

'Just Peace', Just Peace – What Peace?

The US and Russia's Conceptual Approaches to Peace and Conflict Settlement

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ABSTRACT

In theoretical terms ‘peace’ remains a largely contested concept. Academics propose competing definitions and conceptualizations, which possess their own normative and analytical advantages or disadvantages. Yet despite heated academic and theoretical debates, studies looking at the empirical understandings of peace and conflict-settlement strategies of different states are largely missing. In this paper, we set out to cover this gap and ask how similarities and differences in the actors’ conceptual understandings of peace play themselves out in their agreement and disagreement over the advocated ‘peace strategies’. Employing qualitative/quantitative content analysis of the statements made by the representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States at the UN Security Council, we analyze the debates around four recent and/or ongoing conflicts (Georgia 2008, Libya 2011, Syria 2011-2014 and Ukraine 2014). The study reveals that while agreement over the conceptualization of peace does not impede further disagreement as to the advocated peace strategies, disagreement at the conceptual level breeds deeper disagreement.

1 INTRODUCTION¹

“It is a characteristic feature of peace – that it cannot be defined” wrote Georg Picht in 1975, implying that the controversy over which type of societal order constitutes ‘peace’ is itself the object of all political conflicts (Picht 1975: 46). The fierce academic debates over the definition and contents of peace within the peace research community – which have so far not produced a consensual theoretic understanding of the concept – yield certain truth to this quote. At the same time these debates have not resulted in any systematic attempts at investigating the actual empirical understandings as employed by different actors in specific conflict situations. This research gap is surprising, since the relevant conceptualization of peace in each particular conflict might have important repercussions for the actors’ preferred conflict resolution strategies. Taking into account the diversity of *theoretical* conceptions and definitions of peace, we set forward to fill this gap by empirically investigating the diversity of *political* conceptions of peace, as well as their interrelations with the relevant peace strategies advocated by states in specific conflict situations. The identified research gap raises a number of interesting questions, which have received little attention in the literature. Is the plurality of conceptual definitions of peace within the theoretical debate also reflected in the political debates on peace and over the appropriate means of achieving it? Are these invoked consistently or on a situational basis? What are the inter-linkages between the actors’ different understandings of peace and the conflict resolution proposals they make? How do these interact with each other within and across particular conflicts?

This study focuses on the relevant concepts of peace as verbally invoked by official representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States. As members of the great powers club, both have a particularly weighty say “in determining issues that affect the peace and security of the

¹ A previous version of this paper was presented at the WISC Fourth Global International Studies Conference, 6-8 August 2014, Frankfurt am Main. The authors would like to thank Harald Müller and Tongfi Kim for valuable comments and critique.

international system as a whole” (Bull 2002: 196). As permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and wielders of the veto power, they can block or enhance international conflict resolution efforts. Consequently their specific approaches to peace and their conceptual agreements and disagreements are of particular significance for the overall management, resolution or perpetuation of particular conflicts. We investigate their officially invoked conceptualizations of peace and proposed conflict settlement strategies in four recent or ongoing conflicts, which have arguably been of particular importance to one or both of the actors: the Russian-Georgian Five-Day War of 2008, the crisis in Libya and the NATO intervention of 2011, the ongoing civil war in Syria and the recent conflict in and over Ukraine 2014².

While much has already been written about the different positions, possible underlying motivations, diverging interests and capabilities of the United States and Russia in relation to the conflicts analyzed here, this paper takes a different analytical lens. Namely, it sets out to investigate *how the diverging conceptual understandings of peace play themselves out in the actors’ favored or promoted conflict resolution proposals, and how these interact with each other and in relation to different conflict situations*. Taking into consideration the limited analytical and methodological scope of this study, it does not aim at delivering generalizable explanations for the overall conduct of the two states in these particular crises or extrapolating its conclusions to other actors’ overall behavior in conflicts. What this paper suggests is that a comparative examination of voiced subject-positions may shed light on the actors’ salient underlying conceptualizations, which, taken together with other factors (material, structural and ideational), might potentially contribute to the analytical understanding of complex interaction processes in conflict inception and resolution.

This paper offers a first step towards descriptive inference about the empirical manifestations of peace and opens an analytical perspective on the possible implications these might have for the actors’ conflict resolution approaches. Our investigation reveals that there is indeed a divergence in political conceptualizations of peace. Divergent conceptualizations do not only manifest themselves in the clashes of subject-positions of actors in specific conflicts, but might also have meaningful repercussions for the actors’ disagreement over the propagated peace strategies. Moreover, depending on the conflict situation different conceptions of peace might be invoked by the same actors, revealing the inconsistencies of specific claims. The analysis suggests that while agreement over the conceptualization of peace does not impede further disagreement as to the appropriate peace strategies, disagreement at the conceptual level fosters deeper disagreements in regard to the propagated policy options.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we provide a brief summary of the theoretical debates on the concept of peace and outline the diversity of conceptual understandings, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each conceptualization. The outlined analytical distinctions then provide the basis for the conceptual framework of our content-analysis, which is further described in more detail in the methodological section. Here the logic behind the selected sources is also explained. Subsequently we move to the empirical analysis of the four cases in question, providing brief summaries of the conceptual understandings that have been employed by Russia and the US in each particular conflict. Finally, we draw our conclusions regarding the consistency of and inter-linkages between the particular conceptions of peace and the actors’ voiced preferences for conflict resolution, including their disposition to the use and non-use of force.

2 The analysis of the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Ukraine is chronologically limited to July 1, 2014 (before the downing of the passenger plane MH17).

2 THE THEORETICAL DISCUSSION ON PEACE: PLURALITY OF ANALYTICAL CONCEPTIONS

2.1 *The Importance of Arriving at a Shared Understanding*

The reflections on peace are as old as the history of conflict itself (Koppe 2005: 18). As early as 426 AD Augustine in his famous writing *De civitate dei* (“The City of God”) laid out his eschatological understanding of peace conceptualizing it as some form of eternal and final state entered by human beings after death (Augustinus 1978). At the same time, philosophy of peace is not an exclusive Western exercise, as exemplified by the Gandhian conception of peace, or Ubuntu – one of the various African perspectives on peace. Such work devoted to specifying and describing the meaning and content of peace is important given the various functions performed by its definition. In general four such functions can be identified: 1) the constitutive/discipline-building function; 2) the normative-regulative function; 2) the political function, as well as 4) the action-guiding function. Whereas the first function is most closely related to the academic discussions on the *raison d’être* of any research devoted to peace, the last three might have direct repercussions for political practice.

First and foremost, definitions of peace specify what issues become relevant when considering questions of war and peace. In this sense, the concept performs an important **constitutive/discipline-building function** (Schwerdtfeger 2001: 27, Weller 2005: 93). As peace research seeks societal recognition as science, it has to explicate in what respect it differs from existing academic disciplines (Weller 2005: 93).

In contrast to the discipline-building function, the **normative-regulative function** (Schwerdtfeger 2001: 27) is relevant from a practical point of view. More specifically, peace is not only a phenomenon to be scientifically analyzed and examined, but also a value to be politically implemented and maintained (*ibid.*). Consequently, peace is routinely referred to as some form of normative or regulative compass for domestic and foreign policies, potentially yielding far-reaching practical implications depending on the respective understanding at hand. The normative-regulative function is thus closely linked to the political and action-guiding functions of the peace concept. Whereas the **political function** refers to peace as a political norm whose contents are constantly re-negotiated and discussed in public debate, **the action-guiding function** denotes the possibility of translating abstract concepts into concrete, policy-relevant peace strategies:

“Definitions of peace imply strategies for peace. The definition of the (peace-)conflict term is ultimately a declaration of intent concerning the (peace-)conflict strategy to be pursued” (Schwerdtfeger 2001: 28).

Given its important functions, it becomes apparent that any understanding of peace should be as consensual as possible, both from a theoretical and practical perspective. Especially when joint efforts for crisis settlement are required, a minimal consensus in relation to the understanding of what constitutes peace is needed in order to avoid deadlock situations or even counter-productive outcomes. Consequently, “true peace is a peace which is produced and maintained by the many and is not only organized by the few for the many” (Schwerdtfeger 2001: 14). Such an understanding, however, can only be produced and maintained by means of reasoning and agreement. This is mainly due to the factual plurality of interests, values and consequently interpretations, which render the mere imposition of pre-defined normative ideas futile:

“the (...) world of humankind, in its plurality of powers, of interests, of ‘passions’, belief attitudes and systems, balks at proselytism, of whatever kind (...)” (Sternberger 1984: 13).

2.2 *Competing Theoretical Conceptualizations of Peace*

The plurality of understandings already manifests itself within the academic debate, which lacks a consensual agreement on the substance of peace. In the following, we will discuss five major conceptual dichotomies framing the academic controversy. While the theoretical debate over the

theoretical definitions of peace is not exhausted by the brief summary provided here, it provides the basis for the conceptual framework of our empirical investigation.

Narrow vs. broad conceptions of peace

The *narrow vs. broad* dichotomy in the conceptualization of peace refers the question of whether peace can be defined as the sole absence of direct, collective violence – and thus requires the transformation of violent conflict into a non-violent one –, or whether it also presupposes the absence of structural violence and thus necessitates the elimination of the root causes of conflict. The latter notion has been largely influenced by Johan Galtung, one of the major promoters of a broad understanding of violence and peace. According to him, violence is present whenever human beings are influenced in a way that their “actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations” (Galtung 1975: 9). Consequently, violence does not only include direct, physical violence, but also more indirect forms of oppression without a clear subject-object-relation, so-called structural violence (ibid.: 13). Structural violence manifests itself in social injustices. Thus, in order to qualify as peace, a situation must be characterized by both the absence of direct, physical violence, as well as of structural violence (ibid.: 32). In Galtung’s conception, peace is inextricably linked to the provision of equal opportunities in life and is thus inseparably linked to the provision of social justice.

Such a broad understanding of peace has its strengths and weaknesses. Thus it draws attention to the whole spectrum of inadequate social conditions providing a holistic perspective on the phenomenon of peace. Within a broad conception of peace it becomes impossible to conceive of an unjust regime as peaceful (Müller 2003: 209-16). However, the broad conception of peace possesses a number of severe shortcomings as compared to the narrow understanding. Broad conceptions run the risk of legitimizing the use of force, as the elimination of violent conflicts may itself necessitate the application of violent means (Brock 2002: 100, Müller 2003: 212). As Brock puts it, „if violence is so omnipresent, as Galtung’s definition suggests, non-violent behavior is extremely unlikely” (Brock 2002: 101), and the prospects of establishing peace “by peaceful means” become rather dire. What is more, the adoption of a broad conception of peace is associated with certain analytical difficulties. In particular, it has been argued that the broad conception risks becoming imprecise and “meaningless” (Brock 2002: 99, Müller 2003: 209-16). Consequently these might become subject to politicized misuse and serve as rhetorical justifications for interventionist intentions. On the other hand, narrow definitions of peace as the absence of large-scale physical violence might be misused for the justification of non-action and legitimization of oppressive political regimes.

Positive vs. negative conception of peace

Since the narrow vs. broad conceptual distinction emphasizes either the absence of physical violence or the realization of more encompassing social justice, it is sometimes treated synonymously with the *negative vs. positive* dichotomy in the conceptualization of peace. The debate here revolves around the question whether the peace definition is developed *via negationis* (through establishing conditions which are to be absent in a situation of peace) or affirmatively (by outlining the specific characteristics of peace) (Huber 1971: 40). Defining peace as the absence of war would, for instance, be a negative understanding of peace, whereas considering harmony, order or justice as constitutive of peace (Banks 1987, Johnson 1976) would reflect a positive understanding.

