



## **D6.3 – Contestation over Truth Regimes: Russia, China and the US digital diplomacy on the Russian invasion of Ukraine**

**RECLAIM Work Package 6:** (Lead: Institute of International Relations Prague)

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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Abstract.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Resurgent states and the (de)stabilization of regimes of truth by digital means.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Research Design .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. Truth Regime Contestation: The Empirical Analysis.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5.1 Russia: The War in Ukraine as a War Against the West .....</b>	<b>7</b>
5.1.1. The data .....	7
5.1.2 Russian diplomatic missions on X during the war .....	8
5.1.3 Identity affirmation .....	10
5.1.4 Truth construction .....	11
5.1.5 Truth contestation .....	12
5.1.6 Comparison with official documents .....	13
<b>5.2. China: neutral, yet not neutral.....</b>	<b>14</b>
5.2.1 The data .....	14
5.2.2 Identity affirmation .....	15
5.2.3 Truth construction .....	16
5.2.4 Truth contestation .....	17
5.2.5 Comparison with official documents .....	18
<b>5.3 The United States: A revisionist war to be contained.....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.3.1 The data .....	19
5.3.2 Identity Affirmation .....	21
5.3.3 Truth construction .....	21
5.3.4 Truth contestation .....	22
5.3.5 Intertextual comparison with other documents .....	23
5.3.6 Comparison with political discourses .....	24
<b>6. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>7. Bibliography .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>8. Appendix: Tweets quoted in the report .....</b>	<b>30</b>

## 1. Abstract

The paper explores digital diplomacy campaigns conducted by three foreign powers (China, Russia, and in comparison, The United States) in selected EU member states. It sheds light on how the first two try to achieve a specific external impact – severing foreign populations’ links to the regimes of truth that constitute their states’ economies of power, including through strategic disinformation and propaganda efforts. In so doing, these campaigns aim to increase ontological and epistemological insecurity, creating a crisis of belonging, and knowledge production and transfer. They may reach this goal by spreading positive narratives about themselves (identity affirmation), by disseminating a particular worldview (truth construction); but also by challenging the existing regimes of truth (truth contestation). Subsequently, we compare their strategies with that of the United States. Empirically, the paper focuses on a particular ‘controversy’ – Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and its treatment in the tweets produced by diplomatic missions in the EU of the three foreign powers. Methodologically, the study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, relying in particular on computer-enhanced critical discourse analysis

## 2. Introduction

With the continuing digitalization of current global politics, states increasingly employ new technologies in their foreign policies. Great powers in particular conduct strategic campaigns that use digital means not only to influence political decision-making, but also to address societies of target countries. While digital diplomacy may be used to achieve ordinary goals of cultural and public diplomacy, it is also deployed to spread malign disinformation. As a result, the new channels of communication and new technologies result in the contestation over digital sovereignty with communication and security assemblages of the involved countries clashing over political narratives, with each side trying to destabilize and restabilize the dominant “regimes of truth” in the country in question.

Embassies play a novel role in the era of digital diplomacy. On one hand, due to new means of instant communication unchanneled through them, they have lost many of their traditional roles and much of their autonomy. On the other hand, they continue to serve a key role of communicating with the host countries and their societies, adapting the general message to local conditions. The ways in which these messages are conveyed and their contents adapted are essential for achieving their goals, be they related to the destabilization of the host society, norm contestation, the polarization of public debates or other malign activities. They may try to reach these goals employing various political warfare strategies: seeking dissemination and internalisation of a particular self-image (identity construction); presenting narratives about local, regional, and global politics (truth construction), but also strategically replacing the existing regimes of truth with alternative worldviews (truth contestation); and even as by-products of strategies originally devised for internal stabilisation and disciplination – that is, as means of ‘foreign policy’ not in the conventional sense but rather as a boundary producing discipline that takes the internal domestic order as its object (Campbell 1998).

The interest in how foreign policy of great powers is conducted in the digital era can have multiple focal points. For example, it can shed light on how digital means are materially and socially produced based on domestic variables or on how these means shape domestic variables of liberal democracies from the outside. Drawing on the conceptual toolbox of the RECLAIM WP6 and the parallel theoretical groundwork in the first track of this work package, research conducted here will be more empirical. It will focus not on (hybrid) security assemblages managing the anxiety and seeking to reconstitute the interiorisation function of the state which makes it governable, but rather the assemblages strategically oriented toward external impact – typically attempting to sever foreign populations’ links to the regimes of truth that constitute their states’ economies of power. In so doing, these campaigns produce target ontological and epistemological insecurity, the crisis of both belonging (identity) and knowledge.

In our analysis, we focus on the strategic campaigns organized digitally by Russia and China while information activities by another great power, the United States, will be also explored – as a contrast case enabling a detailed conceptual exploration of the line separating malign disinformation and cultural / public diplomacy strategies in the current information environment. We will explore the X (formerly Twitter) messaging of their embassies in selected EU member states, analysing the ways in which they present information about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Our approach is aligned with the research agenda of foreign policy analysis (FPA), drawing in particular on FPA’s third generation scholarship that programmatically mixes a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods (see e.g. various contributions in Mello and Ostermann 2022), here including (critical) discourse analysis of online social data content.

### 3. Resurgent states and the (de)stabilization of regimes of truth by digital means

While the emergence of the political influence of social media was originally hailed as a means of the potential democratization of the global public sphere, states soon adapted and started using social media as suitable channels for their own diplomacies, often allowing them to target otherwise unavailable audiences, to circumvent foreign government and directly influence societies, but also spread political narratives that comply with the state's views of the international system. Hence, instead of bringing about a radical weakening of the state, the digitalization of diplomacy demonstrates that sovereignty is yet again on the rise (Butler 2004; Bigo 2008) and that states remain highly adaptable.

At the same time, the employment of social media for the purposes of digital diplomacy led to the emergence of yet another level of contestation over epistemological foundations of political orders. As a result of this (and related developments), the authority of the truth in the public discourse is increasingly questioned (Newman 2019). This leads to the paradoxical situation in which states assert their position as the main actors employing social media for foreign policy purposes while also being the main targets of the digital campaigns orchestrated by other states and struggling to “territorialise” and control the space of social media “borderscapes” as “digital sovereigns”. In other words, while we observe a resurgence of sovereignty, we also see intensified contestation among sovereign states in which digital means are deployed by others to weaken them (while strengthening their own positions).

Against this backdrop, the contestation over epistemological foundations of liberal political orders in global politics today – featuring intensified geopolitical competition – is approached in our research as the struggle of foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) assemblages on one hand, and security assemblages on the other. The latter seek to (re-)stabilise ontological and epistemological security threatened in the former's strategic campaigns in order to allow continuing experience of the order as the condition to act politically. These complex assemblages focus their strategic practice on the “borderscape” of the social media platforms, the digital space structuring everyday life in liberal polities. They do so through circulated codes and imageries as sense-making devices shaping the dominant patterns of identity and difference, and of construction of “inside” and “outside”.<sup>2</sup>

In this report, we explore not security assemblages seeking to reconstitute the interiorisation function of the state (that makes government possible) but rather the assemblages strategically oriented toward external impact, in particular those that seek to sever foreign populations' links to the dominant regimes of truth that constitute their states' economies of power. The theoretical background of the study remains Campbellian, broadly speaking. Foreign policy is understood here, therefore, as a process of writing and rewriting of security/identity. However, Campbell's analysis is mainly focused on the knowledge production by a specific set of agents (the government) that primarily targets its own population, exploring the ways in which a political apparatus produces foreign policy by writing its own security codes, thus continuously re-constituting its own country's national identity (Campbell 1992). By understanding the doer's identity as continuously re-negotiated, subjectivity itself is challenged and recast as the result of the writing process: the state creates its own identity by defining threats through “discourses of danger” and by producing strategies that manage and contain these threats or externalize them, thus reinforcing the subjectivity-stability linkage (cf. also Laffey 2000).

Drawing on the conceptual toolbox outlined above, our study takes the argument about the connection between foreign policy knowledge production and subjectivity one step further. While states may employ strategies of writing security for the purpose of the interiorization function, i.e. targeting domestic audiences

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<sup>2</sup> For more details about this theoretical argument, see D.6.2 report *Reimagining the International: Surveying Foreign Information Manipulation Landscapes of Power during the Covid-19 Pandemics*.

in order to stabilize economies of power and render the state governable (as Campbell would have it), they also target foreign audiences, with the implicit or explicit aim to destabilize their regimes of truth, or restabilise transnational ones that sustain *international* ordering practices (and economies of power). Knowledge production may be related to the reconstruction of one's own identity, but it may also be used to strategically destabilize the country's rivals and their economies of power, or to sustain orders faced with revisionist challenges.

Based on our analysis of the collected textual corpus, we propose that this effort is usually achieved by three complementary, yet distinct strategies. The first is the more conventional (but digitally updated) strategy of disseminating narratives about one's own self, about the norms that the state in question wants to be seen as following; we call this strategy *identity affirmation*. The second is a related strategy of spreading one's own security narratives which are in line with the desired identity; we call this strategy *truth construction*. The third is the most conflictual as it directly challenges the dominant interpretations propounded by the targeted societies' state apparatuses; we call this approach the strategy of *truth contestation*. This is not to say that other strategies do not exist. For instance, a foreign power's public diplomacy may aim at producing epistemic smog, with different "verities of ignorance" which co-exist simultaneously (Sardar 2020). Another type of communication that we identified emerged as a by-product of communication towards the domestic audience, with limited translation and adaptation to the foreign context. However, the three strategies that we discussed above proved to be most widespread. It is for this reason that we primarily focus on these three strategies in the comparative case study that follows.

