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Putinian Policies of De-Nazification: Discourses of Power in the Deployment of Linguistic Resources on the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

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Abstract

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 has drawn widespread condemnations, criticisms, and reactions. While an infinitesimal figure has spoken in support of the invasion, most world leaders outrightly condemned the action of the Russian government led by Vladimir Putin who in the process of justifying his actions, claims that the reason for the invasion of Ukraine was pure to “de-nazify” the Ukrainian government policies. Ironically, Putin himself is a product of Nazism, a system of government that he strongly fought in his prime. Moreso, in the days of the USSR, the Russian government had been accused of the same offense the Russian government is accusing Ukraine of. This is therefore a clear case of linguistic labeling to justify an action carried out by a superior force. In this study, we apply the theoretical principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in describing and interpreting the texts. The rationale for the choice of CDA is because research in CDA is often interested in the study of ideologically biased discourses, and the ways these polarize the representation of us (in groups) and them (outgroups). Both at the level of global and local meaning analysis. We thus often witness an overall strategy of ‘positive self-presentation and negative other presentation’, in which our good things and their bad things are emphasized, and our bad things and their good things are de-emphasized. In terms of the method of generating data, the data for the study were elicited from CNN and BBC websites. While working on “An Eco linguistic study of oil spillage in Ogoniland” Ebim (2016) opines that “... a good, sound, and logical research output should be governed by a well-defined research methodology based on scientific principles”. The study reveals cases of polarization, ideological projection, the deployment of linguistic resources in form of labeling to justify the actions of Putin over the Ukrainians. There is also the deliberate attempt to “annex” or “conquer” the less powerful using application of force through the policy of “imposition”.

Keywords: *Putin, De-Nazification, Linguistic Resources, Russia, Invasion, Ukraine*

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Introduction

Before the moment of the Ukrainian invasion by the Russians, there were weeks of warning, and the Russian decision to launch an invasion of Ukraine caught much of the world by surprise. Russian President Vladimir Putin released what appeared to be a pre-recorded statement just as the offensive began, wherein he described the commencement of a “special military operation” aimed at defending the Ukrainian breakaway territories of Donetsk and Luhansk, the two

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regions he had recognized as independent countries, as well as the “demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine.” Within minutes, the first of a barrage of missile strikes hit targets around the country as Russian ground troops moved into Ukrainian territory, initiating what is believed to be the biggest attack on a European state since the second world war, WWII. Perhaps not coincidentally, Putin made his announcement just as the U.N. Security Council was convening a special session on the Ukraine crisis. The ensuing debate provided a microcosm into much of the world’s initial reactions to Russia’s actions. While many member states quickly condemned Russia’s actions, others—most notably China and India—made more general calls for de-escalation on all sides and a return to diplomatic dialogue. Russia’s representative continued to defend its actions as necessary responses to Ukraine’s hostility toward the people of Donetsk and Luhansk. Ukraine’s representative, meanwhile, called on Russia to end its aggression, noting: “there is no purgatory for war criminals—they go straight to hell”. Reacting to the invasion by the president of the United States of America, Joe Biden, he says “The prayers of the entire world are with the people of Ukraine tonight” shortly after the invasion began. But much of the world has only begun to formulate its formal response to Russia’s actions.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This study Critical Discourse Analysis as the theoretical framework with specific emphasis on Van Dijk’s (Socio-cognitive model) which is one of the most often referenced and quoted in critical studies of media discourse. Van Dijk started to apply his discourse analysis theory to media texts mainly focusing on the representation of ethnic groups and minorities in Europe. In his *News Analysis* (1988), he integrates his general theory of discourse to the discourse of news in the press and applies his theory to authentic cases of news reports at both the national and international levels. What distinguishes van Dijk’s (1988c) framework for the analyses of news discourse is his call for a thorough analysis not only of the textual and structural level of media discourse but also for analysis and explanations at the production and “reception” or comprehension level (Boyd-Barrett, 1994).

By structural analysis, van Dijk posited analysis of “structures at various levels of description” which meant not only the grammatical, phonological, morphological, and semantic level but also “higher-level properties” such as coherence, overall themes, and topics of news stories and the whole schematic forms and rhetorical dimensions of texts. This structural analysis, however, he claimed, will not suffice, for Discourse is not simply an isolated textual or dialogic structure. Rather it is a complex communicative event that also embodies a social context, featuring participants (and their properties) as well as production and reception processes (Van Dijk, 1988a). By “production processes” van Dijk means journalistic and institutional practices of news-making and the economic and social practices which not only play an important roles in the creation of media discourse but which can be explicitly related to the structures of media discourse. Ebim (2019) asserts that CDA is an approach that is targeted at enabling an assessment of what is meant when language is used to describe and explain by systematically exploring often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts; and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events, and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles overpower.

Van Dijk’s other dimension of analysis, “reception processes”, involves taking into consideration the comprehension, “memorization and reproduction” of news information. What van Dijk’s analysis of media (1988, 1991, 1993) attempts to demonstrate is the relationships between the three levels of news text production (structure, production, and comprehension processes) and their relationship with the wider social context they are embedded within. To identify such relationships, van Dijk’s analysis takes place at two levels: microstructure and macrostructure. At the microstructure level, analysis is focused on the semantic relations between propositions, syntactic, lexical, and other rhetorical elements that provide coherence in the text, and other rhetorical elements such as quotations, direct or indirect reporting that give factuality to the news reports. Central to van Dijk’s analysis of news reports, however, is the analysis of macrostructure since it pertains to the thematic/topic structure of the news stories and their overall schemata. Themes and topics are realized in the headlines and lead paragraphs. Writing on the poetry of Niyi Osundare which focused on the role of politicians in governance, Ebim (2021) says the study examined the choice of language in the poem to take out important pieces of information that are relevant to the African continent nay the Nigerian social life.

