Democratization of Intelligence?

Comparing Vietnam and Ukraine

Björn Almroth

Abstract

This study explores how a contemporary systemic shift regarding secrecy and intelligence is affecting the strategic performance of states engaged in overt or covert intervention. These changes are conceptualized by researchers as "implausible deniability", "delayed disclosure" and "the democratization of intelligence" and their significance are applied to limited-war theory with a theoretical focus on acknowledgment and open secrets. Comparative case study methodology and narrative analysis are used to find and explore this change. Arguing that if it has taken place, it should be found, and explored in a contemporary case where these theoretical factors exist. This case is compared to a historical case, predating the change but which contains similar dynamics, as a reference and point of comparison. Reporting and deliberations on Soviet surface-to-air missile support to North Vietnam during Operation Rolling Thunder are compared to a contemporary case when the Moskva was sunk during the Russian invasion of Ukraine last year. Due to this systemic shift secrecy is being replaced by ambiguity and non-acknowledgment. Mobilizing support for interventions in the future will probably require just cause, and harnessing secrecy as a source of state power might be increasingly difficult.

Keywords: Covert intervention, Vietnam War, Russia-Ukraine War, implausible deniability, democratization of intelligence
Words: 8588

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

This study explores the contemporary changes in the nature of secrecy and intelligence, as well as their implications for military intervention, and covert conflict. Carson, and other researchers on escalation dynamics, argue how covert conflict emerged to deal with escalation risks after states experienced unchecked escalation during the run-up to the first world war, and novel covert ways of waging war emerged (Carson 2018, 81). The "...post-1945 absence of great power war cite the advent of nuclear weapons, the spread of democracy, or the stability of bipolarity" (Carson 2018, 313).

Post-Soviet Russian posture has become more aggressive, and revisionist since the end of the Cold War, after two ruthless campaigns in Chechnya (1994 and 1999), continuing through an overt intervention in Georgia in 2008, and a covert military presence in Ukraine since 2014, that turned into an overt invasion last year. Recent Russian nuclear saber-rattling (Lendon 2022a), as well as recurring aggression toward Taiwan by China (Cheung & Yeung 2022), point to severe risks today. In January this year, scientists moved the "Doomsday Clock" to "...to 90 seconds before midnight -- the closest humanity has ever been to Armageddon" (Grant & Hutchinson 2023).

Major power rivalry during the Cold War, and the threat of a strategic nuclear exchange, made the stakes higher, and the actors increasingly aware of the risks. So, coercion increasingly took the form of covert conflict, or intervention, mainly to control escalation, and communicate an actor's intention to keep a war limited. Other states, with the means to detect an intervention, would often play along, and collude when escalation risks were severe (Carson 2018, 81). Publicly acknowledging an intervention might pressure a state to react and escalate a conflict. Using Goffman's theatre metaphor, Carson argues that covert conflict creates a *"backstage"*, that "…allows governments to present coherent, strategically useful frontstage (overt/public) performances" (2018, 339) to the international stage.

Many researchers argue that the preconditions for believable performances on that "backstage" are rapidly changing. They point to how "...changes in the nature of mass media and the proliferation of electronic whistleblowing have increased implausible deniability" (Cormac & Aldrich 2018, 479). Compounded by a current crisis of secrecy", as well as a systemic shift in intelligence today (Aldrich & Moran 2018, 4). Covert interventions were not always plausible, to begin with, and are becoming less credible today through "factors such as social media, accessible

sensors, open-source intelligence (OSINT), citizen journalism and a broader shift in intelligence culture.

This study engages with a possible shift through a comparative case study. If such a shift has indeed taken place, it should be found and explored in a contemporary case where these factors exist. This case is compared to a historical case, that predates this systemic shift but contains similar dynamics, as a reference and point of comparison. The first, *contemporary* case studied, is the sinking of the warship Moskva during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with alleged covert intelligence aid from the United States. The second, *historical* case studied, is the United States air campaign Operation Rolling Thunder, where the Soviet Union, along with China, covertly aided the North Vietnamese air defense, and the war effort.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to *explore how contemporary changes, conceptualized as "implausible deniability", "delayed disclosure" and "the democratization of intelligence", affect the strategic performance on the international stage, of states engaged in overt or covert military intervention.* These concepts are used by researchers to describe a systemic shift in the nature of intelligence and the information milieu today, and this study explores their theoretical significance to acknowledgment and open secrecy in Carson's limited-war theory (Carson 2018, 311).

1.2. Research question

Given the purpose of the study, executed as a comparison of a contemporary case with a historical one, the following research question is asked:

What significant aspects regarding secrecy and intelligence have changed that might affect a strategic performance on the international stage, by states engaged in overt or covert military intervention?

1.2. Limitations

A challenge regarding the contemporary perspective is that events in Ukraine are unfolding in real-time at a rapid pace, and relevant research is not up to date. Another limitation that is mentioned by researchers, such as Dyson and Parent (2017) who use an operational code approach to profile and understand Vladimir Putin. Namely, that despite researchers have access to public appearances or statements, and leaks or hacks do happen, the inner decision-making process or "real intentions"

often remain a black box that is hard to reach. Having access to the internal deliberations would be of great value, but is somewhat outside the scope of the study, which instead focuses on the public *accounts* of events. Nevertheless, researchers must be open to the possibility that states do not necessarily "say" what they "think", and often have ulterior motives.

The historical perspective does not share the same problems, where the challenge is instead the scope of the study. Peer-reviewed research on the topic is quite abundant, and a large amount of declassified US material on deliberations, and decision-making is readily available, as well as to a lesser extent Chinese, and Soviet perspectives. In this case, the purpose of the study, and research question, guided the investigation for material describing similar dynamics that were suitable for comparison. Largely relying on findings by other researchers, and secondary sources efficiently enhance the comparative potential of the study, while maintaining a limited scope. But this also means the study relies on the accountability of the existing research.

1.3. Delimitations

The term "democratization of intelligence" has been used in a different sense by researchers on intelligence- and security reform previously. Democratization of intelligence in that other sense describes development work directed at intelligence-, and security agencies in former authoritarian states. As well as in a more general sense increasing the transparency, accountability, and oversight of intelligence agencies (Andregg & Gill 2014). To be clear the study does not focus on the term in this sense, or engage with this problem, even if there certainly are theoretical overlaps. New challenges regarding accountability and ethics emerge when "citizens become sensors" (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022). The problem when "...open-source intelligence practices create insecurity for civilians in warzones" is also examined by Saugmann (2019) and needs further research especially when the full impact of these changes is realized by democratic states. Nevertheless, this is not the primary focus of the study.

1.4. Significance of the study

I argue that the current systemic shift should hold implications regarding the performance of states on issues such as credibility, and how intentions to keep the war limited are communicated on the international stage. As wider non-state access to qualified intelligence, increasingly implausible interventions, and non-acknowledgment without credibility become more abundant, the increasingly crowded "backstage" arena of international politics should be affected in some way. Meanwhile, the need to explore changes in escalation dynamics is pressing. Especially since major nuclear powers: Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France are presently opposed in Ukraine.

