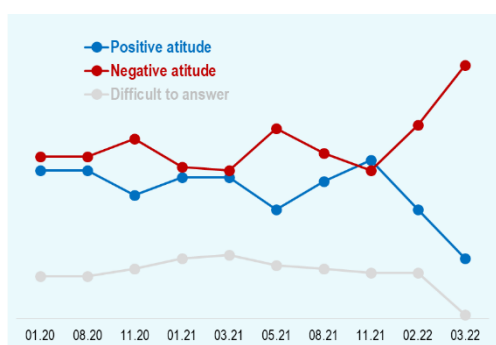


Russia's aggravated hatred of the US

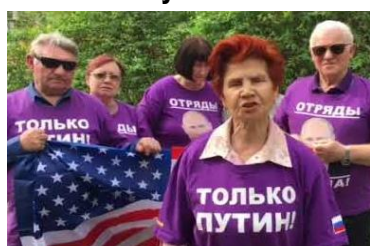
Russia's scepticism about the United States has always been evident because it is seen as a competitor for a seemingly "powerful" Russia. At the same time, aggravated rhetoric before the war about the **imagined danger from the NATO**, America and Ukraine, which wants to cooperate with them, has caused an even greater split in the Russians' perception of the West. During the war against Ukraine with allegedly "**American bases**" according to Russian propaganda, the United States is **crystallized even more deeply as an enemy for the occupiers**. Besides, a ghostly America has always been blamed for Russians' poverty, so they also see the American trace in the war with Ukraine.



According to the Levada Center poll after the beginning of the war, an **absolute majority of Russians (72%) felt bad about the United States** and only 17% have a positive attitude, while in February a third had a positive attitude, and a negative feeling was experienced by just over a half. However, the transition to the negative attitude occurred not only from the positive one. Some previously could not assess their attitude and now only 1% of 13% have not made up their mind. So, the majority of the apolitical **who did not want to speak out before also see the United States as an enemy now**.

The **picture of global leadership is much distorted** for Russians at the moment. For example, **29% of them believe that Russia is highly respected** in the world, and **37% think that they are more likely to be respected**. Yet, **more than a half are sure that the United States is not respected in the world**, and somehow this opinion in society is paradoxically used along with the belief that the United States influences most countries, companies and even their salaries.

The same goes for politicians. For example, **Scholz and Macron**, thanks to their greater loyalty to Putin and trade relations, are still respected in Russia, **while Biden and Zelensky are considered hostile by over 80% of Russians**. In Ukraine, this attitude is treated as an honor, so respect towards German and French leadership expressed by the hostile nation reveals a lack of their full support for Ukraine.

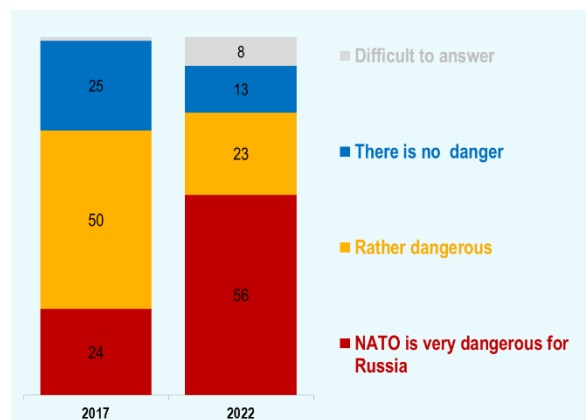


It is not surprising that Russia creates "**Putin's troops**" of impoverished grandmothers who hate Biden and blame him for all the troubles of their unhappy old age.

Instead, there are not so many political leaders who command full respect among Russians: apart from Putin, it is also the self-proclaimed president of politically occupied Belarus, **Lukashenko**, and **Xi Jinping** respected by an absolute majority.

According to 62% of Russians, their state should limit the US influence by any means, and **only 30% believe that it is necessary to leave open paths for cooperation**. Previously, 38% considered it better to be open to cooperation. Thus, the dynamics here is not so rapid, but it is downward-sloping. Moreover, **even among the youngest generation** (18-24-year olds or the so-called Generation Z who have grown up on American comedies and are very

sorry about the closure of McDonald's), the opinion that cooperation with the United States should be limited is supported by 56%, and only a little more than a third of them support cooperation.



The dynamics of ideas about the dangers of the US military force is significantly rapid. Now, 58% of Russians believe that these forces are very dangerous for Russia, although it was 35% in previous years. This narrative is widely spread in the media and is referred to as a ghostly pretext for the invasion of Ukraine. Such fears have no rational basis; it is simply a convenient message of justification for the invasion, which has been incorporated into Russia's public opinion for years and was very easy to impose on society. **The same applies to NATO as an alliance: 56% are sure that it is very dangerous for Russia,** although previously it has been a quarter perceiving it so acutely.

At the same time, Russian people still **do not believe that they are enemies of the world, especially in the European context:** both in case of less scepticism about EU leaders and perception of Russia's place in Europe. For example, **64% still believe that Russia has been and remains part of Europe and this is almost the same percentage as before** (in 2016 it was 68%). Moreover, the number of those who are sure of it even slightly increased.

Therefore, Russia's economic integration in Europe has not yet lost its last strings, while paradoxical hatred towards the West and simultaneous willingness to consider itself a world leader are combined in Russian public opinion. Many Russians live in Germany, get European salaries and, at the same time, go by German cars to marches in support of the USSR and Russia. They also spit at Ukrainians on the streets of Berlin who are now trying to fight for European values. **Meanwhile, the gap between Russia and the States is increasing** and imposed principles of hatred and accusations are being enhanced during the so called "liberation" war.