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**Diplomatic Solutions through Cultural Keywords:
Peace-Linguistic Notes on Selected Speeches
at the General Debate of the 2022 Session of the UN General Assembly***

Abstract

(1) What are important keywords for important political powers (directly or indirectly) involved in the Ukraine conflict in September 2022? (2) Who shows himself aware enough of these keywords to serve as a mediator? Speeches given by Ukraine, Russia and the US at the 2022 general debate of the UN General Assembly are analyzed in quantitative and qualitative manners. We see intersections in the respect for the UN Charter, the UN in general, international law and in the objective of security, or security guarantees (including the end of wars and the reduction of weapons). President Zelensky rejects peace talks with Russia and neutrality at that moment, while he is open for diplomacy with other countries; an additional keyword for him is “territorial integrity”. Additional keywords for Minister Lavrov are a culturally open interpretation of universal values and the awareness of historical developments and traditional concepts. 11 other speeches are qualitatively analyzed for inclusion of “dialog/negotiation/diplomacy”, “security” and “multilaterality”. Based on this, qualifying as mediators (at that time) are Brazil’s then president Jair Bolsonaro, Nigeria’s president Muhammadu Buhari, China’s foreign minister Wang Yi, India’s foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, and UN’s Secretary-General António Guterres.

Sommaire

(1) Quels sont les mots-clés importants pour les pouvoirs politiques importants (directement ou indirectement) impliqués dans la crise ukrainienne en septembre 2022? (2) Qui se montre suffisamment conscient de ces mots-clés pour servir de médiateur? Les discours prononcés par l’Ukraine, la Russie et les États-Unis lors du débat général de l’Assemblée générale de l’ONU en 2022 sont analysés de manière quantitative et qualitative. Nous voyons des intersections dans le respect de la Charte de l’ONU, de l’ONU en général, du droit international et dans l’objectif de sécurité, ou de garanties de sécurité (y compris la fin des guerres et la réduction des armes). Le président Zelensky rejette la neutralité et les pourparlers de paix avec la Russie à ce moment-là, alors qu’il est ouvert à la diplomatie avec d’autres pays; un mot-clé supplémentaire pour lui est “intégrité territoriale”. Les mots-clés supplémentaires pour le ministre Lavrov sont l’interprétation culturellement ouverte des valeurs universelles et la conscience des développements historiques et des concepts traditionnels. 11 autres discours font l’objet d’une analyse qualitative pour “dialogue/négociation/diplomatie”, “sécurité” et “multilatéralité”. Sur cette base, se qualifient de médiateurs (à l’époque) le président brésilien Jair Bolsonaro, le président nigérian Muhammadu Buhari, le ministre chinois des affaires étrangères Wang Yi, le ministre indien des affaires étrangères Subrahmanyam Jaishankar et le secrétaire général de l’ONU António Guterres.

Zusammenfassung

(1) Was sind wichtige Schlüsselwörter für wichtige politische Mächte (direkt oder indirekt), die im September 2022 am Ukraine-Konflikt beteiligt sind? (2) Wer ist sich dieser Schlüsselwörter genug bewusst, um als Vermittler zu fungieren? Die Reden der Ukraine, Russlands und der USA bei der Generaldebatte der UN-Generalversammlung 2022 werden quantitativ und qualitativ analysiert. Wir sehen Überschneidungen in der Achtung der UN-Charta, der UN im Allgemeinen, des Völkerrechts und des Ziels der Sicherheit bzw. der Sicherheitsgarantien (inklusive Beendigung von Kriegen und Reduzierung von Waffen). Präsident Selenskyj lehnt Friedensgespräche mit Russland und Neutralität zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt ab, während er für Diplomatie mit anderen Ländern offen ist; ein weiteres Stichwort für ihn ist “territoriale Integrität”. Weitere Schlüsselwörter für Außenminister Lawrow sind eine kulturell offene Interpretation universeller Werte und das Bewusstsein für historische Entwicklungen und traditionelle Konzepte. 11 weitere Reden werden qualitativ auf die Stichworte “Dialog/Verhandlung/Diplomatie”, “Sicherheit” und “Multilateralität” untersucht. Als geeignete Vermittler erweisen sich (damals): der brasilianische Präsident Jair Bolsonaro, der nigerianische Präsident Muhammadu Buhari, der chinesische Außenminister Wang Yi, der indische Außenminister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar und UN-Generalsekretär António Guterres.

