differences between the two periods as it may shed light on possible similarities of rhetoric and

perceptions. In this context, Bandeira (2016) emphasised that collective memory structures in individual nations come together and create new interpretations of situational events based on their own experiences. He does not see a complete repetition or recurrence of history, but rather a perception that builds on each other and comes into play when threat scenarios build up.

By defining narratives as a construct of opinion based on perception and conviction, some dominant focuses arise for the Cold War. These are identifiable in that they are based on bipolar thinking at all relevant levels of society (Dörr, 1961). These are based on the developments from 1917/18 with the Bolshevik Revolution in Czarist Russia and are diametrically opposed to the liberal-democratic system of the USA (op. cit. Huntington, 1996; Vanden Berge, 2002; Zubok, 2007).

The position of the leading powers, the USA and the USSR, as 'superpowers' resulted in a civilisational claim to sole representation, which was decisive for the nations affiliated and allied with them (von Beyme, 2016; Glaebner, 2017). This resulted in antagonistic positions that extended to all socially relevant areas.

The pairs of opposites are initially aligned with the political systems of both sides and present the USSR as a totalitarian regime that stands in opposition to liberal and democratic principles and is to be defended worldwide by the USA (see Leffler, 1994; Ottmann, 2010). From the Russian side, the approach was dominated by labelling the USA as imperialist, which was justified by the view that socialism and the fight against oppression, racism and colonialism were among the goals of the world revolution (Greiner et al., 2005; Zubok, 2007; Niedhart, 2010).

In economic terms, the planned economy and communism were pursued by the Soviet side as a successful plan, while a free market economy and capitalism prevailed in the USA. Both systems were also used as opposing pairs at the level of the conflict in the Cold War (see Deschner, 2002; Stiefel, 2006; Löwe, 2018). As the antagonisms also expanded into a military two-camp constellation, they became a risk factor for world peace. With NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the two superpowers faced each other with their respective allies.

The potential dangers of an advantage for one side are communicated by political elites and therefore also provided with narratives that are intended to illustrate the threat and to accept countermeasures presented by the recipients (Krebs, 2015). To achieve reinforcement, contradictions are used as threats. Typical of the time are the following narratives, which are mentioned by political elites and taken up by the public.

- World Communist Revolution -Anti-Communism
- Takeover of world domination -totalitarian world state under communist leadership (Dörr, 1961)
- World political isolation
- Totalitarianism/dictatorship
- De-democratisation
- Socialism/Communism
- Planned economy
- Communist aggression

Added to this was the so-called 'domino theory', which was formulated by President Eisenhower in the mid-1950s. According to this, it is assumed that if communist ideologies are successful in a conflict against the USA, other nations will join the ideology because it could be seen as dominant. This encouraged recipients to support measures to prevent the further expansion of communist states. The theory is considered highly controversial and Hans J. Morgenthau, a prominent representative of American politics, rejected it (Rhode, 2004). Nevertheless, it was present in the long term in the presentation of narratives from the US side and was communicated as a threat perception. In addition, both sides worked to discredit and politically isolate the other (Nünlist, 2020).

For the research approach, a separate set of parameters was determined from the former narrative parameters, which comprises three main fields

- Military threat
- Political threat
- Economic threat

The specified categories are in turn divided into subcategories that result from the categories and can be determined as a threat situation for the USA in the self-perception.

Military and political threats and scenarios are the most frequently mentioned in the selected sources as the ones most likely to occur. These have been divided into subcategories, which can be assessed and weighted differently in terms of their impact and how they are perceived as threats:

- Nuclear threat (Military)
- Conventional military threat (Military)
- Strategic influence (Military but also political)
- Supremacy claim (Political)
- De-democratization (Political)
- New alliances (Military but also political)

Economic threats are also recognised as perceptible by the political players and are differentiated according to the following parameters:

- Economic blackmail
- De-globalisation
- De-liberalisation of the economy

Politically, the historical bipolarity of the systems of democracy and communism is replaced by the bipolarity of the systems of democracy and authoritarian systems. However, they are comparable and can therefore be included in the analysis.

In order to be able to determine the statements in terms of their intended effect as a presentation of a perceived threat situation, they are integrated into clusters that make it possible to determine the intention and impact of the statement. The determination patterns that define a statement as constative (statement is a statement, whereby the content of it is not further verified) or used as a performative statement help here. Performative statements offer explanations and additional explanations in the statements (Alattar, 2014).

They may also contain directive statements that are indirectly directed at the addressees and demand an action that is determined by the actor. Similarly, commission-based statements can also be found, which describe an action that the actor carries out themselves in order to counter a potential threat or a real threat, linked to the research topic. The distinction here lies in whether it is a real intention or a promise or undefined type of action (Boisvert and Ludwig, 2008).

Through the analysis the threat in the rhetoric in the selected sources can be classified using sufficient categories and parameters as well as analytical linguistic means in order to make a statement about how real the threat is as assessed by the actors and if it can be defined as a securitising move.

SOURCE SELECTION

The selected sources are listed in the table below. They are in ascending historical order and labelled with the speaker and the thematic content or occasion.

Table Selection of sources for the analysis

Date	Speaker	Topic
January 23, 1980	J. Carter (President)	State of the Union Adress
August 21, 1980	H. Brown (Secretary of Defence)	Speech at U.S. Navy War College
November 18, 1981	R. Reagan (President)	Speech on the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

March 10, 1982	R. Reagan (President)	Proclamation of a remembrance day as Afghanistan-Day
March 10, 1982	R. Reagan (President)	Remarks on Signing the Afghanistan Day Proclamation
March 08, 1983	R. Reagan (President)	Evil empire speech
September 04, 2008	D. Cheney (Vice President)	Vice President Cheney and President Saakashvili of Georgia
September 18, 2008	C. Rice (Secretary of State)	U.S.-Russia Relations At The German Marshall Fund
February 07, 2009	J. Biden (Vice-President)	Remarks at 45th Munich Conference on Security Policy
April 05, 2009	B. Obama (President)	Prague Speech
September 28, 2015	B. Obama (President)	70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Address
May 27, 2015	J. Biden (Vice President)	Remarks on the Russia-Ukraine conflict
June 22, 2015	A. Carter (Secretary of Defence)	U.S., Germany, & NATO are moving forward together" Remarks at Atlantik Brücke Berlin
July 09, 2016	Barack Obama (President)	Press Conference Following NATO Summit
January 25, 2023	J. Biden (President)	Continued Support for Ukraine
February 19, 2023	K. Harrison	Ukraine War and NATO
February 21, 2023	J. Biden (President)	On Russian Invasion of Ukraine After One Year
February 24, 2023	K. Harris (Vice President)	Remarks at the Munich Security Conference
February 24, 2023	A. Blinken (Secretary of State)	Russia's War Against Ukraine - One Year Later
June 2, 2023	A. Blinken (Secretary of State)	Russia's Strategic Failure and Ukraine's Secure Future
October 19, 2023	J. Biden (President)	Speech on Israel-Hamas and Russia-Ukraine Wars
December 02, 2023	L. J. Austin (Secretary of Defence)	A Time for American Leadership
December 11, 2023	L. J. Austin (Secretary of Defence)	Introducing President Zelensky of Ukraine
December 12, 2023	J. Biden (President)	Remarks of Ukraine in Joint Press Conference
March 08, 2024	J. Biden (President)	State of the Union
April 04, 2024	J. Biden (President)	Declaration on the 75th anniversary of the founding of NATO

Source: Own presentation, 2024

RESULTS OF ANALYZE

The following sections initially place the respective periods and their sources individually in an inherent context with the established parameters for research. The sources are presented in an overview and chronological order. This is followed by an analysis of the content and conclusion for the respective period.