2 Background

2.1. Case Description

The first contemporary case used in the study is the sinking of the Russian warship Moskva. Russian covert and overt intervention in Ukraine notably sparked a recent academic debate on the democratization of intelligence (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022) and contemporary challenges regarding escalation dynamics (Carson 2018, 331). The second case is Operation Rolling Thunder which marked the point when the US adopted an overt posture in Vietnam during the Cold War. Through a gradually expanding bombing campaign, paired with a counterinsurgency strategy on the ground (Carson 2018, 214). A major similarity between the cases is the prevailing concern for escalation control, but the overt, and covert actors are reversed.

2.1.1. Operation Rolling Thunder

Even if there is much uncertainty around the events that transpired during the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964, the attacks on the US destroyers would become the trigger for US overt military intervention in Vietnam (Tovy 2021, 6-7). The gradually expanding bombing campaign Operation Rolling Thunder in March 1965 was meant to curb North Vietnam's ambitions to forcibly unify the South, and the US feared a "domino effect" in which more countries would fall to the communist bloc (Carson 2018, 249). From 1964 through 1968, the domestic opinion in the US was strongly supportive of the war effort. Many associate the US intervention today with later antiwar sentiments (Carson 2018, 216), and in the decade following the end, the political establishment received criticism for dragging the US into an immoral and unnecessary war. A similarity to the Russian invasion of Ukraine is how there was no formal declaration of war, and strong support among the political elite (Tovy 2021, 4).

The bipolar structure of the Cold War meant that overt support came to North Vietnam from fellow communist states in the form of supplies, training, reconstruction, aircraft, and weapons. Covert and unacknowledged aid came mainly in the form of Soviet personnel serving SA-2 "guideline" surface-to-air-missile (SAM) sites and intelligence assets. Throughout the war around "…15,000 Soviet personnel served in Indo-China as advisers and occasionally as combatants. The largest part of the Soviet adviser personnel were air defense officers." (Global Security 2015).

2.1.2. Sinking of the Moskva

The Russian invasion began on February 24th last year, after a covert involvement since at least 2014, when Crimea was seized by Russian forces through an implausibly deniable covert intervention, and Russian proxies in Donbas began an insurgency. Russian forces in Crimea used "sanitized" uniforms without markings, and Putin credited "...local Crimean self-defense groups" for the takeover. Militants held the local parliament at gunpoint to ratify the vote on Crimea's separation (Goncharova 2015).

Two months after the invasion began, on the 14th of April 2022, the flagship of the Black Sea fleet, the *Moskva* was sunk. The missile cruiser is the largest ship lost in war since the sinking of the Argentinian cruiser General Belgrano, on the 2nd of May 1982, during the Falklands War (Lendon 2022b). US officials claim that it went down after being struck by two Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missiles (Dilanian, Kube & Lee 2022). While Russia claims that this was an accident, and "...that the warship sank in a storm while being towed after ammunition on board exploded" (Rudenko 2022).

NATO and the EU have shown unprecedented unity regarding support for Ukraine since the overt Russian intervention began. But aid regarding weapons, training, and intelligence was a sensitive topic. Often paired with a public discussion on the risk of reprisals, and escalation from Moscow. Not long after the sinking claims were made by US military officials that the US provided intelligence that made targeting the ship possible for the Ukrainians (Dilanian, Kube, and Lee 2022).

2.2. Previous Research

2.2.1. Covert Conflict

So far, the field has not fully engaged with *"implausible deniability," "delayed disclosure", and "the democratization of intelligence"*, and what these changes might *mean* to covert intervention, and escalation control *in practice* using concrete cases. A central work for the study is Carson's *Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics* (2018) regarding covert conflict, acknowledgment, open secrecy, and escalation control. Carson briefly comments on the recent shift perceived by other researchers, toward the end of his monography. Carson is cautious about what they might mean and argues that states will adapt to change. Perhaps by limiting their "...covert role to places like the air, sea, or cyber, where exposure risks are limited to state-based intelligence detection (Carson 2018, 331)." He also suggests a possible adaption of strategy, that states, to cope with the changes, might shift to open secrecy. However, Carson asserts that

"...understanding the specific dynamics surrounding open secrecy and official (non-)acknowledgment is more rather than less important in a world of WikiLeaks and Twitter" (Carson 2018, 331). Cormac and Aldrich agree that on covert action "…little systematic analysis exists of the role of visibility and acknowledgment" (Cormac and Aldrich 2018, 477).

Carson's caution is understandable at the time since few foresaw the unprecedented mobilization of "democratic intelligence", and in some sense (mainly cyber) non-state covert action toward Russia after the invasion of Ukraine. To address this research gap, the study engages with the recent debate on the "democratization of intelligence", "implausible deniability", global "extreme glasnost", and the current "crisis of secrecy." Combining these perspectives with Carson's findings in his limited-war theory, with a theoretical focus on the concepts of acknowledgment and open secrecy (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022; Aldrich and Moran 2018, 4; Cormac and Aldrich 2018, 479; Carson 2018, 311, 329). This endeavor will hopefully contribute with new perspectives on escalation dynamics and actor behavior, outside the scope of Carson's case studies.

2.2.2. Democratization of Intelligence

As outlined in delimitations in section 1.4. the term is also used to describe intelligence agency reform as well as to describe an aspect of the contemporary shift in the nature of intelligence. There are overlaps but this study focuses on the latter meaning of the term.

In a recent academic discussion on the US Army War College podcast, researcher, and intelligence practitioner David Gioe, as he was performing intelligence duties in the navy reserve, noted that when accessing the compartmentalized intelligence platforms, he had not missed much regarding developments in Ukraine. Instead, he felt that perspectives and analyses from the open-source intelligence (OSINT) space, that could have contributed, to and enhanced the analysis were missing. (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022).

Gioe, and Stolworthy stress that things are developing fast, and what they are seeing in Ukraine is unprecedented and was inconceivable just ten years ago. Ken Stolworthy argues the greatest change is the democratization of analysis. That thousands of people with a passion, acquire data or purchase open-source imagery, and analyze it collectively in ways that only intelligence agencies were able to before. One example is Oryx, who are meticulously tracking losses in Ukraine based on public video, and photo imagery (Oryx 2022a).

Gioe and Stolworthy observe deep changes to intelligence culture carrying implications toward practice, as well as ethics, and democratic society. As more data is widely shared, then instead of withholding information from classified sources to protect them, the US government can point toward data in the unclassified sphere. Another consequence they note is a more balanced relationship between academics, and intelligence agencies, since everyone knows pretty much the

same thing, and this change seems to facilitate a more meaningful exchange (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022).