## 4. Research Design

To explore the role of the FIMI in EU politics, this report focuses on a specific "controversy" (Venturini and Munk 2021) - the contestation over the dominant regimes of truth surrounding Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine (2022-) and its various interpretations. The EU has been on the forefront of defining new forms of foreign influence, while combatting its hostile forms. EU documents explicitly connect the "attempts by foreign actors to influence domestic debates in the EU" with "the fertile ground of people's most basic anxieties" (European Union, 2020). They name Russia and China as the two powers engaging most readily in these operations: "Foreign actors and certain third countries, in particular Russia and China, have engaged in targeted influence operations and disinformation campaigns in the EU, its neighbourhood, and globally." (European Union, 2020) Russia is often regarded as especially active in its employment of digital diplomacy (Adesina 2017). The EU attempts to defend itself from "threats to democratic political and policymaking processes as well as public goods such as the protection of EU citizens' health, the environment or security (European Commission, 2018). For this reason, we explore the digital diplomacies of these two actors (Russia and China) and subsequently compare them with a contrast case, The United States.

The research is based on the analysis of the digital activities of the three countries on the Twitter/X accounts of their embassies to the EU and EU member states. We focused on X for a number of reasons. First, Twitter serves as a popular digital diplomacy tool, ensuring rapid spread and dissemination of the diplomatic messages which are subsequently commented upon or, more likely, rebroadcast (Yaqub et al 2017). X is also seen as a tool that is particularly useful when diplomats intend to address foreign publics (Duncombe 2019). Finally, X can also serve as a channel for truth contestation and polarization – there is a "strong evidence of increasingly polarizing public opinions on Twitter." (Nguyen 2018).

The X accounts of both the embassies to the EU and selected member states were scraped. Table 1 lists all the countries on which we focused. The selection was driven by the need to ensure varied regional representation across the EU. Embassies were selected not only as conduits of the state communication

vis-à-vis target governments and publics; but also as symbolic sites at the intersection of internal/external imaginaries the norms of whose operation are renegotiated in the conditions of the current information revolution and increasing global geopolitical competition.

In each case, we did not analyze tweets only, but also the broader diplomatic ecosystem in which the tweets were embedded. To achieve that we analyzed the ways in which various actants (Puschmann and Burgess 2013) operated, connecting the diplomatic tweets with further documents/events/activities the tweets pointed to. The intertextuality of our research was thus strengthened by the comparison of (a) the tweets and (b) the linked documents, but also with (c) other official documents and speeches by top representatives of the three countries. This made it possible to show how the strategies employed in the digital arena differ (or do not differ) from the more general diplomatic activities of the three countries.

We collected data from Twitter/X through paid access to API v2, using the Postman interface. The analysed period covers 13 months from before the start of the war (February 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023). We focused solely on original posts, excluding reposts, which often significantly outnumbered original content. Despite the limits set by Twitter's API, which allow a maximum retrieval of 3,000 tweets per account, including reposts, and the time delay since the analysed period that constrained our possibilities to collect all published posts, we still obtained 6,488 posts from 28 accounts. We extracted the post content, publication date, and author for analysis. The data were organized and cleaned using Python code. The posts were published in various languages. For example, China's accounts alternated between local languages, English, and Chinese without a clear pattern. All posts were automatically translated into English using Google Translate. If any translation seemed unclear during analysis, it was cross-checked against the original text.

The textual corpus was then analyzed using machine-enhanced mixed methods, relying mainly on two approaches. First, we utilized the Geneea application, which enables semantic text analysis powered by artificial intelligence. Geneea automatically categorizes keywords and phrases into groups such as persons, locations, organizations, or events, and provides an analysis of their occurrence and co-occurrence patterns. It also offers basic sentiment analysis (positive, neutral, negative) (Kušen and Strembeck 2016). Second, we manually coded the tweets directly or indirectly related to the war in Ukraine, with the codes corresponding to the typological triad outlined above: identity affirmation, truth construction, and truth contestation. Beyond the three strategies, the qualitative analysis also aimed to identify patterns typical of each group, differences from the official documents as well as differences between the three countries.

## 5. Truth Regime Contestation: The Empirical Analysis

### 5.1 Russia: The War in Ukraine as a War Against the West

#### 5.1.1. The data

For Russia, the dataset included 10 accounts. Overall, 6,488 tweets were produced by these accounts, from which 1,445 tweets were scraped (see Table 1). The missions exhibited different levels of X activity, with the missions to France, Italy, the Netherlands, the EU and Estonia producing at least one hundred scraped posts. Following the manual analysis of the 1,445 tweets, 406 were selected as clearly and directly relevant for the Russian war on Ukraine, i.e. 28.1% of the scraped posts (Table 2). Out of these, 361 tweets included „Ukrain-“, i.e. 24.98% ; 59 tweets included the term “operation”. Among 361 scraped posts published by Russia's missions (between February 1, 2022 and 31 March, 2023) that include character string “Ukrain”, there are 261 posts of neutral sentiment, 87 of negative sentiment, 11 of positive and 2 of ambivalent sentiment. The distribution of the tweets associated with the Russian war in Ukraine was highly uneven: the top five profiles with the highest number of scraped posts

containing the keyword were, in descending order, the French mission, the mission to the EU, the Dutch, the Italian and the Estonian mission.

Table 1: Total number of scraped posts published by Russia's missions between February 1, 2022 and 31 March, 2023

Twitter/X profiles of Russia's missions	Number of scraped posts
European Union	206
Poland	36
Denmark	25
Netherlands	160
Estonia	100
Slovenia	22
Czechia	9
Italy	179
France	592
Bulgaria	15

Table 2: Manually selected posts associated with the Russian war in Ukraine. Number of scraped posts published by Russia's missions between February 1, 2022 and 31 March, 2023

Twitter/X profiles of Russia's missions	Number of scraped posts
All Russian missions together	406
European Union	67
Poland	4
Denmark	7
Netherlands	30
Estonia	34
Slovenia	9
Italy	24
France	217
Bulgaria	0
Czechia	0

### 5.1.2 Russian diplomatic missions on X during the war

Russia's communication strategies on X share one unifying theme. They virtually always start with contrasting Russia with the West in a starkly opposed manner. Russia is – and has always been – a peace-loving country whereas the West is expansive and confrontational. As peaceful as Russia is, it cannot idly stand by when witnessing Western aggression. The argument is based on a paradox: Although the West is powerful economically and militarily, Russia becomes the true leader of the free world, that is of those who want to protect themselves from Western tyranny. Russian communication thus revolves around the theme of 'tables reversed' - the so-called special military operation in Ukraine is a defensive war, but also a war that reveals the weakness of the West and the power of



those who want to resist the West's expansionism. This central narrative is present in all three aspects of the Russian communication: identity affirmation, truth construction as well as truth contestation.

At the same time, very little attention is dedicated to the war itself and Russian military activities are mentioned only occasionally. In most cases, the invasion is described only in the most general terms and specific military actions on Ukrainian soil are not much discussed. When the 'military operation' is mentioned, it is often presented as a necessary measure, as the only option left to Russia, the last resort. The hand of the Russian President was forced by the perfidious West and by its allies in the Ukrainian government. Accordingly, the invasion was utterly logical, a reaction to the 'objective' danger posed by the USA. As the speaker of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova put it shortly after the invasion: "You can't negotiate with fire during a fire. It is necessary to put out the fire. To save what has caught fire and to prevent the whole from being destroyed." (Zakharova, 27 February 2022).

Before the full-scale invasion, Russian diplomatic missions often ridiculed the West or the information about the imminent invasion by Western secret services, arguing that Russia had no intention whatsoever to attack Ukraine. This rhetorical strategy had to be radically changed with the attack, but ever since then, Russia's official narrative has been remarkably stable. At the same time, the key claim about Russia's peaceful intentions has been flexible enough to accommodate a number of concrete events that were linked to it. As a result, Russia contrasted the Western intention to use the war to destroy Russia economically as well as militarily (Mission of Russia to Estonia, 27 December 2021) with its own official agenda of creating a free Ukraine, devoid of Nazism, nationalism and hostility toward Russia.

While at first, the US was seen as the real enemy and the EU was discussed less and in a less hostile manner, the EU was later increasingly painted in dark colors as well. Especially from November 2022 onwards, the tweets became significantly more critical towards the EU and the EU turned into a regular object of criticism for the missions (Mission of Russia to the EU, 2 November 2022; Mission of Russia to the EU, 15 November 2022, etc.). At the same time, anti-American sentiments in Europe were also increasingly harnessed. For instance, the dependency on the United States was brought up as in the following example concerning Germany: "The #Germans have resigned to the idea and are probably happy that the #US has taken control in #Europe and is protecting its security, or more precisely, that it has assumed responsibility for expanding its military presence so that Europe never has to consider autonomy." (Mission of Russia to Netherlands, 22 June 2022). In a similar manner, the French disagreement with the US regarding the war in Iraq was mentioned to show the strategic difference between the US and France (Mission of Russia to France, 23 March 2022).

In terms of the three categories, our analysis revealed that identity affirmation was quite rare, around ten percent of the scraped tweets. However, when we included indirect identity affirmation (i.e. one produced by mentioning Ukraine's identity and then implicitly contrasting it with Russia's identity), we obtained more than fifty additional references. But even with this inclusion, truth construction remained by far the most common rhetorical strategy used (319 out of 406 tweets). The third category, truth contestation, was less common, constituting around one quarter of cases (108 out of 406).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> We should bear in mind that the same tweet can be simultaneously coded twice or even three times, as it can contain elements of all the three strategies. So the overall sum of codes is higher than the number of analyzed tweets.