Speech	Quotes	Narrative
Carter (1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The 1980s have been born in turmoil, strife, and change. This is a time of challenge to our interests and our values and it's a time that tests our wisdom and our skills.” • “Now, as during the last three and a half decades, the relationship between our country, the United States of America, and the Soviet Union is the most critical factor in determining whether the world will live at peace or be engulfed in global conflict.” • “<u>We superpowers</u> also have the responsibility to exercise restraint in the use of our great military force. The integrity and the independence of weaker nations must not be threatened. <u>They must know that in our presence they are secure.</u>” • “The implications of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan could pose the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War.” • “The Soviet Union must realize that its decision to use military force in Afghanistan will be costly to every political and economic relationship it values.” 	<p>De-democratisation: Soviet aggression as a test of American values.</p> <p>Nuclear and conventional military threat: The bipolarity between the superpowers as a crisis factor for the entire world.</p> <p>Supremacy claim: Superpowers as protectors of the whole world.</p> <p>Strategic influence: Assessment of the situation for world peace.</p> <p>Strategic influence: Emphasis on the USSR's inability to conduct a prolonged war.</p>
Harold (1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "... that make clear to the Soviets the hard reality that, by any course leading to nuclear war, they could never gain an advantage that would outweigh the unacceptable price they would have to pay." • "... nuclear weapons, ..., could led to victory, however they may define victory." • "In declaring our ability and our intention to prevent Soviet victory, even in the most dangerous circumstances, we have no illusions about what a nuclear war would mean for mankind. It would be an unimaginable catastrophe." 	<p>Nuclear threat: A nuclear war has no winners.</p> <p>Nuclear threat: Soviet utopia of ultimate victory.</p> <p>Nuclear threat: Nuclear war without winners, but no retreat by the USA → Resistance to the utmost consequence.</p>
Reagan (1981)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Will the average Soviet family be better off or even aware that the Soviet Union has imposed a government of its own choice on the people of Afghanistan? Is life better for the people of Cuba because the Cuban military dictate who shall govern the people of Angola?" 	<p>De-democratisation: Questioning Soviet policy as a better way of life for society.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We used our power and wealth to <u>rebuild the war-ravaged economies of the world, including</u> those of the nations who had been <u>our enemies</u>." • "But we must also help to bring peace and security to regions now torn by conflict, external intervention, and war. The <u>American concept of peace</u> goes well beyond the absence of war. We foresee a <u>flowering of economic</u> growth and individual liberty in a world at peace." 	<p>New alliances: Emphasis on the liberal American stance after World War II.</p> <p>Supremacy claim: The USA's role as protector against Soviet aggression and supporter of freedom and prosperity.</p>
<p>Reagan Afgha-nistan Day (1982)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Their villages and homes have been destroyed; they have been murdered by bullets, bombs and chemical weapons." • "<u>Every country and every people</u> has a stake in the Afghan resistance, for the <u>freedom fighters</u> of Afghanistan are defending principles of independence and freedom that form the basis of global security and stability." • "<u>Afghanistan Day</u> will serve to recall not only these events, but also the principles involved when a people struggles for the freedom to determine its own future, the right to be free of foreign interference and the right to practice religion according to the dictates of conscience." 	<p>Conventional military threat: Emphasis on brutality and inhumanity of the opponent.</p> <p>De-democratisation and De-globalisation: Communicated admiration from around the world for the fight for freedom.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Afghanistan Day as a symbol of the global fight against the oppression of the free world.</p>
<p>Reagan (1982)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Afghans, like the Poles, wish nothing more, as you've just been so eloquently told, than to live their lives in peace, to practice their religion in freedom, and to exercise their right to self-determination." • "Nowhere are basic human rights more brutally violated than in Afghanistan today." • "We must go beyond public condemnation of the <u>Soviet puppet regime in Kabul</u> to bring relief and an early end to the Afghan tragedy." • "The <u>Soviet Union bears</u> a grave responsibility for the continuing suffering of the Afghan people, the massive violations of human rights, and the international tension which has resulted from its unprovoked attack." 	<p>De-democratisation: Comparison of the situation between Afghanistan and Poland.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Emphasis on the inhumane behaviour of the USSR.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Governments under Soviet control as autocracies.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Depiction of the invaders as animals (depersonalization).</p>

Reagan (1983)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The American experiment in democracy rests on this insight. Its discovery was the great triumph of our Founding Fathers ..." • "America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." • "No matter how well intentioned, their value system is radically different from that of most Americans." • "[...], I pointed out that, as good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognise is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution. [...]. And everything is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat." • "Well, I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates a historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are." • "I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last-last pages even now are being written." 	<p>Supremacy claim: American democracy as a model through the Founding Fathers.</p> <p>Supremacy claim: Climax use for the superior role of the US-American society and constitution</p> <p>Supremacy claim and De-democratisation: Emphasis on the differences between the two systems.</p> <p>Supremacy claim and De-democratisation: Soviet policy and societal structure serve solely to maintain oppression and power.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Soviet policy is an outdated system for preserving totalitarianism.</p> <p>De-democratisation and De-globalisation: Communism is a historical human error that will soon become irrelevant.</p>
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The six sources are dominated by Political threats (5 of 6 speeches) that characterize a threat to the USA. The parameter of De-democratisation is the one which is used mostly (12 times). The supremacy claim follows (6 times) on second, but it is used in two ways. One the one side positive in connection with the USA and negative to USSR. Military references are communicated by half (3 of 3 speeches). There the early speeches dominate with military threats scenarios (Carter and Harold). Both use this parameter 4 times, but Harold focussed on it (3 of 4). Later, Reagan focussed on the differences of the two systems and underline the negative impacts by communists and socialism. Economic threats in combination with De-globalization only play a minor role (2 of 6 speeches). The economic view of the Cold War is in two speeches a minor topic and on the dependencies of oil and other fossil energy.

The political dominance of the themes as a threat is aligned with the strategic alliance policy of the USA with Afghan neighbours and is presented as evidence of an alliance with the USA. Democratic fundamental principles, freedom, and prosperity are therefore frequent arguments used by politicians. This is particularly evident in the case of American President Reagan (Cooper, 2012). He intensified the policy in political and military terms through clear distinctions from the Soviet Union and a pronounced portrayal of the threat posed by Soviet policy. Cooper states, that under the administration of President Reagan the USA try to dominate the conflict with the USSR by extensive armament and the propagandistic offensive of the supremacy claim for peace, economic development and freedom. Beside

the political and military measures, the USA try to keep their interests in the Middle East because of the oil sources which are essential for the US-American economy.

Grau and Cress (2002) also highlight this stance of Reagan and his administration. The aim with armament to challenge the Soviet expansion in military way was a counterpart against the Brezhnev Doctrine. So consequently, the USA support the resistant against the USSR in Afghanistan to stop the expansionism.

The military threat is also important due to the policy of modernization and rearmament before the collapse of the USSR, a phase that brought the two superpowers to the brink of nuclear war. Reagan was regarded as the US president who ushered in a new era of armament, which ultimately overburdened the Soviet Union by preventing it from investing in further armament itself. Nevertheless, this phase marked the highest level of armament on both sides.

This created a difficult situation for the USSR, which was brought to the brink of existence both militarily and economically by the war in Afghanistan (Lowenstein, 2016). Particularly, U.S. military support for the Afghan resistance led to a turning point in the war with significant Soviet losses (Steul, 2001; Cooper, 2012). The USSR had nothing left to counter the U.S. buildup, leading to two possible scenarios. First, the USSR could launch a pre-emptive strike to prevent the military deficit from resulting in a final victory for the class enemy. Brown expressed a similar viewpoint in a 1980 speech from the U.S. perspective, as noted in this research. According to a report by the Scientific Services of the Bundestag, such a potential scenario emerged from the following developments:

The unsuccessful war of the Red Army in Afghanistan,

The renewed threat (“two-front thinking”) of a confrontation with the People's Republic of China, which felt its security interests were violated by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan,

The implementation of the NATO double-track decision to deploy intermediate-range missiles by the Atlantic alliance, and

The growing democratic movement around the trade union Solidarność in Poland, which posed a threat to the ruling claim of the communist party and thus to political stability across the entire Warsaw Pact area,

These factors, from a Soviet perspective, jeopardized the realization of their own global power ambitions. (WD, 2016, p. 8)

Additionally, successful U.S. alliance policies in the Middle East and Pakistan exacerbated the strategic position for the USSR (Hartman, 2022; Lowenstein, 2016).

Secondly, as historical reality shows, Gorbachev chose the diplomatic path and reached an agreement with the USA on nuclear control and disarmament (Krickus, 2011). However, the subsequent dissolution of the USSR was not the actual goal of Gorbachev’s policy (Braithwaite, 2011).

The content communicated by the politicians in the sources corresponds to that of the time and the attitude of the USA and its leaders. On the one hand, immediately after the invasion of Afghanistan, the principle of opportunities for negotiation and diplomacy was still emphasized. In the following years and the impossibility of a quick diplomatic solution, the bipolar views against the USSR and the threat scenarios grew vehemently. This increase in threat communication in military, political and social terms reached its absolute peak on the US side with President Reagan's speech in 1983.

