

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES: A Study of US Print Media Perceptions of the Russo-Chechen Conflict Before and After September 11, 2001

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This work is a study of the changing nature of US print media coverage of the Russo-Chechen conflict before and after the attacks of September 11, 2001. More specifically, it analyzes three major print news publications—*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*—and their coverage of six separate alleged Chechen terrorist attacks on Russian soil, all of which were related to the Russo-Chechen conflict. The importance of this work rests in the power of language and rhetoric in the media and the way that this power can influence readers’ perceptions of external events. This study highlights the way in which the experience of September 11th influenced the US print media’s perception and presentation of Russian-Chechen conflicts. In analyzing the three newspapers, this author collected all relevant articles covering each event within a seven-day radius after the occurrence of the event. This author then used critical language analysis to determine specific and repetitive frames of representation that occurred within the coverage of each event, and compared the patterns of frames of representation presented by the newspapers before and after the attacks of September 11th. The shifting frames of representation within the coverage of the three newspapers indicate there was a significant change in interpretation of the Russo-Chechen conflict after the attacks of September 11th. While the newspapers’ coverage shifted by varying degrees, the post-9/11 reporting was characterized by an overall trend of more personal, less balanced, and less historically grounded reporting. As a result of this, readers of these three publications

encountered a much different interpretation of the Russo-Chechen conflict in the post-9/11 era than had been the case prior to 9/11. Overall, this work contributes to a discussion of the bias within media coverage that occurs as the result of the personal experience and ideology of the editorial staff. This work is also a cautionary tale that highlights the need for a critical analysis in the consumption of authoritative media sources.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This work analyzes the coverage and representation of the Russo-Chechen conflict, in particular alleged Chechen terrorist acts on Russian soil, in selected print media of the United States. Specifically, it analyzes the language and discourse used to describe the conflict both before and after the attacks of September 11, 2001. The ongoing conflict between the Russian Federation (and formerly the Soviet Union and Russian Empire) and the peoples of the North Caucasus, including Chechnya, has resulted in violence and bloodshed for almost three centuries.¹ However, this paper focuses on the most recent developments in that conflict, the increasingly brutal attacks by Chechen separatists into Russia proper before, during, and after the Second Russo-Chechen War (1999-2009).² Although the history of the conflict is intriguing, violent, and incredibly complex, this paper will focus instead on the coverage of this conflict abroad, specifically on its reception and interpretation by US print media.

The reason for this focus on media, which this author will expand upon later, lies in the inherent power of media sources in constructing the rhetoric and perspective through which the mass public views and understands an external event.³ In this case, trusted US media sources

¹ Ali Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), ix.

² While Russian officials including President Vladimir Putin declared the end to the war on several occasions, large-scale military operations did not cease until 2009, and fighting/bombings continue to occur intermittently. See, Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 201.

³ Roger Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (New York; London: Routledge, 1991) 1-9; Lee Marsden and Heather Savigny, eds. *Media, Religion and Conflict* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 5-7.

(such as the established print media) become the authority through which readers are provided a picture of the Russo-Chechen conflict, and thus have great influence over how the US public perceives and relates to the events therein. This paper seeks to analyze the ways in which US print media frames particular events of the conflict and how these “frames of representation” shift over time.⁴

This paper theorizes that the catalyst for such a shift stems from the US experience of the attacks on September 11, 2001. The Russian political leadership has always branded the second war in Chechnya (1999-2009) as a counter-terrorist operation to combat the evils of international extremism. However, it was not until after the events of September 11th and the declaration by the Bush Administration of the ‘Global War on Terror’ that the US government began to support such Russian claims.⁵ This paper thus serves as a study of how the experience of 9/11 influenced and changed the US print media’s coverage and rhetoric regarding Russia’s self-proclaimed ‘War on Terror.’⁶ Although this change may seem obvious, as this study shows, the impact of an event (such as 9/11) can have a profound influence on how the media covers other issues. This in turn has a key effect on how readers, the public, and policymakers come to understand and discuss events. As a result, this change may have major implications for how an external event, such as the Russo-Chechen conflict, is internalized and reacted to by the US as a whole.

In accomplishing this task, this chapter will first lay out some background evidence on the importance and power of language and media in influencing and affecting the public perception of events. This section illustrates not only the relevance of this research, but also the

⁴ Luke Mathew Peterson, *Palestine-Israel in the Print News Media: Contending Discourses* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 29.

⁵ John Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves: Russian Demonisation of the Chechens Before and Since 9/11.” *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005): 107-12.

⁶ John Russell, “Chechnya: Russia's ‘War on Terror’ or ‘War of Terror’?” *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 1 (2007): 163-4.

importance of critical language analysis in identifying media bias. This chapter will then discuss the specific research methodologies and sources used to carry out this research, and address the potential limitations of such an analysis. Finally, before delving into the source analysis, it is prudent to provide some significant background information on the history, nature, and current status of the conflict, as well as the major actors that will appear in the analysis. This section will also acknowledge, explain, and justify the six media events selected for analysis.

1.1 MEDIA, LANGUAGE, AND POWER

There is perhaps no stronger force in the world for instilling, spreading, and consolidating ideas than that of mass media.⁷ For many, media provides a window on to the outside world, a world normally too distant to be accessed, and thus holds powerful influence over the perceptions and perspectives of citizens. Examples of this power can be seen throughout the modern era, including the powerful effect of the news coverage of US casualties in Somalia that quickly swayed public opinion against sustained action in the region.⁸ In the course of many conflicts, the sheer distance of the events from readers further magnifies this power.⁹ It is the role of the news media to transfer these occurrences and take something previously inaccessible, like an explosion at a factory in China or an election in Ukraine, and place it on the television or coffee table of the average US citizen. While this feat is impressive, it is also inherently very dangerous.

⁷ For more on the power of mass media in uniting and consolidating national communities, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Rev. ed. New York;London: Verso, 2006).

⁸ Susan D. Moeller, "Locating Accountability: the Media and Peacekeeping." *Journal of International Affairs* 55, no. 2 (2002): 369.

⁹ Greg Simons, *Mass Media and Modern Warfare Reporting on the Russian War on Terrorism*. (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010.), 190.

As historian Luke Peterson argues, “the flow of information in this model is substantially unidirectional.”¹⁰ The risk of this is that due to a lack of genuine dialogue, the news media earns an authoritative status over the interpretation, and hence understanding of distant events, lulling the public into a sense of implicit trust. The public views the news media (especially the established print media) as a clear window on to the facts of events in the outside world. However, in actuality, the image provided by the media is inevitably refracted through language, discourse, and selection, providing an inherently biased result that is tainted with the perspective of the media outlet itself.¹¹

The purpose of this argument is not to simply attack news media for bias, but to instead point out the inevitable trace of ideology and opinion that seeps into even the most stringent news reporting. As analyst Richard Fowler describes, “anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position.”¹² News is not created in a vacuum, devoid of bias; it is created by regular people with their own inherent ideological perspective. In this sense, even if the bias is unintentional or subconsciously applied, any piece of news writing is innately subjective. The creators of news media are subject to the same influences and experiences as anyone else and thus their work also reflects this experience and perspective.¹³ The very nature of the media industry ensures that news writing is a product of its environment rather than an unbiased source of facts.

The authoritative position assigned to the media drapes a veil of legitimacy over the fact that the news industry is just that, an industry. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are businesses, and thus are subject to the same limitations and requirements of any business in a

¹⁰ Peterson, *Palestine-Israel in the Print News Media*, 21.

¹¹ Fowler, *Language in the News*, 10-11.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Peterson, *Palestine-Israel in the Print News Media*, 21.

market-economy. Media outlets exist in a competitive environment, one in which news is merchandise, not fact. This is not to criticize news publications, but to point out that the media is not independent from the effects of market and social demands. As Fowler insightfully notes, “News is not a natural phenomenon emerging straight from ‘reality’, but a *product*. It is produced by an industry, shaped by the bureaucratic and economic structure of that industry, by the relations between media and other industries and, most importantly, by relations with the government and with other political organizations.”¹⁴ News media not only supplies society with its particular perception of reality, it also reflects the reality of society as well.

In news media, language and rhetoric serve as the main constructors of perspective. Although the selection of coverage plays an important role in shaping readers’ perceptions, how the coverage is presented (i.e. the language and rhetoric used) has a powerful impact on the readers’ interpretation of an event.¹⁵ More than just communicating the news, language serves as the method through which people construct and understand their social, cultural, and political reality.¹⁶ Thus, the language itself that the news media uses to describe news carries with it particular pre-established values that help the reader form a mental representation and understanding of an event.¹⁷ Whether the author is aware of it or not, his/her rhetoric is already imprinted with specific ideologies and thus conveys a special, sometimes subconscious meaning to consumers. For a simple and relevant example, think of the two labels “terrorist” and

¹⁴ Fowler, *Language in the News*, 223.

¹⁵ Susan D. Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism: Co-opting the News for Politics and Profit* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 84-85.

¹⁶ Robin Tolmach Lakoff, and Inc ebrary, *The Language War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 20-23; Fowler, *Language in the News*, 5.

¹⁷ Fowler, *Language in the News*, 41-42; for more information on the linkages between language and thought, see Walter Kintsch, *The Representation of Meaning in Memory* (Hillsdale, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates 1974); L. S. Vygotskiï and Alex Kozulin, *Thought and Language* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1986); Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (New York;London;: Longman, 1989).

“guerrilla”. Both of these terms are often used to label characters in media coverage, but they carry with them very different implications for the reader. “Terrorist” is a term heavily laden with negative value. In the eyes of a reader, the person labeled as such is evil and immoral, and his or her actions are stripped of any political, cultural, or historical context, making them unprovoked and unjustifiable. “Guerrilla” on the other hand, implies a more relatable or humanized person. While their actions may be heinous, they are following political motives with an explicit goal in mind. Although both of these terms could be used to describe the same actor in many conflict scenarios (and are in the cases identified in this study), the representation they provide to media consumers can be vastly different.¹⁸ It is through this descriptive and loaded language that news media creates frames through which the public comes to understand external events.

In the coverage of conflicts, this influence often becomes even more magnified by the reinforcing effect of repeated and accepted rhetoric. The dichotomous nature of conflicts tends to polarize discussions and oftentimes, especially in specific news outlets, one particular narrative will become dominant. This theme or frame of reference becomes the accepted interpretation of the conflict and newcomers to the discussion can only operate within the parameters of this established view.¹⁹ The self-propagating nature of the dominant discourse also limits the power of communication of the writer.²⁰ In this way, all other perspectives of the conflict are snuffed out over time, leaving consumers with just one representation to which they can subscribe. The repetition of these frames also deepens the effect of the discourse by providing the consumer

¹⁸ The debate over the usage of the ‘terrorist’ as a label is very prevalent in media discussions, for more information see, Susan D. Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism: Co-opting the News for Politics and Profit*.

¹⁹ Simons, *Mass Media and Modern Warfare*, 90-91.

²⁰ Fowler, *Language in the News*, 41-42.

with a more established and reinforced mental representation.²¹ To challenge the accepted and dominant understanding is difficult, as this would mean challenging the social norms of the greater public.²² Thus the very nature of conflict coverage itself only serves to amplify the power of the news media over public understanding.

Further, apart from influencing the public's perception of the outside world, news media in the United States also exerts a significant influence over policymakers. In participatory democracies like the US, politicians are directly responsible to the public and must respond to demands in order to secure re-election. Thus, as the news media influences public opinion of external events, its reporting also influences the foreign policy of the democracy.²³ The discourse that defines distant conflicts in the media becomes the discourse through which citizens and policymakers alike discuss and analyze a conflict. Examples of a political manifestation of the power of media language are numerous (as with the previously addressed case of US withdrawal from Somalia), however a distinctly relevant case can be seen in the conclusion of the First Russo-Chechen War. It was in-depth, gruesome media coverage of the fighting that drove international and public opinion against the Russian invasion, eventually forcing an end to the war in 1996.²⁴ Thus, the consequences of media coverage are often far more substantial than either the producer or consumer realize.

The news media is then far from the independent and unbiased guarantor of the facts that it is often claimed to be in liberal political theory. Instead, much like any publication, news is a product of its environment and of the prevailing ideology. For this reason, news media's large

²¹ Peterson, *Palestine-Israel in the Print News Media*, 5.

²² Nick Couldry and James Curran, *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked World* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 39.

²³ Marsden and Savigny, *Media, Religion and Conflict*, 4-5.

²⁴ Graeme P. Herd, "The Russo-Chechen Information Warfare and 9/11: Al-qaeda Through the South Caucasus Looking Glass?" *European Security* 11, no. 4 (2002): 110-112.

influence of over public opinion and foreign policy calls for readers to take a more analytical and critical approach to reading and interpreting the news.

1.2 SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

In the age of the technology, the US news media is increasingly exiting the platform of the printed page and making the transition to a more modern digital format on the Internet. However, several factors demonstrate the continued relevance and influence of the print news industry. First, to attribute decreasing circulation numbers to the end of the age of newspapers is rash. Newspapers are not disappearing, they are adapting.²⁵ As with any business, newspapers are adjusting their strategies to changes in technology in order to remain relevant and profitable. For this reason, almost all major newspapers now use both digital and print formats. Second, despite the increasing ease of access to information provided by technology, the sheer number of unverified and illegitimate sources on the Internet lends a certain sense of quality and authority to the established print media. The very nature of online sources—their lack of regulation and complete openness—actually serves to delegitimize their potential as news providers.²⁶ This established legitimacy grants particular print news a niche that is uninhabited by any other news sources and also magnifies the potential impact of the newspapers on actors who value valid and quality news, such as policymakers and the portion of the public that is attentive to foreign events. A final testament to the lasting impact of the print media is the fact that “items in print

²⁵ Bob Franklin, *Pulling Newspapers Apart: Analysing Print Journalism*. (New York;London;: Routledge), 2008, 3-5.

²⁶ Peterson, *Palestine-Israel in the Print News Media*, 4-5.

retain a more lasting, more substantial impact upon cognition.”²⁷ Overall, despite the increase in the quantity of potential news sources accompanying the rise in technology, print news media retains a position of importance and influence in modern society.

When selecting the newspapers for this analysis, particular attention was paid to the quality, impact, and influence of each publication. The newspapers examined in this paper—*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*—are all papers of considerable repute and significance in US media. All three papers are among the highest in circulation in the country, ranking second, seventh, and first respectively.²⁸ Additionally, each paper has renowned international coverage and maintains a web of foreign bureaus and correspondents, including in Moscow, for the entire timespan of this analysis. This means that rather than draw their information from the stories of the Associated Press or other publications, these paper’s reporters were able to investigate the events in Russia firsthand. This ability to report on location also means that these papers have an impact on the print news community, as many smaller and less profitable papers draw on their primary reports in order to cover international events. Thus the impact of these papers on discourse and perception is actually much larger than circulation numbers suggest. The three papers have additionally all adapted effectively to the demands of online publication, and their established authority and status give them high standing in political and intellectual communities.

Moreover, each of these papers also bears individual traits that warrant subjecting their coverage to analysis. *The New York Times* (hereafter referred to as *New York Times* or the *Times*), besides being the newspaper of record in the US, has very personal and important

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Top 10 Newspapers By Circulation: *Wall Street Journal* Leads Weekday Circulation." *The Huffington Post*, July 1, 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/01/newspaper-circulation-top-10_n_3188612.html

connections to the coverage of terrorist attacks and the Global War on Terror. The very location of the *New York Times* headquarters in Manhattan means that many staff experienced the attacks of September 11th on a more personal level. Additionally, the *Times* was noted for its in-depth and harrowing coverage of the attack, winning six Pulitzer Prizes for its reporting on the event.²⁹ *The Washington Post* (hereafter referred to as *Washington Post* or the *Post*) is the primary publication of the nation's political capital, giving it a significant impact over the perceptions of the nation's leading policymakers and foreign policy analysts. Further, the *Post* also encountered its own personal experience with terrorism due to the attack on the Pentagon building on September 11th. *The Wall Street Journal* (hereafter referred to as *Wall Street Journal* or the *Journal*) provides a slightly different perspective than the other two papers, utilizing a different context for analysis. As an economically focused publication, the *Journal* is also well known for its international reporting and has additionally felt the scarring touch of terrorism. Not only was the *Journal* present front and center at its Manhattan headquarters for the attacks on September 11th, but the paper was also the victim of one of the first and most publicized terrorist attacks following the attacks. The kidnapping and eventual execution of *Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl in January 2002 was a highly publicized tragedy for which al-Qaeda claimed responsibility.³⁰ As a result, all three of these papers have very personalized relationships to the War on Terror. This, combined with their extensive reach and influence over both public opinion and policymakers, means these publications are very relevant for an analysis of terrorism and Russian policy both before and after September 11th.

In order to limit this work temporally, this study focuses on six separate events in order to analyze the coverage of the three publications in each instance. All of these events were

²⁹ Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism*, 62.

³⁰ Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism*, 156.

instances of deliberate attacks on civilians on Russian soil outside of Chechnya. The events, which will be described and placed in historical context in the next section, were chosen not only based on the amount of international publicity each received, but also in order to ensure a balance chronologically: three occurred before September 11, 2001 and three occurred after. Other factors contributing to the selection of the events were the location and nature of each of the attacks, as well as their relative comparability to the other events. The first three attacks—the Apartment Bombings in the Russian cities of Moscow, Buynaksk, and Volgodonsk (September 1999); the Underpass Bombing in Moscow (August 2000); and the Car Bomb attacks in the Stavropol Region near the Chechen border (March 2001)—all occurred before September 11, 2001 and the subsequent declaration of the Global War on Terror. The second three—the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis in Moscow (October 2002); the Subway Bombing in Moscow (February 2004); and the Beslan School Hostage Crisis in North Ossetia near the Chechen border (September 2004)—occurred after the US experience of September 11th and thus serve as effective comparative counterpoints to the first three events in both timing and location³¹. This type of event analysis and comparison is not unique to this paper, which has been inspired by several previous media studies.³²

In order to compile articles for the analysis, the online databases of each of the three newspapers were accessed through Proquest, and searched using both date-sensitive and keyword-based content searches. For the purpose of consistency and control over the quantity of articles, the search for articles included a date range of seven days after the conclusion of the

³¹ Both the Car Bomb attacks and the Beslan School Hostage Crisis occur in the Caucasus region in areas bordering the Republic of Chechnya.

³² Des Freedman and Daya Kishan Thussu, *Media and Terrorism: Global Perspectives* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 184-205; Peterson, *Palestine-Israel in the Print News Media*, 6-8.

event.³³ At this point, coverage of each event had dwindled, but the range still allowed for the full extent of details surrounding the events to be included in the articles.³⁴ The articles selected for this study included news articles, editorials, and commentary. Although editorials and commentary are opinion pieces, they must still gain approval from the editorial staff of the newspaper, and thus represent an ideological product of the publication. Further, because they influence the readership and public opinion, opinion pieces are important parts of event coverage and as such cannot be ignored.³⁵ This author compiled and ordered articles by both publication and chronology for the analysis.³⁶

This paper employs qualitative discourse evaluation as its primary analytical methodology. Qualitative analysis allows for the close-examination of each article as a whole and within the context of the overall coverage; hence this study utilizes quotations from the articles themselves in order to justify its conclusions.³⁷ Additionally, by utilizing a qualitative method of analysis, the conclusions of this study can be insulated from the effects of wider global events. Western media outlets tend to cover events that directly affect Westerners or domestic actors over strictly foreign events.³⁸ Thus, conclusions from a purely quantitative analysis of media coverage may misattribute the causation of the fluctuations, a potential oversight that is much less likely in a qualitative analysis. This author evaluated each article separately using methods of critical language analysis in order to establish the repetitive themes

³³ This strategy was also used in a similar study of the Russian media, see Freedman and Thussu, *Media and Terrorism*, 184-205.

³⁴ In the case of the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis, the date range was expanded 2 days after the conclusion of the crisis (from 10/23/2002-11/4/2002) in order to include the coverage of the identification of the gas used by Russian Special Forces to end the crisis. The controversy over the gas sparked a large media debate that is important to acknowledge in this study.

³⁵ Franklin, *Pulling Newspapers Apart*, 70.

³⁶ For a complete list of the articles analyzed from each newspaper, see Appendix A.

³⁷ When referring to the reporting of publications in this study, this author uses the present tense in adherence with the Chicago Manual of Style, see <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

³⁸ Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism*, 68-73.

or “frames of representation” presented by each publication’s coverage of the events.³⁹ As previously noted, the frames of representation serve to illustrate the ideological perspective of the event that each publication supplied to its readers. This frame becomes both the discourse and interpretation of the event, and thus influences the reaction of public opinion to the event. This method of study is relatively common in the media analysis field and was inspired by several other publications.⁴⁰ In order to draw conclusions from the research, this author compared the established frames of representation within each publication to determine if coverage changed after September 11, 2001. This allowed for conclusions as to the overall effect of the experience of September 11th on the media coverage of Russia’s ‘War on Terror’ provided by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*.

It is prudent to acknowledge that this particular methodology does, however, have several inherent limitations. Firstly, this study, as with any qualitative research, is by definition a subjective analysis. Just as print news is a creation plagued with innate ideological perspective, so this work is similarly a product of this author’s perspective. However, mindful of this potential bias, this author has taken precautions through repeated and careful analysis of the articles and also the use of direct quotations in justifying frames of representation in order to ensure that the conclusions drawn from this study are valid, unbiased, and controlled. Additionally, this author recognizes the limitations of the narrow range of analysis defined in this

³⁹ Although the social cognition concept of ‘themes’ or ‘frames’ is common in the media analysis field (see footnote 40 below), the specific term “frame of representation” is owed to Dr. Luke Peterson (see, Peterson, *Palestine-Israel in the Print News Media*, 2015). The methodology created by Dr. Peterson serves as a large part of the inspiration for the methodology of this study and this author feels that the term “frame of representation” best embodies the given concept.

⁴⁰ For examples of qualitative discourse analysis and the usage of the ‘frames’ or themes as a technique see, Fowler, *Language in the News*, 66-90; Scott Radnitz, “Look Who’s Talking! Islamic Discourse in the Chechen Wars.” *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 2 (2006): 238-40; David L. Altheide, *Terror post 9/11 and the Media*. (Vol. 4.;4;. New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 49; Marsden and Lee, *Mass Media and Modern Warfare*, 1-2; Freedman and Thussu, *Media, Religion and Conflict*, 194-95. For more background on the social cognition theory of frames see, Lakoff, *The Language War*, 47-48.

paper. Due to limitations of time and accessibility, an examination of all media coverage of the Russian War on Terror would have been impossible. Thus, the conclusions from this study cannot claim to represent an all-encompassing change throughout the entire breadth of national media. However, this analysis may still provide an important insight into the imperfect nature of media coverage as well as draw attention to the need for critical and attentive consumption of print media. Additionally, this study may serve as an important contribution to the field of media analysis with regards to the study of the effects of domestic crises on the external perspective of the media.

1.3 RUSSIA AND CHECHNYA: CONFLICT IN THE CAUCASUS

Before delving into the actual analysis of these publications, it is necessary to provide some historical and cultural context for the Russo-Chechen conflict and the major actors involved in its most recent manifestation. This section will highlight the importance of this study's chosen subject and will conclude with descriptions and backgrounds on the six media events that are analyzed in the following chapters.

The full history of Russo-Chechen conflict stretches back as far as the seventeenth century, and encompasses multiple waves of resistance, deportation, and war resulting in a shocking amount of brutality and bloodshed.⁴¹ However, for the purposes of this study, a quick examination of the most significant events in forming the historical and cultural relationship between the two actors will suffice. Although, clashes between Russian Imperial forces and the

⁴¹ For a detailed timeline of the history of the conflict, see Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 1-28.

tribal clans of the North Caucasus had begun in the 18th century, it was the Great Caucasian War, which lasted from the early-19th century until 1864, which established a lasting image of Chechen resistance and Russian domination within the conflict.⁴² Ironically, it was the Russian invasion that unified the Chechen tribes (and others of the North Caucasus) behind a single cause in the first place, a theme that would repeat itself throughout the conflict.⁴³ The war served to solidify negative cross-cultural perceptions between the groups, which only worsened as the conflict wore on.⁴⁴

Although there was seldom peace in the Caucasus between 1864 and the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, Chechnya was still quickly absorbed into the Soviet Union as the Bolsheviks consolidated power, marking a new era of external rule.⁴⁵ However, Soviet rule proved to be just as disastrous for Russo-Chechen relations as the Tsarist rule of the past. In 1943, in the midst of the Second World War, Stalin and the Soviet leadership decided to deport the entirety of the Chechen population, totaling almost 500,000 civilians (along with several other ethnic groups), due to perceived disloyalty and a suspicion of collaboration with the Germans.⁴⁶ The Chechens were rounded up and sent by truck and train to exile in Siberia and Central Asia. Soviet troops used ruthless tactics and those in villages too remote for deportation “were either shot en masse or herded into barns and burned alive.”⁴⁷ However, the violent strategies of the Soviets also had the unforeseen side effect of strengthening Chechen identity

⁴² Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves”, 102-3.

⁴³ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 3-6;

⁴⁴ Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves”, 102-3.

⁴⁵ Robert Seely, *Russo-Chechen Conflict, 1800-2000: A Deadly Embrace* (Vol. 6. Portland, OR;London;: Frank Cass, 2001), 60-73.

⁴⁶ Ben Fowkes, *Russia and Chechnia: The Permanent Crisis : Essays on Russo-Chechen Relations* (New York;Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire;: Macmillan, 1998), 9-11; For more on the roots of Soviet suspicion, see Burds, Jeffrey. “The Soviet War Against 'Fifth Columnists': The Case of Chechnya, 1942-4.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 42, no. 2 (2007): 267-314.

⁴⁷ Seely, *Russo-Chechen Conflict*, 83.

and clan structure, as well as deepening resentment towards the Soviet system.⁴⁸ This event remains very prominent in Chechen cultural memory. As John Russell describes it, the deportation “of every last Chechen man, woman and child is etched deeply into the collective cultural narrative of the Chechen people.”⁴⁹ Although Chechens were allowed to return to their lands in 1956, relations with Moscow remained unstable up until the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁵⁰

Given its tumultuous history of resistance to external rule, it is not surprising that as the Soviet Union was collapsing, Chechnya quickly seized the opportunity for freedom, declaring independence on November 1, 1991.⁵¹ However, the brief era of independence in Chechnya from 1991-94 was characterized by excessive lawlessness and criminal violence, which then-President Zhokar Dudayev failed to adequately stem.⁵² Meanwhile, after dealing with internal issues and negotiating partial autonomy with several other regions within the new Russian state, President Boris Yeltsin and the Russian Federation finally set its sights on Chechnya in 1994. Declaring what he believed would be a quick and easy war, Yeltsin ordered the invasion of Chechnya in December 1994, beginning what would turn out to be an embarrassing and costly failure for the Russian state.⁵³

The First Russo-Chechen War was characterized by Russian military overconfidence and excessive brutality. The 1994 invasion that was supposed to produce victory in weeks turned into an extended nightmare, as unprepared Russian troops clashed with Chechen guerillas, who would not easily surrender their homeland to outside rule once again. In the 21-month conflict,

⁴⁸ Fowkes, *Russia and Chechnia*, 10-11.