Similar to broad and narrow conceptions, positive and negative understandings of peace also possess their strengths and weaknesses. The negative conceptualization, as it has been critically remarked, lacks an integrating goal or vision perceived as desirable beyond the mere absence of war (Meyers 1994: 66). While acknowledging that ‘negative peace’ is indeed a minimum requirement for the peaceful co-existence of humankind, discomfort in relation to such understanding results mainly from the claim that negative peace alone is not sufficient for arriving at a

situation of peace (Lailach 1998: 28). ‘Positive peace’, however, can be arbitrarily filled with whatever meanings one prefers (Meyers 1994: 68). For instance, there is no single/unified concept of justice; instead, it can be interpreted and understood in various ways (e.g. procedural, substantive, distributional justice) (Müller 2003: 212). A premature specification of the positive contents of peace without a previous systematic, empirical examination would run the risk of ideologizing particularistic worldviews (Huber 1971: 43).

Long-term vs. short-term peace

Another conceptual dichotomy concerns the temporal dimension of peace. The question here is whether peace is only conceivable as long-term peace or whether temporally limited, short-term peace can also be conceptualized as peace. Whereas under a positive, broad conception peace necessarily has to be long-term, proponents of a narrow understanding would generally agree that peace has to be somewhat durable, since “peace presupposes a certain degree of stability; a ‘second-long peace’ is absurd” (Müller 2003: 219). Consequently, Lothar Brock considers the durability of peace to be one of four “Pluses”, which can be added to and combined with a narrow understanding of peace. Similarly, Ernst-Otto Czempiel argues that if taken seriously, the self-discriminating, negative peace is exceptionally demanding:

“[Negative peace] does not denominate the avoidance of war, as has been successfully pursued for forty years in the East-West Conflict, not the temporal absence of armed hostilities, but their permanent elimination” (Czempiel 2002: 85).

In order to arrive at a situation of non-war, Czempiel argues, war as an approach to conflict management has to be abolished and substituted by different conflict management tools (ibid.)

The Geographical Scope of Peace: Global vs. Local

Similar to the question regarding the durability of peace, the issue of geographical scope is mainly debated by the proponents of a narrow, negative conception of peace. For advocates of a positive, broad understanding, a divisible, regional peace would be a *contradictio in adiecto*, as peace can only be truly stable as a whole, i.e. as world peace. Only through the provision of equal life opportunities for everyone can structural violence be eliminated, which makes the collective use of force obsolete. Against this background, Georg Picht argued that it is impossible to adequately describe a situation as peace without the existence of a more encompassing world society (Picht 1971: 23f).

In contrast, proponents of a narrow conception of peace are more divided on the issue. While peace within the OECD could have been regarded as relatively stable prior to September 11, 2001, the terror attacks have tragically revealed that it became increasingly difficult for OECD countries to isolate themselves against violent conflicts in their peripheries (Brock 2002). Due to existing markets of violence, OECD countries become increasingly entangled in conflicts outside the OECD area (Brock 2002: 107). For the “OECD peace” to be durable, peace, according to Brock, has to be of a universal nature. Yet world peace needs not necessarily be a unitary peace:

“In the end, [peace] is only conceivable as a constellation, in which people peacefully co-exist in all parts of the world according to their own assessment, according to their own sentiments” (Brock 2002: 106).

The conviction regarding the necessity of world peace is not shared by all proponents of a narrow understanding of peace. According to Müller, regardless of the increasing global interdependencies, peace in Scandinavia, for instance, cannot be contested or hampered by unpeaceful relations in Sierra Leone. Equally, it is possible in his view to describe the state of affairs in the member states of the European Union as peaceful, while at the same time exempting certain regions such as Northern Ireland or the Basque region: “If peace is only supposed to be world peace, why then differentiate between the two terms?” (Müller 2003: 216).

Unit of Reference and Level of Analysis: Collective vs. Individual

Any conceptualization of peace inevitably necessitates a decision on who the intended beneficiaries of peace are. However, despite its fundamental importance the question of peace addressees is rarely explicated or thoroughly addressed within the academic debate (Czempiel 1972: 39). The proponents of the broad understanding of peace often implicitly refer to humankind in its entirety as a starting point. This, however, is problematic. In particular, specific reference to humankind as the primary addressee of peace risks vesting peace researchers with “a veil of cloudiness” (ibid), as it places the concept of peace so far beyond political reality that it can easily be verbally reconciled with any kind of aggressive and unpeaceful policies. More specifically, what “world peace” demands, is adaptable at will to whatever interests states may pursue (ibid). By contrast, taking only *certain* groups as the unit of reference risks creating particularistic visions of peace and is thus undesirable from a normative perspective. According to Czempiel, the unit of reference for peace can thus only be the individual – albeit only in her or his function as a member of a group. At the same time this limitation does not “(...) constrain the claim of each individual to be fully included into any concept of peace. [It] only confirms his existence as an individual. It is societal existence whose level of self-fulfillment can only be measured on the basis of the individual and in that sense can only be judged by him” (Czempiel 1972: 44).

Similar to the problem of the unit of reference, the level of analysis for a given concept of peace is rarely problematized or scrutinized either (Czempiel 1972: 18). Yet there is more than one level upon which peace can be conceptualized: starting from the level of the individual to the level of certain groups, the state or even the international system. Whereas prioritizing the level of the state or the system is common in IR, scholars mainly interested in domestic inner-societal dynamics tend to give more weight to the level of certain groups or the individual. Others try to find some middle ground. Müller, for instance, takes the collective, i.e. the state, as the level of analysis. However, in order to address the increasing number of internal as compared to inter-state conflicts, he distinguishes between internal and external peace (Müller 2003: 216).

3 FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: METHODOLOGY, SOURCES AND DESIGN

As the previous section has already outlined, the conceptualization of peace (and consequently of the appropriate ways of achieving it) remains a highly contested analytical issue. At the same time, the heated theoretical and normative debates have so far not resulted in any attempts at grasping the empirical diversity of peace conceptualizations as employed by different actors in various conflict situations and over time. Since understandings and definitions of peace render specific implications for concrete policy choices in conflict situations (Schwerdtfeger 2001: 28), one might argue that diverging empirical conceptualizations might foster or deepen existing disagreements over the appropriate conflict-settlement and peace-building measures or strategies. The primary aim of this empirical investigation is examining how different conceptions of peace are invoked by different actors and how those play themselves out in the actors’ agreement or disagreement over the ways of ending violent conflicts.

With this aim in mind, qualitative and quantitative content analysis is employed in order to systematically analyze the conceptualizations of peace and peace strategies in the official communication of the Russian Federation and the United States. Four recent or ongoing conflicts, directly relevant for one or both of the actors, have been selected as case studies: the Russian-Georgian war (2008), the conflict in Libya prior to and following the NATO intervention (2011-2012), the ongoing civil war in Syria (2011-2014) and the recent crisis in Ukraine shortly before and after Russia’s annexation of Crimea (2014). All of these conflicts have arguably been marked by a higher (as in the case of Crimea) or lower (as in the case of Libya) degree of disagreement between the Russian Federation and the United States in what concerned the possible conflict resolution options.

The database is comprised of 40 Security Council meeting records, which include a total of 79 individual statements over five years (2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) from four official representatives of Russia and eight representatives of the United States. The Security Council debates were selected as the primary source for the analysis for a number of methodological and practical reasons. First of all, the UN Security Council serves as the primary forum for determining “the existence of any threat to peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” and deciding upon the measures “to maintain or restore international peace and security” (UN Charter, Chapter VII, Art. 39). Second, since both states act as permanent members, their representatives are present (and can deliver their statements) at all the meetings, which allows for a systematic comparative examination of their publicly voiced positions on different issues and conflicts over time as well as in relation to each other. Third, the statements made by states’ representatives before the UN body directly reflect the official positions of their respective governments towards the particular conflict. Fourth, and most practically relevant, the UN Official Document System (ODS) and the UN Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) offer easily accessible and searchable verbatim records of all the UNSC formal (and open) meetings.

For coding purposes a deductive theory-driven coding scheme was created based on the existing conceptualizations of peace in the literature and current academic debates. The scheme was later inductively updated in the course of the empirical analysis to account for some specific practical issues covered in the Security Council discussions (see Table 1). As it has already been mentioned earlier, the coding scheme was largely informed by the five conceptual distinctions as they are discussed in the literature: narrow vs. broad, positive vs. negative, short-term vs. long-term, local vs. global, individual vs. collective³.

Aside from some minor inductive updates (like adding the code “International Criminal Prosecution” for the Libyan and later Syrian cases), the categories within the coding framework were intentionally kept as general as possible in order to ensure the possibility of cross-case and cross-country comparisons. Only those statements containing at least one reference to the concept of peace or conflict settlement (as laid down in the coding framework) have been coded. The smallest unit of analysis was presented by an argument: one sentence may contain multiple arguments, but similar arguments appearing in separate (consecutive) sentences were coded separately. Thus, a syntactic sentence was treated as the largest unit of analysis (see Table 1 for examples of coded statements).

The categories presented in the coding matrix are neither completely exhaustive, nor mutually exclusive, but rather present abstract and generalizable terms for capturing frequently invoked concepts and understandings of peace and conflict resolution options within state agents’ speech acts. Quantitative content analysis was employed in order to capture the frequency of references to particular concepts and ideas and to look at their development over time and across different actors, while qualitative content analysis was used in order to specifically look at the meanings employed and to establish their interconnections.

We do not assess the states’ underlying motives, interests or motivations. Moreover, this analysis is not about establishing the root causes of the analyzed conflicts or assessing the respective roles

3 The first five codes presented in the coding framework (“Understanding of peace”, “(Temporal) Scope”, “Level of application/Unit of reference”, “(Source of) Violence” and “Outreach/Geographical scope”) are designed to capture the different ways in which the representatives of states grasp the concept of peace. Within the category “Understanding of peace” the first five sub-codes (Civil and political rights, Social justice, Democratic form of government, Rule of law, Civil peace) are designed to capture broad conceptualizations of peace, while the latter two (Basic human rights and Ceasefire) refer to a narrow conception (understood as cessation of violence). Similarly the first six sub-codes within this category refer to a positive understanding of peace, while the last one denotes a negative understanding. Within the “(Temporal) Scope” category only those statements explicitly containing words such as “long-term” and “durable” were coded. In terms of geographical scope (“Outreach”), once again, only those statements were coded that contained a direct literal reference to the global or regional dimension of the conflict in order to avoid the inflationary use of the code. The latter three codes (“Peace through (external means)/(internal means)” and “Post-conflict settlement”) are used to capture the states’ specific proposals for crisis management and conflict settlement.

Russia, the United States or both played or continue to play in their inception, resolution, perpetuation, escalation or de-escalation. Neither does this study aim at explaining the particular actions or reactions of the actors in these conflict situations. For these reasons the study stops short of making generalizable claims as to Russia's or the United States' behavior and strategies in conflicts and their overall approaches to conflict resolution. Indeed, multiple factors (domestic, institutional and structural) contribute to the actual policy outputs, which this empirical investigation does not address. This study rather attempts at presenting the diverging and/or converging voiced conceptual understandings and various discursive interpretations, representations and positions on peace and peace efforts as invoked by the United States and the Russian Federation.

4 EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION: THE US AND RUSSIAN CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

4.1 *The August War between Russia and Georgia: Tables Turned?*

The so-called Five-Day Russian-Georgian war of 2008 has become the first inter-state conflict since the collapse of the Soviet Union which Russia became party to militarily. It came as a surprise to the international political and academic community and quickly produced talk about a new confrontation and prophecies of a 'New Cold War' (for a critical assessment see: Sakwa 2008; Makarychev 2011). The conflict has been characterized by an unexpected role reversal between the old Cold War rivals, in which Russia, a traditional advocate of the principle of non-interference and strong opponent of military interventions after what it had deemed to be disastrous military campaigns in Yugoslavia and Iraq, started actively employing humanitarian rhetoric and explicitly normative 'liberal interventionist' arguments. Meanwhile the United States, the 'world gendarme' and the main propagator of a liberal world order, resorted to sovereignty-based, explicitly non-interventionist argumentation. This raises multiple questions, but the one relevant for this research is how these different positions and conceptualizations interrelated with each other in the course of the crisis.