According to van Dijk (1988b), the headlines “define the overall coherence or semantic unity of discourse, and also what information readers memorize best from a news report” (p. 248). He claims that the headline and the lead paragraph express the most important information of the cognitive model of journalists, that is, how they see and define the news event. Unless readers have different knowledge and beliefs, they will generally adopt these subjective media definitions of what is important information about an event (Van Dijk, 1988b). For van Dijk (1988c), the news schemata (“superstructure schema”) are structured according to a specific narrative pattern that consists of the following: summary (headline and

the lead paragraph), story (situation consisting of episode and backgrounds), and consequences (final comments and conclusions). These sections of a news story are sequenced in terms of “relevance,” so the general information is contained in the summary, the headline, and the lead paragraph. According to van Dijk, this is what the readers can best memorize and recall. Van Dijk (1995) essentially perceives discourse analysis as ideology analysis, because according to him, “ideologies are typical, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs, and movies”. His approach for analyzing ideologies has three parts: social analysis, cognitive analysis, and discourse analysis (1995). Whereas the social analysis pertains to examining the “overall societal structures,” (the context), the discourse analysis is primarily text-based (syntax, lexicon, local semantics, topics, schematic structures, etc.). In this sense, van Dijk’s approach incorporates the two traditional approaches in media education discussed earlier: interpretive (text-based) and social tradition (context-based), into one analytical framework for analyzing media discourse. However, what noticeably distinguishes van Dijk’s approach from other approaches in CDA is another feature of his approach: a cognitive analysis.

For van Dijk, it is the sociocognitive—social cognition and personal cognition—that mediates between society and discourse. He defines social cognition as “the system of mental representations and processes of group members”. In this sense, for van Dijk, “ideologies ... are the overall, abstract mental systems that organize ... socially shared attitudes”. Ideologies, thus, “indirectly influence the personal cognition of group members” in their act of comprehension of discourse among other actions and interactions. He calls the mental representations of individuals during such social actions and interactions “models”. For him, “models control how people act, speak or write, or how they understand the social practices of others”. Of crucial importance here is that, according to van Dijk, mental representations “are often articulated along with Us versus Them dimensions, in which speakers of one group will generally tend to present themselves or their group in positive terms, and other groups in negative terms”. Analyzing and making explicit this contrastive dimension of Us versus Them has been central to most of van Dijk’s research and writings (1988c, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998a, 1998b). He believes that one who desires to make transparent such an ideological dichotomy in discourse needs to analyze discourse in the following way (1998b): (a) Examining the context of the discourse: historical, political or social background of a conflict and its main participants; (b) Analyzing groups, power relations, and conflicts involved Identifying positive and negative opinions about Us versus Them d Making explicit the presupposed and the implied e. Examining all formal structure: lexical choice and syntactic structure, in a way that helps to (de), emphasize polarized group opinions.

3. Discourse as Social Practice

Norman Fairclough is one of the key figures in the realm of CDA. In his vantage point, CDA is a method for examining social and cultural modifications that could be employed in protesting the power and control of an elite group on other people. Fairclough believes that our language, which shapes our social identities and interactions, knowledge systems, and beliefs, is also shaped by them in turn. Like Kress and Van Leeuwen, he bases his analyses on Halliday’s systemic-functional grammar. In *Language and Power* (1989), he calls his approach Critical Language Study and considers the first aim of his approach as helping to correct the vast negligence about the significance of language in creating, maintaining, and changing the social relations of power. This first goal tends to be the theoretical part of Fairclough’s approach. The second one which is helping to raise awareness to the question that how language can influence the dominance of one group of people over the others could be considered as the practical aspect of his approach. He believes that awareness is the first step towards emancipation. To reach the latter goal Fairclough has put a great emphasis on raising the level of people’s consciousness, for he assumes that in discourse, the subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing, and they are unaware of the potential social impact of what they do or utter.

Fairclough considers language as a form of social practice. This way of thinking implies some other notions. First, language is a part of society and not somehow external to it. Second, language is a social process. Third, language is a socially conditioned process, conditioned that is by other (non-linguistic) parts of society (Fairclough, 1989). The remarkable point in Fairclough’s view is that all linguistic phenomena are social, but it is not true the other way round. For instance, when we are talking about political words such as democracy, imperialism, or terrorism we use linguistic elements, but this is only part of the whole politics.

Therefore, the relationship between language and society does not observe a one-to-one correspondence; rather, the society is the whole and language is a part of it. The second implied notion – i.e., language is a social process – is meaningful only when we take discourse as different from text, like Fairclough. Fairclough’s notion of text is the same as Halliday’s, and this term covers both written discourse and spoken discourse. For him, the text is a product, not a process. Fairclough employs the term discourse to refer to the complete process of social interaction. Text is merely a

sector of this process because he considers three elements for discourse, namely text, interaction, and social context. In addition to the text itself, the process of social interaction involves the process of text production and text interpretation. Hence, text analysis is a part of discourse analysis.

In comparison to the three aspects of discourse, Fairclough (1989) identifies three dimensions for CDA: Description is the stage that is concerned with the formal properties of the text. Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction by seeing the text as the product of the process of production and as a resource in the process of interpretation. The explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context, with the social determinants of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects. In all these stages we are concerned with the analysis, but the nature of it is different in each stage. Analysis in the first stage limits its boundaries to labeling the formal properties of the text and regards the text as an object. In the second phase, CDA goes through the analysis of the cognitive process of the participants and their interactions. Finally, in the third stage, the aim is to explain the relationship between social events and social structures that affect these events and are affected by them.