Gioe and Stolworthy believe this unprecedented public transparency, with "democratic sensors" in almost all domains, will change how wars are conducted, complicating who is a combatant, and is already exposing disinformation (Bellingcat on MH17), as well as documenting war crimes in Ukraine. They believe this change "...may herald the new face of war itself (Gioe and Stolworthy 2022)." However, their focus is primarily on what these changes mean to intelligence practice itself, neither in the podcast nor in their article do they broach the implications of covert conflict, escalation control, acknowledgment, and open secrets (Ibid 2022). The implication of these perspectives is brought up by Carson, and mentioned in the previous section, even before the events in Ukraine, and will be the focus of this study.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

2.3.1. Limited-war theory

Military intervention is unpredictable, and it might lead to uncontrollable spirals where escalation feeds on itself, especially when other major powers are involved (Carson 2018, 82). Political leaders try to avoid open-ended scenarios leading to loss of control and wish to keep their options open. So, a central capacity for intervening states is what Carson defines as "escalation control," "...or the capacity of heads of state to manipulate and calibrate the level of hostilities in a given conflict" (Carson 2018, 45), and limit war. The concept of *limited war* is contextual, according to Carson's definition, meaning *"...any conflict in which intervention takes place but which lacks large-scale escalation"* (Carson 2018, 45).

Escalation could be *vertical* (new capacities) or *horizontal* (geographic). The "red lines" that might cause an actor to escalate when crossed, are what Schelling conceptualizes as *salient thresholds*. These makeup "...implicit or explicit rules about who uses violence, where it is used, and/or how it is used" (Carson 2018, 44). Since the Cold War a strategic nuclear exchange is arguably the last threshold, and a final step on the escalation ladder. When states are confronted by these salient thresholds Carson argues "...the choice is often among three options: obey, covertly violate, or overtly violate" (Carson 2018, 337). So those involved in an intervention continuously negotiate salient thresholds, creating a situation where it can bring sufficient force to bear, while simultaneously constraining the adversary, and mitigating the risk of uncontrollable escalation.

To negotiate these thresholds, and manage escalation major powers use *secrecy*, and *acknowledgment* during a military intervention, to keep certain developments from the "front

stage" of international politics. While in the meantime covert operations "backstage" allow for signaling an opponent without the possible public humiliation of an overt display, and actions or reactions can be contained from a wider domestic or international audience (Carson 2018, 53-54). States detecting a covert intervention have reasons to *collude* to keep an intervention backstage, or they might opt for *exposure*, and bring events into the light of the international stage. Reasons to collude might be to avoid domestic debate on casualties that could complicate an intervention, there might also be public demands from hawks to escalate a conflict, and influential doves in a democracy might shut down a military intervention entirely. Secrecy is what unlocks the "backstage" used by, and between major powers, to credibly portray limited war on the international stage.

2.3.2. Delayed Disclosure

However, secrecy is vigorously challenged by the present condition. Aldrich and Moran strive to explore this "...collision of the old world of state secrecy and intelligence with the new world of innovation and interconnectivity" (Aldrich and Moran 2018, 5), and see the current state as one in which "there are no secrets, only delayed disclosures" (Watts 2012 in Aldrich & Moran 2018, 4). They argue there is an ongoing shift from intelligence toward information where "…states will no longer 'create' intelligence; rather, they will merely coordinate and 'curate' intelligence" (2018, 13). Secrecy is a source of state power, it gives governments a secluded space to plan and predict. But also, to "cover up embarrassments, blunders, follies and crimes" (Aldrich and Moran 2018, 3). As outlined in section 2.2.2. even if Gioe and Stolworthy rather emphasize collaboration, they seem to broadly agree.

Secrecy is being hollowed out as information technology, and its culture is merging with intelligence, and states meanwhile hope to leverage this shift by encouraging over-sharing. The "...growing availability of surveillance and imagery technologies on the open market has created the 'public secret sphere', where 'secrets' are 'spectacles' for public consumption" (Bratich 2007, in Aldrich and Moran 2018, 12). The authors also note a cultural shift since information technology "…technicians represent a counter-culture that is libertarian and antithetical to secrecy", and the example with the "...Snowden leaks were symptomatic of wider and more important trends, including systemic changes in the nature of intelligence, together with the cultural attitudes of security contractors and the IT community" (Aldrich and Moran 2018, 4).

At the global scale, Florini points to how the triple processes of democratization, globalization and IT are pulling corporations and governments into the open. Florini points to an ever-increasing number of transnational transactions, and that "...there has been a growing assumption that transparency is one of the keys to effective governance" while simultaneously the realm of national security still is the exception, "where transparency gives way to secrecy" (Florini in Aldrich and Moran 2018, 3).

2.3.3. Implausible Deniability

if these processes spell the end of secrecy as we know it, how do states cope? Cormac and Aldrich point out how covert action never really relied on secrecy, it rather relies on non-acknowledgment, and ambiguity. In this sense they are in line with Carson, using the term covert action to describe something that is "...less about plausible deniability and more about non-acknowledged intervention as performance (Cormac and Aldrich 2018, 493)", and stress how covert action has "…communicative value and allows states to demonstrate resolve without escalating to military conflict" (Cormac and Aldrich 2018, 493). They believe the current literature is confused and in need of conceptual clarity with an abundance of similar terms such as "grey", "hybrid" and "non-linear warfare" (Cormac and Aldrich 2018, 490).

They believe changes in the media environment through fragmentation into a multitude of new channels, and informal reporting, alongside state-run information operations, not only weakens secrecy itself but creates a state "...in which claim competes with counterclaim to damage the credibility of any narrative" (Cormac and Aldrich 2018, 486). Instead, covert action underlines a "...spectrum of visibility and deniability" where "...the one constant is non-acknowledgment", (2018, 493) and exploits ambiguity as a "...space for myths to emerge and allows fear to take hold" (2018, 491). A concrete example is taken from Russia in the Donbas. Their "hybrid warfare" generates "...a situation where it is unclear whether a state of war exists—and if it does, who is a combatant and who is not" (2018, 490).

2.4. Research Design

2.4.1. Comparative Case Study

This study is principally designed as a comparative case study, but with an exploratory ambition, without an intention to embark on a controlled comparison. Inspired by the approach suggested by King, Keohane, and Verba that "…focuses on the observable implications of a theory for independent and dependent variables, and not for intervening variables (George and Bennet 2005, 195)." But instead of focusing on implications to, or isolating causal variables, the study uses "observable implications of a theory" as a criterion to find comparable cases where the theories operate. In this sense the case selection strategy is similar to Walt and Lamont's, combining cross-case and over-time comparisons, which allows greater comparison across fewer cases (Lamont 2015, 207).

As outlined under the case description in section 2.1. If a systemic shift in the nature of intelligence has taken place, it should be found and explored in a contemporary case where these factors exist and be compared to a case predating the shift to explore its implications for strategic performance. Covert conflict and escalation dynamics are present in both the contemporary

(Moskva), and historical (Rolling Thunder) cases. While the implications of a "democratization of intelligence" shift are isolated, and at work only in the contemporary case, the historical perspective contains covert, and escalation dynamics so serves as an important reference, and point of comparison.