### 5.1.3 Identity affirmation

Out of all three categories, identity affirmation was the most repetitive and formalized. The invasion did not substantially change the predicates used in relation to Russia. Rather than just simply declaring what the Russian identity is based on, however, it was contrasted with the West and, in particular, with Ukraine. Hence, it is not the war on Ukraine, but Ukraine itself that constitutes the central element of identity affirmation. The contrast is used in many different contexts: Ukrainian fighting methods and military strategies, the alleged deployment of extremists, “neo-Nazis and mercenaries”, released criminals (“gangs of murderers and rapists” who “have been given firearms”). Ukraine’s nationalism and the “nationalist battalions” are also targeted (Mission of Russia to France, 10 March 2022). Specifically, the volunteer military brigade Azov was mentioned to convince the audience of the connections between Ukraine’s army and neo-Nazism.

The tweets about Ukraine are not limited to the army; in fact they commonly target the government as well as segments of the Ukrainian society. Here too, neo-Nazism and extremism are emphasized, and so is Ukraine’s alleged nationalism which is implicitly contrasted with Russia’s humanistic traditions (see, e.g. Mission of Russia to Estonia, 25 February 2022; Mission of Russia to Estonia, 28 February 2022b). Although related to identity affirmation, the frequent references to neo-Nazis in Ukraine also belong to the fourth coding category (“by-product”), as they are connected to domestic narratives about the Great Patriotic War and Russia’s role in saving Europe from Nazism. Linking the war with the sacrifices of the previous generations makes more sense for Russia’s domestic audience than internationally. In other words, the adaptation to target audiences in EU member states seems to be rather limited here.

The comparison with the West often serves to strengthen the image of Russia as a peace-loving country. This is done through pointing out the Western influence in Ukraine and Ukraine’s political, military, and cultural dependence on the West and especially the United States. At the same time, the comparison with the West is often more sweeping and the history of Western colonialism as well as its current belligerence are put in contrast with Russia (and the Soviet Union): “Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen... you probably know the list? Russia hasn’t started a single war since Afghanistan (1979-1989).” (Mission of Russia to France, 23 March 2022). When the West is discussed, identity affirmation is often linked to truth contestation as well. By showing the alleged ‘true face’ of the Ukrainian regime and its motivation, the Russian diplomatic discourse tries to prove its point about its Russia’s own anti-Nazi and humanistic nature, while simultaneously debunking the alleged Western myths, fake news and disinformation about the war as well as about Ukraine itself.

Among the other identities assigned to Russia in the tweets, three deserve a special attention. Firstly, a paradoxical construction of Russia as a strong country and a leader of those opposing Western tyranny and at the same time a permanent victim plays a central role. Russia is a target of Western ire, economic sanctions and Western hybrid warfare: “We see what is happening not as a local conflict, but as a hybrid war unleashed by the #West on #Russia in the political, economic, humanitarian and information areas.” (Mission of Russia to the EU, 21 December 2022). Secondly, Russia is also a rational actor that is trying to react in a reasonable way to the external pressures exerted by the West. It is the West who acts irrationally, emotionally: “Defying the most basic common sense, #Washington and #Brussels compounded the situation by declaring an economic war against #Russia. This resulted in higher global prices of food, fertilisers, oil, and gas.” (Mission of Russia to the EU, 27 September 2022). Thirdly, the tweets also stress the role of Russia as a provider of humanitarian assistance in the ravaged regions of Ukraine (without dwelling much on what caused the destruction). Russia is the one who helps in Ukraine, even in the town of Bucha (Mission of Russia to France, 14 March 2022a; Mission of Russia to France, 14 March 2022b).

#### **5.1.4 Truth construction**

The strategy of truth construction often relies not so much on the credibility of Russian sources, but on Russia presenting 'objective' facts or asking for an 'objective' course of action by Western countries and their authorities (Mission of Russia to the Netherlands, 6 May 2022). One of the key tools to achieve this aim is various Western media or the interviews with the citizens of EU member states or the US as sources of information (Mission of Russia to Denmark, 3 March 2022; Mission of Russia to Denmark, 8 April 2022). Sometimes, these are 'common people'; in other cases, they are Western scholars who share narratives close to the Russian official point of view and sometimes Western politicians. Implicitly, this strategy also leads to the contestation of the Western narratives, as according to the tweets, it seems that ordinary Westerners or Ukrainians see things differently than their governments (Mission of Russia to France, 21 February 2022; Mission of Russia to France, 1 March 2022).

Among the speakers, there are diverse figures such as the US international relations scholar John Mearsheimer (who argued that the West is to blame for the war) (Mission of Russia to France, 1 March 2022); a French fighter for the Donbass (Mission of Russia to France, 21 February 2022); a "censored" French journalist (Mission of Russia to France, 29 March 2022). The former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko was given space to talk about Ukraine (Mission of Russia to France, 5 March 2022), the former President of Bolivia Evo Morales about the US provocations with nuclear weapons (Mission of Russia to France, 11 March 2022), a French scholar about Western Russophobia (Mission of Russia to France, 18 March 2022), "a former Ukrainian deputy" about Bucha (Mission of Russia to France, 6 April 2022), Italian politician Barbara Spinelli about "a war born from too many lies" (Mission of Russia to Italy, 27 February 2022), etc. The claim about the unsafe expansion of NATO of the last US ambassador to the USSR Jack F. Matlock was also used to confirm the Russian claim about the threat of NATO's presence at its door (Mission of Russia to France, 30 March 2022). Jeffrey Sachs' comparison of the Caribbean crisis and Ukraine was tweeted as well: "Neither the United States nor Russian want to have the other's army at its door." (Mission of Russia to France, 30 March 2022).

The element of truth contestation is frequently explicitly connected to Russia's truth construction: "We are also shocked - by West's unwillingness to take facts and evidence into consideration. Once again, #EU high officials are involved in spreading Ukrainian disinformation." (Mission of Russia to the EU, 4 April 2022) In some cases, Russia does not deny its responsibility, but that responsibility is rhetorically diminished by asserting that others made the situation more dangerous. When speaking about Russian hackers, a tweet claimed that "the number of hacker attacks from Russia is many times smaller than from the territory of other countries and, say, smaller than from the territory of the United States." (Mission of Russia to Poland, 22 December 2021).

The tweets often connect the war with the West and the problems caused by the West. Some are very specific, targeting particular countries, such as Estonia, the "Dutch side", or the EU, and others are general: "These countries that have been killing millions", "international terrorism under ideology of 'Anglo-Saxons'" (Mission of Russia to Italy, 27 February 2022). Significant attention is dedicated to the alleged biological weapons of the US in Ukraine, with many direct accusations or indirect hints (Mission of Russia to France, 16 March 2022, 22 March 2022, 15 April 2022; Mission of Russia to Italy, 12 May 2022a; Mission of Russia to Italy, 12 May 2022b, etc.). The pattern is always the same, no matter whether the tweets speak directly about the "biological labs of the USA, installed near our borders" (Mission of Russia to France, 10 March 2022) or about the US links to the presence of biological weapons in Ukraine, the main message is always that connecting forbidden weapons, the United States and the war: "The Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation: the leaders of the Democratic Party are the ideologists of US military biological activities in Ukraine" (Mission of Russia to Italy, 12 May 2022).

Much attention is also dedicated to the West's double standards, hypocrisy, and a general crisis in the West. Europe exhibits "a total lack of responsibility" (Mission of Russia to the EU, 22 June 2022). According to the missions' tweets, it is hypocritical to accuse Russia of initiating the war when the US and the West are burdened by so many atrocities:

“10 wars, 6 million deaths, 0 sanctions” (Mission of Russia to France, 22 March 2022). If President Joe Biden calls President Putin a war criminal, a tweet compares this statement with the suggestion by Biden to “bombard Belgrade” in 1998 (Mission of Russia to France, 18 March 2022). Some tweets even link such seemingly unrelated topics as the way “trees look in Brussels” with the hypocrisy of Europe and its alleged “ecological lies” about the impact of the war (Mission of Russia to the EU, 15 April 2022).

### **5.1.5 Truth contestation**

The element of truth contestation essentially shadows truth construction in the diplomatic tweets. Interestingly, Russia is often presented as a reactive agent in those tweets that contest statements by Western governments or by Ukrainian authorities. Especially when the first days of the full-scale invasion are discussed, the Russian missions’ tweets often see Russia as reacting to the Western preparations for war, to Western or Ukrainian provocations. Russia had to react simply because no other option was left to it by the West which ignored the suffering of those attacked in the Donbass by the Ukrainian army (Mission of Russia to the EU, 23 Aug 2022). In short, it is always Ukraine or the West who are the initiators of the war. It is Ukraine that started a war against its own citizens, and it is the West who launched a hybrid war, an economic war or an information war against Russia (Mission of Russia to the EU, 21 December 2022).

While initially, the tweets were strongly defensive as a radical interpretative shift was needed from denying any possibility of the attack to justifying it, as the war progressed the tweets gradually gained more assertive, confident tones. The tweets remained rather terse in terms of concrete military actions of the invading army and instead tried to steer the attention towards Ukraine’s alleged crimes, the atrocities conducted by the Ukrainian army and the alleged staging of events for which Ukraine and the West blamed Russia. So, the massacre in Bucha was re-interpreted as a Ukrainian staging operation intended “to arouse the interest of the international press and cause anger”. (Mission of Russia to France, 6 April 2022). The tweets often go to considerable details to convince their audiences of why there is no real evidence about the Russian involvement in the massacre (Mission of Russia to Estonia, 4 April 2022). Other highly visible cases are contested by the tweets as well. The destruction of the hospital in Mariupol is one such event: “The attempt to swell the scandal around the alleged destruction of by #Russia of the hospital in #Mariupol is the maximum of cynicism.” (Mission of Russia to Italy, 10 March 2022).