⁴⁹ Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves”, 104.

⁵⁰ Fowkes, *Russia and Chechnia*, 11-13.

⁵¹ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, xvi.

⁵² Scott Radnitz, “Look Who’s Talking! Islamic Discourse in the Chechen Wars.” *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 2 (2006): 245.

⁵³ Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves”, 105.

Russian troops killed up to 100,000 Chechens, mostly civilians, with indiscriminate tactics and bombings.⁵⁴ Additionally, despite the Russian government's declarations of the Chechen guerillas as "terrorists," open media coverage of the vast destruction and grave human rights abuses assured that public opinion remained firmly against the war, both in the West and in Russia proper.⁵⁵ Human rights activists and reporters documented the callous tactics of Russian forces and their efforts played a key role in underscoring the purposeless nature of the conflict, a lesson not soon forgotten by Russian officials. Both international and domestic pressure eventually forced Yeltsin to end the war and to sign a deal for *de facto* independence with Chechen leader Aslan Maskhadov, a moderate leader and former Soviet Army Colonel, in 1996.⁵⁶

However, like Russia in the 1990s, Chechnya was plagued by disorder and heavy crime after the end of the war, leaving Maskhadov, its new president, unable to consolidate control of the war-torn territory.⁵⁷ This, combined with a series of apartment bombings in Russian cities, which the Russian government attributed to Chechen terrorists, led to the launching of a second Russian invasion in September of 1999.⁵⁸ The renewed war effort was championed by Yeltsin's new Prime Minister and soon to be acting-President, Vladimir Putin. Putin garnered strong public backing for a hardline response to the September bombings and rode the wave support into his first elected term as president in 2000.⁵⁹ Although the second war differed from the first in that it began with a well-coordinated and well-organized invasion, the same violent and indiscriminate tactics came to dominate the Russian strategy partly as a result of the military's

⁵⁴ John Russell, "Mujahedeen, Mafia, Madmen: Russian Perceptions of Chechens During the Wars in Chechnya, 1994-96 and 1999-2001." *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 18, no. 1 (2002): 81.

⁵⁵ Radnitz, "Look Who's Talking!", 245; Russell, "Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves", 105.

⁵⁶ Russell, "Mujahedeen, Mafia, Madmen", 86; Radnitz, "Look Who's Talking!", 245.

⁵⁷ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 21-22.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 22-23; Russell, "Mujahedeen, Mafia, Madmen", 76-77.

⁵⁹ Russell, "Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves", 107-9.

complete dehumanization of Chechens.⁶⁰ Despite this, the longevity of the campaign was secured through well-planned control of the information war.

From the beginning of the second war, Putin framed the invasion as an anti-terrorist effort, even ordering the media to only refer to Chechen opposition as “terrorists” as early as 1999.⁶¹ The Russian President and state media often asserted that there were connections between the Chechen fighters and international terrorists like Osama Bin Laden.⁶² Additionally, Russian officials learned from the failures of the First Russ-Chechen War; the government took extensive steps to restrict media coverage of the conflict, starving both the domestic and international public of information.⁶³ However, this strategy did not reach its full potential until after the events of September 11, 2001. Suddenly, Western governments quickly threw support to Putin’s claims as, “almost overnight, Russia became a key partner of the USA and its allies in the common struggle—the global war on terrorism.”⁶⁴ With full international support and almost a complete blackout on media coverage, the war went on seemingly indefinitely. Western media began to refer to events in the war as “terrorist attacks” a phrase almost entirely absent in the first war.⁶⁵ As a result, Putin essentially received a *carte blanche* to bomb Chechen targets indiscriminately and bury any political, cultural, or historical legitimacy to the separatist movement.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 25-26; for further reading on Russian brutality in the Second Russo-Chechen War see, Anna Politkovskaya, *A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya* (London: Harvill, 2001); Anna Politkovskaya, *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁶¹ Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves”, 108; Freedman and Thussu, *Media and Terrorism*, 191.

⁶² John Russell, “Exploitation of the ‘Islamic Factor’ in the Russo-Chechen Conflict Before and After 11 September 2001.” *European Security* 11, no. 4 (2002): 102.

⁶³ Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves”, 110; Herd, “The Russo-Chechen Information Warfare and 9/11”, 112.

⁶⁴ Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves”, 110.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 113-14.

Although Putin declared an end to the war on several occasions, large-scale military operations continued until 2009, and Chechen attacks on Russian civilian and military targets lasted even longer.⁶⁷ In 2003, the Kremlin installed a former separatist-turned Putin supporter, Akhmat Kadyrov, as President of Chechnya. However, Kadyrov was quickly assassinated by radical Chechen rebels and replaced by his son Ramzan, a strongman who has ruled since then with a notorious iron-fist.⁶⁸ All in all, as many as 200,000 Chechens, or over one-fifth of the total population, were killed in the two wars, while Chechen terror attacks on Russian soil have claimed thousands of Russian lives.⁶⁹ As indicated, this paper examines the US print media coverage of six of those attacks, and thus it is prudent to provide some specific context and background for them.

The first event selected for analysis was the September Apartment Bombings in the cities of Moscow, Buynaksk, and Volgodonsk. On September 4, 1999, a truck packed with explosives was detonated outside of an apartment building housing military families in Buynaksk, Dagestan (a republic bordering Chechnya), this event marked the beginning of a wave of apartment bombings over the next two weeks.⁷⁰ On September 9 and 13, two more bombs leveled apartment buildings in Moscow, killing over 150 people and inciting mass hysteria throughout the capital.⁷¹ Finally, on September 16, a truck bomb parked next to an apartment building in the Russian city of Volgodonsk was detonated.⁷² In total around 300 people were killed by the

⁶⁷ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 201.

⁶⁸ Russell, "Chechnya: Russia's 'War on Terror' or 'War of Terror'?", 167-68.

⁶⁹ Russell, "Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves", 101.

⁷⁰ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 72.

⁷¹ Michael Wines. "Debate on Cause of Moscow Blast Heats Up." *New York Times (1923-CurrentFile)*, Sep 10, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110084798?accountid=14709>; Michael R. Gordon, "Moscow Blast, 3d in 2 Weeks, Kills at Least 95." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Sep 14, 1999.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/110067538?accountid=14709>.

⁷² Michael R. Gordon, "Russian Blast Kills 4." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Sep 16, 1999.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/110072866?accountid=14709>

attacks. Despite the fact that no party claimed responsibility, Russian officials were quick to blame Chechen separatists for the attacks. The bombings contributed to the dehumanization of Chechens in the Russian media and population, and served as the main motivator in garnering public support for the Second Russo-Chechen War.⁷³ The sheer scale and significance of the attacks resulted in a large amount of media coverage and the location of the bombings in Moscow provided Western reporters with an ease of access in reporting the tragedies.

The second event selected for analysis was the Moscow Underpass Bombing. On March 8, 2000, a bomb exploded in a crowded pedestrian underpass adjacent to the famous Pushkin Square. The bomb killed seven and wounded dozens more. Again no responsibility was claimed but Russian officials again assigned blame for the explosion to Chechen rebels declaring it a “terrorist attack.”⁷⁴ The bombing received much less coverage than the September attacks, but it still brought a new wave a anti-Chechen fervor to the Russian capital.

The third and final pre-9/11 event selected for analysis was the Car Bombings in Southern Russia on March 24, 2001. Three simultaneous car bombs in the towns of Yessentuki and Mineralnye Vody, which targeted police stations and an open market, resulted in 21 deaths and over 100 people injured. The towns were located in the Stavropol region adjacent to Chechnya and blame was quickly thrust on Chechen rebels. Afterwards, Putin called for US officials to cancel a meeting with a Chechen representative.⁷⁵ Although media coverage of the

⁷³ Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves”, 107-9.

⁷⁴ Daniel Williams, "Moscow Explosion Kills 8; Rush-Hour Bomb Detonates in Crowded Downtown Pedestrian Underpass." *The Washington Post*, Aug 09, 2000.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/408998826?accountid=14709>; Daniel Williams, "Security in Moscow Tight After Bombing; Residents Organize Patrols, Reinforce Locks." *The Washington Post*, Aug 10, 2000.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/408653635?accountid=14709>.

⁷⁵ Peter Baker, "Moscow Blames Rebels for Deadly Car Bombings Near Chechnya." *The Washington Post*, Mar 25, 2001. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409098397?accountid=14709>.

event was modest, its temporal proximity to September 11, 2001 and its location in Southern Russia make the bombings an excellent event for comparison.

The first post-9/11 event and the single most heavily covered attack selected for analysis was the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis in Moscow. On October 23, 2002, during a showing of the popular musical “Nord-Ost,” roughly 50 heavily armed Chechen guerillas stormed a theater in Moscow, taking around 850 hostages and wiring the entire building with explosives.⁷⁶ An almost three-day siege ensued; many negotiation attempts fell through, as the Chechens were demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya. Russian security forces finally stormed the theater pumping a then-undisclosed gas into the theaters vents to knockout the hostage-takers and hostages alike.⁷⁷ Although the rescue was originally deemed a great success, as the death toll began to rise domestic frustration arose over the government’s secrecy regarding the identity of the gas. Almost 130 hostages were killed in the crisis attempt, only two of them by the guerillas; the rest died as an adverse result of the gas.⁷⁸ However, despite the large death toll, criticism both domestically and from Western governments was muted, as most voiced their support for Putin’s hardline response including US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.⁷⁹ Western media coverage of the event was nearly unparalleled and connections were quickly drawn between the attack and those of 9/11.⁸⁰

The second post-9/11 event selected for analysis was the Moscow Metro Bombing in February 2004. On February 6th, a bomb detonated on a Moscow metro train as it traveled

⁷⁶ Michael Wines, "Chechens Seize Moscow Theater, Taking as Many as 600 Hostages." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Oct 24, 2002. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92176667?accountid=14709>.

⁷⁷ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 162-163.

⁷⁸ Michael Wines, "Russia Names Drug in Raid, Defending use." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Oct 31, 2002. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92338830?accountid=14709>.

⁷⁹ "Moscow Siege Gas 'not Illegal'" BBC News. October 29, 2002. Accessed January 6, 2016. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2371691.stm>.

⁸⁰ Russell, "Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves", 110-111.

between stations, killing 41 and injuring 120. President Putin quickly attributed the bombings to Chechen rebels, but the leadership of the separatist movement adamantly denied any involvement.⁸¹ Occurring at the end of a wave of terror attacks throughout the country, the event once again brought the Chechen conflict to the forefront of Russian discussions, and served to shake faith in the Russian government and police to keep its citizens safe.

The final event selected was the Beslan School Hostage Crisis. On September 1, 2004, heavily armed Chechen guerillas seized a school amidst its first day celebrations and took over 1,100 hostages (777 of them children). The separatists, numbering around forty, forced the hostages into the school's gymnasium and laced the building with massive amounts of explosives.⁸² Tense negotiations took place over a three-day standoff, as the Chechens demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops but denied any offers of food or water for the child hostages.⁸³ Finally on the third day, gunfire and explosions broke out and chaos ensued as Russian security forces took on the hostage-takers. Although Russian officials claimed the fighting was initiated by the guerillas, many other groups including many of the Beslan parents placed the blame on Russian forces. In the end, about 380 people were killed, including 186 children.⁸⁴ The failed rescue drew large amounts of domestic criticism, although sympathy for the victims was felt universally, including in the US.⁸⁵

Overall, these events serve to provide a comparison of the US print media reactions to Chechen terror attacks within Russia both before and after September 11th 2001. In the next

⁸¹ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 161-162.

⁸² Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 67.

⁸³ C. J. Chivers, "Captives' 52 Hours of Horror: Heat, Hunger, and then Death." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Sep 05, 2004. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92655870?accountid=14709>.

⁸⁴ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 67.

⁸⁵ Daniel J. Wakin, "A Groundswell of Sympathy and Donations." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Sep 08, 2004. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92797216?accountid=14709>.

section, this paper will analyze that coverage with the three pre-9/11 events and seek to draw conclusions about the frames of representation presented by the different publications for the events.

2.0 ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS PRE-9/11

This study seeks to identify and highlight eight major frames of representation that appear frequently within the print media coverage in order to analyze the shifting perspectives provided by the media outlets before and after the attacks of September 11, 2001. These eight frames are grouped into four dichotomous pairs so as to better analyze a major shift in representation. Before analyzing these frames within the context of the articles, it is prudent to explain each of the pairs of frames themselves, what they constitute, how they were identified in the texts, and what significance they represent.⁸⁶

The first pair of frames identified in the analysis denotes the descriptive labels used by the media sources to refer to the Chechen attackers in their coverage of the events. In some cases, the attackers are identified as rebels, guerillas, separatists, or hostage-takers, while in other cases the label of “terrorists” is used. As such, the first two frames of representation in this analysis are: “Chechen attackers as separatists” (this frame is meant to encompass all four of the terms mentioned in the first part of the above comparison) and “Chechen attackers as terrorists”. In identifying these frames of representation, this author carefully analyzed each of the articles for every event that specifically referred to the attackers (this included almost every article) and took careful note of which labels were used by the three newspapers in each case. In some cases, a mix of labels occurred in a single article, but due to the significance of “terrorist” as an

⁸⁶ For a summary of the eight frames of representation, please refer to Appendix B.

identifier, it almost always dominated the rhetoric in these situations. Although this distinction in labeling may seem insignificant given the nature of the attacks themselves, the impact that labeling can have on consumers' perceptions of an external event is deceptively important.

As discussed previously, the power of language in shaping a reader's perception is substantial and plays a large part in how readers identify themselves and the social reality surrounding them.⁸⁷ Thus, the way that actors in events are labeled deeply affects the ways in which media consumers perceive and react to those actors and their actions. Herein lies the trouble with the label of "terrorist", a word that inherently carries a prevailing and powerful stigma, but is used inconsistently by media publications and government officials. Despite its rise in popularity in recent decades, terrorism continues to escape any sort of unanimous definition. In fact, hundreds of different definitions exist, making the usage of the word as a label both unclear and dangerous.⁸⁸ This difficulty in identifying "terrorists" has been well acknowledged by the media and has sparked much debate, but as of yet clarification of the term's definition in the media remains illusory.⁸⁹ The danger of this inconsistent and unclear use of "terrorist" is in the pre-attached value that the term carries and the influence of that value over consumer reaction.

In the eyes of most media consumers, terrorism is a word that denotes evil in its most horrible form. Thus, the perpetrators of terrorism or "terrorists" are not only evil and immoral, but also mad, beyond reconciliation, and thus incapable of understanding or negotiating with.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Lakoff, *The Language War*, 41.

⁸⁸ Charles Townshend, *Terrorism: A Very Short Introduction* (Vol. 78. Oxford; New York;: Oxford University Press, 2002) 3; Freedman and Thussu, *Media and Terrorism*, 7.

⁸⁹ For more on the debate over terrorism as a label see, Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism*, 15-35.

⁹⁰ Simons, *Mass Media and Modern Warfare*, 98-99.

While the acts committed by those labeled “terrorists” are almost always heinous and unjustifiable, the effect of the label itself serves to bury any deeper political, historical, or cultural narrative that lies behind the actions of the perpetrators. Terrorism is often painted as a spontaneous phenomenon, the plague of the 21st century, but this perception masks any potential contextualization of terrorist attacks that could provide a better understanding of why the phenomenon occurs. In reality, “terrorism is the manifestation of more deeply engrained problems that affect society, such as political, economic, religious or social inequalities.”⁹¹ However, when governments or media sources use the term loosely, they limit the ways in which the public can react to such actors. Because many assume that one cannot negotiate with terrorists, the label instantly delegitimizes any potential legitimate reason for their actions and relegates the discussion of such causes outside of the accepted mainstream discourse.⁹² Additionally, the label often blurs the distinctions between those who commit the attacks and those whom they claim to represent.⁹³ In these ways, the “terrorist” label may only serve to prolong a conflict as it prevents a full understanding of the root causes of the dispute, and diminishes any chance for an effective and lasting peaceful solution.

The risk of such reckless labeling within the framing of the Russo-Chechen conflict is apparent. Russian officials had long used the label of “terrorists” in referring to Chechen rebels in an attempt to gain Western support; however, it was not until after the attacks of September 11th that Western governments acknowledged any legitimacy to these claims.⁹⁴ As a result, little pressure was put on the Russian government after September 11th to find a political solution to the problem and, unsurprisingly, the “humanitarian disaster” that was the Second Russo-Chechen

⁹¹ Simons, *Mass Media and Modern Warfare*, 4.

⁹² Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism*, 22; Marsden and Savigny, *Media, Religion and Conflict*, 18.

⁹³ Freedman and Thussu, *Media and Terrorism*, 268.

⁹⁴ Herd, “The Russo-Chechen Information Warfare and 9/11”, 116-17.

War was allowed to continue.⁹⁵ Additionally, the Russian leadership's ignorance of the historical and political roots of the Russo-Chechen conflict had the effect of pushing more Chechens toward an extreme stance in the face of perceived injustice, turning Putin's counterterrorist operation into a "self-fulfilling prophecy."⁹⁶ It is for these reasons that an analysis of the labeling used by US print media in regard to Chechen attackers is of great importance.

The second pair of frames of representation identified in this analysis centers on the way in which the media publications create a relatable and personal narrative of the victims. Media coverage of events is typically thought of as being dispassionate, a simple presentation of the facts that are left to the reader to interpret. However, in many cases, these facts are contextualized with in-depth scene setting and personal presentations of victims. Due to the potential power of this type of personal coverage, the third and fourth frames of representation studied in this analysis are: "personal depiction of victims" and "impersonal depiction of victims." In identifying these frames, this author carefully and repeatedly analyzed the quantity and specificity of the victims' details, backgrounds and personal experiences provided in the publications. In this way, it was possible to identify which articles in the three newspapers created a more relatable and intimate representation of the victims. Additionally, this author took careful note of which groups in particular receive this intimate coverage as victims.

A more personal and specific representation allows the consumer to relate and empathize with the victims, thus drawing a much different and more lasting reaction to reporting than the mere presentation of the facts.⁹⁷ As described by Susan Moeller, "when the coverage does introduce us to people identified by names and personal characteristics, the event becomes more

⁹⁵ Russell, "Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves", 110.

⁹⁶ Russell, "Chechnya: Russia's 'War on Terror' or War of Terror'?", 168.

⁹⁷ Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism*, 62-64.

accessible,” allowing readers a chance to connect with those depicted and imagine their experience.⁹⁸ Thus the level of detail attributed to the plight of the victims in a given event can exert a powerful influence over how readers’ sympathize with and thus react to the event. After the attacks of September 11th, many US publications, like the *New York Times*, utilized this type of reporting to present a more in-depth image to readers.⁹⁹ For these reasons, understanding the different ways in which the media publications present victims is relevant for this analysis.

The third pair of frames of representation identified in this analysis relates to the particular points of view represented within the media coverage of each event. Point-of-view (POV) is essential in providing a reader with an understanding of the perspectives belonging to both sides of any conflict. However, in many cases the explicit presentation of POVs provided by media coverage are either lacking (usually for one side) or nonexistent. This can result in readers failing to understand the full story behind a conflict and, as a result, responding to it in a partially informed or uninformed manner. Due to this risk, the fifth and sixth frames of representation in this analysis are: “Chechen POV” and “Russian POV”.¹⁰⁰ In order to identify these frames, this author carefully read each of the articles and identified the different viewpoints provided by each publication in their coverage of the events. Ideally, the coverage should represent both viewpoints equally, leaving further judgment up to the reader, but in many cases the coverage favored one POV over the other.

The justification for an analysis of POVs is quite obvious, as a perspective that is unrepresented in the interpretation of an event created by the media may be overlooked by the

⁹⁸ Ibid., 69.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 62-63

¹⁰⁰ The reason that the label “Chechen POV” and not “Rebel” or “Separatist POV” is used in this analysis is because the frame includes not just the perspective of the attacking rebels, but the perspective of the Chechen community as a whole within the context of the wider conflict.

public. Without a proper understanding of the full nature of a conflict, media consumers are doomed to draw incomplete, and possibly incorrect conclusions and reactions. The party whose POV goes unrepresented may turn to violence as the only method they perceive possible in order to escape a system they believe is unjust.¹⁰¹ In the case of the Russo-Chechen conflict, a failure to represent the Chechen POV may lead US public opinion to a misunderstanding in regards to the political nature and historical background of the dispute. As such, a comparison of the POVs represented by the US print media in regards to the Russo-Chechen conflict is essential.

The final pair of frames of representation identified in this analysis is concerned with the greater context within which the publications place each event. Contextualization is important in providing readers with an understanding of the wider conflict outside of the specific event. Thus, different contexts can induce very different perceptions of the nature of a conflict. The two most common contexts presented in the analysis was one that highlighted the historical and cultural aspects of the Russo-Chechen conflict (including previous/current wars and disputes) and one that highlighted previous terror attacks (both domestically and internationally) and placed the event within a timeline of these attacks. As a result the seventh and eighth frames of representation identified in this analysis are: “Context of historical conflict” and “Context of wave of terror”. In identifying these frames, this author carefully analyzed each article that included a wider contextualization of the conflict in order to pinpoint the dominant narrative illustrated by the background details provided by the publications. In some cases, the articles synthesized both contexts crafting a more balanced picture of the conflict, but more often only one set of circumstances was included.

¹⁰¹ Russell, “Mujahedeen, Mafia, Madmen”, 77.

The dangers of a limited contextualization of a particular event are similar to those associated with the label of “terrorist” in that they both risk burying the greater historical and political origins inherent in the conflict. The “context of a wave of terror” is incomplete and paints a narrative that ignores these important aspects. Resolving a conflict is highly unlikely in a situation that ignores the dispute’s root causes and a misunderstanding may serve to push the conflict even further from resolution. Additionally, this context also links the Russo-Chechen conflict to the wider US-declared ‘Global War on Terror’. This type of relationship creates a sympathetic perspective to Russia’s struggle with Chechnya and thus is relevant for analysis.

In the case of the pre-9/11 attacks, the coverage of all three events from each publication will be analyzed as a group for two main reasons. Firstly, by combining the articles for each event into one unit, this author was better able to examine the frames of representation that appear repeatedly and consistently in the coverage, a task which would have been much more difficult separately due to the markedly smaller coverage surrounding the pre-9/11 events. Secondly, the homogenous nature of the frames of representation identified in the coverage of the pre-9/11 events renders an individual examination of each event unnecessary, even if some of the details of the three events are lost.

2.1 *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

The *New York Times* coverage over the course of the three pre-9/11 events follows a thematic narrative and incorporates a consistent combination of specific frames of representation. These frames are demonstrative of the reality of the Chechen conflict that the *Times* created for its

readers from September 1999 to September 2001, and thus illustrate the picture of the conflict that many readers of the *Times* internalized. In order to highlight and discuss these dominant frames of representation, this author has incorporated direct examples from the coverage of the events.

The first identifiable frame of representation within the *New York Times*' coverage of the pre-9/11 events is "Chechen attackers as separatists." The dominant labels used for Chechens within this coverage are rebel, guerilla, and militant: all of which connote a two-sided war rather than the charged one-sidedness often associated with the label of "terrorist." For example, in an article about the September Apartment Bombings, the *Times* describes, "their investigation... found that Chechen militants had shipped tons of explosives into Moscow disguised as bags of sugar."¹⁰² Although these explosives were being used to blatantly target civilians in Moscow, the Chechens are not labeled as terrorists, but rather as militants. Another example from the same article states, "reports... had indicated the rebels planned to attack not only Moscow, but also Rostov and St. Petersburg."¹⁰³ Again, although the article is reporting on attacks on civilians, the perpetrators are referred to as rebels. Words like "rebels" and "militants" inspire a context of war within the imagination of the reader, as opposed to "terrorists" which creates an image of random and unexplainable killing. Further, references in the *Times* reporting to Russian officials blaming the attacks on "Chechen rebels" and claiming the killings were "linked... to Chechen militants" provide readers with additional perspective on the conflict.¹⁰⁴ Not only do these terms imply a political context for the attacks, but they also attribute a national identity to the attackers, making

¹⁰² Michael R. Gordon, "Russian Blast Kills 4." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 16, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110072866?accountid=14709>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Patrick E. Tyler, "Security Heightened as Bombs Kill 20 in 3 Russian Villages." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Mar 25, 2001, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91839123?accountid=14709>; Celestine Bohlen, "Russians Feel Helpless Against Terror." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 14, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110079680?accountid=14709>.

it clear that what is occurring is not a wave of random terror, but the manifestation of an ongoing nationalist war for independence.

The use of the label of “terrorist” in reference to the pre-9/11 attacks is exclusively reserved for when the publication directly quotes or refers to statements made by Russian officials, and it often describes the nature of the violence instead of the perpetrators. For example, in an article addressing the Moscow Underpass Bombing the *Times* quotes the Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov: “Luzhkov described the explosion, ... as a ‘terrorist act’ with a ‘Chechen trace.’”¹⁰⁵ In this way, the *Times* distances itself from the term and additionally applies a sense of skepticism to the validity of the Mayor’s claims. Another example of this can be seen in an article referring to the September Apartment Bombings: “officials say are terrorist attacks, attributed to Islamic guerilla leaders.”¹⁰⁶ In this quote, the *Times* separates its own voice from both the attribution of blame to the guerillas and from the use of “terrorist,” thus portraying to the reader that these claims may be part of the information war around the conflict and ought to be taken with a grain of salt. A final effective representation of the *Times* labeling appears in the coverage of the Southern Russia Car Bombings. In one article, the *Times* uses the phrase “terrorist acts” on four different occasions, but only from the objective safety of direct quotations of Russian officials; the publication itself otherwise refers to the Chechens as “rebels.”¹⁰⁷ This report came just one day after Russian President Putin had protested to the European Union for its refusal to refer to the Chechens as terrorists.¹⁰⁸ The reality projected by the *New York Times*

¹⁰⁵ Patrick E. Tyler, "Rush-Hour Bomb Attack Kills 8 in Central Moscow." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Aug 09, 2000, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91527981?accountid=14709>.

¹⁰⁶ Celestine Bohlen, "Uneasy Moscow Swept by Rumors About What Yeltsin Will Do." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 16, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110142668?accountid=14709>.

¹⁰⁷ Tyler, "Security Heightened as Bombs Kill 20 in 3 Russian Villages."

¹⁰⁸ Suzanne Daley, "Pressed on Chechnya, Putin Cites Macedonia." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Mar 24, 2001, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92043649?accountid=14709>.

labeling of the Chechens in the pre-9/11 events provided viewers with a perspective of war and secession rather than of groundless terror.