2.4.2. Narrative analysis

The primary method of within-case analysis draws from narrative analysis to understand how states make sense of and communicate events (Boréus and Bergström 2018, 224-225) to the public, among themselves, as well as to their adversaries. Another relevant angle is how secrecy is used to avoid communicating to certain audiences, and covertness is used to communicate an interest in limiting war between states (Carson 2018, 331,335). The type of public material used in the study is also suited to this type of analysis.

The narrations often take the form of *accounts* by state or non-state actors, further divided up as different forms of *justifications*, and *excuses* (Scott and Lyman 1968). these terms are used to bring clarity and structure to how states respond to something *untoward*. Such as attempts to challenge established *salient thresholds*.

2.4.3. Material

In preparation for the study, a literature review was conducted of published research in the Lund University Library service LUBsearch using search terms "covert intervention", "covert conflict", and "covert action." An important criterion for selecting relevant material is the availability of news or open-source intelligence (OSINT) reporting on the events, including reports on events being debunked by non-state actors, possible official leaks "opening secrets", and accounts by official state actors on what transpired.

To find material on Operation Rolling Thunder a wide search in the historical archives of one of the largest newspapers in Sweden, Svenska Dagbladet was conducted. So news material from the period is used, alongside secondary sources in Carson's research (2018). The archival search covered the period before, and after the initiation of Operation Rolling Thunder (1963-12-01 to 1967-01-01) using the Swedish terms for the keywords "Soviet" (*sovjetiskt*) and "air defense" (*luftvärn*), and this generated 26 hits. By studying this material, twelve of them could be separated that covered the Vietnam War, Soviet aid, and Vietnamese air defense. Studying the material for meaning it is important to "...consider who is speaking to whom, for what purpose and under what circumstances" (George and Bennet 2005, 136).

3 Analysis

3.1. Operation Rolling Thunder

3.1.1. Missiles to Hanoi

Operation Rolling Thunder was a gradually expanding, and frequently halted, US bombing campaign that was initiated on the 24th of February 1965, and would last until the end of October 1968. The purpose of the campaign was to signal US determination to North Vietnam, force Ho Chi Minh to abandon moves to unite the country, and bolster morale in the South (Pike 2016). The operation would become a juncture for Soviet covert involvement in Vietnam. The Soviet intervention was smaller in number than China but involved sending SA-2 "guideline" surface-to-air missiles that were highly advanced at the time, giving the North Vietnamese air defense a considerably enhanced range, and the capacity to engage the US aircraft at high altitudes. Records, and intelligence estimates at the time suggested that the Soviets maintained a continuous staff of around two thousand people "...servicing SA-2 missile systems from mid-1965 to as late as 1967" (Carson 2018, 239). This presence was not publicized, signaling to the US it did not desire direct confrontation. The US reciprocated by not commenting on Soviet presence, keeping intervention covert, and on the "backstage" (Carson 2018, 238).

3.1.2. Escalation during Rolling Thunder

During Operation Rolling Thunder the US primarily relied on air assets and escalated the intervention horizontally to include more targets in North Vietnam, as well as vertically with larger strike packages. Meanwhile, the Soviets covertly brought SA-2 air defense systems, and personnel to bear against the American air campaign escalating vertically. The Soviet Union and China were constrained in their role out of a desire to avoid direct confrontation with US forces in North Vietnam, as well as by the Sino-Soviet rivalry at the time (Global Security 2015). Even though there were many direct encounters during the US air war against Hanoi these carried a risk of escalation (Carson 2018, 211). Meanwhile, US intelligence interpreted Soviet air defense support as displaying resolve, and as "...a warning that further escalation risked counterstrikes against targets in the South or US carriers" (Carson 2018, 244). The Soviet side was cautious of pushing the US too hard, and Gaiduk notes the Soviet leadership "...found it plausible that American leaders might use tactical nuclear weapons out of desperation" (2018, 241).

3.1.3. An Ambiguous Media

Carson has a point in categorizing US involvement in Laos as an open secret, and Soviet support during Operation Rolling Thunder in 1965 as covert (Carson 2018, 212). The media situation at the time is certainly ambiguous in a sense that significantly differs to the *Moskva* case. According to Carson there is a "…conspicuous absence of public news reporting on Soviet combat involvement in Vietnam", but while "...construction for the SA-2 missiles was publicly reported, the identity of any crews operating those missile sites was left ambiguous" (Carson 2018, 245). Swedish news reporting around the time in *Svenska Dagbladet* or *SvD* (The Swedish Daily News) is also silent on any Soviet personnel involved and refers to air defense batteries as "North Vietnamese" in all the articles found in *SvD* from the period 1963-12-01 to 1967-01-01.

There are several convincing examples. Around the start of the campaign the news bureau TT-Reuters only reported official US sources saying "...nothing indicates that the North Vietnamese have been given Russian surface-to-air missiles, or that Chinese troops have been transported to North Vietnam[1]" (TT-Reuters in SvD 1965). A Swedish newspaper report, on Warsaw Pact (WP) support to Vietnam, from as late as July 1966 reports the possibility of WP volunteers to Vietnam and asserts that "...of course so far the Russians have only sent military equipment to North Vietnam[2]" (Hoffer 1967). The findings on Soviet public reporting, as a response to increased US bombing during Rolling Thunder, are in line with Carson's (2018, 240). Another article in December 1966 on how the air war in Vietnam displays the value of conventional weapons (contrary to the "novelty" of guided missiles), references only North Vietnamese air defense units, and the only mention of Russia is on the origin of the missiles (Torselius 1966).

Russian arms shipments and even the possibility of volunteers are discussed openly in the media at the time, while quiet on the identity of air defense operators, combatants, and even direct Soviet involvement. While among the senior US leadership in 1965 the tone is different. Hubert Humphrey, US vice president, remarked that "all the press knows the Russians are in the site business", and the US Information Agency reported that: "Every European newspaper takes it for granted that Russians shot down our plane" (Carson 2018, 247). So there certainly seems to be a dissonance between reporting, and what US officials believed were "open secrets", regarding direct Soviet involvement.

During Operation Rolling Thunder I argue that there were no real "democratic sensors" or "detectors", the next best thing was media, and investigative journalism. But these were never

---

[1] Authors translation, original text in Swedish: "Det finns dock inget som tyder på att Nordvietnameserna fått ryska luftvärnsraketer eller att kinesiska trupper transporterats till Nordvietnam"

[2] Authors translation, original text in Swedish: "Hittills har veterligen endast ryssarna skickat militär utrustning till Nordvietnam"

sensors or detectors in a real sense, since they were reliant on leaks from state officials, lacking any means of their own to verify and analyze events. Although leaks did happen, interventions (or their magnitude) eventually would come into the eye of the public. The Pentagon Papers would reveal the real scope of US ambitions in Vietnam, which leaked to the media and reached the US Congress in 1971 (Nixon Library 2021). A practical example of "delayed disclosure" that took several years. However, this delay was significant, measured in years, while the Moskva event became public almost instantaneously.