4. Ideology and Power

The roots of the first goal of Fairclough's critical language study can be traced to his expertise and background in sociolinguistics. Fairclough believes that in sociolinguistics—the study of language in the social context—one can propound ideas about language and power; for instance, in the discussions of standard and non-standard dialects, there is clear-cut evidence that the dialect of the powerful group will gain the reputation of the standard one. By the same token, some studies pay attention to how power is exercised in people's conversations. All these studies are concerned with the description of power distribution in terms of sociolinguistic conventions; however, they cannot explain these conventions. Explaining how the relations of power are shaped and the struggle on how power is shaped does not fall in the realm of sociolinguistics. Always, the media is accused of hiding information from the masses either knowingly or otherwise. While researching the activities of the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria, Ebim (2021) observes that “there seems to be information which the media is hiding from the masses with the continuous use of the name “Shekau” in their reportage. The study opines that if the war against the Boko Haram sect must be won, then there is the need for effective collaboration between media practitioners, security agencies and the populace”.

In his approach, Fairclough endeavors to explain these conventions; conventions which are the upshots of the relations of power and the struggles on them. He accentuates the presuppositions of a commonsense present in the interlocutions among people that they are usually blind to their existence. These presuppositions are the very ideology that has a close relationship with power; for these ideological presuppositions exist in the social conventions and the nature of the conventions depends on the power relations that cover them. Just as a part of Ukraine has been annexed by Russia, some parts of Nigeria have consistently asked for independence, and this has been met with stiff opposition. Ebim (2016) observes that:

The federal government continues to repress the people of the Niger Delta region through oil exploration, exploitation, and environmental degradation. State security apparatus had been used to harass and intimidate the people leading to torment, suppression, and outright destruction of some communities. This culminated in the formation of various Environmental Movement Organizations (EMOs) and armed non-state youth organizations that emerged in a bid to counter the continued harassment, intimidation, rape, oppression, and repression of the people. The murder of the environmentalist, writer, and human rights campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa, along with eight other members of the Ogoni people, by the Nigerian State in 1995 led to the formation of more ferocious militant groups in the region. The state monopoly of the violent means of destruction has been undercut by the widespread deployment of arms locally by militia and other militia groups.

The relationship between common sense and ideology was introduced by the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. He refers to “a form of practical activity in which a philosophy is contained as an implicit theoretical premise’ and ‘a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and all manifestations of individuals and collective life’” (Antonio Gramsci, 1971, cited in Fairclough, 1989). This form of practical activity is the ideology that exists in the background and is usually taken for granted. Fairclough assumes an ideological nature for common sense, to some extent, and believes that this is the common sense which is ideological to be at the disposal of the survival of the unequal relations of power and to be a justification for it. Fairclough takes a rather traditional approach towards power and does not agree with Foucault. From Fairclough's (1995a) point of view, Foucault considers power as a pervasive force and symmetrical relations that is dominant over the whole society and is not in the hands of one special group or another; whereas in Fairclough's thinking, the relations of power are asymmetrical, unequal, and empowering that belong to a special class or group.

5. Naturalization and Neutralization in Discourse

If a type of discourse is dominant over an institution in such a way that other types of discourse are oppressed or become a part of that discourse, this issue will not make the discourse seem an autocratic one; rather it will cease to be seen as natural and legitimate. Fairclough, like other critical discourse analysts, calls this phenomenon naturalization. Naturalization has a relation with the ideological common sense, in the sense that by the naturalization of the discourse, its ideology will change into the ideological common sense. In the process of naturalization and creation of common sense, the type of discourse appears to lose its ideological character and tends to become merely the discourse of the institution itself instead of looking like the discourse of a special class or group within that institution. In this way, the struggle for power seems to be neutral, and being neutral means being out of ideology having no ideological load. The fact that discourse loses its ideological load, paradoxically, will make a fundamental ideological effect: “Ideology works through disguising its nature, pretending to be what it is not” (Fairclough, 1989). Ebim (2017) opines that “the issue of linguistic labeling in the media is a serious one... and amidst these competing voices, there is the need to critically evaluate the various labels associated with militants as seen in the media and this was done through the application of the Socio-Political Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA), to explicate the growing importance of CDA and its socio-political concern to revealing inequalities of power as a standard approach to media texts”. Now, if linguists insist only on the formal aspects of language, they foster the development of this ideological effect. Thus, naturalization occurs in this way and people can hardly if ever, understand that their routine and usual behaviors make ideological effects on society.

6. Data Presentation

Country/Group	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
D1. Russian President Vladimir Putin	Announce what he called a “special” military operation in eastern Ukraine, in response to what he termed Ukrainian threats. He warned other countries not to intervene, declaring they will face “consequences they have never seen” if they do.	“Special” “military operation”, “Ukraine, “threats”, “consequences”	Justification, ferocity
D2. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy	“The government was introducing martial law throughout the country after “Russia treacherously attacked our state in the morning, as Nazi Germany did in the World War Two years.” “As of today, our countries are on different sides of world history. Russia has embarked on a path of evil, but Ukraine is defending itself and won’t give up its freedom no matter what Moscow thinks,” said Zelenskyy, who also said the government would arm “anyone who wants to defend the country.”	“Martial law” “treacherously attacked” “Nazi Germany” “World War Two years” “path of evil”, “freedom”	Rebuke, condemnation, reprisal
D3. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg	Russia’s attack is “a deliberate, cold-blooded and long-planned invasion”. “a brutal act of war” and a “cold-blooded & long-planned invasion.” “We will further increase, and we are increasing, our presence in the eastern part of the alliance, and today we activated NATO’s defense	“Russia’s attack” is “a deliberate, cold-blooded and long-planned invasion”. “a brutal act of war”, and a “cold-blooded & long-planned invasion.”	Condemnation, caution, threats