A second dominant frame of representation notable within the *Times*' pre-9/11 coverage is the "impersonal depiction of victims". Although it is difficult to provide evidence of what the *Times* did not include in the coverage (i.e. specificities regarding the victims' experience and background), some cases still represent the overall detached mood of the coverage. For example, in an article referring to the victims of the September Apartment Bombings, the *Times* notes only that, "women and children were among the casualties."¹⁰⁹ The use of the label "casualties" even when referring to the deaths of innocent women and children makes clear the impersonal and detached nature of the *Times* coverage. Additionally within the article, as with many others in the pre-9/11 coverage, no interviews with victims or their perspective is provided, as the *Times* instead focuses more attention to the political context and repercussions of the attacks.¹¹⁰

However, despite the predominantly impersonalized coverage, several articles from the *Times* do include brief glimpses into the victims' experiences. An excellent example of this can be seen in the *Times* coverage of the Moscow Underpass Bombing in which an article provides several personal relations of the explosions including interviews and graphic descriptions of the victims, "some of them streaming blood from shrapnel... others limping with shredded clothing."¹¹¹ These types of depictions create a more sympathetic and relatable representation for consumers, as they humanize the victims in ways that the attackers are not. Nevertheless, within the pre-9/11 coverage, the majority of detached articles overshadows the personal frame. In fact,

¹⁰⁹ Michael R. Gordon, "Rebels Attack Caucasus Area; Bomb Kills 30." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 06, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110051937?accountid=14709>.

¹¹⁰ Gordon, "Rebels Attack Caucasus Area; Bomb Kills 30."; Michael Wines, "Debate on Cause of Moscow Blast Heats Up." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 10, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110084798?accountid=14709>; Tyler, "Security Heightened as Bombs Kill 20 in 3 Russian Villages."

¹¹¹ Tyler, "Rush-Hour Bomb Attack Kills 8 in Central Moscow."

the article that provides the most specific personal background and experience in the pre-9/11 coverage does not focus on the victims of the attacks at all. Instead, the article describes the backlash and harassment against Chechens in Moscow after the September Apartment Bombings, focusing on the victimization of the Chechens. The article, one of the longest in the *Times* pre-9/11 coverage, traces the story of a Chechen woman and her family from their flattened home in Grozny, the Chechen capital, to their emigration to Moscow where “they suffer from a constant fear of eviction.”¹¹² This personal coverage of the Chechen experience represents a balance to the coverage of the Russian victims and allows readers to relate to both Chechen and Russian victims of the conflict. This personalization and humanization of the actors within the events affects the ways in which media consumers perceive and react to the actors’ experiences and actions.

Another identifiable attribute of the *Times* coverage in the pre-9/11 era is its balanced presentation of the “Chechen POV” and the “Russia POV”. In many of the articles regarding the September Apartment Bombings, the *Times* is sure to present not only the perspective of the victims of the attacks, but also the effects of the attacks on Chechens as well. For example, one article depicts the fears of Russian Muscovites in exceptional detail with several interviews highlighting the pervasive fear and suffering throughout the city. However, the *Times* balances this coverage by also acknowledging the persecution being felt by Chechen citizens in the city, some of whom “said they did not dare go outside,” for fear of oppression at the hands of the Russian authorities.¹¹³ Thus, the frame described by the *Times* is one of an ongoing and complex conflict in which the violence hurts Chechens as well as Russians, albeit in different ways. This

¹¹² Michael R. Gordon, "Caught in a Backlash to Moscow's Bombings." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 15, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110076241?accountid=14709>.

¹¹³ Bohlen, "Russians Feel Helpless Against Terror."

contrasting presentation of POVs is also present in several other articles as well. The coverage shifts from relating the “new sense of vulnerability” caused by the attacks in Moscow to explaining the crackdowns on Chechens as “extensive, so extensive that it is prompting concerns by human rights organizations.”¹¹⁴ In this way, the *Times* provides a more complete picture of the conflict to consumers, one that encompasses the fear and suffering on both sides of the violence.

The *Times*' balanced coverage of the victims of the conflict is best exemplified in two articles from the September Apartment Bombings. The first, as previously mentioned, is a long descriptive article devoted to the scapegoating of Chechens after the bombings. This article, with its illustrative depiction of the indiscriminate tactics used by the Russian police, represents an attempt by the *Times* to balance its victimization and perspective given to the Russians with the comparable experiences of Chechen civilians.¹¹⁵ The second article, an editorial, provides a direct view into the outlook of the *Times* itself and the sympathy felt by the publication toward the entirety of the conflict's victims. The editorial begins by describing the harsh nature of the bombings and acknowledging that, “The fear and anger in Russia are understandable.” However, the focus of the piece quickly shifts, as most of the article is devoted to a condemnation of the Moscow police for “arresting and detaining the innocent” and “bursting into homes... by nationality.”¹¹⁶ Thus, despite the obvious victims of the bombings being Russians, the *Times* coverage of the pre-9/11 events is careful to preserve a balanced and objective consistency of POVs.

¹¹⁴ Michael R. Gordon, "Moscow Blast, 3d in 2 Weeks, Kills at Least 95." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 14, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110067538?accountid=14709>; Michael R. Gordon, "Russians Name a Chechen as the Chief Suspect in 5 Bombings." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 18, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110113229?accountid=14709>.

¹¹⁵ Gordon, "Caught in a Backlash to Moscow's Bombings."

¹¹⁶ "Russian Terrors, New and Old." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 20, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110069446?accountid=14709>.

The final frame that dominates the pre-9/11 coverage of the *New York Times* is the “context of historical conflict.” In placing the events within a greater context, the *Times* coverage consistently refers to historical interactions and situates the attacks within the ongoing war in Chechnya. For example, an article regarding the September Apartment Bombings begins by describing the attacks as “a wave of random violence,” but quickly supplements this statement with the important context of the “Chechen militants ongoing war with the Russian army.”¹¹⁷ Another article describes in detail the fighting in the Caucasus, citing the attacks in Russia as “the war (was) being fought on several fronts.”¹¹⁸ The context given to the reader by these articles places the attacks within the understandable violent back-and-forth of modern warfare, despite the fact that civilians were directly targeted. The importance of this is that the war retains a political identity and logical goal for its fighters. Instead of being purposeless murderers, the Chechens are separatists fighting, albeit with indiscriminate tactics, for their independence.

Other articles delve into even greater historical context in constructing the narrative of the conflict for consumers. For example, one article describes not only the destruction caused by the First Russo-Chechen War in Grozny, but even refers to the roots of the conflict in Stalin’s 1944 deportation of the Chechen people.¹¹⁹ This serves to position the new outbreaks of violence in the conflict within a greater timeline of nationalist disputes so as to provide the reader with a greater political understanding of the conflict’s main issues. A final pertinent example of the *Times* shunning of the “context of wave of terror” frame of representation in favor of the “context of historical conflict” is visible in an article covering the Moscow Underpass Bombing. The article contrasts a direct quote from Russian President Putin stating, “terrorism was an

¹¹⁷ Bohlen, "Russians Feel Helpless Against Terror."

¹¹⁸ Gordon, "Rebels Attack Caucasus Area; Bomb Kills 30."

¹¹⁹ Gordon, "Caught in a Backlash to Moscow's Bombings."

‘international illness’” with deeper historical background highlighting, “two rebellions and two devastating invasions by the Russian military” in Chechnya.¹²⁰ Clearly the priority in the contextualization provided by the *Times* was focused on creating a representation of an ongoing and historical conflict.

Overall, five main frames of representation dominated the *New York Times* coverage of the three pre-9/11 events. The consistent combination of the “Chechen attackers as separatists”, “impersonal depiction of victims”, equal representation of the “Chechen POV” and “Russian POV,” and heavy favoritism toward a “context of historical conflict” offers the *Times*’ readers with an interpretation of the conflict that is characterized by historical disputes, an ongoing separatist war, and innocent suffering on both sides. This depiction stands in stark contrast to the *Times* coverage of events in the post-9/11 era, which this author will further address in Section 3.1.

2.2 THE WASHINGTON POST

Much like the *New York Times*, the coverage provided by the *Washington Post* consists of a repetitive yet distinct combination of frames of representation that serve to provide the *Post*’s readers with a particular perspective on the nature of the Russo-Chechen conflict. This in turn influenced the way in which readers related to and responded to the events in Russia before September 11, 2001. In order to ensure the validity of the following observations and present a

¹²⁰ Patrick E. Tyler, "Moscow Arrests Suspects but can't Link any to Fatal Bombing." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Aug 10, 2000, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/91510241?accountid=14709>.

more detailed and complete picture of the *Post's* coverage, this author has again utilized specific examples from the coverage itself.

The first notable frame of representation within the *Washington Post's* pre-9/11 coverage is "Chechen attackers as separatists." As in the *Times* coverage, Chechens discussed in the pre-9/11 coverage are typically referred to using various terms including rebels, separatists, and guerillas. In an article about the September Apartment bombings, the *Post* describes those being blamed as "guerillas from Chechnya" and proceeds to use the label of "guerilla" throughout the remainder of the article.¹²¹ Another article on the bombings states, "Russian leaders have accused separatist rebels... of Chechnya of organizing the attacks."¹²² Both of these labels imply that those being referred to are participants in a war, presumably for independence, and thus their actions are part of that war. This implication lends legitimacy to the actions and the apparent political cause championed by the attackers that is not otherwise attributed by labels such as "terrorist". The most dominant label applied throughout the entirety of the coverage however is that of "Chechen rebels".¹²³ Not only does this imply that the rebels are championing a specific and stated political goal, it also clearly implies that the motivation behind that goal is nationalist self-determination, a concept that most media consumers are familiar with and can understand.

Additionally, the label of "terrorist" is almost exclusively used in quotations or in reference to the nature of the attacks rather than the identification of those blamed for them. A

¹²¹ David Hoffman, "Yeltsin Pledges Tough Stance on Terrorism; Moscow Bombings Linked to Guerrillas." *The Washington Post*, Sep 14, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/408499891?accountid=14709>.

¹²² David Hoffman, "Fourth Blast in Russia Kills 17; Country Shaken by Terror Attacks." *The Washington Post*, Sep 17, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/408506384?accountid=14709>.

¹²³ David Hoffman, "Apartment Blast Blamed on Bomb; Moscow Says Military Explosive used." *The Washington Post*, Sep 10, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/408509450?accountid=14709>; Peter Baker, "Russia Says Envoy being Expelled is CIA Officer." *The Washington Post*, Mar 28, 2001, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409077418?accountid=14709>; Peter Baker, "Moscow Blames Rebels for Deadly Car Bombings Near Chechnya." *The Washington Post*, Mar 25, 2001, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409098397?accountid=14709>.

very representative example of this policy can be seen in the *Post's* coverage of the Southern Russia Car Bombs. In reference to a meeting between a US State department official and a Chechen delegate, the *Post* explains that Russian officials declared that the US had “received an emissary from terrorists with the ‘blood of civilians on their hands.’” However, the *Post* contrasts this quote with its own depiction of the delegate as “a representative of Chechen rebels.”¹²⁴ The distinction between these two identities reveals the differing views toward the Chechens held by Russian officials and the editorial staff of the *Post*. This view is then passed on to the readers, who are presented with an image of the Chechen separatists of which Russian officials disapprove. Another example of this careful labeling can be seen in an article regarding the Moscow Underpass Bombing. In this case, “Chechen ‘terrorists’” were “quickly labeled” by Russian officials as the cause of the attack.¹²⁵ This not only distances the *Post* from the claims made by Russian officials, but also represents skepticism of the validity of the claims in the first place. Overall, the *Post's* labeling of Chechens in the pre-9/11 events preserves the political and national identity of the attackers, implying an environment of war between two legitimate parties rather than of one-sided acts of random violence.

A second dominant frame of representation common to the pre-9/11 coverage of the *Washington Post* is the “impersonal depiction of victims.” What is striking about the *Post's* creation of this frame is not what is included in the articles, but what is not. Even more detached than the mostly impersonal coverage of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post's* pre-9/11 articles are almost entirely devoid of any information regarding the backgrounds and experiences of victims. In most of the articles, the full extent of the coverage of victims consists of a sentence

¹²⁴ Baker, "Russia Says Envoy being Expelled is CIA Officer."

¹²⁵ Daniel Williams, "Moscow Explosion Kills 8; Rush-Hour Bomb Detonates in Crowded Downtown Pedestrian Underpass." *The Washington Post*, Aug 09, 2000, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/408998826?accountid=14709>.

stating the number of dead and wounded. For example, in an article covering one of the September Apartment Bombings in Moscow, the *Post* states, “the blast... killed 40 people and injured 152 others, but dozens more were believed to be buried under the rubble.”¹²⁶ This is the only information regarding victims that is provided, with the exception of a later statement clarifying that “some of the casualties were in a neighboring building.”¹²⁷ This coverage reduces any personal or sympathetic experience that might be drawn from the coverage, simply presenting the reader with the facts of the event.

The only interviews and specific information regarding victims to occur in the pre-9/11 coverage are within two articles covering the Moscow Underpass Bombing in 2000.¹²⁸ The accounts provided are brief, numbering a few sentences at most. They provide very minimal insight into the scene of the bombing, as opposed to the lengthy interviews conducted by the *Times*. Despite the fact that the September Apartment Bombings had also occurred in Moscow just a year earlier and caused much more devastation, no such interviews or background were provided on those events. This distant style of reporting provides *Post* readers with a very detached view of the attacks. The actors—both attackers and victims—are faceless and devoid of any personality or history. No explicit sympathy is expressed for either side, leaving the reader to draw conclusions for themselves about how to judge and react to the event. By refraining from humanizing or personalizing the victims, the *Post* also avoids the implicit creation of a villain.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Hoffman, "Apartment Blast Blamed on Bomb; Moscow Says Military Explosive used."

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Williams, "Moscow Explosion Kills 8; Rush-Hour Bomb Detonates in Crowded Downtown Pedestrian Underpass;" Daniel Williams, "Security in Moscow Tight After Bombing; Residents Organize Patrols, Reinforce Locks." *The Washington Post*, Aug 10, 2000, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/408653635?accountid=14709>.

¹²⁹ This is not meant to be critical or supportive of the *Washington Post's* method for covering the events. It is not this author's purpose to decide what styles of journalism are most effective, but to analyze the ways in which these styles (and thus their influence) change as a result of external events.

Although this frame of representation is dominant in much of the pre-9/11 discourse, it is much less prevalent in the later coverage of the publications.

While the *New York Times* seems to seek a balance in its presentation of points of view, the *Washington Post* mostly attempts to mitigate this challenge by refusing to present the conflict through either side's perspective. In the vast majority of articles, the *Post* takes the position of an objective observer. Rather than present the particular grievances of either party, the *Post* uses brief statements by officials on both sides and the reactions of experts to the events to provide a depiction of the conflict from a comfortable distance. For example, an article covering the September Apartment Bombings provides the typical format of the *Post's* pre-9/11 coverage. The article opens with a brief description of the bombing and of the public responses by Russian law enforcement and officials. Next, it provides context on the war in Chechnya, and reports experts' reflections on the potential impact of the event.¹³⁰ By avoiding spokesmen for either side, the *Post* attempts to remove any potential bias and leave interpretation to the reader.

In the few pre-9/11 cases in which the *Post* does provide a particular point of view, it tends to present a balance of both the "Chechen POV" and "Russian POV." For example, an article referring to the apartment bombing in Volgodonsk describes the paranoid and "unnerved" reactions among Russian citizens after the attack instilled a sense of pervasive vulnerability. However, this POV is quickly countered with a short section highlighting the "constant questioning and police checks" that created a similar sentiment amongst Chechens.¹³¹ In this way, the amount of POV presented in the *Washington Post's* coverage is measured and balanced. Readers do not have a standing of the conflict imposed upon them through the provided viewpoints, although other frames of representation may still influence readers' responses.

¹³⁰ Hoffman, "Yeltsin Pledges Tough Stance on Terrorism; Moscow Bombings Linked to Guerrillas."

¹³¹ Hoffman, "Fourth Blast in Russia Kills 17; Country Shaken by Terror Attacks."

The final dominant frame of representation present within the pre-9/11 coverage of the *Washington Post* is the “context of historical conflict”. By far the dominant narrative promoted by the *Post’s* articles is one that places the contemporary attacks in the context of a long and complex historical conflict. For example, in an article addressing the Moscow Underpass Bombing, the post states, “Chechnya has been ravaged by Russian bombs and artillery; its capital... has been nearly leveled; and tens of thousands of civilians have been driven from their homes. Yet the war persists, with Chechens carrying out frequent hit-and run-attacks.”¹³² This type of contextualization for the bombing provides news consumers with the impression that the attack is simply another act of war in a long and brutal conflict for both sides. Other articles take a more specific historical approach, describing the context of the First Russo-Chechen War and the uneasy ceasefire that led up to the current conflict.¹³³ In this way, the attacks on Russian soil are depicted not as isolated acts of terror, but as manifestations of the fundamental historical conflict that remained dormant during a brief period of peace. Readers of the *Post* are provided with a view that encompasses these political, economic and social problems rather than one that attributes the events to the plague of international terrorism.

Overall, the *Washington Post’s* coverage of the three pre-9/11 events utilizes these frames of representation in order to construct an interpretation of the Russo-Chechen conflict that encompasses greater historical and political issues within the dispute. Additionally, the careful and distant reporting of the *Post* ensures that a level of agency in interpreting the conflict remains with the reader, a phenomenon that becomes much less common after the September 11th attacks.

¹³² Williams, "Security in Moscow Tight After Bombing; Residents Organize Patrols, Reinforce Locks."

¹³³ David Hoffman, "Anger Over Bomb Attacks Fuels Russian Talk of War; Leaders Weigh Attack on Chechnya." *The Washington Post*, Sep 18, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/408504875?accountid=14709>; Hoffman, "Fourth Blast in Russia Kills 17; Country Shaken by Terror Attacks."

2.3 THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Despite having a significantly smaller amount of pre-9/11 coverage than the other publications, the *Wall Street Journal's* presentation of events is characterized by a consistent arrangement of frames of representation. These frames, through their repetition and dominance, create a coherent narrative that defines the reality of the pre-9/11 conflict for the readers of the *Journal*. In order to effectively illustrate the authority attributed to these specific frames within the *Journal's* coverage, this author has selected specific examples from the articles that best illustrate the thematic consistency of coverage as a whole.

The first prominent frame of representation that is applied consistently in the *Wall Street Journal's* discourse is the “Chechens attackers as separatists” frame. Throughout the *Journal's* presentation of events, the most common labels applied to the Chechen attackers are militants and rebels. These terms denote the attackers as legitimate actors representative of a state of war in which violence is expected. For example, in articles about the Moscow Underpass Bombing and Southern Russia Car Bombs, the *Journal* describes how “suspicion fell on Chechen rebels” and “Moscow blamed Chechen rebels.”¹³⁴ Not only do these statements distance the publication from the accusations made by Russian officials, they also provide the reader with a specific understanding of the conflict. The use of “rebels” implies that the fighters are championing a specific and explicit cause, independence, which is much different from the implications inherent in other labels like “terrorists”. Additionally, by emphasizing the national character of the attackers, the *Journal* has made clear that the roots of the conflict are ones of nationalism and

¹³⁴ “World-Wide.” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug 09, 2000, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398802038?accountid=14709>; “World-Wide.” *Wall Street Journal*, Mar 26, 2001, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398785418?accountid=14709>.

identity, both of which are common and recognized causes of dispute in modern times. In this way, the *Journal* provides its consumers with a sense that the specific events about which they are reading are neither isolated nor random, but rather part of a larger narrative characterized by a dispute over national self-determination.

Further, the only uses of the term “terrorist” in the *Journal’s* pre-9/11 articles are in reference to the nature of the bombings themselves. While the *Journal* freely describes the September Apartment Bombings as “suspected terrorist bombings” or a “suspected terrorist explosion,” those who allegedly carried out these attacks are referred to in both cases as “militants” from Chechnya.¹³⁵ Thus, the *Journal* does not use “terrorist” as an identifier or label, but as a description of a tactic exhibited by a warring party. This distinction, coupled with the presentation of an ongoing asymmetrical conflict, creates an image of the attackers and their actions that is understandable and relatable rather than unapproachable. Overall, the identification of the Chechen attackers supplied by the *Journal* serves to reinforce the context of ongoing and legitimate conflict in the pre-9/11 period.

A second recognizable frame of representation that is heavily present in the *Wall Street Journal’s* coverage is the “impersonal depiction of victims.” The *Wall Street Journal’s* presentation of the pre-9/11 attacks is by far the most detached and neutral of the three publications. Nowhere in its coverage does the *Journal* not deliver one instance of coverage that provides any background, experiential, or personal information regarding victims on either side of the conflict. This is a bit surprising, given the fact that the *Journal* has maintained a foreign

¹³⁵ Alan S. Cullison, "Fifth Bomb Blast in Russia Fuels Fear of Pre-Election Political Crisis." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 17, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398704469?accountid=14709>; Guy Chazan, "Russia Steps Up Pressure on Chechnya --- Prospect of Invasion Looms, but Critics Call Moscow Too Weak for Big War --- Moscow Weighs Invasion in Wake of Bombings Blamed on Terrorists." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 23, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398677681?accountid=14709>.

bureau in Moscow (the site of several of the bombings) since 1993.¹³⁶ For example, an article covering one of the September Apartment Bombings in Moscow mentions the victims of the attack just once, stating, “The latest explosion reduced an eight-story building in Southern Moscow to rubble... killing at least 73 people.”¹³⁷ This lack of attention to the victims of the attacks, whether the result of journalistic objectivity or a more overt focus on political and economic issues, characterizes the *Journal’s* coverage throughout the pre-9/11 events. As such, readers of the *Journal’s* coverage receive an objective, albeit impersonal representation of the conflict that requires them to imagine and judge the events themselves.

A third noteworthy aspect of the *Wall Street Journal’s* pre-9/11 coverage is the small amount of and balanced presentation of both the “Russian POV” and “Chechen POV.” The vast majority of the coverage avoids either of the points of view, choosing instead to focus on the political and economic repercussions of the attacks. For example, an article regarding the September Apartment Bombings spends as much text covering how the explosion “rocked Russian markets” as it does discussing the nature of the bombing itself.¹³⁸ However, on the very rare occasion that the *Journal* does address the specific perspectives within the conflict, the outlooks are typically measured and balanced. An article from the *Journal’s* September Apartment Bombing coverage describes the aftermath of the bombings in which public sentiment called for military action to protect Russia from further attacks. Juxtaposed to this reporting is a description of the destruction brought about by Russian military strikes in Chechnya, “which left

¹³⁶ "Gregory L. White." *The Wall Street Journal*. <http://www.wsj.com/news/author/1570>.

¹³⁷ Jeanne Whalen, "Fourth Terror Bombing in Russia Raises Specter of Emergency Rule." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 14, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398754923?accountid=14709>.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

200 civilians dead.”¹³⁹ In this way, the limited coverage of victims in the *Wall Street Journal's* coverage provides the audience with a more balanced representation of the views in the conflict.

The final thematic frame of representation present within the *Wall Street Journal's* coverage of the pre-9/11 events is the “context of historical conflict”. In the pre-9/11 period, the *Journal's* reporting consistently places the attacks within a context of ongoing and continuous warfare. For example, in a description of the September Apartment Bombings, the bombings are labeled as “rebel attacks,” giving the impression of a military operation rather than a terrorist assault.¹⁴⁰ Further, another article begins with an explanation of the end of the First Russo-Chechen War and describes the current conflict as a continuation of that dispute over independence.¹⁴¹ This type of contextualization provides readers of the *Journal* with an understanding of the contemporary attacks as a manifestation of an ongoing conflict over established and legitimate goals. However in one case the *Journal* does seem to present a “context of wave of terror,” but this is countered in the text by the inclusion of the war context as well. The article, which reports on the Southern Russia Car Bombs, describes the bombings as part of a “terrorist campaign in the North Caucasus,” a description which would paint a very different picture if it were not accompanied by a description of Russia’s “protracted guerilla war in the southern region of Chechnya.”¹⁴² The combination of these two descriptions provides the reader with a context in which terror has become a tactic of a long-term separatist war. Overall,

¹³⁹ Chazan, "Russia Steps Up Pressure on Chechnya --- Prospect of Invasion Looms, but Critics Call Moscow Too Weak for Big War --- Moscow Weighs Invasion in Wake of Bombings Blamed on Terrorists."

¹⁴⁰ "World-Wide." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 1999, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398810208?accountid=14709>.

¹⁴¹ Chazan, "Russia Steps Up Pressure on Chechnya --- Prospect of Invasion Looms, but Critics Call Moscow Too Weak for Big War --- Moscow Weighs Invasion in Wake of Bombings Blamed on Terrorists."

¹⁴² Guy Chazan, "Russia's Putin Tightens Grip on Kremlin." *Wall Street Journal*, Mar 29, 2001, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398736649?accountid=14709>.

the context established by the coverage of the *Wall Street Journal* provides its readers with an understanding of the historical and political nature of the conflict.

Through its use of specific language and context, the *Wall Street Journal* creates a thematic representation of the pre-9/11 events that is the result of an increasingly brutal ongoing separatist war. Additionally, the impersonal and detached nature of the *Journal's* coverage creates a sense of objectivity towards the conflict that leaves much up to the reader's interpretation. However, this type of reporting is much less prevalent in the coverage of the post-9/11 events.

3.0 POST-9/11 ANALYSIS:

The following discussion of the post-9/11 events differs from the previous discussion in that the analysis will be separated not only by newspaper, but also by event. This reflects the massive increase in media coverage after 9/11, as well as the continued shift in the style of coverage from 2001-2004. Additionally, the themes conveyed in each newspaper will not only be compared to each other, but also to the patterns of coverage identified from the pre-9/11 events. The purpose of this organization is to enable this author to draw measured conclusions about the impact of the experience of the September 11th attacks on the publications reactions to attacks within Russia.

3.1 DUBROVKA THEATER HOSTAGE CRISIS

On October 23, 2003, around 50 heavily armed Chechen militants seized a theater in the Dubrovka neighborhood of Moscow, taking about 850 hostages just three miles southwest of the Kremlin.¹⁴³ After an almost three-day siege including many negotiation attempts, Russian security forces finally stormed the bomb-laden theater pumping a then-undisclosed gas into the theater's vents to knockout the hostage-takers and hostages alike.¹⁴⁴ Although the rescue was

¹⁴³ Michael Wines, "Chechens Seize Moscow Theater, Taking as Many as 600 Hostages." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Oct 24, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92176667?accountid=14709>.

¹⁴⁴ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 162-163.

initially deemed a success, as the death toll rose to over 100, criticism emerged toward the government's secrecy about the gas. In the end, almost 130 hostages were killed in the rescue attempt, only two of them by the guerillas and the rest as an adverse result of the gas.¹⁴⁵ Despite the large death toll, criticism remained muted from both the Russian public and from Western governments, as most citizens and leaders voiced support for Putin's hardline response to the attack including US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.¹⁴⁶

The Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis remains one of the most infamous and heavily reported events in the history of the Russo-Chechen conflict. As such, the US media coverage attached to the event is both extensive and thorough. In accurately identifying the patterns of frames of representation created by the publications in their coverage, this author carefully and analytically reviewed each article several times. Additionally, so as to ensure the validity and accuracy of the conclusions drawn from this work, this author has utilized direct quotations and references to each newspaper's article base in presenting these patterns.