The truth contestation strategy is different from truth construction regarding Ukraine in that it is significantly more general. The West is repeatedly accused of double standards: the West cannot be believed, it is aggressive, but also cynical as it accuses the peaceful Russia of aggression (Mission of Russia to France, 23 March 2022). Not Russia, but the West and especially the USA start wars, and it is mainly the USA who profits from wars by selling weapons (Mission of Russia to France, 23 March 2022). The West was also progressively accused of growing Russophobia. As Foreign Minister Lavrov put it one of the tweets: “Official Russophobia has taken on unprecedented and grotesque dimensions in the West. They do not have the scruples anymore to declare their intention to not only defeat our country militarily, but also to destroy and fracture Russia.” (Mission of Russia to the EU, 28 September 2022) There are many other examples of criticizing the Western attitude to Russia and Russians, and of arguing that the West is driven by Russophobia: Foreign students at a Russian university spoke against Russophobia (Mission of Russia to France, 23 March 2022), the Russian representative in the UN denounced the Russophobia of Ukrainian political leaders (Mission of Russia to France, 23 June 2022), a Russian embassy reported about insulting messages and threats received by Russian citizens in Western Europe (Mission of Russia to Netherlands, 2 March 2022), etc.

In general, the truth contestation strategy employed by Russian missions often mimics Western counter-disinformation campaigns. Russia offers its own “proofs” and rebuttals of Western or Ukrainian “lies” (Mission of Russia to Estonia, 28 February 2022a), such as a video with the allegedly betrayed Ukrainian soldier who was left

behind by the Ukrainian army (Mission of Russia to Estonia, 28 February 2022a). The hashtag #FakeNews is also sometimes directly used in truth-contesting tweets (Mission of Russia to the EU, 11 March 2022).

### **5.1.6 Comparison with official documents**

We subsequently compared our X analysis with Russia's more formal documents. Our textual sample contained three types of documents, all of which were published in the same period of time as the tweets. The first was the new Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, a comprehensive and detailed overview of Russia's long-term foreign policy goals published in March 2023. We also included key speeches: those pronounced by President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov in 2022 and 2023 (the former from the official website of the Kremlin, the latter from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation). We chose speeches that focused on the war, with a special stress on those which carried a particular symbolic importance due to their contents or their timing (such as the start of the invasion or its anniversary). These include the speeches by President Putin from 21 February and 24 February 2022 and from 21 February 2023; Minister Lavrov's speech from 22 February 2022 as well as his news conference from 18 January 2023; a meeting of the Board of the Ministry of Defense (21 December 2022) and the 2022 Valdai Club address.

The major differences between the tweets by Russia's missions in the EU and its official documents and speeches are twofold: Firstly, official documents stress the role of Russia as a global power, a civilizational actor which is not only European, but rather Eurasian (Eurasia is not discussed in the tweets, but it is in official documents, cf. The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2023). To stress the preferential orientation of Russia towards non-Western parts of the world and its aspiration to become a global leader of those resisting Western hegemony, they intentionally place the West behind others (Europe and the United States are mentioned at the end in the regional section of The Concept, just before the Antarctica).

Russia is a uniquely important "country-civilization"; the Russian World is a civilizational community marked by its "ability to ensure harmonious coexistence of different peoples, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups on one common territory, which has been developed over many centuries." (The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2023) Official documents also link current politics to older concepts, in particular that of multipolarity. Russia thus constitutes "one of the sovereign centers of global development performing a historically unique mission aimed at maintaining global balance of power and building a multipolar international system" (The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2023), thus keeping Western hegemony in check. The official discourse as a whole also had to make a U-turn from denying any intention to occupy Ukraine's territory to its acknowledgment ("It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force" (Putin, 22 February, 2022)). But unlike the tweets, the official documents and speeches, perhaps due to the lower frequency of their publications, could simply silently ignore the contradiction.

Secondly, the rhetoric in the speeches often frames the conflict as a war of resistance to new forms of oppression, exploitation, and colonialism. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov argued in January 2023, for instance, that the West aims at transforming other parts of the world "into new-style colonies in order to use new methods to ruthlessly pump out resources from them. These methods are all too familiar and include demonization, blackmail, sanctions, threat of force, and much more." (Lavrov, 18 January 2023). The alleged growth of negative trends in world politics is then ascribed to the West, while the positive trends are, in the speeches and documents, linked to the rise of the non-West. On one hand, "the culture of dialogue in international affairs is degrading, and the effectiveness of diplomacy as a means of peaceful dispute settlement is decreasing." On the other hand, "the formation of a more equitable multipolar world order is underway. The imbalanced model of world development which has for centuries ensured the advanced economic growth of colonial powers through the appropriation of resources of dependent territories and states in Asia, Africa and in the Occident is irrevocably fading into the past. The sovereignty and competitive opportunities of non-Western

world powers and regional leading countries are being strengthened.” (The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2023).

All in all, the tweets are often similar and show a relatively low level of differentiation among various European audiences. However, the tweets as a whole are significantly different from the official speeches and documents. In the latter, the critique of the West is strongly linked to the theme of colonialism and Russia’s key role in Eurasia and the global resistance to Western aggression.

## 5.2. China: neutral, yet not neutral

### 5.2.1 The data

For China, the dataset included 10 accounts and 2,931 original posts. The account with the highest number of scraped posts (1,656) was the representation of China in the EU (see Table 3). This account was the first official Chinese account on Twitter in Europe, launched in 2013 (Blablová 2023, 14). Until 2019, it was likely the most active official Chinese account on Twitter (Huang and Wang 2019, 2991). The low number of posts from some accounts may be due to their focus on sharing reposts rather than publishing original content.

Table 3: Number of scraped posts published by China’s missions between February 1, 2022 and 31 March, 2023

Twitter/X profiles of China’s missions	Number of scraped posts
European Union	1656
Poland	358
Denmark	338
United Kingdom	272
Netherlands	112
Estonia	92
Germany	39
Portugal	28
Slovenia	27
Czechia	9

Posts from China’s missions are characterized by their heavy reliance on external sources, primarily state media and government institutions such as Global Times, the official international outlet of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the website of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Of the 2,931 posts analysed, 89% (2,612) included a website link. The most common type of posts was references to statements by state officials or updates on their official visits. Nearly 10% of all posts (284) referenced CCP general secretary Xi Jinping, making him the most frequently mentioned individual. The second most mentioned figure, appearing in 6% of posts (181), was Wang Yi, who served as China’s foreign minister for most of the analysed period and, from 1 January 1 2023, became head of the CCP’s foreign affairs commission.

Compared to accounts managed by individual Chinese diplomats or state media, the missions’ accounts are noticeably more moderate and cautious, reflected also in their heavy reliance on external sources. The



dataset does not include the account of China's mission in France, whose representative was known for controversial and even abrasive rhetoric (Tian 2023). However, as will be discussed later, these accounts occasionally use citations of external sources to express messages more confrontational than official statements, including spreading disinformation or making sharper criticisms of the United States.

Most posts had a positive or neutral tone. Sentiment analysis estimated 61% of posts as neutral, 33% as positive, and only 6% as negative. This is supported by analysis of word frequency. Early in the analyzed period, posts often focused on the Beijing Winter Olympics, with #Beijing2022 being the most common hashtag, appearing in over 4% of all posts. Cultural topics were also relatively frequent, with approximately 5% of posts containing terms like "culture" or "cultural." References to the Chinese New Year appeared in 48 posts. China's region Xinjiang was referenced considerably often, in 53 posts, most probably as a response to international criticism of human rights abuses against Uyghurs in the region. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2022 was addressed in 49 posts, with China portrayed as handling the situation responsibly and offering assistance to other countries. However, these posts also focused more on portraying the region positively rather than directly refuting accusations. Economic themes were common as well, with "investment" mentioned in 46 posts; "ecology" was mentioned in 35 posts.

Ukraine is directly mentioned in nearly 7% of posts (194). The sentiment distribution slightly shifts, with negative posts increasing from 6% to 16%, positive posts decreasing from 33% to 18%, and the share of neutral posts being relatively similar at 63%. This reflects the more frequent use of terms like "conflict", but the vast majority of posts (81%) remain neutral or positive even in this case. Posts about the war in Ukraine are mostly quotes from foreign policy representatives or official documents, indicating a high level of cautiousness among the missions regarding China's own position. Compared to general posts, Ukraine-related posts feature a significantly higher proportion of mentions of Wang Yi (38% compared to 6%) and Xi Jinping (15% compared to 10%). After the manual analysis of the general posts, indirect references to the war in Ukraine were also included. This expanded the Ukraine-related posts to 8% (231). The discursive analysis from this point onward focuses on this subset of data.

### **5.2.2 Identity affirmation**

In relation to Ukraine, China was portrayed as a peacemaker and mediator, and characterized as constructive, impartial, and open to negotiation. The terms "peace" and "peaceful" were among the most frequently used, appearing in 32% of posts related to Ukraine. China was described as a peace-loving nation: "(...) China has always advocated peace and opposed war. This is a historical and cultural tradition in China (...)" (Mission of China to the EU, 18 March 2022). Wang Yi was cited explicitly referring to China as "a peace-loving country," which has always settled disputes with non-violent means: "Wang: As a peace-loving country, China has always stayed committed to settling disputes peacefully through political means (...)" (Mission of China to the EU, 16 March 2022).

