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THE USE OF RHETORIC AND THE MASS MEDIA IN
RUSSIA'S WAR ON TERROR

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Introduction

Russian President Vladimir Putin has built his political career upon and linked it to the issue of fighting terrorism in Russia. The apparent early 'successes' of the conventional military campaign in Chechnya in 1999 have been replaced by a drawn out guerrilla warfare, which has also spilled over into a terror campaign aimed at striking unprotected civilian targets across the Russian Federation. Mass media have been an important instrument for both sides of this conflict, which have been fighting for the hearts, minds and sympathies of their audience(s). The focus of this particular paper is to look at how the Russian mass media frame and carry the message(s) of key political actors. Of particular interest are matters such as the rhetoric used, and the significance of the time and place that the statement was made.

This paper has been broken down into a number of sections, each dealing with a small section of the broader questions of analysing how and why certain statements come out in the mass media. It begins with a brief description of rhetoric and its use, starting with a historical perspective and the use of rhetoric in a more contemporary sense. By doing so, the foundations of analysis for how the various extracts from the mass media is given. Another important aspect that needs to be explained early in the piece is a definition of the media's role in the war on terrorism, as this is key part of the paper. This section starts with a more Western and academic definition of what could be termed as 'good practice' definition. However, another definition is also given, which is how the Russian authorities view what role should be played by the mass media.

Some basic facts and figures on Russia's casualties as a result of acts of terror are given. Then the thorny issue of defining terrorism and terrorists is tackled. A particularly contentious issue, given the raw emotion and politics that surround these contemporary issues, and has a tendency to cloud our understanding and judgement. This time I start with how the Russian authorities define terrorists and terrorism, before finishing with an academic definition.

With the 'groundwork' laid out, the paper then shall move into analysing various rhetorical frames that are being used by various key Russian actors. The first of these looks at the issue of 'normalising' the Russian war on terror in the international arena. This is followed by an examination of what is termed as the issues of lack of understanding and double standards, followed by calls for unity in the war on terror and finishing with attempts to rhetorically close the gap between Russia and the West through use of examples of common shared history and mutual suffering. It should be noted here that a number of extracts can contain more than one of the rhetorical frames.

¹ By mass media I am referring to primarily mass means of communication, for the most part; TV, radio, print media and Internet. Although this paper focuses primarily on newspapers and Internet. This paper was given in St Andrews on December 20, 2005 at the British International Studies Association annual conference.

Rhetoric – A brief Description

In a classical sense, rhetoric relates to the discussion of a special topic, which is influenced by the factors of emotion and character. In this sense: “Let rhetoric be the power to observe the persuasiveness of which any particular matter admits.” Additionally, proof is achieved more effectively when speech utilises a real or an apparent aspect of a particular subject.² In a simplistic understanding rhetoric focuses on the relationship that exists between the sender and the texts.³ In this paper I shall take more of a sophism approach to the study and not the point of view of Plato, who took into consideration ethical considerations and the truthfulness (or otherwise) of the argument. The focus therefore shall be on the nature of the arguments used, and not whether or not they are ethically defensible or truthful.

“The choice of rhetorical means must be adequate to the topic, which is an essential part of the situation. Classical rhetoric put great emphasis on the fact that rhetorical communication always takes place at a certain occasion, at a particular time, directed at a particular audience, with a particular purpose. Rhetoric is, in other words, fundamentally pragmatic in its orientation.”⁴

Rhetorical theory identifies three main means of persuasion available to the sender; *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. *Ethos* is concerned with use of emotion as the means of persuasion. It is tied to the impression given by and the credibility of the speaker. The use of *logos* relates to word, speech and reasoning. In rhetoric there are two primary types of intellectual persuasion – deduction and induction. *Pathos* concerns the use of emotions, especially those that exert an almost ‘overpowering’ influence on the receiver. This may range from; trust, respect to joy, anger and grief.⁵

This work shall focus on the aspect of fragments of speech, by key political actors in Russia, as they were reported in the mass media. Aspects to be taken into account shall include; the event that triggered a particular rhetorical ‘campaign’, the choice and nature of the language used, who made the comments under analysis and possible political objectives. The mass media are viewed as the carrier or bearer of the message, the conduit for a particular message, if you will. Some attention will be paid to the status of the media outlets in question, whether they are state-owned, ‘independent’ or owned by a particular political or business interest.

Defining the Media’s Role in the War on Terror

In *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, a commentary is made on the mass media’s role in the environmental sector, with specific reference to the securitisation of an

² Aristotle (Translation, Introduction and Notes by Lawson-Tancred, H. C.) (2004), *Aristotle: The Art of Rhetoric*, London, Penguin Books, pp. 74-75.

³ Gripsrud, J. (2002), *Understanding Media Culture*, London, Arnold, p. 154.

⁴ Gripsrud, J. (2002), *Understanding Media Culture*, London, Arnold, p. 156.

⁵ Gripsrud, J. (2002), *Understanding Media Culture*, London, Arnold, pp. 163-65.

incident or issue. It is possible, with modification to apply the reasoning and logic behind this, to the contemporary issue of terrorism, and the phenomenon of *global terrorism* in particular.

“The reference to the general good is important; it implies that local conflicts are the result of considerations about wider contexts. Dealing with the causes leads to pre-emptive, low intensity conflicts to avoid high intensity disaster. In the face of such environmental security policies, the local scale maybe the main level of implementation and conflict, but it is not the level at which security in this sector crystallizes. The fear of cumulative negative effects on regional and global scales motivates the policies.”⁶

Some have argued that the use of crisis, be it imagined or real, as a means of stifling the mass media. “Invoking a state of crisis has, at least in the past half-century been the classical strategy for legitimating the silencing of media criticism, and the tendency for the media is to go along.”⁷ This is a problem that has been recognised for some time. In 1977 a UNESCO commission that was headed by Sean MacBride (completed in 1980) studied the “problem of institutionalised state controlled information” (International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems) and produced what has become known as the “MacBride Report”. A concise description of the report highlights the findings.