3.1.1 THE NEW YORK TIMES

The *New York Times* coverage of the Dubrovka Hostage Crisis differs greatly from the paper's pre-9/11 coverage not only in the magnitude of coverage, but also in the themes through which the conflict, and the attack's place in it, is represented. This is characterized by a dominant discourse that differs notably from the frames of representation found in the earlier coverage. As

¹⁴⁵ Michael Wines, "Russia Names Drug in Raid, Defending use." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Oct 31, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92338830?accountid=14709>.

¹⁴⁶ "Moscow Siege Gas 'not Illegal'" BBC News. October 29, 2002. Accessed January 6, 2016. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2371691.stm>.

a result, readers in the post-9/11 era are given a much different perspective into the Russo-Chechen conflict than provided in the past.

The first and one of the most noticeable shifts in the coverage is the rise of the “Chechen attackers as terrorists” frame of representation and a concomitant decrease of the “Chechen attackers as separatists” frame. Although the *Times*’ pre-9/11 coverage is characterized by a systematic avoidance of the use of “terrorist” when referring to the Chechens, this restraint is not evident in the *Times*’ post-9/11 coverage. In the very first article about the Dubrovka Crisis, the assault on the theater is described as beginning “when a group of between 40 and 50 Chechen terrorists, ...stormed the theater.”¹⁴⁷ This represents a clear departure from the cautious and controlled labeling of the earlier events and serves to paint the Chechens not as actors in an ongoing war, but as “terrorists.”

Further, not only is this frame of representation used much more loosely in the Dubrovka Crisis coverage, but it also becomes the dominant label through which the attackers are identified. Although other terms like “guerilla” and “militant” still appear occasionally in the articles, “terrorist” replaces them as the most common and by far the most significant label.¹⁴⁸ This rhetorical change deprives the attackers of rationality or political motivations. For example, in one article regarding the experience of hostages inside the theater, the attackers are referred to exclusively as “terrorists” with no other qualifying description.¹⁴⁹ Although the absence of other

¹⁴⁷ Sabrina Tavernise, "Inside, Fearful Children; Outside, Frantic Relatives." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 24, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92236831?accountid=14709>.

¹⁴⁸ For several examples of “terrorist as a label”, see "The Search for a Knockout Weapon." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 30, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92279971?accountid=14709>; Sabrina Tavernise and Sophia Kishkovsky, "Hostage Drama in Moscow: The Rescue, and its Trail of Questions." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92324089?accountid=14709>; Sabrina Tavernise, "Terrifying Nights in a Theater Where Lights Never Dimmed." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 26, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92232609?accountid=14709>.

¹⁴⁹ Sabrina Tavernise, "Hostage Voices." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92201713?accountid=14709>.

labels or details may seem inconsequential, it serves to entirely dehumanize the attackers and remove any rational motive for their actions. Without terms like “separatist,” “rebel,” or even “Chechen,” the true nationalist roots of the Russo-Chechen conflict are dismissed by the use of the blanket term “terrorism.” As “terrorists” the Chechens are no longer representative of an ongoing nationalist dispute and are instead part of a new, evil global phenomenon. Readers of this type of presentation come to understand the violence in the events not as a manifestation of oppressed nationalist ambitions, but as an irrational act of random violence and unexplainable hate. In contrast to the understanding of the conflict fostered by the pre-9/11 coverage, readers of the Dubrovka Crisis coverage receive an incomplete and partial representation of the ongoing conflict.

Although the *Times*' coverage marks a shift to a less judicious use of “terrorists” as a label, a smaller proportion of the coverage, almost of all of which is attributable to one reporter, still retains the careful identifications that characterized its earlier coverage. Although these few articles continue to only use “terrorist” in reference to quotes made by officials, the open use of the term in the rest of coverage hinders the effect of this prudence. A telling example of the prevalence of the label appears in one of the commentary pieces on the event published by the *Times*. The piece provides an accurate history of the violence of the conflict, highlighting the death and destruction caused by the Russo-Chechen Wars and the oppressed nationalist aspirations of the Chechen people. However, even in this article, which presents one of the most personal and detailed views of the Chechen cause within the coverage, the author still refers to the attackers as “heavily armed terrorists.”¹⁵⁰ This exemplifies the pervasive nature of the label in the Dubrovka Crisis coverage and illustrates the acceptance and authority of the term as

¹⁵⁰ Yevgenia Albats, “The Chechen War Comes Home.” *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 26, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92190387?accountid=14709>.

appropriate discourse to describe the event. However, new labels such as “gunmen” and “hostage-takers” also emerge in the *Times*’ coverage of the event.¹⁵¹ Unfortunately however, these new terms, which do little to break up the repetition of the use of “terrorists,” retain a similar dehumanizing effect and provide no further representation of the identities and motivations of the attackers.

Overall, compared to the pre-9/11 coverage until the Dubrovka Crisis, the labeling of attackers by the *New York Times* underwent a major shift. With the label of “terrorists” no longer limited to the discourse of Russian officials, readers of the *Times* are presented with a much different representation of the conflict than before 9/11, one that stresses random and irreconcilable violence rather than an increasingly desperate and brutal war of independence. In both the Dubrovka Crisis and the attacks before September 11th, the attackers targeted and killed civilians (although on a greater scale beforehand) and yet in the latter case they were “rebels” and in the former “terrorists.”

A second major shift in the coverage of the Dubrovka Theater Crisis is the increased amount of “personal depiction of victims,” including much more detail and background than in the previous events. As opposed to the relative lack of attention to the victims and their experience in the pre-9/11 coverage, “personal depiction of victims” is perhaps the most dominant frame of representation in the *Times*’ depiction of Dubrovka. Interviews and backstories on victims and their handling of the crisis appear repeatedly in the coverage, providing consumers with a method of relating, understanding, and empathizing with the victims’ experience of the attack.

¹⁵¹ Tavernise, "Terrifying Nights in a Theater Where Lights Never Dimmed;" Steven Lee Myers, "The Toxic Agent." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92312530?accountid=14709>.

Overall, the personalization and sympathy in the average *Times* article increased dramatically in the coverage of the Dubrovka Crisis. For example, many of the articles follow the narrative of specific victims and their experience in the theater. One such article begins with a quote from a hostage, "We were waiting to die." The article goes on to provide details of the hostage's dramatic time in the crisis and even closes with another powerful quote, "I am sure that we were saved from imminent death."¹⁵² This style is very common in much of the *Times* reporting on Dubrovka. The emphasis on the victim's experience and personal recollection helps to construct much of the narrative and in doing so gives readers a much more intimate perspective of their experience. Other articles use a similar format but focus instead on the victim's families, drawing empathy for the fear and anxiety amidst the chaos.¹⁵³ Additionally, *Times* articles include an increased focus on the graphic details of the setting, thus providing readers with a method of personal engagement with the story. For example, in one article, the *Times* highlights the experience of the victims by describing the "red upholstered theater seats" and the way that hostages formed a "long line... for a private corner of the orchestra pit" when allowed to go to the bathroom.¹⁵⁴ Superfluous details like this do not offer any explanation of the cause of the event, but they do allow readers to better imagine the reality of the event from the victims' perspective. The repetition of scenic details and graphic descriptions of the chaos allow the reader to relate to the victim's experience, a form of empathy not granted to the opposition.

In addition to the increased personalization of the Dubrovka Crisis reporting, a considerable portion of the *Times*' coverage is devoted to covering only the victims' experiences

¹⁵² Steven Lee Myers, "Hostage Drama in Moscow: A Threat, a Siege, the Deadly Consequences." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 27, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92227159?accountid=14709>.

¹⁵³ For an example of this type of focus, see Tavernise, "Inside, Fearful Children; Outside, Frantic Relatives;" Sabrina Tavernise, "The Families." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 27, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92217892?accountid=14709>.

¹⁵⁴ Tavernise, "Terrifying Nights in a Theater Where Lights Never Dimmed."

rather than the event itself. For example, one of the *Times*' articles tells the specific story of one college student on a date at the theater that night, while another focuses entirely on the director and actors in the play and how they coped with the attack.¹⁵⁵ These articles and several others represent a type of personalization almost entirely absent in the pre-9/11 coverage. The value of displaying the humanity and personality of the victims supersedes the importance of providing insight into the causes of the attack; as a result readers are showered with stories and details that prompt deeper sympathy.

Another example of the more personal nature of the *New York Times*' Dubrovka coverage is visible in the ways that the paper presents a personal connection between the US and Russia. For example, in an article addressing the aftermath of the crisis, the *Times* describes how the "disaster... evoked the Sept. 11 tragedy in its randomness and unpredictability."¹⁵⁶ Not only does this draw a very direct connection between the US and Russian experiences of terror, it also blatantly buries the historical and political context behind the Dubrovka Crisis. Another article describes, "Like Americans after Sept. 11, Russians are trying to rebuild and resist fear and depression."¹⁵⁷ For readers, this type of presentation evokes a sense of empathy and identification with the US experience with September 11th, but it also serves to blind the reader to the root causes of the Russo-Chechen conflict in the first place. Another example of this can be seen in an article that addresses the type of knockout gas used by Russian forces when storming the building. Far from critical of the Russian tactics, the article describes sympathetically how the US has also looked into similar technologies for incapacitation since the

¹⁵⁵ Sabrina Tavernise, "The Hostages." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 29, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92336045?accountid=14709>; Myers, "The Toxic Agent."

¹⁵⁶ Steven Lee Myers, "Putin Vows Hunt For Terror Cells Around The World." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 29, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92339918?accountid=14709>.

¹⁵⁷ Sabrina Tavernise, "The Players And The Play." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 30, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92265285?accountid=14709>.

September 11th attacks and would benefit from such a discovery, glossing over the fact that the Russian gas had killed 117 hostages and the attackers only killed two.¹⁵⁸ The understanding tone of the article stands in stark contrast to the pre-9/11 coverage and offers readers a view that is sympathetic to the Russian authorities as victims of the “terrorists” harsh ultimatum, thus conveying the killing of over 100 civilians in a more relatable light.

Although the vast majority of the personal and sympathetic perspectives provided by the *Times* relate to either the actual victims of the attack or the Russian authorities, a few articles do still personalize the Chechen experience as well. This sympathy stems primarily from two commentary pieces published on the event (a theme which is prevalent in much of the post-9/11 coverage). In contrast to the rest of the articles, the commentaries provide a deep historical background of the conflict and specifically highlight the atrocities committed against Chechen civilians throughout the dispute.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, the *Times* also published one article that relates the experience of Chechen citizens in Moscow after the event, highlighting a seemingly indiscriminate crackdown similar to the reaction after the September Apartment Bombings.¹⁶⁰ However, although these minority articles present a contrast to the dominant discourse defined by the *Times*, they fail to balance out the large amount of sympathy for the Russian victims.

Overall, the increase in sympathetic and personal coverage of Dubrovka in comparison to the pre-9/11 events is startling. Although the extended nature of a hostage crisis may account for some of this increased detail and background, the dramatic scale of the shift indicates that there is a larger factor influencing the coverage. It is likely that the personal experience of the

¹⁵⁸ Judith Miller and William J. Broad, "U.S. Suspects Opiate in Gas in Russia Raid." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 29, 2002 <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92378677?accountid=14709>.

¹⁵⁹ Albats, "The Chechen War Comes Home."; Masha Gessen, "Ignorance Perpetuates the Chechen War." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Nov 01, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92358276?accountid=14709>.

¹⁶⁰ "Russia's Investigation." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 31, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92347569?accountid=14709>.

September 11th attacks influenced the *Times*' interpretation, and thus presentation, of the hostage crisis. Readers of the *Times* depiction of the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis are presented with a human, positive, and relatable view of the Russian victims of the attack, and as a result are likely to sympathize and support the Russian perspective.

Another noticeable shift in the Dubrovka Crisis coverage is the decline in the balance between the "Russian POV" and "Chechen POV" frames of representation. Due to the extended nature and personal coverage of the Dubrovka Hostage Crisis, it is unsurprising that the articles exhibit a sizeable increase in the presentation of the Russian point of view, but what is troubling is that this marked a decrease in the representation of Chechen perspectives, as if reporting was a zero-sum game. In theory, due to the overwhelmingly larger availability of Russian perspectives presented to readers, it would be prudent to also include an increased amount of Chechen perspectives in order to provide a more well-rounded and complete understanding of events. However, in the coverage of the post-9/11 events, the Chechen narrative within the conflict is all but silenced by the focus on terrorism, and its random and violent nature.

Despite the rise of the "Russian POV" as the dominant perspective within the discourse of the *New York Times*' Dubrovka Crisis coverage, a few articles still provide a Chechen perspective. For example, one article covering the aftermath of the attack addresses not only the Russian perspective of the terror, but also discusses reports that Russian officers had "systematically tortured criminal suspects nationwide, and had committed 'serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws' in Chechnya."¹⁶¹ Although rare, excerpts like this provide the reader with a picture of a violent and complex conflict that is not purely one-

¹⁶¹ Michael Wines and Steven Lee Myers. "The Aftermath in Moscow: Use of Gas Draws an American Reproach." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 30, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92265260?accountid=14709>.

sided. Another article acknowledges the destruction on both sides by describing how “citizens have been driven to the guerillas’ cause by the Russian Army’s brutal handling of civilians.”¹⁶² This type of depiction does not impose the role of victim or villain on either party, but instead provides a more realistic perspective of the back-and-forth and escalating nature of the violence. Such rounded views of the conflict enable readers to better draw conclusions as to its causes and potential solutions. However, even when combined with the above noted, balanced commentary pieces and articles on Russian police profiling of Chechens, these articles still only account for a small minority of the coverage, thereby burying, for the most part, the Chechen perspective.

The numerous interviews and perspectives from Russian victims and citizens greatly outweigh the press coverage given to the Chechen side of the conflict. As previously mentioned, a large portion of the narrative of the event is told primarily through the eyes of victims and their families. Although this method is understandable given the chaotic nature of the attack, it does not explain the diminished coverage of the Chechen point of view. Without a balance of perspectives within the coverage, the statements from the Russian perspective drown out any viewpoint that takes into account the atrocities committed by both sides. Although these witness statements are too many to recount in this article, one representative piece describing the destruction of livelihoods in the theater quotes a hostage stating, “It is the most horrible thing imaginable...I’ve seen so many nightmares.”¹⁶³ Readers of this type of coverage are bombarded by the graphic and detailed accounts of the violence in the theater and in doing so given a one-sided point of view of the conflict as a whole.

¹⁶² Michael Wines, "Hostage Drama in Moscow: A Theater of Horror." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92174262?accountid=14709>.

¹⁶³ Tavernise, "The Players And The Play."

A final major shift between the pre- and post-9/11 coverage of the *New York Times* is the prominence of the “context of wave of terror” frame of representation. In its pre-9/11 coverage, the *Times* is careful to present a historical context for the attacks and to highlight the nationalist roots of the dispute. However, in the Dubrovka Crisis coverage, the historical context is partially replaced with one that places the attack within the setting of international terrorism. An example of this shift can be seen in one of the *Times*’ editorial pieces discussing the knockout gas used in the raid by Russian special forces. The article describes the importance of the development of such technologies “in an age of terrorism” in order to protect the country from attacks. This context of “an age of terrorism” carries special meaning, as it implies several things: the US experience with terror is linked and similar to the Russian experience; and terrorism is a new phenomenon, seemingly unexplainable but unlikely to go away. Both of these implications conceal any sort of political or historical source for the violence of Dubrovka, an ignorance that ensures a misunderstanding of the conflict as a whole. Another example of this type of contextualization can be seen in an article that describes how “Chechen militants fought alongside Taliban and Qaeda [*sic.*] members in Afghanistan, and experts say the separatist movement... has been financed by Middle Eastern and Asian groups tied to Al Qaeda and terror.”¹⁶⁴ This acknowledgement represents a major shift in the *Times*’ coverage, a shift that reflects a more accepting view of Putin’s longstanding claims of international terrorism in Chechnya. The articles regarding the pre-9/11 events never recognized any assertions of “a foreign terrorist role” in the conflict.¹⁶⁵ This shift stresses the context of international terror, which in turn detaches the attack from historical and political motives.

¹⁶⁴ Michael Wines, "Chechens Kill Hostage in Siege at Russian Hall." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92250164?accountid=14709>.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

However, in some measure, the *Times* still balances this context with more information on the historical and nationalist nature of the conflict. Almost all of the commentary pieces published on the attacks go into great depths about the historical nature of the conflict, one of which is even entirely focused on why the Russo-Chechen conflict cannot be considered part of international terrorism. The article describes, “it was far from clear whether the Chechen hostage-takers were linked to Al Qaeda or any other foreign organization,” and goes on to describe the differences between the US and Russian experiences with terror. This background and criticism of the international terror angle provides an effective counter to the other contexts in the coverage. Overall, the reporting provided by the *Times*’ coverage of the Dubrovka Crisis provides a synthesis of frames of representation, mixing the “context of wave of terror” with the “context of historical conflict.” However, despite the lack of dominance from either frame, this mixture still represents a major shift from the historically focused context of the pre-9/11 events and as a result provides readers with a much different understanding of the conflict.

The *New York Times* extensive coverage of the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis illustrates a major change in thematic frames of representation provided by the publication. Despite the similarities between the attacks before and after 9/11, the attackers cease to be “rebels” and they are now “terrorists” and thus inherit the stigma that is associated with their new label. Additionally, the personal and detailed depiction of the event provides a much more sympathetic and relatable representation for readers. The pre-9/11 balance of points of view is also lost in the Dubrovka coverage, as the Chechen voice is marginalized from the dominant discourse. Finally, the context of the conflict also exhibits a shift, as the rising threat of international terrorism partially displaces the political history behind the dispute. These changes provide a very different portrayal of the Russo-Chechen conflict for readers, a portrayal that is

dominated by unexplainable and random violence and a more subjective presentation of victim and villain.

3.1.2 *THE WASHINGTON POST*

Much like the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post's* coverage underwent a thematic shift between its reporting of the pre-9/11 events and that of the Dubrovka Crisis, albeit a much less drastic one. Nonetheless, this change in the pattern of frames of representation within the coverage still projects a much different image of the conflict to the *Post's* readers. Consequently, readers of the post-9/11 reporting understand the conflict in a much different manner than previously.

Although the label of “terrorist” rose to prominence in US political discourse after the attacks on September 11th, the *Washington Post*, for the most part, continues to use the term carefully in its post-9/11 coverage of the Russo-Chechen conflict. As opposed to *the New York Times*, which embraced the label as its new dominant frame of representation, the dominant frame for the *Washington Post's* coverage remains “Chechen attackers as separatists.” However, despite this continued preeminence, the “terrorist” label appears increasingly in the *Post's* Dubrovka Crisis reporting. For example, in a few of the *Post's* articles covering the attack, the label appears alongside less charged terms like “rebel” and “guerilla.” In one article, the *Post* describes the commander of the attack, “the young Chechen rebel whose terrorists... had seized the hostages.”¹⁶⁶ Although this usage creates a more ambiguous picture of the militants, the *Post* counters this by utilizing other labels such as “Chechen rebels” and “guerillas” in a more

¹⁶⁶ Susan B. Glasser, "Rescue Ended Days of Horror and Uncertainty." *The Washington Post*, Oct 27, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409366109?accountid=14709>.

frequently than does the *Times*.¹⁶⁷ In fact, in the articles where “terrorist” is used most freely, the *Post* ensures the protection of the political nature of the conflict by drawing important distinctions between the “terrorists” who attacked the theater and the “legitimate political movement” seeking independence and peace.¹⁶⁸ By making this distinction, the *Post* is able to condemn the terrorists while continuing to convey the political and historical nature of the conflict as a whole, thus presenting readers with a more rounded understanding of the attacks.

Additionally, the majority of the *Post*'s coverage preserves the pre-9/11 reporting policy of relegating the label of “terrorist” to quotes by officials and civilians. For example, it reports that “Putin said he would ‘never make any deal with terrorists,’” thus presenting the official Russian policy on the conflict without adopting its rhetoric.¹⁶⁹ The main terms used by the *Post* in identifying the attackers in the Dubrovka Crisis coverage remain “Chechen rebels” and “guerillas”, much like the in the pre-9/11 events.¹⁷⁰ Hence, readers of the *Post*'s coverage are offered a presentation of the Chechen attackers that, while condemning their actions, retains the historical and political disputes that remain at the root of the conflict. However, despite the continued dominance of the “Chechen attackers as separatists” frame, the rise of the use of “terrorists” as a label still represents a notable shift in coverage.

A much more drastic shift in the *Washington Post*'s coverage of the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis is the ample increase in the “personal depiction of victims” within the articles. The detail and background applied to the victims in the *Post*'s coverage greatly outdistances that

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ "Terrorism's Losers." *The Washington Post*, Oct 29, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409331570?accountid=14709>.

¹⁶⁹ Peter Baker and, Susan B. Glasser. "Putin Takes Hard Line on Terror, Stays Silent on use of Deadly Gas; Russian Leader Vows to Pursue Chechens' Sponsors and Financial Backers." *The Washington Post*, Oct 29, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409334991?accountid=14709>.

¹⁷⁰ For an example of the typical labeling in the *Post*'s Dubrovka Crisis articles, see Sharon LaFraniere, "Setback seen for Rebel Cause; Theater Takeover is Predicted to Prolong War in Chechnya." *The Washington Post*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409335615?accountid=14709>.

of the *Times*. For example, in one article, the *Post* describes the particular experience of one couple split up by the crisis relating personal text messages, describing the chaotic emotions in detail, and even providing the back story of how the lovers met stating, “The two met in a Moscow nightclub four years ago. He was a tall, thin 34-year-old with a wicked sense of humor and a devotion to the piano and guitar.”¹⁷¹ Details like these make the stories very personal for the reader, allowing them to relate personally to the experiences of people whose lives were deeply affected by the attack. Another article highlights two of the child actors who were killed in the attack, describing their close friendship, and even speculating about a hypothetical romance between the 13 and 14 year-old children. The details attributed to their story are exceedingly vivid, “His is such a boyish smile, hers are such wide haunting eyes”¹⁷² This reporting reads more like a novel than a news report and not only induces empathy from the reader, but also is commonplace throughout the *Washington Post’s* Dubrovka reporting. Much like with the *Times’* coverage, other articles use the perspective of victims and families in order to relate the narrative of the attack to readers, including one story that spans two separate articles.¹⁷³ Perhaps the most startling aspect of this shift is the intense graphic imagery utilized by the publication. Several articles describe, “the decrepit basketball court of a shabby vocational school” where “tear-stained moms and somber dads” waited for news about their loved ones, the “agonizing vigil” of by a husband waiting for news about his wife, and the “frilly white dress

¹⁷¹ Sharon LaFraniere, "Couple Clutched Electronic Lifeline; Hostage's Messages Convey Love, Fear." *The Washington Post*, Oct 27, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409418593?accountid=14709>.

¹⁷² Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser. "In Moscow, a Tragic Final Scene; Two Young Actors Who Died in Siege of Theater are Buried Side by Side." *The Washington Post*, Oct 31, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409411215?accountid=14709>.

¹⁷³ Glasser, "Rescue Ended Days of Horror and Uncertainty;" Susan B. Glasser, "Search for Sister Ends, at Long Last, in Grief." *The Washington Post*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409334049?accountid=14709>.

that looked like a wedding gown” worn by one of the child victims.¹⁷⁴ The vivid and meticulous nature of these descriptions allows readers to form a clear image of the victims in their head and thus relate and empathize with the horror of their experience. As a result, the readers of the *Post’s* Dubrovka Crisis articles are encouraged to identify with and support the victims of the attack, even if that means burying the larger issues within the conflict that have escalated the dispute to this level of violence.

In only one case does the Dubrovka Crisis coverage focus directly on the personal experience of Chechens. The article covers the experience of several Chechens living in Moscow and dealing with the brutality of the indiscriminate crackdown that followed Dubrovka.¹⁷⁵ However, the vast majority of articles that personalize the Russian victims’ experience of the Dubrovka Crisis overshadow this piece. With the dominance of the “personal depiction of victims” frame of representation, the *Washington Post’s* Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis reporting offers a much different perspective on the victims of the attack than was provided by the objective and detached reporting of the pre-9/11 attacks. Instead, readers are showered with graphic descriptions, long backstories, and many personal details allowing them to relate on a human level with the victims and their experiences during the attack. As a result, these readers may feel much more compelled to support the victims and than to develop a complete narrative of the overall conflict.

¹⁷⁴ Susan B. Glasser, "Captives' Families Wait and Wonder; in a Dingy Refuge, Information Comes in Bits and Pieces." *The Washington Post*, Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409338576?accountid=14709>; Annie Gowen, "Hostage Crisis Touches Md. Family; Gaithersburg Man Learns Wife Safe, but Mother Died." *The Washington Post*, Oct 30, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409333468?accountid=14709>; Baker and Glasser. "In Moscow, a Tragic Final Scene; Two Young Actors Who Died in Siege of Theater are Buried Side by Side."

¹⁷⁵ Sharon LaFraniere, "Moscow's Chechens Complain of Abuse; Police Accused of Campaign of Harassment in Wake of Theater Hostage Crisis." *The Washington Post*, Nov 01, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409368931?accountid=14709>.

Although the *Post* provides a much more personal narrative of the Russian victims of the attack, it still retains a sizable representation of the “Chechen POV” frame of representation. This presentation of both points of view creates a sense of dialogue and clash between the two that allows the reader to gain a more complete understanding of the conflict and its nature. For example, in order to counter the attention attributed to the Russian victim and official narratives within the conflict, the *Post* also includes an article describing the background of the Chechen leader in the attack.¹⁷⁶ The article describes the man’s adoption of violence and shares a perspective of the attackers that is lacking in the *New York Times*’ coverage. Another example of the recognition given to the “Chechen POV” can be found in a commentary piece published by the *Post* written by the famous Russian reporter Anna Politkovskaya. The piece narrates Politkovskaya’s experience negotiating with the captors and discusses the oppressive context that has pushed the Russo-Chechen conflict into the current level of violence and extremism.¹⁷⁷ Although this type of background is most profoundly present in commentary and editorial pieces, the Chechen viewpoint of the backlash from the conflict is additionally available in a regular article as well.¹⁷⁸ These examples clearly exemplify an effort by the *Post* to maintain a more balanced presentation of the conflict for their readers; however, the most apparent examples of this commitment are visible in the dialogue fostered by several of the publication’s articles.

In an editorial published during the tense moments of the Hostage Crisis, the *Post* criticizes the Russian government’s handling of the Russo-Chechen conflict as a whole, highlighting the Chechen viewpoint on self-determination and the failure of the Russian military

¹⁷⁶ Sharon LaFraniere, "A Young Gang Leader Sheds His Obscurity." *The Washington Post*, Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409347588?accountid=14709>.

¹⁷⁷ Anna Politkovskaya, "The 'Sons' Rise in Chechnya." *The Washington Post*, Nov 03, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409370986?accountid=14709>.

