

The War Between Biden And Putin

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Introduction: Allison Tenney & Ryan Maneval

Neighboring countries Russia and Ukraine have been highlighted in the news over the last several weeks, due to a conflict leading to a war. In late 2021, Russia moved heavy military equipment and thousands of troops close to the Ukrainian border, claiming preparation for military operations. However, the so-called military operation sparked an invasion in Ukraine on February 24th. The invasion led by Russia sparked against major cities in Ukraine led to thousands of civilian injuries, and deaths. Although no one else has joined the war efforts on either side besides to send supplies, dozens of countries have sanctioned Russia. Ukraine and Russia have continued on and off peace talks although none were successful until the second month of the war. The war has left over two million Ukrainian citizens as refugees in other countries, trying to pick up the pieces of their lives. The media in both Russia and the West are vastly different from each other. Russia state media is – mainly in the beginning – very dismissive of the war and attempts to downplay what is actually going on in Ukraine. While the media in the West is more focused on economic security, and remaining as diplomatic as possible.

Media Narratives: Mitchell Smedley

Media narratives ensnare society in their slanted grasp, and influence on a large scale the decisions and lives of millions. Whether it be from mass media, social media, broadcast media, internet media, or any other form, media narratives can come from a multitude of places, viewpoints, agendas, and styles. In this case, the stakes could not be higher, with narratives dictating how people react toward their governments when faced with one of the largest military conflicts since World War II. With the United States as one of the world's top two or three super powers, American opinion of the conflict in Ukraine is pivotal to the course of international

discussion and conflict heading forward. Not only must Americans pay attention to their own media sources and how they spin the crisis, but also the Russian opinion of the conflict. Russia has developed into an adversary of the United States on a global stage. Understanding, how their people feel about the crisis will better help Americans close the gap that exists between the two people. Finally, getting multiple points of view on an event this large and impactful will assist in putting spin and narratives aside in search of a more unbiased view of the situation on the ground.

Communicative Strategies: Ryan Maneval

The TASS articles carried a similar tone throughout each article. The language used in each article seemed to be carefully proofread and vetted before being published. The articles did not once use the term “war” when referring to the Ukrainian conflict. The articles tended to use other terms such as “special military operation”, “conflict”, and “the situation” in Ukraine. Refraining from using the term “war” in each article is a consistent strategy used by Russian state media in order to shift the narrative around the war. This is imperative to the Russian government to maintain legitimacy with the Russian people. If they were to use the term “war” the Russian people might turn against it, and against the current Russian government.

USA Today constructs their narrative as very anti-Russian. They are very firm and precise when reporting on the sanctions being imposed on Russia and its oligarchs. They make sure to maintain a fact-based, yet strictly US-centric view of the war in Ukraine. They also make sure to highlight the atrocities that Russia is committing in Ukraine, attempting to get the American people behind supporting Ukraine and its war effort against Russia.

Strategic Narratives: Ryan Maneval

The Russian government is also careful to maintain specific language when referring to the Ukrainian government. They do not ever refer to them as a legitimate government, instead referring to them as the “Kiev regime”. This type of language is also carefully selected in order to portray the government as an evil, corrupt entity. When using the term “regime”, one usually associates that with a corrupt, untrustworthy government out to subjugate its people. This is what the Kremlin and Vladimir Putin want. They want the Russian people to believe they are fighting a worthy and noble cause. They want the Russian people to believe that they are going after an authoritarian regime and fighting for freedom. TASS also wants the Russians to believe that the Ukrainian government is overrun with neo-Nazis (TASS 2022). This propaganda tool is especially effective in Ukraine due to sentiments against Nazis coming from WWII.

In the USA Today articles, a noticeably large difference in tone and message can be observed. Within these articles, pro-Ukraine sentiment and anti-Kremlin sentiment. The articles mainly cover the actions of President Joe Biden and his administration. Obviously, with Russia being a main adversary of the United States since after WWII, it is clear where the US stance on the country is. The articles discuss multiple statements made by the Biden administration regarding the war in Ukraine. In a USA Today article by John Fritz and Joey Garrison, they quote the president ““As we watch freedom and liberty under attack abroad ... I’m here to fulfill my responsibility under the Constitution to preserve liberty and freedom here”” (Fritz and Garrison 2022). This messaging shows the clear stance of the United States – that Russia’s attack on Ukraine is illegitimate and endangers the freedoms and liberties of the people of Ukraine.