Speech	Quotes	Narrative
Cheney (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Russia's actions have cast grave doubt on Russia's intentions and on its reliability as an international partner - not just in Georgia but across this region and indeed 	<p>De-globalisation: Collaboration with Russia as a risk for all countries → Sowing doubt among others.</p>

	<p>throughout the international system."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "NATO is a defensive alliance. It is a threat to no one. Indeed, NATO is one of the great forces for freedom, security and peace that the modern world has known." • "Now, it is the responsibility of the free world to rally to the side of Georgia. We will help your people to heal this nation's wounds, to rebuild this economy, and to ensure Georgia's democracy, independence and further integration with the West." 	<p>Supremacy claim: Emphasis on the alliance as a counterbalance to Russia. Support of opponents of Russian attacks.</p> <p>De-democratisation: The USA as the defender of the free world. Democracy and independence as the highest values</p>
<p>Rice (2008)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The picture emerging from this pattern of behaviour is that of a Russia increasingly authoritarian at home and aggressive abroad." • "Increasingly, Russia's leaders have simply not reciprocated. And their recent actions are leading some to ask whether we are now engaged in a new Cold War. No, we are not." • "Conversely, Russia has found little support for its actions. A pat on the back from Daniel Ortega and Hamas is not a diplomatic triumph." • Whatever its course, though, Russia today is not the Soviet Union – not in the size of its territory, the reach of its power, the scope of its aims, or the nature of the regime. Russia's leaders today have no pretensions to ideological universality, no alternative vision to democratic capitalism, and no ability to construct a parallel system of client states and rival institutions. The bases of Soviet power are gone. 	<p>De-democratisation and De-globalisation: Russia as an autocracy and military aggressor.</p> <p>Nuclear and conventional military threat: Accusation of Russia reviving the Cold War → Rejection by the USA.</p> <p>New alliance: Reference to the lack of international support for Russia. Diminishing its significance.</p> <p>Supremacy claim: Emphasis on Russia's weak position compared to the USSR. Portrayal of the Russian government as a regime.</p> <p>New alliance: Condemnation of Russia's stance by attempting to reconnect with the past through war.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Whether Russia’s leaders overcome their nostalgia for another time and reconcile themselves to the sources of power and the exercise of power in the 21st century – still remains to be seen. The decision is clearly Russia’s – and Russia’s alone.” 	<p>Emphasis on its isolated position in international politics.</p>
<p>Biden (2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “But this year, more than ever before, we know that our physical security and our economic security are indivisible. We are all confronting a serious threat to our economic security that could further spread instability and erode the progress we've made in improving the lives of all our citizens.” • “Our Founders understood then, and the United States believes now, that the example of our power must be matched by the power of our example. And that is why our administration rejects a false choice between our safety and our ideals. America will vigorously defend our security and our values, and in doing so we believe we'll all be more secure.” • “The United States rejects the notion that NATO's gain is Russia's loss, or that Russia's strength is NATO's weakness. The last few years have seen a dangerous drift in relations between Russia and the members of our Alliance. It is time -- to paraphrase President Obama -- it's time to press the reset button and to revisit the many areas where we can and should be working together with Russia.” 	<p>De-globalisation and De-liberation of economy: Linking economic conditions with political security through the economic crisis.</p> <p>Supremacy claim: The USA as the best example of a strong and secure state. This establishes the claim to the role of protector of freedom and democracy in the world.</p> <p>Conventional military threat: Deterioration of the relationship between the USA and Russia → Emphasis on further cooperation as the solution.</p>

<p>Obama (2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The threat of global nuclear war has diminished, the risk of nuclear attack has increased. Several nations have developed such weapons, testing continues, and the black market trade in fissile material is flourishing. The technology to build a bomb has proliferated." • "To end Cold War thinking, we need to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our own national security strategy. Others may do the same." 	<p>Nuclear threat: No major threat of nuclear war → But dangers from new nuclear powers and terrorist use are increasing.</p> <p>Nuclear threat and supremacy claim: Reduce nuclear deterrence to secure international peace → Appealing call to all nuclear powers.</p>
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The speeches show a moderate reaction without excessive distribution of roles. But the reaction show also that the USA is not ready to give in by the aggression of Russia. The Russian politics is an example for autocracy and a false understanding of the own position after 1990. Russia is isolated and the few new alliance nations are no threat for NATO with a strong USA in leading role. Military threat is mentioned, but it is not fundamental to concern.

The content communicated in the speeches shows a very even distribution of threat scenarios. For example, deglobalisation, the supracry claim and nuclear threat are each addressed three times by three different speakers. However, the nuclear threat is to be understood in such a way that terrorist groups can use the expanding black market with this type of bomb.

No direct nuclear threat from Russia is seen. Other aspects are less addressed, with only Biden raising an economic aspect, although this is more caused by the global economic crisis than by Russia. After the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, a period of extended co-operation between the USA and Russia emerged. With the attempt by Russia to intervene in former satellite states, the USA increasingly doubted Russia's stance with regard to compliance with international agreements. The threat to the USA from Russia communicated in the sources is not perceived, but the USA is positioning itself more strongly as the protector of free nations that have to suffer attacks.

No Cold War narratives like in the 1980s are communicated, rather it is assumed that a repetition is not possible as Russia as a single state is no longer a superpower. This is despite the strong nuclear potential that the country still possesses. NATO, with its military leader the USA, sees itself in a strong position and assumes that further expansion attempts will fail in the future.

The USA is increasingly emphasising its desire for further cooperation in order to avert other common international threats. Above all, this includes the increasing international terrorism from radical groups in the Middle East. The war in Georgia is a momentum of the development towards more tensions in the communication of top politicians but is not presented as a direct threat to the USA overall.

Nevertheless, there is a recognisable trend that shows that increasingly autocratically led nations (including Russia) are increasingly turning out to be states with an aggressive foreign policy. These states are increasingly supporting each other, as shown by the military interventions and military support for the Assad regime in the Syrian civil war at this time.

Speech	Quotes	Narrative
Biden (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Because it's not a remote conflict between neighbours arguing over who gets what, what's happening in Ukraine is about much, much, much more than that. It's about the rights of nations on the frontier of Europe to choose their own futures; it's about the future of NATO, our collective self-defence, and our unity, our strength, our ability to deter aggression together." • "China and many other nations are watching very closely how the world responds. They'll learn from this conflict regardless of how it plays out in my view." • "But when Prime Minister Putin returned to the Kremlin in 2012 as President Putin he set Russia on a very different course almost immediately, recriminalising libel, calling off direct elections for governors, and making it harder for political parties to register, aggressive repression at home[...]." • "The conflict over Ukraine I think is a test for the West, a test for the EU, a test for NATO, a test for us." 	<p>De-democratisation and conventional military threat: Threat to the self-determination of nations and the future and effectiveness of NATO as an alliance against aggressors.</p> <p>New alliance and strategic influence: Decisions by NATO and the USA define potential new conflicts in the face of weakness.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Russia's shift from democracy to autocracy.</p> <p>Strategic influence and supremacy claim: Claim that signs of weakness will lead Russia to plan further military attacks.</p>
Carter (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The challenges from both the south and the east are different, but both must be addressed with equal vigor. Both require new 21st Century approaches and both the threats – and our responses – to them will define the future of Europe's security in the Transatlantic community for years to come." • "But we also must assure that NATO, long the gold standard in alliances, continues to evolve to meet new types of threats and secure the bright future that can be ours." • "The answer, of course, is that we will do so together as we always have, but the Cold War play book 	<p>Conventional military threat and strategic influence: Terrorism and autocratic states with expansionist ambitions as threats of the 21st century.</p> <p>Conventional military threats, new alliance and strategic influence: New types of threats require a renewal and strengthening of NATO as a countermeasure → Ensuring international peace.</p> <p>Conventional military threats, strategic influence: Not a Cold</p>