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1. Introduction and Research Questions

I agree with Andy Curtis (e.g. 2022) that “peace linguistics” needs more approaches that focus rather on “linguistics” than on “peace”. I myself have been dealing with language and peace for about two decades, starting with developing peace-promoting approaches of teaching and using English as a lingua franca (cf., e.g., Grzega 2005). I have especially investigated the relationship US-EU-Russia since 2014 when the first refugees who had fled the civil war in eastern Ukraine came to me to learn German. So far, I have published a book covering qualitative and quantitative, historical and present-day aspects of the connection between language and peace (Grzega 2019a), relevant book chapters on aspects of the topic (cf. Grzega 2012, 2013) and several relevant articles (cf., e.g. Grzega 2016, 2017, 2019b, 2021, 2022). From this work, I have drawn as one conclusion that an awareness of keywords (meaning single words or phrases) and their associations and an honest use of keywords is advisable, if not necessary, if you want to reach a broadly supported solution on hotly debated political issue. By *honest use of keywords* I mean that words and actions of a speaker match. Therefore, in this short article I would like to address the following questions:

- (1) What are (currently, in the UN General Assembly 2022) important keywords (either single words or word-combinations/phrases/collocates/constructions) for important political powers (directly or indirectly) involved in the Ukraine crisis?
- (2) Who shows himself aware enough of these keywords to serve as a mediator?

2. Background and Assumptions

First of all, talking—not only written communication—is important. Fenske (2014) sees the denial of face-to-face communication as a central failure in the Versailles Treaties. An investigation of peace-treaties in earlier centuries reveals that the discussion toward, and the wording of, sustainable peace treaties should include the following (cf. Moser 1749, Scharfe 2002, Espenhorst 2012, Tischer 2012, Grzega 2019a: 22-38):

- Use respectful and equal communication with all countries or groups involved (respecting a high degree of self-determination)—by “equal” I mean that all parties involved should be granted the same communicative rights with respect to the setting, quality/type and quantity of communicative actions as well as the quality and quantity of reactions to them (e.g. Do the parties use written and/or oral communication? Do parties stand up or remain seated when speaking? Should the parties use specific formula in their contributions?)
- Respect the correct address forms and the names that the partners have chosen themselves.
- Use no unintentional ambiguity, i.e. use the words that you can expect to be common ground (cf. Clark 1996), words that you can expect to be unequivocal—unless all sides consider ambiguous wording appropriate.
- Mention commonalities.
- Do not mention the motivations that led to the war and the single phases of the war, or at the most, mention “misunderstanding” as a cause (even though it is advisable to know the historical developments that led to the war for non-official discussions).
- Do not mention “(sole) guilt” or at least a high degree of “forgetting” (with a juridical institution that is acknowledged by all parties and that judges wisely to the satisfaction of the basic needs of all people) (the ignorance of this point is now seen as one of the core mistakes in the Versailles Treaties)

From more recent times, we can take Germany’s chancellor and 1971 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Willy Brandt as a rhetoric example of successful east-west detente: His work, co-organized by Egon

Bahr, immediately led to improvements for families who got torn apart after World War II and ultimately set the basis for the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989/1990. Brandt's rhetorical style features were (Grzega 2021):

- awareness of culture-specific symbolic words
- creation of new positive symbolic words
- addressee-specific word variation
- communication with the political rulers (and avoidance of their opponents).
- prompt implementation of words into action

Based on these findings, it seems worthwhile trying to find out if there are keywords that central political figures use frequently and, if yes, what meaning these culture-specific political keywords want to convey. An example: Brandt became aware that the leaders in the Soviet Union and other countries of the Warsaw Pact the word *normalization* occurred again and again. In addition, Brandt had to understand (at least in part) what the eastern political leaders meant by this term. In other words: I do not claim that determining frequent terms is enough. If someone, for example, one person uses *peace* a lot and another person *war*, this will not say that the first person is more peaceful and the other more belligerent; rather, you have to look at the context and to find out what type(s) of peace and war are referred by the words. There are many types of wars, of course, but peace, too, is far from being defined unanimously as clearly elaborated in Wolfgang Dietrich's Many Peaces series and magazine (cf. Dietrich 2018, URL16).

3. Methodology

In this article, we will refrain from going into the historical developments that led to the Ukraine conflict, except facts mentioned in quotes (at least what are considered facts, or truths, in these speakers' views). There is a lot of literature on various views (cf., e.g., Mearsheimer 2022, Toal 2017, Lo 2015, Stent 2015, and, as an outline of propaganda history, Diesen 2022). As for the events since February, time is too short to decide which descriptions are facts, and if they are facts who is responsible for them. Again, what we will focus on in this contribution are these questions:

- (1) What are (currently, in the UN General Assembly 2022) important key words and phrases for the important political powers (directly or indirectly) involved in the Ukraine conflict?
- (2) Based on these observations, who shows enough awareness to maybe serve as a good mediator?