Before we move to the actual analysis, we shall shortly recapitulate the main events. The chronology and the interpretations are still being largely contested by both Russia and Georgia, but the report of an independent fact-finding mission mandated by the Council of the European Union allows a rough reconstruction of the course and consequences of the conflict (see Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia 2009 I, II, III). It started on the night of 7 to 8 August with a Georgian artillery strike on the city of Tskhinvali in South Ossetia, which was followed by Russian air force and artillery strikes on Georgian targets and a subsequent military intervention in the early afternoon of August 8. Russian troops rapidly forced the Georgian military out of South Ossetia and penetrated deeply into Georgian territory, stopping short of the capital. After five days of military hostilities (hence the name 'Five-Day War') a preliminary ceasefire was agreed on August 12 between Russia and Georgia under the mediation efforts of France. On August 26 Russia responded to the appeal of South Ossetia and Abkhazia unilaterally recognizing the breakaway republics' independence, which resulted in Georgia cutting diplomatic relations with Moscow. Although then President Medvedev signed an agreement on the withdrawal of Russian troops on September 8 (the so-called 'implementation agreement'), the last troops left Georgian territory only in October 2008. The EU-mandated mission reported, that the Georgian military operation and the Russian invasion resulted in around 850 deaths (military and civilian) and more than 100,000 people displaced from their homes (Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia 2009 II: 223, 224).

Although most of the negotiations between the representatives of Russia, Georgia and the United States with then European Council President Nicolas Sarkozy acting as a semi-official mediator took place behind closed doors and through secure telephone lines, the Security Council,

paralyzed throughout and incapable of either preventing or solving the conflict, provided a scene for a public exchange of official subject-positions, justifications and mutual accusations. The Security Council met four times during the actual crisis (twice on August 8 upon request of Russia and later Georgia and on August 10 upon request of Georgia and the United States; the UNSC also held a closed meeting on August 11) and twice in its immediate aftermath (on August 19 and 28)⁴. During the conflict, it failed thrice to agree upon a statement calling for an immediate ceasefire and a truce. The Security Council later returned to the conflict in order to prolong the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia, but since it is widely assumed that the military conflict ended with the signing of the implementation agreement on September 8 (Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia 2009 I: 22), this analysis will only consider the five open UNSC meetings, which took place from August 8 to August 28.

As it has been noted above, Russia is believed to have surprisingly and unexpectedly taken “a discursive jump” and positioned itself as “an actor engaging in a local conflict as a guardian of those in danger and more generally a defender of the value-based international society” (Joenniemi 2011: 104). While heavily emphasizing the breach of the agreement on the non-use of force on Georgia’s part, Russia’s UN Representative Vitaly Churkin had been gradually building up the justificatory narrative for Russia’s own use of force, first pointing to “reports of ethnic cleansing in the villages of South Ossetia”⁵, then reporting casualties among the Russian peacekeepers and finally referring to the right of the Russian Federation to protect the “lives and dignity” of its compatriots “in accordance with the Constitution of Russia and in accordance with the laws of the Russian Federation and international law” (S/PV. 5952). Shortly after Russia’s military invasion on August 8 Churkin announced that Russia was intervening “as a real peacekeeper” in its traditional role as a “guarantor of the security of the peoples of the Caucasus” (ibid).

Because of its false allegations of genocide in South Ossetia, the Russian government had been subsequently accused of misusing the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm in order to legitimize its military intervention in Georgia (Badescu/Weiss 2010: 364; Stuenkel 2014: 13). Russia’s UN representative did indeed point out to the “large loss of civilian life” (S/PV.5953) and even threw a rhetorical question at the convened audience: “how can we not recall the responsibility to protect that we hear so much about in the United Nations?” (S/PV.5952). Yet Russia’s justificatory narrative in its formulation (aside from the legal inconsistencies) is quite different from the original R2P concept. The main characteristic feature of Russia’s assertive humanitarianism is its particularistic character – aimed at the protection of *Russian citizens* or *Russian-speakers*, selectively taking them as the unit of reference – in contrast to the universalistic humanitarian principle of the R2P norm. This difference was made explicit by Russia’s Foreign minister Lavrov, who pointed out that it was the “Constitution of the Russian Federation, the laws of the Russian Federation” which made it “absolutely unavoidable [for Russia] to exercise responsibility to protect” (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 09.08.2008)⁶.

4 See: Security Council meeting records S/PV.5951, S/PV.5952, S/PV.5953, S/PV.5954 (closed), S/PV.5961 and S/PV.5969.

5 On August 8 Churkin claimed that the Georgian military operation resulted in 1,400 deaths in Tskhinvali alone (S/PV.5952). Two days later Russia’s representative delivered an emotional speech accusing the Georgian government of genocide: “What legal terms can be used to describe what has been done by the Georgian leadership? Can we use “ethnic cleansing”, for example, when, over a number of days, nearly 30,000 of the 120,000 people of South Ossetia have become refugees who have fled to Russia: more than a quarter of the population. They went across the border from South Ossetia to the North at great risk to their lives. Is that ethnic cleansing or is it not? Should we describe that as genocide or not? When out of that population of 120,000, 2,000 innocent civilians die on the first day, is that genocide or is it not? How many people, how many civilians must die before we describe it as genocide?” (S/PV.5953).

6 Here this analysis dwells away from the quite common assumption that Lavrov’s “decision to refer explicitly to R2P” “shows that Russia in principle agrees with the notion that violating another country’s sovereignty may be justified if that country commits mass atrocities against its own citizens” (Stuenkel 2014: 12). First of all, Lavrov did not explicitly

Another rhetorical jump, uncharacteristic of Russia's traditional sovereignty and territorial integrity-asserting stance was the invocation of the principle of self-determination in regard to its unilateral recognition of South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence. According to Churkin, Russia recognized the two breakaway republics "aware of its responsibility for ensuring the survival of their brotherly peoples in the face of the aggressive and chauvinistic policy of Tbilisi" (S/PV.5969). Thus, it was the use of "crude and blatant military force" on the part of Saakashvili, as well as Georgia's long-lasting policy of exclusion and discrimination of the peoples of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which altogether rendered them "considerably more grounds for recognition than Kosovo" (ibid.) and allegedly provided the legal and historical basis for Russia's decision – which stood in conflict with the principle of territorial integrity. While the conceptualization of peace was largely negative and narrow, the justification for the use of force was based on a preferential selectivity in regard to Russian-speakers.

The position of the United States, whose UN representatives from the onset of the crisis have been repeatedly emphasizing the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference, might appear to stand in stark contrast to Russia's sudden humanitarian-normative stance. The US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad took note of Russia's claimed intention of "protect[ing] its peacekeepers and the civilian population in South Ossetia" but stressed that its reaction went "far beyond any reasonable measure required to do so" (S/PV.5953). This point was later reiterated by Alejandro D. Wolff, who stated that "Russia's military offensive and political objectives went far beyond any reasonable or credible limit consistent with its claims" (S/PV.5961). To the contrary, according to the American diplomats, it was Russia's military involvement which resulted in an unprecedented outbreak of violence and caused "increased loss of innocent life and humanitarian suffering" (S/PV.5953). At the same time the United States denounced Russia's intervention as an illegitimate aggression against "a sovereign country with a democratically elected Government that pose[d] no threat to Russia" (S/PV.5961)⁷. The repeated emphasis on the democratically elected nature of Georgia's political leadership rendered Russia's military action against it unlawful and unjustifiable. In the eyes of American diplomats, the conflict may have started as an attempt at putting an end to Georgia's campaign in South Ossetia, but was blown out of proportion by further military action on Georgian soil and support for the armed struggle of Abkhazians. Following the understanding of the conflict as an interstate one and as a military aggression "against a sovereign and democratic state of Georgia" (S/PV.5953), the US Representatives were continuously calling for an immediate ceasefire on Russia's part and for diplomatic talks between the governments of Russia and Georgia, demonstrating a narrow and negative understanding of peace, tied to the individual level.

These calls apparently clashed with Russia's newly defined humanitarianism. However, as the analysis suggests, Russia's use of humanitarian rhetoric was, if not completely "hollow" (Badescu/Weiss 2010: 364), excusatory-exceptionalist rather than normative-universalist. Thus Churkin re-emphasized Russia's respect for the principle of non-interference, stating that "of course, it is bad to use force", but then immediately pointed out to the West's own use of armed

use the universal R2P norm, but a vaguely (and questionably) formulated principle of ex-territoriality, allegedly rooted in the Russian Constitution and legislation. Second, his remark, taken together with Putin's earlier statement and Churkin's comment in the Security Council, points to the specific exceptionality in the application of the use of force against sovereign states – not necessarily when the state commits mass atrocities, but when the "life and dignity" or Russian citizens are being jeopardized (S/PV.5952).

⁷ Here Zalmay Khalilzad insinuated that Russia's actual intention in Georgia was regime change and not a peacekeeping operation, stressing that Churkin himself acknowledged that the situation was "no longer about South Ossetia" and recalling a famous phone conversation between Foreign Minister Lavrov and Secretary of State Rice, in which the latter demanded that "Saakashvili must go" (S/PV.5953). Churkin countered by declaring "regime change [to be] an American expression" (ibid.), but avoided a direct answer.

forces in Kosovo and Iraq⁸ (S/PV.5969). He declared the US remarks on Russia's "terror" against civilian population "absolutely unacceptable" as they came from the representative of a country whose actions "with regard to civilian populations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Serbia" were "known" to the international community (S/PV.5953). Similarly Churkin justified Russia's acknowledgement of the breakaway republics' independence in violation of the territorial integrity principle pointing out to the Kosovo precedent, which he himself then renounced as a violation of particular UN resolutions and international law in general (S/PV.5969). The particularistic references to the specificity of the situation and Russia's role in it (as a traditional peacekeeper in the region and protector of Russians and Russian-speakers), as well as the apologetic justifications of one's own (unacknowledged) violations of the principles of international law based on previous precedents (regarded as illegitimate) renders Russia's entire humanitarian-normative argumentation rather shaky, since the conceptual core was still embedded in the traditional sovereignty-based discourse, which does not justify the use of force against sovereign states. This is why Churkin appeared to have found it increasingly difficult to respond to the repeated calls for an immediate ceasefire and diplomatic solution. Indeed, he did acknowledge multiple times that "peace is better than war" and rhetorically responded with such questions as "who would object to ceasefire? Who would object to peace?" (S/PV.5952). Yet Russia's representation of the conflict as "blatant and aggressive actions of the Georgian military forces against [...] an internationally recognized party to the conflict" (S/PV.5951) and as a "bloody military adventure" (S/PV.5969) against the people of the republic and Russian citizens, which the Russian Federation could not allow to "go unpunished" (S/PV.5952), determined Russia's demands for an immediate cessation of violence on the part of Georgia. This explicated a rather narrow/negative conceptualization of peace – with an emphasis on Russia's role as a peacekeeper and not party to the conflict. In this context he even complimented Ambassador Khalilzad for "the clearest statement about a ceasefire and peace-loving intentions", which in his eyes should have rather come from the representative of Georgia (S/PV.5953).

All in all, despite the seeming incompatibility of the views demonstrated by Russia and the United States in the Georgian conflict, both states expressed rather similar understandings of peace (negative and narrow as an end to military action and return to the pre-conflict status-quo) and similar views on the short-term strategies of restoring the pre-conflict status-quo (ceasefire and end of military hostilities; see Figure 1). Disagreements largely boiled down to the 'blame-game' with the two sides having diametrically opposing views as to who was responsible for the escalation and which side should have stopped (or had already stopped) violence. In terms of the conceptual consistency of both positions, it should be noted that although on the surface the argumentative tables might have appeared to be turned between Russia and the United States, the underlying conceptual premises were pretty much in line with the states' traditional understandings. Thus, the repeated reference to Russia's illegitimate aggression against a sovereign democratic state as employed by the US reveals a broader conceptual understanding of peace (as presupposing the presence of a just political order and not only the absence of violence). At the same time Russia's excusatory discourse making use of the exceptional necessity argument revealed its preference for sovereignty-based status-quo, the disturbance of which deserved to be punished.