“While institutional communication may be necessary, the report concluded, it can be used to manipulate opinion, to monopolise the sources of information, it can also abuse the principles of government secrecy or state ‘security’ by concealing basic facts.”⁸

One of the ‘problems’, which is by no means solely confined to the present situation in Russia, is the proximity of the mass media to society’s establishment. This has been discussed and theorised about on numerous occasions, and is not likely to leave the topic of discussion any time soon either. George Gerber has described this relationship, rationalised it and gave it a historical comparison (of institutional interdependence). “Media are the cultural arms of any establishment. Private media relate to public authorities as the Church did to the state in medieval times. It is a symbiotic relationship of mutual dependence and tension.”⁹

⁶ Buzan, B., Waever, O. & de Wilde, J. (1998), *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 88.

⁷ Raboy, M. & Dagenais, B. (editors) (1992), *Media, Crisis and Democracy: Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order*, London, Sage, p. 5.

⁸ Raboy, M. & Dagenais, B. (editors) (1992), *Media, Crisis and Democracy: Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order*, London, Sage, pp. 37-38.

⁹ Raboy, M. & Dagenais, B. (editors) (1992), *Media, Crisis and Democracy: Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order*, London, Sage, p. 94.

It has been espoused by some that the mass media's reporting reflects the interests of those who own it. Ownership and control can be two completely different things though, as one does not necessarily need to own a media asset to control it. Taking Gerber's observation a little further and reflecting the balance between being perceived as being independent, and not 'upsetting' powerful interests:

“Like editors, reporters are granted autonomy by demonstrating that they will not use it beyond acceptable limits. They are independent agents in a conditional way, free to report what they like as long as their superiors like what they report.”¹⁰

Mass media are a conduit through which society obtains their images that they will derive their sense of reality. In this sense media have three important properties, the importance of which is even further elevated in times of difficulty and/or stress; a *mirror*, a *witness* and a *transmitter*.

- Mirror – reality is amplified through the images that the media transmit. This gives a certain definition of reality.
- Witness – the survival of democracy is ensured as the media see and hear events and act in the capacity as a watchdog. They can also add credibility or otherwise, to an event.
- Transmitter – media act as an intermediary for all groups that are able to express themselves and transmit their image to the public (the so-called ‘CNN Effect’).¹¹

However, this idealised image of the mass media seems to run into a variety of problems and contradictions. One of these initial problems being the apparent contradiction with Gerber's statement, that the mass media being an arm of the establishment. This if true, would cast serious doubts on the mass media's ability to act as an effective watchdog of democracy and truth. They are certainly a mirror of a certain ‘reality’ through the images they transmit, however, does this reflect a desired ‘political reality’ (agenda) or the actual reality of events? A final problem to point out at this stage relates to the transmitter qualities of the media. They act as an intermediary for the actors that are able to express themselves and get their message across. This is potentially helpful, however, those who are not ordinarily able to do this are society's most vulnerable and arguably most in need of getting their message across to a wider audience. Is it possible to break this cycle?

Taking Gerber's statement as being correct and adding the facet of the mass media acting in the capacity of a mirror from society determines its reality, a potentially powerful asset is in the making. “Thus while the media serve as resources for a majority of the population in their roles as audiences, they have increasingly become a resource, or more aptly, a tool for powerful social actors.”¹² The mass media as a source of manipulation or

¹⁰ Parenti, M. (1993), *Inventing Reality: The Politics of News Media*, Second Edition, New York, St Martins Press, p. 40.

¹¹ Raboy, M. & Dagenais, B. (editors) (1992), *Media, Crisis and Democracy: Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order*, London, Sage, p. 123.

¹² Axford, B. & Huggins, R. (Editors) (2001), *New Media and Politics*, London, Sage Publications, p. 81.

policy promoting/making is far from a novel concept. Serving the dual capacity as a source of information and a source of influence requires careful coordination and control over both images and discourse.

In late November 2005, Nikolai Patrushev, the Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB) was interviewed by the Russian government owned newspaper *Rossiskaya Gazeta* where he interviewed about the fight against terrorism. When discussing the measures that are necessary in efforts to combat terrorism, the mass media's role was mentioned.

“I believe that it is essential to increase responsibility in law for the dissemination of extremist materials through the mass media and telecommunications systems, particularly the Internet. The reason for this is that terrorists, taking account of the great significance of the media in modern society, are now attempting increasingly frequently to use them as auxiliary resources to achieve their criminal objectives. The urgency of this matter is confirmed by the adoption by the UN Security Council in September of a resolution that criminalised incitement to terror. Its binding nature opens the way for tough legislative counterterrorist initiatives at the national level.

Unfortunately, this has still not yet become the norm for all states. Thus, despite all our appeals, the *Kavkaz-Tsentr* Internet site, which not only fuels ethnic and religious strife but also calls in practice for the commission of terrorist attacks, continues to find refuge in first one, then another country.”¹³

President Putin has also hinted a role that will be developed for the Russian media in a campaign against challenging contemporary societal issues such as; countering drug trafficking and the war on terrorism. Under the umbrella of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CTSO – Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia), a conference began in Moscow on December 8, 2005 – the Second International Anti-Terrorist Media Forum.¹⁴ The media are in this respect being used as a means with which to enact or at least publicise/popularise state goals (including a coalition of states).