3.1.4. Secrecy Works - For Now

During Rolling Thunder, the US and Soviet Union could calibrate, and control the information environment in ways than seem impossible today. This also meant that the major powers involved could fully utilize the "backstage" and keep the scope of intervention between state detectors. The prime motivation from both sides is to avoid unwanted escalation. An ambiguous media supported these strategic goals and kept escalation in check. Sensitivity from the US side was so high that South Vietnamese prime minister Nguyen Khanh was pressured to rescind a statement that the "Chinese had moved a regiment of their troops into North Vietnam" (Carson 2018, 327). Similar sensitivities, and events are present with Russia as the overt intervener in Ukraine. But this time within the US government itself regarding intelligence sharing in the aftermath of the Moskva sinking and will be elaborated further in the next section.

3.2. Moskva Sinking

3.2.1. Secrecy Challenged

Aldrich and Moran cited retired counterterrorism officer Mark Fallon, that today "there are no secrets, only delayed disclosures" (Aldrich and Moran 2018, 4). Despite these changing circumstances it is reasonable to assume that major powers have so far become accustomed to an intelligence environment where they are the exclusive credible detectors of covert intervention. Through control of intelligence assets, and primary detection means. Researchers argue that this is rapidly changing, and the *Moskva* case hints at the magnitude of this change, as well as some of its implications.

3.2.2. Escalation in Ukraine

US and NATO provided Ukraine with critical new capacities through the Javelin in 2018, before the overt Russian invasion, along with Bayraktar TB2 drones (March 2022), and HIMARS (June

2022) where the latter two can be understood as a vertical escalation of the conflict (Lendon 2023, Oryx 2022b, Reuters 2018). Russia initially struck from Belarus, in what constitutes a horizontal escalation, and by the time of the strike on the Moskva, Russia had not yet begun mass attacks against Ukrainian energy infrastructure which began in October 2022 (Meilhan and Roth 2022). Russia had not yet conducted any large-scale mobilizations, but otherwise brought most of its military capacity to bear against Ukraine.

Already two months after the invasion comments from the US Secretary of Defense Austin, show how goals in Ukraine might have shifted. From helping Ukraine defend itself to weakening Russia (Ohanes 2022). A mirror of Soviet ambitions in Vietnam. While Putin expressed how Russia is waging "...a wider war against US, NATO and the West" (Ohanes 2022). In October 2022 the Russians began large strikes against Ukrainian civilian infrastructure alongside an increase in nuclear threats. This led to Petraeus publicly stating that any nuclear strike would lead to an overwhelming conventional response from NATO, toward every identifiable Russian asset (Helmore 2022). A clear statement regarding the costs of crossing such a threshold and escalating further.

3.2.3. Accounts on the Moskva

On the 14th of April 2022, the flagship of the Black Sea fleet the Moskva was sunk. The same Swedish newspaper *SvD*, which reported on Vietnamese air defense in 1965, cited The New York Times (NYT) on controversies surrounding the event. NYT received information from anonymous US sources, that US intelligence made the attack on the Moskva possible. The official US account was that publicizing the information was incorrect, and irresponsible and that Ukraine only combines US, other partners, and their own intelligence. That the US only provides intelligence that helps Ukraine defend itself TT-AFP 2022). At the same time, President Joe Biden reprimanded several of his most senior defense officials after leaks hinted at the magnitude of US intelligence sharing with Ukraine (Ankel 2022).

The anonymous source told NYT that they were not aware the Ukrainians were planning an attack, simply confirming it was the Moskva, and that the US government wanted to keep intelligence sharing a secret. Since it might be perceived as an escalation, and provocation toward Vladimir Putin (TT-AFP 2022). Not even a week after the attack, the US sensor suspected by the media was a P-8 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft, that was tracked by the publicly available "Flight Radar 24." The aircraft left Sicily just hours before the attack, turning off trackers before reaching the coastline of the Black Sea.

The official US account was that the P-8 conducted limited air patrols on behalf of NATO (Boyle 2022). Aside from leaks, which have always happened, the speed and detail regarding access to US intelligence capabilities in the air was unthinkable during Rolling Thunder, and a consequence of increasingly public sensors in places less expected. A contemporary massive expansion of information technology, and "over-sharing" (Aldrich and Moran 2018, 2) of all kinds

of data suddenly make "democratic detectors", and intelligence possible in a sense. The flight tracker is just one such example. Another is mentioned by Gioe of mobilizing Russian tanks, showing up on google maps as a traffic jam, ahead of the Russian invasion, illustrating how "...people have their own very convincing ways to verify things" (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022).

The US official account of the event is an "appeal to defeasibility" (Scott and Lyman 1968, 48), claiming their intelligence was not involved, or that Ukraine combined several sources, and they did not know or were involved. The leaked anonymous account cites that in providing intelligence on the ship, they did not know Ukraine was going to use it for targeting. Pentagons John Kirby argues that: "We were not involved in the Ukrainians' decision to strike the ship or in the operation they carried out. We had no prior knowledge of Ukraine's intent to target the ship", and "...the Ukrainians have their own intelligence capabilities to track and target Russian naval vessels, as they did in this case" (Dilanian, Kube, and Lee 2022).

The Ukrainian account is that they did not have the capacity to detect the *Moskva* at the time, but nature itself, and extraordinary circumstances intervened on that day. One of the Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missile (ASM) operators claimed that they fired two missiles at the Moskva, and give their account of the events: "We did not have over-the-horizon radar at the moment of the invasion, and Russia knew this. But as the clouds were hanging very low, and the signal had nowhere to go from this corridor between the water and the clouds, the radar unexpectedly reached the Moskva" (Romaniuk 2022). The Ukrainian account is a form of appeal to "accidental circumstances" (Scott and Lyman 1968, 47) pointing to a weather phenomenon were the Moskva became reflected between sky, and water which gave the ASM radar added range. The Neptune operator also corroborates the Russian account of a sudden storm (Romaniuk 2022).

Former Turkish naval officer Ozberk refers to weather data that reports mild weather, and sea conditions which contradict that there ever was a storm. He blames the successful ASM strike on general Russian negligence, poor intelligence, and training (Ozberk 2022). Ozberk as well as Sutton used available synthetic aperture radar (SAR) imagery from Sentinel-1 which is "complete, free and open access" to analyze the events (Copernicus 2023). An available sensor in space, and OSINT tool used by the public today. ShadowBreak is another space-based example used in Ukraine, stating their intent to *democratize geospatial intelligence* (ShadowBreak Intl), with space-based radar (RADINT) and image intelligence (IMINT). This kind of data would have been lower in quality, strictly confidential, and the sole domain of major powers during the Cold War era. This ongoing collaboration in the OSINT-sphere among, amateurs, technicians, enthusiasts, and military experts, not only on collection but also analysis marks the present shift toward a "democratization of intelligence" according to Stolworthy (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022).