¹⁷⁸ LaFraniere, "Moscow's Chechens Complain of Abuse; Police Accused of Campaign of Harassment in Wake of Theater Hostage Crisis."

to distinguish between moderate and extreme factions within Chechnya.¹⁷⁹ This editorial is an example of the preservation of the Chechen point of view, but what is more striking is that the *Post* additionally published a response to the editorial from the Russian Ambassador Yuri Ushakov. In an example of journalistic integrity, the *Post* printed the Ambassador's harsh criticism of the *Post's* writing, which presented the Russian point of view in the conflict and heavily chastised the editorial staff of the publication.¹⁸⁰ This is not the only example of this juxtaposition of presentations; for example, the *Post* also published a letter responding to another article that was very critical of the Russian handling of the crisis and conflict.¹⁸¹ These instances of dialogue between perspectives represent the attempt by the publication to maintain an equal balance of the "Chechen POV" and "Russian POV" in its coverage, thus providing readers with a more comprehensive understanding of the reality of the conflict.

Another shift in the *Washington Post's* Dubrovka Crisis coverage is the appearance of the "context of wave of terror" frame of representation. However, the presence of this frame is typically limited, and the "context of historical conflict" frame remains the dominant context within the *Post's* discourse. The most profound instances of the wave of terror context are exhibited in the commentary pieces featured in the *Post* rather than the regular reporting. For example, in one such piece, connections are drawn between the US War on Terror and Russia's struggles with Chechnya, citing a Chechen "alliance with Taliban" and "hospitality to al Qaeda

¹⁷⁹ "Chechnya in Moscow." *The Washington Post*, Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409337469?accountid=14709>.

¹⁸⁰ "The Russian Embassy Responds." *The Washington Post*, Oct 26, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409355555?accountid=14709>.

¹⁸¹ Glasser. "Putin Takes Hard Line on Terror, Stays Silent on use of Deadly Gas; Russian Leader Vows to Pursue Chechens' Sponsors and Financial Backers;" "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures." *The Washington Post*, Oct 31, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409329534?accountid=14709>.

representatives.”¹⁸² Although this creates a perception of the conflict that is entirely devoid of political or historical context, several articles and editorials within the *Post’s* coverage counter this viewpoint. One such editorial criticizes Putin’s claims of international terror connections, citing that “Mr. Maskhadov... fairly represents the aspirations of a nation that has been brutally subjugated by Russia.”¹⁸³ This type of narrative counteracts the opposing claims of international terror, and seeks to provide the reader with a view of Chechens that distinguishes between moderate and extreme. Overall, these claims of the conflict resulting from the plague of “global Islamic terrorism” are overshadowed by the majority of the *Post’s* coverage, which remains skeptical of Putin’s claims of the former.¹⁸⁴

One example of this is clear in an article covering the aftermath of the rescue attempt. The article cites how Putin “linked the incident to the global war on terrorism,” but quickly countered this perspective with an acknowledgement that the separatists “say they are fighting for self-determination in Chechnya and reject the terrorist label.”¹⁸⁵ In this way, the *Post* offers a balance of contexts, allowing the reader to better understand the perspectives and motivations held on both sides of the conflict. Several other articles also only use Putin’s claims of “international terrorism” within quotations, and provide a counterpoint to this perspective with the history of Russia’s “brutal battle in Chechnya, where Russian troops have waged two wars...

¹⁸² "The Russian Embassy Responds." *The Washington Post*, Oct 26, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409355555?accountid=14709>.

¹⁸³ "Terrorism's Losers." *The Washington Post*, Oct 29, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409331570?accountid=14709>.

¹⁸⁴ "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures." *The Washington Post*, Oct 31, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409329534?accountid=14709>.

¹⁸⁵ Peter Baker, "50 Militants, 90 Hostages Dead After Moscow Siege; Gas used to Subdue Chechens; Fate of Americans Unknown." *The Washington Post*, Oct 27, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409366030?accountid=14709>.

in an unsuccessful campaign to smother separatist ambitions.”¹⁸⁶ This type of coverage provides readers with a sense of a conflict characterized by a long-standing and complex conflict based around nationalism, rather than one sparked by the sudden onset of random terrorism. The retained dominance of the “context of historical conflict” frame thus continues to create a more well-rounded understanding of the conflict for readers of the *Post’s* Dubrovka coverage.

Overall, the shifts in the *Washington Post’s* Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis coverage are much less drastic than that of the *New York Times*. However, the change that occurs still reflects a different attitude within the publication toward the Russo-Chechen conflict in the post-9/11 era. Further, the drastically increased personalization of the coverage not only serves to increase the empathy of readers, but also reflects an increased empathy from the publication itself. Despite this, the *Washington Post* still presents a much more impartial interpretation of the conflict surrounding the Dubrovka Crisis than the *Times* by effectively managing its labeling of the Chechens, the presentation of points of view, and the contextualization of the attacks.

3.1.3 THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The *Wall Street Journal* provides perhaps the most balanced and consistent presentation of the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis, especially when examined in comparison to its pre-9/11 coverage. However, the *Journal’s* coverage is also much smaller and more detached than its contemporaries. Despite this, the *Journal* formulates a specific reality of the Russo-Chechen

¹⁸⁶ Susan B. Glasser, "Russia Seizes Theater from Rebels; Troops Kill Chechen Leader in Bloody Battle; some Hostages Reported Dead." *The Washington Post*, Oct 27, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409431529?accountid=14709>; Susan B. Glasser, "Hostage Crisis may Expand Putin's Mandate in Chechen War." *The Washington Post*, Oct 30, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409428179?accountid=14709>; Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser. "Chechen Rebels Issue Threat; Officials Say Guerrillas Set to Release Foreigners." *The Washington Post*, Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409338388?accountid=14709>.

conflict through a repetition of particular frames of representation. Readers of the *Journal* are thus presented with a picture of the event that is comparable to that of the pre-9/11 events.

The first notable comparison between the *Wall Street Journal's* pre-9/11 and Dubrovka Crisis coverage is the continued dominance of the "Chechen attackers as separatists" frame of representation. In fact, the label of "terrorist" is used by the publication in only one article on the Crisis, while any other references to the term are limited to quotations, descriptions of tactics, or heavily buffered by distinctions from the separatist movement. Even within the article in which the label is applied more loosely, the *Journal* still provides a countering perspective on this usage, acknowledging that the label "terrorist" may be a tactic by Russian officials to garner Western support and understanding.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, the majority of articles that use the label (which remains a minority within the total coverage) favor its usage as a description of tactics used by a party at war. For example, several articles refer to the Hostage Crisis as a "terrorist attack" or "act of terror," while the attackers themselves continue to retain the titles of "separatist" and "rebel."¹⁸⁸ Further, other articles preserve the pre-9/11 policy of only using the term in reference to quotes by Russian officials or victims. While an article may quote the Russian President or a victim as calling the Chechens "terrorists", the publication itself prefers terms like "guerilla," "militant," and "rebel."¹⁸⁹ A final method for curbing the influence of "terrorist" as a label, appears in an editorial on the attack in which the *Journal* makes a clear distinction between the "terrorists" (the attackers in the theater) and the greater legitimate

¹⁸⁷ Guy Chazan and Jeanne Whalen, "Putin Blames International Terrorism for Moscow Hostage Ordeal." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398862743?accountid=14709>.

¹⁸⁸ "Russian Official Confirms Opiate in Moscow Raid." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 31, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398807504?accountid=14709>; "Basayev Says He Directed Attack by Chechens." *Wall Street Journal*, Nov 04, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398791766?accountid=14709>.

¹⁸⁹ Guy Chazan, Andrew Higgins and Jeanne Whalen. "Putin's Plans to Repair Russia are Damaged by Hostage Crisis." *Wall Street Journal*, Nov 01, 2002 <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398793252?accountid=14709>

separatist movement.¹⁹⁰ Overall, these measures ensure that the “terrorist” label does not overpower the historical context of the Russo-Chechen conflict.

Moreover, the vast majority of the *Journal's* coverage refrains from the usage of the term altogether. These articles tell the story of “a Moscow theater held by Chechen militants” and how “40 Chechen rebels seized as many as 700 people.”¹⁹¹ In this way, the majority of the *Journal's* coverage creates a depiction of the attackers not only as legitimate warring parties, but one that is also often attributed a specific national identity. Thus the readers are provided with an interpretation of the conflict that is characterized by separatist rebellion rather than one that is stripped of any political agenda.

Another notable frame of representation that remains dominant in the *Journal's* cover of the Dubrovka Crisis is the “impersonal depiction of victims.” In this aspect, the *Journal* differs greatly from the other two publications. There are no articles based entirely on the victims or on any specific person's narrative, and no descriptions match the background and scene setting provided by the other papers. Additionally, no mention is made of the experience of the victims' families or the experience within the theater, topics that received close attention in the *Times* and *Post*. Instead, the only examples of the victim's voice or perspective within the *Journal's* coverage are limited to very rare short quotes from victims, providing minimal background. In one such example the *Journal* quotes “Veronika Panova, a 27-year-old engineer,” briefly describing her time in the hospital but providing no background or further experience than

¹⁹⁰ "Putin's 9/11." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398865848?accountid=14709>.

¹⁹¹ Guy Chazan, "For Putin, Mixed Victory Over Chechen Terrorists --- use of Lethal Gas Clouds Handling of Hostage Crisis; it has Killed at Least 116." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398815164?accountid=14709>; "World-Wide." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 24, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398807079?accountid=14709>

that.¹⁹² One of the few other examples is a quote from “Georgy Vasiliev” about the musical, providing no further background than his job and status as a hostage.¹⁹³ In this way, the *Journal* maintains a very detached stance within its Dubrovka Hostage Crisis coverage, which provides readers with a much less sympathetic, human, and personal understanding of the victims.

In fact the vast majority of the *Journal’s* coverage ignores the victims’ perspective altogether. These articles instead provide a narrative through the raw facts of the event and testimony by experts and officials. The only mention of the victims in these articles is the number of dead, if they are even mentioned at all.¹⁹⁴ The *Journal* focuses more on the political implications of the event rather than on humanizing and understanding the victims. Thus, readers of the *Journal* are much less likely than their counterparts of the *Times* and *Post* to feel compelled to support or sympathize with the victims of the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis.

Another feature of the *Wall Street Journal’s* Dubrovka Crisis coverage is its preservation of a relative balance between the “Russian POV” and “Chechen POV”. Although several articles acknowledge only the Russian perspective of the conflict, the rest of the coverage does a respectable job of presenting a more holistic reality of the dispute. An example of the purely “Russian POV” can be seen in one *Journal* article discussing the aftermath of the attack. Although a Russian victim and several Russian experts and officials are quoted, the Chechen narrative is withheld from the article.¹⁹⁵ The danger of such reporting is that, much like with the

¹⁹² Jeanne Whalen, "Moscow's Silence on Gas is Criticized --- U.S. Voices Disapproval, but Not of Theater Raid; Russians Back Putin in Poll." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 30, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398812808?accountid=14709>.

¹⁹³ Chazan, Higgins and Whalen. "Putin's Plans to Repair Russia are Damaged by Hostage Crisis."

¹⁹⁴ For examples of these articles, see Guy Chazan, "For Putin, Mixed Victory Over Chechen Terrorists --- use of Lethal Gas Clouds Handling of Hostage Crisis; it has Killed at Least 116." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398815164?accountid=14709>; Andrew Higgins and Jeanne Whalen. "For Putin, Mixed Victory Over Chechen Terrorists --- Theater Triumph may Help Discredit Islamist Forces Behind Chechnya Rebellion." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398804971?accountid=14709>.

¹⁹⁵ Chazan, Higgins and Whalen. "Putin's Plans to Repair Russia are Damaged by Hostage Crisis."

label of “terrorist,” it strips the attackers of any human qualities or motivations. Rather than being a result of years of brutal separatist war and historical conflict, the Chechens become static villains, natural bad guys attacking civilians for seemingly no cause other than their inherent evil nature. But for the most part, the *Journal* protects against this effect by providing more open access to the Chechen perspective of the conflict, even more so than the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*.

The majority of the *Journal*'s “Chechen POV” frame of representation appears in the editorial and commentary pieces covering the Dubrovka Crisis. For example, one editorial counters the brutality of the Hostage Crisis with the admission that “Russia’s military has ravaged Chechnya and radicalized some of its population,” thereby contributing to the increasing civilian violence.¹⁹⁶ Additionally, two other commentary pieces focus on the Chechen perspective of the greater conflict and how the experience of the Chechen people could lead to violent attacks like Dubrovka.¹⁹⁷ Several of the news articles published by the *Journal* also convey the “Chechen POV” frame. For example, one article quotes a Russian anti-war protester describing, “When an entire nation is marginalized, you can expect anything.” The article goes on to quote a Chechen journalist’s take on the attack and provide details of the Chechen experience of the war.¹⁹⁸ Another example of the balance of POVs appears in an article describing who was responsible for the Dubrovka Crisis. While the article explains that Russian officials blame Aslan Maskhadov for the attack, it also counters this with Chechen claims that

¹⁹⁶ "Putin's 9/11." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398865848?accountid=14709>.

¹⁹⁷ Thomas de Waal, "The Chechen War." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398815450?accountid=14709>; Ivan Rybkin, "Chechen Roulette." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 29, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398809207?accountid=14709>.

¹⁹⁸ Higgins and Whalen. "For Putin, Mixed Victory Over Chechen Terrorists --- Theater Triumph may Help Discredit Islamist Forces Behind Chechnya Rebellion."

militant leader Shamil Basayev alone ordered the hostage-taking.¹⁹⁹ Thus, the *Journal* retains a measured balance between Chechen and Russian perspectives within its coverage, thus providing readers with a deeper and more complex understanding of the Dubrovka Crisis and its roots.

A final characteristic of the *Wall Street Journal's* Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis coverage is the continued dominance of the "context of historical conflict" over the "context of wave of terror." Although connections to international terrorism are much more common within the post-9/11 reporting, the *Journal* often only presents these claims in reference to claims by Russian officials, thereby distancing the publication from them and withholding validation of the claims. For example, one article describes how "Mr. Putin's claims... that Russia's enemies in Chechnya are terrorists, not freedom fighters," received more support by Western governments in the aftermath of Dubrovka.²⁰⁰ Similarly, another article notes that, "Putin portrayed the seizure... as the latest act of terrorism by Islamic militants."²⁰¹ By attributing these claims to President Putin and refusing to confirm their validity, the *Journal* manages to present readers with the perspective of the Russian government while maintaining its distance from Russian policy. Other articles present the "context of wave of terror," but alongside one finds the opposing "context of historical conflict." In these cases, claims of "extensive links between Chechen terrorism and al Qaeda" are presented along with claims that Russia has brought the violence on itself through "the brutality of its military and a blanket rejection of all negotiation with the rebels."²⁰² Rather than favoring one of the frames, the articles present the two different contexts as part of an ongoing debate in the international community over the nature of the

¹⁹⁹ "Basayev Says He Directed Attack by Chechens." *Wall Street Journal*, Nov 04, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398791766?accountid=14709>.

²⁰⁰ Chazan, "For Putin, Mixed Victory Over Chechen Terrorists --- use of Lethal Gas Clouds Handling of Hostage Crisis; it has Killed at Least 116."

²⁰¹ "World-Wide." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 25, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398824366?accountid=14709>.

²⁰² Chazan and Whalen, "Putin Blames International Terrorism for Moscow Hostage Ordeal.", 6

conflict. In fact, the strongest support of the “context of wave of terror” frame of representation comes from one of the *Journal’s* own editorials, which chastises Putin for his criticism of the US calls for war against Saddam Hussein. The article goes on to speculate that perhaps Putin will be more supportive now that “Islamic terrorists have struck in the heart of Moscow.”²⁰³ However, despite this affirmation of connections to international terrorism, the *Journal’s* coverage still maintains strong representation of the historical nature of the conflict.

Several of the commentary pieces published in the *Journal* provide an extensive look at the history of the Russo-Chechen conflict. These articles describe the Russo-Chechen Wars of the 1990s, and one even describes the conflicts roots “in the history of the Russian Empire and the memories of deportation by Stalin.”²⁰⁴ These descriptions provide readers with a greater historical knowledge of the region and conflict, as well as an affirmation that the roots of the current violence are historical rather than based on new international terror. In addition to these descriptions, other articles addressing the context also affirm this perspective. One such article contextualizes the conflict in Chechnya by describing the fighting of “two inconclusive wars in the past decade.” Overall, these descriptions prevent readers of the *Journal* from the burying of the historical and separatist roots of the violence, thereby preserving a more accurate depiction of the conflict as a whole.

Overall, the coverage provided by the *Wall Street Journal* of the Dubrovka Theater Hostage Crisis remains consistent with the publication’s pre-9/11 reporting. The distant and detached coverage by the *Journal* combined with the presentation of both Chechen and Russian perspectives ensures that readers receive a more balanced picture of the conflict. Additionally,

²⁰³ "Putin's 9/11." *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 28, 2002, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398865848?accountid=14709>.

²⁰⁴ de Waal, "The Chechen War.", Rybkin, "Chechen Roulette."

the avoidance of the label of “terrorist” for the attackers along with the preservation of the historical roots to the conflict prevent the dehumanization of the Chechen people. However, the emergence of connections to an international terrorist phenomenon in the coverage, even when overwhelmed by another contextualization, speaks to a changing trend in the publication’s perspective.

3.2 MOSCOW METRO BOMBING

On February 6, 2004, a bomb exploded on a Moscow metro train traveling between stations. Russian officials quickly placed the blame for the explosion, which killed 41 and injured 120, on Chechen rebels, while leaders of the separatist movement denied such claims.²⁰⁵ The explosion was the final in a series of attacks on Russian soil, and once again brought the Chechen conflict to the forefront of Russian conversations and anxieties, and further undermined the Russian people’s confidence in the government and police to keep them safe.

The coverage devoted to the Moscow Metro Bombing in March 2003 is by far the smallest of the post-9/11 events. However, although this means that the frames presented in the event are less representative of the post-9/11 coverage as a whole, the bombing remains an important and significant comparison to the pre-9/11 events for several reasons. First of all, the location and nature of the attack as a seemingly random bombing of a public area in Moscow makes the event an appropriate counterpoint to both the September Apartment Bombings and the Moscow Underpass Bombing. Additionally, as opposed to the other two post-9/11 attacks, the

²⁰⁵ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 161-162.

Metro Bombing resulted in international attention comparable to that of the Underpass Bombing and the Southern Russia Car Bombs. Thus, despite its much smaller coverage, the attack is essential for providing more well-rounded and accurate conclusions on the nature of the change in coverage by the three publications.

3.2.1 *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

The *New York Times*' coverage of the Moscow Metro Bombing in February 2004 bears much more similarity to the paper's coverage of the Dubrovka Crisis than to its pre-9/11 reporting. The repetitive yet distinct patten of frames of representation utilized in the *Times*' coverage provides readers with a similar presentation of the Russo-Chechen conflict as a whole, especially when compared to the pre-9/11 coverage. In order to effectively illustrate this representation of the conflict, this author has identified specific examples that are demonstrative of the coverage as a whole.

A first interesting shift in the *Time*'s coverage of the Metro Bombing that departs both from the pre-9/11 and Dubrovka examples is the mix of "Chechen attackers as separatists" and "Chechen attackers as terrorists" frames of representation, though this may be a result of the nature of the attack. Although the phrase "terrorist" along with terror and terrorism appear very frequently in the coverage, they are almost never used to label the attackers. For example, in several articles, the *Times* refers to "a wave of terrorist bombings," "terrorism's grim results," and a "long string of terrorist attacks around the country."²⁰⁶ In this case, the use of terror in

²⁰⁶ Erin E. Arvedlund, "Ride during Moscow Rush Ends Under Pile of Bodies." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Feb 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92782486?accountid=14709>; Steven Lee Myers, "19 Die in Moscow S Bomb Goes Off --On Subway Train." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Feb 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92844470?accountid=14709>; Seth Mydans, "Air of Anxiety in Moscow After

describing the attacks is much higher than in any previous coverage, but the *Times* withholds the human labeling of Chechens as terrorists. As such, this is a different usage of the term than identified in either the pre-9/11 or Dubrovka coverage. However, rather than reflecting a change in policy of the *Times*, this may reflect the nature of the bombing as an unclaimed attack without a clear perpetrator. Although Russian officials immediately attributed the bombing to Chechen terrorism (as in previous events), in the initial aftermath, the perpetrator of the explosion was unclear. As a result, the labeling of a specific attacker was not possible. If Russian officials had uncovered concrete evidence illustrating a Chechen bombing before the *Times* coverage had moved on from the event, it is unclear what labeling the *Times* might have been used.

On the other hand, the publication consistently depicts the Chechens fighting within Chechnya as separatists. In several articles referring to the movement within Chechnya, the *Times*' coverage uses phrases such as, "Putin ruled out any talks with Chechen separatists" and "Russia's latest war to quell separatists".²⁰⁷ While this serves to ground the readers' perceptions of the Chechens in the reality of a nationalist struggle for independence, it may also be a reflection of a lack of connection between that struggle and the bombing at the time in which the reporting was done. These descriptions, combined with a more widespread use of "terrorist" as a description of attacks on Russian soil, make it difficult to discern the impact of labeling within the coverage of the Metro Bombing on the *Times*' readers' understanding of the Russo-Chechen conflict. As a result, the other frames of representation present within the coverage obtain an enhanced role in constructing the reality of the conflict for readers.

Blast on Subway." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Feb 10, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92841707?accountid=14709>.

²⁰⁷ Arvedlund, "Ride during Moscow Rush Ends Under Pile of Bodies;" Myers, "19 Die in Moscow S Bomb Goes Off --On Subway Train."

One of the dominant frames of representation present in both the Dubrovka and Moscow Metro Bombing coverage is the “personal depiction of victims.” The majority of the Metro Bombing coverage consists of victims’ personal narratives and graphic descriptions of the attack, much like the reporting of the Hostage Crisis. In one such article, the *Times* graphically describes how the explosion “shredded bodies, complicating the grim task of counting the dead, let alone identifying them.” This imagery is combined with a victim’s description of survivors “trudging out in darkness with their clothes and hair scorched.”²⁰⁸ Such a presentation allows readers to better imagine the victims’ experience and picture their plight, thus promoting greater sympathy.

Another article traces the narrative of Anna A. Lvova, a victim who survived “because she was buried under the dead.”²⁰⁹ The article then discusses the effect of the terror attacks on Moscow’s hospitals including an interview with a doctor who treated victims of several of the attacks. The piece closes with a quote from the doctor regarding future attacks stating, “‘We are ready,’ he said, smoking a cigarette in his office.”²¹⁰ Powerful images like this further cement an understandable and humanist depiction of the Russian victims. Additionally, the *Times*’ devotes an entire article to the heart-wrenching experience of victim’s families. The piece describes the desperate attempts by families and parents to find information on their loved ones in the aftermath of the attack.²¹¹ Overall, the combination of frequent and personal descriptions of victims combined with graphic depictions of the explosion forces readers to experience the attack alongside the victims and thus sympathize with the pain of the victims.

²⁰⁸ Myers, "19 Die in Moscow S Bomb Goes Off --On Subway Train."

²⁰⁹ Arvedlund, "Ride during Moscow Rush Ends Under Pile of Bodies."

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Seth Mydans, "For Families of Subway Bombing Victims, Few Answers." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Feb 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92860561?accountid=14709>.

Another similarity with the framing of the Dubrovka Crisis and the Metro Bombing coverage is the decrease in the “Chechen POV” in relation to the “Russian POV”. In contrast to the pre-9/11 coverage, the Chechen perspective is all but absent from the *Times*’ coverage of the Metro Bombing. One of the only examples of this presentation is in one article that attributes one sentence to Chechen complaints of police detention “based on little more than their ethnicity,” a subject that received its own articles in previous coverage.²¹² Additionally, other articles recognize Maskhadov’s response to the attack and acknowledge the racist claims made by nationalist politicians, but these small examples do little to present the Chechen perspective on the violence.²¹³

On the contrary, the dominant perspective provided within the Metro Bombing coverage is the “Russian POV” of the conflict. For example, an article discusses the toll that the attacks have taken on the civil society in Moscow, describing “waves of grief, fear, and suspicion” in response to the attack as well as the ever-heightened state of paranoia and preparation for further violence within the city.²¹⁴ A comparable article notes that the attack “has brought a heightened sense of insecurity to Moscow.”²¹⁵ Such presentations of fear and suffering among Russians are lacking in regards to the Chechen experience of the ongoing conflict, an experience characterized by violence on an even larger scale. Another article describes how the attacks have pushed one Moscow woman to the point of emigration because, as she described, “Russia had become a country where normal, peaceful life was out of reach.”²¹⁶ This presentation effectively presents the response to the violence of the Russian people, while the suffering of the Chechen people

²¹² Arvedlund, "Ride during Moscow Rush Ends Under Pile of Bodies."

²¹³ Mydans, "Air of Anxiety in Moscow After Blast on Subway;" Myers, "19 Die in Moscow S Bomb Goes Off --On Subway Train."

²¹⁴ Arvedlund, "Ride during Moscow Rush Ends Under Pile of Bodies."

²¹⁵ Mydans, "Air of Anxiety in Moscow After Blast on Subway."

²¹⁶ Myers, "19 Die in Moscow S Bomb Goes Off --On Subway Train."

within the conflict is entirely ignored. As a result, readers are well informed about the anxiety of those living in Moscow, but are not told of the extensive destruction of life in Grozny.

One of the most striking shifts in the *New York Times*' Moscow Metro Bombing reporting is the increased influence of the "context of wave of terror" frame of representation. Although the "context of historical conflict" is continually acknowledged, often in tandem with the "wave of terror," any elaboration on the historical nature of the conflict earlier than the mid-1990s is completely absent. For example, one article states, "During the five years of Russia's latest war to quell separatists... Moscow and other cities have borne the brunt of terrorist attacks."²¹⁷ Although this may seem like an effective acknowledgement of the historical context, this is the only mention of the wars in Chechnya in the article, which instead provides a narrative of other terrorist attacks, which "have often come in pairs."²¹⁸ Although the acknowledgement of other attacks is completely legitimate in providing a background for the explosion, when this is combined with the ignoring of the historical roots of the violence, it presents readers with a perspective that effectively denies much of the conflict. A similar article contextualizes the explosion by stating, "a long string of terrorist attacks around the country... have been linked to Chechen rebels."²¹⁹

Despite this increased presentation of the conflict as a terror campaign, some of the *Times*' reporting still retains the historical and national roots of the violence. One such article buffers the description of a "wave of terrorist bombings" with the background of "a long, devastating war in Chechnya" and a description of the independence movement under

²¹⁷ Arvedlund, "Ride during Moscow Rush Ends Under Pile of Bodies."

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Mydans, "Air of Anxiety in Moscow After Blast on Subway."

Maskhadov.²²⁰ In spite of this, the rising prevalence of the “context of wave of terror” results in too little coverage of the true nature of the conflict. Readers of the *Times*’ coverage of the Metro Bombing are provided with much less historical background than in previous coverage and thus have a less complete understanding of the violence.