The authorities' relationship with the mass media during the Russian War on Terror seems on the surface to be a somewhat contradictory one. On the one hand, it is feared that the mass media will be hijacked and used by media savvy terrorist groups. It assumes a passive mass media (that will not offer resistance to a 'takeover') and a passive audience (in order to 'believe' the terrorists' message). However, on the other hand, the authorities view the mass media as being an essential vehicle for mobilising resources and public opinion. The effectiveness or otherwise of the campaign has been tied to the

¹³ *FSB Head Patrushev Interviewed on Fight Against Terrorism*, *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, 24 November, 2005. Johnson's Russia List (JRL) #9305, 27 November, 2005.

¹⁴ *Putin Recognises Role of Media in Fighting Terrorism and Extremism*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 8 December, 2005.

state's ability to mobilise. This view, of the need for mobilisation and unity was expressed by the Russian Security Council Secretary, Igor Ivanov in a briefing.

“These efforts on the part of the authorities will not prove productive if they lack public support. People need to understand these problems and play an active part in resolving them. We will only be able to protect ourselves from terrorism if society gets involved in the fight against this threat.”¹⁵

Russia's War on Terror – Some Basic Facts and Figures

At 0500 on the 13th of September, 1999 an explosion ripped through a residential block at Kashirskoye Shosse in Moscow. A total of 124 people were killed and 149 injured as a result of this attack. A similar incident occurred four days earlier in Guryanova Street. In addition to these two Moscow locations, a residential dwelling in Volgodonsk was also subject of a terrorist attack on the 16th of September. A total of 240 people were killed as a result of these three initial attacks, which signalled the beginning of a new terror campaign in Russia.¹⁶ At the Terrorism and Electronic Mass Media conference at Gelendzhik (Krasnodar Territory) in October 2005, Moscow's Police Chief, Colonel General Vladimir Pronin stated that in the period from 1999 until 2004 some 13 terrorist attacks had been carried out in Moscow. This had resulted in some 354 dead and 647 injured.¹⁷ A spate of terrorist attacks across Russia between August and September 2004 claimed over 500 lives alone.¹⁸

According to Police Colonel Alexander Trudov, Chief of the Sixth Sector of the Interior Ministry's Crime Investigation Department, the number of explosions (bomb blasts) began to decline since 1997. However, there has been an increase since 2001, with 871 recorded explosions. By 2003 this number had increased to 1370, with a decline to 826 in 2004 (up until 1 December).¹⁹

Defining Terrorism and Terrorists

The word and the concept “terrorist” and terrorism have become a very value loaded and hotly contested words and concepts. One thing that has emerged clearly in the debate on terrorists and terrorism is that it is very much in the eye of the beholder. Key political actors in Russia have relayed their definition(s) of terrorists and terrorism. The definitions

¹⁵ *Anti-terror Measures need Broad Public Support – Russian Official*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 13 September, 2004. See also *The Effectiveness of the War on Terror will Depend on how Effectively all Society's Resources are Organised*, President of Russia – Official Web Portal, <http://president.kremlin.ru>, 13 September, 2004.

¹⁶ *Five Years After Explosion of Residential Block in Kashirskoye Shosse*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 13 September, 2004.

¹⁷ *13 Terror Attacks with 354 Dead Committed in Moscow in 5 Years – Pronin*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 26 October, 2005.

¹⁸ *Unprecedented and Useless*, Mosnews, www.mosnews.com, 8 July, 2005.

¹⁹ *Bomb Blasts Claim 179 Lives all Over Russia this Year*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 21 December, 2004.

have links with some of the rhetorical frames, which will be described later on in this work. In the wake of the Beslan attack in September 2004, Putin called for the need for an international definition of terrorism, which he hoped would help weed out what he terms as being “double standards”.

“We believe that there should be not only the same definition of terrorism for everybody but we should also mean the same things when we talk about it. Bin Laden has twice offered a truce to Europe in exchange for withdrawal of troops from Iraq, but nobody has entered into negotiations with him, because the methods and means he chooses make it impossible to maintain dialogue with him.”²⁰

The problem of the word/concept of terrorist was raised by Putin again in early 2005 in regard to a press conference on the report of an operation in Kabardino-Balkaria. Interrupting Interior Minister, Rashid Nurgaliyev's report on the incident, Putin stated “what you should refrain from is the use of their terminology, all this jamaat nonsense. Bandits will be bandits.”²¹ Putin's interruption and comment seems to reflect a concern regarding legitimacy. Perhaps, by using the ‘bandits’ terminology, it may be granting them some measure of legitimacy. And by referring to them as ‘bandits,’ legitimacy is being withheld or removed. Another incident involving terminology and legitimacy occurred in a condemnation of the terror attacks on the Egyptian tourist resort of Sharm el-Sheikh by Russia's Chief Rabbi, Adolf Shayevich. He referred to terrorists as “zombies and sick people having false and man-hating ideals.”²² The use of such strong rhetoric is used to try and strip away any semblance of humanity of the public notion of the terrorist. And in doing so makes this ‘Other’ group much easier to despise as it has little or nothing left in common with those who constitute the ‘We.’

Approximately one month later, Sergei Mironov, the Federation Council Chairman raised the issue of the need to create a common definition. “If such a definition existed, some people who are travelling to various conferences to speak on behalf of so-called advocates of independence or some liberation movements would be called by their names, with all of the consequences following from this.”²³ The statements by Putin and Mironov clearly display some of the frustrations experienced by the Russian authorities, especially with regard to the calls for Russia to enter into negotiations over Chechnya and a number of ‘exiles’ who have been granted asylum.