Let us depart from the assumption that speeches held at the UN General Assembly are given particular international value by the speakers. Therefore, we can use these speeches as a corpus. However, since countries are unequal in population, military power and economic power, we may restrict ourselves to analyzing only a selection of speeches of the powers directly and indirectly involved in the Ukraine crisis. The directly, or immediately, involved powers in the Ukraine crisis are Ukraine and Russia. The US, the EU and other "western" countries are indirectly, or mediately, involved by sending military material and by applying economic sanctions. Some large countries do not support the military and economic activities of the western Ukraine supporters. We will deal with (the English translation of) the following speeches.

country	comment	representative	speech no. (day+no.)	original language	English version by
--- [UN]	--	Secretary-General António Guterres (Mr.)	#1.01	English (URL01)	n.a.
Brazil	Latin America's largest population	President Jair Bolsonaro (Mr.)	#1.03	English (URL02)	n.a.
France	EU's 2nd-largest population	President Emmanuel Macron (Mr.)	#1.17	French	French gov't (URL03)
Poland	Ukraine's largest EU neighbor	President Andrzej Duda (Mr.)	#1.27	Polish	UN (URL04)
Germany	EU's largest population	Chancellor Olaf Scholz (Mr.)	#1.33	English (URL05)	n.a.
Nigeria	Africa's largest population	President Muhammadu Buhari (Mr.)	#2.01	English (URL06)	n.a.
US	largest NATO country	President Joseph Biden (Mr.)	#2.07	English (URL07)	n.a.
Ukraine	direct combatant	President Volodymyr Zelensky (Mr.)	#2.26 (online)	English (URL08)	n.a.
UK	largest population as a NATO but not EU country	Prime Minister Liz Truss (Ms.)	#2.37	English (URL09)	n.a.
Austria	largest population as a EU but not NATO country	Minister Alexander Schallenberg (Mr.)	#3.31	English (URL10)	n.a.
China	East Asia's largest population	Minister Wang Yi (Mr.)	#5.10	Chinese	Chinese gov't (URL11)
Russia	direct combatant	Minister Sergey Lavrov (Mr.)	#5.15	Russian	Russian gov't (URL12)
India	South Asia's largest population	Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar (Mr.)	#5.17	English (URL13)	n.a.
Sweden	largest population as a EU state and NATO candidate	Minister Ann Christin Linde (Ms.)	#5.18	English (URL14)	n.a.

Fig. 1: List of Selected UN Speeches

Since we deal partly not with the original text, but only with translations into English, current methods of keyword analysis such as a log-likelihood ratio test (cf. Stewanowitsch 2020) cannot be applied. This is not a big issue, though, since we are interested in politico-culturally important keywords. Therefore, we will proceed as follows:

1. We will put the texts of the speeches into the concordance program AntConc and proceed a quantitative analysis of the Ukrainian, Russian and US-American representatives.
 - 1a. We will see what the most frequent nouns, adjectives and verbs with political or cultural meaning are. Not every frequent noun/adjective/verb is politics-laden or culture-laden, but it does not have to be a newly coined lexeme, but any common-language lexeme that can become politically or culturally laden; therefore, each frequent noun/adjective/verb should get a little more attention.
 - 1b. For each frequent word, we will search for relatively frequent or otherwise interesting collocates (we can also call them *key collocates* or *key phrases*—both single words and phrases could be subsumed, in the sense of construction grammar, under the label *key constructions*).
2. We will proceed a qualitative analysis of all speeches selected and carry out the following searched:
 - 2a. We will check the words for “unilateral”, “bilateral”, “multilateral”, “monopolar, unipolar”, “multipolar”, “dialogue, diplomacy, negotiation, talks”.
 - 2b. We will look for other keywords that may speak in favor or against a certain speaker as mediator.

These findings may then help diplomats or mediators to find a rhetoric style that will enable the directly and indirectly involved political powers to find a rapid way of ending the use of weapons and thus a way of saving lives.

4. Analysis

The analysis will first present quantitative remarks on the speeches by the representatives from Ukraine, Russia, and the US. This will be followed by qualitative remarks on the same speeches and finally by qualitative looks at eleven other speeches.

4.1. Quantitative Remarks: Frequent Politically Laden Nouns, Verbs and Adjectives

4.1.1. Ukraine

President Zelensky’s English speech (roughly 3,000 words) is monothematic. It is all about the war in Ukraine.

The noun *Ukraine* and the adjective *Ukrainian* amount to 26 hits. The noun *world* and the semantically corresponding adjective *global* together occur 22 times. The word *UN* occurs in 12 instances, of which 6 in the collocate *UN Charter* (the full variant *United Nations* occurs 3 times). The word *state* occurs 12 times, 5 times referring to Ukraine.