4.2 *The Conflict in Libya: Deliberate Misunderstandings?*

Much has already been written about the crisis in Libya and the NATO operation in general, and also on the specific negotiations (including those in the UN Security Council), which led to the adoption of Resolutions 1970 and 1973 (see e.g.: Bellamy/Williams 2011; Adler-Nissen/Pouliot

8 At this point Churkin sarcastically asked the US representative, whether "he ha[d] found the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq yet, or [was] he still looking for them", which Wolff renounced as an attempt at comparing "completely unrelated and dissimilar situations" (S/PV.5969).

2014). The UNSC-mandated authorization of the use of force for humanitarian purposes without the consent of the government in-power has now become a largely contested case of R2P use. The NATO operation in Libya is often being treated as a “model intervention” and as an example of best practice implementation of the emerging R2P norm by some academics and practitioners (see e.g.: Daalder/Stavridis 2012; Chivvis 2012; Etzioni 2012). Recent studies, however, suggest that the positive assessment of the campaign has been an over-estimation (Kuperman 2013). NATO’s conduct in Libya was harshly criticized by BRICS diplomats from the early days of the operation. While Washington largely continues to view the Libyan operation as a success, for BRICS states, it rather presented a “dangerous precedent” (Stuenkel 2014: 18). In theoretical and analytical terms, there is also little consensus among the academics as to the underlying motivations and intentions (be they normative or materialistic) of those who actively lobbied for the intervention and eventually carried it out (the P3), and those who later strongly condemned it, despite having initially mandated the use of force in the Security Council (Russia and China, for example). This analysis focuses on the specific conceptualizations of peace invoked by Russia and the United States in the UNSC debate on the conflict.

The crisis in Libya developed within the overall context of the Arab Spring, with popular uprisings having (by that time) already led to the ousting of Tunisian long-time President Ben Ali and to the resignation of Egypt’s President Mubarak. With events on the ground developing rapidly, the Security Council acted extremely fast in response (Adler-Nissen/Pouliot 2014: 10). On February 28, 2011 (only two weeks after the regime’s violent crackdown on the protesters in Benghazi) the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1970, which imposed an arms embargo on the Libyan state, introduced sanctions against government officials responsible for violence against the civilian population and referred the case to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Less than a month later, when these measures had proven incapable of deterring the regime from further threats of attacks against civilians, the Security Council met for the second time on March 17 to pass Resolution 1973, which authorized the establishment of a no-fly zone and the use of “all necessary measures [...] to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack”. However, the resolution explicitly “exclude[d] a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory” and reaffirmed “the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya”⁹. Days later NATO began its air force operation, launching air strikes on Libyan military positions. With the direct air support on the part of NATO the rapidly growing rebel forces soon launched a military offensive against the Qadhafi-loyal army. The campaign effectively ended in regime change, with Qadhafi executed on October 20, 2011 and power being transferred to the National Transitional Council. Despite the still ongoing local conflicts and persisting internal violence, which has slowly developed into a protracted civil war, October 23, 2011 is considered to be the formal end of the Libyan civil war (as announced by the National Transitional Council; see also: ICG 2012: 1)¹⁰. Therefore this study only considers the four Security Council meetings which took place in the course of the conflict from February 26 to September 16, 2011.¹¹

The United States (together with the United Kingdom and France) acted as one of the main proponents of the use of force for the protection of civilians and as one of the sponsors of both Resolutions 1970 and 1973. Studies suggest that while initially the leading role largely belonged to British and French diplomats with the United States being more reluctant towards the military option during the discussions on Resolution 1970 (Bellamy/Williams 2011: 839), Washing-

9 See: S/RES/1973 (2011).

10 On October 31 the Security Council passed Resolution 2011 on the prevention of the proliferation of arms and other lethal materials. The subsequent Security Council meetings on the situation in Libya have primarily been addressing questions of post-conflict settlement and ICC investigation and have served as an arena for a public exchange of accusations and justifications on the misuse of the UN mandate.

11 See: Security Council meeting records S/PV.6491, S/PV.6498, S/PV.6528 and S/PV.6620.

ton quickly made up its mind afterwards and acted as one of the main moral advocates and supporters of Resolution 1973 (Adler-Nissen/Pouliot 2014: 13; Steele/Heinze 2014: 106). Russia, on its part, supported the 1970 Resolution, but abstained on Resolution 1973, which authorized the use of force in order to protect the civilian population against the Libyan government. Despite the apparent unity of the Council in the earlier discussions (with Russia reportedly not putting up much of a fight), the specific understandings of the measures and their implications revealed considerable differences among the US and Russian representatives.

Commenting on the adopted resolution 1970, the Russian UN Representative condemned the “use of military force against peaceful demonstrators and all other manifestations of violence” and proclaimed them “absolutely unacceptable” (S/PV.6491). Although this resonated with the US Ambassador Rice’s statement that “violence of any sort against the Libyan people by their Government or security forces” could not be tolerated, Churkin also emphasized that the “settlement of the situation in Libya [was] possible only through political means”. He also stressed that the resolution itself did not in fact “enjoin sanctions, even indirect, for forceful interference in Libya’s affairs”, but was necessary to “preserve Libya as a united, sovereign state with territorial integrity” (ibid.). This stood in observable contrast to the US Representative’s demands for Muammar Qadhafi “to do what is right for his country, by leaving” immediately and promise that the Libyan leaders would be “held accountable for violating [the universal] rights and for failing to meet their most basic responsibilities to their people” (ibid.). Both states shared a positive understanding of peace and referred to the individual level, but the United States’ vision of peace was broad, as compared to Russia’s narrow one.

While these discrepancies did not prevent the Council from adopting this and the consequent resolution, the conceptual divide was gradually becoming ever more evident. Ambassador Rice delivered a hasty speech explaining the US vote on Resolution 1973, calling it a response “to the Libyan people’s cry for help” and announcing her government’s commitment to the “Libyan people in support of their universal rights” (S/PV.6498). Churkin also reiterated Russia’s position on the “clear unacceptability of the use of force against the civilian population”, but complained that the resolution draft “[had morphed] before [the Council’s] very eyes, transcending the initial concept” of the no-fly zone, and “potentially open[ing] the door to large-scale military intervention” (ibid.). According to Churkin, the fact that “the passion of some Council members for methods involving force prevailed” was “unfortunate and regrettable” and stressed that the “responsibility for the inevitable humanitarian consequences of the excessive use of *outside force* (emphasis added) in Libya [would] fall fair and square on the shoulders of those who might undertake such action” (ibid.).

In the aftermath of the adoption of Resolution 1973 and in the course of NATO’s military operation, Russia harshly criticized the manner of NATO’s involvement in Libya stressing that the “disproportionate use of force [was] unacceptable” (S/PV.6528). The United States, on the other hand, kept repeatedly referring to the atrocities committed by the Qadhafi regime, announcing that the Libyan government lost “any and all legitimacy to lead” the people of Libya, who “deserve[d] leaders who share[d] their aspirations to freedom, democracy and dignity” (ibid.). These arguments were invoked as an effective moral justification for the use of force. Russia, on the other hand, continuously stressed its conviction, that “the quickest way to ensure robust security for the civilian population and the long-term stabilization of the situation in Libya [was] immediate ceasefire” (S/PV.6498). With the NATO operation already underway, Russia once again announced that the only way to effectively halt violence was “an immediate ceasefire and the necessary efforts for a political settlement” (S/PV.6528).

Summing up, it should be noted that despite the initial superficial agreement over the root causes of the conflict and over the necessary means of addressing it, the Libyan case demonstrated a clear gap between the actors’ conceptual premises in regard to peace and use of force as a means of conflict settlement (see Figure 2). The United States was explicitly operating with a broad understanding of peace, which not only implied the absence of violence, but “a new society

based on democracy, pluralism and the rule of law” (S/PV.6620). This did not necessarily stand in conflict with Russia’s support for “the transition process in Libya” (ibid.). Nonetheless, the general understanding propagated by Russian Representative Churkin was that of putting an end to violence and military hostilities – “the establishment of peace [...] through political and diplomatic channels” (ibid.). Subsequently Churkin put the blame for the perpetuating violence on pretty much all sides of the conflict responsible for civilian casualties (Qadhafi security forces, armed rebels) and accused NATO of disregarding the UN mandate, resulting in “air strikes that also targeted civilian facilities and killed civilians” (ibid.). The United States in contrast saw their mission as support for the people of Libya “who suffered many years under one of the world’s most brutal dictatorships” in their “efforts to restore order and bring about democracy” (ibid.). The occurrence of regime change as a result of the NATO military involvement is still being heatedly debated within the academic, political, and public circles (McMillan/Mickler 2013: 306). Yet the early statements of US Ambassador Rice echoing the words of President Obama on the illegitimacy of the Libyan leadership and on the need of ensuring the Libyan people’s “ability to shape their own future” (S/PV.6491) clearly suggested that there could not be any peace while the regime of Muammar Qadhafi was still in power. Hence the divergent approaches to the concept of peace (US’ broad vs. Russia’s narrow one) manifested themselves in the actors’ differing visions of peace strategies and the justifiability/non-justifiability of the use of force.

4.3 *The Syrian Crisis: Agreeing to Disagree*

The inception of the Syrian crisis ran almost parallel to the developments in Libya. The popular mass uprising against President Al-Assad, inspired by the successful examples of Tunisia and Egypt, began shortly after the first protests against the Qadhafi government in mid-March 2011, but the crisis in Syria – both in regard to its internal developments and international response to them – was to take a strikingly different course from that in Libya and gradually transformed from popular dissent into a prolonged large-scale civil war.

It is widely believed that the alleged misuse of the UN mandate in Libya became one of the reasons for the cautious approach towards the settlement of the crisis in Syria on the part of BRICS states (McMillan/Mickler 2013; Stuenkel 2014). It has even been claimed that “Syrians have paid the price of NATO excesses in Libya” (Thakur 2013: 70). Russia and China specifically have acted as the most severe opponents of direct or indirect interference, while Russia was later also portrayed as the “diplomatic shield” for the Syrian regime (Allison 2013: 798). In the course of the conflict (from the end of March 2011 to the end of May 2014) Russia together with China blocked four Security Council resolutions (S/2011/612; S/2012/77; S/2012/538 and S/2014/348) – both mildly and harshly formulated – which contained condemnations of the human rights abuses on the part of Al-Assad’s regime or even indirectly allowed for the possibility of external interference with the events in Syria. Many studies have already looked into the complex motives of Russia’s support for the Syrian regime (domestic, material and ideational) and its unwavering stance towards the crisis (see e.g.: Baev 2013; Allison 2013; Charap 2013). The US approach to Syria, on the other hand, has been transforming over the three years of the raging conflict and has been informed by different options: from a US military intervention for the protection of civilians, targeting terrorists, or punishing the Syrian leadership for the use of chemical weapons against civilians and opposition groups to a more restrained approach weighing the possible unintended negative consequences of such an intervention (Blanchard et al. 2014: 19).

From the beginning of the crisis, Russian diplomats have been continuously and consistently advocating ceasefire and political dialogue as the first and foremost measure needed to end violence and the only appropriate means of achieving peace. Churkin stressed that “violence by all sides must cease, and the crisis [could] be resolved *only* (emphasis added) through a Syrian-led inclusive political process” (S/PV.6710). In the early stages of the conflict Russia actively called

for political reforms (led and implemented by the Syrian government) in order to restore civil peace and took a firm stance against any kind of outside interference following the Libyan model, which, in the eyes of Russia “should be excluded from global practices once and for all” (S/PV.6627). Russia further stressed that “a significant number of Syrians [did] not agree with the demand for a quick regime change and would rather see gradual changes, believing that they have to be implemented while maintaining civil peace and harmony in the country” (ibid.). Later on, the call for socio-economic and political reforms gave way to demands for political dialogue with the “constructive patriotic groups of the Syrian opposition” (ibid.) in the form of a “Syrian-led dialogue on the basis of the principles of international law” (S/PV.6906).