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	plans that give our military commanders more authority to move forces and to deploy forces when needed.”.		
D4. U.S. President Joe Biden	“The people of Ukraine are suffering “an unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russian military forces. “President Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering,” Biden said in a statement. “Russia alone is responsible for the death and destruction this attack will bring, and the United States and its allies and partners will respond in a united and decisive way. The world will hold Russia accountable.”	“Suffering” “an unprovoked and unjustified attack” “military forces” “a premeditated war” “catastrophic loss of life and human suffering,” “death and destruction” “allies” “partners” “accountable”	Condemnation, caution
D5. Group of 7 (G-7)	“Large-scale military aggression” “integrity, sovereignty” “unprovoked and completely unjustified”, “serious violation” “international law” “breach of the United Nations Charter” “Budapest Memorandum.”	“large-scale” “military aggression” “integrity, sovereignty” “unprovoked”, “unjustified”, “serious violation”	Caution, condemnation
D6. NAC	“Condemn [Ing] in the strongest possible terms Russia’s horrifying attack on Ukraine” as unjustified and unprovoked. “a grave violation of international law, including the UN charter, . . . the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, the Budapest memorandum, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act.” The NAC also promised a “very heavy economic and political price” “in line with our defensive planning to protect all Allies, to take additional steps to further strengthen deterrence and defense across the Alliance.” It also promised that its “measures are and remain preventive, proportionate and non-escalatory.”	“Condemn [Ing]” “horrifying attack” “unjustified and unprovoked” “grave violation” “Budapest memorandum, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act.” “Very heavy economic and political price” “non-escalatory.”	Condemnation, caution
D7. (OSCE)	<i>(Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe)</i> . “We strongly condemn Russia’s military action against Ukraine. This attack on Ukraine puts the lives of millions of people at grave risk and is a gross breach of international law and Russia’s commitments.”	“Russia’s military action” “grave risk” “breach of international law”	Condemnation, caution
D8. AUSTRIA	“Ukraine has become the victim of another Russian aggression Russia has chosen the path of violence. In these difficult hours, we stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.”	“victim”, “aggression” “path of violence”	Condemnation

Country/Group	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
D9. BELARUS	“[w]ayes must be found to prevent bloodshed and massacre The entire infrastructure is reported to have already been destroyed. It was known to everyone, including Russia. In a ground operation, a single shot, a single death will start a full-scale war. This must be prevented.” “[t]her Belarusian army is not taking part in the Russian special operation in the Donbas.”	“bloodshed” “massacre” “full-scale war”,	Caution, condemnation
D10. BULGARIA	“The efforts for de-escalation of the conflict in Ukraine and [leading] to rising tensions throughout the whole region. He added, “sustainable solution to the crisis cannot be found through violation of international law and by military means.”	“de-escalation” “conflict” “rising tensions” “violation of international law and by military means.”	Caution, condemnation
D11. CZECH	Russia’s “unjustifiable and unfounded aggression against Ukraine.” The ministry said that “Russia is trampling on the elementary principles of European security architecture, international law, and peaceful coexistence between nations, which it cynically invokes. After years of laboriously built stability, Russia is bringing war, chaos, and suffering to Europe, not only to countless innocent Ukrainians but also to its citizens and other Europeans.”	“Unjustifiable and unfounded aggression” “trampling” “peaceful coexistence” “war, chaos and suffering”	Caution, condemnation
D12. DENMARK	Russia’s invasion of “a free and sovereign nation has no place in Europe in our time.” She also noted that Russia will face consequences for its actions.	“Invasion” “a free and sovereign nation” “consequences”	Caution, condemnation
D13. ESTONIA	“Condemn [Ing] the wide-ranging military attack by Russia against Ukraine” as disregarding “international order and several international agreements.” “Russia’s attack against Ukraine today is completely unacceptable and violates international law. “Russia’s attack constituted a complete disregard for not only international law but the fundamental principles of humanity.”	“Condemn [Ing]” “attack”, “unacceptable” “violates” “humanity.”	Caution, condemnation
D14. EU	Accused Putin of ordering “atrocious acts of aggression against a sovereign and independent country, and innocent people.” Calling the attack an “outrageous violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty” that threatens the stability of “Europe and the whole international order.” “Russia to fully respect international	“Accused” “Putin” “atrocious acts of aggression” “sovereign and independent country”, “innocent people” “outrageous violation”, “threatens”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation

Country/Group	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
	humanitarian law, and to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access and assistance to all persons in need” and to “ensure the safety of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.”		
D15. FINLAND	“Flagrant violation of international law.” Finland also announced it would “respond to Russia’s actions as part of the European Union.”	“flagrant” “violation”	Caution, condemnation
D16. FRANCE	“In breaking his word and refusing the path of diplomacy, in choosing war, President Putin has not only attacked Ukraine: He has decided to trample Ukraine’s sovereignty ... He has decided to commit the most serious violation of peace and stability our Europe has seen in decades.”	“Breaking his word” “refusing the path of diplomacy” “choosing war” “attacked” “trample” “sovereignty” “commit” “violation” “peace”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D17. GERMANY	German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called Russian actions “a blatant violation of international law.” And noted that “There is no justification for it.”	“a blatant violation of international law.” “No justification”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D18. GREECE	a “flagrant violation of international law and universal values.” “The violation of international legality.” a “clear violation of international law and our values.” Russia “to respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty and to end its aggression.”	“Flagrant violation” “universal values.” “The violation of international legality.” “Territorial integrity” “aggression.”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D19. ITALY	Promised the “full and unconditional solidarity” of Italy and said the Italian embassy in Kyiv would remain open and fully operational. Further, he promised EU leaders would impose tough sanctions on Russia later today. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also reportedly summoned the Russian ambassador.	“solidarity” “imposes” “tough sanctions” summoned”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D20. POLAND	Condemned Russia’s actions as “a criminal aggression on Ukraine” and called on Europe and the free world to stop Putin. He further tweeted, “European Council should approve fiercest possible sanctions. Our support for Ukraine must be real.”	“Condemned” “a criminal aggression” “stop Putin” “fiercest possible sanctions” “support”	Caution, condemnation
D21. ROMANIA	Condemned Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine, calling it a “very grave breach of international law, and Ukraine’s	“condemned” “military aggression” “very grave breach” “sovereignty and integrity”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation

Country/Group	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
	sovereignty and integrity.” He further stated that “this will be met with the strongest reaction by the international community inflicting massive consequences and a most severe cost.”	“strongest reaction” “inflicting massive consequences”	
D22. SPAIN	Condemned the military invasion of Ukraine, as “a completely unjustified aggression, of unprecedented gravity, and a flagrant violation of international law that puts global security and stability at risk.” It demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return of Russian troops to the internationally recognized territory of Rus, describing the action as a “blatant violation of international law.”	“condemned” “military invasion” “a completely unjustified aggression, of unprecedented gravity” “flagrant violation” “risk” “demand” “cessation” “hostilities” “troops” “blatant violation of international law.”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D23. UK	Condemned Russia’s actions, saying Russian President Vladimir Putin launched an “unprovoked attack” on Ukraine, Western countries would impose massive sanctions to “hobble” the Russian economy. ... called for peace and respect for the U.N. charter.	“condemned”, “launched”, “unprovoked attack” “impose massive sanctions” “hobble” “economy” “peace” “respect”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D24. AU	“Imperatively respect international law, the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine.” The chair of the African Union and chairperson of the African Union Commission urged both Russia and Ukraine to “establish an immediate ceasefire and open political negotiations without delay, under the auspices of the U.N., ... in the interests of peace and stability in international relations.”	“ceasefire” “political negotiations”, “interests”, “peace”	Precautious, Caution,
D25. KENYA	Reiterated its earlier remarks in support of Ukraine, calling attention to the potential humanitarian and refugee crises that are likely to stem from further violence and a wider conflict. the U.N. ‘s structure stems from the ruin of World War II and gives the U.N Security Council members significant responsibility.	“Humanitarian and refugee crises”, “violence” “conflict”, “ruin” “WWII”	Caution, condemnation
D26. SA	Called on Russia to “immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine in line with the United Nations Charter, which enjoins all member states to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and	“withdraw” “forces” “disputes” “peaceful means” “international peace” “endangered” “peaceful resolution” “resume diplomatic efforts”	Accusation, Caution, condemnation

Country/Group	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
	justice are not endangered.” It proclaimed a “respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states” and also expressed support for the Minsk Agreements and called on the UN Security Council to “play its role” in working towards a peaceful resolution. It called on “all parties to resume diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the concerns raised expressed [sic] by Russia.”		
D27. KAZAKHSTAN	The government of Kazakhstan remained largely silent regarding Russia’s actions in Ukraine, with the lone exception of the Kazakh Embassy in Kyiv, which issued a series of instructions to Kazakh citizens regarding their evacuation options from Ukraine. Kazakhstan is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization which includes Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. In January 2022 unrest in Kazakhstan led to the deployment of approximately 2500 Russian troops to serve as a “peacekeeping force.”	“Silent” “evacuation” “peacekeeping force.”	Indifferent, silence
D28. PAKISTAN	Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan arrived in Moscow on Feb. 23 for a scheduled visit. He described the trip as an “exciting” time to be there. His visit will continue as planned, and he is set to return to Pakistan on Feb. 24. In advance of the trip, Khan suggested that he was concerned about the situation in Ukraine—he reportedly told Russia Today on Feb. 22 that he hoped “this Ukrainian crisis is resolved peacefully.”	“exciting” “hoped “this Ukrainian crisis is resolved” “peacefully.”	Support
D29. CHINA	China delayed response but has acknowledged the conflict while placing significant blame on the United States. The Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying declined to refer to the attack as an “invasion,” even after she was pushed by reporters. In one response, she stated that “The U.S. has been fueling the flame, fanning up the flame, how do they want to put out the fire?”	“Delayed response”, “conflict”, “put out the fire”	Indifferent, silence
D30. JAPAN	Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa released a statement condemning Russia’s military actions in Ukraine. The	“Russia’s military actions”, “Russia’s attacks”, “infringe”, “serious violation”	Condemnation, caution, and accusation

Country/Group	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
	statement emphasized that Russia's attacks "clearly infringe upon Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, constitute a serious violation of international law prohibiting the use of force, and are a grave breach of the United Nations Charter."		
D31. MALAYSIA	Express sadness about the recent developments in Ukraine. The government also stressed its effort to ensure the safety of Malaysians in Ukraine.	"sadness", "safety"	Sad, caution
D32. SINGAPORE	Called for the cessation of Russian military action and said, "Singapore strongly condemns any unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country under any pretext. We reiterate that the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine must be respected."	"cessation", "Russian military action", "condemn", "unprovoked", "invasion", "pretext"	Caution, condemnation
D33. SOUTH KOREA	"Ukraine's sovereignty, territory, and independence must be respected." "The use of force that causes innocent casualties cannot be justified under any circumstances."	"The use of force" "innocent casualties" "justified"	Rejection, caution
D34. TAIWAN	Tweeted a condemnation of the invasion and announced an emergency evacuation plan for Taiwanese citizens in Ukraine. accused Russia of "changing the status quo" and has pledged to take action to assist Ukraine, as well as impose export controls against Russia by the U.S. and other "like-minded" partners. "Opposes unilateral changes to the status quo by force or coercion and calls on all parties concerned to continue to resolve their differences through peaceful and rational dialogue."	"condemnation", "invasion", "emergency evacuation", "changing the status quo" "like-minded partners" "resolve" "peaceful and rational dialogue"	Condemnation, caution
D35. THAILAND	Calls for "peaceful settlement to the situation through dialogue by the U.N. Charter and international law" that upholds the "principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity."	"Peaceful settlement" "dialogue"	Caution, advisory
D36. IRAN	"Ukraine crisis is rooted in NATO's provocations."	"Ukraine crisis", "NATO's provocations."	support
D37. ISRAEL	Tel Aviv is "ready and prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to the citizens of Ukraine."	"Humanitarian assistance"	caution

