



**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Department of Security Studies

**International Security Studies (MISS)**

**Master's Thesis**

**2025**

**Ruslan Huseynov**



**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Institute of Political Studies

Department of Security Studies

**Speech act theory applied:**

**Vladimir Putin's case on**

**Ukraine**

**Master's Thesis**

Author of the Thesis: Ruslan Huseynov

Study programme: International Security Studies

Supervisor: prof. Mgr. David Erkomaishvili, Ph.D.

Year of the defence: 2025

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on

Ruslan Huseynov

**30.04.202**

## **Abstract**

The study researches the securitization of the Russia-Ukraine conflict by analyzing Vladimir Putin's speeches, through the Securitization Theory and Speech Act Theory. The main period analyzed is between inauguration of Volodymyr Zelensky and the break of war. The purpose of the study is to understand how Putin's rhetoric progressively securitized issues of national identity, sovereignty, and the perceived threat by Ukraine and the West. By applying qualitative approach, the research focuses on recurring themes and key narratives in Putin's speeches to understand how language was strategically used to construct a security threat. The similar methodology was applied into the Iraq war back in 2003, which gave the author stimulation to adopt matching pattern to examine how Putin's rhetoric shaped public perception and political discourse, ultimately contributing to the justification of military action. The findings underline the role of rhetoric in constructing security threats and its results on the political discourse which led to the war.

## **Keywords**

**Securitization, War, Russia, Ukraine, Putin, Speech Act Theory**

## **Title**

**"Speech act theory applied: Vladimir Putin's case on Ukraine".**

**Length of the Thesis: 115170**

## Table of Contents

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 1. Introduction .....           | 10 |
| 2. Theoretical Framework .....  | 12 |
| 3. Research Methodology .....   | 21 |
| 4. Analysis .....               | 23 |
| 5. Summary and Discussion ..... | 60 |
| 6. References .....             | 63 |

## **1. Introduction**

The Russia-Ukraine War has been one of the most widely observed events of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The war not only has had an impact on the population of conflicting parties, but also it has reshaped geopolitical and security paradigms, leading to the revision of alliances, international norms, and the art of war. It is often perceived as a territorial dispute at first glance: however, it goes beyond territorial dispute. A combination of historical and territorial disputes and the use of narratives and rhetorical constructs are the main foundations of this ongoing conflict.

Securitization theory, which is a theoretical framework that explains how actors in International Relations portray existential threats as a breach of their national security to justify their future actions, forms the foundations of the paper. Vladimir Putin is the object of political discourse analysis of the Securitization theory in this scenario as his speeches have been crucial in identifying existential threats. The goal here is to identify how Ukraine has been framed as an existential threat to Russian national security by analyzing the speeches of President Putin in the period from Volodymyr Zelensky's inauguration in May 2019 to the beginning of the war in February 2022.

### **1.1. Historical and Geopolitical context**

The conflicting parties have deep historical, cultural, and geopolitical ties that increase the complexity and uniqueness of the dispute. Since the collapse of the USSR, Ukraine's shift to the West triggered relations with its neighbor, Russia. The Kremlin acknowledges these movements as a threat to its security as it loses its sphere of influence in the neighboring countries. The Orange Revolution, Euromaidan protests, conflicts in Eastern Ukraine, and the annexation of Crimea have changed the relations drastically. During these processes, the Kremlin has used rhetoric to frame Ukraine's alignments with the West as a direct threat to the Russia's national security. Alongside, rhetoric has portrayed Ukraine as an unfriendly neighbor and justified Moscow's actions as defensive measures.

## **1.2.Theoretical Foundations and Research Objectives**

Securitization theory allows an understanding how political actors use language to define threats which is called speech act. The foundation of this theory is that the security is a social construct rather than an objective condition. Actors can take extraordinary measures and avoid political confrontation if they declare any issue as a direct threat to their national security.

Securitization theory, with a particular focus on speech act, is applied in this thesis to study Vladimir Putin's speeches. Main focus here is to identify securitizing moves of President Putin and find answers to following questions:

- How he portrayed Ukraine as an existential threat in his speeches?
- What recurring themes and patterns in his speeches signal a progression toward justifying military aggression?
- How does this case study contribute to the broader understanding of securitization in International Relations?

## **1.3. Methodological Approach**

The thesis adopts a qualitative approach to find answers to the mentioned questions. The focus is to find out key phrases, patterns, words and implicit or explicit signs of the securitization of Ukraine, and how military intervention was justified. The data set consists of official translated transcripts of speeches and statements of Vladimir Putin during press conferences, key events or annual addresses at the Federal Assembly. Particular attention is given to analyzing frequency and context of recurring patterns to understand fundamental instruments through which Putin rhetorically portrayed Ukraine as an existential threat.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The key findings of this research study contribute to both academic and practical spheres. It enhances the literature on securitization theory as it applies the theory to one of the most contemporary and important events of the modern world. It successfully applies the theoretical knowledge into the real world and explains how rhetoric determine the dynamics of disputes. Practically, the research offers the deeper and better understanding and role of the

rhetorical strategies to policymakers and analysts, so that they could adopt possible countermeasures in similar scenarios or cases.

## **1.5. Structure of the Thesis**

The introduction sets the stage for a detailed exploration of securitization and its application to the Russia-Ukraine War. The subsequent chapters delve into the theoretical foundations, methodological framework, contextual background, and detailed analysis of Putin's speeches. The study concludes with a discussion of key findings, their implications, and recommendations for future research.

To sum up, this thesis is not only intended for academic purposes, however, to provide a critical inquiry into the narratives that shape the modern world. Analyzing the speeches of President Putin proves us the importance and power of language in defining threats and taking countermeasures and actions to fight against the threat.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. Introduction to Securitization Theory**

Securitization Theory, developed by the Copenhagen School, challenges traditional approaches to security by emphasizing on the power of discourse. The School's work on securitization has changed the discourse of critical security studies. Buzan *et al* (1998)<sup>1</sup> defines security in International Relations as different to security in daily life – in International Relations, it is necessarily linked to power politics, and ultimately, it is about “survival”. This makes security threats different to threats more broadly; they pose an “existential threat” to a particular referent object – they threaten its very existence (Buzan, 1998)<sup>2</sup>. Securitization theory is a kind of politicization process, but more severe version of it. It basically takes an issue apart from traditional boundaries of politics into an exceptional case, where more

---

<sup>1</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

attention is needed. Barry Buzan *et al.* (1998)<sup>3</sup> explains the theory that any public issue is transformed from non-politicized through politicized to securitized. Non-politicized means that the given state does not deal with the case. On the second level, the government places the issue into its agenda, considering decisions or resource allocations. On the final stage of the process, the issue is considered as an existential threat to security and prioritized, and the government considers taking emergency actions to alter it. These steps in all mean to be securitizing moves taken by a securitizing actor (state). A securitizing actor chooses to securitize the issue, but its success is heavily affected by different factors, ranging from context itself to audience. The role of language is better explained through Securitization Theory.

According to Copenhagen School, security is a socially constructed process. Any issue becomes “security issue” only if it is labeled as “security issue” by the political actors. In the words of Wæver, “something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so” (Wæver 1995: 54)<sup>4</sup>. However, as Buzan says, “actors in a position of power are more likely to be successful in securitizing by virtue of the added legitimacy of their position, though this does not guarantee that the audience will accept the securitizing move” (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 31)<sup>5</sup>. It becomes successful securitization only if the audience accepts the framing and legitimizing extraordinary measures to fight against the threat. If it is not accepted by the audience, it is not called a successful securitization, but a securitization move. When an issue is securitized, it is approached through specific means, often involving “threat, defense, and often state-centered solutions” (Wæver 1995: 65)<sup>6</sup>. This perspective suggests that labeling an issue as a matter of “security” alters its status, making it too critical for open discussion or standard political processes. Instead, such issues are elevated in importance and should be given priority by the state's leaders or governing elites (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 29).

---

<sup>3</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> Wæver, O. (1995). Securitization and desecuritization. In R. D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *On security* (pp. 46–87). Columbia University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> Wæver, O. (1995). Securitization and desecuritization. In R. D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *On security* (pp. 46–87). Columbia University Press.

The Copenhagen School does not only focus on military threats, but non-military threats as well, emphasizing 5 sectors in total in which securitization theory is applied. In *Security*, military threats are regarded as the foremost existential danger because they pose a risk to society as a whole (Buzan et al. 1998: 58)<sup>7</sup>. In the military sector, the nation-State is the most important object as it is the key securitizing actor and has a right to use force. Generally, military threats that compose threats to the territorial integrity or survival of the state are mentioned in this sector. The second branch is the environmental sector. Traditional security approaches often neglect the environmental sector, which focuses on threats to ecosystems at various levels—local, national, regional, or global. However, environmental issues are often deeply connected to the need to protect and sustain our current way of life (Buzan et al. 1998: 75)<sup>8</sup>. The following sector is economic, which encompasses a wide range of "referent objects," including the global market, states, social classes, and individuals, often with significant overlap among them (Buzan et al. 1998: 100)<sup>9</sup>. Another one is the societal sector, which focuses on identity and its security, according to the Copenhagen School. "Societal insecurity arises when communities, of any kind, perceive a development or potential threat as endangering their survival as a community" (Buzan et al. 1998: 119)<sup>10</sup>. Last but not least is the political sector which concentrate on non-military threats to the sovereignty of states.

## 2.2. Evolution of Securitization Theory

The theory was first introduced in the 1990s, but it has been evolved significantly throughout the years. Initially, its concentration was on democratic states where public opinion plays greater role compared to authoritarian regimes. However, through evolution process, scholars have expanded the theory to apply it globally.

---

<sup>7</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>8</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>9</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>10</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

### 2.2.1. Early Applications

One early application of securitization theory is the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, with a particular focus on speech acts. The Bush administration justified military action against Saddam Hussein's regime by framing it as an existential threat to U.S. security. Historical tensions, including Iraq's use of chemical weapons in Halabja (1988), its invasion of Kuwait (1990), and its repression of uprisings in 1991, contributed to the perception of Saddam's regime as hostile. The 9/11 attacks further heightened insecurity and fear, providing the Bush administration with a compelling basis for securitization. Using these historical and contextual factors, the administration portrayed Iraq as a direct threat to American citizens, global peace, and international stability. To analyze this securitization process, it is crucial to examine several components. First, the referent object—the entity being protected—was framed on three levels. At the micro level, President Bush emphasized protecting American citizens and those oppressed by Saddam's regime. At the macro level, he depicted Iraq as a threat to global peace, famously referring to "States like these... constituting an axis of evil"<sup>11</sup>. At the middle level, Bush framed the U.S. and its allies as the primary referent objects, directly threatened by Iraq's regime. The second component is the securitizing actor. In this case, the Bush administration, rather than Bush alone, acted as the securitizing actor, requiring institutional support from Congress and other government entities. Functional actors, such as the media, played a crucial role in communicating the administration's narrative to the public. The final component is the audience, which included not only the American public but also Congress, the United Nations Security Council, and international allies. Several factors contributed to the Bush administration's successful securitization of Iraq. The 9/11 attacks, which killed thousands of Americans, created a sense of fear and vulnerability. The administration capitalized on this environment by linking Saddam's regime to terrorism and al-Qaeda. For instance, Bush stated in 2002 that "Saddam has sponsored and sheltered terrorists; it has developed weapons of mass death"<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, the issue of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) was a central element of the securitization narrative. Bush argued that Saddam's possession and prior use of WMDs,

---

<sup>11</sup> Bush, G. W. (2002, January 29). State of the Union Address. The American Presidency Project.

<sup>12</sup> Bush, G. W. (2002, October 2). Remarks by the President after meeting with House leadership on Iraq resolution. The White House Archives.

as well as his ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons, posed a direct threat to the U.S. and its allies. Additionally, the administration highlighted Saddam's human rights abuses and repression of uprisings to garner international support, framing Iraq's regime as a threat to both its own people and global peace. According to McGillivray (2006)<sup>13</sup>, "securitization is about convincing." In this case, the Bush administration successfully convinced both domestic and international audiences of the need for military action against Iraq. By leveraging fear stemming from 9/11, emphasizing Saddam's links to terrorism, highlighting WMDs, and pointing to human rights abuses, the administration legitimized its actions and achieved a successful securitization process.