While Churkin proclaimed that “there [was] no alternative to dialogue” (S/PV.6627), Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asserted that peace could only be reached by the establishment of the “rule of law and civil society on the ruins of a brutal and failed dictatorship”. The alternative – “more of al-Assad’s brutal rule – [was] no alternative at all” for the United States (S/PV.6710). From the outset, the US perceived the crisis within the general context of the Arab Spring, i.e. as a peaceful struggle of the oppressed people against an authoritarian regime. Its’ representatives called the members of the Security Council (hinting particularly at Russia) to decide whether “during a time of sweeping change in the Middle East, [they] [would] stand with peaceful protesters crying out for freedom or with a regime of thugs with guns that tramples human dignity and human rights” (S/PV.6627). Since the regime was seen as the main obstacle in the way of conflict settlement and sustainable peace, Ambassador Rice proclaimed that “political transition would be the fastest and most effective way to end the horrific bloodshed” (S/PV.6906). Guided by this assumption, the US promised to “continue to work with the friends of the Syrian people to increase pressure on the regime, support the Syrian opposition, marshal relief for the Syrian people and help prepare for a Syrian-led democratic transition” (S/PV.6816). While in the early stages of the crisis the United States called for targeted sanctions and arms embargo in order to “bring pressure” and introduce “firm actions against the regime”, later Susan Rice expressed her conviction that “the [democratic] transition [was not] only inevitable; it [had] already begun” and threatened that the United States “[would] not wait for all members of the Council to get on the right side of history” (S/PV.6847).

Thus, the conceptualization of peace invoked by the United States in regard to the conflict in Syria was positive and broad – conceived of as not only the end of physical violence, but also as cessation of political oppression and respect for both fundamental human rights and political and civil rights, providing “dignity, freedom and hope to the Syrian people” (S/PV.7007). Seeing the al-Assad regime as the main perpetrator of atrocities and the only force responsible for the perpetuation of violence, the US put strong emphasis on state violence (physical and non-physical) and the resulting suffering of individuals (see Figure 7). This understanding was also reflected in the US-advocated peace strategy, where post-conflict settlement and restoration of peace were seen as a long-term process of democratic transition with the development of democratic institutions, rule of law, civil society and respect for human rights (political and civil rights, minority rights and non-discrimination). Consequently no peace could be possible while the regime was still in power, and this guided the US support for internal resistance and calls for external action. Within this context the use of force was not only perceived as justifiable, but necessary as a means to end the regime’s atrocities.

The Russian conceptualization of peace here was, on the contrary, mainly negative – perceived as the absence of physical violence with ceasefire postulated as the main priority – and for the most part narrow (understood as cessation of military hostilities) with reference to the need of national reconciliation and civil peace (see Figure 8). Russia acknowledged both state and non-state actors as the perpetrators of violence (understood as loss of human lives and individual suffering) and therefore insisted that all sides should lay down arms. The resulting peace strategy was based on the understanding of peace as gradual process, the foremost condition for which was ceasefire, political dialogue between the regime and the opposition with the aim of an open-

end internal political settlement process. Notably conflict settlement was envisioned as a Syrian-led political process “*without foreign interference* (emphasis added), through national dialogue between the Government and the opposition, during which they could freely, democratically and *without any preconditions* (emphasis added) determine the future order of the country” (S/PV.6816). Consequently Russian representatives have throughout the crisis been putting strong emphasis on non-interference, since third-party involvement, according to their general logic, would have only led to further destabilization. Moreover, third-party support for the opposition in the eyes of the Russian diplomats had already led to the perpetuation and intensification of the conflict. The only acceptable means of international involvement was bi- and multi-lateral diplomacy and international monitoring. The attainment of peace through the use of force was not only seen as non-justifiable, but counterproductive and potentially destabilizing.

To sum up, while Russia’s conceptual approach to the Syrian crisis can be best summarized using Churkin’s own words that “bad peace is better than a good quarrel” (S/PV.7180), for the United States this reductionist position was dismissed as “back[ing] the Syrian regime, no matter what it [did]” (ibid.). The different views on what constituted peace consequently played themselves out in the opposing views on conflict settlement. Russia’s negative and narrow definition, linked to the collective level clashed with the US positive and broad one, taking the individual as the unit of reference, while ceasefire, political dialogue and diplomacy as advocated by Russia clashed with support for internal resistance, sanctions and eventual US military intervention (see Figure 3).

4.4 *The Ukraine Crisis: Finger-Pointing and no Peace in Sight*

The evolving crisis in Ukraine has developed rapidly and unexpectedly and now risks turning into a prolonged inner- and interstate conflict. The conflict started at the end of November 2013 with popular protests against President Viktor Yanukovich’s decision to postpone the signing of the association agreement with the EU. The protest quickly turned into a political rally against the corrupt government. After the mass demonstrations and the government’s response turned violent, an Agreement on the settlement of the crisis brokered by the Foreign Ministers of Germany, France and Poland, was signed between Yanukovich and the representatives of the opposition on February 21, 2014. Immediately afterwards Yanukovich fled Kyiv, the presidential power being transferred to the Chairman of the Parliament followed by the announcement of an interim government. Shortly after the power change in Kyiv, the so-called “self-defense forces” in Crimea (some of them wearing Russian military uniform without insignia) started taking over government buildings, proclaiming their dissatisfaction with the new authorities. Meanwhile the Crimean Parliament dismissed the Government of Crimea, appointed a new Prime Minister and announced a referendum on Crimea’s autonomy. The referendum took place on March 16, 2014 – two months earlier than initially planned – and contained a question, whether the people of the peninsula wanted Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to join the Russian Federation as a federal subject. With the reported overwhelming majority of 96,77% in favor of joining Russia, the Crimean Autonomous Republic and the Federal City of Sevastopol were officially incorporated into Russia less than a week later.

In the following weeks the so-called “pro-Russia” activists started occupying government buildings in the East of Ukraine. In mid-April, the interim government in Kyiv announced a counter-offensive to retake control in the Eastern regions. At this time a Joint Statement (Geneva Statement on Ukraine) between the EU, US, Russia and Ukraine was issued as an attempt to diffuse the crisis. The statement demanded the disarmament of armed groups and vacation of illegally occupied buildings and public places (in all of Ukraine). However, the provisions of the documents were ignored by both sides, each of which consequently blamed the other for breaking the agreement. On May 11 the self-proclaimed Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk held status referenda announcing their independence from Ukraine. These went unrecognized by Russia and the rest of the international community. After the presidential poll on May 25, the newly elected

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko announced a fifteen-point peace plan, which was perceived as an ultimatum by the self-proclaimed separatist leaders. In the beginning of July, the earlier announced short ceasefire was broken (both sides once again blaming each other for continued violence) and the Ukrainian authorities resumed the “anti-terrorist” operation in Eastern Ukraine.

Since the ousting of President Yanukovich the Security Council met eleven times (from March 1 to June 24, 2014) upon request of the representatives of Ukraine and the Russian Federation in order to discuss the situation on the Crimean Peninsula prior to and after Russia’s annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, as well as the ongoing armed hostilities in Eastern Ukraine. Russia unilaterally vetoed the draft Resolution S/2014/189 which reaffirmed the “sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders” and renounced the Crimean referendum as invalid (see S/RES/189). Russia delivered arguments based on self-determination similar to those employed in the 2008 Russian-Georgian crisis. The United States, on the other hand, denounced Russia’s actions as violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, renounced the Crimean referendum, as well as the referenda in Donetsk and Luhansk as illegal and unlawful and continue to accuse Russia of direct and indirect support for the armed separatists in Eastern Ukraine.

As in the case of Georgia, the self-determination arguments were employed by Russia inconsistently and on a situational basis in order to provide a more or less morally and legally acceptable justification for the annexation of Crimea. This time, however, the justification for the recognition of Crimea’s independence and its incorporation into the Russian Federation occurred with a mix of universalist-normative and particularistic-exceptionalist discourses. Ambassador Churkin re-affirmed that “the achievement of the right to self-determination in the form of separation from an existing State is an extraordinary measure” (S/PV.7134), “applied when further coexistence within a single State becomes impossible” (S/PV.7138). Yet he declared that “in the case of Crimea, it obviously arose as a result of the legal vacuum created by the violent coup against the legitimate Government carried out by nationalist radicals in Kyiv, as well as by their direct *threats* (emphasis added) to impose their order throughout the territory of Ukraine” (S/PV.7134). The use of selectively chosen precedents of past or future referenda in Puerto Rico, Gibraltar, the Falkland Islands, Catalonia and Scotland (see *ibid.*) combined with references to certain provisions of international law and the overall historical context, coupled with claims of alleged discrimination and threats of violence against the Russian-speaking population of Crimea resulted in a constructed narrative of a kind of “preventive secession” (authors’ term). The narrative was close to the one employed during the Georgian crisis as it once again selectively referred to the specific collective level – putting Russian-speakers and their fundamental human rights (this time also civil and political rights) in need of protection from “calls [...] for violence against Russian-speaking Ukrainians and Russians in general, with all the signs of ethnic cleansing, and for the armed overthrow of the legal authorities” (S/PV.7144). “The extraordinary situation in Ukraine and the threat posed to Russian citizens”, in the worst-case scenario, provided the justification for the use of force and military intervention (S/PV.7125). The broad and positive conceptualization (with a selective unit of reference) of peace on Russia’s part translated into a kind of “preventive interventionism” (authors’ term) on behalf of the Russian and Russian-speaking population and support for their self-determination rights.

For the United States, on the other hand, Russia’s actions constituted an “intervention [...] without legal basis” and a violation of Russia’s commitment “to protecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine” (S/PV.7124). The conflict consequently represented “not an eastern Ukrainian spring”, but “a well-orchestrated campaign, with external support, to destabilize the Ukrainian State” (S/PV.7165). Russia’s concerns over the instability in the East of Ukraine were disregarded as “falsehoods”, since it was “Russia [which] [was] causing the instability” (S/PV.7167). Guided by this understanding, the United States justified the Ukrainian state’s use of force against the insurgents in the Eastern regions as “reasonable, [...] proportional

and [...] what any other countries would have done in the face of that [external] threat” (S/PV.7167) for the sake of a “peaceful, democratic, inclusive and united Ukraine” (S/PV.7167). Similar to Russia, the US advocated a positive and broad understanding of peace (with a reference to individuals as part of the unified state collective). Consequently the (democratic) state possessed the legitimate right to the use of force against outside aggression for the protection of its citizens.

The Russian-US debate on the Ukrainian crisis at the UN Security Council is in way unique, since it was much more concentrated on mutual accusations than on the prospective visions of peace and the means of achieving it (see Figure 4). The United States saw Russia as the main aggressor, initiator and perpetuator of violence and hostilities. Russia, in turn, blamed the United States for its support in the violent overthrow of the “legitimate” President Yanukovich, accused non-state radical groups (the far-right Pravyi Sektor being depicted as the most ominous and dangerous one) of violence and threats of violence against Russian-speaking Ukrainians and Russians, pointed to the Ukrainian government’s disregard of the rights and aspirations of the people in Eastern Ukraine, and accused it of excessive use of force against the rebels of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics. However, the contours of the actors’ peace conceptions can still be traced in individual statements of Ambassadors Vitaly Churkin and Samantha Power. For the United States, peace in Ukraine would mean an end to the military insurgency and Russia’s aggression, and would pre-suppose support for the desire of the Ukrainian people “to build a strong and united country with a robust democracy and effective national and regional institutions” (S/PV.7157). While Russia’s conceptual vision of peace in Ukraine is much less clear (and much less salient), it is generally presented as a “path to normal development whereby every region, every ethnic and religious group would know what to expect tomorrow” (S/PV.7157). Consequently Russia’s officially voiced peace strategy was one of “ceasefire [which] should lead to dialogue among all the warring parties in order to reach a compromise acceptable to all, so that people living in south-east Ukraine feel without a doubt that they are an integral part of the country, with all the rights of citizens of that State, and that those rights are guaranteed, including by the Constitution” (S/PV.7205). With the opposing visions of the root causes and initiators of the conflict, both sides upheld diverging perspectives on what could constitute a peaceful solution – for Russia it was an inner-Ukrainian dialogue (with the separatists at the negotiation table), while for the United States it was in effect a truce between Russia and the new democratic Ukraine, capable of determining its own future without outside pressure. The striking particularity of the Ukrainian crisis is that the United States and Russia did not even possess a minimal consensual vision of what constituted the conflict (outside aggression vs. brutal suppression of dissenters). Nonetheless, at the conceptual level, they shared a broad positive understanding of peace and subsequently reserved the right to the legitimate use of force (on the part of the Ukrainian state, on the one hand, and as a preventive/supportive measure by Russia) as *ultima ratio*.