	<p>doesn't apply to this future. Our new play book takes the lessons of history and leverages our Alliance's strengths in new ways for these new threats."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "A more active Germany and a more adaptive NATO will ensure that while Vladimir Putin may be intent on turning the clock back in Russia, he cannot turn the clock back in Europe." 	<p>War in the old sense but securing against multiple threats.</p> <p>Conventional military threat: A return to the USSR for Russia is not possible → A strong NATO is the prerequisite.</p>
Obama (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [...] defined by opposition to old enemies, perceived adversaries, a rising China, or a resurgent Russia; a revolutionary Iran, or an Islam that is incompatible with peace. We see an argument made that the only strength that matters for the United States is bellicose words and shows of military force; that cooperation and diplomacy will not work." "The history of the last two decades proves that in today's world, dictatorships are unstable." "And history tells us that the dark forces unleashed by this type of politics surely makes all of us less secure. Our world has been there before. We gain nothing from going back." 	<p>New alliance, strategic influence and conventional military threat: Listing the threats to the USA, NATO, and the international world. Policy of strength as the American response to threats.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Strongly emerging dictatorships in the world are not politically stable.</p> <p>Conventional military threat and De-democratisation: The Cold War will not reemerge and threaten security.</p>
Obama (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> „I especially want to commend our friends in the UK, Poland, Greece, Estonia -- all who, along with the United States, pay their full share of at least 2 percent of GDP for our collective defense. But for those of you doing the math, that means that the majority of allies are still not hitting that 2 percent mark -- an obligation we agreed to in Wales." "There's a recognition that given the range of threats that we face and the capabilities that we need, everybody has got to step up and everybody has got to do better." 	<p>Conventional military threat and supremacy claim: NATO can only fulfill its security role if all members contribute equally → Implicit criticism, especially of Germany and France without explicit mention.</p> <p>Conventional military threats and De-globalisation: Overcoming threats through the unity of the alliance against aggressors.</p>

The overview of the contents show that a conventional threat (9 times) seems realistic and communicated in direct and indirect way. An important point is that the USA urges it to spend more money in the

military defence. It is a sign that the USA is not ready to secure other NATO members who are not willing to spend more money. In combination with potential new structures of cooperation between autocracy states as aggressors the NATO has to be prepared for new threats.

The military annexation of Crimea and the eastern territories of Ukraine by pro-Russian militias equipped by Russia has created a new situation for the USA. Russia is expanding its sphere of interest in the Black Sea and poses a new strategic threat. The results show this by using strategic influence parameters 6 times in the sources.

The sources used in the analysis here show that there is no longer any certainty with regard to further cooperation with Russia to secure international peace. While hopes for further cooperation against terrorism and a de-escalating stance against aggressors were still relatively high during the Georgian war, they are increasingly being called into question. Under President Putin, Russia is continuing its policy of independent, aggressive foreign policy, which is also deliberately opposed to the interests of NATO and the USA. In the sources it is 4 times used as parameter De-democratization.

The USA recognises a potential threat to its own country in the form that a direct confrontation could arise if Russia continues to reconquer former Soviet republics and NATO members are included in the military focus. To this end, the USA is focussing on strengthening the presence of its own troops in Europe. In addition, in the sources used, top US politicians are demanding that Europeans who are members of NATO expand their own defence efforts and investments. This is becoming increasingly necessary as further threat scenarios associated with China emerge. In connection with the parameter 'New alliances' (3 times in sources) as possible, but not contracted, it shows a new situation in international politics. Their interests in the Pacific are again increasingly focussed on Taiwan, tying the US to focus its military contingents on multiple strategic threats. The European NATO members must increasingly build up their own deterrence scenario on the eastern flank so that the NATO alliance does not materialise.

With regard to a return of the Cold War through this constellation, however, US top politicians are turning away. On the one hand, they are refraining from taking an active role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. On the other hand, the military deterrent potential in NATO is being increased in order to prevent a direct Russian attack on the alliance. In addition, the option of diplomacy continues to be favoured, whereby Russia must refrain from incorporating occupied territories into Russian territory and NATO must accept this.

In addition, Iran is another potential nuclear power that the US wants to contain by means of sanctions. The possibility of Russian support would put Iran in a position to produce its own nuclear weapons, which would pose a direct threat to the USA.

In addition, threats are named that include not only military threats but also climate policy requirements, which represent a global threat. The conditions of supply chains and free trade are also being increasingly impaired, which represents an economic threat. As a result, risk-based problem areas and impending as well as existing crisis potentials at international level are becoming increasingly clear, which the USA and NATO are calling for.

Speech	Quotes	Narrative
Biden (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “[...] Russia’s brutal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine [...]” – “[...] this horrific war[...].” – “[...] against the brutal — the truly brutal aggression of Russia. We haven’t seen the likes of this in a long time.” 	<p>Conventional military threat: Descriptions of the war to emphasize the inhumanity of Russia as an aggressor.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[...] the expectation on the part of Russia is we’re going to break up, we’re not going to stay united. But we are fully, thoroughly, totally united.” • “He thought that he was going to have — end up with the Finlandization [Finlandization] of Europe. Well, he’s got the NATOization of Finland. He’s gotten something that he never intended.” • “Putin expected Europe and the United States to weaken our resolve. He expected our support for Ukraine to crumble with time. <u>He was wrong. He was wrong. And he was wrong from the beginning, and he continues to be wrong.</u> We are united. America is united and so is the world.” 	<p>Strategic influence and conventional military threat: Russia's expectations of weakness lead to the strengthening of NATO.</p> <p>New alliance and strategic influence: Instead of Europe maintaining a neutral stance, more neutral countries are joining NATO.</p> <p>Supremacy claim and conventional threat: Clarification of the misjudgement of the situation and emphasis on the opposite through epanalepsis (repetition for emphasis).</p>
Harris (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “As a defensive alliance, we have deterred acts of aggression against NATO territory for the past 75 years. And today, let me be clear: America’s commitment to Article 5 is ironclad. This commitment is sacrosanct to me, to President Biden, and to our entire nation.” • “Since Russia launched its proxy war against Ukraine nearly eight years ago, the people of Ukraine have suffered immensely [...]” 	<p>Strategic influence: The role of NATO in maintaining peace and security. The USA fully fulfills its duties within the alliance.</p> <p>Conventional military threat: Use of the term "proxy war" (parallel to the Cold War in the 1980s)</p>
Biden (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "When Russia invaded, it wasn't just Ukraine being tested. The whole world faced a test for the ages. Europe was being tested. America was being tested. NATO was being tested. All democracies were being tested." • [...] the Ukrainian people are too brave. America, Europe, a coalition of nations from the Atlantic to the Pacific - we were 	<p>Strategic influence and conventional military threat: Function of the Russian invasion for further military planning if no resistance or support is provided.</p> <p>Supremacy claim: Democracies are superior to Russian autocracy.</p>

	<p>too unified. Democracy was too strong."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "President Putin's craven lust for land and power will fail." • Extraordinary brutality from Russian forces and mercenaries. [...]Used rape as a weapon of war. Stole Ukrainian children in an attempt to - in an attempt to steal Ukraine's future. Bombed train stations, maternity hospitals, schools, and orphanages." • "Putin tried to starve the world, blocking the ports in the Black Sea to stop Ukraine from exporting its grain, exacerbating the global food crisis that hit developing nations in Africa especially hard." 	<p>Strategic influence: Defamation of the political leader of the 'opposing side.'</p> <p>De-democratisation and conventional military threat: Emphasis on the inhumanity of Russia's military actions.</p> <p>Economic blackmail: Accusation of deliberately blocking essential civilian goods for impoverished regions of the world. → Further emphasis on inhumanity.</p>
<p>Blinken (2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This war is an attempt to seize territory from Ukraine and thwart its independent, democratic trajectory." • „President Putin started this illegal war, and he has the power to end it." 	<p>Strategic influence and De-democratisation: Interpretation of the war as a deliberate assault on right to self-determination and democracy.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Emphasis on the possibility for Russia to avoid further losses and politically reconnect with the international community.</p>
<p>Harris (2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Russian forces have pursued a widespread and systemic attack against a civilian population - gruesome acts of murder, torture, rape, and deportation. Execution-style killings, beatings, and electrocution." • "We also have a significant strategic interest. The fight in Ukraine has far-reaching global ramifications. No nation is safe in a world where one country can violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another, where crimes against humanity are committed with impunity; 	<p>Conventional military threat: Emphasis on the inhumanity of Russian military forces and political leaders. → Violation of all international agreements in warfare.</p> <p>Strategic influence, De-globalisation and De-democratisation: Strategic importance of Ukraine for the USA. A defeat of Ukraine would have far-reaching consequences → A copycat effect among other imperialist nations with expansionist ambitions.</p>