### **2.2.2. Adaptation to non-Western Contexts**

This adaptation has been one of the most significant advancements of the Securitization Theory. Initially, this theory was very much Eurocentric which made it unsuitable for applying to countries outside of the political West. Therefore, a necessity to consider diverse historical, religions, and regional features was emerged. In many non-Western countries, governance, legitimacy, and other factors may differ to a great extent. For instance, in authoritarian regimes, securitization may happen even without the consent of its population as the leaders have more power solely compared to their democrat counterparts. Alongside with the type of regime in a country, historical and cultural contexts play an important role in securitization process outside of the West. Identity and religion are pivotal parts of societal security in some regions. Therefore, some securitizing actors portray threats as not only endangering the existence of the state but also its identity and religion. Furthermore, the difference is also found in securitizing actors. In Western contexts, securitizing actors are typically heads of government, such as presidents or prime ministers. However, in other parts of the world, they can include tribal leaders, religious leaders, or heads of militant groups.

---

<sup>13</sup> McGillivray, R. G. (2006). *Casus belli: Fear, rhetoric and securitization of the war in Iraq*.

## 2.3. Key Concepts in Securitization Theory

A couple of concepts are the foundations of the Securitization Theory. These concepts explain how an issue is securitized.

### 2.3.1. The Speech Act

The Speech Act, one of the essentials of this theory, refers to the act of declaring any issue as a security threat through discourse. The securitizing actor uses discourse to label an issue as an existential threat to their survival. In order to achieve that, framing the threat by using powerful language, metaphors, or narratives to create a sense of urgency is needed. Successfully framing the threat gives an opportunity to the securitizing actor to take extraordinary measures, such as declaring emergency laws, military intervention, etc. All of these steps are done through the Speech Act, which is the power of language.

### 2.3.2. Securitizing Actor

The securitizing actor could be an individual, group of people or an institution which is the key actor that defines any issue as an existential threat to their national security. In real life examples, the securitizing actors are presidents, prime ministers, governments, or head of governments, in other words, the heads of any given state. Through the evolution process of the theory, non-state actors and international organizations are also considered as the securitizing actor. As Balzacq *et al* (2016)<sup>14</sup> put, “it is the agent who presents an issue as a threat through securitizing move”.

### 2.3.3. Referent Object

The Referent Object is the object that is considered as being under threat or danger and needs protection. The referent object is usually identified by the securitizing actor. Wæver (1995)<sup>15</sup> claims that “the concept almost always poses the state as a *referent object*” by focusing on its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national survival. However, in cases of societal and

---

<sup>14</sup> Balzacq, T., Léonard, S., & Ruzicka, J. (2016). Securitization revisited: Theory and cases. *International Relations*, 30(4), 494–531. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117815596590>

<sup>15</sup> Wæver, O. (1995). Securitization and desecuritization. In R. D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *On security* (pp. 46–87). Columbia University Press.

environmental securitizations, ethnic groups, religious communities or ecosystems might be under threat and considered as the referent object. The choice of referent object is important as it plays a crucial role in shaping the audience's perception, which is the next key concept.

#### **2.3.4. Audience**

The audience might vary, depending on the context. Domestic public – citizens of the state which is the referent object – is the most prominent example for the audience as their approval is necessary for the securitizing actor to take extraordinary measures in most states. In some parts of the world, governmental bodies such as legislatures, courts, or executive agencies are considered the audience. In some scenarios, international stakeholders – foreign governments, international organizations – are recognized as the audience, depending on the scope of the issue. Success of the securitization process highly depends on the audience's approval and support. The audience's approval depends on range of factors – cultural, historical, political contexts as well as the securitizing actor's persuasion skills.

#### **2.3.5. Existential Threat**

The Existential Threat is one of the fundamental elements of the securitization theory, as it justifies the extraordinary measures. Therefore, it is argued, “A successful securitization has three components (or steps): existential threats, emergency action, and effects on interunit relations by breaking free of rules” (Buzan et al., 1998:26)<sup>16</sup>.

A threat must be portrayed as an existential threat to the very survival of the referent object by the securitizing actors. Alongside, such threats possess certain characteristics; immediacy and severity are core attributes since the threat needs to be framed as urgent and potentially catastrophic. Essentially, threats are not existential, nonetheless; due to their constructed nature, they are framed as existential to justify further actions.

### **2.4. The Speech Act Theory and Its Relevance**

---

<sup>16</sup> Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

The Speech Act Theory, which was initially developed by John Austin, is one of the foundations of the Securitization theory within the Copenhagen School. Later on, Ole Wæver integrated this framework to show how security threats are constructed through discourse. The central principle of this theory is that language does not only describe reality, however, can actively shape and transform it. Declaring an issue as a security threat through a speech act has important practical and political implications, which make this theory as a central part of the Securitization theory.

According to the theory, utterances are divided into 3 discrete functions: *locutionary*, *illocutionary*, and *perlocutionary acts*. In the book called *How To Do Things With Words*, J.L. Austin (1962: 94-107)<sup>17</sup> explains that locutionary acts involve producing meaningful sentences, illocutionary acts convey the speaker's intent (e.g., promising or commanding), and perlocutionary acts focus on the effect on the audience (e.g., persuading or scaring). Illocutionary acts are complete in themselves, while perlocutionary acts depend on the listener's reaction. In the Securitization theory, illocutionary acts are central because when an issue is declared as a security threat, the actor does not only describe the issue, but actively transforming it into an existential threat.

#### **2.4.1. Relevance to Securitization Theory**

The Speech Act Theory plays a crucial part in the securitization process by explaining how language is used to construct security threats and legitimize exceptional measures. The idea here is that security is not an objective condition, but a social construct framed by language. This process is done through *illocutionary act*; a securitizing actor portrays an issue as an existential threat to a referent object. The issue is transformed into a matter of security, which creates a security narrative to legitimize exceptional measures. Moreover, as mentioned in the earlier paragraphs, the credibility of a securitizing actor and the acceptance of an audience are crucial features of a successful securitizing process.

---

<sup>17</sup> Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words* (pp. 94–107). Harvard University Press.

## 2.5. Critiques and Limitations of Theory

The Securitization Theory, despite its popularity and groundbreaking framework for understanding how security threats are constructed, has been highly criticized for its assumptions, scope, and applicability.

The theory has been highly criticized due to its heavy emphasis on speech acts as a primary tool for securitization, which often leads to disregarding non-verbal and material practices. Williams (2003: 525)<sup>18</sup> emphasizes the growing influence of visual media by stating, “speech-acts are inextricable from the image-dominated context in which they take place and through which meaning is communicated”. Cori Dauber’s (2001:209)<sup>19</sup> emphasis on the role of images in security practices, “while it is often the case that the rhetorician will focus on linguistic texts, on words themselves, in an increasingly media-saturated environment, ignoring visual imagery provides less and less satisfactory work”, boosts the previously mentioned critique. According to McDonald (2008: 568)<sup>20</sup>, the theory places too much focus on speech acts, overlooking other forms of communication, such as images and visual media like videos, which are also crucial in the securitization process. Another critique comes from Möller (2007: 180)<sup>21</sup>, “language is only one of the (albeit the most central) means, through which meaning is communicated”.

Another limitation of the theory is its contextual and Eurocentric bias. According to Matt McDonald (2008: 571)<sup>22</sup>, “In developing a universal framework for the designation or construction of threat through speech acts, the Securitization Theory ultimately downplays the importance of contextual factors”. Basar Baysal, in *20 Years of Securitization: Strengths,*

---

<sup>18</sup> Williams, M. C. (2003). Words, images, enemies: Securitization and international politics. *International Studies Quarterly*, 47(4), 511–531. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0020-8833.2003.00277.x>

<sup>19</sup> Dauber, C. (2001). Image as argument: The impact of Mogadishu on U.S. military intervention. *Armed Forces & Society*, 27(2), 205–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X0102700203>

<sup>20</sup> McDonald, M. (2008). Securitization and the construction of security. *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(4), 563–587. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066108097553>

<sup>21</sup> Möller, F. (2007). Photographic interventions in post-9/11 security policy. *Security Dialogue*, 38(2), 179–196. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26299651>

<sup>22</sup> McDonald, M. (2008). Securitization and the construction of security. *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(4), 563–587. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066108097553>

*Limitations and A New Dual Framework* (2020: 8)<sup>23</sup>, comments on this limitation; “Securitization involves the *exceptionalization* of an issue to justify extraordinary measures. However, what is considered exceptional varies across time and place, as norms have temporal and spatial dimensions. As a result, securitization processes, mechanisms, and consequences can differ significantly depending on the context”.

Furthermore, elitism and the top-down framework of the theory have been criticized. Ken Booth, in his book called *Theory of World Security* (2007)<sup>24</sup>, mentions that the Securitization Theory, with its roots in Schmittian ideas, tends to be elitist by focusing on political leaders and decision-makers while treating others as passive audiences who can only agree or disagree. It views securitization as a straightforward, top-down process, ignoring the ways it can also emerge from the bottom up.

Baysal (2020: 10)<sup>25</sup> lists another major limitation of Securitization Theory, which is its lack of focus on opposing perspectives. He claims that “while securitizing actors present their version of truth to define threats and solutions, rival voices often challenge or counter these claims. These opposing views, whether through non-violent dissent or counter-securitization, create a constant conflict over what is considered a security issue. To address this, a dual approach is needed that includes these rival perspectives in the analysis”.

### **3. Research Methodology**

As mentioned in the earlier paragraphs, this thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach to analyze Putin’s speeches and statements, merging quantitative analysis using R Studio with qualitative interpretation grounded in the Securitization Theory. This combined approach makes sure a complete understanding of both measurable data and the nuanced rhetoric used to securitize Ukraine prior to the war.

---

<sup>23</sup> Baysal, B. (2020). 20 years of securitization: Strengths, limitations, and a new dual framework. *Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations*, 17(67), 3–20. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26928568>

<sup>24</sup> Booth, K. (2007). *Theory of world security*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>25</sup> Baysal, B. (2020). 20 years of securitization: Strengths, limitations, and a new dual framework. *Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations*, 17(67), 3–20. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26928568>

### **3.1. Research Design**

The quantitative content analysis is intended to reveal patterns and trends in Putin's speeches while the qualitative discourse analysis is to interpret the security narratives and discourse. This methodology is escorted by the following research questions:

- How do key securitization-related themes, words, and phrases manifest in Putin's speeches over time?
- What rhetorical strategies and speech acts does Putin employ to frame Ukraine as a security threat?
- How does the interplay between quantitative and qualitative insights deepen our understanding of securitization?

### **3.2. Data Collection**

Official speeches, interviews, and public statements delivered by Vladimir Putin between May 2019 and February 2022 have been chosen for this study to be analyzed. The main reason behind why this specific timeframe is that it captures the period of intensifying the tension since the inauguration of Volodymyr Zelensky until the start of the war. It is crucial to pay special attention to this time interval as securitization narratives were heavily highlighted in Putin's words. By analyzing this period, the aim here is to understand the development of key themes and strategies which were used to justify extraordinary measures by the Kremlin. Materials that consist of any information regarding Ukraine, NATO, or security related themes are included to prevent deviating from the main aim of the study.

### **3.3. Qualitative Discourse Analysis**

The qualitative discourse analysis here is to interpret the context, intent, and meaning behind Putin's words and statement where he discusses Ukraine, NATO, and other security issues. The aim here is to conclude how securitization narratives are constructed and communicated. The analysis explores the deeper layers of meaning behind the words and statements mentioned which gives us a clue how Ukraine was framed as a security threat.

The main tool used in this analysis is the Speech Act Theory. Each speech has been evaluated for its locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Specific focus has been placed on the ways how Putin uses language to justify actions, mobilize public opinion, and construct an existential threat to Russia's national security.

Contextual interpretation is also an essential component of the qualitative analyses, therefore, speeches have been examined withing their geopolitical and historical contexts in order to understand how events, such as NATO's activities or political activities in Ukraine are swerved into the securitization narrative. Special attention has been given to themes such as historical unity, cultural protection, and resistance to Western influence.