5 CONCLUSION: ‘JUST PEACE’, JUST PEACE – WHAT PEACE?

The case studies presented above provide a summary of the voiced conceptualizations of peace and peace strategies as employed by Russian and American representatives in the course of UN Security Council discussions over four recent and/or ongoing conflicts. These conflicts were and are of direct importance for the states in question: the Russian-Georgian conflict of 2008, the Libyan crisis and NATO intervention of 2011, the ongoing civil war in Syria (2011-2014) and the evolving crisis in Ukraine (2014). The aim of this comparative investigation was to look at how state actors conceptualized peace in each of the studied conflicts, how these specific conceptualizations were reflected in their proposed crisis resolution strategies, and how these in turn inter-related with each other in their communication and over time. Table 1 summarizes the actors’ main positions and understandings.

	Russian Federation		United States	
	<i>Peace concept</i>	<i>Peace strategy</i>	<i>Peace concept</i>	<i>Peace strategy</i>
Georgia (2008)	Negative/narrow Reference: Russian-speakers, compatriots	"Intervention for protection", ceasefire on the part of Georgia	Negative/narrow Reference: Individual	Ceasefire, end of Russian military aggression.
Libya (2011)	Positive/narrow Reference: Individual	Diplomacy, political dialogue	Positive/broad, Reference: Individual	Intervention for the protection of civilians.
Syria (2011-2014)	Negative/narrow Reference: Collective	Ceasefire, political dialogue, non-interference	Positive/broad, Reference: Individual	Democratic transition, intervention as an option.
Ukraine (2014)	Positive/broad Reference: Russian-speakers	"Preventive intervention", legitimate secession, inner-Ukrainian dialogue	Positive/broad, Reference: Individual	End of Russian aggression, legitimate use of force against the separatists, diplomacy.

As this brief summary demonstrates, the United States mostly conceptualized peace in positive and broad terms – understood as the absence of violence, but also as respect for basic human rights, provision of civil and political rights within a just political order substantiated by a democratic form of government. The US position on Georgia supposedly presented an outlier case since emphasis was primarily put on ending physical violence and military hostilities without explicit reference to any particular vision of a post-conflict order. However, a deeper examination of the US narrative revealed that the conceptual core of its argumentation remained pretty much in line with the traditional understanding of the legitimate democratic state and the non-justifiability of outside aggression against it. By contrast, Russia's basic conceptualization of peace is a narrow and mainly negative one, perceived as only the absence of physical violence – the so-called "bad peace", which is better than "a good quarrel" (S/PV.7180). The Ukrainian crisis presented a clear deviation in this sense, since Russia adopted a new narrative explicating respect for civil and political rights of the discriminated minorities and presenting oneself as the guardian and supporter of the legitimate interests of the Russian-speaking population in the neighboring country.

An interesting point for comparison is the referential level denoting the addressees of peace. Whereas the United States routinely referred to the individual (human security) as the unit of reference, this particular aspect is more diffuse and situational in the Russian case. This was most visible in the case of Georgia and Ukraine (as compared to Libya and Syria), when a very specific group (Russians, Russian-speakers or "compatriots") was brought out as the primary object for protection and subject to particular rights. But there were also notable differences between the cases of Libya, where Russia emphasized individual security (security of the civilian population) and Syria, where the collective/state level was prioritized.

As far as the states' propagated peace strategies are concerned, notable variation can be identified here as well. The US tended to legitimize the use of force for the protection of civilians and/or preservation/establishment of a just political order. By contrast Russia's propagated peace strategies appeared much more situational. Russia argued as a strong proponent of non-interference, diplomacy and political dialogue in the cases of Libya (despite its abstention at the UNSC) and Syria. Georgia and Ukraine, on the other hand, presented cases of "intervention for protection" and "preventive intervention" (although Russia still officially denies its involvement in the Ukrainian conflict) legitimized by means of a mixture of particularistic and normative universalistic arguments.

While this analysis only looked at the voiced conceptual understanding invoked by the actors in specific conflict situations, we can still draw a number of interesting conclusions relating to the

conceptual linkages and interrelations between peace conceptions and strategies as employed by different actors.

In general, the empirical analysis confirmed the theoretical assumption that broad conceptualizations of peace can be more easily reconciled with the use of force as a legitimate means of establishing peace (Brock 2002: 101; Müller 2003: 212). However, as we have observed in the Russian narrative on the legitimization of its intervention in Georgia, a negative and narrow basic peace conception could also be rhetorically accommodated to suit an interventionist agenda. Nonetheless, it has been confirmed that a basic negative and narrow understanding of peace is more prone to prioritize diplomatic and political crisis solutions. Also, while human security (individuals as primary peace addressees) references could be expected to be used in connection to humanitarian interventionist conflict approaches, this could not be fully confirmed by the empirical analysis. The US consistently took the individual as the reference point, but did not argue in favor of forceful solutions in all the presented conflicts, whereas Russia referred to specific collective entities (Russian-speakers) in order to legitimize its protective intervention in Georgia and preventive intervention in Ukraine.

Overall, it can be stated that while agreement over the conceptualization of peace does not impede further disagreement as to the appropriate peace strategies, disagreement at the conceptual level fosters deeper disagreements in regard to the preferred policy options. As the cases of Georgia and Ukraine have shown, similar approaches to peace in terms of its basic conceptualization (negative and narrow in the case of Georgia and positive and broad in relation to the crisis in Ukraine) did not translate into similar strategies of resolving the conflicts. However the differences here were not of a conceptual, but primarily of an interpretative nature – pertaining to what constituted the conflict itself. At the same time the diverging conceptions of peace in the prominent case of Syria (negative and narrow as seen by Russia in contrast to the positive and broad vision advocated by the United States) also manifested themselves in deep disagreements over the preferred solutions to the crisis. These disagreements effectively blocked the decision-making process in the Security Council on the issue for more than three years.

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Georgia (2008)				
Meeting	Date	Title	Outcome	Speaker
S/PV.5951	8 Aug. 2008	Georgia	-	CHURKIN/ DICARLO
S/PV.5952	8 Aug. 2008	Georgia	-	CHURKIN/ KHALILZAD
S/PV.5953	10 Aug. 2008	Georgia	-	CHURKIN/ KHALILZAD
S/PV.5961	19 Aug. 2008	Georgia	-	CHURKIN/ WOLFF
S/PV.5969	28 Aug. 2008	Situation in Georgia	-	CHURKIN/ WOLFF
Libya (2011-2012)				
Meeting	Date	Title	Outcome	Speaker
S/PV.6491	26 Feb. 2011	Peace and security in Africa - Libya	S/RES/1970 (2011) 15-0-0	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.6498	17 March 2011	The situation in Libya	S/RES/1973 (2011) 10-0-5	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.6528	4 May 2011	Libya	-	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.6620	16 Sept. 2011	Libya	S/RES/2009 (2011)	CHURKIN/RICE
Syria (2011-2014)				
Meeting	Date	Title	Outcome	Speaker
S/PV.6520	21 April 2011	Middle East situation, including the Palestinian question	-	PANKIN/ RICE
S/PV.6590	26 July 2011	Middle East situation, including the Palestinian question	-	PANKIN/ DICARLO
S/PV.6627	4 Oct. 2011	Middle East situation	Draft resolution S/2011/612 vetoed by China and Russian Federation	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.6636	24 Oct. 2011	Middle East situation, including the Palestinian question	-	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.6710	31 Jan. 2012	Middle East situation - Syria	-	CHURKIN/ CLINTON
S/PV.6711	4 Feb. 2012	Middle East situation - Syria	Draft resolution S/2012/77 vetoed by China and Russian Federation 13-2-0	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.6734	12 March 2012	Middle East	-	LAVROV/ CLINTON
S/PV.6751	14 April 2012	Middle East	S/RES/2042 (2012)	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.6810	19 July 2012	Middle East	Draft resolution S/2012/538 vetoed by China and Russian Federation	CHURKIN/ RICE
S/PV.6816	25 July 2012	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	-	CHURKIN/ ELAURENTIS
S/PV.6826	30 Aug. 2012	The situation in the Middle East	-	CHURKIN/ RICE
S/PV.6841	26 Sept. 2012	The situation in the Middle East	S/PRST/2012/20	LAVROV/ CLINTON
S/PV.6847	15 Oct. 2012	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	-	CHURKIN/ RICE
S/PV.6906	23 Jan. 2013	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	-	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.6950	24 April 2013	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	-	CHURKIN/RICE
S/PV.7007	23 July 2013	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	-	CHURKIN/ DICARLO, DELAURENTIS
S/PV.7038	27 Sept. 2013	The situation in Middle East	S/RES/2118 (2013)	LAVROV/KERRY
S/PV.7047	22 Oct. 2013	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7096	20 Jan. 2014	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	-	CHURKIN/ POWER

S/PV.7180	22 May 2014	The situation in the Middle East (Syria)	Draft resolution S/2014/348 vetoed by China and Russian Federation 13-2-0	CHURKIN/ POWER
Ukraine (2014)				
Meeting	Date	Title	Outcome	Speaker
S/PV.7124	1 March	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7125	3 March	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7134	13 March	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7138	15 March	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	Draft resolution (S/2014/189) vetoed by Russian Federation 13-1-1	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7144	19 March	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7154	13 April	Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7157	16 April	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7165	29 April	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7167	2 May	Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER
S/PV.7185	28 May	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	-	CHURKIN/ DICARLO
S/PV.7205	24 June	Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)	-	CHURKIN/ POWER

APPENDIX

Table 2: Coding Framework			
Code	Sub-Code	Example	
1. Understanding of peace			
Positive understanding of peace	Broad conceptualization of peace	Civil and political rights	“We call on all Governments [...] to respect their citizens’ rights to peaceful assembly and free expression.” Rice, 21.04.2011, S/PV.6520
		Social justice	“The transformation processes that have agitated the Middle East and North Africa reflect the understandable aspirations of the peoples of those countries [...] for a better life, increased opportunities for self-expression, participation in political life and greater economic and social benefits.” Lavrov, 12.03.2012, S/PV.6734
		Democratic form of government	“We stand fully ready to assist Libya’s citizens in building a new society based on democracy, pluralism and the rule of law.” Rice, 16.09.2011, S/PV.6620
		Rule of law	“[...] It is becoming increasingly clear that the continuing effects of the crisis in that country are a serious obstacle on the path to achieving national justice.” Karev, 07.11.2012, S/PV.6855
		Civil peace/Reconciliation	“The communiqué interprets the principles of accountability and national reconciliation as interrelated, leaving the leading role in that process to the Syrians themselves.” Churkin, 22.05.2014, S/PV.7180
Negative understanding of peace	Narrow conceptualization of peace	Basic human rights	“I repeat, the issue is one of defending our citizens and compatriots, as well as the most important human right — the right to life.” Churkin, 1.03.2014, S/PV.7124
		Cease-fire	“To that end, we call urgently on all parties to agree on local ceasefires and to move ahead with prisoner releases.” Power, 20.01.2014, S/PV.7096
2. Scope			
	Long-term	“On the political and diplomatic front, I underscore my Government’s strong support and gratitude for Joint Special Representative Brahimi’s efforts to find a durable solution to this crisis”. Rice, 23.10.2013, S/PV.6906	
	Short-term		
3. Level of application/ Unit of reference			
	Individual	“The Council’s purpose is clear — to protect innocent civilians.” Rice, 17.03.2011, S/PV.6498	
	Collective/Group	“[...] To ensure that the country retains its sovereign territorial integrity and as a secular and an independent State where all rights of ethnic and interreligious groups are ensured.” Churkin, 20.01.2014, S/PV.7096	
	State		
	System		