A Russian Foreign Ministry (FM) statement that was released on the 3rd anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the United States' mainland used a variety of similes and rhetoric to ‘draw’ a picture of terrorism as an evil entity, which is the threat of the 21st century and thus requires a united front.

²⁰ *Putin Favours Unified Definition of Terrorism*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 16 September, 2004.

²¹ *Putin Wants Bandits to be Called Bandits*, Itar-Tass, <http://itar-tass.com/eng>, 21 February, 2005.

²² Lipich, O., *Chief Rabbi calls Terrorists Zombies and Sick People*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 25 July, 2005.

²³ *Mironov Calls for International Definition of Terrorism*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 20 October, 2004.

“Terrorism is Nazism of the 21st century. The only way to defend ourselves against it is rooting it out. On September 11, 2001, many came to realize that the world had undergone an irrevocable change. New-generation terrorism then put itself on the world map in a most hideous manner. Back then, not all of us could fully comprehend the actual magnitude of the threat posed by our attackers. The entire world reawakened to this threat when shaken by yet another barbarous terrorist act – this time around, in Russia. Terrorism, which affects many countries, is international in nature and has no ethnic, religious, cultural, or any other affiliation. Terrorism defies all legal and moral constraints. Its goal is to destroy the very foundation of our civilization, to subdue the world to its will. We, the civilized world, will surely win in the mortal combat against terror if we come to realise that terrorism is our No. 1 enemy and if we join hands and act consistently and honestly toward one other [...] countering terrorist threats’ new dimension with a qualitatively new level of anti-terrorist partnership, absolutely free of double standards.”²⁴

The Foreign Ministry statement is loaded with emotional rhetoric; historical comparisons (with Nazism), a merciless enemy, a common enemy and the stated need for unity between Russia and the world in order to defeat their common enemy. The use of history comes not only through the use of a common historical enemy (which required a common front), but also on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and in the wake of the Beslan attack. The description of the ‘new-generation’ terrorist enemy paints the picture of a group that has no kind of cultural or social ties with the outside world (i.e. ‘civilised world’). By depicting the common enemy in this manner, it presents the picture of a polarised world between ‘us’ and the ‘other’. In doing so, Russia presents itself and the ‘civilised world’ as an ‘us’ and the new-generation terrorist as an ‘other’. Thus, it is a lot easier to form an alliance with a group that can be more closely identified to your own.

The Deputy Head of the Centre for Political Technologies, Alexei Makarkin, identified what he termed as a ‘new generation’ of terrorism. A breed that is distinct from the period that existed during and before the Cold War.

“Modern civilisation has faced a new phenomenon that has little in common with the usual political radicalism of the previous decades. At that time, terrorism was part of the armed struggle for national liberation. Now the situation has undergone a dramatic change. The terrorists among religious fanatics (representatives of radical Wahhabism) do not limit themselves to local tasks: They want to change the whole world according to their own pattern. Their ideals appeal both to social outsiders who kill policemen in Dagestan, and to

²⁴ (a) *Russian Foreign Ministry: New-Generation Terrorism has put Itself on the World Map*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 11 September, 2004.

(b) *Russia Rejects “Double Standards” in Dealing With Terrorism*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 11 September, 2004.

people with a Western education who perpetrated acts of terror in New York and London.”²⁵

Makarkin's comments on the one hand, give a historical account of terrorism and imply that terrorism has evolved from the old model into a form that is a potential threat to 'modern civilisation' as it is non-selective in who it targets. He attempts to narrow the perceived difference between terrorism in Russia and the West through a selective use of examples; New York and Washington are compared to the situation in Dagestan in this instance.

Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), Nikolai Patrushev promoted the need to arrive at a unified definition, and therefore action, on terrorism. “We have to take a more proactive approach in eventually working out an adjusted definition of terrorism. It is time that we created a legal basis for a person as a terrorist in one country to be treated likewise in all countries and therefore deprived of political asylum.”²⁶ This quote illustrates the problem of definition; a terrorist to one group may be a freedom fighter for another. It is surrounded and clouded by issues of political, culture and other facets. However, to condense and clarify a simplified understanding for use here the following will suffice:

“Terrorism is understood here as the symptomatic use of coercive intimidation against civilians for political goals. This concept identifies this phenomenon by the techniques, targets, and goals; and all these attributes are regarded as necessary and sufficient for an act to qualify as terrorism. ‘Terrorist’ are those who employ the methods of terrorism.”²⁷

Use of Rhetoric – Normalising Russia's War on Terror on the International Stage

When going to or engaged in warfare, the conflict that appears in the mass media parallels the fighting ‘on the ground’. It is common practice for governments and authorities to ‘soften up’ the domestic and international public to prepare them for war and as a means of justification for what is about to come. One of the ‘tried and true’ strategies that are employed in information warfare is the simplification and bipolarisation of the impending conflict and the key actors involved (on both sides). American academic George Gerbner highlights this aspect.

“Stigmatisation and demonisation isolate their targets and set them up to be victimised. The cultural context in which that can precipitate social paranoia and political crisis is the historically unprecedented discharge of media violence into the mainstream of common

²⁵ Oganessian, A., *New Generation Terror*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 15 August, 2005.

²⁶ *Terrorism Needs Clear Definition, Says FSB Chief*, RIA Novosti, 15 April, 2005.