The qualitative discourse analysis provides a deeper understanding of Putin's securitization strategy by uncovering his real intentions, strategies, and rhetorical techniques to construct a threat and evolve it over time.

### **3.4. Limitations of the Study**

The chosen methodology offers a comprehensive analysis of the securitization of Ukraine in Putin's rhetoric. However, certain limitations are on the table. Exploring themes, patterns and rhetorical strategies rely on the researcher's interpretation of language and context which might lead to a subjective analysis. Alongside, as the official translations of Putin's speeches into English have been analyzed, it does not exclude the risks of losing cultural and linguistic nuances, which could impact the results. Another limitation is that comparative analysis to similar cases (US invasion of Iraq) is not included in the paper in order to keep the purity of analysis. From the perspective of the author, if compared Putin's rhetoric is compared to other actors, the analysis would lose its cleanness. Moreover, during some of the news conferences held, there were other speakers, such as Angela Merkel, Emmanuel Macron, and other leaders. However, the author intentionally excluded their speeches from the analysis to keep the focus on Vladimir Putin. Despite the challenges, the research is intended to provide an objective and comprehensive analysis of the securitization process.

It is necessary to mention that some of the word choices ("portray", "picture", "paint"... ) might seem subjective. However, main aim of the author in this research is to

analyze Putin's speeches. Therefore, the author is forced to use the mentioned words to describe his words. Every necessary step to avoid subjectivity is taken by the author.

#### **4. Analysis**

##### **4.1. Putin, V. (2019, November 14). *Vladimir Putin answered Russian journalists' questions following the BRICS summit in Brasilia*. President of Russia.<sup>26</sup>**

The Vladimir Putin's speech on November 14, 2019, following the BRICS summit in Brasília, reflects a strategic effort to position Russia as a stabilizing force in a complex and shifting global environment. The speech concentrate on three key themes: the growing importance of BRICS, the controversial relationship with Ukraine, and Russia's broader diplomatic engagements.

BRICS has been portrayed as a stabilizing force in global politics and economics by Putin. The organization's role has been framed as a counterweight to Western alliances by stating, "BRICS stands for open markets, against any kind of protectionism". Putin basically portrays Western powers as self-serving and protectionist. Putin presents the organization as an emerging global leader by emphasizing its achievements, with Russia playing the team captain, as it surpasses G7 in GDP measured by purchasing power parity.

Sovereignty is one of the recurring themes in the speech as Putin uses to underline the independence of BRICS member countries in deciding their development paths. He states that "each of the countries has its full sovereignty and independently determines its development priorities and partners". This statement serves to Putin's narrative that the Western interference in global affairs often destabilize crises rather than resolving.

While the key theme in this speech is not Ukraine, Putin's comments on it are important to note. Ukraine's perceived noncompliance with the Minsk Agreements frustrate Putin and therefore, he states that failure to coordinate with Donetsk and Lugansk would "deadlock the process overnight". The rhetoric of Putin portrays Russia as a mediator and protector of stability while blaming Ukraine for harming the peace process. These comments signal mistrust

---

<sup>26</sup> <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62047>

and annoyance with Ukraine's alignment with the West, which sets early rhetorical foundation for the future securitization.

Putin weaves together global and regional narratives in this speech to connect concepts of sovereignty, stability, and Western influence, which leads to portraying Russia as a victim of external interference and guarantor of order and legitimizing its actions on the global stage.

#### **4.2. Putin, V. (2019, December 19). Vladimir Putin's annual news conference. President of Russia.<sup>27</sup>**

Vladimir Putin delivered his annual news conference on December 19, 2019, addressing a couple of topics, including the current situation in Ukraine. His comments after the Normandy Format summit in Paris declared the key elements of his securitization narrative regarding the Donbass conflict. During the speech, he emphasized the Minsk Agreements as the foundation of the settlement process and blamed Ukraine for noncompliance with the agreement.

Ukrainian President Zelensky has suggested revising the Minsk Agreement which Putin was totally against it, claiming that it would destroy any chance of peace. Putin mentions that "if we revise the Minsk Agreements, the settlement process will heat a dead end". He also underlines that Ukraine's Constitution must adopt the special status of Donbas. From his point of view, the Kyiv is unwilling to engage in direct communication with representatives from Donetsk and Lugansk, which is a breach of the agreement. "The Minsk Agreements say that any actions concern Donbass must be coordinated with Donbas" he says, warning Ukraine not to escalate the conflict.

Putin is definitely against the fact that Kyiv refuses to disengage along the entire contact line but appreciates the partial troop withdrawals and decrease in artillery attacks. Furthermore, he accuses Ukraine of intensifying tension in Donbas through an economic blockade, stating, "The Kyiv authorities were the ones who imposed this blockade". Putin portrays Russia as a necessary protector of the region's population while framing Ukraine as a hostile and neglectful actor.

---

<sup>27</sup> <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62366>

Putin also points out to the resilience of Donbas people, mentioning that they are unwilling to bow to pressure. In addition, he denies that Russia has not directly involved in the conflict and claiming that any heavy weaponry was sourced locally or provided by someone else.

From his rhetoric, he accuses the West of pressuring Ukraine into counterproductive actions. “They want to help Ukraine keep its transits... but their support is not real,” he said, criticizing the West to be more interested in their own geopolitical motives rather than welfare of Ukrainians.

Overall, the Kyiv’s actions and Western interference are the primary threats to peace in Ukraine, according to Putin. Putin presents Russia as a mediator which preserves international agreements and the Donbas people as victims of Ukrainian aggression. His previously mentioned statements regarding “the settlement process will heat a dead end” and “The Kyiv authorities were the ones who imposed this blockade” let him frame Russia as a necessary mediator to be involved in this conflict to ensure the stability.

**4.3. Putin, V. (2020, February 20). *On the tasks of the new government: Interview with TASS News Agency. President of Russia.*<sup>28</sup>**

In his interview with TASS News Agency on February 21, 2020, he talks over the longstanding historical, cultural, and religious ties between Russia and Ukraine. He claims that these two nations have been tied to each other and division of these nations is a recent phenomenon created by the external forces. Putin portrays these nations a one of unity, stressing out that “we had no language differences”. He further comments on the historical connection of two nations by stating, “Ukrainians were the people who defended the southern frontiers from attacks by the Crimean khan” and “Ukrainians were everywhere”, which basically means that Ukrainians took part in the defense and expansion of the Russian state. His main aim is to

---

<sup>28</sup> <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62843>

remind the audience that these two nations are not naturally divided but artificially divided by the external forces, by emphasizing the historical and cultural links between them.

From Putin's discourse, he displays the current separation between these nations as harmful to both of them, and he feels disappointed about their once-close relationship has been tense. He says, "I have repeatedly said I believe that we are one and the same people," emphasizing the idea that the link between them is crucial and should not be harmed. He accuses Ukrainian nationalism of deterioration of relations. He says that "The father of the Ukrainian nationalism... say that Ukraine is: a) multinational and should be a federal state, and b) should build good relations with Russia". These statements are the proofs of his view of Ukrainian nationalism as a driving force behind the worsened relations.

Putin also criticizes the Ukrainian leadership that they have chosen personal and elite interests over the well-being of Ukrainian people. He claims that having worsened relations with Russia has led to economic decline. He states that "the break-up with Russia has led to the loss of space engineering, shipbuilding, aircraft engineering and engine manufacturing; it is virtually the deindustrialization of the country that is happening". Putin's rhetorical aim here is to portray that breaking up with Russia has done more harm to Ukraine than good and Ukraine is suffering from these losses. He argues that the Ukrainian elite is selling "Russophobia" to please external powers, and the elite's only interest is to maximize their self-interest rather than the welfare and needs of the Ukrainian people.

One of the key subjects of this speech is the geopolitical rivalry between Russia and the West. Putin pictures this rivalry as a major component of the Ukrainian separation. He states that, "because any integration of Russia and Ukraine, along with their capacities and competitive advantages, would lead to the emergence of a rival, a global rival for Europe and the world," which is the reason why the West has encouraged the division of these two nations. According to Putin, by preventing the integration of Russia and Ukraine, the West aims to weaken them in the global arena. He also suggests that this division is a strategic maneuver to keep Russia from becoming a stronger global power. He states: "Division makes us weaker".

Another point that Putin touches is the role of religion, namely Russian Orthodox Church, which he claims to be the unity between Russia and Ukraine. "Why did one need to

destroy the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church?”, he accuses of efforts to cut off ties between the two nations’ religious unity. He states that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has always been “spiritually united” with the Russian one even though being administratively autonomous. By bringing these claims to the table, he aims to invoke the idea of the spiritual and cultural ties between them remain strong while politically divided. He accuses of Ukrainian leadership for sabotaging the unity which has helped binding the two nations together. The church serves as a metaphor in this context for a broader cultural and historical connections between Russia and Ukraine and according to him, these connections should be preserved.

In regard to the tone of speech, it carries a sense of both frustration and regret, as well as being confident and firm. His language is authoritative as he criticizes Ukrainian leaders for their role in the separation process. He frequently draws attention to the sense of shared identity and history. His aim is to evoke emotional resonance with his audience and make his audience to remember the historical unity between these two nations. Alongside, he pictures the West as a manipulator in this scenario which aims to divide these nations. A dual narrative is pictured here; on one hand, the division is portrayed as a deep loss for both countries, and on the other hand, Russia is pictured as the defender of shared cultural and historical legacy which has been endangered by the external forces.

The Securitization Theory describes this speech as an effort to frame the division as a security threat to Russian national security. Putin implicitly justifies his actions to preserve its interests and historical links with Ukraine, as he portrays the “artificially” created division to be harmful for both nations. The use of historical references, cultural appeals, and geopolitical rhetoric serves to portraying Russia as a legitimate actor which has a right to preserve its influence over Ukraine and prevent further separation. It is a part of the bigger picture where Russia describes the Ukrainian issue not only as a political matter but also an existential threat to its national security.

**4.4. Putin, V. (2020, March 2). *On army and arms race: Interview with TASS News Agency*. President of Russia.<sup>29</sup>**

---

<sup>29</sup> [www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62917](http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62917)

In the following speech which happened on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2020, Putin talks about Russia's military strategy, defense capabilities, military advancements, and strategic stability in global politics. The Global arms race is one of the key themes recurring during the speech. Putin acknowledges that they are not the military superpower but capable to defend their own country. He says, "We are not a military superpower... but we are quite capable of defending our country".

Russia's recent military advancements, namely the development of hypersonic weapons is the major focus of the speech, which Putin is quite proud of. He mentions, "We are the leaders in the development of hypersonic weapons. No one else has anything like this," positioning Russia as the first nation to develop such weapons. He is proud of the fact that this development gives them superiority in the global arms race.

The speech also mentions the importance of strategic stability in the global context, which has been achieved because of nuclear deterrence, according to Putin. "Strategic stability was achieved after the Second World War, and it has preserved global peace, primarily because of nuclear deterrence". He believes that advancements of new military technologies would preserve the global peace as no one would dare to challenge Russia's military power. This rhetoric is a part of his broader strategic vision.

Overall, although the speech does not include anything regarding Ukrainian issue, it portrays Russia as a strong, capable nation focused on maintaining strategic stability in the global context. The rhetoric here is that Russia is pictured to be the guarantor of peace and stability while maintaining the country's military readiness against potential threats.

#### **4.5. Putin, V. (2020, March 10). *On memory of the Great Patriotic War, Stalin, and Hitler: Interview with TASS News Agency. President of Russia.*<sup>30</sup>**

In his fifth speech, Putin talks about the Soviet Union's pivotal role in defeating Nazi Germany and securing global peace and historical legacy of WW2. "It was the Soviet Union that bore the brunt of the Nazi onslaught, losing tens of millions of lives, and yet it was our

---

<sup>30</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62963

nation that ultimately ensured the liberation of Europe,” he mentions, to highlight the immense sacrifices made by the Soviet people. Putin portrays Russia as a guardian of historical truth while criticizing others for efforts to rewrite the history of WW2, particularly Poland, by stating “There were leaders in Europe, including in Poland, who were complicit in encouraging Hitler’s ambitions and ultimately paving the way for the conflict”.