Justifications: Ryan Maneval

Russian state media justifies the invasion of Ukraine by using an extremely similar paragraph at the end of each article. At the end of each article, there is a small statement that discusses how Vladimir Putin ordered a “special military operation” into the Donbass region, at the request of the leaders of the Donbass. The fact that this is in each article is telling, and shows the lengths the Russian government is willing to go to drill their agenda into the heads of its citizens. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov also said this about Ukraine, ““Ideally, Ukraine should be liberated, cleaned from neo-Nazis, from people sharing pro-Nazi sentiment and ideas”” (TASS February 2022). This messaging, as touched on earlier, is pure propaganda from the Russian government. This is another way they justify their invasion and current war in Ukraine. By telling the Russian people that they are purging Ukraine and its government of Nazis, a group who purged them during WWII, they are able to create a rallying cry and a convincing reason for an invasion (at least inside Russia itself). This justification works within the borders of Russia, but does not work outside of that as Western media can see that there is no issue with rampant Nazism inside Ukraine and its government.

The United States imposed a variety of economic sanctions on Russia and its oligarchs. The sanctions are meant to “isolate Russia from the global financial system, shut down its access to cutting-edge technology and undercut Putin's strategic ambitions to diversify and modernize his economy” (Meyer 2022). Doing this indirectly hurts Putin’s war effort against Ukraine by crippling his economy and giving him less resources to continue the fight. The United States is able to easily justify their sanctions by citing Putin’s actions against Ukraine, and stating how it is an unjust act to invade a sovereign nation.

Article Comparisons: Jackson Luneburg

In reading the first two articles comparing Putin and Biden during the entire Ukrainian crisis. In the first article of USA today they begin to talk about how Biden has imposed sanctions on Putin's powerful military instead of being more aggressive and promoting military actions. Instead of more direct threats, USA Today explained how Biden made sanctions on Russia he would walk away from the podium by sort of backtracking on questions from the American people. Instead they chose to use tactics for the reader throughout this article and it is obvious. At the end of reading the article it became apparent that the democrats would turn on President Biden after what has been happening in the world. Also, the potential of their being an anti Biden protest throughout social media mainly on twitter. This article also mentions Putin's and Biden's relationship from Biden's side. The president of the United States would say "Has he ever called me racist" the article goes in depth in discussing how Biden explained his and Putin's relationship as a whole.

In the first TASS article Putin attempts to justify invading Ukraine for their evil regime they have held over their people for years and he thinks this attack is completely acceptable. The one main point prevalent throughout the article was that TASS was more straight to the point rather than just opinions. They seem to put Putin's wishes into consideration and report exactly what he says to social media rather than fatheming over his words. This network seems to be more straight to the point than anything. After pointing out the reasons for the invasions he puts another plan into action directing the Ukraine people to make the right decision by trusting in his words.

Article Comparisons: Allison Tenney and Jackson Luneburg

While reading through the second article it became apparent that they were reporting about how this war is ultimately developing and it could lead to a huge economic loss in America. Due to the war in Ukraine, Putin has been able to do whatever he wants ultimately by attacking the prices of inflation and gas prices skyrocket and is affecting the economy as we speak. Throughout the article USA today started to justify his action plans by stating that Biden will keep imposing sanctions and using the military accordingly. Although obviously we see Putin rolling over Ukraine territory; USA Today stated that Biden said he will continue to match the force used by Putin and his military. As USA today continues to write on the conflict we will see what Putin's next moves are but only time will have to tell.

In discussing new things in Russia this article stated ultimately about Putin's relationship with NATO. While on a phone call with NATO Putin kept pushing his aggressive motto forward in continuing his genocide on Ukraine while NATO is planning a full fledged operation on Russia and president Putin's military. This reporting again is a different style than what we expect but they justify their reasons to protect the Indian people and their native culture in a sense. These articles are very odd because we are not used to seeing this type of reporting in this much of a chaotic environment. The wording and the way it is displayed makes it sound like what Russia is doing is ultimately okay.