Table 2: Coding Framework (cont.)		
Code	Sub-Code	Example
4. Violence		
	Third-state violence	“Russian military action is not a human rights protection mission. It is a violation of international law and of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the independent nation of Ukraine and a breach of Russia’s Helsinki commitments and its United Nations obligations.” Power, 03.03.2014, S/PV.7125
	State violence	“We condemn the use of military force against peaceful demonstrators and all other manifestations of violence and consider them absolutely unacceptable.” Churkin, 26.02.2011, S/PV.6491
	Non-state violence	“The situation is dangerous because the opposition, a significant part of which does not wish to even hear of dialogue, is being told to continue with the armed struggle, which only exacerbates the confrontations and destabilization.” Churkin, 25.07.2012, S/PV.6816
5. Outreach/ Geographic scope		
	Global	Conflict-specific
	Regional/Inter-s	
	Intra-state	
6. Peace through (external means)		
	Military intervention	“The option of military force that President Obama has kept on the table could have achieved that, [but tonight’s resolution in fact accomplishes even more].” Kerry, 27.09.2013, S/PV.7038
	Sanctions	“We adopted strong sanctions that target Libya’s leadership.” Rice, 17.03.2011, S/PV.6498
	Monitoring	“It is important to continue to have the international community back the Special Envoys so they can continue their work on settling the crisis in Syria.” Churkin, 19.07.2012, S/PV.6810
	Diplomacy	“We remain committed to a diplomatic process, but Russia seems committed to destabilization and fantastical justifications for its actions.” Power, 29.04.2014, S/PV.7165
	Non-interference/Sovereignty	“[...] Interference from the outside using brute military force increases the threat of the illicit spread of arms, thus jeopardizing the stability of the region.” Lavrov, 12.03.2012, S/PV.67.34

Table 2: Coding Framework (cont.)		
Code	Sub-Code	Example
7. Peace through (internal means)		
	Self-Determination	“In strict compliance with international law and democratic procedure, without outside interference and through a free referendum, the people of Crimea have fulfilled what is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and a great number of fundamental international legal documents — their right to self-determination.” Churkin, 19.04.2014, S/PV7144
	Struggle against oppression (including regime change)	“Every member of the Council knows that a political transition would be the fastest and most effective way to end the horrific bloodshed.” Rice, 23.01.2013, S/PV.6906
	Political dialogue	“The best way to end the crisis is to refuse to provoke a confrontation and to bring together all responsible members of the international community so as to induce the parties to launch an inclusive intra-Syrian political process.” Churkin, 04.10.2011, S/PV.6627
	Political reform	“Among other initiatives, they are moving ahead with constitutional reform, plans to decentralize power, preparations for the election and initiatives to curb the corruption that flourished so blatantly under the former President.” Power, 16.04.2014, S/PV.7157
8. Post-conflict settlement		
	International Criminal Prosecution	“The referral [of the Libyan case to the ICC] has served to keep accountability and the rule of law as key elements of Libya’s transition to a peaceful and democratic future.” Rice, 16.05.2012, S/PV.6772
	Democratic transition	“A transition to democracy is already under way. President Al-Assad may try to delay that transition, but he cannot stop it, and Syria can never return to the way it was before.” DiCarlo, 26.07.2011, S/PV.6590
	Open-end political process	“We advocate the rapid peaceful settlement of the crisis by the Syrians themselves, without foreign interference, through national dialogue between the Government and the opposition, during which they could freely, democratically and without any preconditions determine the future order of the country.” Churkin, 25.07.2012, S/PV.6816

Figure 1. Russia's and US' Positions on Georgia (2008)
 % to total amount of coded statements for a given actor

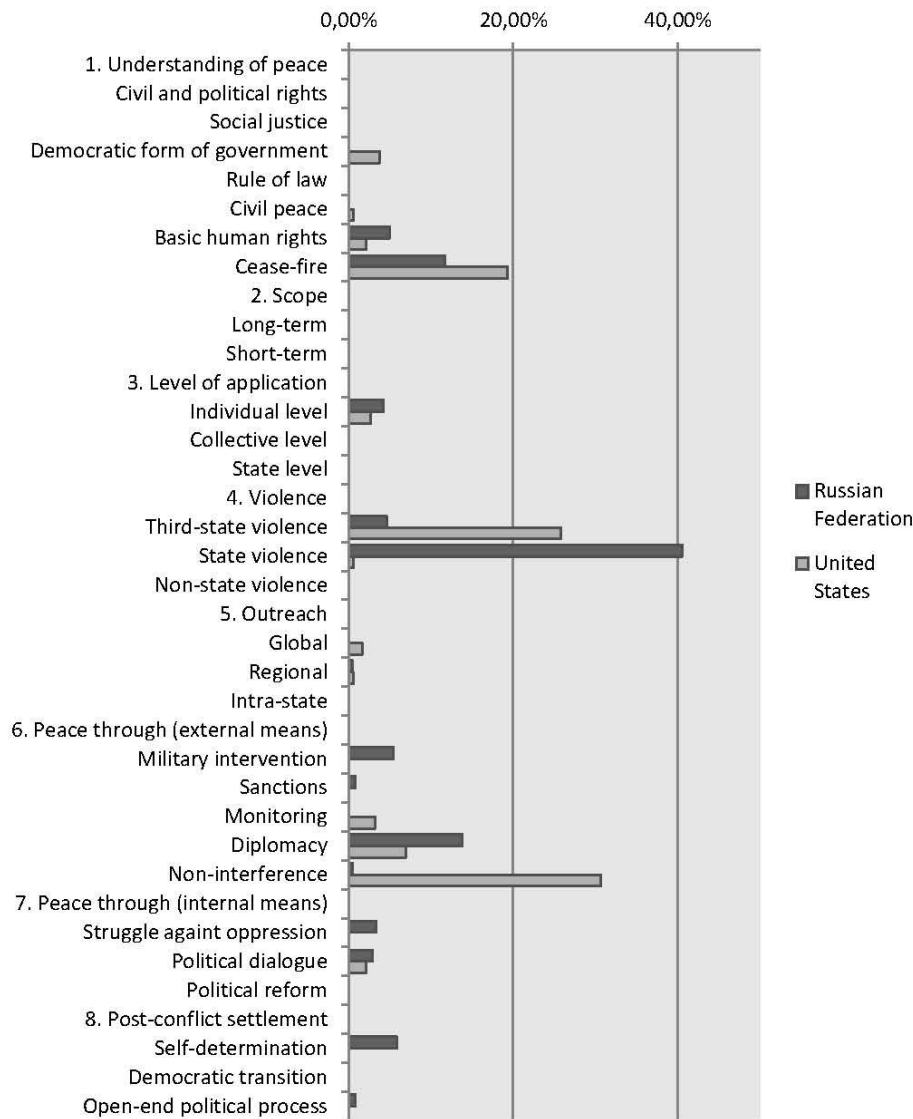


Figure 2. Russia's and US' Positions on Libya (2011)
 % to total amount of coded statements for a given actor

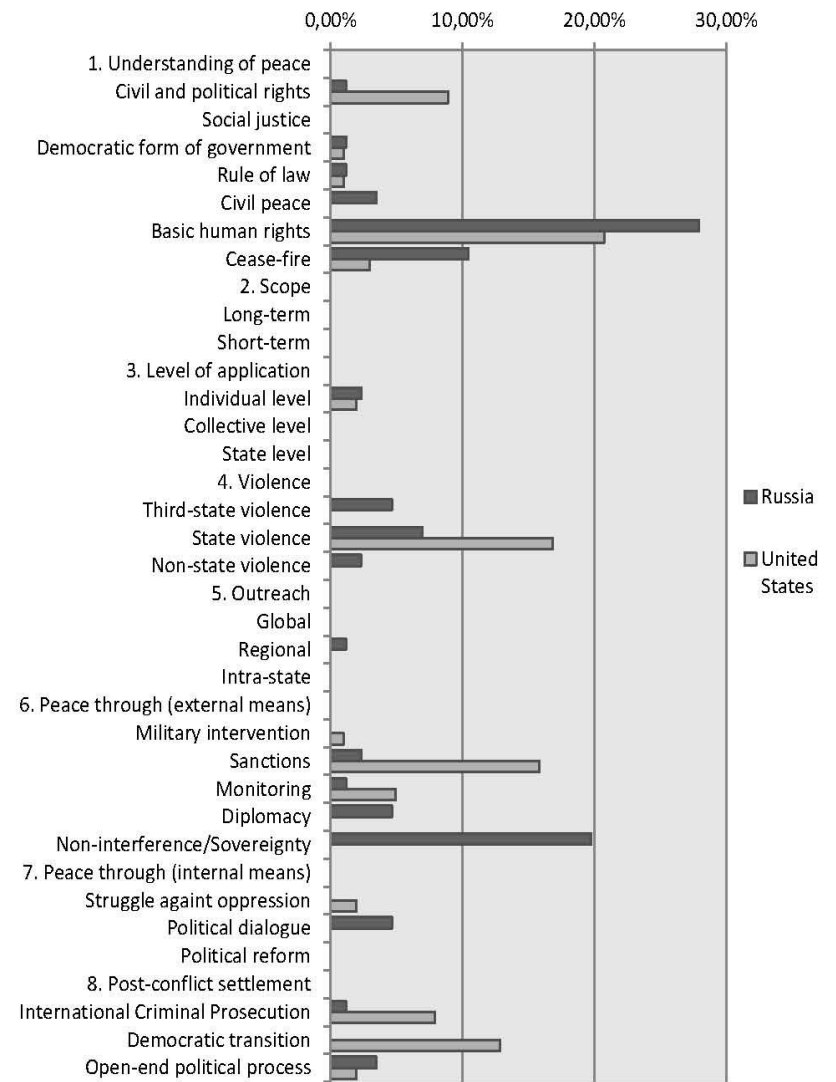


Figure 3. Russia's and US' Positions on Syria (2011-2014)
 % to total number of coded statements for each actor