	<p>where a country with imperialist ambitions can go unchecked."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Americans know well the meaning of independence. We believe in the fundamental importance of sovereignty and rule of law. And we will always stand on the side of justice." 	<p>Supremacy claim: The USA as a defender of unjustly attacked nations.</p>
<p>Blinken (2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Like President Putin's so-called "special operation" against Ukraine, the USSR's so-called "liberation operation" falsely accused Finland of provoking the invasion." "Like Putin in Ukraine, when Stalin failed to overcome the Finns' fierce and determined resistance, he shifted to a strategy of terror, incinerating entire villages and bombing so many hospitals from the air that Finns started covering up the Red Cross insignia on the rooftops." "President Biden made clear that regardless of which path President Putin chose, we would be ready. And if Russia chose war, we would do three things: support Ukraine, impose severe costs on Russia, and strengthen NATO while rallying our allies and partners around these goals." "Where Putin aimed to project strength, he's revealed weakness. Where he sought to divide, he's united. What he tried to prevent, he's precipitated. That outcome is no accident. It's the direct result of the courage and solidarity of the Ukrainian people and the deliberate, decisive, swift action that we and our partners have taken to support Ukraine." "NATO always has been – and always will be – a defensive 	<p>Conventional military threat: Comparison between the USSR and Russia in their actions during unprovoked invasions.</p> <p>Conventional military threat and De-democratisation: Stalin-Putin comparison emphasizes the dictatorial policies of both leaders. Also similar is the inhumane conduct of both dictators.</p> <p>Conventional military threat: Determination of U.S. measures in the event of war → Leadership in support and security.</p> <p>Strategic influence: Emphasis on Russia's complete misjudgement and failure regarding its war objectives.</p> <p>Nuclear and conventional military threat: NATO as a defensive alliance → However, rearmament is necessary since Russia is threatening the use of nuclear weapons.</p>

	<p>alliance. But Russia's aggression, threats, nuclear saber-rattling compelled us to reinforce our deterrence and defense."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Kremlin often claimed it had the second-strongest military in the world, and many believed it. Today, many see Russia's military as the second-strongest in Ukraine." 	<p>Strategic influence and supremacy claim: Clarification of the perception that Russia no longer represents a military power.</p>
<p>Biden (2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • " Hamas and Putin represent different threats, but they share this in common: They both want to completely annihilate a neighbouring democracy - completely annihilate it." • "We will have something that we do not seek - make it clear: we do not seek - we do not seek to have American troops fighting in Russia or fighting against Russia." • "American leadership is what holds the world together. American alliances are what keep us, America, safe. American values are what make us a partner that other nations want to work with." 	<p>De-democratisation: Comparison of both threats as enemies of democracy.</p> <p>Conventional military threat: Emphasis on the USA's position of not planning or engaging in a full-scale war with Russia.</p> <p>Supremacy claim and strategic influence: The USA as the leader for global security and peace, accepted by all partners.</p>
<p>Austin (2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We're living through challenging times. That includes the major conflicts facing our fellow democracies, Israel and Ukraine; bullying and coercion from an increasingly assertive China; and a worldwide battle between democracy and autocracy." • "From Russia to China, from Hamas to Iran, our rivals and foes want to divide and weaken the United States-and to split us off from our allies and partners." • "The world will only become more dangerous if tyrants and terrorists believe that they can get away with wholesale 	<p>De-democratisation and De-globalisation: The various global problems represent a battle between democracies and autocracies (bipolarity).</p> <p>New alliance and strategic influence: Various enemies of the USA are attempting to isolate the country from its alliance partners.</p> <p>De-democratisation: Security can only be achieved if autocracies are put in check, which requires strong</p>

	<p>aggression and mass slaughter. And America will only become less secure if dictators believe that they can wipe a democracy off the map. And the United States will only pay a higher price if autocrats and zealots believe that they can force free people to live in fear."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "First, Putin's war poses a strong and direct threat to security in Europe and beyond. Second, Putin's aggression is a clear challenge to our NATO allies. Third, the Kremlin's deliberate cruelty is an attack on our shared values of democracy and decency. And finally, Putin's war is a frontal assault on the international rules-based order. So the outcome of this struggle will define global security for decades to come." • "If we do not stand up to the Kremlin's naked aggression today, if we do not deter other would-be aggressors, we will only embolden them-and we will invite even more bloodshed and chaos. Russia's invasion of Ukraine offers a grim preview of a world of tyranny and turmoil that should make us all shudder. And that's important far beyond Europe." 	<p>alliance policies among democratic nations.</p> <p>Conventional military threat and De-democratisation: Chain reaction effect of the Ukraine war. Threat to Europe's security → Threat to NATO's security → Threat to democratic structures → Final global threat if autocracies succeed.</p> <p>Conventional military threat, De-democratisation and strategic influence: If no opposition to Russia is presented, other autocratic nations will feel motivated to carry out their own regional attacks.</p>
<p>Austin (2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ukraine matters profoundly to America's security, and to the trajectory of global security in the 21st century." • "America will be more secure if we stand up to Putin's increasingly aggressive Russia. America will be more secure if we stand up for our bedrock values. And America will be more secure if we make it clear to would-be aggressors worldwide that they do not get to decide which 	<p>Strategic influence: Emphasis on the situation in Ukraine as a security factor for the USA.</p> <p>Conventional military threat and supremacy claim: Russia's failure is a significant security factor for the USA.</p>

	countries live or which countries die."	
Biden (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Russian loyalists in Moscow celebrated when Re- - when Republicans voted to block Ukraine's aid last week. The host of a Kremlin-run show literally said, and I quote, "Well done, Republicans! That's good for us," "Today, Ukraine's freedom is on the line. But if we don't stop Putin, it will endanger the freedom of everyone almost everywhere. Putin will keep going, and would-be aggressors everywhere will be emboldened to try to take what they can by force." 	<p>De-democratisation: Domestic political division in the USA strengthens Russia's position.</p> <p>Conventional military threat, new alliance and strategic influence: The success of Ukraine is a security factor for all nations → Russia's success would trigger further conflicts.</p>
Biden (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Now, now my predecessor, a former Republican president, tells Putin, quote, do whatever the hell you want. That's a quote. A former president actually said that, bowing down to a Russian leader. I think it's outrageous, it's dangerous, and it's unacceptable." "I say this to Congress: We have to stand up to Putin. Send me a bipartisan national security bill. History is literally watching. History is watching. If the United States walks away, it will put Ukraine at risk. Europe is at risk. The free world will be at risk, emboldening others to what they wish to do us harm." 	<p>De-democratisation: Domestic political problems between Republicans and Democrats create international uncertainty. A U.S. withdrawal from securing the free world would lead to global conflicts.</p> <p>Strategic influence and De-democratisation: Emphasis that only the USA, as the leader of NATO and other alliance partners, can ensure international security.</p>
Biden (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Generation after generation, the United States and our Allies have chosen to come together to work for peace and push back aggression [...]." "We experienced this during the Cold War when we stood united against the forces of Soviet totalitarianism. We experienced it again when the United States was attacked on 11 September 	<p>Strategic influence and supremacy claim: The role of the USA and its allies as guarantors has been recognized for generations.</p> <p>Conventional military threat and strategic influence: Presentation of successful guarantees in historical examples. → In the Ukraine war, it is even more important, as this war is the largest since World War II.</p>

	<p>2001 and our allies declared a state of alliance for the first and only time in history - an attack on one is an attack on all. And we've seen it for two years, as Allies have stepped up their efforts to support the brave people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's brutal invasion - the largest war in Europe since World War II."</p>	
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The expansion of the Russian confrontation with the USA through the war of aggression against Ukraine and the desire to integrate the country into Russia using military force means that the USA and NATO must reposition themselves. Existing sanctions will be massively extended and NATO's internal armaments efforts increased. In addition, existing military goods are being given to Ukraine in order to halt the Russian advance. To date, top US politicians have emphasised that they are not seeking a direct confrontation with Russia at any time and would only intervene in a defensive situation. This continues to represent the greatest direct threat to the USA in relation to Russia's expansionist policy, as the USA would have to enter into direct war with Russia in the event of attacks on NATO members. In the sources of the own research the parameter was found 16 times. One more time the use of strategic influence was used. For its part, Russia repeatedly communicates its intentions to carry out strategic operations against NATO countries and the use of nuclear weapons also appears in the Russian depiction of the situation. Nevertheless, the speeches presented rarely mention a direct threat to the USA from Russia as a source basis. In the view of the USA, the threat is centred on Europe and must be averted here too. The greater threat posed by China, which is currently evident on an economic level, is increasingly appearing in the narrative of top US politicians. However, expansionist interests in the Pacific and the establishment of military bases in the region are perceived more as a direct threat than that posed by Russia.