Putin touches to the complex legacy of Joseph Stalin. From his point of view, Stalin had a controversial nature as well as unquestionable wartime leadership. “Stalin’s actions, like those of any historical figure, should be judged within the context of the era. While mistakes were made, we cannot ignore his contribution to the Soviet Union’s victory over fascism,” he states. By defending Stalin, Putin aims to invoke broader narrative of soviet strength and unity.

Another recurring theme in the speech is the unity and sacrifice. Putin proudly mentions the sacrifices and unity of all soviet people in that period. "Victory was achieved through the courage and unity of all Soviet peoples—Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and others, who stood shoulder to shoulder on the front lines," he says. By stating that, he criticizes the Ukrainian leadership’s modern political path, and he frames Ukraine’s division from them as a betrayal of their shared history. Alongside, his accusations on the Western interference are noteworthy: "Western interference has severed the bonds forged during the Great Patriotic War, leaving Ukraine adrift from the unity we once had".

In the speech, Putin expresses his comments on western attempts to distort history for political gain. "Certain nations are trying to erase the Soviet Union’s contribution to the victory over fascism and instead paint themselves as the sole defenders of freedom. This is a distortion of the truth," he states. Such remarks let him position Russia as a defender of historical accuracy.

Overall, in this speech, Putin defends Russia’s historical narrative and criticizes current global politics. Russia is pictured as a nation rooted in unity, resilience, sacrifice, and the one to stand against external forces to preserve its legacy. In order to strengthen Russian identity and frame Russia as a stabilizing force in global context, Putin has invoked the past.

**4.6. Putin, V. (2020, March 18). *Meeting with the public from Crimea and Sevastopol.* President of Russia.<sup>31</sup>**

The following speech revolves around the themes such as national unity, historical continuity, and strategic significance of Russia's historical legacy, specifically in regard to Crimea and Sevastopol. Putin once again leverages history and national identity to strengthen its sovereignty and global position.

The unification of Russia's historical narrative is one of the foundations of this speech. "If we want to have a truly great future, we need to overcome all these divisions of the past and move forward together," stated by Putin to emphasize on the importance of collective memory. From his rhetoric, Crimea is the integral and unique part of Russia. He claims that the annexation took place because of the will of the Crimean people and restore historical justice. He accuses of Ukrainian government for neglecting Crimea and leaving it economically underdeveloped. He strengthens his point with the following statement: "The infrastructure from the mid-1980s was left as it was, in a dilapidated state".

The speech also touches to the preservation of historical memory, which is a national priority, according to Putin. He speaks about Chersonese, calling it as a birthplace of their faith. Such historical sites are counted as the symbols of unity among Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, as well as shared spiritual and cultural connections. Overall, this framing serves to the legitimizing the narrative of Slavic identity unification under Russia's leadership.

To conclude, Putin has used the history and national identity strategically to enhance domestic support and maintain Russia's global position. While balancing domestic and international messaging, he has portrayed Russia as both a historical custodian and modern global power.

**4.7. Putin, V. (2020, June 19). *75th anniversary of the Great Victory: Shared responsibility to history and our future.* President of Russia.<sup>32</sup>**

---

<sup>31</sup> [www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/63021](http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/63021)

<sup>32</sup> [www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/63527](http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/63527)

This speech is intended to represent Putin's rhetorical strategy of securitizing historical statements to strengthen Russia's position. He justifies the USSR's actions during WW2 as necessary to establish a narrative to portray Russia as under threat from distortions of history. He also criticizes Western effort to equate the Soviets' actions with Nazi Germany. From his point of view, such narratives are direct attacks on Russia's legitimacy and moral authority and are "hypocritical and politically motivated".

By doing so, he securitizes the rewriting of history as a coexistent threat to its sovereignty. He frequently brings the Soviet people's sacrifices to the attention to establish a narrative of Russia's role as a guarantor of global peace. He claims that the Western efforts are determined to undermine Russia's global influence.

Putin accuses of Western actors for appeasing Hitler, by mentioning the "Munich Betrayal" of 1938, and name it as a failure of Western collective security. By underlying the fact that the USSR has called for collective security back in time, he aims to establish a narrative that the West has been ignoring Russia's security concerns historically. The historical analogy here is the NATO's eastern expansion and the West's interference in the Eastern Europe, particularly in Ukraine. Overall, Putin portrays Russia as a victim of historical Western hostility.

Based on Securitization theory, Putin's rhetoric here is to picture the West as a direct threat to Russia's historical legacy and sovereignty. His frequent references to "distortions of history" transform these issues into existential threats, which would later on be used to justify certain actions. The discourse sets the stage for Russia to frame contemporary issues, such as the Ukrainian conflict or Western attempts to destabilize Russia, into existential threats.

Referring to collective memory, moral duty, and external threats, Putin has been effectively using the history to justify his actions to protect Russia's interests and sovereignty. This speech shows one of the key elements of the whole study: "how securitization is deployed through rhetorical strategies to frame issues such as historical memory and territorial disputes as matters of existential importance".

**4.8. Putin, V. (2020, July 26). *Telephone conversation with President of Ukraine Vladimir Zelensky. President of Russia.*<sup>33</sup>**

This speech revolves around the telephone conversation between Putin and Zelensky, in which they have discussed couple of topics. Putin has carefully portrayed the conflict in Donbas and the Minsk Agreements as matters of security and stability. Putin has frequently mentioned that the Minsk Agreements are the only legitimate framework for peace and serves to Russia's longstanding position in this conflict. Putin has accused of Zelensky for not fulfilling his commitments to the Agreement. His has called the Verkhovna Rada's July 15 resolution on local elections as a challenge to the Agreement and peace efforts. The rhetoric has portrayed Ukraine as the main obstacle to resolving the conflict while framing Russia as the responsible one which stands for the settlement.

During the conversation, he has frequently mentioned that situation in Donbas is an "internal Ukrainian crisis". By doing so, he aims to serve to his broader strategy of denying direct involvement in the crisis which would hold Ukraine as accountable for any harm to peace process. Alongside, by referring to Donbas as an internal Ukrainian crisis, he implies that the destabilizing factor in the region and peace process is the Kyiv's decisions rather than Russia's actions.

The discourse analysis of Putin's rhetoric when discussing potential changes to the Minsk Agreements is noteworthy to pay attention. From his rhetoric, any effort to revise the agreement would "threaten settlement prospects". This leads to the transformation of the discussion from a political negotiation into a security issue, which effectively limits Ukraine's maneuverability in the negotiation. Putin claims that the Agreement is a necessity for stability and pictures any deviation from the Agreement as a direct threat. This rhetorical strategy boosts Russia's position in the peace talks while ensuring that Kyiv has limited maneuverability.

Overall, this speech serves as a coercive statement of Russia's position while pretended to be diplomatic. From Putin's point of view, the stability exclusively depends on Kyiv's actions and its willingness to comply with Russia's offered terms, by portraying any deviation

---

<sup>33</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63755

from the Minsk as a security risk. From Securitization theory perspective, it is highly appreciated as it let the Kremlin legitimize any involvement in the conflict while shifting responsibility from itself.

**4.9. Putin, V. (2020, September 14). *Meeting with President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko*. President of Russia.<sup>34</sup>**

In this speech, Putin's main discourse is securitizing ongoing protests in Belarus, as he portrays them as externally influenced rather than domestic activities. He pictures Russia as "much more restraint and neutrality" compared to the West, which has been fueling instability in Belarus. He generalizes domestic uprisings in post-Soviet states as threats to Russian regional security.

Putin's main argument here is that Russia carries obligations under the Union State and the CSTO to help each other to protect their sovereignty. He states that "all member states of these organizations, including the Union State, are obliged to help each other protect their sovereignty, external borders, and stability". Moreover, he mentions that Lukashenko has personally asked Moscow's support. All of these lead to the fact that Russia legitimizes a potential intervention in domestic affairs of Belarus.

The most explicit securitizing move is the announcement of a "reserve force" by Putin at the Lukashenko's personal request. However, as Putin puts, "this group would not be used unless the situation becomes uncontrollable, when extremist elements... start plundering the country, burning vehicles, houses, banks, trying to seize administration buildings". He calls protestors extremists and criminals which justifies physical intervention as a necessary security measure.

Putin once again criticizes the West for the double standards, claiming "was it not awful when people died in some European countries nearly every day?". By stating that, he refers to protests that have been in Europe. His claim is that the West should focus on their own

---

<sup>34</sup> <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64031>

problems rather than criticizing Lukashenko. From his point, such critiques from the West are politically motivated rather than based on democratic principles. This rhetoric serves to the strategy that Russia is portrayed as a guarantor of stability while the West is manipulating the crises for maximizing their own interests.

Putin has not openly declared any intervention but also assures that Russia is ready to take an action. He insists that it is Belarus's internal problem and needs to be resolved internally. However, he also warns any foreign interference. This rhetoric reminds the earlier on Ukraine, in which similar language about the West's interference and treaty obligations were used to justify possible further actions.

Overall, this interview is a rhetorical tool to justify possible Russian intervention in Belarus in order to protect the regional security. By picturing the uprisings as externally powered, the issue is securitized. By this interview, he has prepared domestic and international audiences for a possible Russian intervention.

**4.10. Putin, V. (2020, September 22). *75th session of the UN General Assembly: Video address. President of Russia.*<sup>35</sup>**

This speech is from Putin's pre-recorded address at the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. He balances Russia's vision of global stability, criticizes Western interventions, and reaffirms sovereignty principles. His main points in the speech are regarding international law, non-interference, and Russia's role in maintaining global peace. Although the speech does not explicitly focus on Ukraine, Putin's emphasis on sovereignty principles and historical narratives might give justification for its activities in the region.

Another dominant topic of the speech is Russia's defense of the post WW2 international order. He states that "the equality of sovereign states, non-interference in domestic affairs, and the right of peoples to determine their own future," are necessary to be remembered and not violated. Basically, he criticizes the West for intervening in other countries' internal affairs,

---

<sup>35</sup> [en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64074](https://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64074)

particularly post-Soviet states while portraying Russia as a committed to international law's principles.

Putin once again emphasize the rewriting of history. His accuses of the West for attacking its legitimacy and global stability by attempting to rewrite the history. Basically, Putin reinforces the idea that Russia is the successor of the USSR and it bears the responsibility to keep the order in the region, by accusing the West for attempting distortions of history and post-war world order.

During the speech, he carefully pictures Russia as a stabilizing force which is surrounded by global crises. He touches upon the topics of regional conflicts, terrorism and organized crime as well as emphasizing the importance of strategic stability. He argues that the source of stability is to have strong sovereign states rather than having external interferences. He criticizes NATO expansion, the Western interference, and sanctions, claiming that Russia is not aggressor but the victim of unjust geopolitical pressure.

Although the majority of speech is concerned with diplomatic principles, international law, and global governance, the implicit rhetoric is clear. Putin presents Russia as a defender of sovereignty and international law principles while blaming the West for their interferences in other countries' affairs. Overall, the aim of the speech is to position Russia as a necessary counterbalance to Western influence in global affairs.

**4.11. Putin, V. (2020, November 11). *Meeting with heads of Defence Ministry, federal agencies and defence companies*. President of Russia.<sup>36</sup>**

In this speech, Putin talks about Russia's nuclear capabilities and emphasizes the necessity of maintaining absolute control over its strategic forces. According to him, "Russia's strategic nuclear forces must remain fully prepared for any scenario, even in the event of a nuclear strike". Putin also mentions the importance of "regular combat readiness checks" for any possible scenario that might occur. Although he does not explicitly name his adversaries, but he states, "our nuclear triad's combat capability must remain at the highest level," basically,

---

<sup>36</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64396

counterbalancing his Western adversaries. From his point of view, technological upgrades are matter of national security, therefore, he continuously invests in military development while reinforcing Russia's deterrence posture against external pressures.

Overall, although the speech does not explicitly mention Ukraine or the West, it is important to pay attention to the development of Russia's strategic forces and how he frames them as a necessity for its national security.

**4.12. Putin, V. (2020, November 10). *Meeting with senior Defence Ministry officials, sheads of federal agencies and defence industry executives. President of Russia.*<sup>37</sup>**

As in the previous address, this speech also revolves around the nuclear capabilities of Russia. Putin explicitly mentions that nuclear deterrence capabilities are the main guarantee of national security and global stability. He reinforces the idea that deterrence is a central strategy to his general defense strategy, by stating, "the nuclear triad remains the primary, key guarantee of Russia's military security". He frequently ensures the audience that nuclear readiness remains a priority.