Article Comparison: Jackson Luneburg

So far throughout this crisis America is getting killed in the economic field with the invasion of Ukraine effecting gas prices and inflation which are continuing to rise. Although gas prices are really starting to be the key economic loss through all of this chaos and war. What became prevalent while reading USA today is that they point out key crucial issues that are

happening and affecting America's economy but yet they still stand behind Biden and the sanctions that he is imposing on Ukraine. Although he truly has no other choice because of the chaos and destruction the Russian military has caused. Even though they still justify his decisions by his words in his press conference. Another tactic that they do is they blame a lot of the problems on the supply chain and global demand for products across the world. Overall USA Today typically supports President Joe Biden and seems to believe he is making the right decisions regarding this ongoing crisis.

As the TASS story continues to develop they develop a pattern of grabbing the reader's attention by saying that Putin is beginning to lay back on military use and starting to rely on very tough sanctions on Moscow. Ukraine wants to impose sanctions on Russia and Moscow wants to do the same thing back to Russia also. As Putin looks for an answer it seems that he is laying off the aggressiveness of war due to these sanctions put in place. The one thing they justify through all of this is that later during this time President Putin would go on television and threaten Ukraine with a special military operation to get rid of Ukraine's horrendous regime that has been going on for too long in Putin's words. As they continue to justify his words through their reporting they are tending to sound extremely biased but straight forward of the fact that the president said what he said and he does not regret it.

As USA Today was already beginning to frame, Putin is beginning to go off the rails essentially and start to cause chaos throughout the world. He is destroying people's homes and peoples lives as we speak and it is crucial as NATO that we protect our borders with caution. As Joe Biden still holds off on an attack on Russia, Ukrainian troops continue to die and Ukraine is being destroyed beyond repair. Another thing to mention is one of the first things stated in this article was that if any allied countries with Ukraine do anything about the attack in quote there

will be “ Swift and costly consequences”. As this goes on I notice that USA today justifies the Biden administration by relying on the supply of energy being uplifted and working other foreign affairs to make things better in this economic crisis.

While reading the TASS article it seems to underscore the fact that Putin makes fun of NATO because he thinks it only a tool for Washington and other foreign policies. As stated by the president of Russia over TV that Russia is continuing to be targeted due to the expansion of NATO to the west but he promises to the people he will not let his great country fall due to NATO essentially. As the article continued Putin mentions that we have crossed a red line we should not have crossed essentially. While this threat being out there TASS justifies this statement by continuously representing a regime that ultimately abuses and harms their people over political control.

Differences in Media: Mitchell Smedley

USA Today and TASS have clear differences in their language describing the current conflict in Ukraine. Firstly, and most broadly speaking, the layout of the articles between the two news sources differ interestingly. The length and general make-up of the articles is enough to draw the eye. The TASS articles are dramatically shorter and barely say more than the headline. Each article also ends in the same few sentences detailing Putin's supposed reasoning for sending troops into the Kyiv Regime. TASS does not use the term Ukraine, or war. In contrast, the USA Today articles do not shy away from the words Ukraine and war. They clearly paint Putin in a much darker image. USA Today also lacks the ominous ending that all the TASS articles include. Each USA today article ends independently of the others, leading to the news source feeling like more of a free to speak source. TASS, on the other hand, feels more like an extension

of Putin's lips. Though both news sources clearly have a slant, the differences between the two lead to an ominous feeling for anyone reading from the one they are less familiar with.

Conclusion: Allison Tenney

Throughout this unfortunate situation occurring between Ukraine and Russia the bulk of the information we have received regarding the issue has come from media sources. Although the media sources received in the United States have a different agenda than those received in Russia, and European countries. USA Today wrote from a more condemning Russian actions point of view. While, the TASS refused to call the Ukraine and Russia situation a war, and was more straight to the point reporting wise. Although both news sources reported similar but slightly contradicting information, the information was dispersed to the public. After reviewing all the articles and their information the way the story was framed was not surprising. Although, the narratives held many similarities, the differences between the two sources truly showed the standpoint each country held while watching a war unfold.