Meanwhile, the Russian account of the event is an "appeal to accidents", in the classic sense. Claiming that the Moskva sank after an accidental fire causing ammunition to explode, and stormy sea. US intelligence even assesses that the senior military leadership in Russia is keeping accurate accounts of the war from Putin, and probably lied about what happened to the Moskva

(Barnes and Glanz 2022). During Operation Rolling Thunder the US believed the Soviets would keep any losses secret, disguising staff on the SA-2 batteries as "technicians", and the US would reinforce this strategy by colluding (Carson 2018, 243). According to Carson collusion during the
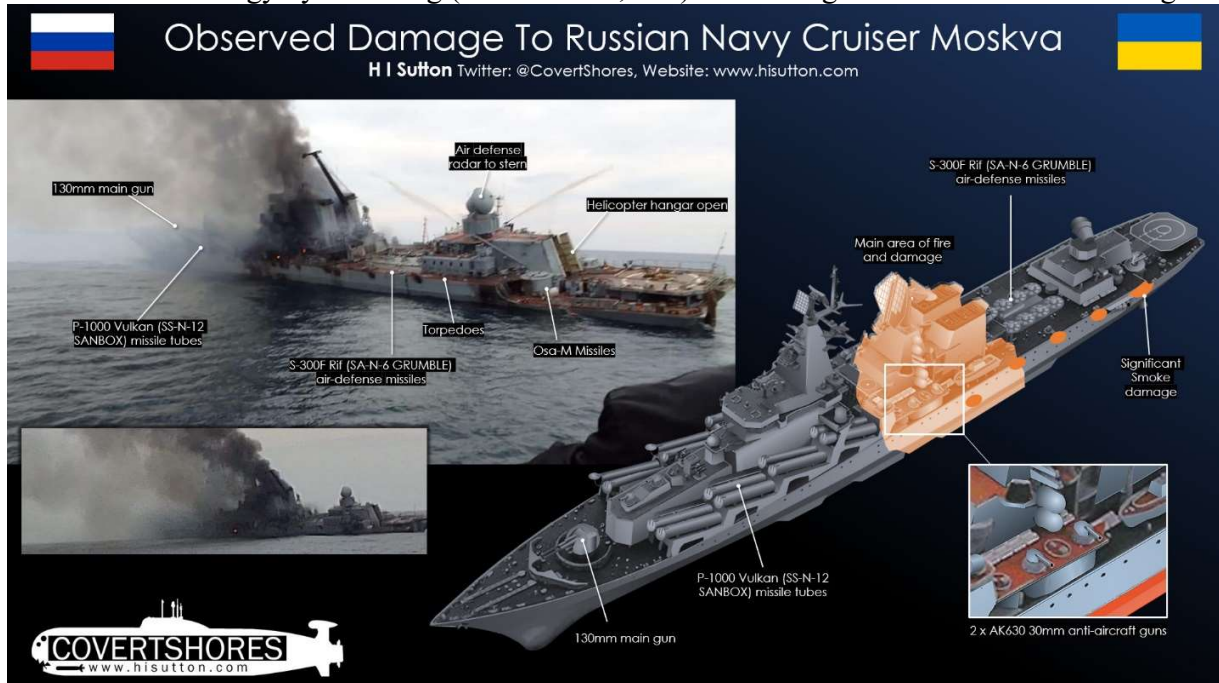
Cold War had the function of keeping certain developments from a hawkish elite fearing pressures to escalate a conflict, but if the suspicions of US intelligence are true it might even be used for internal disinformation and keeping Putin in the dark. Despite colluding in a sense, and downplaying the event, Russia retaliated with missile strikes after the Moskva went down (Taylor 2022).

In the Moskva case the window of opportunity for Moscow to simply ignore the loss and carry on as usual quickly closed. There was a little delay until the event was disclosed to the public, and just four days after the ship went down photos leaked online.[3] Accompanied by assessments from naval experts on the extent of the damage, which reinforced a Neptune ASM strike as the probable cause (Sutton 2021). In addition, a recording of radio communication from the Moskva was released a month later, by the Ukrainian military, with the crew calling for aid and reporting "Moskva-1 – two holes, propeller stalled, sinking, falling on the side" (Taylor 2022). Authenticity is hard to assess but even if the audio capture is a fabrication, the shared photos alongside available audio capture is another example of an emerging "...new realm of superabundant information" (Aldrich and Moran 2018, 13), and if true serves to validate the account that two Neptune ASM struck the Moskva. Even if this example is of intentionally leaked signals intelligence (SIGINT), there are examples from Ukraine of non-state collection, and even electronic warfare through jamming of non-encrypted comms (Jankowicz 2022).

---

[3] The photos are embedded in the image above, with illustrations, and comments by the naval OSINT source Covert Shores.

There are also instances of image sharing on social media during the war when the collector doesn't know what they are looking at. Gioe mentions an example of a man sharing images of Iskander launch vehicles passing by on TikTok asking users on the app what they are (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022). The wide distribution and reach of shared images in general also made it possible to question Russian disinformation that was published of alleged survivors from the Moskva (Rudenko 2022). A relative saw her nephew in the photo of survivors who, according to a navy representative, had gone down with the ship, and she had not been able to reach since. Apart from debunking the Kremlins story, it proved that Russia was violating its own laws by sending conscripts to a combat zone.

In the material analyzed on Moskva	In the material analyzed on Rolling Thunder
- HUMINT (US intelligence leaks) – around one month later - HUMINT (relatives on social media) – around one month later - RADINT (Sentinel-1) - instantaneous - IMINT (shared from the event) – four days - GEOINT (Flight Radar 24) – one week after - OSINT (collaboration and analysis) – continuous as data is available	HUMINT (Ellsberg and Russo DoD leaks) – in 1971 six years later

Table 1: Publicly available information or sensors and delay until disclosure.

3.3. Further Implications

3.3.1. A Crowded Backstage

As outlined in the sections above significant aspects of secrecy, and intelligence, have changed. I argue that these changes affect the strategic performance of states in certain ways. Carson argues "...that interveners and those detecting covert interventions can use secrecy to cope with two escalation-control problems: hawkish domestic pressure and poor communication among adversaries. When escalation risks are severe, leaders will prioritize escalation control and embrace a tacitly collusive use of the backstage" (Carson 2018, 81).