The Cold War, as it existed until 1989, does not play a role in the content, as on the one hand it is denied that such a constellation could arise again. On the other hand, there is increasing talk that the levels of conflict are increasingly centred on the autocratic governments with the democracies. This depiction of a new form of bipolarisation appears massively in the representations and can therefore be recognised as a communicated threat as well as a manifestation of a new demarcation of international politics. In this constellation, the USA continues to see itself as the nation that is in a position to secure the free, democratic world. To do so, however, it increasingly needs strong and reliable partners in NATO, which is also being communicated. Without the alliance, international security remains fragile. It is therefore increasingly being communicated that the success of an autocratic state with attacks on sovereign states can have an effect that produces imitators.

As a result, the old constellation of political oppositions has shifted from a rivalry between communism and capitalism to a new confrontation between autocracies and democracies. This creates a new configuration among the countries that face each other. In this regard, one can speak of multipolarization, as the individual autocratic states do not form a new unified alliance opposing the USA/NATO and other democratic nations. Although there is support from China, North Korea, and Iran for Russia, there are no overarching, aligned goals that unite all these nations. The only strategic alignment of interests lies in an ambiguously defined enemy image of the USA and/or NATO.

Top US politicians are also communicating the internal threat to maintaining the USA's leading position in international politics, the situation of approval at home for further support for threatened nations. The Republican opposition is increasingly rejecting this policy and would evade the measures if it came to

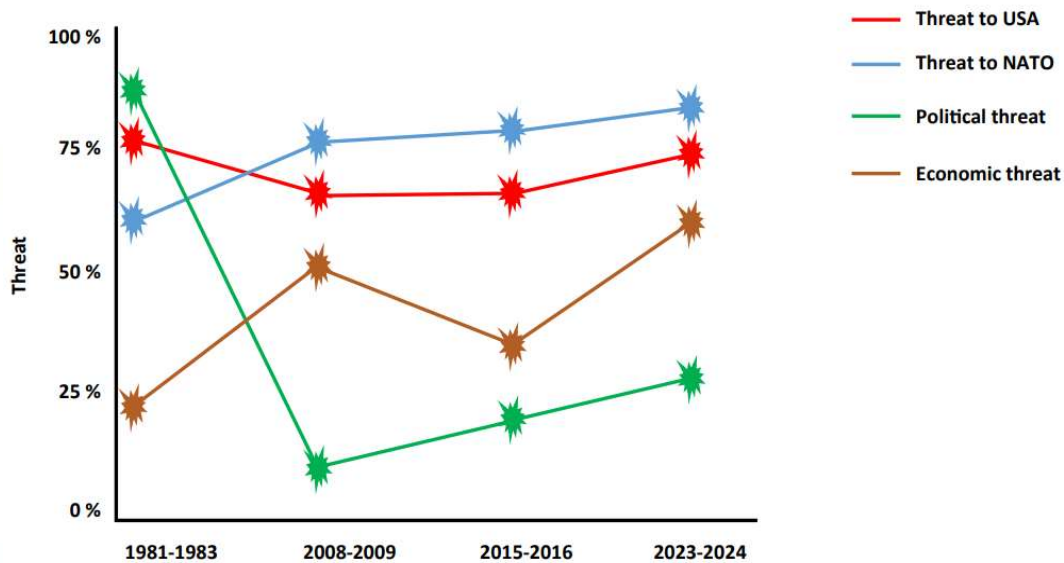
power. If NATO could then break apart as an alliance, international security would be threatened by even more wars in various regions. Several nations would follow an expansionist path as autocracies (North Korea, China and still Russia). This would massively increase the direct threats to the USA.

The results currently after Russia's war of aggression show the increase in the communicated military threat in all speeches. Also, there is a lot of communicated contents of De-democratization that shows the new counterpart of democracies and autocratic governments. But a new bipolarity seen by the politicians is not detectable, but it is a global threat because of the raise of these autocratic governments existing alliances can be destabilized. Economic and nuclear threats are mentioned but are now only found sporadically.

DISCUSSION

The first fundamental question of the research can only be clearly confirmed on one level. A direct potential threat from the attack is not communicated by government officials. The war is a regional conflict and takes place within the borders of Ukraine. It has no direct influence on the territorial sovereign rights of the USA. However, many of the selected sources focus the potential threat on NATO interests and regulations.

A look at the various threat situations communicated by US government leaders from the analysed sources, the following graphic categorisation emerges.



Threats in the communication of sources

Source: Own representation, 2024

The chart deliberately separates the national and threat to NATO, as two scenarios are conceivable for the USA that could lead to a direct conflict situation with adversaries.

The threat to the USA as a single nation has diminished after first phase of the Cold War, as the intercontinental threat posed by the use of nuclear weapons has diminished. Since the first aggressive action of Russia and the increase of possibilities of terrorism with nuclear weapons, the threat increases for the nation. Examples can be found in the sources used, particularly President Obama, who addresses this urgently, emphasising the use of nuclear weapons available on the black market. The situation for the USA in combination with the NATO is more threatful, because an attack on a NATO member is also an attack on the whole alliance. The future threat depends on the ambitions of Russia and their strategy in expansion. The situation in the Cold War is equivalent, as bipolarity meant that a war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact was the ultimate military conflict on the horizon. The actual military confrontations

during the Cold War were fought as proxy wars (Greiner et al., 2005). With the end of the bipolarity of the two superpowers, the threats are shifting from direct national threats to the USA to a scenario that draws the USA into an unwanted war. Russia's ambitions in Europe must also be seen as a security threat to the USA, as Europe has numerous NATO members which, as former satellite states of the USSR, represent a potential target. The USA with its allies must therefore inevitably build a counter-scenario that serves as a deterrent.

Thus, it can be clearly seen from the results of our own research that the USA's fears are focused on automatically getting drawn into a military conflict with Russia in a NATO conflict. Analyses of speeches surrounding the conflict in Georgia do not yet show this in this form with the vehemence that has been observed since 2014 and in the second phase from 2022. American leaders very often emphasise the strengthening of European defence, which can only be achieved by increasing investment in military goods. At the same time, it is clear from the statements that the USA cannot take on this task alone, as the USA still faces other potential threats and must also secure these militarily. Above all, China is a direct competitor for influence in the world. Particularly on the African continent and in the Pacific region, China's attempts at expansion and influence have increased and threaten the interests of the USA. Ahamad (2023) shows that the USA is pursuing a policy of securitisation to counter China's expansionist ambitions. This is particularly true with regard to the international influence on other nations, which China is increasingly seeking to consolidate with its economic investments and support for poorer nations, but with rich strategic raw materials. This threat is also evident in the speeches presented and is substantiated by the USA's securitisation. In order to achieve a high level of efficiency in deterring attacks, it is important that the European NATO partners and the EU are militarily prepared in such a way that Russia cannot successfully expand into states from these two alliance structures.

Therefore, since the Ukraine conflict, it has been repeatedly emphasised in speeches that if military defence in Europe continues to be too weak, Russia may decide to spread military action to NATO and EU member states. In this context, the leading politicians emphasise that this will be the case in particular if Ukraine falls because it is not sufficiently supported and the EU continues to have insufficient military strength.

Therefore, it can be concluded from the results that although a direct threat from the conflict is not seen for the USA, the NATO case does pose a threat.

Sperling and Webber (2017) have confirmed this with their own research, which can also be adapted to the period since 2022, as the research results of the content analysis of this research show. In 2017, the two researchers speak of a collective NATO security strategy that is designed to ensure that the alliance must prepare for multiple threats. This implies that the territorial distribution of NATO members must be uniformly strong in military terms in order to counter the individual threats. The USA alone is not able to respond appropriately to all situations. However, Sperling and Webber attest that in Europe, various states with conservative national governments (Hungary and the Czech Republic) are behaving in a rather pro-Russian manner. Poland and the Baltic republics feel massively exposed to the Russian threat and are therefore pushing for NATO's military strength, while France and Germany tend to favour diplomatic solutions. As a result of these differences, both researchers see the European NATO line as weakened, which is repeatedly criticised by the USA. Böttcher and Brozus also raised this issue in 2024, as there was a tendency towards more conservative national governments before the European parliamentary elections. As a result, more national self-interest and a lack of direction in foreign policy have weakened NATO's stability, which has security policy implications for both the U.S. and the EU.

The discussion about the Cold War has been going on since the end of the Second World War and had supposedly come to an end with the collapse of the USSR in 1990. The parameters of the Cold War until 1990 were the competition between the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR, as leading nuclear powers and their far-reaching influence on other nations. This became politically, economically and socially influential for allies and friendly states. The Cold War is also defined by the form of military conflict between these two powers. Until 1990, they never directly confronted each other militarily;

instead, proxy wars were fought (Turner, 2015; Breuer, 2022). Ford concludes that both sides did not engage in a direct conflict because an escalation could have led to a nuclear war (Ford, 2023).