The second most frequent noun is *Russia*, which occurs 26 times; together with the adjective *Russian*, which occurs 17 times, this is the most central item. Most collocates are negative evaluations (e.g. *Russia wants war*); descriptions of referring speech acts are rare, but often also negative. The word *aggression* (14 hits) occurs most often in the collocate *armed aggression* (4 hits) and the agent noun *aggressor* is used an additional 6 times; the semantically close *crime* is used 10 times, among which 5 times in the collocate *crime against*.

Zelensky also uses collocates that express the wish of negative treatment of Russia (“punish Russia”, “Russia should pay”, “recognize Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism” and also in synonyms as “aggressor state” and “terrorist state”). The wish for negative treatment is also

reflected in the frequent use of *punishment* (15 hits) and the verb *punish* (4 times); among which 8 cases occur in combination with the postponed preposition *for* (6 instances).

Another frequent noun is *life* (10 hits), mostly in the politically laden combination with *protect(ion)* (7 hits). Other concrete ones are *integrity*, always preceded by *territorial* (7 occurrences). The most frequent noun of political implication, though, is *peace*. It occurs 33 times. 13 of these hits occur in the collocate [*Ukrainian/our*] *peace formula* (and 1 time *formula for peace*). The word *formula* occurs 19 times. It is worth noting that Zelensky claims that the “world wants peace. And we have seen who is the only one who wants war”, meaning Russia (and ignoring the many other wars going on in the world, including the civil war in his own country since 2014). Once Zelensky uses “true, honest and fair peace”, which points out that *peace* may well be understood diversely. Also of importance is the noun *security* (19 times). Both *peace* and *security* are found combined with *restore* and *guarantee*; the compound *security guarantees* occurs 4 times.

The word *weapons* (7 hits) occurs either in instances where they are blamed as Russia’s means (3 hits) or as a desired support for Ukraine from other countries (4 hits).

The verb *want* occurs 14 times, 6 times in connection what Zelensky claims to know about Russia’s intention.

4.1.2. Russia

Foreign Minister Lavrov’s speech is not exclusively monothematic, but about a fifth is dedicated to the topic “Ukraine”, i.e. not just the things going on directly in Ukraine, but predominantly the larger geopolitical frame. In the official English translation of his speech (roughly 3,300 words) *Russia* and *Russian* occur 19 times altogether. The forms *United Nations* and *UN* occur in 23 instances, with 6 times in the combination *UN Charter*. The words *world* and *global* appear 13 times altogether.

The forms *United States*, *US* and *American* (in the sense of ‘US’) occur 18 times and thus almost twice as often as *Ukraine* and *Ukrainian* (10 times); the proportions are similar if we include *Washington* (10 times) and *Kiev* (6 times) as pars pro toto, with the resulting ratio being 28:16. *NATO* occurs 11 times. The forms (*the*) *west* and *western* occur 17 times. Quite a number of times, the references to the US are (1) negatively formulated descriptions given by Lavrov (e.g. “blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba for more than 60 years”, “forceful intervention”, “elevated itself”), (2) self-descriptions by the US (e.g. “American exceptionalism”), (3) negatively formulated activities and quotes by the west in general (e.g. “the crusade declared by the west against unwanted regimes”), and (4) negatively formulated evaluations of the west (e.g. “western arrogance”); similarly negative are references to NATO activities (“expand NATO to the east”) and the description/evaluation-mixed comments on NATO (“NATO’s aggression”, “NATO’s devastating legacy in Afghanistan”). Interestingly, as far as criticism against the Ukrainian political powers is concerned, this is never done with the words *Ukraine* or *Ukrainian*, but only with the word *Kiev* (“Kiev regime”, “Kiev neo-Nazis”, “Kiev’s policy to impose a total ban on the Russian language”). The EU, if mentioned separately from the US, is also connected with several negative facts (“has not responded”) or judgements (“irresponsible and unprofessional actions”). Apart from political entities, the most frequent noun used is *people* (15 hits). In 5 instances this relates to the people living in eastern Ukraine.

The word *war* occurs 8 times, the word *peace* only once in the name *Dayton Peace Agreement*. Lavrov uses the collocate *World War II* 1 time, *Cold War* 3 times and uses the collocate *war against*

3 times (“economic war against Russia”, “war against Donbass”, “[Kiev’s] war against its own people”). The forms *military* and *militarily* occur 8 times (mostly as an adjective), twice in the context of bringing military infrastructure closer to Russia.

Another frequent word is *efforts*. It occurs 9 times, 8 times in the positively viewed collocate *our efforts*, which can be considered a policy-laden collocate.