²⁷ Norris, P., Kern, M. & Just, M. (editors) (2003), *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, The Government, and the Public*, London, Routledge, p. 6.

consciousness. The ultimate victim is a community's ability to think rationally and creatively about conflict, injustice and tragedy."²⁸

Following from Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda' model of 1988, an 'ideology' of anti-terrorism seems to have filled the post Cold War void as the 'political control mechanism' of the mass media.²⁹ In a sense of general application, it helps to mobilise the population against a poorly defined enemy, 'legitimises' measures that may potentially threaten freedom in an otherwise democratic society. The way in which it is employed is designed to keep the domestic opposition on the defensive as they can be labelled as being; naïve, enemy sympathisers or even traitors. As such, the use of discourse is intended to narrow public debate and eventually 'weed-out' dissenting views. This is done on the assumption that the established 'We' are righteous and this enables them to defend themselves against the cruel 'Them' who are described as being bent on destroying the people and culture of the 'We'.

The authorities have painted the picture of their enemy in a manner that is similar to what is described above. Putin once publicly defined a 'terrorist' in the following manner; "terrorists are bandits who hide behind political, religious or nationalist slogans to try to resolve questions that have nothing to do with what they publicly state."³⁰ After the Beslan School attack in September 2004 a harsher and more sinister rhetorical account of the enemy appears to have taken place. One of the frames that have emerged revolves around the slogan of "some people are unfit for talks". In the wake of the Beslan attack, Putin was at a CIS conference in Astana (Kazakhstan), where he issued the comment "there are people with whom no talks can be held", after which he made some links to other frames by mentioning Osama Bin Laden as being one such person and double standards in the War Against Terrorism.³¹

The 'new' type of Chechen terrorist was described in the mass media too, which placed emphasis on the 'international' dimension to the conflict and the ruthless nature of this actor. The Defence Minister, Sergei Ivanov described them in an interview on *NTV*:

"The latest series of terrorist attacks – airplane crashes, the explosion near Moscow Rizhskaya metro station, and the terrible tragedy in Beslan – indicates that this war is becoming a system, and we are facing a powerful adversary. This does not mean that there are many of (enemy fighters) around. The point is that they are well organised, well controlled, and undoubtedly enjoy substantial financial support. Many militants fight not for an ideology, but just for money. There is no

²⁸ Gerbner, G., *Violence and Terror in and by the Media* in Raboy, M. & Dagenais, B. (editors) (1992), *Media, Crisis and Democracy: Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order*, London, Sage, pp. 94 – 107, p. 97.

²⁹ See Herman, E. S. & Chomsky, N. (1988), *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, New York, Pantheon for the model.

³⁰ *No Talks With Chechens After Beslan – Putin*, Mosnews, www.mosnews.com, 16 September, 2004.

³¹ *Putin: Some People are Unfit for Talks*, RBC News, <http://top.rbc.ru/english>, 16 September, 2004.

forward edge in this war, we cannot see the enemy, so it is just impossible to use army methods to defeat such an enemy.”³²

Ivanov gives a vivid collection of terrorist acts committed by an enemy that is described as being driven by money rather than an ideology. They are not portrayed as an inept and disorganised rabble, but as a ruthless, powerful and unseen enemy that will not be stopped easily and through the use of ‘conventional’ methods.

“Double Standards” and a “Lack of Understanding”

Rhetoric of the nature of ‘double-standards’ and/or a ‘lack of understanding’ is a current strain of discourse in communications with the ‘West’ by the Russian authorities, through the mass media. It would appear to be used as a means of policy pursuit or policy justification in the conduct of their war against ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorists’. One of the sources of irritation, as was mentioned before, is the issue of the so-called exiles that have been granted asylum in Europe and the United States. The level of frustration increases when they receive publicity through making statements in the mass media.

One week after the bloody finale at Beslan, *RIA Novosti* raised the issue of Chechen exiles and Russia’s failure to convince the West that Chechnya was an anti-terrorist operation. An extensive interview with Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the State Duma’s international committee, on the matter was published. The story sets out Russia’s case and the problems that are faced in the process of attaining the demands stipulated by the West.

“For example, Europeans and Americans continue to plainly ignore Moscow’s major demands on extraditing (Ilyas) Akhmadov and Zakayev. However, says Mr. Kosachev in the interview to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* newspaper, it does not mean that they turn their back on Russia. They just need comprehensive evidence of these persons’ involvement in the terrorist activities. And the Russian side cannot obtain this evidence until these men are brought to its territory and the investigation is completed.

Russia, complains Mr. Kosachev, has so far failed to convince the rest of the world that the Chechen operation for the country is an anti-terrorist operation. And the lack of argumentation is primarily to blame. This being the case, without full-scale cooperation with the West and the East, Russia will never settle the Chechen problem. ‘I am not speaking about internationalising the problem, [...] I am speaking about cooperation in suppressing the flash-points of terrorism on the territory of the Chechen Republic, because they could simply not exist without external support. The situation is aggravated by the fact that it is extremely difficult to obtain exhaustive revelatory information on the

³² *Latest Terrorist Attacks in Russia were Perpetrated by Mercenaries – Sergei Ivanov*, *RIA Novosti*, <http://en.rian.ru>, 12 September, 2004.

terrorists for the West in Chechnya, because the present-day terrorists are rather educated and competent, many of them have worked for special services and have a clear understanding of where they can be caught and how to avoid such traps.”³³

Implied in the story is not only the ‘problems’ faced by Russia in transmitting the message to the outside world, but an implied lack of understanding theme. This comes through in the mentioning of the situation in Chechnya, especially with the reference to the contemporary ‘educated’ breed of terrorist. The first part of the quoted extract implores the necessity to extradite the exiles, however stopping short of accusing the named countries of shunning Russia. Kosachev on the one hand rues the apparent inability of Russia to formulate a convincing case. Yet on the other hand he blames ‘external support’ for perpetuating the conflict. There is a lack of emotional rhetoric in this particular article, which instead utilises a ‘logical’ form of reasoning to persuade the reader of the case.