Another post said that "China is a great country that loves peace" (Mission of China to the EU, 7 March 2022). Four days before the full-scale invasion, with the escalating situation on the Ukrainian border, the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing were framed as "a sign of peace and common ground, against turbulence in the world" (Mission of China to Germany, 20 April 2022). In many posts, China was described as a country striving for dialogue and negotiating peace, though the specifics for achieving these goals are not detailed. This was often contrasted with the United States, sometimes in an indirect manner, with references to an allegedly escalatory approach often mentioned vaguely without naming specific actors: "We stand for peace rather than war, dialogue and negotiation rather than unilateral sanctions, and cooling down and putting out the fire rather than fanning the flame and pouring oil on the flames (...)" (Mission of

China to Poland, 30 March 2022). While not mentioning any country by name, one post even suggested that China is the only actor striving for peace: “#China alone cannot singlehandedly turn the tide (...)” (Mission of China to the EU, 9 June 2023). This post, with the addition that “oriental wisdom can be helpful,” referred to the popular ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu, citing that “long warfare is beneficial for no country.”

China’s role was often described as consistently “constructive.” The phrase that China “continues to play a constructive role” appeared in 14% of posts related to Ukraine, making it likely the most common phrase in this context. In some posts, China was explicitly presented as impartial and objective, taking neither Ukraine’s nor Russia’s side. This was linked to Wang Yi’s meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov: “State Councilor and FM #WangYi met with Russian FM Sergey #Lavrov on July 7. About the #Ukraine situation, China will continue to hold an objective and impartial position” (Mission of China to the EU, 8 July 2022). One post citing Xi Jinping emphasizes that China makes its own decisions, seemingly in response to criticism suggesting China is under Russian influence: “(...) We have always set out from the right and wrong of the matter ourselves, make judgments independently (...)” (Mission of China to the EU, 18 March 2022).

China is also portrayed as “humanitarian,” a country that regrets the negative impacts of the conflict in Ukraine on civilians and provides humanitarian aid. Specifically, several batches of humanitarian packages sent to Ukraine by the Red Cross Society of China in March 2022 are mentioned several times. While the posts emphasize China’s contribution as significant, it is worth noting that this assistance was, for example, more than twenty times lower than the humanitarian aid provided by the much smaller Czech Republic (Wu 2022; Plevák 2022). China is portrayed as unhappy with the development and escalation of the conflict. President Xi was quoted in March 2022 describing the situation as “worrisome” and stating that it had reached the “point that China is unwilling to see” (Mission of China to the EU, 18 March 2022).

### **5.2.3 Truth construction**

Most posts describing China’s position on the war in Ukraine are grounded in official statements and documents. Just two days after the invasion, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) presented the so-called Five-Point Position on the Current Ukraine Issue (MFA of the PRC 2022). This document laid a foundation for what can be described as China’s pro-Russian neutrality stance. Most posts from China’s missions regarding Ukraine, including those citing statements by Xi Jinping or Wang Yi, are largely based on this document. The first two ambivalent points are often presented together, suggesting China’s alleged respect for Ukraine’s territorial integrity and UN Charter while simultaneously acknowledging Russia’s legitimate security concerns: “Wang: the legitimate security concerns of any country must be respected, and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter must be upheld (...)” (Mission of China to the EU, 22 February 2022). While the first point is vague and unspecified, the second explicitly opposes the “Cold War mentality” and “NATO’s five consecutive rounds of eastward expansion,” thereby adopting Russia’s official narrative justifying the invasion: “The reasonable security concerns of all countries should be respected. In the context of NATO’s five consecutive rounds of eastward expansion, Russia’s legitimate security demands should be taken seriously and properly addressed.” (Mission of China to the EU, 25 February 2022).

Similarly, the fifth point, which criticizes sanctions and the use of force, is clearly aimed at preventing actions against Russia. China’s self-portrayal as humanitarian was linked to the so-called Six-Point Initiative, presented by Wang Yi on 7 March 2022, and referenced in nearly 4% of posts (Xinhua 2022a). The very first point calls for humanitarian operations to remain impartial and to avoid “politicizing” humanitarian issues, indirectly defending Russia against criticism. The remaining points vaguely emphasize the need to prevent disasters, ensure humanitarian access, and express support for the UN’s coordinating role. In one post, this document is contrasted with sanctions, which are framed as worsening the situation (Mission of China to the EU, 7 March 2022).



Peaceful negotiations and diplomatic solutions are portrayed as viable options, though no specific details are provided. As noted earlier, “peace” is among the most frequently used terms, appearing in 32% of posts, “negotiation” is mentioned in 16% of posts, “dialogue” in 12%, and “settlement” in 11%. In the days leading up to the invasion, two posts referred to the Minsk agreements, calling for their implementation. However, after the invasion, the Minsk agreements were not mentioned again, possibly because they no longer aligned with Russia’s interests at that point.

At the end of the observed period, the document China’s Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis, which contains twelve points and was introduced on the first anniversary of the invasion, on 24 February 2023 (China Daily 2023a), was referenced several times. However, these references typically involved general mentions of the document without specifying its content.

#### **5.2.4 Truth contestation**

The war in Ukraine is often referred to in the posts as the “Ukraine crisis,” “Ukraine issue,” or “Ukraine conflict”. The term “crisis” is the most common, appearing in 35% of posts, followed by “issue” in 24%, and “conflict” in 6%. In none of the posts is it associated with Russia, while the semantic association with Ukraine (“Ukraine crisis” instead of “crisis in Ukraine”) might invoke perceived partial responsibility on Ukraine’s part. In a few cases, the word “war” is used, primarily stemming from a virtual meeting between Xi Jinping, French President Emmanuel Macron, and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on 8 March 2022 (Xinhua 2022d). The official report quoted Xi Jinping saying that China is “deeply grieved by the outbreak of war again on the European continent.” This statement was subsequently cited in several posts by China’s missions. Russia and Ukraine are mentioned together as equal partners, disregarding the unequal situation where Ukraine is defending itself against Russia’s attack: “China hopes the international community will support #UkraineRussia talks, which China has encouraged since the beginning of the conflict (...)” (Mission of China to Poland, 8 March 2022).

As stated earlier, the US is directly or indirectly blamed for the “crisis,” echoing aspects of Vladimir Putin’s official narrative, which attributes Russia’s actions to NATO’s expansion and the alleged neglect of Russia’s “legitimate” concerns. A day before the invasion, amid escalating tensions, post from China’s EU mission claimed that “it is necessary to learn the whole story on the Ukraine issue.” The day after the invasion, China’s EU mission directly quoted Vladimir Putin, who had “introduced the history of the Ukrainian issue” to explain why Russia launched the “special military operation,” stating that the US and NATO ignored Russia’s “reasonable concerns.” However, alignment with Russia’s narrative is only partial. The term “special military operation” is not used in any other posts, and neither the quote of V. Putin nor any other posts attack Ukraine, label Ukrainians as Nazis, or mention “denazification.” None of the posts refer to Russia’s nuclear threats or any role of nuclear weapons in the conflict. This demonstrates even greater caution than official reports, in which Xi Jinping was quoted as explicitly opposing the threat of using nuclear weapons (Xinhua 2022c).

The term “Cold War” was mentioned in 5% of posts, exclusively in a negative context, implying that the so-called “Cold War mentality” is primarily promoted and caused by the US. This is also linked to “bloc confrontation” and “power politics” (Mission of China to the EU, 19 May 2022). The USA is blamed for obstructing mediation and, conversely, escalating the situation by issuing sanctions and providing weapons. This is contrasted with China, which is portrayed as advocating for a peaceful resolution. A day before the invasion, the USA was accused of “creating panic” for warning about the threat of an invasion: “China is always committed to promoting peace and negotiation and playing a constructive role in seeking a peaceful resolution of regional hotspot issues, in stark contrast to the US, which has been creating panic and sending weapons to Ukraine (...)” (Mission of China to the EU, 23 February 2022).

Some posts call for the USA and its allies to engage in equal dialogue with Russia, implying that the alleged lack of respect for Russia is the primary reason the conflict persists: “(...) The #US and #NATO should also have dialogue with Russia to address the crux of the Ukraine crisis and ease the security concerns of both Russia and Ukraine.” (Mission of China to the UK, 18 March 2022) As the conflict progressed, the USA and NATO were further accused of “fuelling the conflict” and “adding oil to fire”: “(...) We stand for peace rather than war, dialogue and negotiation rather than unilateral sanctions, and cooling down and putting out the fire rather than fanning the flame and pouring oil on the flames.” (Mission of China to Poland, 30 March 2022).

A clear distinction is evident in the perception of the EU and European states compared to the US and NATO. In no post are the EU or European states directly blamed for the situation. Consistent with China’s official strategy, the EU is portrayed as a partner that, together with China, should contribute to resolving the situation in Ukraine: “(...) China is willing to work with EU countries, including the Netherlands, to play constructive roles in resolving the Ukraine crisis.” (Mission of China to the EU, 16 March 2022) This narrative stems from the perception that European states are under pressure and influence from the US. In at least one instance, the China’s EU mission account spread disinformation regarding an alleged “revelation” of US Navy involvement in blowing up the Nord Stream pipeline. This was presented as “proof” that the US was waging an “economic war” against its “submissive allies in Europe” (Mission of China to the EU, 16 February 2023a). The post was presented in the form of an indirect citation of an alleged Swedish expert but it was framed as a factual claim.