Finally, a note on the verb *want*. It had occurred 14 times in Zelensky’s speech, with 6 times introducing the assumed intentions of Russia. In Lavrov’s speech, the verb occurs 4 times—none of them introducing the assumed intentions of Ukraine, but all four presenting the alleged intentions of the US or the west.

Already at this point, it can be seen that Lavrov’s takes a historically and (geo-)politically wider view than Zelensky. Lavrov puts the contrast between the US-led west and Russia to the foreground. It therefore seems advisable to have a closer look at US President Biden’s speech.

4.1.3. The US

President Biden’s speech (roughly 3,800 words) covers several topics, about a fifth of his speech being on the Ukraine war. The most prominent items are *world* and *global* (53 times altogether), mostly in the collocate *the world* (29 instances). The forms *United States* and *US* occur 35 times (with one instance of *US* accidentally used to refer to the UN). The forms *United Nations* and *UN* occur 20 times altogether, of which 12 times the collocate *UN Charter*. Other uses of *nation(s)* encompass 23 occurrences; the word *countries* is used 15 times. *Ukraine* and *Ukrainian* occur 14 times (twice in the collocation “Ukraine’s right to exist”).

The name *Russia* occurs 19 times (the adjectival form is not used). Mostly, it occurs in descriptions of negatively viewed facts (three times “Russia’s war”, but also e.g. “calling up more soldiers to join the fight”) or negative judgements (e.g. “sought conflict”) or a mixture of both (e.g. twice “atrocities and war crimes”).

The words *people*, *rights*, *climate* and *food* occur 13 times each. Among these are 6 occurrences of *food insecurity* and 2 of its antonym, *food security*. Once, *food insecurity* is connected to *Russia*. In general, *security* occurs 12 times, among which 3 hits of *Security Council* and 2 hits of *peace and security*. The word *war* also occurs 13 times, 3 times in the combination *Russia’s war*. One noteworthy remark is: “The United States wants this war to end on just terms”. What he means by *just*, though, is not explained.

The words *help* and *support* occur 13 times as nouns or full verbs (twice with respect to Ukraine). The items *peace* and *human* occur 8 times, with 5 instances of *human rights* and 2 instances of *peace and security*. The word *partners* is used in 8 cases, too, twice in the combination *our allies and partners*. The word *diplomacy* is used 6 times, although in connection with the Ukraine issue.

Furthermore, the lexeme *nuclear* is employed 8 times, 7 times in the sense of condemning its use as a weapon and 1 time positively referring to its use for energy. The lexemes *new*, *crisis* and *energy* are used 7 times each (with 1 hit of *energy* occurring in a proper name).

Mention should also be made that the noun *year* occurs 8 times (if *a year* ‘per year’ is not included), mostly with referring to the past year or this year. Though *history* is used 6 times, there is never a concrete reference to past events. The verb *want* does not occur in the third person.

4.2. Qualitative Remarks: Key Objectives

4.2.1. Ukraine

The Ukrainian president bases Ukraine's actions as self-defense on Art. 51 of the UN Charter (URL15):

“Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.”

In this respect, Zelensky also appeals to international law, as do Lavrov and Biden.

Zelensky says that

“Ukraine wants peace. Europe wants peace. The world wants peace. And we have seen who is the only one who wants war.”

But we have already said that *peace* knows many definitions. It is therefore helpful that Zelensky offers a peace formula that he succinctly summarizes as follows: “punishment for aggression; protection of life; restoration of security and territorial integrity; security guarantees; and determination to defend oneself”. And he underlines: “I rule out that the settlement can happen on a different basis than the Ukrainian peace formula.”

As to punishment, Zelensky mentions several strategies:

“sanctions [...]. Blocking the trade and relations with the aggressor [...]. So long as the aggressor is a party to decision-making in the international organizations, he must be isolated from them – at least until aggression lasts. Reject the right to vote. Deprive delegation rights. Remove the right of veto – if it is a Member of the UN Security Council. [...] Russia should pay for this war with its assets.”

Again, it does not become entirely clear what territory is referred to by “territorial integrity” (with or without Crimea). Due to war atrocities that he quotes, he explicitly rejects “neutrality”:

“What is not in our formula? Neutrality. Those who speak of neutrality, when human values and peace are under attack, mean something else. They talk about indifference – everyone for themselves. [...] All you need is determination.”

He also rejects “talks”, or “negotiations” as they would not be “real negotiations” anyhow, which indicates that the notion of “negotiation”, too, may have diverse definitions, too:

“Russia is afraid of real negotiations [...]. As for the talks between Ukraine and Russia. Probably you have happened to hear different words from Russia about the talks – as if they were ready for them. But. They talk about the talks but announce military mobilization. They talk about the talks but announce pseudo referendums in the occupied territories.”