One of the leading sources of annoyance has been the Chechen separatist emissary Akhmed Zakayev, who has received sanctuary in the United Kingdom. Leader of the Communist Party, Gennady Zyuganov issued an appeal to the US and UK to expel what he termed as ‘foreign emissaries of the Chechen rebels’ from their respective territories as a mark of commitment and solidarity in the campaign against terrorism. “Let Blair and Bush expel at least Zakayev alone instead of telling tales of fighting international terrorism. Zakayev knows all the secret hideouts, all the sources of financing and could give very important testimony to the investigation.”³⁴ As the level of activity of the exiles has increased so has the official Russian response, in opposition to the likes of Zakayev. The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a strong protest concerning the “sharply intensified anti-Russian activities” of both Zakayev and self-exiled oligarch Boris Berezovsky. It was noted that the slanderous remarks are receiving increasingly broad coverage in the media, including the state-owned BBC, but are not met with an adequate official response.” The message went on to state that as the British had given refuge to these people, they had to accept full responsibility for their actions.”³⁵

A little over one year later, in the wake of the attack on the Southern Russian town of Nalchik, the issue was revived. Once again, Zakayev appeared in the British media and publicly voiced “support” for the raid. The presidential envoy for international cooperation in combating terrorism, Anatoli Safanov, issued a commentary on the FM website. “This propagandist of terrorism, this terrorist instigator again expressed public support for terror, for the barbaric actions of the militants in Kabardino-Balkaria. Once again, he openly and blatantly called for violence, for killing Russian civilians.”³⁶ On October 16, 2005, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov commented further on the

³³ *Without Support of West and East Russia will Never Suppress Hotbeds of Chechen Terrorism*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 10 September, 2004.

³⁴ *West’s Reluctance to Expel Chechen Emissaries Shows Lack of Cooperation – Zyuganov*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 14 September, 2004.

³⁵ *Russia Criticises UK for Sheltering Berezovsky, Zakayev*, Mosnews, www.mosnews.com, 17 September, 2004.

³⁶ *Zakayev’s Comments in British Media Anger Russia*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 14 October, 2005.

situation on the state channel *RTR*'s programme *Vesti Nedeli* (News of the Week), where he described Zakayev's actions as being criminal. He went further: "I think that we can define such appeals as a crime. Moscow will make a statement, presumably, to British colleagues and voice the need to ensure the fulfilment of resolutions of the UN Security Council."³⁷ The comments made by Zakayev to *Reuters* that were of the most concern were: "This was a legitimate military operation which took place in the framework of the Caucasus front" and he stated that Russia should "definitely" expect more attacks.³⁸ A lot of use is made of references to issues of morality and law in this particular rhetorical frame – of double standards in relation to the exile issue.

On the fourth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the State Duma was especially active in initiating a campaign of rhetoric on the issue of double standards and lack of international unity in the global war on terror. They issued a statement to the effect, where they outlined Russian concerns in what they saw as a 'division' of terrorists – into 'good' and 'bad' categories. "Double standards in the struggle against the main evil of modern times, attempts to make advances to terrorists, divide them into 'good' and 'bad', and trying to explain or justify the actions of those capable of shooting cold-bloodedly at children weaken the anti-terrorist coalition."³⁹ The resolution that was issued by the Duma continued, drawing a link between Al Qaeda and the Chechens, as well as the costs of engaging in this 'policy.' "Pursuing al-Qaeda terrorists and at the same time being lenient toward representatives from its 'Chechen cell' means leaving at large a dangerous enemy capable of using all of the possibilities of the democratic system against the security and lives of both Russian and British citizens."⁴⁰ This part of the resolution conveys an image of Russia and the democratic world (with an emphasis on the UK) being locked into one and the same conflict and that the 'Chechen cell' is only a piece of a larger puzzle. It also places importance on the 'need' to neutralise all parts of this cell in order to gain some measure of security for Russian and British citizens. Boris Gryzlov, the Speaker of the State Duma, drew a final parallel and a hope in witnessing 'coordinated action' against global terrorism.

"When we speak of the 9/11, Nord Ost and Beslan, we speak of tragedies the world will never be able to forget. The memory of the victims and grief, the awareness of responsibility before future generations will have us do everything possible to put a barrier to new terrorist attacks. The will of all the nations across the world should be focussed on achieving precisely that goal."⁴¹

³⁷ *Moscow to Make Statement to London re Zakayev Interview*, Itar-Tass, <http://itar-tass.com/eng>, 16 October, 2005.

³⁸ *Russia Angered by Zakayev Statement on Nalchik Crisis, Urges London to Act*, Mosnews, www.mosnews.com, 17 October, 2005.

³⁹ (a) *Duma Seeks Solidarity in Anti-terror Fight*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 9 September, 2005.

(b) *Update: State Duma calls on Anti-terrorism Coalition to Coordinate Efforts*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 9 September, 2005.

⁴⁰ *Update: State Duma calls on Anti-terrorism Coalition to Coordinate Efforts*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 9 September, 2005.

⁴¹ (a) *Russian MP calls for International Unity Against Terrorism on 9/11 Anniversary*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 11 September, 2005.

“Unity” in the War on Terrorism

‘Unity’ as it appears in the mass media would appear to be taken at two levels; one on a national basis and the other at the international level. In the context of the national unity, references are made to the need to harness and direct various resources in the campaign, as was mentioned earlier in the paper in the section on mass media. A brief article that appeared in the private news agency *RBC News* demonstrates this aspect amply.