Overall, the *New York Times*’ coverage of the Moscow Metro Bombing contains a thematic use of frames of representation that is much more comparable to the Dubrovka Crisis reporting than to its pre-9/11 coverage. The *Times*’ delivers to its readers a perspective of the conflict that is much less historically grounded than in the past. Additionally the increasing pervasiveness of the more open use of “terrorist”, along with the “context of wave of terror” frame represents a disconcerting trend in the *Times*’ post-9/11 coverage.

3.2.2 THE WASHINGTON POST

The *Washington Post*’s Moscow Metro Bombing utilizes a pattern of dominant frames of representation that is very consistent with those presented in its Dubrovka Crisis coverage. In this way, readers of the *Post*’s post-9/11 coverage receive a constant depiction of the Russo-Chechen conflict that represents a slightly shifted perspective from the representation formed in the pre-9/11 coverage.

The first dominant frame that remains consistent through the *Post*’s coverage is the “Chechen attackers as separatists” frame. Throughout the Metro Bombing coverage, as before, the *Post* commonly utilizes the labels “Chechen separatists” and “Chechen rebels” in presenting

²²⁰ Myers, "19 Die in Moscow S Bomb Goes Off --On Subway Train."

the Chechens as potential suspects for the bombing.²²¹ In this way, it is not only clear that the Chechens are actors representing a political cause, but also that their particular cause is one of nationalist separatism. The *Post* additionally distances itself from the accusations against the Chechen separatists by utilizing phrases such as, “Putin blamed the attack on secessionist rebels from Chechnya.”²²² The *Post* thereby further distances itself from the claims, making it clear to readers that the identity and motivation of the bomber remain unclear. In fact, the infrequent uses of “terrorist” in the Metro Bombing coverage are in phrases such as “terror attacks” and “terrorist attacks,” both in reference to a recent string of bombings throughout Russia. However, despite this usage, the term remains rare in the *Post*’s coverage, and the publication does an effective job of presenting readers with an understanding of Chechen rebels that highlights the nationalist roots of their movement.

Another consistency with the Dubrovka Crisis coverage present in the *Post*’s Metro Bombing reporting is the “personal depiction of victims” frame. Despite the drastically smaller coverage of the Metro Bombing, the *Post* continues to offer detailed background information and narratives provided by victims and witnesses. For example, in one article, the *Post* provides a graphic description of the metro train stating, “Many of the dead were still in their seats, and pieces of flesh littered the car.”²²³ In another article, the main narrative of the piece centers on the experience of one survivor. The emotional story of Marina Sedova is told in great detail,

²²¹ "World in Brief." *The Washington Post*, Feb 06, 2004.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/409665212?accountid=14709>; John Burgess, "Bomb Kills Dozens in Moscow Subway; at Least 39 Dead, Over 200 Injured; Putin Blames Chechen Separatists." *The Washington Post*, Feb 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409585683?accountid=14709>.

²²² John Burgess, "I Knew I was Not Alone'; Survivor of Russian Subway Blast Led to Safety by a Stranger." *The Washington Post*, Feb 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409622470?accountid=14709>; for more examples, see "World in Brief." *The Washington Post*, Feb 06, 2004.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/409665212?accountid=14709>; John Burgess, "At Least 39 Killed in Bombing in Moscow Subway; Putin Blames Chechen Separatists." *The Washington Post*, Feb 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409604910?accountid=14709>.

²²³ Burgess, "At Least 39 Killed in Bombing in Moscow Subway; Putin Blames Chechen Separatists."

from the explosion and evacuation when she was injured and began “weeping hysterically,” to her rescue by a kind stranger who quickly disappeared after.²²⁴ The article includes several other detailed witness testimonies as well, but none are as in depth as the story of Marina and her savior. Told entirely through Marina’s personal point of view, the narrative takes the reader from the darkness of the metro tunnel when “blood spilled down her face” to the hospital where Marina’s helper “waited patiently while the doctors treated her injuries.”²²⁵ The rich detail, graphic descriptions, and personal narrative allow readers to experience the attack through Marina’s eyes and thus relate to the victims in a way unoffered in the pre-9/11 coverage. In fact, the only article lacking a personal testimony from a victim is the first article covering the attack, which was published the day of the explosion and thus contains only minor preliminary details.²²⁶ Overall, the *Post’s* Metro Bombing coverage continues to use the personal humanization of the Russian victims that was present in the reporting on the Dubrovka Crisis.

While the *Washington Post* continues to strongly present the “Russian POV” in its Metro Bombing coverage, the prevalence of the “Chechen POV” within the reporting decreases significantly. The Russian perspective on the attack is presented through a combination of reactions from politicians, officials, and regular Russian citizens. One article describes the large reaction of compassion from the Russian people to the attack as “large numbers... reported to blood banks to donate,” while also describing the reactions of survivors, who were “trying to recover and return to their lives.”²²⁷ Another article highlights the Russian political response to the bombing while also acknowledging the state of expectancy within Russia toward “periodic

²²⁴ Burgess, "I Knew I was Not Alone"; Survivor of Russian Subway Blast Led to Safety by a Stranger."

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ "World in Brief." *The Washington Post*, Feb 06, 2004.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/409665212?accountid=14709>

²²⁷ Burgess, "I Knew I was Not Alone"; Survivor of Russian Subway Blast Led to Safety by a Stranger."

terrorist attacks.”²²⁸ In these ways, the reader is able to appreciate the ways in which the attack and conflict as a whole have affected the Russian people and the ways in which they have reacted as a result.

On the other hand, the Chechen perspective of the attack and conflict is minimized in the *Washington Post's* coverage. The only reference to the Chechen experience of the conflict is a statement from Maskhadov's spokesman consisting of a fervent denial of responsibility for the attacks and condemnations of terrorism as a tactic. The *Post* also presents Maskhadov's claim that “Russian government policies toward Chechnya created the conditions to prompt such acts,” providing the most concrete example of a Chechen perspective of the attack in the Metro Bombing coverage.²²⁹ However, this single reference does little to counter the dominant frame of representation provided within the coverage of the “Russian POV”. Although it is unsurprising due to the nature and location of the attack that the Russian perspective receives the lion's share of coverage, it still represents a shift in coverage from the pre-9/11 reporting. Further, this shift presents readers with an understanding of the conflict that is seen through the eyes of the Russian people, while depicting the Chechens only as attackers.

Much like its Dubrovka Crisis, the *Post's* coverage of the Metro Bombing favors a “context of historical conflict,” although the presence of the “context of wave of terror” is additionally present within the reporting. However, due to the modest amount of coverage and thus limited context provided, it is admittedly difficult to draw conclusions from this presentation. The majority of the context provided in the *Post's* coverage refers to the Russo-Chechen Wars of the 1990s. These presentations frame the current conflict as part of an ongoing

²²⁸ Burgess, "At Least 39 Killed in Bombing in Moscow Subway; Putin Blames Chechen Separatists."

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

dispute with separatists, “who have been battling Russian forces for much of the past decade.”²³⁰ Rather than bury the political roots to the violence, these articles embrace the historical context (albeit the recent history) and provide an understanding of the conflict as one that has grown out of national separatist ambitions. Additionally, although one article does describe examples of “periodic terror attacks” within Russia, this potentially misunderstood representation is only presented within the context of the ongoing war within Chechnya.²³¹ Overall, the context provided by the *Washington Post*, however limited, presents a historical narrative to the Russo-Chechen conflict that retains the political roots of the dispute.

The Moscow Metro Bombing coverage of the *Post* presents a similar depiction of the Russo-Chechen conflict as is present in the Dubrovka Crisis coverage. The careful labeling of the Chechens and historical context attributed to the dispute provide readers with a more open and well-rounded perspective of the conflict. However, the heavy personalization of the Russian victims, as well as the rising dominance of the Russian point of view as opposed to the Chechen perspective convey an incomplete context for readers.

3.2.3 THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The *Wall Street Journal's* coverage of the Moscow Metro Bombing is by far the thinnest of the select sampling and therefore drawing solid conclusions from the small amount of articles is difficult. However, several trends are still visible within the coverage that are useful in understanding the shifting perspective of the *Journal* in the post-9/11 era. As such, this author

²³⁰ Burgess, "I Knew I was Not Alone'; Survivor of Russian Subway Blast Led to Safety by a Stranger."; for another example, see Burgess, "Bomb Kills Dozens in Moscow Subway; at Least 39 Dead, Over 200 Injured; Putin Blames Chechen Separatists."

²³¹ Burgess, "Bomb Kills Dozens in Moscow Subway; at Least 39 Dead, Over 200 Injured; Putin Blames Chechen Separatists."

will use specific instances from the text to highlight these examples, while also admitting that the coverage of the event itself can not stand alone in drawing indisputable conclusions about the *Journal's* post-9/11 perspective.

The first frame of representation that is present within the *Wall Street Journal's* Metro Bombing coverage is "Chechen attackers as terrorists." Interestingly enough, there is actually no reference in the *Journal's* coverage to the potential perpetrator(s) of the Metro Bombing, and very few instances in which the Chechens are mentioned at all. One example describes the vulnerability felt after the attack as comparable to that "last felt when terrorists from the Chechen republic seized a Moscow theater during the autumn of 2002."²³² Additionally, the use of terrorism as a descriptor of the Russian experience of the conflict is prevalent in the decreased coverage.²³³ The validation of these labels by the *Journal*, rather than in quotations from Russian officials, illustrates a shift from the pre-9/11 coverage. This shift paints the Chechen attackers in a much different light than in previous coverage in that it obscures the legitimate political roots of the separatist movement. However small these examples are, they serve to represent a shifting trend in the *Journal's* coverage that will continue into the reporting of the Beslan coverage.

A continuation of the *Journal's* Dubrovka Crisis coverage is present in the "impersonal depiction of victims" and detached reporting of the Metro Bombing. However, this detached presentation of the attack is just as likely a result of the small amount of coverage than a representation of any journalistic method or inherent bias. Nevertheless, the *Journal's* presentation of the victims within its coverage is limited to one statement describing how, "a

²³² "World Watch." *Wall Street Journal*, Feb 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398879757?accountid=14709>.

²³³ "World Watch." *Wall Street Journal*, Feb 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398879757?accountid=14709>; "World-Wide." *Wall Street Journal*, Feb 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398873654?accountid=14709>.

bomb ripped through a packed Moscow subway train... killing 39 passengers.”²³⁴ Much like in previous coverage, the main focus of the *Journal's* detached reporting remains the political and economic repercussions of the attack rather than the experience of the victims.

As expected, the points of view presented in the *Wall Street Journal's* reporting, while very limited, provide more of a Russian perspective. Much of the *Journal's* small coverage is devoted to the specific political and security response in response to the attack within Russia. It describes the calls for an improved security infrastructure and the rise of doubts about Putin's ability to protect the country from terrorism. Accompanying these statements is the description of a “revived sense of vulnerability” among Muscovites that presents the heightened fears within Russia in response to the violence.²³⁵ Additionally, while Putin's claims that the bombing was “a Chechen bid to disrupt March 14 voting” in the upcoming election, no such attention is given to the Chechen separatist authority, which, as previously noted, denied responsibility for the attack.²³⁶ Overall, although this lack of Chechen perspective cannot be claimed to be representative of the entire post-9/11 coverage, it still represents a troubling trend that threatens to provide readers with an incomplete understanding of the conflict.

The limited nature of the *Journal's* Metro Bombing coverage also results in a very limited context surrounding the event. What is striking about this limited context is that it makes no mention of the historical nature of the Russo-Chechen conflict at all. Instead, the only context compares Russia's experience of long-term terrorism with that of Israel. The brief section compares the security measures adopted by each country, and criticizes Russia for its poor

²³⁴ "World Watch." *Wall Street Journal*, Feb 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398879757?accountid=14709>.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ "World-Wide." *Wall Street Journal*, Feb 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398873654?accountid=14709>.

infrastructure.²³⁷ The danger of this comparison is that it seems to suggest a validation of Putin's claims that the Russo-Chechen conflict is part of a global struggle against terrorism rather than a long-standing dispute over independence.

Overall, the thin nature of the *Wall Street Journal's* Metro Bombing reporting makes the drawing of larger conclusions from the coverage difficult. However, the frames of representation present in the articles still serve as a connection in the trend of the *Journal's* shifting post-9/11 perspective. Additionally, readers of the Metro Bombing coverage are still provided with a much different depiction of the conflict, one characterized by unwarranted Chechen terrorism rather than an increasingly violent separatist struggle.

3.3 BESLAN SCHOOL HOSTAGE CRISIS

On September 1, 2004, some 40 heavily armed Chechen guerillas seized a school amidst its first day ceremonies in the town of Beslan in southern Russia and took over 1,100 hostages, including 777 children. The attackers forced the hostages into the school's gymnasium, wired the building with explosives, and constructed large amounts of defenses.²³⁸ Over a three-day period, tense negotiations took place. The Chechens demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops and denied any offers of food or water for the child hostages.²³⁹ On the third day of the crisis, gunfire and explosions broke out as disorganized Russian security forces stormed the school. Although Russian officials claimed the fighting was initiated by the guerillas, many other groups,

²³⁷ "World Watch." *Wall Street Journal*, Feb 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398879757?accountid=14709>.

²³⁸ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 67.

²³⁹ C. J. Chivers, "Captives' 52 Hours of Horror: Heat, Hunger, and then Death." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Sep 05, 2004. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92655870?accountid=14709>.

including many of the Beslan children's parents, placed the blame on Russian forces. In the end, nearly 380 people, including 186 children, died in the fighting.²⁴⁰ Although the failed rescue drew large amounts of domestic criticism, sympathy for the victims was widespread, including in the US.²⁴¹

The extent and depth of the coverage of the Beslan School Hostage Crisis is similar to that of the Dubrovka Hostage Crisis in 2002. As such, the Beslan coverage represents the culmination of the trends of shifting perspectives present within the post-9/11 reporting of the three publications. In order to draw accurate conclusions on the nature of the coverage of the Beslan Crisis, this author has carefully read and selected examples from the reporting to provide an effective depiction of the dominant frames of representation existent in the coverage as a whole.

3.3.1 THE NEW YORK TIMES

The *New York Times* coverage of the Beslan School Hostage Crisis presents a significantly different depiction of the conflict than that presented by the *Times*' pre-9/11 coverage. The pattern of frames of representation governing the *Times*' Beslan reporting is almost an exact opposite of the one showcased by the pre-9/11 coverage. In order to accurately present this shift, this author has identified the most striking and prevalent examples of the change, which are drawn directly from the reporting of the event.

²⁴⁰ Askerov, *Historical Dictionary of the Chechen Conflict*, 67.

²⁴¹ Daniel J. Wakin, "A Groundswell of Sympathy and Donations." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Sep 08, 2004. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92797216?accountid=14709>.

The first striking change in the *Time's* reporting, which represents the culmination of a post-9/11 trend in labeling, is the near exclusive utilization of the "Chechen attackers as terrorists" frame as opposed to the more careful presentation of "Chechen attackers as separatists". In fact, the "Chechen attackers as separatists" frame is all but absent from the *Times'* coverage, appearing in only a small number of articles. Examples of these articles continue to use labels like "heavily armed fighters," "militants," and "hostage-takers," but these terms provide little identity to the attackers and are overwhelmed by the much more dominant label of "terrorist."²⁴² Other articles use a combination of labels including "insurgents", "guerillas," and "terrorists" in order to break up the monotony of "terrorist" as a label, but unfortunately this does little in providing readers with a more balanced understanding of the conflict.²⁴³

More so than in any of the *New York Times'* previous coverage, the use of the "Chechen attackers as terrorists" frame of representation within the Beslan reporting is ubiquitous. For example, one of the first articles after the violent end of the crisis repeatedly uses the phrases, "terrorists teased their child captives," "terrorists also spoke of politics," and "a terrorist shot him in the forehead."²⁴⁴ Other articles describe how the "terrorists had shoved out dead hostages" and that "one of the terrorists had been detained by the F.S.B." years before the attack.²⁴⁵ Still

²⁴² C. J. Chivers, "Russian Town's Young Treasures Under Threat." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 03, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92691398?accountid=14709>; C. J. Chivers and Steven Lee Myers. "Some Children Freed, but Standoff Continues." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 03, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92691871?accountid=14709>; C. J. Chivers and Steven Lee Myers. "Many are Hurt during Hours of Fighting." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92739899?accountid=14709>.

²⁴³ C. J. Chivers and Steven Lee Myers. "Insurgents Seize School in Russia and Hold Scores." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 02, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92657027?accountid=14709>.

²⁴⁴ C. J. Chivers, "Captives' 52 Hours of Horror: Heat, Hunger, and then Death." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 05, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92655870?accountid=14709>.

²⁴⁵ C. J. Chivers, "In School's Ruins, a Town Confronts the Unthinkable." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 06, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92769542?accountid=14709>; Seth Mydans and C. J. Chivers. "Russia

another describes the connections between the “Beslan terrorists” and other terrorist groups throughout Europe.²⁴⁶ Although the acts committed by the militants of the Beslan Crisis are among the most heinous and immoral imaginable, the exclusive use of “terrorist” in labeling the event creates issues of journalistic balance. Not only does the stigma surrounding “terrorist” serve to inhibit any deeper understanding of the nature Chechen cause or experience within the conflict, it also precludes any notion of peaceful negotiation as a solution to the event or the larger conflict, given the common assertion that diplomacy with those labeled “terrorists” is impossible. As a result of this, readers of the *Times*’ coverage are presented with a picture of the Chechen cause that is stripped of its nationalist separatist ambitions, and is instead characterized by unjustified and irreconcilable violence.

A clear representation of the established supremacy of “terrorist” as a label appears in an editorial piece by the *Times*. Although the piece serves to illustrate a Chechen perspective of the conflict and place the tragedy of Beslan within the context of a long-standing and violent historical dispute, the attackers are almost exclusively referred to as “terrorists.”²⁴⁷ This example illustrates that “terrorist” has become the accepted label within which the conflict is framed in

Grieves for Children and Putin Vents His Fury." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92754804?accountid=14709>.

²⁴⁶ Fiona Hill, "Stop Blaming Putin and Start Helping Him." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 10, 2004; <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92877463?accountid=14709>; for other examples of “Chechen attackers as terrorists” see, "Deadly Stalemate in Chechnya." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92672487?accountid=14709>; Steven Lee Myers, "Warmth was Wanted; Instead, Putin's Chilly Responses Darken the Political Clouds." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 05, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92726266?accountid=14709>; Steven Lee Myers, "Putin Says Russia Faces Full 'War' To Divide Nation." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 05, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92694316?accountid=14709>; "Putin Tells the Russians: 'we Shall be Stronger'." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 05, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92747522?accountid=14709>; Seth Mydans, "Moscow's Gloom Deepens as Fear Becomes Routine." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 06, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92778510?accountid=14709>; David Brooks, "Cult of Death." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92801873?accountid=14709>.

²⁴⁷ Richard Pipes, "Give the Chechens a Land of their Own." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92715659?accountid=14709>.

the *Times*' coverage. The *Times* thereby presents the conflict to readers through the frame of terrorism and counterterrorism rather than through a frame that highlights the much more complex political and cultural roots to the conflict. The term "terrorist" provides the reader with a seemingly well-defined picture of the good and evil sides of a conflict. However, as with the Russo-Chechen conflict in general, assigning these labels in a long-term, brutal conflict that has been characterized by violence against civilians on both sides is not so simple. In the end, the picture of Chechen attackers provided by the *New York Times*' post-9/11 coverage of the Beslan Crisis is much more sinister than the depiction of the Chechens before September 11, 2001.

Another continued post-9/11 trend within the *Times*' Beslan Crisis coverage is the heavy use of the "personal depiction of victims" frame of representation. In fact, the instances of victim narration, scene setting, and graphic detailing are so numerous and intense throughout the *Times*' coverage that presenting the totality of this coverage is impossible in this study. Instead, this author has attempted to isolate several of the most representative examples of these personal representations in order to provide a valid illustration of the nature of the reporting.

One example of victim narration provides the story of two parents whose two daughters were hostages. The article describes how the mother, Mrs. Arkova, watched her children leave for school with a group of children carrying balloons as part of the first day celebration only to see "dozens of multicolored balloons rising through the schoolyard's trees" after the gunfire began.²⁴⁸ The article goes on to describe the frantic and desperate attempts by Mrs. Arkova and her husband to reach their children only to be turned away by police and left waiting "in the deflated calm of helplessness."²⁴⁹ Another article highlights the victims' experience within the school, using several different testimonies to narrate the three days of the crisis. The piece

²⁴⁸ Chivers, "Russian Town's Young Treasures Under Threat."

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

graphically depicts the hostages' experience, describing how the air was "steaming hot and foul-smelling with worry, urine, and sweat," and captures the chaos of the final battle through the perspective of a young school girl who "ran wildly" while next to her "a boy who was running with his sister was struck."²⁵⁰ It is difficult to capture the imagery and emotion captured in these articles, which present readers with a dark and terrifying glimpse into the victims of the attack.

More examples of the graphic nature of the *Times*' coverage can be seen in several articles describing the aftermath of the Beslan Crisis. One provides a particularly in-depth depiction of a mother searching the school after the attack for her missing child:

She entered the nearly empty cafeteria and passed through it, and proceeded even to the kitchen and pantries, to the last unlit and darkened corner, screaming and sobbing, pulling herself up over the rubble to look for him behind a refrigerator that had been knocked on its side. She found nothing, and wandered out, filling the room with piercing, incomprehensible cries.²⁵¹

Passages like this present the reader with a very powerful and personal image of the pain and suffering felt by the victims of the Beslan Crisis. Another article describes the scene at Beslan's overflowing morgue, "A mother in a red and white blouse knelt on the ground, weeping as she kissed her dead daughter's face."²⁵² A third article paints a similar picture, stating, "unclaimed children lying dead... beside the tiny bodies of classmates whose mothers knelt in the grass, stroking their blood-matted hair."²⁵³ Readers of the *Times*' coverage are thus drawn into the tragic and emotional response to the attack, and are provided an avenue through which

²⁵⁰ Chivers, "Captives' 52 Hours of Horror: Heat, Hunger, and then Death."

²⁵¹ Chivers, "In School's Ruins, a Town Confronts the Unthinkable."

²⁵² Chivers and Myers. "Many are Hurt during Hours of Fighting."

²⁵³ C. J. Chivers, "An Agonizing Vigil Leads to Reunion Or Despair." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92672127?accountid=14709>.

they may understand and sympathize with the Beslan victim's experience. Additionally, the graphic nature of the descriptions provides readers with a powerful and lasting image of Russian suffering than anything previously offered in the *Times*' coverage of the Russo-Chechen conflict.

Still more articles by the *Times* focus on the response to the attacks throughout Russia and abroad, even informing readers of different methods through which they can express sympathy. One such article follows several Ossetian families who were forced to travel to Moscow in order to acquire burn treatment for their families. The article describes the grieving of the helpless families and describes their support for each other, and by strangers from the local community, several of whom brought gifts and money to the hospital.²⁵⁴ Several other articles describe the wave of sympathy and support throughout Russia and the West, even comparing the Russian response to the atmosphere present in the US following the attacks of September 11th.²⁵⁵ Another article quotes a Russian embassy official describing the overwhelming amount of support, "It's not the point, how much money. It's the reaction of the Americans." The article also includes a list of relief organizations available for donations for support of Beslan.²⁵⁶ In this way, the *Times*' Beslan Crisis coverage evokes a sense of shared experience and empathy with the victims of the attack that is more significant than in any of the previous coverage, especially the pre-9/11 coverage. As a result, readers are able to relate to and comprehend the magnitude of the Russian suffering.

²⁵⁴ Erin E. Arvedlund, "To Speed Healing, Ossetians Cling Together." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92792789?accountid=14709>.

²⁵⁵ Mydans, "Moscow's Gloom Deepens as Fear Becomes Routine."; "Embassy Open for Condolences." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92795560?accountid=14709>; Sophia Kishkovsky, "A Rock Telethon in Russia, Echoing the Mood of 9/11." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92644703?accountid=14709>.

²⁵⁶ Daniel J. Wakin, "A Groundswell of Sympathy and Donations." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92797216?accountid=14709>.

A personal depiction of the Chechen victims does occur in one *Times*' article that discusses several of the female Chechen bombers and speculates as to the experiences that may have led to their attacks.²⁵⁷ However, this single article fails to influence the dominant discourse within the coverage, which is one that presents the Russian victims of the conflict in a very personal, human, and sympathetic light.

Overall, the "personal depiction of victims" dominates the *New York Times*' Beslan School Hostage Crisis reporting more than in any of the other coverage analyzed in this work. This is a striking shift from the paper's pre-9/11 stance.

Another trend continued in the *Times*' Beslan Crisis coverage is the dominance of the "Russian POV" frame of representation over the "Chechen POV". Although, the Chechen perspective does appear in several editorial and commentary pieces as well as a few regular articles, the overriding viewpoint throughout most of the reporting is the Russian POV. Examples can be found in all of the personal articles identified above as well as in much of the rest of the coverage. As only Russian officials are quoted in the vast majority of the articles, a Chechen voice is difficult to find.²⁵⁸ Additionally, other articles discuss the reactions of Russian citizens to the Beslan Crisis. For example, one piece which discusses a music telethon put on by a Russian television channel in order to raise relief funds describes the somber mood and rallying of support by the Russian in the aftermath of the crisis.²⁵⁹ One piece highlights Russia's struggle with "repeated Chechen terrorist attacks," and encourages Western support of Putin's policies in

²⁵⁷ Steven Lee Myers, "From Dismal Chechnya, Women Turn to Bombs." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 10, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92795790?accountid=14709>.

²⁵⁸ Chivers, "An Agonizing Vigil Leads to Reunion Or Despair."; Chivers and Myers. "Many are Hurt during Hours of Fighting;" Seth Mydans, "Russia's Antiterror Tactics: Reward and a First Strike." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92666461?accountid=14709>.

²⁵⁹ Kishkovsky, "A Rock Telethon in Russia, Echoing the Mood of 9/11."

Chechnya.²⁶⁰ A final major example of the prevalence of the Russian point of view in the *Times*' coverage is the transcription and publishing of Putin's televised speech from the Kremlin after the conclusion of the Beslan Crisis.²⁶¹ Publishing Putin's speech directly provides the readers of the *Times* with a look into the Russian understanding and reaction to the conflict that is much more thorough than any Chechen perspective provided by the paper. Although it is unsurprising that the *Times* stresses the "Russian POV," failing to balance possible alternative perspectives of the conflict presents readers with an incomplete and biased understanding of the dispute as a whole.

Despite the prevalence of the "Russian POV" frame in the Beslan Crisis coverage, the *Times* continues to provide a detailed, albeit minor, representation of the "Chechen POV" in some of its reporting. Examples of the use of this perspective can be formed in several articles discussing the political aftermath of the Beslan Crisis. One article acknowledges "years of war and atrocities that have left the Chechen people embittered."²⁶² Another briefly mentions pleas from human rights groups calling for the Russian government to "address the root causes of the separatist conflict in Chechnya."²⁶³ Although these present a more balanced view of the conflict, their brevity reduces their potential impact on readers.