Ultimately, to reach this type of peace, Zelensky says further military actions as a strategy:

“We can return the Ukrainian flag to our entire territory. We can do it with the force of arms. [...] For us, this is a war for life. That is why we need defense support – weapons, military equipment and shells. Offensive weapons, a long-range one is enough to liberate our land, and defensive systems, above all, air defense.”

4.2.2. Russia

Lavrov also reminds of the value of international law and justifies Russia’s actions with Art. 51 of the UN Charter:

“This operation is being carried out in execution of the treaties of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance reached between Russia and these republics [Donetsk and Luhansk, which Russia had recognized before] under Article 51 of the UN Charter.”

Lavrov clearly argues for the end of anti-Russian actions in Ukraine (and the newly recognized republics) as a goal, describing what he, or Russia, sees as a cause for the war:

“putschists started bombing eastern Ukraine where people refused to accept the government coup. [...] those behind the coup elevated Nazi accomplices involved in atrocious ethnic cleansings against Russians, Poles, and Jews during World War II to the rank of national heroes. [...] Kiev’s policy to impose a total ban on the Russian language, education, the Russian media and culture, its insistence that Russians be expelled from Crimea, and when it declared war against Donbass? The authorities in Kiev back then, as well as the current leadership, have designated these people as creatures, not people – this is what we hear from the country’s most senior official. [...] the hostilities unleashed by Kiev neo-Nazis in eastern Ukraine”.

In this respect, Lavrov reminds that the original agreed plan was that

“the Minsk Package of Measures be implemented, as approved unanimously by the UN Security Council in February 2015, but then buried by Kiev with the direct involvement of the United States and the European Union?”

Here it becomes clear that Russia does not see the war as one between Russia and Ukraine, but as one between Russia and the US plus its western allies. Therefore, Lavrov also raises security issues: “no one can seek to reinforce one’s security at the expense of the security of others.”

In this respect, Russia’s disapproval of biological weapons close to its borders becomes obvious:

“There are fierce attempts to undermine efforts to set up a mechanism as part of the Biological Weapons Convention to ensure the transparency of hundreds of military biological programmes the Pentagon has around the world, including along Russian borders and across Eurasia. Irrefutable evidence discovered on Ukrainian territory demonstrates that these programmes are far from innocuous.”

Further, Lavrov emphasizes Russia’s dislike of the growing privatization of multilateral institutions:

“that multilateral institutions are declining at an everincreasing pace. The United States and its allies use these institutions as tools for achieving their selfish interests. This is the approach they have been sticking to in the United Nations, its Human Rights Council, UNESCO, and other multilateral associations. The OPCW has been de facto privatised. [...] We are witnessing an assertive push to privatise the UN Secretariat and imbue its work with a neo-liberal discourse, which ignores the cultural and civilisational diversity in today’s world.”

Moreover, this shows his objective that it is accepted that core ideas such as “democracy” are organized in culturally vitally different ways:

“By aggressively imposing their vision of democracy on all countries as a social model, our Western colleagues categorically refuse to follow the norms of democracy in international affairs. The situation with

Ukraine is the most recent example. Russia has gone to great lengths to justify its position and has been doing this for several years now. But the West announced that it disagreed. One would think that it would be up to the other members of the international community to decide on their position: to support one side, or the other, or remain neutral. Is this not the way this is done in democracies when politicians competing against one another make their case and try to win popular support? However, the United States and its allies are denying others the freedom of choice. They are threatening and twisting the arms of anyone who dares to think independently. They use threats to force others to join in sanctioning Russia. They have not been very good at it, but it is obvious that actions of this kind by the United States and its satellites are a far cry from democracy. In fact, it amounts to dictatorship, pure and simple, or at least an attempt to impose it.”

Finally, Lavrov criticizes the US Monroe Doctrine:

“Clearly, the notorious Monroe Doctrine is becoming global in scope. Washington is trying to turn the entire globe into its own backyard while it uses illegal unilateral sanctions as a tool for coercing those who disagree. For many years now, these unilateral sanctions have been imposed in violation of the UN Charter and used as a tool for political blackmail. [...]. The blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba for more than 60 years now is one such egregious example.”

4.2.3. The US

It seems that, unlike Lavrov, Biden does not appear to conceive the US as directly involved in this war, but he explicitly mentions three aspects that he pursues to end the war in a brief manner: “to impose costs on Russia, to deter attacks against NATO territory, to hold Russia accountable for the atrocities and war crimes”. He regards himself as a core representative of the democracy, which he sees in contest with autocracy. He also mentions international law as an important element.