Country/Group	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
D38. SAUDI ARABIA	“Full implementation of Security Council Resolution 2202, which was unanimously adopted in 2015 and calls for a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and the simultaneous withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides to create a security zone.”	“Full implementation of Security Council Resolution 2022”, “ceasefire”, “withdrawal”, “heavy weapons”	Condemnation
D39. SYRIA	Supported Putin’s decision to recognize the two “separatist” regions in Ukraine as an independent. In comments carried out by the state-run Syrian News Agency, Foreign Minister Faisal Medad was reportedly said that the government of President Bashar al-Assad “will cooperate” with the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR).	“supported Putin’s decision” “recognize the two “separatist” regions”, “independent”, “cooperate”	Supportive
D40. TURKEY	“This attack, beyond destroying the Minsk agreements, is a grave violation of international law and poses a serious threat to the security of our region and the world.” The ministry called the invasion “unjust and unlawful” and reported that “our support for the political unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine will continue.”	“attack”, “destroying”, “grave violation” “invasion” “unjust”, “unlawful” “political unity”	Condemnation, caution
D41. UAE	Affirmed the importance of good faith dialogue and diplomatic efforts, supported a return to the Minsk agreements, affirmed the importance of international law and the UN charter, and pointed out humanitarian obstacles. The ambassador also urged involved states to allow for civilian movement and the provisions of humanitarian aid.	“affirmed” “good faith dialogue”, “diplomatic efforts”,	Indifferent
D42. CANADA	Calling on Russia to cease all hostile and provocative actions against Ukraine and to withdraw all military personnel from the country. Trudeau also announced that he plans to meet with G7 partners and NATO allies to “collectively respond to these reckless and dangerous acts, including by imposing significant sanctions in addition to those already announced.”	“condemned” “Russian aggression” “peace”	Caution, condemnation
D43. CHILE	Condemned Russian aggression “despite repeated calls for dialogue by the international community to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict, as established in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations.”	“condemned” “Russian aggression” “peaceful solution to the conflict”,	Caution, condemnation

Country/Group	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
D44. MEXICO	Rejecting the use of force in Ukraine and supporting the UN Secretary General's position in favor of peace.	"Rejecting the use of force" "supporting the UN Secretary General's position in favor of peace"	Rejection, condemnation
D45. NICARAGUA	Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega backed Russia's position on Ukraine. Ortega reported that Ukraine's interest in joint NATO represents a threat to Russia. President Ortega stated "If Ukraine gets into NATO, they will be saying to Russia let's go to war, and that explains why Russia is acting like this. Russia is simply defending itself."	"backed Russia's position", "threat to Russia", "NATO" "war", "defending itself."	Supportive

7. Data Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

This analysis is carried out on the belief that the relationship between discourse and power rests in the ability of language to control or affect the behaviors and thoughts of others and that discourse analysis concerning power typically focuses on the role of authorities and their abilities to guide, lead or control others through speech or conversation. Controlling the topic, interrupting others, and using forceful or command-oriented language are ways that some people attempt to gain power. Examination of discourse across cultures shows varying interpretations of language usage. Understanding and mastering the nuances of discourse is important for mitigating power inequalities.

In data D1 the Russian President Vladimir Putin was ferocious in justifying his actions through the use of "special" military operation in response to what he termed Ukrainian threats and by extension he warns countries not to intervene, declaring they will face "consequences they have never seen" if they do. Responding to the threat, in data D2, the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy did not only rebuke he also condemns and promises a reprisal attack if Putin fails to curb his aggression, according to him: "The government was introducing martial law throughout the country after "Russia treacherously attacked our state in the morning, as Nazi Germany did in the World War Two years." "As of today, our countries are on different sides of world history. Russia has embarked on a path of evil, but Ukraine is defending itself and won't give up its freedom no matter what Moscow thinks".

The threats and counter-threats of the rhetoric above are closely followed by Condemnation, caution, threats in data D3 by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg who states that Russia's attack is "a deliberate, cold-blooded and long-planned invasion". "a brutal act of war" and a "cold-blooded & long-planned invasion." "We will further increase, and we are increasing, our presence in the eastern part of the alliance, and today we activated NATO's defense plans that give our military commanders more authority to move forces and to deploy forces when needed,"

As if in a show of power and demonstration of force, the United States president Joe Biden in data D4. Also condemns and cautions Russia: "The people of Ukraine are suffering "an unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russian military forces. "President Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering,". "Russia alone is responsible for the death and destruction this attack will bring, and the United States and its allies and partners will respond in a united and decisive way. The world will hold Russia accountable."

The G-7, NAC, OSCE, and AUSTRIA all cautioned and condemn the actions of Russia in Ukraine. In data D5, D6, D7 and D8 they all spoke in unison calling the world's attention to what they term an act of injustice and brutality in an independent state. D5=Group of 7 (G-7): "large-scale military aggression" "integrity, sovereignty" "unprovoked and completely unjustified", "serious violation" "international law" "breach of the United Nations Charter" "Budapest Memorandum". D6=NAC: "Condemn [Ing] in the strongest possible terms Russia's horrifying attack on Ukraine" as unjustified and unprovoked. "a grave violation of international law, including the UN charter, . . . the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, the Budapest memorandum, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act." The NAC also promised a "very heavy economic and political price" "in line with our defensive planning to protect all Allies, to take additional steps to further strengthen deterrence and defense across the Alliance." It also promised that its "measures are and remain preventive, proportionate and non-escalatory."