Aldrich and Moran believe we are moving from compartmentalized intelligence to widely available information. For a democratic, and transparent society, this could be a good thing, but

such developments carry implications for the "backstage" of international politics. "A multitude of nuanced analyses to select from", and an increase in the number of players alongside experts, intelligence professionals, and policymakers (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022) would point to how the "backstage" of international politics is more crowded than ever. Intelligence, or information, that would have been top secret IMINT during Operation Rolling Thunder is available to a wide public today. Continuing Carson's theatre analogy, borrowed from Goffman, there seems to be a reason to believe that the international stage *at least* has assumed the shape of black box theatre configured for audience interaction rather than a strictly delineated space that conveniently separates front- and backstage, actors and audience. So, if covert intervention can no longer be hidden from domestic hawks, they might pressure states toward escalating a conflict. While especially demoralizing blows might be kept from authoritarian leaders, becoming a recipe for faulty communication and mistakes.

Secrecy is used to make sure that the right message was delivered to a certain target group, protecting signaling between states. Recent changes tend to make secrets "open" and non-acknowledging an open secret runs the risk of damaging the state's credibility. Russia was internationally ridiculed on its own account of how the Moskva sank. Carson also argues that "…open secret situations should prompt exposure by adversaries" (2018, 229). However, the US did not expose the swift but the implausibly deniable occupation of Crimea in 2014. However, they seem to have managed to learn from that experience. Instead, they adopted a different strategy of "pre-bunking" Russian smokescreens, sharing intelligence widely and thereby exposing the extent of the Russian mobilization ahead of the invasion last year (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022). When the Moskva sank, the US also did not collude to support a Russian account. Probably striving to avoid the same mockery Moscow got. So, the US adapts to these changing circumstances.

3.3.2. Deniable Acknowledgement

According to Carson, Cormac, and Aldrich secrecy has always been more about acknowledgment than visibility, and "…a covert intervention may remain "covert" even if partially visible (i.e., exposed to those with intelligence capabilities) or even widely exposed" (Carson 2018, 45). Carson reasons current developments and posits that covertness can probably create new ways to exploit a rival (Carson 2018, 328). How the US is acting and the rapid changes in the information environment point to that. US behavior in the Moskva case could perhaps be described as a form of "deniable acknowledgment" that harnesses ambiguity.

The US could be leaking its involvement to show resolve and commitment to allies, and China, while simultaneously non-acknowledging to mitigate escalation risks, and keeping its role ambiguous. Contemporary changes illustrate the multitude of public sensors available stating that someone else, even non-state open-source actors, could be providing intelligence is quite possible. Essentially taking some credit while avoiding escalation risks. Or adopting the Russian strategy in Crimea of taking credit after the fact. The extreme saturation of information and the difficulties in

substantiating certain claims sets the stage for another strategy that the US might have observed already. This would entail overtly providing weapons that are harder to hide, while covertly providing targeting data that is "sanitized" by planting it within reach of non-state actors affiliated with Ukraine. Information dominance is what wins wars today. Managing to collect, process, and disseminate information unhindered, while simultaneously hindering the enemy from doing the same is (Tuck 2016, 131).

As the Moskva case and MH17 prove a "democratization of intelligence" might mitigate disinformation when non-state actors can mobilize for a just cause. On the other hand, non-acknowledgment and ambiguity have always been in the playbook of major powers. This might also bite back when Russia spreads disinformation regarding Western volunteers or new capabilities not yet sent to Ukraine. They are in fact "opening secrets" that have not happened yet. Creating imaginary forces through disinformation, simultaneously offering a window of opportunity for NATO or the US to insert real ones in its place. So, disinformation without a clear policy goal makes it easier for Ukraine's supporters to escalate.

3.3.2. Democratic Intelligence

If anyone with assets can engage in intelligence collection and analysis. This could mean real deniability for certain states. But from the examples outlined before an important factor could be that democratic intelligence can only be harnessed for democratic means. The contemporary Moskva case supports this, and Gioe points out that "from a moral perspective people have not been as interested in discerning or documenting Ukrainian moves" (Gioe, Stolworthy, and Lester 2022). There might also be an ongoing change in political culture that Aldrich and Moran hint at. People are willing to devote their time to de-bunking threats to human rights, collaborating, online, and increasingly have the means to do so.

4 Conclusion

In a comparison of two cases: Operation Rolling Thunder and the sinking of the Moskva. The study used limited-war theory, alongside theories describing a systemic shift in intelligence and the information milieu today to ask what significant aspects regarding secrecy and intelligence have changed that might affect a strategic performance on the international stage, by states engaged in overt or covert military intervention.

During Rolling Thunder, the media had a quite ambiguous role and neither the Swedish news material nor that cited by other researchers could show that Soviet surface-to-air missile support was an "open secret" or known widely to the public during the period 1963-12-01 to 1967-01-01. Both sides colluded in keeping Soviet support from the public eye, fearing escalation. During Rolling Thunder secrecy seemed to work, in creating a "backstage" to the international stage that the US and Soviets could access.

The Moskva sunk at a point in time when secrecy is seriously challenged by a multitude of available sensors accompanied by changes in intelligence culture. Rapidly shared information is collected and analyzed by non-state actors undermining the credibility of Russian accounts and making the US wary. Keeping events "backstage" between major powers is not possible in the same sense, with claims competing with counterclaims, exemplified by how the US chose not to collude with Russia on how they lost the Moskva.

The study argues that the "backstage" of today is increasingly crowded, often with non-state actors who chose not to collude, complicating escalation control and making mistakes more likely for major powers engaged in a covert or overt intervention. As the legitimacy of state performances is being eroded by plausible detection, either by states or democratically motivated non-state actors. In a situation where the latter used sensors and methods, that was the privilege of secret intelligence during the Cold War. Meanwhile, new ways of exploiting other states are made possible through "deniable acknowledgment" and by states choosing to fully embrace ambiguity. At the same time, democratic intelligence has the potential to counter disinformation and mobilize powerful assets if the cause is perceived as just.

4.1. Suggestions for Further Research

Ethical problems emerge when "...open-source intelligence practices create insecurity for civilians in warzones" and are examined by Saugmann (2019). These considerations need further research especially when the full impact of these changes is realized by democratic states.

5 References

Al Jazeera, 2022. Lavrov defends Russian attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure. Al Jazeera.

Aldrich, R.J., Moran, C.R., 2018. 'Delayed Disclosure': National Security, Whistle-Blowers and the Nature of Secrecy. Political Studies 67, 291–306. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321718764990

Andregg, M.M., Gill, P., 2014. Comparing the Democratization of Intelligence. Intelligence and National Security 29, 487–497. https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2014.915174

Ankel, S., 2022. Biden is furious about the leaks saying US intelligence helped Ukraine kill Russian generals and sink its warship, report says. Insider.

Barnes, J.E., Glanz, J., 2022. Moskva, Russia's Prized Ship, Was Hit by Missiles, U.S. Officials Say. The New York Times.

Boréus, K., Bergström, G., 2018. Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursalys.

Boyle , D., 2022. Moskva sinking: Did the US supply Kyiv with the location of the Black Sea flag ship? Daily Mail.

Carson, A., 2018. Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics. Princeton University Press.