4.3. Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Observations

The speeches analyzed here do not seem to reveal the kind of concrete culture-specific keywords that Brandt saw. Nevertheless, we can observe a few things. All three criticize or blame the other side for the conflicts. On the other hand, both Ukraine and Russia mention and value Art. 51 of the UN Charter. Both also value the UN in general. So does the US. This may be a good basis for finding a common solution. In addition, all three calls for the attachment to international law. What we also can determine as commonalities between Ukraine and Russia (and the US) is the objective of security, or security guarantees. This naturally includes the end of military or economic war aggressions in both directions. It also encompasses the reduction of weapons on both sides; Lavrov particularly condemns biological weapons, while Biden criticizes the use of nuclear weapons.

Notwithstanding disappointments of prior negotiations, Lavrov votes for going back to the roots of UN diplomacy; Biden, too, declares himself open for diplomacy, although he speaks only of “our [i.e. US] diplomacy to strive for peaceful resolution of conflicts”. For Zelensky, also expressing disappointment of past talks, negotiations with Russia are not an option at the time of the speech, but he is open for diplomatic cooperations with other countries. This may be a valuable basis to find a mediator among these countries.

For Zelensky, territorial integrity is important, leaving open which territory he refers to at the time of the speech. Zelensky, more than the other two, seems to value the continuation of military actions against the opponent (emphasizing the determination to defending oneself). Moreover, Zelensky (together with Biden) attaches great importance to punishment of Russia for war crimes.

In contrast, for Lavrov, the acceptance of cultural diversity or culturally diverse interpretations of universal basic concepts (such as “democracy”) are vital. Also noteworthy is Lavrov’s focus on

historical events (e.g. World War, Cold War) and on traditional concepts of the other side (e.g. Monroe Doctrine, sanctions on Cuba), which are presented as bad experiences with the west.

4.4. A Comparison with Other Speakers/Speeches

In this section, we will try to see whether there are personalities that may serve as mediator in the Ukraine conflict due to their communicative skills. The Ukraine conflict occurs in all speeches analyzed, but to a highly varying degree. Apart from the Ukrainian speech itself, only the Polish contribution is monothematically dedicated to this topic. The Austrian foreign minister reserves 80 percent of his text to the topic. The German chancellor dedicates about 40 percent of his speech to the Ukraine war. All other representatives dwell on this issue considerably less. China's and Nigeria's representatives spend least time on this topic, with less than 5 percent of the speech. India's representative and the UN Secretary-General reserve less than 10 percent of the speech to the war in Ukraine, the Brazilian contribution about 15 percent, France's and Sweden's speeches about 20 percent each, and the UK's contribution about 25 percent. I do not claim that these numbers should be interpreted as the degrees of empathy for Ukrainian people. What I think may be interpreted is that a lower percentage shows a more emotional distance and a more balanced awareness as to the challenges for world community in general—other military conflicts, socioeconomic plights as well as the climate crisis. Such personalities, especially if they do not speculate about the intentions of other UN members, seem more qualified as mediators.

Although Zelensky does not consider diplomacy with Russia as an option at the time of the speech, he seeks for diplomatic cooperation with other countries, which may ultimately open a door for negotiations with Russia. To solve the conflict, “diplomacy” is suggested by the representatives of India (quite strongly), China (with a focus on multilaterality), Brazil (explicitly rejecting diplomatic isolation and unilaterality), the UK, Austria, and the UN Secretary-General. As a matter of fact, Secretary-General Guterres considers the ship *Brave Commander*, which, under the UN flag, sailed grain through the war zone, “multilateral diplomacy in action”. Similarly, “dialog” is proposed by Brazil (“all channels of dialog”), China, India, France, Poland, Austria and the UN Secretary-General. As already mentioned, the US president also had mentioned “dialog” as a strategy, but not in connection with Russia. The Russian foreign minister, in contrast, did propose “dialog” in general. In the Ukrainian president's speech the term is missing. The Ukrainian president mentions the notion of “negotiation” when interpreting what Russia does not want. Negotiation as a strategy with Russia in connection with the Ukraine conflict is rejected by the US and German heads of government (the latter claiming that Ukrainians don't want this). Poland considers negotiations possible only after withdrawal of the Russian military. France's prime minister suggests it only if the Ukrainians themselves want it. In contrast, Brazil and China propose negotiating unconditionally; India's representative also speaks in favor of negotiating as a strategy, although not explicitly with respect to the Ukraine conflict (which, however, covers only a small part of the speech any how). Nigeria does not express itself clearly in this respect.

The strategy of “sanctions” is considered legal and/or legitimate by Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Austria and the US and illegal and/or illegitimate by Russia, Brazil, China (explicitly calling for the end of the sanctions on Cuba) and India.