D7= Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe “We strongly condemn Russia’s military action against Ukraine. This attack on Ukraine puts the lives of millions of people at grave risk and is a gross breach of international law and Russia’s commitments”. D8. Austria= “Ukraine has become the victim of another Russian aggression Russia has chosen the path of violence. In these difficult hours, we stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.”

From data D9 BELARUS, D10 BULGARIA, D11 CZECH, D12 DENMARK, D13 ESTONIA all cautioned and condemned the actions of Russia. Such cautious and condemnations are captured in the following linguistic choices: “bloodshed and massacre”, “sustainable solution to the crisis cannot be found through violation of international law and by military means”, Russia’s “unjustifiable and unfounded aggression against Ukraine, is trampling on the elementary principles of European security architecture, international law, and peaceful coexistence between nations, which it cynically invokes. After years of laboriously built stability, Russia is bringing war, chaos, and suffering to Europe, not only to countless innocent Ukrainians but also to its citizens and other Europeans”, Russia’s invasion of “a free and sovereign nation has no place in Europe in our time.” “The wide-ranging military attack by Russia against Ukraine” as disregarding “international order and several international agreements” and “Russia’s attack against Ukraine today is completely unacceptable and violates international law, the attack constituted a complete disregard for not only international law but the fundamental principles of humanity.”

Another group of leaders chose to indulge in accusation and counterpropaganda. Such can be found in D14 EU, D15 FINLAND, D16 FRANCE, D17 GERMANY, D18 GREECE, D19 ITALY, D20 POLAND, D21 ROMANIA, D22 SPAIN and D23 UK. Such accusations are captured in the following language choices: “atrocious acts of aggression against a sovereign and independent country, and innocent people.” “Flagrant violation of international law” “trample Ukraine’s sovereignty”, “serious violation of peace and stability” “a blatant violation of international law without justification for it.” “Flagrant violation of international law and universal values.” “The violation of international legality.” a “clear violation of international law and our values.” Russia “to respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty and to end its aggression” “a criminal aggression on Ukraine” a “very grave breach of international law, and Ukraine’s sovereignty and integrity... that will be met with the strongest reaction by the international community inflicting massive consequences and a most severe cost.” “a completely unjustified aggression, of unprecedented gravity, and a flagrant violation of international law that puts global security and stability at risk, ... we demand an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return of Russian troops to the internationally recognized territory of Russian... whose action is a “blatant violation of international law.” “Unprovoked attack” on Ukraine, Western countries would impose massive sanctions to “hobble” the Russian economy”

D24 AU D25 KENYA D26 SA all tow the path of caution. The call for the respect of international law and the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine.” The chair of the African Union and chairperson of the African Union Commission urged both Russia and Ukraine to “establish an immediate ceasefire and open political negotiations under the auspices of the UN in the interests of peace and stability while the Kenyan government reiterated its support of Ukraine, calling attention to the potential humanitarian and refugee crises that are likely to stem from further violence and a wider conflict. The South African government called on Russia to “immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine in line with the United Nations Charter, which enjoins all member states to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice are not endangered.

In the crises, some countries outrightly supported the actions of Russia in Ukraine while others either kept silent or chose to be indifferent. Such are labeled as D27 KAZAKHSTAN, D28 PAKISTAN, D29 CHINA, D36 IRAN, D38 SYRIA, D40 UAE and D44 NICARAGUA. The linguistic choices of such leaders painted a picture of their disposition. The following expressions are representative of the actions of such leaders for instance the government of Kazakhstan remained largely silent regarding Russia’s actions in Ukraine, with the lone exception of the Kazakh Embassy in Kyiv, which issued a series of instructions to Kazakh citizens regarding their evacuation options from Ukraine. This level of silence stems from the fact that Kazakhstan is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization which includes Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. In Pakistan for instance, Prime Minister Imran Khan arrived in Moscow on February 23 for a scheduled visit. He described the trip as “exciting” amidst the crises and suggests that “the visit will continue as planned” suggesting that the crises in Ukraine did not mean anything to him. It was reported that China delayed response, but later acknowledged the conflict, while placing significant blame on the United States and referred to the crises as an “invasion,” and accused the US of “fueling the flame, fanning up the flame, and rhetorically enquired “how do they want to put out the fire?”

For Iran, the “Ukraine crisis is rooted in NATO’s provocations” thereby supporting the actions of Russia and blaming NATO for standing behind Ukraine. In the case of SYRIA, their support is anchored on the Putinian support for the separatist states in the neighborhood “the government of President Bashar al-Assad “will cooperate” with the self-

proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR). While the United Arab Emirates remains indifferent by affirming "the importance of good faith dialogue and diplomatic efforts, supported a return to the Minsk agreements, affirmed the importance of international law and the UN charter and pointed out humanitarian obstacles" the government of Nicaragua outrightly supports the Russian aggression in Ukraine. "Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega backed Russia's position on Ukraine. ... Ukraine's interest in joint NATO represents a threat to Russia" in sarcastic expression, the president stated "If Ukraine gets into NATO, they will be saying to Russia let's go to war, and that explains why Russia is acting like this. Russia is simply defending itself."

D30 JAPAN "clearly infringes upon Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity constitutes a serious violation of international law prohibiting the use of force and is a grave breach of the United Nations Charter." D31 MALAYSIA expresses sadness about the recent developments in Ukraine. The government also stressed its effort to ensure the safety of Malaysians in Ukraine, D32 SINGAPORE called for the cessation of Russian military action and said, "Singapore strongly condemns any unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country under any pretext by reiterating that the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine must be respected" D33 SOUTH KOREA is of the view that "Ukraine's sovereignty, territory, and independence must be respected... the use of force that causes innocent casualties cannot be justified under any circumstances" D34 TAIWAN accused Russia of "changing the status quo" and pledged to take action to assist Ukraine, as well as impose export controls against Russia in accordance with the US and other "like-minded" partners by opposing unilateral changes to the status quo by force or coercion and calls on all parties concerned to continue to resolve their differences through peaceful and rational dialogue". D35 THAILAND Calls for "peaceful settlement to the situation through dialogue in accordance with the U.N. Charter and international law" that upholds the "principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity". D36 ISRAEL Tel Aviv is "ready and prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to the citizens of Ukraine". D37 SAUDI ARABIA calls for "full implementation of Security Council Resolution which was unanimously adopted in 2015 and calls for a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and the simultaneous withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides to create a security zone".