“Fighting terrorism first of all needs unity of action of all executive authorities, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared at an extended meeting of the government. He underlined that fighting terrorism was a national task and all state resources should be mobilised to fulfil it. In this connection, it is first of all necessary to ensure the unity of the country, the unity of action of executive agencies and the public.”⁴²

An interesting aspect of Putin’s mobilisation of society call is that it implies that after approximately five years of being involved in an anti-terror campaign with the Chechen rebels that Russian society is still not fully engaged in this war. The Deputy Director of the Moscow Carnegie Centre, Dmitry Trenin stated the perceived problem, which Russia faces at a round table conference in September 2004.

“Terrorism is not a policy but an instrument. The goal of Shamil Basayev and his likes is to destabilise the situation not only in the North Caucasus but also in the Volga Region, to undermine the peoples’ trust in the Kremlin administration, to unleash a war, to split Russia and to create a Muslim caliphate in its ruins. The al-Qaeda comrades of the Chechen terrorists pursue similar goals. They are trying to involve Washington in the struggle in the Islamic world, to use it in order to replace authoritarian regimes in some major Arab countries, which they want to unite under radical slogans, and to dictate their conditions to the world.”⁴³

The proposition that terrorists were creating and using social, ethnic and religious divisions in Russia to attain their political ends was raised by Putin at the Council for Interaction with Religious Associations (and a mere three weeks after Beslan). “There are in Russia, with its age-long experience of peaceful coexistence, many peoples and religions, and the struggle against this threat is, in the full sense, the struggle for the unity of our country.” He urged that citizens do not vent their anger against people of another faith or nationality as this would play into the hands of the terrorists. Putin also urged

(b) *World Community Should put up Roadblock to International Terrorism* – Speaker, Itar-Tass, <http://itar-tass.com/eng>, 11 September, 2005.

⁴² *Fighting Terrorism Needs United Actions of Executive Authorities*, RBC News, www.rbcnews.com, 13 September, 2004.

⁴³ Litovkin, V. (military commentator), *Moscow Carnegie Centre Discusses Terrorism*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 16 September, 2004.

calm and patience, as measures were being taken that would eradicate terrorism, but that it would take time.⁴⁴ Under the circumstances, with the existing social tensions that were likely to be heightened after the Beslan attack, Putin is trying to communicate to the nation's leading religious heads in an effort to maintain some form of workable balance. His appeal makes use of a civic nation, which is one devoid of religious or ethnic identity so as to not inflame passions further. And calls for the diverse groups and interests to come together under adversity and work for a common purpose of Russian unity and the defeat of terrorism.

One of the frames that is apparent in the Russian news media is on the issue of global "unity" in the war against terrorism. The impression of unity is conveyed by a number of themes, one of which is the issue of Russian cooperation with international partners. The stories are used to convey images of trust and reliability as well as the appearance of consensus. In November 2005 the state news agency *Itar-Tass* covered a story on cooperation in the field of countering terrorism between the US and Russia. *Itar-Tass* interviewed Henry Crumpton on the talks that were scheduled to take place in December.

"We are taking a very robust delegation because we place so much emphasis on our bilateral relations with Russia. My portion of it – looking at counter terrorism – we'll be looking at terrorism not only in terms of the activities of the terrorist groups but also the motivation of our enemies and trying to understand them and this evolving battlefield, global battlefield and how we can cooperate more closely on these issues. [...] the need to have bonds of personal trust not only in the intelligence field, but also in a diplomatic and the military and law enforcement – across the board."⁴⁵

The published quotations from *Itar-Tass* are used to give the impression of a close and valued working relationship between the United States and Russia. In addition to this message, the combating of a mutual enemy under trying circumstances is given (an evolving global battlefield). The closing part of the given quote seems to be designed to bestow legitimacy to the proposed partnership, by not being solely based upon a military foundation, but by a variety of state institutions.

In addition to 'unity' on the basis of bi-lateral relations, some stories focus on news on talks and arrangements between Russia and multi-national structures. One such structure has been the Council of Europe (COE). The state news agency *RIA Novosti* reported on an opinion of Terry Davis, the Secretary General of the COE, which was published in the Moscow based newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* about the Beslan attack. The article noted that: "According to him, the terrorist attacks in Russia, Spain and Turkey show that the problem of terrorism is facing the whole of Europe and calls for joint actions to prevent a repetition of such tragedies" and that the "reaction to international terrorism

⁴⁴ *Putin: Fight Against Terrorism is Fight for National Unity*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 29 September, 2004.

⁴⁵ *US Delegation to Discuss Anti-terror Cooperation in Moscow*, Itar-Tass, <http://itar-tass.com/eng>, 24 November, 2005.

must be international.”⁴⁶ Davis’ words supported the Russian argument regarding the common threat and the need to form a united ‘front’ against the international terrorist threat. Some 14 months later, on the 17th of November, 2005, Russia signed the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (for the member states of the COE). The convention covered various spheres of society; education, media, culture, civil society and NGOs. Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Glushko, who signed the document on behalf of the Russian government hailed the document as “the first counter-terrorism convention wholly aimed at preventing terrorist acts [...] As a matter of fact, the convention has opened an important front of international anti-terrorist cooperation, joint efforts and initiatives for states to counter terrorist ideology and propaganda.”⁴⁷ The passage leading up to and including the convention would appear on the surface to vindicate Russian concerns on the lack of unity (and double standards) and goes some way in settling Russian concerns.

Within the rhetorical frame of ‘unity,’ several other messages exist, including and in addition to the ones already mentioned; ‘real’ action needed in the fight against terrorism, global unity and resolve needed, no ‘indulgence’ of terrorism and no single country can defeat terrorism alone. However, a number of the various message types mentioned can exist together in the same news story. As part of the real action needed argument, a case is made on the basis of human values and the ‘creation’ of blocks of nations brought together through common suffering that has been inflicted by acts of terrorism. This was brought to the fore recently just prior to Lavrov’s visit to Madrid and discussions on forming an ‘Alliance of Civilisations’.