The most substantial example of an acknowledgement of the Chechen perspective of the conflict appears in an article discussing the historical background of the fighting. Rather than only present the Russian side of the story, the article includes an interview with a Chechen leader and quotes his criticism of Russian tactics in Chechnya: "You must agree that the elimination of

²⁶⁰ Hill, "Stop Blaming Putin and Start Helping Him."

²⁶¹ "Putin Tells the Russians: 'We Shall Be Stronger'." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 05, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92747522?accountid=14709>

²⁶² Myers, "Putin Says Russia Faces Full 'War' To Divide Nation."

²⁶³ Seth Mydans, "Putin Moves to Strengthen Antiterror Forces in South." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 10, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92848566?accountid=14709>.

one-fourth of the population is not the struggle against terrorism.”²⁶⁴ An equally effective article at presenting the Chechen perspective analyzes the stories of several of the Chechen female bombers, providing their backgrounds in an attempt to understand the motivations behind their decisions.²⁶⁵ However, these articles constitute a distinct minority within the *Times*’ narrative of the Beslan Crisis.

The only other presentation of Chechen viewpoints found in the *Times*’ reporting of the Beslan Crisis is within two commentary pieces discussing the event and potential solutions to the ongoing conflict. These articles acknowledge the “brutal history of Russian oppression of Chechens,” as well as the fact that Chechen separatists are seeking “the limited objective of independence.”²⁶⁶ In this way, these commentaries provide readers with a sense of the conflict that acknowledges the violence by both sides and the historical roots of the dispute. However, despite the effective representation of the Chechen perspective in these articles, they are statistically insignificant compared to the Russian-dominated view of Beslan and the overall conflict present in the rest of the *Times*’ coverage.

A final trend continued within the *New York Times*’ post-9/11 coverage is the combination of “context of historical conflict” and “context of wave of terror” frames of representation. However, despite the rise of the “wave of terror” as a concept in the paper’s reporting, much of the *Times*’ coverage continues to retain a historical background of the conflict as its main contextualization. Examples of this are visible in several articles, which make brief mentions to the wars in Chechnya when grounding the Beslan Crisis in a larger narrative. One

²⁶⁴ C. J. Chivers and Steven Lee Myers, "Rebels in Russia Had Precise Plan." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 06, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92756267?accountid=14709>.

²⁶⁵ Myers, "From Dismal Chechnya, Women Turn to Bombs."

²⁶⁶ Michael Wines, "To Negotiate Or Not." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 05, 2004. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92697166?accountid=14709>; Pipes, "Give the Chechens a Land of their Own."

such article states, “The attack on the school in Beslan, in southern Russia, was the latest and most disturbing of a series of terror attacks that are apparently linked to the decadelong separatist war in Chechnya.”²⁶⁷ In this way, readers understand that the Beslan attack, like others before it, is not a result of random or unexplainable violence, but the culmination of a long and brutal rebellion. Another similar article describes, “The war between Russia and Chechen separatists, characterized by terrorist bombs, abductions, assassinations and brutality by both sides, had descended so deeply into inhumanity that much of the world had turned away.”²⁶⁸ Context like this supplies readers with a more informed understanding of the violent historical nature of the Russo-Chechen conflict, and situates the Beslan Crisis within a timeline of that violence.²⁶⁹

One article by the *Times* delves even deeper into the historical narrative of the conflict. This commentary piece describes the history of the dispute from the deportation under Stalin through the First and Second Russo-Chechen Wars, citing that “Chechens have been battling their Russian conquerors for centuries.”²⁷⁰ This type of context not only provides a historical understanding of the conflict, but also serves to acknowledge the Chechen experience within the fighting. However, despite these reports and in contrast to the pre-9/11 coverage, much of the *Times*’ reporting of the Beslan Crisis plays down, or even drops, the historical context altogether in favor of one focused on terror.

As the above examples imply, several of the pieces from the *Times*’ Beslan Crisis coverage offers a hybrid contextualization of the event, acknowledging both the antiquity of the Russo-Chechen conflict as well as the rise of the newfound notion of international terrorism. For

²⁶⁷ Mydans, "Russia's Antiterror Tactics: Reward and a First Strike."

²⁶⁸ Chivers, "Russian Town's Young Treasures Under Threat."

²⁶⁹ For other examples of this type of context, see Chivers and Myers. "Insurgents Seize School in Russia and Hold Scores;" Chivers and Myers. "Many are Hurt during Hours of Fighting.;" Wines, "To Negotiate Or Not."

²⁷⁰ Pipes, "Give the Chechens a Land of their Own."

example, one editorial attributes the Beslan Crisis to “a global terrorist jihad,” which “flows across national borders,” while simultaneously acknowledging that “Chechen hostility to Russia goes back centuries” and “turned even more venomous after Stalin deported the entire Chechen population.”²⁷¹ While this dichotomous presentation of contexts offers readers a historical understanding of the conflict, it also asserts the threat of an international terrorist conspiracy, a claim that the *Times* confined to Russian officials in the pre-9/11 coverage. Several other articles contrast “claims that the separatist movement was fueled by groups like Al Qaeda” with quotations by critics of the international terrorism.²⁷² One such quotation from a Russian newspaper describes that blaming the attack on international terrorism “allows governments all over the world not to assume their responsibilities for the deaths of their citizens.”²⁷³ Although mixed contexts continue to give readers a view into the historical aspects of the Russo-Chechen conflict, the rising validation of the “wave of terror” context continues to represent a shift from the *Times*’ pre-9/11 reporting.

Further, several articles covering the Beslan Crisis provide readers with only the “context of wave of terror” frame of representation. Rather than highlight the ongoing fighting in Chechnya, these pieces frame the Beslan attack within the context of “the vicious world of terrorism.”²⁷⁴ Another example of this type of background is exhibited by a commentary piece that states that the Beslan attack was “initiated by terrorist groups outside Russia.”²⁷⁵ Although less common than the hybrid or historical contexts, these examples still serve to instill in readers

²⁷¹ "Deadly Stalemate in Chechnya." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92672487?accountid=14709>

²⁷² Chivers and Myers, "Rebels in Russia Had Precise Plan."

²⁷³ Seth Mydans, "Grief in Russia Mixes with Harsh Words for Government." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 07, 2004. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92895985?accountid=14709>; for other hybrid contexts, see Chivers and Myers, "Some Children Freed, but Standoff Continues;" Mydans, "Moscow's Gloom Deepens as Fear Becomes Routine."

²⁷⁴ Mydans and Chivers, "Russia Grieves for Children and Putin Vents His Fury."

²⁷⁵ Hill, "Stop Blaming Putin and Start Helping Him."

an understanding that the Beslan Crisis is part of a new global plague, rather than tied to a much more complex and longstanding historical and cultural dispute. As such, readers come to understand the Russo-Chechen conflict as “beyond negotiation” and only solvable by the destruction of one side.²⁷⁶

Overall, the coverage of the Beslan School Hostage Crisis by the *New York Times* offers a clear example of the culmination of shifting trends in the *Times*' post 9/11 coverage. The rising domination of the “Chechen attackers as terrorists”, “personal depiction of victims”, and “Russian POV” frames of representation provide readers with a reality of the Russo-Chechen conflict that is much less well-rounded and informed than the reality espoused in the pre-9/11 coverage. Additionally, the rising influence of the “context of wave of terror” frame illustrates a trend within the coverage that serves to bury the historical and political roots of the dispute, and thus handicap potential outlooks for a peaceful resolution.

3.3.2 THE WASHINGTON POST

As with the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*'s coverage of the Beslan School Hostage Crisis represents the culmination of the publication's shifting perspectives in the post-9/11 period. Consequently, the pattern of frames of representation exhibited by the *Post*'s Beslan Crisis reporting is much different than that present in the paper's pre-9/11 coverage. In order to illustrate these changes, this author has selected specific examples that will most accurately represent the nature of the *Post*'s Beslan Crisis as a whole.

²⁷⁶ David Brooks, "Cult of Death." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/92801873?accountid=14709>.

The first shift represented in the *Washington Post's* Beslan Crisis coverage is the rising prevalence of the "Chechen attackers as terrorists" frame of representation as compared to the "Chechen attackers as separatists" label. More so than in any of the paper's previous coverage, the *Post's* Beslan Crisis reporting contains frequent use of "terrorist" both as an indicator of tactics and of the attackers themselves. Several examples of these articles narrate the events of the Beslan Crisis from the perspective of the hostages, stating, "terrorists with guns burst into their school," and "one of the terrorists taunted the hostages."²⁷⁷ Others pieces retrospectively use the label, declaring "condemnation of the acts that Chechen terrorists have inflicted."²⁷⁸ These depictions strip the attackers of any potential motivation, and thus fail to help readers understand the nature of the conflict. Additionally, despite the dominance of other labels within the *Post's* coverage, the increasing inclusion of the term "terrorist" represents a shift in the accepted dominant discourse surrounding the conflict.

Yet much of the *Post's* coverage preserves the pre-9/11 strategy of relegating "terrorist" to quotations by officials or descriptions of tactics rather than people. A representative example of this reporting makes reference to the Russian officials' use of labels ("Putin blamed international terrorists"), but maintains distance from this claim and counters it by referring to the attackers as "guerillas," "heavily armed insurgents," and "hostage-takers" throughout the rest of the article.²⁷⁹ In this way, readers are presented with the official Russian perspective of the

²⁷⁷ "Today's News." *The Washington Post*, Sep 02, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409692489?accountid=14709>; Peter Finn and Peter Baker. "Hostages were Helpless in Face of Chaos; in Aftermath of Disaster, Survivors of School Siege Recall the Nightmare." *The Washington Post*, Sep 05, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409689345?accountid=14709>; for more examples of the "terrorist" label, see "Staying Strong in the Face of Terrorism." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409816858?accountid=14709>.

²⁷⁸ "Acts of Terror." *The Washington Post*, Sep 03, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409809587?accountid=14709>.

²⁷⁹ Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser. "Russia Collects Dead at School; Putin Calls Attacks 'Inhuman' Acts of Terrorism." *The Washington Post*, Sep 05, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409689270?accountid=14709>;

attack without being forced to operate within the bounds of Russian discourse. Other articles use terror frequently as a label, but avoid burying the Chechen identity within the conflict by labeling the tactics rather than the attackers. These articles label the attack in Beslan as a “terrorist strike”, “terrorist attack”, or simply as “terrorism” in general.²⁸⁰ Thus, although this still represents a rise in the post-9/11 pervasiveness of “terrorist” as a general term, the *Post’s* adoption of the discourse better preserves the identity of the attackers.

Another way that the *Post’s* preserves the Chechen identity is the use of “terrorists” as a distinct group separate from the larger and more moderate Chechen separatist movement. While these articles use “terrorist” as a label in reference to the Beslan attackers, this attribution is coupled with a plea for people “to distinguish between genuine Chechen nationalists and the terrorists.”²⁸¹ In this way the reporting strongly condemns the Beslan attackers, while also pointing readers toward a more comprehensive understanding of the greater Russo-Chechen conflict.

Finally, as in the previous coverage, much of the *Post’s* Beslan Crisis avoids the controversy of the “terrorist” label by simply avoiding the term altogether. Similar to the Dubrovka Crisis coverage, the main labels for the attackers espoused in these articles are

for another representative example of this labeling, see Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser. "Hundreds Held Hostage at School in Russia; Many Children Seized in Town Near Chechnya." *The Washington Post*, Sep 02, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409671774?accountid=14709>; David E. Hoffman, "Putin Alleges 'Weakness,' Security Gap; in Speech, Russian Leader Vows to Resist Separatists." *The Washington Post*, Sep 05, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409686823?accountid=14709>.

²⁸⁰ Peter Baker, "Siege Deepens Rift with West in Russia; U.S., Europe Said to Harbor Chechens." *The Washington Post*, Sep 10, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409670845?accountid=14709>; Susan B. Glasser, "Russia Admits it Lied on Crisis; Public was Misled on Scale of Siege." *The Washington Post*, Sep 06, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409694716?accountid=14709>; Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser, "Two Dozen are Freed at School in Russia; Hundreds Still Held." *The Washington Post*, Sep 03, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409782074?accountid=14709>.

²⁸¹ Jim Hoagland, "Putin's Misdirected Rage." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409816151?accountid=14709>; For more examples of the distinctions between Chechen groups, see Anne Applebaum, "The Irrationality of Terror." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409729778?accountid=14709>; "Tragedy in Russia." *The Washington Post*, Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409696718?accountid=14709>.

“guerillas,” “Chechen rebels,” and “hostage takers.”²⁸² Thus, this presentation of the attackers illustrates the nature of the attack while not burying of the political roots the conflict through the destruction of Chechen identity.²⁸³

Overall, the *Washington Post’s* labeling of the attackers within the Beslan Crisis represents a continuity of the shifts present in the previous post-9/11 reporting. While the *Post* preserves a sense of the political nature of the dispute through several methods, the label “terrorist” becomes more prevalent in the coverage of the conflict.

Another trend in frames of representation that is sustained in the *Post’s* Beslan Crisis coverage is the dominance of the “personal depiction of victims” frame. Much like with the *New York Times*, the *Post’s* Beslan coverage utilizes a combination of individual narratives and graphic detail to provide a much more personalized presentation of the event than in any of the paper’s previous coverage.

An example of this type of coverage is visible in the *Post’s* use of personal narratives in order to describe the beginning of the crisis. One such article follows the narrative of two children who fled the initial assault, describing their fear as the attackers “stormed through the

²⁸² Peter Baker and, Susan B. Glasser, "Hostage Takers in Russia Argued before Explosion; Chechen Gave Orders by Phone, Investigators Say." *The Washington Post*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409731868?accountid=14709>; "Why? Chechnya and Russia have a Long History of Conflict. Last Week a School Became the Battleground." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409695609?accountid=14709>; Peter Baker, "Russia Says Siege Leader Brutally Killed 3 Followers." *The Washington Post*, Sep 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409668305?accountid=14709>.

²⁸³ Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser, "Russia School Siege Ends in Carnage; Hundreds Die as Troops Battle Hostage Takers." *The Washington Post*, Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409672517?accountid=14709>; Peter Baker, "'all of a Sudden, the Big Bomb Blew Up'; for Children, Indelible Images of Mayhem." *The Washington Post*, Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409697366?accountid=14709>; David E. Hoffman, "Chechen Conflict Now Rages Beyond Russia's Expectations." *The Washington Post*, Sep 02, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409756401?accountid=14709>.

schoolyard...barking orders at hundreds of students and parents.”²⁸⁴ Another article portrays the hostage taking from the perspective of those outside the school. It describes one woman who received a call from a loved one in the school screaming, “They are shooting! They are shooting!” before the call disconnected.²⁸⁵ Such vivid descriptions not only provide readers with a more personal presentation of the victims themselves, but also allow readers to experience the horror of the attack through the eyes of those at the scene.

This type of narration is visible in the *Post*'s reporting on the final battle of the Beslan Crisis. One article describes the experience of a history teacher in the school, Nadezhda Gurieva. “Gurieva’s 11-year old daughter fell dead in the first explosion and her son Boris, 14, was seriously wounded... she was unable to move him.”²⁸⁶ Another piece follows the perspective of Sosik Parastayev, a fourth-grade student at the school, who was with his mother and brother when an explosion shattered a window nearby: “as she tried to clear the broken glass from the window so the boys could leap out, Sosik said, a bullet sliced through the air and ripped into her body.”²⁸⁷ Reporting like this draws readers into the reality of the horror of the event and hence evokes much greater sympathy than alternative presentations.

Like the *New York Times*, the *Post* also makes use of graphic details in presenting readers with images of the crisis. One article describing the chaos of the rescue describes, “A man came out carrying a naked girl, her hair matted, her body streaked with shrapnel cuts, her head lolled back. He laid her on the ground and tried to revive her. When she didn’t respond, he started to

²⁸⁴ Peter Baker, "First Day of School was Study in Terror; Escapees Describe Seizure by Guerrillas." *The Washington Post*, Sep 03, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409781810?accountid=14709>.

²⁸⁵ Baker and Glasser. "Hundreds Held Hostage at School in Russia; Many Children Seized in Town Near Chechnya."

²⁸⁶ Finn and Baker. "Hostages were Helpless in Face of Chaos; in Aftermath of Disaster, Survivors of School Siege Recall the Nightmare."

²⁸⁷ Baker, "'all of a Sudden, the Big Bomb Blew Up'; for Children, Indelible Images of Mayhem."

cry.”²⁸⁸ Another describes the wreckage of the school in the aftermath of the battle: “Amid all the charred rubble, it was the shoes that somehow stood out. A burned black sneaker near the wall. A soiled white slipper with faux jewelry. A girl’s toeless sandal. A woman’s pump. And somehow, each without its mate.”²⁸⁹ The vivid imagery provided by these articles allows readers to more easily imagine and comprehend the violence and destruction that occurred in the school. The descriptions also provide a much more personal look into the experiences of the victims, both alive and dead.

The *Post* also provides very personal coverage of the grieving process after the Beslan Crisis, thereby offering a more sympathetic view than had been the case before. Several articles describe the funeral process in Beslan. One reported that: “In one five-minute period... 14 coffins arrived in succession.” It goes on to narrate how the destruction affected several specific families, before closing with a quote from one of the grave-diggers stating, “We will work until dark... There are many more to bury.”²⁹⁰ Readers are not only drawn into the horrors of the attack, but also the dismal grief of the aftermath.

A final example of the *Post*’s personal presentation of the Beslan Crisis can be found in the paper’s coverage of the widespread sympathy offered to the victims. Much like the *Times*, the *Post* devotes space to informing readers about ways to donate to the victims, and even includes an entire article discussing the sympathy shown by US citizens at the Russian

²⁸⁸ Baker and Glasser, "Russia School Siege Ends in Carnage; Hundreds Die as Troops Battle Hostage Takers."

²⁸⁹ Peter Baker, "A Gruesome Tour Inside School no. 1; Beslan Residents Get First Look at the Wreckage." *The Washington Post*, Sep 06, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409732391?accountid=14709>.

²⁹⁰ Peter Finn and Susan B. Glasser, "Under a 'Crying' Sky, Beslan's Dead are Laid to Rest; Death Toll at 334; 200 Still Missing." *The Washington Post*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409670504?accountid=14709>; for another example of this type of coverage, see Glasser, "Russia Admits it Lied on Crisis; Public was Misled on Scale of Siege."

embassy.²⁹¹ The *Post* also published a commentary piece by the Russian Ambassador describing his thanks for the widespread support and calling for unity in the “common fight against terrorism.”²⁹² In this way, the *Post* goes beyond any of its previous reporting in presenting a vivid and sympathetic picture of the attack and its victims. Further, by including an article about how to send relief to Beslan, the *Post* provides its readers with a way to directly interact with the victims and feel more connected and involved in their recovery from the attack.

Overall, the *Washington Post’s* Beslan School Hostage Crisis coverage exemplifies a strong exhibition of the “personal depiction of victims” frame of representation that is much more powerful and thorough than in previous coverage, especially its pre-9/11 coverage. Readers are presented with a much deeper and more vivid understanding of the victims’ experiences of the attack than in the past, and as a result can more easily relate and sympathize with the victims and their reactions.

Another trend that appears in the *Post’s* Beslan Crisis coverage is the decreasing presentation of the “Chechen POV” in order to balance out the Russian perspective within the reporting. Although the Chechen perspective is retained in a minority of articles, it receives much less attention than in comparison to the pre-9/11 reporting. As is exhibited in the wealth of examples above, most of the Beslan Crisis coverage is told through the narrative of Russian victims and officials. Without any Chechen perspective on the event and the conflict as a whole, readers of the *Post* receive a partial account of the dispute. Examples of the dominance of the Russian narrative exist in the very personal narrative of the event and conflict presented by the

²⁹¹ "How to Help Beslan Victims." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409754791?accountid=14709>; Maureen Fan, "Brought Together by Grief; at Russian Embassy, Hundreds Express Sympathy for People of Beslan." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409775793?accountid=14709>.

²⁹² "Staying Strong in the Face of Terrorism." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409816858?accountid=14709>.

Post.²⁹³ A telling example of this dominance is a commentary piece by the Russian Ambassador. The ambassador's writing presents a purely Russian perspective to readers, claiming that any change to Russian policy in Chechnya would be giving into the demands of terrorists.²⁹⁴ However, no perspective from a Chechen leader is ever presented to counter this piece.

Nevertheless, the *Post's* coverage does provide several articles that exhibit a more balanced presentation of Chechen and Russian perspectives. The vast majority of such pieces appear in the editorial and commentary sections. For example, one piece balances its sympathy for the Russian suffering from Beslan with an acknowledgment that "Russia's abominable behavior" has driven many Chechen's to extremism.²⁹⁵ Another acknowledges that the Russian government is "allowing Russian troops to torture and torment Chechen civilians" has contributed to the cycle of violence within the conflict.²⁹⁶ A commentary piece even refers to a Chechen separatist leader's statement that the labeling of the Second Russo-Chechen War as a "counter-terrorist operation" was a tactic "to discredit the idea of Chechen autonomy, and to link the rebels firmly with al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden."²⁹⁷ Although few in numbers, the presentation of a counter-point to the Russian perspective provides reader with some insight into the experience and potential motivations for Chechen actors within the conflict. Perhaps the most rounded presentation of perspectives contrasts the use of "harsh occupation tactics, destroying

²⁹³ Baker and Glasser, "Russia School Siege Ends in Carnage; Hundreds Die as Troops Battle Hostage Takers;" Baker, "A Gruesome Tour Inside School no. 1; Beslan Residents Get First Look at the Wreckage.;" Finn and Baker. "Hostages were Helpless in Face of Chaos; in Aftermath of Disaster, Survivors of School Siege Recall the Nightmare;" Baker, "all of a Sudden, the Big Bomb Blew Up"; for Children, Indelible Images of Mayhem;" Baker, "First Day of School was Study in Terror; Escapees Describe Seizure by Guerrillas;" Baker and Glasser. "Hundreds Held Hostage at School in Russia; Many Children Seized in Town Near Chechnya."

²⁹⁴ "Staying Strong in the Face of Terrorism." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409816858?accountid=14709>.

²⁹⁵ "Tragedy in Russia." *The Washington Post*, Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409696718?accountid=14709>.

²⁹⁶ "Acts of Terror." *The Washington Post*, Sep 03, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409809587?accountid=14709>.

²⁹⁷ Applebaum, "The Irrationality of Terror."

villages and rounding up prisoners” by the Russians to the Chechens increasing use of “suicide attacks on Russian civilian targets.”²⁹⁸ Here the violence and suffering that exist on both sides of the conflict are made clear to readers. However, these articles account for a small minority of the *Washington Post’s* Beslan Crisis coverage, and are greatly overpowered by the “Russian POV” frame.

Overall, the *Post’s* reporting on the Beslan Crisis represents a marked shift from the frames of representation dominant in the pre-9/11 coverage. The diminishing presentation of a “Chechen POV” presents readers with a much different reality of the Russo-Chechen conflict. This is not to suggest that the reciprocity of violence justifies any of the tactics, but to assert that without an acknowledgement of the evils on both sides of the fighting, resolution of the conflict is highly unlikely.

As with the Dubrovka Crisis coverage, the *Washington Post* maintains much more consistency in its presentation of contexts than does the *New York Times* in reporting the Beslan School Hostage Crisis. The *Post’s* dominant frame of representation remains the “context of historical conflict” frame, although the “context of wave of terror” is also present in a significant minority of the *Post’s* articles, which marks a distinct shift from the pre-9/11 coverage. An example of this representation appears in an article reporting Putin’s claims of Chechen linkages to al Qaeda by describing the “inordinately important role” played by the Chechens in a network of international terrorism.²⁹⁹ Another piece compares the Beslan Crisis to the US experience on September 11th, claiming that the US and Russian Federation are partners in the “mutual war against terror.”³⁰⁰ Such claims of a “common fight against terrorism” blur the distinctions

²⁹⁸ Hoffman, "Chechen Conflict Now Rages Beyond Russia's Expectations."

²⁹⁹ Hoagland, "Putin's Misdirected Rage."

³⁰⁰ Fan, "Brought Together by Grief; at Russian Embassy, Hundreds Express Sympathy for People of Beslan."

between the US and Russian experiences with terror, and thus force the Chechen separatist movement into a category of modern global terror rather than an enduring nationalist struggle.³⁰¹

However, a majority of the *Post's* coverage presents a mix of both potential contexts, often presenting Putin's international terrorist narrative along with a representation of the criticism of such claims. An example of this type of hybrid coverage is demonstrated by one article that cites Russian officials as, "blaming the siege on international Islamic terrorists," but counters this context by acknowledging criticism that this rhetoric represents an "effort to deflect attention" from Chechnya, "where a year of on-again, off-again war has brought about a wave of Chechen-related terrorism."³⁰² In this way, readers are presented with both perspectives on the context and can thus make informed judgments. One last example of this type of coverage presents the potential international origins of several of the hostage-takers, but it also offers the counter-narrative that the government may be exaggerating these connections in order to "claim to be fighting international terrorists rather than domestic nationalists."³⁰³ Thus, rather than obscure the political and historical origins of the dispute, the *Post* protects these aspects by providing a counter-context to the one espoused by Russian officials.

The vast majority of the *Post's* Beslan Crisis coverage focuses its contextualization of the conflict on the historical events of the dispute, especially the separatist wars of the 1990s. Various articles describe how "war and upheaval have marked Chechnya for decades," emphasizing the most recent expression of that violence in the "separatist rebellion" of the 1990s

³⁰¹ "Staying Strong in the Face of Terrorism." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409816858?accountid=14709>.

³⁰² Susan B. Glasser, "Putin Angered Critics on Siege; West Fails to Grasp Situation, He Says." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409805789?accountid=14709>.

³⁰³ Baker and Glasser, "Hostage Takers in Russia Argued before Explosion; Chechen Gave Orders by Phone, Investigators Say;" for another example of hybrid contextualization, see Baker and Glasser, "Russia Collects Dead at School; Putin Calls Attacks 'Inhuman' Acts of Terrorism."

and second war that followed.³⁰⁴ Several articles even describe the historical context of the dispute back to the times of the Russian Empire; the *Post* devoted an entire article to presenting background and history of the Russo-Chechen conflict.³⁰⁵ Several of the *Post's* editorial and commentary pieces also provide readers with a deeper contextualization. One such piece describes the “nearly 10 years of brutal Russian-Chechen conflict in Chechnya,” while an editorial chastises Boris Yeltsin for his 1994 invasion of Chechnya, which inevitably “set off an endless and vicious circle of violence” by turning the Chechen capital “into a ghost town of corpses and rubble” and forcing thousands to flee the country.³⁰⁶ These examples of background information provide the *Post's* readers with a reality of the Beslan Crisis that is well rounded and accurately situated within the context of a long and violent dispute.³⁰⁷

Overall, the Washington *Post's* Beslan School Hostage Crisis coverage exemplifies the shifting perspectives that occurred within its reporting over the post-9/11 period. The rising use of “terrorist” as a label and the growing influence of international terrorism as a context, even when subordinated by other frames, symbolizes a shifting trend in the discourse of the Russo-Chechen conflict. Additionally, the massive increase in the personal presentation of the events, along with reduced coverage of the Chechen perspective, demonstrates a shift within the *Post's* decision of how to present the conflict. As a result of this, readers of the *Post's* post-9/11

³⁰⁴ Hoffman, "Chechen Conflict Now Rages Beyond Russia's Expectations."