D38 TURKEY claims that "the attack is a grave violation of international law and poses a serious threat to the security of our region and the world". D41 CANADA calls on Russia to cease all hostile and provocative actions against Ukraine and to withdraw all military personnel from the country. D42 CHILE condemned Russian aggression "despite repeated calls for dialogue by the international community to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict, as established in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations". D43 MEXICO rejects the use of force in Ukraine and supports the UN Secretary General's position in favor of peace.

8. Conclusion

In this study we have noticed that the ability to direct the course of a conversation is one way that people exercise control. This is due to the fact that studies on discourse and power often focus on the language and communication strategies used by people who are in leadership or authority roles. Experts rely on distinct language and terminology to create order, question people, and compel witnesses to reveal facts just like a mother might rely on firm words to curb the behavior of her child. Gaining power over others through language is done in a variety of ways. The most obvious connection between discourse and power is the use of controlling or aggressive language to control behavior. Directing the course of a conversation is another way that people exercise control, and this is usually done by selecting the topic of conversation and steering away from personal topics. Interrupting others is considered another strategy for gaining power and is a common habit of interlocutors who need attention or who feel powerless. The connection between discourse and power, therefore, is related to the actual words, tone, and amounts of communication between people. Understanding the link between discourse and power is significant for reducing power inequalities. The discourse of a particular ethnic group might be considered forceful in comparison with the dominant culture when, in fact, its true intent might not be to control or disrespect others.

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Appendix

Recurrent Lexical Items in the Data

“special” “military operation”, “Ukraine, “threats”, “consequences” “Martial law” “treacherously attacked” “Nazi Germany” “World War Two years” “path of evil”, “freedom” “Russia’s attack” “a deliberate, cold-blooded and long-planned invasion”. “a brutal act of war” and a “cold-blooded & long-planned invasion.” “suffering” “an unprovoked and unjustified attack” “military forces” “a premeditated war” “catastrophic loss of life and human suffering,” “death and destruction” “allies” “partners” “accountable” “large-scale” “military aggression” “integrity, sovereignty” “unprovoked”, “unjustified”, “serious violation” “condemn [Ing]” “horrifying attack” “unjustified and unprovoked” “grave violation” “Budapest memorandum, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act.” “Very heavy economic and political price” “non-escalatory.” “Russia’s military action” “grave risk” “breach of international law” “victim”, “aggression” “path of violence” “bloodshed” “massacre” “full-scale war”, “de-escalation” “conflict” “rising tensions” “violation of international law and by military means.” “Unjustifiable and unfounded aggression” “trampling” “peaceful coexistence” “war, chaos, and suffering” “invasion” “a free and sovereign nation” “consequences” “condemn [Ing]” “attack”, “unacceptable” “violates” “humanity.” “accused” “Putin” “atrocious acts of aggression” “sovereign and independent country”, “innocent people” “outrageous violation”, “threatens” “flagrant” “violation” “breaking his word” “refusing the path of diplomacy” “choosing war” “attacked” “trample” “sovereignty” “commit” “violation” “peace” “a blatant violation of international law.” “No justification” “flagrant violation” “universal values.” “The violation of international legality.” “Territorial integrity” “aggression.” “solidarity” “imposes” “tough sanctions” summoned” “condemned” “a criminal aggression” “stop Putin” “fiercest possible sanctions” “support” “condemned” “military aggression” “very grave breach” “sovereignty and integrity” “strongest reaction” “inflicting massive consequences” “condemned” “military invasion” “a completely unjustified aggression, of unprecedented gravity” “flagrant violation” “risk” “demand” “cessation” “hostilities” “troops” “blatant violation of international law.” “condemned”, “launched”, “unprovoked attack” “impose massive sanctions” “hobble” “economy” “peace” “respect” “ceasefire” “political negotiations”, “interests”, “peace” “humanitarian and refugee crises”, “violence” “conflict”, “ruin” “WWII” “withdraw” “forces” “disputes” “peaceful means” “international peace” “endangered” “peaceful resolution” “resume diplomatic efforts” “Silent” “evacuation” “peacekeeping force.” “exciting” “hoped “this Ukrainian crisis is resolved” “peacefully.” “delayed response”, “conflict”, “put out the fire” “Russia’s military actions”, “Russia’s attacks”, “infringe”, “serious violation” “sadness”, “safety” “cessation”, “Russian military action”, “condemns”, “unprovoked”, “invasion”, “pretext” “The use of force” “innocent casualties” “justified” “condemnation”, “invasion”, “emergency evacuation”, “changing the status quo” “like-minded partners” “resolve” “peaceful and rational dialogue” “peaceful settlement” “dialogue” “Ukraine crisis”, “NATO’s provocations.” “humanitarian assistance” “full implementation of Security Council Resolution 2022”, “ceasefire”, “withdrawal”, “heavy weapons” “supported Putin’s decision” “recognize the two “separatist” regions”, “independent”, “cooperate” “attack”, “destroying”, “grave violation” “invasion” “unjust”, “unlawful” “political unity” “affirmed” “good faith dialogue”, “diplomatic efforts”, “condemned” “Russian aggression” “peace” “condemned” “Russian aggression” “peaceful solution to the conflict”, “rejecting the use of force” “supporting the UN Secretary General’s position in favor of peace” “backed Russia’s position”, “threat to Russia”, “NATO” “war”, “defending itself.”

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