Cheung, E., Yeung, J., jozuka, emiko, 2022. China carries out military exercises near Taiwan and Japan, sending 47 aircraft across Taiwan Strait in 'strike drill.' CNN.

Copernicus, 2023. Open Access Hub [WWW Document]. Copernicus Open Access Hub. URL https://scihub.copernicus.eu/ (accessed 3.20.23).

Cormac, R., Aldrich, R.J., 2018. Grey is the new black: covert action and implausible deniability. International Affairs 94, 477–494. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy067

Dilanian, K., Kube, C., Lee, C.E., 2022. U.S. intel helped Ukraine sink Russian flagship Moskva, officials say. NBC News.

Dyson, S.B., Parent, M.J., 2017. The operational code approach to profiling political leaders: understanding Vladimir Putin. Intelligence and National Security 33, 84–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2017.1313523

George, A.L., Bennett, A., 2005. Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences. MIT Press.

Gioe, D., Stolworthy, K., 2022. Democratised and declassified: the era of social media war is here [WWW Document]. Engelsberg ideas. URL https://engelsbergideas.com/notebook/democratised-and-declassified-the-era-of-social-media-war-is-here/ (accessed 3.18.23).

Gioe, D., Stolworthy, K., Lester, G., 2022. Every Citizen a Sensor? Democratizing Intelligence. YouTube.

Global Security, 2015. Soviet Aid to North Vietnam [WWW Document]. Global
        Security. URL https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/vietnam/hist-
        2nd-indochina-ussr.htm (accessed 3.17.23).

Goncharova, O., 2015. Putin's narrative on Crimea annexation takes an evolutionary
        leap - Mar. 11, 2015 [WWW Document]. Kyiv Post. URL
        https://archive.kyivpost.com/article/content/war-against-ukraine/putins-
        narrative-on-crimea-annexation-takes-an-evolutionary-leap-383183.html
        (accessed 3.18.23).

Grant, T., Hutchinson, B., 2023. 2023 "Doomsday Clock": This is how close we are
        to the apocalypse, scientists say. ABC News.

Helmore, E., 2022. Petraeus: US would destroy Russia's troops if Putin uses nuclear
        weapons in Ukraine. The Guardian.

Hoffer, P., 1967. Svenska Dagbladets historiska arkiv [WWW Document]. Svenska
        Dagbladet. URL https://www.svd.se/arkiv/1966-07-08/7/SVD (accessed
        3.19.23).

Jankowicz, M., 2022. Ukrainians mocked Russian troops while jamming their
        unsecured radio networks, NYT investigation reveals. Insider.

Jordan, D., Kiras, J.D., Lonsdale, D.J., Speller, I., Tuck, C., Walton, C.D., 2016.
        Understanding Modern Warfare. Cambridge University Press.

Lamont, C., 2015. Research Methods in International Relations. SAGE.

Lendon, B., 2023. Three weapons that changed the course of Ukraine's war with
        Russia [WWW Document]. CNN. URL
        https://edition.cnn.com/2023/02/25/europe/ukraine-war-three-key-weapons-
        intl-hnk/index.html (accessed 3.19.23).

Lendon, B., 2022a. Putin rattles his 'Satan II' nuclear saber to hide Russian failures
        in Ukraine war: analysts. CNN.

Lendon, B., 2022b. Moskva sinking: What really happened to the pride of Russia's
        fleet? CNN.

Meilhan, P., Roth, R., 2022. Ukrainian military says 18 Russian cruise missiles
        destroyed amid attacks on energy infrastructure. CNN.

Nixon Library, 2021. 50th Anniversary of the Release of The Pentagon Papers
        [WWW Document]. Richard Nixon Museum and Library. URL
        https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/news/50th-anniversary-release-pentagon-
        papers (accessed 3.19.23).

Ohanes, G., 2022. Did US intelligence-sharing with Ukraine cross a line? Deutsche
        Welle.

Oryx, 2023. Oryx [WWW Document]. Oryx. URL https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/
        (accessed 3.18.23).

Oryx, 2022a. Attack On Europe: Documenting Russian Equipment Losses During
        The 2022 Russian Invasion Of Ukraine [WWW Document]. Oryx. URL
        https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/2022/02/attack-on-europe-documenting-
        equipment.html (accessed 3.18.23).

Oryx, 2022b. Answering The Call: Heavy Weaponry Supplied To Ukraine [WWW
        Document]. Oryx. URL https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/2022/04/answering-
        call-heavy-weaponry-supplied.html (accessed 3.19.23).

Ozberk, T., 2022. Analysis: Chain of Negligence caused the loss of the Moskva cruiser [WWW Document]. Naval News. URL https://web.archive.org/web/20220417223048/https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/04/analysis-chain-of-negligence-caused-the-loss-of-the-moskva-cruiser/ (accessed 3.20.23).

Pike, J., 2016. Operation Rolling Thunder [WWW Document]. Global Security. URL https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/rolling_thunder.htm (accessed 3.21.23).

Reuters, 2018. Ukraine receives U.S. Javelin systems: Poroshenko. Reuters.

Romaniuk, R., 2022. Sinking the Moskva: previously undisclosed details. How the Ukrainian Neptune destroyed the flagship of the Russian fleet. Ukrainska Pravda.

Rudenko, A., 2022. Photograph Of A Missing Sailor Deepens Doubts About Russia's Narrative On The Sunken Warship Moskva. Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty.

Saugmann, R., 2019. The civilian's visual security paradox: how open source intelligence practices create insecurity for civilians in warzones. Intelligence and National Security 34, 344–361. https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2018.1553700

Scott, M.B., Lyman, S.M., 1968. Accounts. American Sociological Review 33, 46. https://doi.org/10.2307/2092239

ShadowBreak Intl, n.d. ShadowBreak Intl [WWW Document]. ShadowBreak. URL https://www.shadowbreakintl.com/ (accessed 1.2.23).

Sutton, H.I., 2021. Moskva Sinking: Images Reveal Once Powerful Russian Navy Ship On Fire [WWW Document]. Covert Shores. URL http://www.hisutton.com/Russian-Navy-Moskva-Sinking.html (accessed 3.20.23).

Taylor, W., 2022. "We're sinking and falling to the side": Dramatic audio of Moskva's final moments released. LBC.

Torselius, J.-H., 1966. Svenska Dagbladets historiska arkiv [WWW Document]. Svenska Dagbladet. URL https://www.svd.se/arkiv/1966-12-22/18/SVD (accessed 3.19.23).

Tovy, T., 2021. The Gulf of Tonkin: The United States and the Escalation in the Vietnam War. Routledge.

TT-AFP, 2022. USA: Vi hjälper inte Ukraina döda generaler. Svenska Dagbladet.

TT-Reuters, 1965. Svenska Dagbladets historiska arkiv [WWW Document]. Svenska Dagbladet. URL https://www.svd.se/arkiv/1965-02-18/8/SVD (accessed 3.19.23).