³⁰⁵ "Why?; Chechnya and Russia have a Long History of Conflict. Last Week a School Became the Battleground." *The Washington Post*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409695609?accountid=14709>; Hoffman, "Chechen Conflict Now Rages Beyond Russia's Expectations."

³⁰⁶ Applebaum, "The Irrationality of Terror;" "Acts of Terror." *The Washington Post*, Sep 03, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409809587?accountid=14709>.

³⁰⁷ For more examples of historical contextualization, see "Today's News." *The Washington Post*, Sep 02, 2004. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409692489?accountid=14709>; Hoffman, "Putin Alleges 'Weakness,' Security Gap; in Speech, Russian Leader Vows to Resist Separatists;" Masha Lipman, "Putin's Burden." *The Washington Post*, Sep 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409680895?accountid=14709>; "Tragedy in Russia." *The Washington Post*, Sep 04, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/409696718?accountid=14709>.

coverage receive a much different picture of the Russo-Chechen conflict than painted in the pre-9/11 coverage.

3.3.3 *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Much like the reporting by the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal's* coverage of the Beslan School Hostage Crisis also presents a culmination of the shifting pattern of frames of representation within the *Journal's* post-9/11 reporting. Thus, these major shifts represent a different understanding of the conflict than that presented in the *Journal* before and after the attacks of September 11th. In order to illustrate this shift, this author has selected appropriate examples from the *Journal's* reporting that serve to characterize the paper's coverage of the Beslan Crisis as a whole.

One of the most striking shifts in the *Journal's* Beslan Crisis coverage is the sharp rise in the "Chechen attackers as terrorists" frame of representation, which had formerly been subordinated by "Chechen attackers as separatists." Although some articles in the *Journal* refrain from using "terrorist" as a human label, the pervasiveness of the term represents a clear shift in the dominant discourse of the conflict. Examples of this shift can be found in several articles that describe the attack on the school. One article describes the "Islamic savagery" of the "terrorists who invaded Middle School No.1," while another describes how, "terrorists wired the building with explosives and kept the hostages with little water and no food."³⁰⁸ Although these

³⁰⁸ Guy Chazan and Gregory L. White, "Russia's Putin Vows to Tighten Security in Wake of School Siege." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398997560?accountid=14709>; George Melloan, "Beslan's Message: Terrorists Don't have Souls." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398906304?accountid=14709>; for more examples of the "terrorist" label applied to the attackers, see "The Children of Beslan." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398906366?accountid=14709>; Gregory L. White, "Russians Fill the Streets to

descriptions highlight the barbarity of the hostage takers, they have another side effect of dehumanizing the attackers and thus obscuring the experiences and motivations that have fueled the cyclic violence of the Russo-Chechen conflict. Thus, readers of the *Journal's* Beslan Crisis coverage may receive a picture of the state of the conflict that is incomplete, ignoring the deep-seeded issues behind the violence of Beslan.

But several articles counter this labeling by presenting a distinction between the Chechen “terrorists” who attacked Beslan, and the wider and more legitimate separatist movement. One article describes the brutal tactics of the attackers, “terrorists deliberately targeted children,” but distinguishes these actions by acknowledging, “Moderate elements in Chechnya do exist.”³⁰⁹ Although the reader receives a vague picture of a “terrorist” attacker, the *Journal* preserves the identity of the Chechen people and the larger separatist movement. One commentary piece couples its descriptions of the “Beslan terrorists” with a statement that “Chechnya’s broader separatist movement... is not made up of extremists.”³¹⁰ In this way, the *Journal* provides its readers with a more rounded understanding of the conflict, and prevents the label of “terrorist” from burying the legitimate political nature of the dispute.

A significant portion of the *Journal's* coverage uses terror as a description not of the attackers themselves, but of their tactics and assaults. These articles use terror very frequently and in various forms, but rather than referring to the attackers, they describe the Beslan Crisis as “terrorism,” part of a “concerted campaign of terror” or one of several “major terrorist

Protest Terrorism; Wave of Attacks Spurs Marches Across Country, Fuels Criticism of Kremlin." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398904954?accountid=14709>.

³⁰⁹ David Satter, "A Small Town in Russia." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398897642?accountid=14709>.

³¹⁰ Adrian Karatnycky, "Weekend Journal; Taste -- Houses of Worship: Blood and Belief." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 10, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398877879?accountid=14709>.

strikes.”³¹¹ The attackers, who are described as “rebels” and “gunmen”, are able to retain a human identity and human qualities rather than becoming faceless mad men. Another example of distancing the *Journal* from the term appears in an article that notes that, “Putin still insists he won’t negotiate with what he calls terrorists,” while consistently describing the attackers as “rebels” and “militants.”³¹² In this way, the *Journal* makes clear that the label “terrorist” is one used by Russian officials and contrasts this presentation with one that leaves room for a more open understanding of the political nature of the conflict. However, it is telling that the use of “terrorist” as a label has risen to dominance in the *Journal’s* Beslan Crisis coverage. Additionally, the pervasive use of “terrorist” (and other labels using this root), which is present in almost every single of the *Journal’s* articles, represents a major shift in the previously used rhetoric to describe the Russo-Chechen conflict. Overall, the rise in use of the “Chechen attackers as terrorists” label tends to obscure the root causes of Russo-Chechen violence for readers.

In contrast to the *New York Times’* and *Washington Post’s* reporting, the narrative of victims and detailed description of the attack and aftermath are entirely absent from the *Wall Street Journal’s* coverage. However, although the *Journal* does not include a single interview with any witness or victim of the attack in its Beslan Crisis coverage, there is a notable increase in the graphic detail paid to the victim’s experience. For example, one article illustrates the

³¹¹ Guy Chazan and, Gregory L. White, "Bold Terror Strikes in Russia Raise Security Fears; Surge of Attacks all Linked to Chechen Rebels Proves Huge Challenge to Putin." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 02, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398942956?accountid=14709>; Guy Chazan, "Putin's Crisis Choices are Limited; Hostage Standoff at School Hasn't Provoked an Outcry, but any Move Poses Risks." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 03, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398906930?accountid=14709>.

³¹² Guy Chazan, "Putin Struggles Over how to React to Terror Surge; Varying Views of the Siege, Past Policies in Chechnya Hamper Coherent Response." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 09, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398871252?accountid=14709>.

experience of the children stating, “their captors denied them so much as a sip of water.”³¹³ Another describes the bloody aftermath of the attack, “there is nothing left of what were once the school’s children -- only pieces.”³¹⁴ Several other of the *Journal’s* articles also include graphic imageries of the event.³¹⁵ Although these descriptions are a far cry from the graphic portrayals provided by the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, they still represent a major shift from the entirely detached nature of the *Journal’s* pre-9/11 coverage. Further, readers of the *Journal* are presented with a much more engaging and vivid picture of the event and its victims than in any previous reporting, and thus are able to understand and sympathize more strongly with those affected by it.

However, despite this increase in graphic content, the majority of the *Wall Street Journal’s* coverage retains the detached style that characterizes the paper’s previous coverage. These articles acknowledge the outcome of the event with statements such as, “the school siege in the Southern Russian city of Beslan... ended in a bloodbath Friday that left more than 300 people dead, nearly half of them children.”³¹⁶ However, no further attention is paid to the victims as the bulk of the reporting focuses on the political repercussions of the attack and responses from Russian officials.³¹⁷ One article even devotes equal time to economic responses to the

³¹³ "The Children of Beslan." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398906366?accountid=14709>

³¹⁴ Satter, "A Small Town in Russia."

³¹⁵ "World-Wide." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398905299?accountid=14709>; Karatnycky, "Weekend Journal; Taste -- Houses of Worship: Blood and Belief;" Daniel Henninger, "Wonder Land -- 9/11 World: This is the Way we Live Now." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 10, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398935711?accountid=14709>.

³¹⁶ Chazan, "Putin Struggles Over how to React to Terror Surge; Varying Views of the Siege, Past Policies in Chechnya Hamper Coherent Response."

³¹⁷ Chazan and White, "Bold Terror Strikes in Russia Raise Security Fears; Surge of Attacks all Linked to Chechen Rebels Proves Huge Challenge to Putin;" Chazan, "Putin's Crisis Choices are Limited; Hostage Standoff at School Hasn't Provoked an Outcry, but any Move Poses Risks;" Chazan and White, "Russia's Putin Vows to Tighten Security in Wake of School Siege.;" Garry Kasparov, "Putin must Go." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 08, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398967812?accountid=14709>.

attack: "Leading Russian business groups yesterday pledged to keep the economy going."³¹⁸ This type of reporting presents readers with a much more distant and obscure perception of the event than the depictions of the other papers.

Overall, the "personal depiction of victims" within the *Journal's* Beslan Crisis coverage, however miniscule in comparison to the other publications, still represents a shift in the pattern of frames of representation previously found in the paper. Additionally, as a result of this shift, readers are provided with a more personal depiction of the nature of the event and its victims than in the pre-9/11 coverage. Another notable shift in the *Wall Street Journal's* Beslan Crisis coverage is the notable decrease in presentation of the "Chechen POV" frame of representation. In fact, the Russian narrative becomes the dominant frame through which the *Journal* presents the Beslan Crisis and conflict as a whole.

Brief demonstrations of the Chechen perspective are evident in several of the *Journal's* commentary pieces. One such piece describes the "endless horrors" of Chechen prison camps and notes that, "there is a fullscale genocide taking place" by "Kremlin-backed bandits who are no different from the terrorists."³¹⁹ In this way, the piece highlights the horrors and violence suffered on the Chechen side of the conflict in order to balance a purely Russian perspective of the fighting. Another piece highlights the moderate nature of the vast majority of the Chechen people, citing that extremists "have broadly failed to win Chechens over to their side." The article goes on to describe the "dozens of calls for a peaceful, negotiated solution to the conflict" offered by the separatist movement.³²⁰ In this way, the presentation of the separatist movement by Russian officials, which typically generalizes Chechens as nonnegotiable extremists, is

³¹⁸ White, "Russians Fill the Streets to Protest Terrorism; Wave of Attacks Spurs Marches Across Country, Fuels Criticism of Kremlin."

³¹⁹ Kasparov, "Putin must Go."

³²⁰ Karatnycky, "Weekend Journal; Taste -- Houses of Worship: Blood and Belief."

countered by a distinctly different point of view.³²¹ However, these examples of the “Chechen POV” frame of representation do not effectively mitigate against the dominant narrative provided by the *Journal*, as the vast majority of coverage exhibits a purely Russian perspective of the Beslan Crisis and surrounding conflict.

The majority of the *Journal's* reporting, including almost all of its actual news articles, neglects to balance the dominant Russian voice with a Chechen voice. In these articles, Russian officials and analysts tell the narrative of the Beslan Crisis and its aftermath within Russian politics.³²² Examples of this type of narrative include comments like “Chechen extremists have turned increasingly to terrorist attacks against Russian civilians” and discuss the reactions of the Russian government, quoting Putin’s call for “an organized and united civil society” in the wake of the violence.³²³ Another describes how “Russia took to the streets to protest terrorism,” calling for increased security measures and improvements in law enforcement.³²⁴ Although this perspective is unsurprising given the ease of access to Russian sources, and the location and nature of the attack, by diminishing the Chechen representation of the conflict, the *Journal* provides its readers with a perception of the dispute that more strictly aligns with Russian views. As a result, readers of the *Journal's* Beslan Crisis coverage may remain uninformed as to the root causes of the fighting and are much less likely to understand the cyclical nature of violence in the conflict than in past reporting.

³²¹ For another article that exhibits this perspective, see Satter, "A Small Town in Russia."

³²² For articles containing only the “Russian POV” frame of representation, see Chazan and White, "Bold Terror Strikes in Russia Raise Security Fears; Surge of Attacks all Linked to Chechen Rebels Proves Huge Challenge to Putin;" Chazan, "Putin's Crisis Choices are Limited; Hostage Standoff at School Hasn't Provoked an Outcry, but any Move Poses Risks;" "The Children of Beslan." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398906366?accountid=14709>; Henninger, "Wonder Land -- 9/11 World: This is the Way we Live Now."

³²³ Chazan and White, "Russia's Putin Vows to Tighten Security in Wake of School Siege;" Melloan, "Beslan's Message: Terrorists Don't have Souls."

³²⁴ White, "Russians Fill the Streets to Protest Terrorism; Wave of Attacks Spurs Marches Across Country, Fuels Criticism of Kremlin."

A final representation of shifting trends in the *Journal's* Beslan Crisis coverage appears in the rising dominance of the "context of wave of terror" frame over top of the "context of historical conflict." Indeed, although the historical background of the dispute is commonplace in the *Journal's* Dubrovka Crisis reporting, in the Beslan coverage it is reduced to a small number of commentary pieces. One such article begins its context with Stalin's deportation of Chechens during the World War Two and traces the history of Chechnya's separatist struggle through the tumultuous 1990s and into the contemporary era, where the movement has split between a "radical terrorist network" and the legitimate "broader separatist movement."³²⁵ This type of contextualization presents a reality of the Russo-Chechen conflict that is grounded in a war for national independence and a longstanding cycle of increasingly brutal fighting. A similar piece begins its contextualization with the Chechen declaration of independence in 1991, and describes the brutal nature Russo-Chechen Wars, especially Putin's ongoing second invasion in which, "Russian forces have launched a campaign of terror in Chechnya, arresting, torturing and murdering thousands of Chechen men."³²⁶ This detailed background provides readers with a much less one-sided perspective of the conflict, and acknowledges the atrocities committed by both sides. However, this historical contextualization is only prevalent in a small number of the *Journal's* articles. The majority exhibits either a hybrid context or one that is based on the phenomenon of international terrorism.

Examples of a combination of contexts are present in several of the *Journal's* articles. One such piece mixes a description of the second invasion of Chechnya in 1999 with a depiction of a "terror wave" in Russia, even going as far as including a timeline of terror attacks from the

³²⁵ Karatnycky, "Weekend Journal; Taste -- Houses of Worship: Blood and Belief."

³²⁶ Satter, "A Small Town in Russia;" for another example of historical contextualization, see Kasparov, "Putin must Go."

September Apartment Bombings until the present.³²⁷ Another exemplary article describes the Beslan Crisis as part of the “war against terrorism” and describes the international nature of terrorism while also presenting the effect of the Second Russo-Chechen War as a “futile campaign of destruction,” which served to “strengthen the resolve of the Chechen insurgents.”³²⁸ In this way, readers are introduced to both potential contexts and are able to glean an understanding of the conflict’s contemporary history. However, most of the *Journal’s* coverage disregards the historical aspects of the dispute, favoring only the “wave of terror” contextualization.

The bulk of the *Wall Street Journal’s* Beslan Crisis coverage favors a more contemporary context for the Russo-Chechen conflict, one that is based on international terrorism rather than separatist ambitions. In these articles, rather than being characterized as part of a long and brutal war, the Beslan Crisis is described as part of a “rain of terror [sic.]” or “wave of terrorist attacks.”³²⁹ Additionally, these pieces describe “assistance from international terrorist groups” supporting the terror acts.³³⁰ Readers are led to understand the Beslan Crisis as part of a modern phenomenon of unjustified violence as opposed to the escalation of decades of bloodshed and oppression. Similar contexts are presented by a commentary and editorial piece. In the former, the attack is placed within the context of “9/11 World,” which the author describes as the

³²⁷ Chazan and White, "Bold Terror Strikes in Russia Raise Security Fears; Surge of Attacks all Linked to Chechen Rebels Proves Huge Challenge to Putin."

³²⁸ Melloan, "Beslan's Message: Terrorists Don't have Souls;" for another example of this hybrid contextualization, see Chazan, "Putin Struggles Over how to React to Terror Surge; Varying Views of the Siege, Past Policies in Chechnya Hamper Coherent Response."

³²⁹ "World-Wide." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398905299?accountid=14709>; Chazan and White, "Russia's Putin Vows to Tighten Security in Wake of School Siege."

³³⁰ White, "Russians Fill the Streets to Protest Terrorism; Wave of Attacks Spurs Marches Across Country, Fuels Criticism of Kremlin."

“constant murdering of people engaged in the mere act of urban life.”³³¹ The article goes on to describe the connections between the attack in Beslan and other terrorist acts from “New York to Moscow, Madrid to Jakarta, Jerusalem, Rome, Nepal and Fallujah.”³³² This type of conflation buries any historical or political roots of the Russo-Chechen conflict by tying the Chechens tightly into a stigma of international terrorism and demolishes any sort of individual identity. An editorial describes the Beslan Crisis as part of the “war on terror” and describes the “current age in which innocents are targeted by Muslim terrorists.”³³³ The article goes on to describe the Beslan attackers: “the murderers were Chechens, aided by Arabs believed to be allied with al Qaeda.”³³⁴ Not only is this description inaccurate (there were no Arabs involved in the Beslan Crisis), but it also blinds readers to the real root causes of the Russo-Chechen conflict in favor of a conspiracy of international terror against the West. Overall, the domination of this “context of wave of terror” in the *Wall Street Journal’s* Beslan Crisis coverage presents a major shift from previous reporting that provided readers with a much more sharply focused understanding of events and their place within the broader Russo-Chechen dispute.

Like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal’s* presentation of the Beslan School Hostage Crisis represents the culmination of shifting perspectives in the post-9/11 era. The increased exhibition of “terrorist” as a label and rise of graphic descriptions of the attack provides readers with a very different picture of the conflict than ever before. Additionally, the decline of Chechen perspective within the coverage along with a contextualization that favors international terrorism over historical background creates an image

³³¹ Henninger, "Wonder Land -- 9/11 World: This is the Way we Live Now."

³³² Ibid.

³³³ "The Children of Beslan." *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 07, 2004, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/398906366?accountid=14709>

³³⁴ Ibid.

of the Russo-Chechen conflict that buries the roots of separatist ambitions and cyclical brutality that led to the Beslan Crisis.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Based on this analysis' examination of the shifting nature of the *New York Times*', *Washington Post*'s, and *Wall Street Journal*'s coverage of the Russo-Chechen conflict before and after 9/11, several conclusions deserve to be highlighted. Although this paper is limited in scope, its conclusions contribute to the larger study of the inherent bias of media sources, and the ways in which events may in turn influence and change that bias.

Most importantly, this analysis demonstrates the major impact that the events of September 11, 2001 had on the interpretations of the Russo-Chechen conflict by each of the three newspapers. The coverage provided by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal* in the pre-9/11 era offered an interpretation of the terrorist attacks that was impersonal, that balanced the presentation of perspectives, and that preserved the historical and political roots of the Russo-Chechen conflict. However, in the post-9/11 reporting of the newspapers, there was a notable change.

After the 9/11 attacks, the newspapers relied on the use of the label of "terrorist" to describe the alleged attackers after 9/11. The risk of this shift is that rather than present the alleged attackers as actors within a historical conflict focused on national identity and independence (as was the case in the pre-9/11 coverage), the newspapers instead presented an interpretation in which the attackers are devoid of legitimate historical motives and a cultural identity. The increasing use of the label terrorist in relations to the Chechen attackers after 9/11,

as opposed to its complete absence in the pre-9/11 era, represents a shift in the dominant discourse and changes how readers might understand the Russo-Chechen conflict. The stigma associated with the “terrorist” label of irrationality and immorality may limit the readers’ understanding of the Chechens’ historical experience and perspective of the conflict. While it is difficult to know how readers reacted to or internalized this new perspective, the shift in coverage made it more likely that readers could draw inaccurate conclusions about the conflict and hence about potential resolutions to it.

Following 9/11, the publications provided increasingly in-depth and personal coverage of the Russian victims of each attack. Although all six of the attacks targeted civilians (including women and children), in the post-9/11 era the newspapers utilized victim narratives, personal interviews, and graphic background descriptions to present a more vivid and intimate presentation of the events. As a result of this shift, readers of the post-9/11 coverage were probably much more likely to empathize with and relate to the experience of the victims. This study has argued that the personal experiences and reactions of the staffs of all three newspapers to the events of 9/11 accounts for this shift in tone and interpretation of the alleged Chechen attacks and the appearance of a much more intimate and in-depth perspective of the victim experience.

This accounts for the much less balanced coverage of Russian and Chechen perspectives in the post-9/11 era. Given that reporters had ready access to the sites of the post-9/11 attacks, it is not surprising that the Russian point of view was overrepresented within the coverage. However, the downplaying of the Chechen point of view, as opposed to the more balanced presentation in the pre-9/11 era, changed in notable ways the interpretation of the conflict found in the newspapers, an interpretation that stressed the Russians as victims and the Chechens as

perpetuators of terrorism. The contrast between the Chechens as victims of Russian aggression before 9/11 and shifting identity of the victim is significant.

Finally, following 9/11, each of the newspapers focused less on creating a historical context for the attacks and instead relied increasingly on evoking the “wave of terror” to set the context for the attacks. This shift represents a conscious decision to downplay the historical roots of the Russo-Chechen conflict in the post-9/11 era. Instead, readers are exposed to an interpretation that highlights the phenomenon of terrorism as the driving force of the conflict, an interpretation that links the events to the US War on Terror rather than to the Russo-Chechen Wars. Such a shift in perspective suggests that readers will be less likely to understand the historical contentions between the Russians and Chechens, and thus misunderstand the political and cultural motivations behind the specific acts of violence. This may lead readers to incorrectly assume that the Russo-Chechen conflict operates by the same circumstances as the US experience with terrorism, thus inhibiting readers from identifying valid methods for resolution.

Overall, these shifts provide readers of the three newspapers post-9/11 coverage with a very different interpretation of the Russo-Chechen conflict than that offered before 9/11. The new interpretation provides much less attention to the historical separatist movement of the Chechens and instead paints the attackers as terrorists without a name or cause. The lack of historical background or attention to the Chechen experience presents readers and US policy makers with an incomplete or incorrect interpretation of the conflict as a whole. It is telling that US criticism, from the public, media, and policymakers, of Russian policy in Chechnya waned significantly after the events of September 11. Unlike the case of Yeltsin in the First Russo-Chechen War, the US did not pressure Putin to end his conflict in Chechnya. Hence the brutal fighting continued indefinitely.

However, it is prudent to acknowledge the constraints of these conclusions. Due to the limited nature of this analysis, it is impossible to generalize about the nature of all US media coverage before and after 9/11. Nevertheless, the conclusions identified in this work are still eye opening to the potential effect of experiential bias on the perspective of print news media in regards to external events. The conclusions of this work call for further analysis of the effects of domestic events on the coverage provided by media of external events. Additionally, these conclusions call for a more critical approach to media representation and its potential effect on readers. One insight that this study makes clear is that the print media is not the unbiased guarantor of the facts that it is often identified as in liberal political theory.

APPENDIX A

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

In order to correspond with the layout of this paper, this appendix separates articles by event and also by publication. The articles are listed in chronological order from their publishing.

A.1 SEPTEMBER APARTMENT BOMBINGS

A.1.1 *The New York Times*

Gordon, Michael R. "Rebels Attack Caucasus Area; Bomb Kills 30." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 06, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110051937?accountid=14709>.

Wines, Michael. "Debate on Cause of Moscow Blast Heats Up." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 10, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110084798?accountid=14709>.

Bohlen, Celestine. "Russians Feel Helpless Against Terror." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 14, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110079680?accountid=14709>.

Gordon, Michael R. "Moscow Blast, 3d in 2 Weeks, Kills at Least 95." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 14, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110067538?accountid=14709>.

Gordon, Michael R. "Caught in a Backlash to Moscow's Bombings." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 15, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110076241?accountid=14709>.

Bohlen, Celestine. "Uneasy Moscow Swept by Rumors About What Yeltsin Will Do." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 16, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110142668?accountid=14709>.

Gordon, Michael R. "Russian Blast Kills 4." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 16, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110072866?accountid=14709>.

Gordon, Michael R. "Another Bombing Kills 18 in Russia." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), Sep 17, 1999. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/110069108?accountid=14709>.

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APPENDIX B

FRAMES OF REPRESENTATION

Chechen attackers as separatists:

The “Chechen attackers as separatists” refers to the labels used by the newspapers in identifying and discussing the attackers in each event. This frame of representation encompasses the descriptive terms: rebels, hostage-takers, militants, and guerillas along with the term separatists. In identifying this frame of representation, this author carefully analyzed each of the articles for every event that specifically referred to the attackers and took careful note of which labels were used by the three newspapers in each case.

Chechen attackers as terrorists:

The “Chechen attackers as terrorists” also refers to the labels applied to the attackers in each event. In this case, the frame of representation only refers to the direct use of terrorist (as well as its various forms, i.e. terror, terrorism) in describing the attackers. The identification of this frame involved the careful analysis of the descriptive labels used in all articles addressing the attackers.

Impersonal depiction of victims:

This frame of representation centers on the ways that the newspapers presented the personal narrative of victims of the attack in each article. Articles exhibiting this frame of representation are characterized by a lack of detail and attention attributed to the victims and their experience of the attack, as well as a lack of graphic depictions of the event and its aftermath. In identifying this frame, this author read each article carefully and analyzed the language and descriptions attributed to victims.

Personal depiction of victims:

The “personal depiction of victims” frame of representation is focused on the attention given to victims by the articles of each publication. Examples of this frame include articles that present extensive detail on victims, their experience, and their background, as well as articles that provide graphic depictions of the event and its aftermath.

Chechen POV:

This frame of representation focuses on the points of view presented by the newspapers in their coverage. Examples of this frame provide readers with a Chechen perspective of the event or conflict as a whole through the subject of the article itself, context provided, or interviews with Chechens. This author identified this frame of representation by carefully reading each article and identifying the particular viewpoints provided in each case.

Russian POV:

The “Russian POV” frame of representation addresses the points of view presented in the coverage of each newspaper. Articles exhibiting this frame include a Russian perspective through interviews with Russians, specific context provided, or the subject of the article itself. In order to identify the “Russian POV” frame of representation, this author carefully analyzed the coverage of each paper and evaluated the viewpoints provided in each article.

Context of historical conflict:

The “context of historical conflict” frame of representation centers on the particular context presented in the reporting of each newspaper. Examples of this frame present readers with a context of historical dispute between Russians and Chechens, highlighting historical events within the conflict (wars, deportation, and other historical events). In identifying this frame of representation, this author analyzed the context of each article, and evaluated the focus of these contexts.

Context of wave of terror:

This frame of representation refers to the specific context presented for readers by the articles of each publication. Articles exhibiting this frame provide a context that dismisses the historical aspects of the conflict in favor of an explanation centered on terrorism as a phenomenon. These articles may discuss previous terror attacks within Russia, or tie the event to the idea of international terrorism. In order to identify this frame of representation, this author considered the context provided for the events in each article by the publications, and identified the explanative focus of these contexts.

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