Alongside, he underlines NATO's increasing military presence near Russian borders, especially in the Eastern Europe. He claims that NATO has not responded to his proposal to decrease military activity during the pandemic. He puts as following: "NATO has failed to respond to our proposal to scale down military activity during the epidemic", while instead "stepping up their operations". The meaning behind this rhetoric is to frame NATO as an escalating threat, so that the Kremlin could legitimize its continued investment in nuclear deterrence. Also, he criticizes the USA's nuclear doctrine which mentions "using nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear weapons". He calls the doctrine as "totally unjustified". As a result, the USA's strategic is being securitized as a direct threat to Russia's national security.

Another major theme of the speech is the failure of arms control agreements. Putin claims that this failure is an erosion of global strategic stability. He frames Russia as a

---

<sup>37</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64392

responsible actor who seeks global stability while portraying USA as the one who is willing to withdraw from key treaties.

Altogether, this speech revolves around Russia's nuclear doctrine while criticizing NATO and the US, and an emphasis on military superiority. Putin has framed Russia's nuclear capabilities as defensive, by frequently stressing the word "deterrence" and justified his military investments as a response to Western policies.

**4.13. Putin, V. (2020, December 17). *Vladimir Putin's annual news conference. President of Russia.*<sup>38</sup>**

In this annual press conference, Putin has framed Russia as a protector rather than an aggressor in the Ukrainian conflict. He once again blames Ukrainian leadership for the Donbas conflict because they failed due to the influence of nationalist forces and external interferences. He states that, "all the preceding heads of state, just as the current one, Vladimir Zelensky, came to power with slogans on unifying the country". He pictures the situation that Ukrainian government is not absolutely independent but controlled by radical internal elements and external actors. As the Ukrainian government is framed as incapable, Russia's further involvement in the conflict is justified: "to protect Russian-speaking populations".

One of the major themes in the speech is the Minsk Agreements. Putin calls it as "internationally recognized through a UN Security Council resolution". Thus, he is against the unilateral revision of the resolution by Ukrainian leadership. He insists on the fact that Ukraine has to fully comply with the agreements. By stating that, he frames Ukraine as obstructionist while Russia as a responsible actor who is binding with the international law. This is a crucial securitization move which needs to be given attention. Moreover, as he frames Ukraine as the one who does not fulfill his compliance, he states that he will continue supporting Donbas: "Russia will keep supporting Donbas as it has been. We will even increase our support". This literally means that Donbas is under Russian influence while officially part of Ukraine, and Moscow is ready to possibly expand its involvement in the conflict.

---

<sup>38</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64671

Alongside with Ukraine, Putin once again mentions the efforts of the West for rewriting the history. He explicitly pictures Russia as a defender of historical truth and sovereignty principles. He claims that the Western efforts to distort the history is aimed at maximizing political gains and justify their anti-Russian policies. These statements align with the previously said statements in which historical revisionism and geopolitical aggression were equated. He believes that Russia not only need to fight against the West militarily, but ideologically as well.

From Putin's view, Ukrainian leadership and the West are the main sources of instability in the region. His discourse remains static with the previously mentioned statements regarding securitization strategies, legal arguments, historical justifications, and external interferences. Overall, the speech lays the groundwork for justifying Russian involvement in Donbas, to protect legal and historical truth.

#### **4.14. Putin, V. (2021, June 30). *Direct Line with Vladimir Putin*. President of Russia.<sup>39</sup>**

The direct line with Putin revolves couple of topics such as relations with Ukraine. Putin once again stresses the point that Russians and Ukrainians are “one people” based on historical and cultural narratives but divided due to external influences. He explicitly states, “I do not regard Ukraine as a country unfriendly towards Russia”. However, he keeps criticizing Ukrainian leadership for being unfriendly to Russia. The dual approach of distinguishing Ukrainian people and the government is intended to delegitimize Ukraine's post-2014 sovereignty.

Another striking theme in the interview is the new Ukrainian law on indigenous people. Based on this law, Ukrainian government has excluded Russians from the list of indigenous people, which Putin strongly disagrees. He frames such actions as a discrimination and uses to securitize the issue of Russian identity in Ukraine as being under threat. He warns the Kyiv that such measures could result in a form of ethnic displacement.

---

<sup>39</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65973

Another attention-drawing topic of the speech is Putin's unwillingness to meet President Zelensky. Basically, he claims that Zelensky does not have full control over Ukraine, by stating, "the main issues concerning Ukraine's functioning are not decided in Kyiv but in Washington and, partly, in Berlin and Paris". This is a crucial securitizing move to frame Ukraine's sovereignty, arguing that they are under the West's control and not a legitimate actor to be able to take part in direct negotiations. This is an important detail to keep in mind as Russia uses it to bypass Ukrainian leadership in diplomatic negotiations and attempting directly engagement with the Western actors.

Once again, Putin touches upon the topic of historical distortion. He claims that such efforts by the external powers are intended to weaken Russia. He makes an analogy of Poland and Austro-Hungary's historical policies with the current Western policies which aimed at distorting the unity of Russian people.

Overall, the interview invokes to Putin's securitization of Ukraine while portraying its government as controlled by the external powers and being hostile. From his statements, the Russian speaking population in Ukraine are victims of systemic discrimination, which is a proper cause of justification of further possible actions by the Kremlin. His efforts to bypass Zelensky administration by accusing of being controlled by the external forces serve to his narrative of delegitimizing Ukrainian sovereignty and once again justifying possible further actions. In short, Russia has been justified to intervene in Ukraine's internal affairs to protect its interests.

**4.15. Putin, V. (2021, July 12). *On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians*. President of Russia.<sup>40</sup>**

"On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians" is one of the most crucial speeches in the whole process of securitizing Ukraine by Putin. The speeches analyzed until now have been reactive to specific events. However, in this speech, Putin frames the entire history of Russian-Ukrainian relations in a way that justifies his claims over Ukraine. "Russians and Ukrainians were one people – a single whole," he states. From his perspective, Ukraine's independence is

---

<sup>40</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181

an artificial construct which is the result of Western interventions and Soviet administrative decisions. He has repeatedly mentioned the unity narrative to delegitimize Ukraine's independent national identity and frame it as a part of Russian civilization.

Putin has used selective historical events or moments to distort Ukraine's history of distinct statehood. His reference to the Pereyaslav Agreement of 1654, which was about Ukrainian Cossacks pledging allegiance to the Russian Tsar, is intended to portray a strategic alliance forged under external pressures as a natural reunification. Alongside, he pictures Ukraine's joining into the Russian Empire as beneficial, mentioning that "the lands on the left bank, taken under the protection of the unified stated, saw rapid development". Overall, Ukrainian resistance, repressions, and forced Russification processes have been ignored while portraying Russian rule as benevolent.

Another striking securitizing move is the narrative of Ukraine being ruled by the external forces. Putin once again draws the attention to the Western efforts to turn Ukraine into an "anti-Russian". From his point of view, the West has used "divide and rule" tactic in Ukraine. He also accuses of the West for nurturing Ukrainian nationalism which he equates with radicalism and neo-Nazism. As in the previous speech, he claims that post-2014 Ukrainian leadership has been the puppets of the West, and all the important decisions have been taken in Washington. This rhetoric is intended to portray Ukraine as not entirely an independent state but a struggle between Russia and the West.

Putin also draws attention to cultural and linguistic issues which as he frames, are deliberately used to erase Russian identity. The previously adopted law on indigenous people is used to justify the protection of the Russian-speaking people. Overall, Ukraine's nation-building efforts are portrayed as an existential threat to Russia.

Putin pictures the unity of Russians and Ukrainians as "transmitted from generation to generation," framing the point that Ukraine's true historical identity has always been protected by Russia. He states that "true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia". By stating that, he deliberately delegitimizes Ukraine's independence. Not only limited to delegitimization of the independence, but also implying that any separation from Russia is unnatural and externally forced.

All in all, this speech has been one of the most explicit securitization efforts by Putin. From his perspective, Ukrainian independence is a historical mistake, The West attacks on Russian identity, and Russia has a right to intervene and protect its interests. This speech is noteworthy to understand ideological justifications that led to the future escalation of tensions.

**4.16. Putin, V. (2021, November 13). *Interview with Rossiya TV channel*. President of Russia.<sup>41</sup>**

Putin's interview with Rossiya TV channel is another crucial moment in his rhetoric regarding the EU, Belarus, and Ukraine. His comments on the ongoing migrant crisis on the Belarus-EU border put the blame totally on the West. He claims that the Western military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have caused migration crisis. This rhetoric serves to Putin's bigger narrative of the West being the cause of destabilization in global affair while Russia being the neutral observer or the guarantor of the global peace.

In regard to Belarus, Putin has expressed his continuous support for Lukashenko. He commented on Lukashenko's threats to cut gas transit to Europe, by stating that, "To be honest, this is the first time I hear about it". It means that Lukashenko has not coordinated such plan with the Kremlin, and now Putin uses it as a leverage over the West that he does not have any intension to escalate the tension with Europeans while reaffirming that Russia has a big control over the European energy security. His reference to past Ukrainian energy disputes, he once again reminds to the audience that he still has the leverage of the regional energy flows.

In regard to Ukraine, Putin has criticized the allegations that Russia was preparing for a military invasion and blamed the West for increasing tensions. He cited to NATO's unscheduled drills in the Black Sea, which is not welcomed by him. Such activities serve to his bigger narrative of the Western activities near his borders are provocative and pose a threat to Russia's national security. Also, he blames Ukrainian government for breaching the Minsk Agreements by using drones in the conflict zone, by stating, "Even though it is unmanned, it is still aviation, used in the conflict zone, which is strictly prohibited by the Minsk agreements".

---

<sup>41</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67100

Such rhetoric once again portrays Russia as a responsible party to the agreement while positioning Ukraine as a reckless and violent actor.

In every part of the interview, Putin has consistently portrayed Russia as a victim of Western hostility. His carefully drawn narratives around the West, Belarus, and Ukraine have pictured Russia as being under the external pressure and threat, which would justify taking defensive measures.

**4.17. Putin, V. (2021, August 20). *News conference following Russian-German talks.* President of Russia.** <sup>42</sup>

Vladimir Putin at the joint press conference with Angela Merkel continues securitizing Ukraine. His main narrative is to portray Ukraine as an unreliable negotiating partner and reason for regional instability. He frequently refers to the Minsk Agreements and blame Ukraine for violating its terms while portraying Russia as a responsible actor seeking peace. He supports his arguments by stating, “Ukraine has adopted a number of laws and regulations that essentially contradict the Minsk agreements”. He furthermore blames Ukraine for giving up on achieving a peaceful settlement altogether. By these statements, he shifts the blame onto Ukraine and its Western allies and pushes Merkel to influence Ukraine to comply with the agreement.

Putin further blames the West for drawing parallels between Ukrainian and Afghan crises. He accuses them of attempting to apply their style of governance on others, by saying that “it is imperative to put an end to the irresponsible policy of imposing outside values on others, to the desire to build democracies in other countries according to other nations’ ‘patterns’ without regard to historical, national, or religious specifics”. This rhetoric is intended for two reasons. The first reason is that Putin does not appreciate Western-backed governance in Ukraine and implies that the Ukrainian government is an artificial product of the external powers. The second reason is to portray Russia as an actor which understands “realities” of different nations and does not attempt to impose foreign models. He criticizes the fact that Afghanistan has collapsed right after the USA withdrawal which means that the Western

---

<sup>42</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66418

interventions lead to failed states. From his perspective, Ukraine might follow a similar tragedy if they keep moving towards the West.

Putin draws the attention to the current situation in Donbas and reminds the need for urgent intervention. He states that “more than a thousand ceasefire violations” since the start of August and claims that “Donbass towns and villages face artillery fire every day,” in order to justify the need for Russian intervention to prevent further violence. Alongside, he frequently portrays Russia as an actor who is committed to diplomatic measures by mentioning complying to the Minsk Agreements. He does not appreciate Ukraine’s unilateral withdrawal wishes from the agreement. Such rhetoric allows Putin to picture Russia as a mediator, while justifying potential future interventions.