From own research analysis of the sources from the 1980s, we were able to determine that although the communication of the American speakers recognises and addresses defined differences between the two systems. So kann besonders unter Reagan Administration in den ausgewählten Quellen aufgezeigt werden, dass die starke Gegenüberstellung beider Systeme in ein Schwarz-Weiß-Modell bzw. In Gut und Böse seitens der USA propagandistisch genutzt wird, um die aggressive Politik der UdSSR als eine massive Bedrohung für die USA darzustellen. Reagan betont immer wieder den Suprematsanspruch der USA zur Verteidigung der freien Welt und Sicherung von Demokratie gegen den Kommunismus. Diese extreme Haltung zeigt in der noch heißen Phase des Kalten Krieges der 1980er Jahre, dass sich der Konflikt auf einer bipolaren Ebene abspielt (Hartman, 2002; Krickus, 2011; Younus, 2024). This is despite the fact that the USSR is waging a war of military aggression against a sovereign state that has not carried out any active escalatory action of its own. Ford's statement that open confrontation should be avoided therefore appears to be consistent with the fact that nuclear war could have been the consequence. Harold Brown makes this very clear in the source findings according to his own statements that nuclear warfare would mean the end of human civilisation. This red line was never crossed, even if it could have happened in an extreme case. Nevertheless, Reagan's presidency shows an intensification from 1983 onwards. Thus, the Mujahedin were equipped with American weapons to strengthen the resistance against the USSR. In addition, extensive defence spending was incurred, which also extended to a missile defence system in space with the Strategic Defence Initiative. Under the given circumstances, the USSR had no chance of keeping pace with these developments and spending (Reuveny and Prakash, 1999; Keller, 2017).

A consideration of the brief phase of the Georgian conflict makes it clear that the USA does not feel directly threatened by NATO and its function in the examples of sources presented. However, the possibility of an attack by Russia on a member country is also included in the considerations. These are still expressed cautiously, as the politicians are still of the opinion that cooperation with Russia in times of peace still seems possible.

In addition to the conflict, the sources repeatedly refer to the economic crisis at the time and an increasing threat from international, especially Muslim, terror. Russia is therefore not the only source of danger for the USA, but the first multiple factors are emerging that can be identified as cumulative security risks. However, the US representatives do not see the emergence of a new Cold War, which Rice emphasises by stating that Russia is not in a position to pose a threat to the USA and NATO alone.

Following Russia's annexation of Crimea, Turner (2015) argued that the Cold War was never over, but was now being continued by Putin after Russia's forced pause following the collapse of the USSR. If we look at Putin's fundamental goals for Russian policy at this point, the lines of development for 2014 and 2022 can be determined as early as 2007.

- The development of Russia as a civilisation with its own character
- The defence of the common cultural space
- Strengthening Russia's sovereignty
- A high level of defence capability
- Guarantee of a worthy place in a multipolar world.

(Casula, 2012)

Hidden in these statements are a claim to supremacy on the part of the Russians and a perception of Russia from the outside world with respect. At the same time, terms such as the common cultural space provide room for interpretation as to where this is located.

Based on our own research, it can be stated that US American leaders do not see themselves in a new Cold War. This is explicitly emphasised in speeches by Obama and Carter (2015). In the second phase, starting in 2022, this is no longer explicitly mentioned, but the concept of the Cold War is also not mentioned in a new edition. Since the Georgian conflict, an increasing number of new juxtapositions have

emerged, which have become more and more pronounced between 2014 and 2022. These can be verified by the high frequency of use of the parameter of dedemocratisation and refer to the communicated perception of a juxtaposition of democracies and autocracies. According to Turner, this conflict is subject to the premise of expanding one's own influence and thus accumulating power, as interpreted according to Waltz's structural realism and Mearsheimer's offensive realism theory.

“Under both these theories, power in the international system is believed to be the most important factor, the international system is anarchic, the survival is the primary focus of the state, and that states should do everything to maximise their power. However, offensive realism and neorealism diverge in their view this should be accomplished. The former argues that states should maximise their relative power in relation to other states, with the end goal of becoming the hegemonic power in the international system; focusing externally.” (Turner, 2015 based on Mearsheimer, 2001)

Russia has chosen the path of direct military confrontation.

Russia's isolated position against the USA and NATO as a military alliance appears to be new in the constellation. However, this is not the case in the current position. It is true that Russia has no military allies who would enter a war on its side. However, Russia's support, both with military goods and economically, is not as weak as the West makes it out to be. Iran and North Korea support Russia with weapons and India and China maintain close economic ties as they have personal interests in raw materials and energy (Kasturi, 2022). This softens the sanctions against the Russian economy to some extent. This can be confirmed in the speech analyses, as US political leaders repeatedly make reference to threats from these nations that the US and NATO must confront. The increasing polarisation between democracy and autocracy was also highlighted here. The selected sources emphasise the strengthening of democracies in order to create a counterweight to autocratic governments that harbour nationalist and expansionist intentions and thus endanger both globalisation and the liberal economy. However, no bipolarisation can be confirmed, although there has been mutual support between various autocratic governments.

Rudolf (2016) identifies three key points that shape American policy towards Russia following the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of eastern Ukraine. First, military readiness in nuclear strategy has not changed, even after the collapse of the USSR, meaning that the nuclear situation continues to serve as a significant deterrent. Second, Rudolf sees pressure on Russia through sanctions imposed on the country after 2014. The economic interdependence between the two countries was never particularly strong, but the sanctions are felt more acutely on the Russian side since they also involve the EU and other democratic nations. Third, and as a consequence of the situation, there has been a growing perception of Russia as a threat by the United States.

In the analyses of speeches by top American politicians, these three focuses appear in varying degrees. The nuclear threat is highlighted in certain speeches, making it clear that there will always be a response to Russian attacks. Statements regarding sanctions emphasize that Russia is in a weakened economic position, unable to sustain the war or achieve military success in the long term. This is further reinforced by the emphasis on the need to provide military support to Ukraine. Increasingly, American leaders have stressed that European states and NATO partners need to invest more in rearmament to independently address Russian threats. For the USA, the threat is particularly evident in the sense that, as a NATO member and leader of the alliance, it would automatically be drawn into military conflict if NATO territory were attacked. This has been repeatedly implied in speeches by American leaders, with the suggestion that an independent deterrent capability in Europe plays a key role in maintaining stability. From the results of the analyses of the speeches in the phase since 2022, it can be deduced that the Russian threat is mainly concentrated on the European continent in US communications. However, the speakers see the indirect threat to the US from NATO falling apart, resulting in direct confrontation in the event of an attack on one of its members. Apart from that, the political leaders communicate a greater threat from China, which is expressed in the fact that China is perceived and communicated as the only military and economic power that can directly endanger the US.

From the analysis of the available source findings for the research, it can be definitively stated with regard to the research question “Does the securitisation of Russian war against Ukraine by the USA officials indicate the return of Cold War narratives?” that narratives of this form according to the old pattern of the Cold War have no substantive relevance in communication. Relations between the USA and Russia are on a different footing than was the case until 1989. The majority of top US politicians in government positions have made it clear that they are not seeking war against Russia or intending to isolate it. Instead, the prospect of further co-operation is being held out if Russia withdraws from existing conflicts, accepts the status quo and accepts international agreements.

It is striking that in the source findings, Russia is seen as the weaker counterpart to the USA vis-à-vis China (von Bressendorf in an interview with Schröder, 2023). This means that the tendencies of the former superpowers have shifted. China is communicated as the main competitor for dominant influence in the world, both militarily and economically. Despite the nuclear threat, Russia is therefore not the main threat to US interests.

With the emergence of China as a new economic giant, the USA is becoming increasingly dependent on Asian markets, which are taking over many production and raw material processing operations for the US market in the spirit of the division of labour. In the meantime, however, China is taking over ever larger parts of high technology on its own, which is playing into American economic interests. The USA is therefore attempting to increasingly decouple the Chinese economy from its own. The American threats and its defence measures will increasingly put other nations under pressure, as they also have close economic ties with both nations but follow the leading role of the USA in terms of security policy (Braml, 2021).

Five years ago, Hebner and Priest (2019) already saw the constellation of a real threat to the USA from China, in that the economic concentration on the Chinese market has a determining effect and can intensify in further developments and come to a head politically and, in extreme cases, militarily. It is difficult to break up existing interdependencies, as China has a monopolistic position in some areas of raw material processing. Examples can be found in the areas of manganese, cobalt and graphite, which are required for battery and rechargeable battery production. China is dominant here with shares of 90% to 99% (Bünting et al., 2023).