No posts attempt to rebuke specific allegations such as the Bucha massacre. However, in several cases, posts accuse the US of spreading “disinformation” or “falsehoods” about the war in Ukraine, referencing a “reality check” published in Chinese state media. These so-called “reality checks” again focus primarily on defending China’s constructive stance rather than addressing accusations against Russia or the actions of its military (Xinhua 2022b): “Spreading #disinformation on #Ukraine issue against China cannot help the #US shift its responsibility. The country would do better to actually do something to help the peace effort instead of undermining it (...)” (Mission of China to the UK, 4 March 2022).

In one instance, a post responds to comparisons between the war in Ukraine and the situation in Taiwan, referencing a more detailed document on the China’s EU mission website and adding, “Why are the #Taiwan question and the #Ukraine issue uncomparable at all” (Mission of China to the EU, 16 February 2023b). The document argues that the main difference is that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China’s territory, without explaining why eastern territories are not considered part of Ukraine’s territory. Paradoxically, the statement regarding Taiwan emphasizes that, according to the Charter of the UN, the territorial integrity of countries must be upheld, without addressing why this principle should not apply to Ukraine (Mission of the PRC to the EU 2022).

### **5.2.5 Comparison with official documents**

As previously stated, tweets from Chinese embassies are mostly based on official documents. This is particularly true for the Five-Point Position on the Current Ukraine Issue (MFA of the PRC 2022), which summarises the key points of China’s approach, repeated in various forms in most tweets. In summary, the document emphasises: first, that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, and the principles of the UN Charter upheld; second, that the legitimate security concerns of all countries, including Russia, should be acknowledged; third, that China opposes escalation and prioritises preventing humanitarian crises; fourth, that China supports dialogue between Russia and Ukraine; and fifth, that the UN Security Council should avoid using force and imposing sanctions. This approach, which partially aligns with the narrative of Russia’s official propaganda, also informs statements by Chinese officials, particularly the most senior diplomat Wang Yi, which are then referenced in official reports and subsequently cited in tweets.

A strong emphasis on references to official meetings is characteristic of both tweets and official portals. More than two-thirds of the documents published during the observed period on the English-version State Council website (China's nominal government) containing the word "Ukraine" in full text are reports from international meetings and phone calls. As previously mentioned, most of these reports are based on the Five-Point Position. Similar to the tweets, one of the most frequent patterns is China's portrayal as an impartial peacemaker and its framing of the war as a conflict between two equal sides, primarily caused by NATO due to its negligence of Russia's "legitimate concerns". However, there is a notable difference in the extent to which China-Russia friendship is mentioned. While this is a common theme in official documents, with the State Council even publishing Xi Jinping's article in Russian media referencing the Ukraine crisis (Xinhua 2023), it is largely absent from the tweets. Instead, China's missions in Europe tend to present the country on X as neutral towards Russia.

Approximately one-quarter of official documents referencing the war in Ukraine focus on China's economic situation. Here, the impact of the Ukraine crisis is primarily viewed as negative, particularly in terms of rising prices and disruptions to international trade. The crisis is often mentioned alongside the COVID-19 pandemic as a key reason for the slowdown in global economy. This perspective is reflected in several speeches by Xi Jinping, who, for instance, stated as early as late 2022 that the "global economy is troubled by the Ukraine crisis" (Xinhua 2022e). Official documents also highlight the war's impact on China's energy security (China Daily 2023b) and food security (China Daily 2022). Such framing of the Ukraine crisis is rarely mentioned in the tweets. This discrepancy is likely due to the greater emphasis of official documents on domestic affairs. China is presented as a country that manages these negative impacts better than most other countries. Citing Xi Jinping, the "Ukraine crisis" is also portrayed as an opportunity for China (Xinhua 2022e), contrasting with the narrative in the tweets, which tend to frame China as empathetic rather than opportunistic.

On the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine, 24 February, China published the document China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis, containing 12 points (China Daily 2023a). While some points merely reiterate the previously mentioned Five-Point Position ("respecting the sovereignty of all countries"; "abandoning the Cold War mentality") or the Six-Point Initiative ("protecting civilians and prisoners of war"), the document also introduces new points. For instance, point seven calls for the protection of nuclear power plants, and point eight explicitly opposes the threat or use of nuclear weapons. However, these points were not reflected in the analysed tweets, possibly due to the sensitivity of topics related to nuclear weapons and nuclear accidents.

Tweets were based on official documents even in the case of the accusations against the US regarding supposed biological laboratories in Ukraine. As early as March 2022, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the US of "bio-military activities in Ukraine" (Xinhua 2022b). The language used in this, and several other, reports is more confrontational compared to the tweets. Sharper statements made by China's MFA spokespersons are typically absent from tweets. This confirms the observation that social media accounts of China's official missions are generally considerably cautious, relying almost exclusively on official documents and avoiding confrontational or sensitive topics.

## 5.3 The United States: A revisionist war to be contained

### 5.3.1 The data

For the last case study, the archive consists of 661 tweets issued by US missions between 1 February 2022 and 31 Mar 2023. The distribution of the tweets according to the mission was as follows:

Twitter/X profiles of Russia's missions	Number of scraped posts (related to Ukraine)
Italy	187
Denmark	170
EU	121
Poland	42

Netherlands	27
Estonia	27
Slovenia	26
France	23
Czechia	6
Bulgaria	3

As in the other case studies included in this report, the tweets have been coded in three basic categories of *identity affirmation*, *truth construction*, and *truth contestation*. In addition, the truth construction category has been further divided into subcategories *truth about the world* (TW) and *what the U.S. policy is* (TP) while the category truth contestation has been further divided into *what the world isn't* (CW) and *what the U.S. policy isn't* (CP). The archives can be divided into these categories as follows<sup>4</sup>:

Identity Affirmation	2		
Truth Construction	721	<i>Truth about the World</i>	228
		<i>Truth about Policy</i>	493
Truth Contestation	55	<i>What the World Isn't</i>	55
		<i>What the U.S. Policy Isn't</i>	0

Most of the issued tweets seek to construct a certain truth regime. Majority of these tweets are intended to convey to the audience a sense of what the U.S. policy is in relation to Ukraine and how it is justified (TP). A number of tweets also describe what the world is (TW). These two categories also form the most common combination – in which the reality is described and the U.S response is outlined in the same statement. The truth contestation ('debunking') statements are limited to correcting the image about the world. There are none that explicitly deny or seek to correct the record about U.S. policies, even though such intent can be traced in a number of indirect statements about the causes of the war and assigning blame for starting it (see below). Identity affirmation statements are very few (2) – one presenting the US as the leader of the world united in the efforts to support Ukraine, the other (a quote from President Biden's speech) claiming that the US and allies will emerge from the conflict stronger, more united, more determined, and more purposeful (US Mission to Estonia, 25 February 2022). No statements could be identified as by-products intended for domestic consumption – an interesting contrast to the Russia case study in particular.

The sentiment analysis shows that 398 (60.21 %) of the tweets had a neutral tone while 186 (28.14 %) were negative and 69 positive (10.44 %). This proportion suggests a certain distance from the conflict while the number of negative tweets indicates an emphasis on condemning the disruption of the *status quo* (see also below) that appears absent in e.g. the Chinese case. Predictably, the proportion of negative statements was highest in the two months after the full invasion in February 2022. Despite the prevalence of neutral sentiment in the tweets, however, the labelling of the conflict is rather unequivocal. The most common themes are war (101), attack (71) and security (52).

The intensity of messaging related to Ukraine was highest at the beginning of the observed period – that is, immediately before and after the full invasion. Subsequently, the numbers of tweets dropped, and remained at much lower numbers for the remainder of the period:

<sup>4</sup> However, as noted below, it does feature somewhat more prominently in the general political discourse

Period (Selected)	Number of scraped posts (related to Ukraine)
Feb. 1-14, 2022	49
Feb. 15-28, 2022	130
Mar. 1-14, 2022	179
Mar. 15-28, 2022	130
Mar. 29-Apr. 11, 2022	58
Apr. 12-25, 2022	19
Apr. 26-May 9, 2022	18
...	...

### 5.3.2 Identity Affirmation

The qualitative, interpretive discourse analysis of these archives reveals several noteworthy findings. Tweets by US missions make comparatively very few statements that could be categorised as direct identity affirmation. That is to say that there is little in terms of projecting a certain image of the United States through digital public diplomacy as traced in the collected archives and related to Ukraine in this period. While there is a clear effort to construct a certain image of Russia as the aggressor, including with reference to values and norms of civilised society, there is no salient corresponding effort to stabilise a certain identity of 'US' beyond asserting the unity and resolve in the alliance of those assisting Ukraine (see below). This can be directly related to the relative absence of universalising speech portraying the conflict as universal – this markedly stands out for example in comparison to the discourse of the GWOT, and the corresponding basic discourses of identity and difference (Ditrych 2014; cf. Hansen 2006, Connolly 2002). Whereas building a certain image of the US through public diplomacy can be seen as a distinct foreign policy agenda at least since the Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration (Hart 2013), in the case of Russia's war on Ukraine it seems to be comparatively absent in the analysed communications<sup>5</sup>.