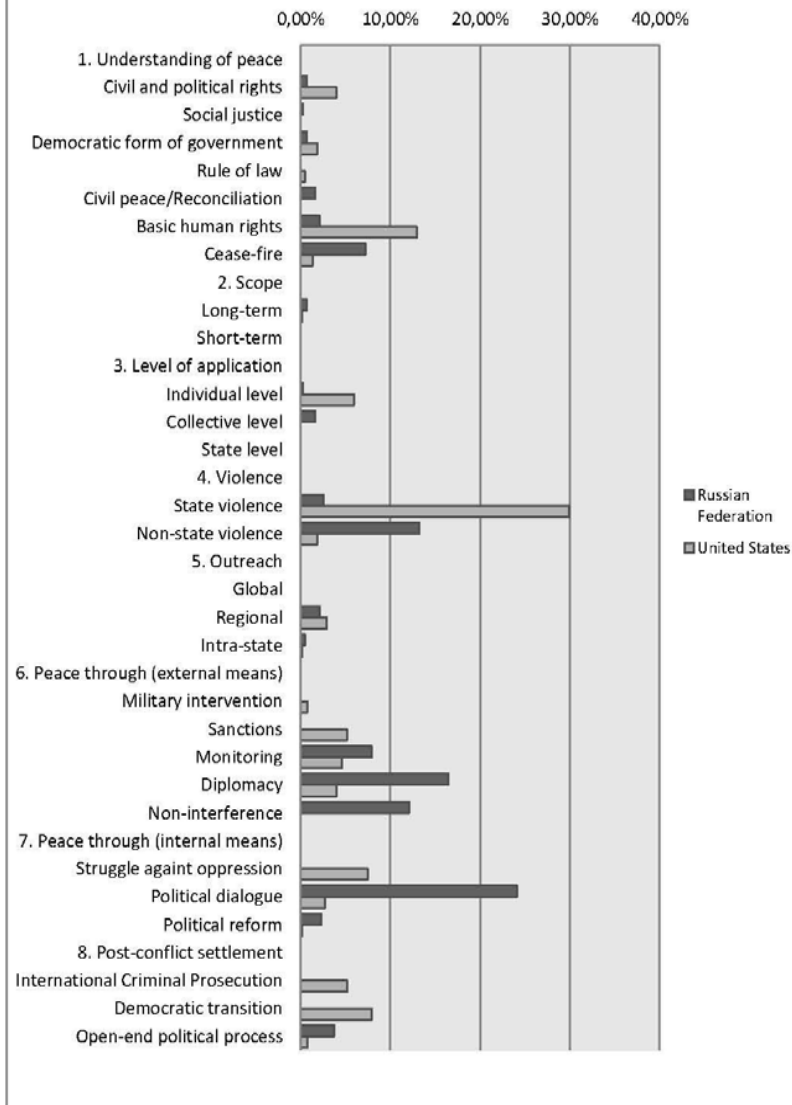


Figure 4. Russia's and US' Positions on Ukraine (2014)
 % to total amount of coded statements for a given actor

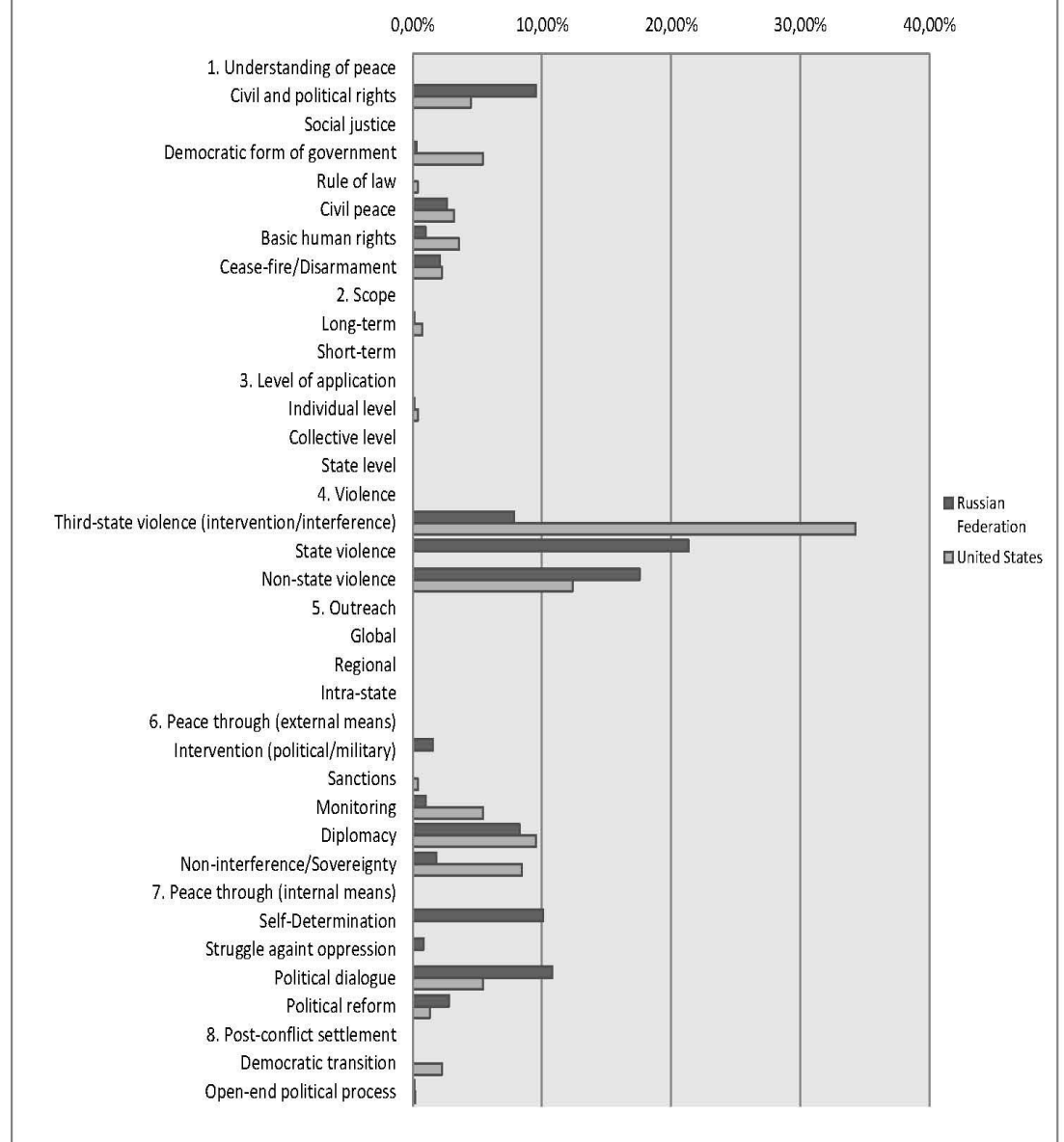


Figure 5. United States Position on Syria (2011-2014)
 % to total number of coded statements in a given year

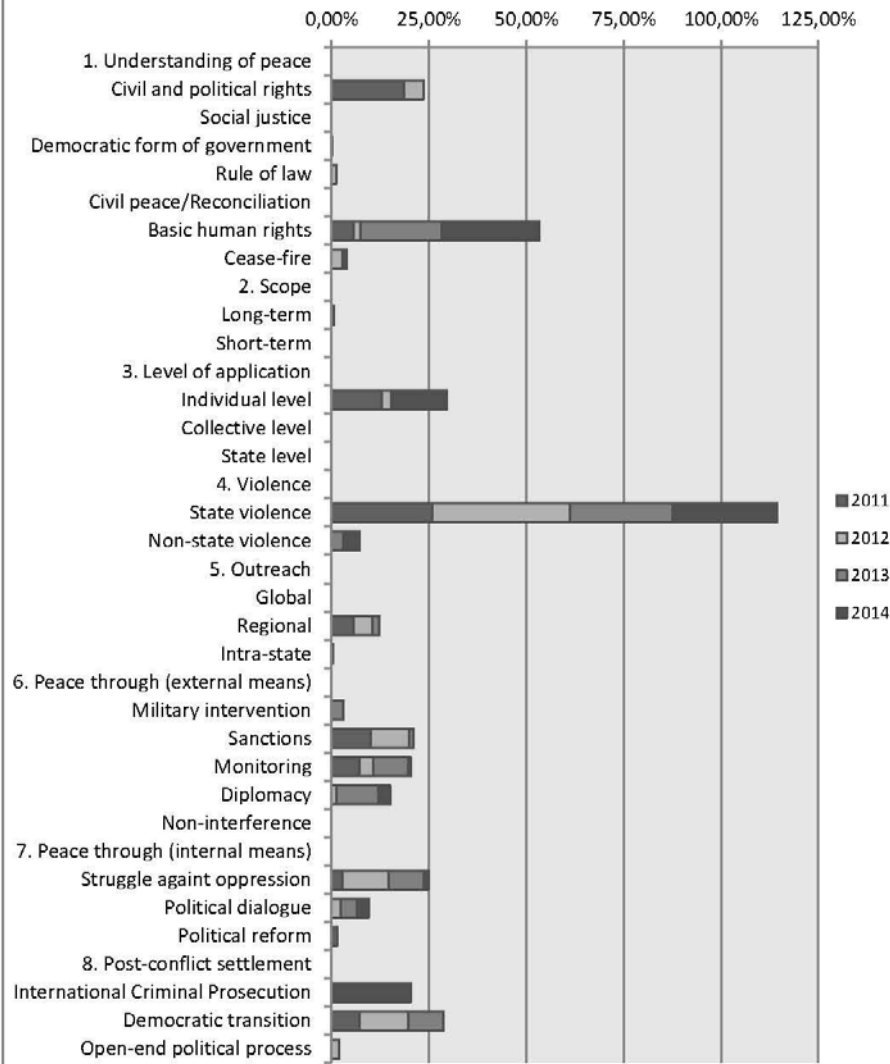
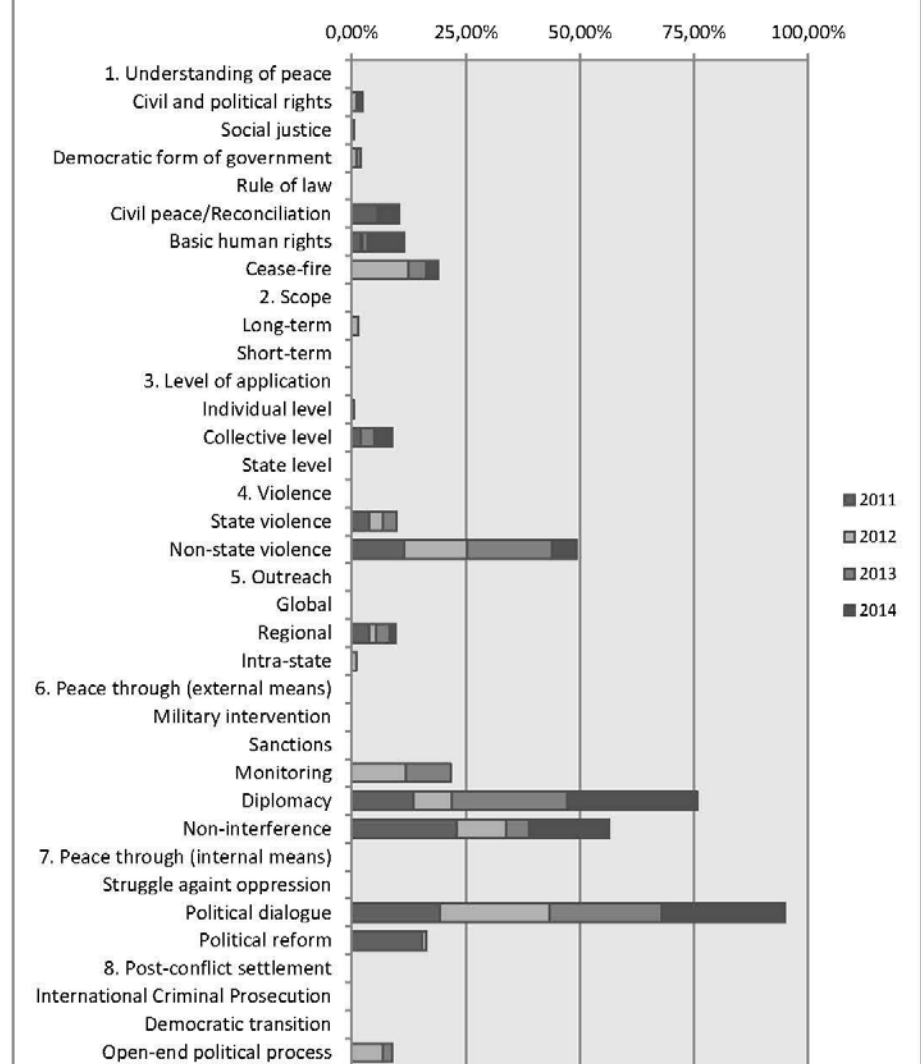


Figure 6. Russia's Position on Syria (2011-2014)
 % to total number of coded statements in a given year



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