To sum up, this speech provides a diplomatic farewell to Merkel while strengthening Russia’s securitization of Ukraine. Ukraine has been portrayed as an unreliable and reckless party to the negotiations which is backed by the West while Russia is the stabilizing force in the region who understands the realities and needs of the region.

**4.18. Putin, V. (2021, November 18). *Expanded meeting of the Foreign Ministry Board.* President of Russia.<sup>43</sup>**

Putin in the meeting with the Foreign Ministry Board has given a speech about couple of topics. His major concerns are that Ukraine is an unreliable actor, NATO is a direct threat to Russian security, and Russia is the defender of stability and international law. He once again blames Ukrainian leadership for not fulfilling their obligations under the Minsk Agreements and the Normandy format, by stating “Ukraine has failed to fulfil its obligations under the Minsk Package of Measures, as well as the Normandy format agreements”. His aim here is to shift the full responsibility onto the Ukrainian side for the ongoing crisis. Alongside with the Ukrainian leadership, he criticizes French and German leaders for intervening in Ukraine’s internal affairs, by stating “indulging the current Kiev leadership’s course on dismantling the Minsk

---

<sup>43</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67123

agreements”. Basically, he draws a picture where Russia acts in accordance with international law principles while Ukraine and the West undermine diplomatic efforts.

Another striking focus of the speech is NATO’s military presence near Russian borders, which is identified as an imminent security threat by Putin. He states that “strategic bombers, which carry very serious weapons, fly at a distance of only 20 kilometers from our state border,” and such activities are portrayed as provocative and aggressive. Putin also refers to the long-standing Russian injustice over NATO’s eastward expansion. By stating, “despite the fact that relations between Russia and our Western partners were almost allied, our concerns and warnings regarding NATO’s eastward expansion have been totally ignored,” he aims at framing the historical grievance as a justification for Russia’s demand for security guarantees.

Overall, Putin concludes his speech by emphasizing Russia’s demands for security guarantees. He states that “it is imperative to push for serious long-term guarantees that ensure Russia’s security in this area, because Russia cannot constantly be thinking about what could happen there tomorrow”. This statement shows his impatience with the Western actions and justify his possible military actions. Although he pictures Russia as an actor who is open to dialogue, he reassures that the Kremlin is ready to take necessary actions in case the demands are not met. He effectively frames NATO and Ukraine as a direct threat to Russia’s national security and justify possible countermeasures.

**4.19. Putin, V. (2021, December 8). *Joint news conference with Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis*. President of Russia.<sup>44</sup>**

Putin at the joint press conference with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis talks about economic and historical ties with Greece while subtly continuing securitizing Ukraine and NATO. He refers to the history when framing Russia-Greece relations, by emphasizing the fact that Russia has supported Greece’s independence in 1828. By doing so, he highlights the long-standing cultural, economic, and political links between the countries. He puts that “to this day, the peoples of the two countries are linked by strong friendship and deep cultural and humanitarian ties”. Such statements serve to his narrative that Russia is a reliable and historical

---

<sup>44</sup> en.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/646/events/67320

ally. His highlights regarding economic cooperation by stating the increased trade relations between two countries, especially energy transits, serve to reinforce Russia's importance in Greece's economy.

Even though Ukraine is not a central focus of this conference, but Putin uses the opportunity to continue securitizing NATO. He once again blames NATO for the expansion, by stating, "regretfully, the NATO bloc is pursuing a confrontational line towards Russia... They declare Russia an adversary". This rhetoric pictures NATO as an aggressive actor which subtly strengthen Russia's justification for possible defensive countermeasures. He takes the opportunity to criticize Ukraine's potential access to NATO by claiming "the deployment of troop contingents, bases, and weapons that threaten us". Such rhetoric is aimed at completing the puzzle of Putin's securitization strategy of Ukraine which is framing Ukraine's access to NATO is a direct threat to Russian national security, and therefore, Russia has a right to take countermeasures in case its security demands are not met.

Overall, the conference serves as a diplomatic balancing act which shows strong bilateral ties with Greece while precisely supporting Russia's securitization rhetoric. He avoids any direct signals of future escalation of tensions with Ukraine, but he still portrays NATO's actions, particularly their eastward expansion as a direct threat to Russia's security. His frequent references to economic cooperation and energy relations are to display Russia's role as a stable energy supplier as well as subtly advance its geopolitical influence in Europe. Ultimately, by using such rhetoric, Putin attempts maintaining diplomatic engagement with Greece while confronting Western narratives.

**4.20. Putin, V. (2021, December 23). *Vladimir Putin's annual news conference.* President of Russia.<sup>45</sup>**

Putin's annual news conference has covered a range of topics, including Ukraine. One of the crucial moments during the conference is Putin's framing 2014 Ukrainian revolution as a Western-backed coup. Based on his framing, he frames the actions taken back in time as just and necessary. He states that "a bloody coup, people were killed and burned alive... The then

---

<sup>45</sup> [www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67438](http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67438)

president, Yanukovych, had agreed to everything. Three foreign ministers – of Poland, Germany, and France – guaranteed the peaceful development of the situation... But then a coup took place in a day or two. What for?” The rhetoric displays the revolution as orchestrated by the West to destabilize Ukraine and made the Kremlin to take proper actions, such as intervening.

He additionally securitizes the issues of Crimea and Donbas. He claims to be the protector of Crimea and Donbas from the external threats. He puts that “but how could we turn down the request of Sevastopol and Crimea, the people who lived there, to take them under our protection, under our wing? It was not possible”. Such rhetoric pictures Russian actions as a necessary defensive move rather than an aggressive act. Also, he subtly puts that annexation of Crimea was a humanitarian obligation rather than a strategic decision while claiming that certain regions of Ukraine have historically been Russian which is an act of delegitimizing Ukrainian sovereignty.

He once again talks about NATO expansion and names it as an existential threat to Russian national security. From his perspective, NATO’s military buildup near his borders is unacceptable and criticizes such actions. He blames them for failing to notice Russian insecurities regarding the expansion by stating, “we spoke out clearly and directly against any further eastward expansion by NATO. The ball is in their court”. He shifts the responsibility onto the West while emphasizing the situation that Russia is being forced into defensive action. The meaning behind the rhetoric is that NATO’s presence near Russian borders, particularly in Ukraine is not only a political issue, but a direct threat to the national security of Russian statehood.

He has frequently referred to historical events to support his narratives and arguments during the speech. His claims on the history of Donbas are noteworthy to pay attention. He implies that Donbas has been forcibly given to Ukraine by Lenin’s leadership. He declares, “Donbass, which has only ever thought of itself as part of Russia, even during the formation of the USSR in 1922–1924... Lenin and his comrades wedged Donbass in there by force”. Such rhetoric frames Russia’s involvement in the conflict as a necessity and just, in order to restore historical justice while not breaching international law principles.

The crucial moment during the speech is the one where he addresses the possibility of war. His carefully prepared rhetoric positions Russia as being forced into a defensive stance. He states, “ You could get the impression that maybe a third military operation is in the making... They are warning us in advance: ‘Do not interfere, do not protect these people. If you do, certain sanctions will follow.’ It may well be that they are preparing for this”. Russia is portrayed as a reactive power rather than proactive, which suggests that any provocation coming from the West or Ukrainian side might force Russia to react aggressively.

All in all, Putin has used the opportunity to securitize Ukraine in a similar pattern as previously. Russia is presented as the protector of Russian-speaking populations while any Western involvement is framed as a hostile interference. In addition, NATO’s eastward expansion is definitely framed as an existential threat to the Russian statehood. The use of historical references, rhetorical questions, explicit and implicit warnings are the part of bigger picture of him preparing for the full-scale invasion in couple of months.

**4.21. Putin, V. (2021, December 31). *Telephone conversations with US President Joseph Biden. President of Russia.*<sup>46</sup>**

Putin had a telephone conversation with Biden to discuss security guarantees regarding NATO and Ukraine. He has framed Russia as a state under existential threat, by mentioning, “legally binding guarantees ruling out NATO’s eastward expansion and the deployment of weapons that threaten Russia in the immediate vicinity of its borders”. He frames his concerns and demands as legitimate and necessary actions for the global security by emphasizing, “the security of any nation cannot be ensured unless the principle of indivisible security is strictly observed”. This rhetoric serves to his narrative of Russia’s demands being ignored which justifies him taking defensive measures, including military action.

Putin also criticized Biden’s mention of potential US sanctions against Russia, by stating that it would lead to complete breakdown in Russia-U.S. relations. His rhetoric is intended for two reasons. Firstly, he warns the US administration for potential severe geopolitical consequences. Secondly, he pictures the Western actions as hostile rather than

---

<sup>46</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67487

detering the threat. Although the conversation has been concluded with a diplomatic tone such as exchange of New Year's greetings, Putin has clearly emphasized that his security concerns and demands have been ignored which might result in future escalation of tension. Such rhetoric, right before the full-scale invasion, reflects the Kremlin's securitization attempts by justifying their security concerns.

**4.22. Putin, V. (2022, February 1). *News conference following Russian-Hungarian talks. President of Russia.*<sup>47</sup>**

The following Russian-Hungarian talks reflect Putin's securitization narratives of NATO and Ukraine. Although, the speech was focused on economic and energy cooperation between Russia and Hungary, Putin has used the opportunity to continue framing NATO and the West, by emphasizing his security concerns. He states the fact that he is not happy with NATO's ignoring his concerns and demands, by highlighting, "we can see that they have failed to adequately address our three key demands concerning the prevention of NATO's expansion, a refusal to deploy offensive weapon systems near Russian borders, and the return of the Bloc's European military infrastructure to 1997 levels". Such rhetoric is intended to picture Russia as a state which is under an existential threat, so that any potential countermeasure is justified.

He has also accused of the West for a betrayal, claiming that they had broken their promises by expanding. "It is common knowledge that we were promised that the NATO bloc infrastructure would not expand eastward by one inch. Everyone knows this... They said one thing but did another. As people say, they flaked out on us; they simply cheated," he states, in order to portray Russia as a victim of betrayal, who is justified to take defensive measures. He also criticizes the possibility of Ukraine joining to NATO, by referring to the Ukrainian government's plans to take Crimea back by using military. From his perspective, such action would raise the specter of a direct military confrontation with Russia. He supports his idea with a rhetorical question: "Imagine that Ukraine is a NATO country and starts these military operations. What are we supposed to do? Fight against the NATO bloc? Has anyone given at

---

<sup>47</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67690

least some thought to this?” By stating that, he frames Ukraine’s aspirations to be part of NATO bloc as a direct military threat to Russia’s sovereignty, not just as a geopolitical decision.

During the speech, Putin has insisted that the West’s real intention is to contain Russia, not to protect Ukraine. He claims that “the United States is not that concerned about Ukraine’s security... Its main goal is to contain Russia’s development. Ukraine is simply a tool to reach this goal”. He subtly delegitimizes Ukraine’s sovereignty by this rhetoric, and frame Russian actions as defensive rather than aggressive. Displayed historical grievances, security concerns, and Western hostility narratives are intended to lay groundwork for justifying military escalation.

**4.23. Putin, V. (2022, February 8). *News conference following Russian-French talks.* President of Russia.<sup>48</sup>**

At the news conference following the talks with Emmanuel Macron, Putin keeps securitizing narratives of Ukraine and NATO. He once again frames Russia as a victim of Western aggression. Although the meeting was intended to de-escalate tensions, Putin has highlighted longstanding historical grievances and justified necessary military action.

At the conference, Putin criticizes NATO’s expansion, claiming that it is a violation of previously agreed security guarantees, and it threatens Russia’s national security. He does not agree with NATO’s claims of being a “peaceful and purely defensive alliance” by stating that, “people in Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan have learned the truth of this statement the hard way”. His rhetoric is intended to link the previous Western interventions in certain conflicts with the Ukrainian crisis and imply that NATO’s actions are a direct existential threat to Russia. He also refers to the military strategy of NATO in 2019 which has identified Russia as an adversary. By doing so, he portrays the alliance as a hostile actor whose role is containment rather than cooperation against Russia.