### 5.3.3 Truth construction

In contrast, there is a clear effort to establish a certain frame of interpretation of the war, and of related US policies, by means of truth construction statements. The majority of truth construction statements relate, as noted above, to policies. The US defends the international political and legal *status quo* against Putin's aggressive, revisionist Russia. There is a strong emphasis in the tweets on action verbs such as *support*, *continue* and *standing* in solidarity with others (the hashtag #unitedwithukraine has 88 mentions while #standwithukraine features 36 times), in particular NATO – stressing that the collective action ("rapid" and "combined")<sup>6</sup> is one that will ultimately defeat Russia. Predictably, before the full invasion there was a strong emphasis on deterrence. It is then succeeded by compellence to be enacted through allied commitment to a collective response or repeated claims that the invasion will end up costing Russia 'dearly'

<sup>5</sup> However, as noted below, it does feature somewhat more prominently in the general political discourse.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. a tweet by US embassy in Rome (Mission of the US to Italy, 5 March 2022) referencing a statement by Secretary Blinken.

(U.S. Mission to Estonia, 25 February 2022). To *impose* (collocated with costs) is the third most common action verb in the set.

The war itself is portrayed as an act of aggression, with an effort to instil a clear image of an attacker and a victim. It was unprovoked ('not caused') – here implicitly denying the strategic counternarrative by Russia that the invasion was in fact a defensive act to protect Russia against NATO –, premeditated and unjustified. The most common attribute relations in the set are *aggression / Russian* (21), *war / unprovoked* (21), *Russian invasion of Ukraine / unprovoked* (19), *attack / unjustified* (15) and *-unprovoked* (12). As noted above, there are few statements that would cast the conflict in universal terms, for example as a struggle between good and evil, democracy and tyranny, or light and darkness – all these basic discourses being a staple of the US rhetoric during the GWOT – beyond a small set of statements with the *world* as a subject category such as “the world stands with [Ukrainians] in their fight for freedom” (U.S. Mission to the EU, 22 December 2022), “the whole world condemns Putin’s senseless war” (U.S. Mission to Italy, 16 March 2022; U.S. Mission to the Netherlands, 11 March 2022) or “the world has been shocked and appalled by the atrocities committed by Russia’s forces in Bucha and across Ukraine.” (U.S. Mission to the EU, 6 April 2022) Indeed, there are recurrent references to the war as a breach of international law. This puts basic rules of international relations at stake. It also has global food security implications, threatening to throw people around the world into poverty. However, these references tend not to follow the basic identity/difference scheme creating abstract polar opposite entities assigned with either positive or negative characteristics<sup>7</sup>. This discursive limitation is further emphasised through a strong personal focus on Vladimir Putin (rather than *Russia*) as the subject responsible for the war. Putin is the most often mentioned person in the tweets<sup>8</sup>.

### 5.3.4 Truth contestation

Truth contestation is a much less populated category compared to truth construction – or Russia’s communications. This is perhaps unsurprising insofar as the US constructs its position as conservative in regard to the prevailing normative order. The US does engage in *ripostes*, however, challenging through its missions’ tweets Russia’s claims (“contrary to what Russia says”) – any insecurity Russia experiences is because of Putin’s war not the US sanctions, Ukraine is not the aggressor, and Russia is not protecting life and health of civilians as its government says. Where Moscow ‘systematically’ creates lies, the US ‘disarms’ Russia’s misinformation weapons by the truth. (U.S. Mission to Poland, 19 March 2022; U.S. Mission to Denmark, 17 March 2022).

Indirectly, it also pointedly challenges Moscow’s narrative about the war causes by recurrently referring to the ‘unprovoked’ nature of the conflict which Putin launched of his own will and after premeditation while deceiving the international community about his true intentions. More rarely, US communications are directed also against China’s recycling disinformation, for example related to secret laboratories in Ukraine developing WMDs – and by so doing ‘justifying’ Putin’s war. (U.S. Mission to Denmark, 11 March 2022).

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<sup>7</sup> Similarly, there is no salient discourse of civilisation and barbarity though the set includes a small set of statements about Russia e.g. targeting children, elderly and sick which can be read as inferring barbarity by extension. (U.S. Mission to the EU, 1 December 2022)

<sup>8</sup> Putin has 119 mentions in the set. This can be compared to handles (preferred to refer to own state officials) @secblinken and @potus used for Secretary Blinken (93) and President Biden (48) respectively.



### 5.3.5 Intertextual comparison with other documents

There is a rich bricolage of text 'behind' the text of the actual tweets that (hyper-)link to it<sup>9</sup> as well as visual content that accompanies them. There are diplomatic press releases, media notes, actual speeches, events pictures, documentary clips, visuals, fact sheets or, less so, links to externally produced content. These support the truth construction/contestation communications functions in particular. At times they do so through static, matter-of-fact visuals; on other occasions, more colourful video content compounds the tweets, for example to convey the sense of a global food crisis (through images of empty shelves) that the US is determined to tackle through building 'unprecedented cooperation' with the intended result visualised in the form of green fields and renewed cargo traffic flows. (U.S. Mission to the EU, 2 June 2022).

Another instance of an originally produced video content is intended to support the truth contestation function by revealing, in a clip form, Putin's 'patterns of lies' related to Ukraine's alleged biological and chemical weapons programme supported by the U.S.<sup>10</sup> Some linked statements by the Department of State provide rich, and at times loaded textual content. They include statements of attribution (of Russia's malicious cyber activities against Ukraine with spillover impacts into other European countries) (U.S. Department of State, 10 May 2022); rebukes to Russia's efforts to 'denazify' Ukraine that invite the reader to 'discover the truth' and include a depiction of Dmitry Medvedev as 'corrupt former president' while offering a 'peek behind the curtain' of Russia's disinformation machine by referencing an alleged FSB report (leaked by Ukraine's SBU) which makes a case for more intensified informational and propagandistic support of Russia's 'special operation'; (U.S. Department of State, 11 July 2022) or descriptions of the media crackdown in Russia including an appellative statement that 'the people of Russia did not choose this war... [and] have a right to know about the death, suffering and destruction being inflicted by their government on the people of Ukraine.' (U.S. Department of State, 2 March 2022) A distinct subgenre of the press statements is related to the efforts to provide detailed accounts of war crimes and the commitment to build a truthful picture of these crimes committed by Russian armed forces in Ukraine, with the 'same tactics' used previously in Grozny and Aleppo and now again '[shocking] the world' (Cf. U.S. Department of State, 23 March 2022). This picture, as well as the message of condemnation of the war, is conveyed also through personal testimonies 'voices from Ukraine' like Nataliya (helping her displaced countrymen) and Stanislav (a journalist tortured by Russians), at times compounded with appeals to resist and counter Russia's state rampant disinformation<sup>11</sup>.

In contrast to Russia's and China's communications, links to externally produced contents are rather rare. The observed instances include Bellingcat's guide how to recognise false videos (with #stopthelies hashtag) (U.S. Mission to Italy, 20 April 2022); #UkraineFacts website showing disinformation debunked by members of the IFCN consortium, or a *Washington Post* article on Russians' downloading VPNs that '[tear] holes in the digital iron curtain.' (The Washington Post, 6 May 2022) But overall, there does not seem to be much effort to convey (less-than-diplomatic) meaning by external proxies that can be seen in the other two case studies.

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<sup>9</sup> It has to be noted that some of this hyperlinked content was no longer available at the time the analysis was conducted, i.e. throughout Fall 2024.

<sup>10</sup> A retweet of a tweet by Kurt Campbell (@DeputySecState) dated 17 March 2022.

<sup>11</sup> A retweet of a tweet by HR/VP Josep Borrell sharing a clip featuring Russian chess master Maria Emelianova, dated 28 March 2022.

### 5.3.6 Comparison with political discourses

There is no significant divergence between the content of the tweets and key US policy statements issued over the same period – as expected, since the tweets serve, among other, to circulate official positions. In President Biden's and Secretary of State Blinken's speeches as well as key strategic documents made at the time one can therefore find the familiar tropes described above – sometimes only with some more colour. For example, in what can be considered Biden's foundational statement, issued in the immediate aftermath of Russian invasion, Moscow's actions are described as a 'brutal assault on the people of Ukraine without provocation, without justification, without necessity'. As in the tweets, the focus is on Putin as the aggressor who decided on a 'premeditated attack' the motives of which were in no way related to Russia's legitimate security concerns. What drives Putin in Biden's understanding is a 'desire for empire' (Biden, 24 February 2022).

Foreshadowing his later speeches, however, Biden here also casts the conflict in more universalistic terms compared to the tweets. He relates it to a sinister vision for the future of the world which the U.S. and all freedom-loving nations everywhere will oppose. The war thus emerges as ultimately a clash of 'forces' – on one hand liberty, democracy and human dignity, and on the other fear and oppression (Biden, 24 February 2022). Biden later doubled down on this binary rhetoric in his first speech at the Royal Castle in Warsaw when he spoke about the latest 'great battle for freedom: a battle between democracy and autocracy, between liberty and repression, between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force.' (Biden, 26 March 2022) A year later, moreover, he would speak of Russia's invasion as a 'test for the ages' faced by the 'whole world'. (Biden, 21 February 2023).