Butterfield (2022) also sees a Cold War in a different constellation, which will take place between the USA and China. He sees the interests of both nations boiling down to direct competition. Both sides are expanding their economic interests throughout the world to acquire raw materials and energy reserves as well as new sales markets. The situation is different when the two nations overlap, as both sides are the strongest buyers of each other's goods. According to Butterfield, this distinguishes the situation between the USSR and the USA. Bunglawala (2022) assumes that a close constellation between China and India and Russia could result in economic sanctions. However, it would be extremely difficult for the USA and Europe to compensate for these sanctions on such a large scale, so it is more likely that the measures would be reduced, as the consequences would be too massive.

Walkenhorst (2021) is also of the opinion that China and the USA are in an economic conflict and competitive rivalry. He sees the conflict primarily from an economic point of view, with both sides trying to separate their supply chains from dependencies on the other, but this does not prevent the conflict. Other suppliers are another competitive factor that is a problem here. Walkenhorst emphasises an important point, however, which again bears a resemblance to the ideological Cold War. China is still characterised by communism in its political orientation, even though a relatively free market economy exists. This market economy is politically and autocratically controlled and thus also shows a systemic difference to the West.

In her essay, Mayer (2022), on the other hand, is of the opinion that Russia's war with Ukraine and the lines of confrontation between NATO and the USA have different structures than the original Cold War. She explains this through the multi-perspective lines of conflict that play into it. These are also extended internal conflicts in the Eastern European states as to whether they should adopt an Eastern or Western

orientation. However, this is now also the case in other European states, depending on the political orientation. This results in differences that lead Mayer to this definition.

In summary, it can be deduced from the own results that a development in US communication is emerging. From the bipolarisation of the Cold War, there is increasing talk in the three subsequent periods of different threat scenarios that the US has to face. Russia is only one factor in this multidimensional danger or threat.

The research approach developed and presented here shows this development very clearly and manages to show it in the communication by US top politicians. The parameters selected for this serve the most important main parameters of political relations in the military, political and economic spheres. On the basis of these parameters, it is possible to identify the tendency of developments both in individual cases and in combinations. The individual development steps towards this current new communication of the security situation can be clearly demonstrated in four periods using comparative content analysis, since the triggering moments are almost congruent. All four situations are actively instigated military interventions, which in their final outcome can be very clearly interpreted as pure wars of aggression by the USSR or Russia. This makes it possible to compare statements and communication strategies of US American politicians in direct reference to these situations very well and can make overarching moments of comparison and differentiation in the periods clear. Since this has not yet been done in this form on more than two comparative scenarios, a more valid comparative methodology emerges in the own results, which better documents the development of US security policy through the lens of securitisation vis-à-vis Russia by the political decision-making elite than would have been possible in a single-case analysis. Therefore, the two main results can be shown to provide analytical support for answering the research questions. Die Bedrohungslage, die kommuniziert wird, ist stark auf die Folgen einer NATO-Strategie ausgelegt und wird durch die US-amerikanischen Spitzenpolitiker am häufigsten in den Reden angeführt.

1. The USA does not see any direct threat to the US state from Russia, but it does see an indirect threat from a weakness in the European flank of the defence, which could draw the USA into a direct conflict.
2. US leaders are not communicating a renewed Cold War due to Russia's war of aggression, which could threaten world peace in a bipolar form.
3. However, US political leaders are communicating a multiple threat situation that arises from individual scenarios.
 - a. Russia could attack NATO allies, forcing the United States into direct conflict.
 - b. China could feel motivated to use military force to assert its own interests in the South Pacific if Russia is successful in Ukraine.
 - c. Countries such as North Korea, Iran or other expansionist states could be equally motivated and trigger regional conflicts that could expand the multiple threat situation.
 - d. Authoritarian regimes with strong nationalist ideas are thus a direct threat to democratic and liberal states, for which the USA has so far claimed a self-proclaimed security function.

In the speeches of the analysis, communication tends to spread nationalist ideas and endanger international communities, treaties and other agreements in the course of a de-democratisation by autocratic governments. Since this is reflected as individual national interests, it is not yet possible to speak of a renewed bipolarisation, as no new alliance constellations of authoritarian states are solidifying as a counterweight to democracies or are being secured by treaty. Therefore, a multipolar scenario must be assumed, which can also be seen in the content communicated by leading politicians, since no comprehensive threat is communicated by all individual threats. Nevertheless, an increased securitisation is recognisable.

The broader research approach used here makes it easier to identify crucial points more clearly when analysing strategies for securitisation. This research approach is integrative and useful for various fields of expertise and provides valid results that also allow statements about further developments. In this way, historical, sociological, political, economic and psychological fields of expertise can be used

individually or in combination with these approaches to provide a better explanatory approach for currently communicated threat scenarios for each country, and can also be better explained and validly presented in a more deeply analysed way of looking at them.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The research is limited in a few points, both in terms of the research framework and the selection of sources in terms of content.

First of all, the sources are to be named, which could certainly have been more extensive in terms of the number of sources. The sifting and the accessibility were criteria for limiting the selection to the sources identified within the time invested. The fact that not all sources are freely available in the individual archives that were used resulted in limitations, which, however, can still be considered sufficient given the results.

In terms of content, other sources with a purely economic orientation might have yielded slightly different results with regard to the economic threat. However, during the review and selection process, the limited source material was noticed and the focus was placed on sources that could contain a general threat. As a result, the economic situation may have been somewhat underrepresented. Nevertheless, all three parameters could be found and recorded in the sources. They therefore offer content that corresponds to the research framework.

The limitation of the selection is also due to the research objects that were included in the selection. The targeted top politicians were found and included in the analysis. However, if the group of people had been expanded, it is felt that the results would hardly have been different, or only in minor nuances.

CONCLUSION

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has been one of the defining geopolitical events in world politics since 2014. The progress and a possible end of the war depends heavily on the role of the USA, which supports Ukraine. The role of the USA has been analysed in the research. The research examined whether Russia is being communicated by American top politicians as a threat to the USA from the perspective of the USA's securitisation against the Russian aggressor. In addition, the research's own design was used to examine whether a comparison and thus a return of the Cold War between the two states can be demonstrably identified in the communication through the war of aggression.

The research was conducted under the two coordinated questions:

- 1. Is the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine being communicated as a potential threat to the USA by American government officials?**
- 2. Does the securitization of Russian war against Ukraine by the USA officials indicate the return of Cold War narratives?**

In a content-analytical approach, speeches by top US politicians were included in a comparison for this purpose. In terms of content and theme, a far-reaching new approach was taken to address historical political events that were approximately congruent in geopolitical terms. The four events were the Soviet war of aggression on Afghanistan in the 1980s, the Russian attack on Georgia in 2008, the military annexation of Crimea and further eastern territories of Ukraine in 2014, and the direct war of aggression on autonomous Ukraine in 2022. Due to their similarity, the speeches could be selected in such a way that they show how the threat posed by the USSR and Russia, respectively, is communicated by top US politicians. To this end, three main parameters were selected for the content analysis, which allow a threat to be demonstrated in military, political and economic terms.

The results show that a pure repetition of the Cold War cannot be proven from the communication of the events of 2008, 2014 and 2022 compared to the 1980s. It could also be shown that there is no direct threat to the US's own territory, but that Russia's aggressive expansion can indirectly force the US into a direct confrontation by attacking a European NATO member.

The most important result of the new approach is that the analysis shows a valid result that, unlike media reports and the opinion of some international researchers, no new Cold War is emerging in the form of the period from 1945 to 1990. Rather, it can be assumed that there is a new constellation that demonstrates multipolar threat patterns and shows no signs of changing significantly in the near future. The USA sees itself threatened by independently acting nations on several strategic fronts, although it must be stated absolutely clearly that no direct threat is perceived. Rather, the USA sees itself compelled by weak NATO members, especially in Europe, to intervene in the event of a NATO attack and to play a military role that is too one-sided.

The research design that was created and used has contributed to the fact that this development could be clearly demonstrated in the source material and can thus be applied to other conflicts with a historical-political background for further research in the practical as well as scientific field. Thus, individual analyses can be carried out from the perspective of a nation as in the present research. However, comparative analyses of the parties to the conflict can also be used to chart developments to a current state and provide a valid outlook on further developments.

In view of the current conflicts and their uncertain outcomes and consequences, as well as further potential geopolitical scenarios, comparative research is considered useful for analysing security aspects.

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