Regarding Ukraine, Putin continues his framing Ukraine’s aspirations for joining NATO as a direct military threat, particularly concerning Crimea. He states that, “Ukraine’s

---

<sup>48</sup> [en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67735](https://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67735)

doctrines declare Russia an adversary and state the possibility of regaining Crimea, even using military force". With such rhetoric, he intends to justify Russia's control over Crimea as a defensive necessity, and frame Ukraine's NATO aspirations as a trigger for war. He supports his argument by using rhetorical questions, "Imagine that Ukraine is a NATO country and starts these military operations. What are we supposed to do? Fight against the NATO bloc?" The statements are used to frame the conflict as a dispute between Russia and the West rather than a bilateral conflict with Ukraine.

Alongside, he also criticizes Ukraine's non-compliance with the Minsk Agreements, framing the Ukrainian leadership as the violator of the peace process. He points out to the Ukrainian leadership's refusal to directly negotiate with Donetsk and Lugansk Republics. From his perspective, Ukraine's domestic policies are discriminatory towards Russian speakers, and therefore, the Russian intervention was necessary. He basically draws the humanitarian justification narrative for the intervention. His statement regarding the granting asylum to Petro Poroshenko is a rhetorical attack on Ukraine's leadership and declaration of influence over Ukrainian politics.

Putin has maintained a dual messaging strategy at this conference. Although, he has expressed appreciation of Macron's diplomatic efforts, he has reduced the possibility of a peaceful resolution by such rhetoric, highlighting the uncompromising security demands of the Kremlin. Fundamentally, he has portrayed Ukraine as a Western puppet, NATO bloc as an aggressor, and Russia as a victim of hostilities which is forced into defensive action. This rhetoric sets the stage for imminent military intervention.

All in all, this conference is one of the final rhetorical escalations of Putin couple of days before the military intervention. His perspective suggests that the war is inevitable, and it is because of Western actions rather than a choice of Moscow. The Western betrayal of past agreements, NATO's actions, and Ukraine's attitude are all part of the strong securitization process, which has been going on for a long time.

**4.24. Putin, V. (2022, February 14). *Meeting with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.* President of Russia. <sup>49</sup>**

In his meeting with Sergei Lavrov, Putin continues the securitization of NATO. He declares that diplomatic negotiations are ineffective. Lavrov uses the similar rhetoric as President Putin, stating that Russian demands such as NATO's non-expansion, the withdrawal of military infrastructure to 1997 levels, and the non-deployment of strike weapons near Russian borders have been ignored by the West. Instead, the West has been trying to come closer by using Ukraine. Such events are portrayed as an unacceptable security risk. As Russian demands are rejected, the negotiations are futile effort.

Lavrov also highlights the Russia's suspicion of Western assurances. He states that, "they assure us that this will not happen any time soon. We are well aware of how those assurances work". Lavrov's intention is to support Putin's long-standing argument that NATO has broken its promises and Russia will no longer wait for further expansion. Thus, Russia needs to take countermeasures. Putin, while the conference, has asked that "Is this simply an attempt to drag us into an endless negotiating process with no logical conclusion?" when the conversation shifted to whether further diplomatic efforts were necessary. Lavrov's response was that Russian diplomatic efforts were not yet exhausted but should not be "endless". His intention was to subtly mention the inevitability of the military action.

The meeting's main outcome is that the diplomacy is failing because of NATO's dismissal of Russia's demands. Putin shows deep skepticism toward continuing further negotiations and blames the West to be unreliable as their assurances are doubtful. This rhetoric reinforces the argument that Russia is forced into taking military actions to protect its security interests.

Overall, the meeting marks the abandoning of diplomacy as it is failing. Instead, military measures are portrayed as the only choice left. Once again, NATO is portrayed as an untrustworthy aggressor while Russia as an actor forced into acting in self-defense. With

---

<sup>49</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67766

portraying the negotiations and diplomacy as reaching a dead end, the meeting serves as a public justification for shifting from diplomatic engagement to imminent military action.

**4.25. Putin, V. (2022, February 18). *News conference following Russian-Belarusian talks*. President of Russia.<sup>50</sup>**

Putin, at the conference with Belarusian President Lukashenko, once again reinforces the key narratives of Russia's foreign policy moves. He subtly securitizes NATO and its activities near Russian borders and frames Ukraine as an actor which breaches the agreements while stressing the strong cooperation with Belarus. The speech's purpose is to legitimize Russia's future actions while keeping a façade of diplomatic engagement.

One of the main matters during the speech is the securitization of NATO as an aggressor. As in the earlier speeches, Putin mentions Western activities near Russian and Belarusian borders have been increased and therefore, both countries "will continue taking the necessary collective measures to ensure the security of our two states in light of the growing military activity of the NATO states". This rhetoric provides a ground for framing NATO's actions as a direct threat to Russian and Belarusian national securities. From his perspective, the longstanding narrative of NATO's ignoring Russia's security demands is the main cause of tensions in Europe.

Another dominant theme in the speech is the securitization of Ukraine as a violator of signed agreements, namely the Minsk Agreements. He claims that Ukraine has refused to engage in direct negotiations with the representatives from Donetsk and Lugansk. He states that "Kiev is not complying with the Minsk Agreements and is strongly opposed to a direct dialogue". He shifts the blame onto the Ukrainian leadership for not showing enough effort to solve the conflict. Putin criticizes Ukraine for violating human rights against Russian speakers, by stating, "human rights are massively and systematically violated in Ukraine, and discrimination against the Russian-speaking population is being fixed at the legislative level".

---

<sup>50</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67809

This rhetoric serves to Putin's justification of protecting ethnic Russians and framing intervention as a necessary step.

Moreover, Putin also mentions the increased military cooperation with his everlasting friend, Belarus, in a response to Western actions. He talks about the ongoing joint military exercises with Belarusian armed forces and labeling them as "purely defensive and not threatening anyone". Alongside, he frames such exercises as a necessary responsive act to NATO's activities near the borders, highlighting the narrative that Russia and its beloved friend Belarus are under an existent threat. Putin also emphasizes the fact that Russia and Belarus have been integrated militarily as they share common air defense systems, joint regional military forces, and joint training centers. Such deep cooperation positions Belarus as an integral part of Russian strategic security narrative.

Vladimir Putin also discusses the Western sanctions applied to Russia, declaring them as acts of economic warfare, not diplomatic actions. From his perspective, such sanctions are "banditry" and intended to "impose an economic war on us". He further claims that such actions are designed to weaken Russia and Belarus. The rhetoric serves to the purpose of justifying Russian countermeasures, as well as strengthening deeper economic integration with Belarus and non-Western parties.

The crucial moment of the speech was the dismissal of claims that the Kremlin was preparing to invade Ukraine. Putin deliberately responds to the question regarding an imminent military activity by saying, "I just did not pay attention to it. There is a lot of fake news, and constantly reacting to it is not worth it". He intends to misdirect the audience and maintain the strategic ambiguity while the Russian armed forces were already positioned.

Overall, this is one of the last rhetorical stages of securitization of Ukraine before the military intervention. Putin has systemically constructed a couple of narratives that Russia is a victim of Western hostility, Ukraine is an aggressor who does not comply with the agreement's terms, and Belarus is an ally. Also, he keeps Russia's true intentions concealed by denying the claims of imminent escalation of tensions. Ultimately, this rhetoric is a justification of the dramatic events which would take place in a few days, well as a warning to the West and Ukraine.

**4.26. Putin, V. (2022, February 21). *Address by the President of the Russian Federation. President of Russia.*<sup>51</sup>**

The address to the nation by Vladimir Putin is the last but not least rhetorical step in justifying military action 3 days prior to the intervention. The speech revolves around three key themes: historical revisionism, the securitization of Ukraine, and the delegitimization of Ukrainian statehood. The historical narrative of Putin is that Ukrainian state was artificially created by the Soviet leaders, such as Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev and shifts the blame onto them. From his perspective, Ukraine has gained the independence due to political mistakes of the Soviet leaders, not as a result of natural historical development. He states, “Modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia or, to be more precise, by Bolshevik, Communist Russia”. The rhetoric is an attempt to delegitimize Ukraine and frame the situation that the Kremlin has the right to alter or reclaim its existence. He also threatens Ukraine for its hypocrisy regarding its Soviet past, stating, “You want decommunization? Very well, this suits us just fine. But why stop halfway? We are ready to show what real decommunization would mean for Ukraine”. From his words, Ukraine should be stripped of all Soviet-era territorial gains as well as regions that has been intervened by Russia.

Furthermore, Putin frames the existence of Ukraine as an existential threat to Russian national security because of its Western alliances. He criticizes the fact that Ukraine’s accession to NATO is inevitable, by arguing, “Ukraine’s accession to NATO and the subsequent deployment of NATO facilities has already been decided and is only a matter of time”. The securitization pattern is that Ukraine’s foreign policy is a direct danger to Russia, and therefore, military intervention is a defensive necessity. He also claims that Ukraine has been seeking developing nuclear weapons, by stating, “If Ukraine acquires weapons of mass destruction, the situation in the world and in Europe will drastically change, especially for us, for Russia. We cannot but react to this real danger”. By claiming that Ukraine is searching for nuclear weapons, he frames the risk of nuclear threat which makes the military actions seem like a necessary security measure rather than aggression.

---

<sup>51</sup> [www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828](http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828)

Alongside with the securitization of Ukraine, he further talks about the Ukrainian government, claiming them to be a corrupt puppet of the West rather than a sovereign and legitimate authority. His rhetoric suggests that Ukraine is entirely controlled by foreign actors. He states, “Do they realize that their country has turned not even into a political or economic protectorate but has been reduced to a colony with a puppet regime?” He further intensifies his claims by linking the Ukraine’s leadership to neo-Nazism. He declares, “Ukrainian nationalists and neo-Nazis escalated [the Maidan protests] to a coup d’état in 2014”. Basically, his intention is to portray the Ukrainian government as an illegitimate and extremist actor, so that he can justify the intervention as a means of restoring order rather than an invasion.

The culminating point of the speech is that Putin announces that Russia will officially recognize the independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics, which is the final step before the war. This decision is framed as a humanitarian necessity because Putin claims that Ukraine has been committing genocide in Donbass. He states, “Not a single day goes by without Donbass communities coming under shelling attacks... the killing of civilians, the blockade, the abuse of people, including children, women, and the elderly, continues unabated”. His rhetoric serves to the purpose of framing the protection of Russian-speaking population as a justification for taking the military action. As the Securitization theory suggests, a leader constructs an existential threat to justify extraordinary actions.

Overall, the address to the nation is the clearest and most explicit securitization step which followed by the full-scale invasion. It consists of historical revisionism, security threats, and humanitarian intervention narratives to justify the war. Putin clearly portrays the military actions necessary as Ukraine is an illegitimate state, NATO’s puppet, and a threat to the Russian security. This speech is the final stage of securitization of Ukraine, marking the direct transition from securitization to military action.

#### **4.27. Putin, V. (2022, February 21). *Security Council meeting*. President of Russia.<sup>52</sup>**

---

<sup>52</sup> [www.en.kremlin.ru/events/security-council/67825](http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/security-council/67825)

One of the main topics discussed at the Security Council meeting is the recognition of Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. Putin portrays the recognition as an unavoidable necessary act, which was a crucial step in the securitization process of Ukraine.

Once again, Putin uses the opportunity to frame Ukraine as an aggressor and a failed state to justify his actions. He frequently claims that Ukraine is the one who has escalated the tension in Donbass, by arguing that the government of Ukraine has systemically oppressed and showed violence to the population of Donbass. He declares, "the situation in Donbass has again acquired a critical and acute character. Today, I am addressing you to inform you about the developments and propose solutions". The rhetoric is intended to position Russia as a responsible actor, and therefore, it is necessary to intervene in case an existential threat demands an immediate action. Putin reinforces the "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) doctrine to justify his intervention, by framing it as a protection of Russian-speaking population.

Another dominant theme during the speech is the delegitimization of Ukraine's sovereignty. He once again repeats the claims of Ukraine's independence being artificial and the result of Western interference. His further claim is that Ukraine does not have a genuine statehood and states, "Ukraine never had stable traditions of real statehood. It was simply used by the West as a tool against Russia". From his perspective and rhetoric, Russia is attempting to correct a historical mistake and frame the Ukrainian government as a basic extension of Western geopolitical interests. He justifies the role of Russia as a decision-maker over Ukraine's fate by using such narratives of undermining Ukraine's legitimacy.