In other ways, however, motives and frames similar to the tweets' archives can be discerned in Biden's and Blinken's speeches as well as key strategic documents. There is an emphasis on a strong and united alliance determined to counter Russia's brutal, needless, and unprovoked war. (U.S. Department of Defense, 27 October 2022) No one had threatened Russia and the crisis, which the U.S. had in vain tried to deescalate, was a 'manufactured' one (Biden, 21 September 2022). This was done discursively notably in Blinken's speech at the UNSC on 22 February 2022 where he shared the information that indicated that Russian forces were about to attack and offered a 'detailed scenario' of the invasion ('sharing what we know with the world'). Where Biden's speech in the immediate aftermath of the invasion served to create a certain regime of interpretation of the invasion, Blinken's had been a (failed) attempt to deter the invasion by authoritatively declaring certain truth about the world (Blinken, 22 February 2022). Both before and after the actual invasion, the speakers stress that it is Putin who can and must end the war, and so any responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict – imputed to the West in Russia's official speech –, in which Russia's efforts are destined to constitute a 'case study in failure' (Blinken, 2 June 2022), is denied. When the Kremlin portrays NATO as an imperial project, 'nothing is further from the truth.' (Biden, 26 March 2022) The salient basic discourse of identity and difference in Biden's speech, echoed more moderately in Blinken's statements such as 'time and again, we are demonstrating who fuels global problems and who solves them' (Blinken, 2 June 2022) and occasional references to Russia's violations of international law (making the conflict transcend a struggle between Russia and the West) (The White House, October 2022) and basic norms like sovereignty (Gambino 2022) can thus be seen as the only exception to the general congruence observed between the tweets' archives and the more general political discourse as observed in the examined period.



## 6. Conclusion

Digital diplomacy strategies of Russia and China in that part of the 'borderscape' of X that targets EU member states are surprisingly different. Although both countries in many ways share the critical attitudes towards the United States and although they support each other diplomatically, their narratives about the war in Ukraine are not the same. In other words, the cooperation between Russia and China did not translate into sharing a unified 'truth regime' and instead the two countries maintain distinct positions. The main narrative spread by Russian diplomats is that what we are witnessing is a defensive war of Russia against the aggressive West. The invasion of Ukraine is just a local flare-up of the broader conflict and Ukraine's government is a puppet of the West. Russian embassies in the EU try to minimize the military aspect of the war, rarely informing about events on the ground and generally downplaying the destruction caused by the invasion.

The avoidance of the allusions to the war can be contrasted to the frequent references to Ukraine as Russia's dark other, which constitute more than 16% of the corpus. Here, Russian diplomacy often uses a rhetorical repertoire borrowed from domestic politics, labelling Ukraine as an extremist country ruled by a Nazi government and offering analogies with the 'Great Patriotic War'. This narrative, albeit central for Russian communication, is highly idiosyncratic and does not travel well internationally. Neither China nor, understandably, the US employ that narrative in their diplomatic communications. The Russian attempts to steer international attention away from the military side of the invasion also result in the argument that the West leads a war with Russia on many fronts, from the attempts to corrupt it culturally and spread dangerous ideologies to economic and informational warfare.

It is interesting to note how undifferentiated the X messaging by Russian embassies is, with little adaptation to local contexts. While early in the war, the tweets were mainly critical of the US and the EU was presented mainly as a weak follower, the critique of the EU became increasingly scathing. At the end of the period analyzed, the critique became generalized, with frequent accusations of the West as a whole. In contrast to Chinese diplomatic communication, the Russian tweets were often more critical than official documents and speeches. In addition, the Russian official documents stressed different motifs, compared to the tweets, such as the neo-colonial and imperialist nature of the Western depredations and the dangers related to US hegemony. At the same time, concrete problems caused for the Global South by the war, such as rising food prices and decreased energy security, were not substantively discussed here.

Chinese embassies' tweets were, compared to the Russian ones, less confrontational and more cautious as China presented itself mainly as a neutral mediator advocating for a peaceful solution of the conflict. The Chinese tweets thus relied heavily on official documents, in particular China's Five-Point Position. Whereas Russia repeatedly presents itself as a champion of the resistance to the Western hegemony, China does not refer to itself as a power that stands against the West (although occasionally contesting Western narratives as well); instead, it frames its role as independent and standing aside from the conflict. As a result, the carefully crafted messages recognize Russia's "legitimate security concerns," but they avoid explicit endorsement of Russia's actions. China is also more careful in distinguishing the USA and the EU: some blame is attributed to the USA and NATO, but the EU (and Ukraine) is not directly attacked.

Chinese tweets differ from the Russian diplomatic communication in several other dimensions too: Firstly, although China refers to the conflict as the "Ukraine crisis" or "Ukraine issue," mostly avoiding the term "war" and semantically attaching the "conflict" to "Ukraine," tweets occasionally refer to the conflict as a "war" (following the statement by Xi Jinping). Also, China repeatedly expressed concerns about the conflict's negative impacts, and potential further escalation. Secondly, global negative consequences of the "Ukraine crisis" are also discussed: the conflict is framed as a challenge to global trade and economic

stability. While in other Chinese documents, the war is sometimes seen as an opportunity for China, such a framing is largely absent from tweets which do not mention any impact of the war on China itself and avoid portraying China as anyhow benefiting from the conflict.

In comparison, The U.S. communications as efforts to shape the social media 'borderscape' where boundaries are contested and renegotiated were predominantly aimed at conserving the political *status quo* founded on the constitutive norms of sovereignty and democracy against a revisionist challenge. This was done primarily by constructing a certain truth regime as a set of rhetorical devices through which Russia's war on Ukraine and the response of the community of Ukraine's allies as well as U.S. policies could be mediated and represented. In this sense, the Russian argument about the Russian-Ukrainian war as an instantiation of the global contestation between the West and Russia find a certain reflection in the US framing of the conflict. However, although US digital diplomacy focused on the construction of the collective subjectivity of the coalition supporting Ukraine, as well as more limited efforts at interpreting the conflict to outsiders as one that concerned them as either a universal struggle, more emphasis was on (re-)enacting a sense of ontological and epistemological security by truth construction as well as truth contestation mechanisms targeting 'alternative truths' established by adversaries' strategic disinformation campaigns.

Our study shows that Russia's and China's digital diplomacies in the EU exhibit a number of similarities, but – importantly – clear differences in which 'truth regimes' they seek to promote can be observed as well. Russia's increasingly sharp wholesale critique of the West is not automatically reproduced by China and its position of a neutral country supportive of peace shows a more nuanced assessment of the role of the EU and the US. With a few rare exceptions, China does not engage in spreading clearly identifiable disinformation about the conflict and its support for Russia's revisionist claims falls short of rhetorically attacking Ukraine or the EU. The contrast case of the United States shows a third strategy is possible. This strategy on one hand acknowledges Russia's disruptive behaviour as a revisionist power but simultaneously rejects the universalist undertones prevalent in the Russian discourse. If the Russian aggression is given attention, it is still regarded with a certain distance. This is also perhaps the reason why American digital diplomacy engages much less in identity affirmation as its identity (similarly as China's) is not tied to the conflict to such an extent as Russia's is. Our analysis thus shows that the three actors employ different approaches in their digital diplomacies, but it also confirms in general terms that digital diplomacy as part of foreign policy practice is a boundary-producing discipline. Therefore, even if there was little in the social media communications in the observed period that could be directly seen as identity affirmation, the analysis confirms in general terms that digital diplomacy as part of foreign policy practice is a boundary-producing discipline (cf. Campbell 1998) that has stabilising ambitions on political communities.

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Mission of China to Poland, 8 March 2022. ID 1501140997862051848  
Mission of China to the EU, 16 February 2023a. ID 1626135288035565568  
Mission of China to the EU, 16 February 2023b. ID 1563175596557242368  
Mission of China to the EU, 16 March 2022. ID 1504022095608561664  
Mission of China to the EU, 19 May 2022. ID 1527265603966443523  
Mission of China to the EU, 22 February 2022. ID 1496149706472312832  
Mission of China to the EU, 23 February 2022a. ID 1496400856824090624  
Mission of China to the EU, 23 February 2022b. ID 1496510181001334784  
Mission of China to the EU, 25 February 2022. ID 1497320838852485120  
Mission of China to the EU, 7 March 2022. ID 1500878486331875328  
Mission of China to the EU, 8 July 2022 1545305109848117248  
Mission of China to the EU, 9 June 2023 1667073315972734977  
Mission of China to the UK, 18 March 2022. ID 1504859346420867072  
Mission of China to the UK, 4 March 2022. ID 1499895412257439752  
Mission of Russia to Denmark, 3 March 2022. ID 1499443460763529225  
Mission of Russia to Denmark, 8 April 2022. ID 1512363456925741066  
Mission of Russia to Estonia, 25 February 2022. ID 1497237277352865797  
Mission of Russia to Estonia, 28 February 2022a. ID 1498370614184361986  
Mission of Russia to Estonia, 28 February 2022b. ID 1498274982299906048  
Mission of Russia to Estonia, 4 April 2022. ID 1510942404488089606  
Mission of Russia to France, 1 March 2022. ID 1498576584701272067  
Mission of Russia to France, 10 March 2022. ID 1501904029802192898  
Mission of Russia to France, 11 March 2022. ID 1502222878602842115  
Mission of Russia to France, 14 March 2022a. ID 1503286299599458311  
Mission of Russia to France, 14 March 2022b. ID 1503292832689262593  
Mission of Russia to France, 15 April 2022. ID 1514986999194791938  
Mission of Russia to France, 16 March 2022. ID 1504224419161550849  
Mission of Russia to France, 18 March 2022. ID 1504827380904439814  
Mission of Russia to France, 18 March 2022. ID 1504918377952862210  
Mission of Russia to France, 21 February 2022. ID 1495847485482360838  
Mission of Russia to France, 22 March 2022a. ID 1506182747559235596  
Mission of Russia to France, 22 March 2022b. ID 1506337486469017609  
Mission of Russia to France, 23 June 2022. ID 1539884627178971136  
Mission of Russia to France, 23 March 2022a. ID 1506666005476610052  
Mission of Russia to France, 23 March 2022b. ID 1506582159376666625  
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