All speakers use the term “security” in one way or another as a keyword. It has turned out a general issue in geopolitics (cf., e.g., MacDonald/Hunter 2019). The reform of the Security Council in the sense that it includes more countries, particularly non-western, countries is promoted by Brasil, France, Germany, Nigeria, the US, Russia and India. The term “values” is used by all except Russia, India and Sweden.

“Democracy” is considered important by several countries—the UK, Nigeria, India, China, Austria, Sweden as well as Russia and the US (the UN Secretary-General only mentions it in connection with artificial intelligence). However, it becomes clear that the definitions, or concepts, of democracy vary. Russia’s foreign minister makes clear, as already said, that he sees the US and the west not as democracies, while western representatives see it explicitly the other way around. China’s foreign minister emphasizes that the term “democracy” (as well as “human rights”) should not be used as a weapon to reach a political goal.

Some country representatives underscore, at various points of the speech, (reformed) multilaterality: not only Ukraine, US (explicitly rejecting Russian unilaterality), Russia (rejecting US unilaterality), but also Brazil (explicitly rejecting unilaterality), Nigeria (explicitly rejecting unilaterality), Austria (explicitly rejecting unilaterality), China, India, Germany, Sweden, and the UN Secretary-General. Russia also says that unipolarity is vanishing and that multipolarity is and should be coming to the fore; the growing importance of multipolarity is also stated and/or desired by China, India and Germany.

“Neutrality” is not mentioned by most speakers. Ukraine’s president calls for non-neutrality with respect to the Ukraine war, so does France’s prime minister. Russia’s foreign minister says that “neutrality” should be an accepted position of a country in a democratic system.

A note on the idea of empathy: Other countries seen as allies are, if mentioned, mostly referred to as “partners” or, a little less frequently, as “allies”. The term “friends” is used not only by Ukraine, but also by Germany, the UK, and Russia. “Brothers” is used once by Brazil (with respect to Venezuela) and India (with respect to developing countries). Also of note, the representatives of France and Germany are the only ones admitting own mistakes in the past (though underlining that these mistakes do not justify Russia’s invasion). President Putin is personally mentioned as the driving force behind the conflict by the US, Germany and the UK, all three of them also using the name without the title “president”.

In sum, we can see the following: Viewing the clear positionings and adoption of Ukrainian wording expressed in the speeches by the representatives of the UK, France, Poland, Germany, Sweden, Austria, these speakers do not seem to qualify themselves as mediators. Therefore, the representatives of Nigeria, Brazil, China and India as well as the UN Secretary-General seem more adequate mediators.

5. Conclusions

The Ukraine conflict is an on-going conflict, and thus things can change rapidly. However, if we take into account speeches at the general debate of the 77th meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, we can already sort out important notions for the conflict parties Ukraine, Russia and, to a certain degree, the US. Luckily (with view for peace), we see intersections in the respect for the UN Charter, the UN in general, and international law and in the objective of security, or security guarantees (encompassing the termination of military or economic war aggressions and the reduction of weapons). As to weapons, Lavrov particularly condemns the biological type, while Biden criticizes the use of nuclear weapons. Although Zelensky rejects peace talks with Russia and neutrality at that moment, he is open for diplomacy with other countries, which may be a chance for mediating. An additional keyword, or key phrase, for Zelensky is “territorial integrity” and for Lavrov a culturally open interpretation of universal values and the awareness of historical developments and traditional concepts.

These observations as well as other recommendations for diplomatic actions (cf. Kurbalija/Slavik 2001; Friedrich 2015; Kadrić/Rennert/Schäffner 2022) should be kept in mind by a potential mediator. As said, several people qualified themselves as mediators in the conflict, because they focused on “dialog/negotiation/diplomacy”, “security” and “multilaterality”. To wit: Brazil’s then president Jair Bolsonaro, Nigeria’s president Muhammadu Buhari, China’s foreign minister Wang Yi, India’s foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar as well as UN’s Secretary-General António Guterres. Guterres even had the courage to highlight a positive moment in the war, namely the UN ship *Brave Commander* who carried grain out of the war zone. Let me end with some phrases of his speech:

“this ship is a symbol of what the world can accomplish when we act together. [...]. It navigated through a war zone—guided by the very parties to the conflict—as part of an unprecedented comprehensive initiative to get more food and fertilizer out of Ukraine and Russia. [...]. Ukraine and the Russian Federation—with the support of Türkiye—came together to make it happen—despite the enormous complexities, the naysayers, and even the hell of war. Some might call it a miracle on the sea. In truth, it is multilateral diplomacy in action.”

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