In addition, further securitization of NATO takes place at the speech, too. Putin claims that military cooperation between Ukraine and NATO is a direct threat to Russia. "NATO's military infrastructure is expanding towards our borders, and we see that Western intelligence services are working directly with Ukrainian forces," he states. His rhetoric suggests that he cannot afford to wait for Ukraine's further integration into NATO as its influence over Ukraine is already a security threat. Throughout the speech, the frequent mentioning of NATO's expansion as a threat is a part of the Russian narrative that the expansion is a direct cause for instability and hence the military intervention is a measure of self-defense.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, Putin frames the recognition of the DPR and LPR as a necessary action by emphasizing legal and humanitarian narratives. He criticizes Ukraine's violating agreements and ignoring diplomatic solutions, and therefore, justifies his actions. "They did not leave us any other choice. They forced us to take this step," he states, arguing that Ukrainian policies have been intended to weaken Russia. It is noteworthy to pay attention to this argument as it transfers the rhetorical securitization into a concrete action. His narrative of Ukraine and the West's actions that pushed Moscow to recognize those republics shifts the blame onto their side, and hence justifies the decision as a necessary step.

Overall, the speech at the Security Council meeting is a noteworthy step before the start of the war. Recognition of the DPR and LPR, narratives of historical revisionism, accusations of Ukrainian aggression, and the construction of NATO as an existential threat have been the main components of the picture drawn by Putin in which Russia is portrayed not an aggressor, but a defender of Russian-speaking people and Moscow's security interests.

**4.28. Putin, V. (2022, February 22). *Vladimir Putin answered media questions.* President of Russia.<sup>53</sup>**

Vladimir Putin at the press conference answered some questions coming from journalists. His speech has been revolving around the same themes as earlier, such as historical revisionism, securitization of Ukraine, framing of NATO, as well as his rhetorical strategy for justifying imminent military action.

A dominant theme at the speech is the Minsk Agreements. Putin calls the agreement as null and void, due to Ukraine's failure to comply with it. He mentions the Russian efforts made for the diplomacy, by stating, "it is not seven but almost eight full years that we have been working on this". He blames the Ukrainian government for refusing to comply with the agreements and hence making further negotiations meaningless. His statement makes everything clear; "The Minsk agreements were dead long before yesterday's recognition of these republics. They were killed not by us, but by the current Kiev authorities". The meaning

---

<sup>53</sup> en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67838

behind the statement is to eliminate the possibility of a peaceful resolution, strengthening the idea that military actions is the only option.

Putin also intensifies his Ukrainian narrative by arguing that the country is committing genocide against Russian-speaking people of Donbass. He states, “should we wait for this abuse of people to continue, this genocide of the almost four million people who live in these territories?” This rhetoric is to provide a humanitarian pretext for intervention. From his perspective, as Ukrainian actions are a deliberate campaign against civilians, Ukraine is the one to blame. By doing so, he pictures Russia as a protector of vulnerable populations.

Another dominant theme is Ukraine’s aspirations for joining the alliance. He argues, “We are categorically opposed to Ukraine joining NATO because this poses a threat to us”. He claims that in order to ensure peace, Ukraine must drop the idea to join NATO and adopt neutrality. His implication is that if Ukraine keeps aligning itself with the West, conflict is unavoidable. This rhetoric is a part of the picture in which NATO’s presence is drawn as an existential threat that drives Russia into taking extreme measures.

President Putin draws the attention to nuclear weapons, arguing that Ukraine is in search for them. He answers to the question of possibility of Ukraine’s being a nuclear power by saying, “They only lack one thing – uranium enrichment systems. But this is a matter of technology, it is not unsolvable for Ukraine”. He further claims that “the appearance of tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine is a strategic threat to us. Because the range can be extended from 110 kilometers to 300, to 500 – and that is it, Moscow will be in the strike zone”. His intention is to fabricate a nuclear threat to increase the perceived urgency of Russian action. The narrative reminds the similar case where the USA used the possibility of weapons of mass destruction to justify the invasion of Iraq.

Putin deliberately avoids answering questions regarding the scope of Russia’s military actions by stating, “It is absolutely impossible to predict the detailed path of possible actions. It depends on the concrete situation that is unfolding on the ground”. The ambiguity of the statement lets him maintain strategic flexibility while preparing the audience for potential escalation. He keeps reinforcing the idea that he is just responding to the situation, denying that Russia is an aggressor. He states, “why do you think that good must always be frail and

helpless? I do not think that is true. I think good means being able to defend oneself'. The military action is a necessary act of self-defense, not an invasion, as Putin frames.

The press conference is the last piece of the puzzle. His systemic strategy of delegitimizing diplomacy, claiming of genocide, framing NATO as a threat, and introducing a nuclear concern are intended to serve one purpose: to justify the military action. Throughout the whole process of securitization, negotiations, diplomacy, and all other alternative solutions have been eliminated, and hence, war is the only option left. This speech is an example of the classic securitization model in which a leader constructs the threat and make extraordinary measures justified, necessary and morally correct. Within hours, the whole securitization process produces its "fruit": the full-scale invasion happens.

### **Summary and Discussion: The Securitization of Ukraine in Vladimir Putin's Speeches**

Over the course of 28 speeches which have covered time interval since Zelensky's inauguration till 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, Vladimir Putin has securitized Ukraine. His speeches have gone through a systemic transformation. At the beginning, he was focusing on historical narratives, by arguing Ukraine's sovereignty and legitimacy. Over time, his narratives had been intensified as he started to mention security concerns frequently, such as NATO's expansion. As a result of escalation of tensions, he started to justify the necessity of military actions. His last speeches during February covered the last steps of the full securitization of Ukraine, framing it as an existential threat to Russia and claiming the war as the only option left.

The narrative that appeared in Putin's earlier speeches was his revisionist interpretation of the historical relations between Russia and Ukraine. During a couple of speeches, he has explicitly claimed that Ukraine is not a real state but an artificially created state by the Soviet leaders. His statement that says, "Modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia, more precisely, by Bolshevik, Communist Russia," is a clear example of this narrative. His another frequently mentioned narrative was the historical unity of Russian and Ukrainian people. He states, "Russians and Ukrainians are one people, a single whole". His intentions were to delegitimize Ukraine's sovereignty, by claiming it did not have any independent historical identity, as well as framing Ukraine's separation from Russia as an unnatural and reversible mistake. It was a necessary step to justify future Russian claims over Ukrainian territory.

As Ukraine's movement towards the West increased, Putin's rhetoric had evolved into securitization of NATO expansion. His frequent warnings about NATO and its eastward expansion had been crucial parts of the "puzzle". The statements, such as "The United States and NATO are irresponsibly expanding toward Russia's borders" and "Ukraine's accession to NATO and the subsequent deployment of NATO facilities has already been decided and is only a matter of time," had been intended to frame NATO's presence as an existential threat directed towards Russia's national security and frame Ukraine's NATO aspirations as a guaranteed reality which is also a security threat to Russia. By heightening the urgency of the situation, he had reinforced the necessity for military action over the years.

One of the turning points was that Putin started to portray Ukraine as an aggressor, not a historical error or a geopolitical pawn. His claims over Ukraine's oppressing Russian-speaking populations in Donbass marks such transition. In his one of the last speeches, he had explicitly accused of Ukraine for committing genocide: "Should we wait for this abuse of people to continue, this genocide of the almost four million people who live in these territories?" The word "genocide" here serves to the purpose of manufacturing a moral justification for Russian intervention.

Another crucial point was the introduction of the nuclear threat. Couple of days prior to the invasion, he had stated that Ukraine was in search of nuclear weapons. He stated, "Ever since Soviet times, Ukraine has had fairly broad nuclear competencies. They have everything they need". From his point of view, this was an immediate and strategic danger to Russian national security. He has warned Ukraine by stating, "The appearance of tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine is a strategic threat to us". Such narratives have been used in other conflicts around the world, especially by the USA prior to Iraq war in 2003. President Bush used the same narrative of weapons of mass destruction to justify the war, as Putin did.

Getting closer to the war, Putin's rhetoric eliminated the possibility of diplomatic alternatives. During the earlier speeches, he was frequently mentioning the diplomatic negotiations and the Minsk Agreement. However, in February, his rhetoric evolved into eliminating diplomatic alternatives. He stated, "The Minsk agreements were dead long before yesterday's recognition of these republics. They were killed not by us, but by the current Kiev

authorities”. This was a breathtaking moment throughout the securitization process as the diplomacy was declared as dead, hence the military intervention was the only option left.

By the final speeches, Putin had fully securitized Ukraine, describing a clear pattern that aligns with Securitization Theory. He:

1. Questioned Ukraine’s legitimacy (*“Ukraine never had stable traditions of real statehood.”*)
2. Framed Ukraine’s NATO aspirations as an existential threat (*“Ukraine’s NATO membership is a direct path to conflict.”*)
3. Presented Ukraine as an active aggressor (*“Ukraine continues military aggression against Donbass.”*)
4. Manufactured a humanitarian crisis (*“The people of Donbass are suffering genocide.”*)
5. Escalated to nuclear threats (*“Ukraine’s nuclear ambitions threaten Russia’s security.”*)
6. Eliminated diplomatic options (*“The West and Ukraine left us no choice but to act.”*)

These rhetorical steps mirror historical cases of war justification, particularly Russia’s 2008 war in Georgia, the 2014 annexation of Crimea, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In all cases, a security crisis was manufactured, alternative solutions were dismissed, and war was framed as a reluctant but necessary action.

Overall, his speeches were not just descriptive statements but performative speech acts that created the necessity for war. The Speech Act Theory suggests that words do not just reflect the world but shape it. Putin’s rhetoric clearly followed this pattern. Ukraine was labeled as a threat, an imminent crisis was constructed, and necessity of military actions were justified.

His discourse created an image in which the war was not just an option but necessity. Drawing such image did not just happen over a night but through gradual, calculated discursive processes that evolved over years. By the late February, the military action was no longer framed as a choice, but as an inevitable action to be taken.

## References:

- Austin, J. L. (1962). How to do things with words (pp. 94–107). Harvard University Press.
- Balzacq, T., Léonard, S., & Ruzicka, J. (2016). Securitization revisited: Theory and cases. *International Relations*, 30(4), 494–531. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117815596590>
- Baysal, B. (2020). 20 years of securitization: Strengths, limitations, and a new dual framework. *Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations*, 17(67), 3–20.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26928568>
- Booth, K. (2007). *Theory of world security*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bush, G. W. (2002, January 29). State of the Union Address. The American Presidency Project.
- Bush, G. W. (2002, October 2). Remarks by the President after meeting with House leadership on Iraq resolution. The White House Archives.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Dauber, C. (2001). Image as argument: The impact of Mogadishu on U.S. military intervention. *Armed Forces & Society*, 27(2), 205–229.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X0102700203>
- McDonald, M. (2008). Securitization and the construction of security. *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(4), 563–587. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066108097553>
- McGillivray, R. G. (2006). Casus belli: Fear, rhetoric and securitization of the war in Iraq.
- Möller, F. (2007). Photographic interventions in post-9/11 security policy. *Security Dialogue*, 38(2), 179–196. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26299651>
- Wæver, O. (1995). Securitization and desecuritization. In R. D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *On security* (pp. 46–87). Columbia University Press.
- Williams, M. C. (2003). Words, images, enemies: Securitization and international politics. *International Studies Quarterly*, 47(4), 511–531. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0020-8833.2003.00277.x>
- [en.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/646/events/67320](http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/646/events/67320)
- [en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62963](http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62963)

en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63755  
[en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64031](https://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64031)  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64074  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64392  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64396  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64671  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65973  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66418  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67100  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67123  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67438  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67487  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67690  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67735  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67766  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67809  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67838  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62917  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/63021  
en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/63527  
en.kremlin.ru/events/security-council/67825  
[en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62843](https://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62843)  
[en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62047](https://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62047)  
[en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62366](https://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62366)