“The time has come to replace political discussions with real political interaction of civilisations [...] [expand cooperation] not only at the level of interstate relations, but also between the civil society institutions. We should make common for all people values the cornerstone and on that basis form a coordinated political course. [The danger of terrorism is that] it seeks to use unresolved problems for making people of different confessions and cultures clash. [Moscow] welcomes the initiative of Spain and Turkey to form an Alliance of Civilisations. The problem of maintaining accord between civilisations is one of the most vital for international relations. Terrorists want to split the world on the civilisation principle, but it should not be allowed. In the conditions of globalisation this would be catastrophic for our planet. [...] I think the idea of the Alliance of Civilisations will help build a more just, democratic and secure world order.”⁴⁸

Lavrov makes his call to action in the beginning of the article, and then sets out to justify this call through emphasising certain humanistic values and the situation in common with other European nations. He makes clear that the initiative to form an ‘Alliance of

⁴⁶ *International Terrorism calls for International Approach*, COE Secretary General, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 15 September, 2004.

⁴⁷ *Russia Signs European Convention on Terrorism*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 17 November, 2005.

⁴⁸ *Real Action Needed in Fighting Terrorism – Lavrov*, Itar-Tass, <http://itar-tass.com/eng>, 10 October, 2005.

Civilisations' comes from Spain and Turkey, with Russia welcoming this suggestion. A message of the need to band together to ensure mutual survival of the 'civilised world' is made at the end of the story.

On the matter of calling for global unity and resolve in the war on terror, such a call appears to be linked to a matter that can also be placed in the 'double standards' rhetorical frame. One such call was made by Putin during a UN Security Council session on countering terrorism in September 2005, where he voiced support for the British proposal that condemned acts that instigated terrorism. Putin made a call for states to unite "to fight this evil" and denounced "any attempts to connive at terror, playing with terrorists, using them for the sake of some political biases or aims."⁴⁹ Gryzlov repeated this call in October 2005, on the eve of the Dubrovka Theatre (Nord Ost) anniversary. "The practice of 'double standards', discordant anti-terrorist measures and a low level of coordination are next problems which we should settle." He went on to describe the activity of the State Duma in bringing about legislation designed to combat terrorism.⁵⁰ Use is made of the anniversary of an act of terrorism in Russia, which constitutes an emotional pull aspect to the call for global unity, resolve and action. By using the anniversary of the Dubrovka Theatre incident, a certain amount of emotion is evoked in the rest of the message, possibly influencing the readers' perception of the part of the message that contains the call.

In September 2005 Putin raised the issue of the indulgence of terrorism. He did so in New York during the preparations for a UN General Assembly meeting that was to discuss (among other things) a convention on international terrorism.

"New serious tasks, such as the prevention of instigating terrorism have emerged. [...] Such actions should be recognised as criminal by all states, with no exceptions. Any attempts of being indulgent with terrorism, flirting with terrorists, using them for the benefit of this or that political fancy or ambition should be met with general condemnation. It is the UN and its Security Council that might become a coordinating centre, a kind of interior headquarters for the international counter-terrorist front."⁵¹

A very 'dry' message with a use of legal or semi-legal appeals is made in this instance, there is an absence of the use of emotional words or events. This could imply that the intended audience for this message is not so much the general public, but those who shall be participating at the UN General Assembly meeting.

⁴⁹ *Putin calls on International Community to Toughen its Fight Against Terrorism*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 15 September, 2005.

⁵⁰ *Terrorism – Global Threat Requiring Joint Efforts of World Community*, Itar-Tass, <http://itar-tass.com/eng>, 23 October, 2005.

⁵¹ *Indulgence of Terrorism Deserves a General Disapproval – Putin*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 14 September, 2005.

I shall round up this particular discussion by analysing the message of ‘no single country can defeat terrorism alone.’ *RIA Novosti* featured an opinion article on the issue in the wake of the Beslan hostage taking tragedy. Among other things, the article discussed Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan in addition to Chechnya and terrorism on Russian soil. The writer, Oleg Nechiporenko (Director General of the National Anti-Criminal and Anti-Terrorist Foundation of the Russian Federation) focuses at a point on the expression of sympathy from the US and its leaders after Beslan and the apparent double standards in their call for Russia to start discussions with ‘moderate’ Chechen factions. This is made after the American ‘mistakes’ in Iraq and Afghanistan (due to increased instability and increase in drug production) are described. A lot of rhetorical imagery is used through the piece, especially the image of the slaughtering of children and innocent civilians. It ends with a call for unity and an end to double standards in order to combat an enemy that is hard to define and has a constantly evolving identity.⁵²

Episodes of Common History and Common Suffering

This section shall be devoted to media materials that contain matter on subjects that imply a common suffering or resurrecting historical memories, when a common approach was needed to defeat a powerful common enemy. I shall begin with a description and analysis of the use of Nazism and its comparison to contemporary terrorism. Putin spoke at a ceremony at the former death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in January 2005, which marked the camps liberation. He stated that; “in the same way as there could be no good or bad Nazis, there cannot be good or bad terrorists. Double standards are simply unacceptable here, they are deadly dangerous for civilisation.”⁵³ In his talk on double standards, Putin makes maximum use of pathos – the use of emotional language and in this case symbols too. He makes his plea on the end to double standards on the grounds of the notorious Auschwitz, which was marking its liberation, comparing Nazis and terrorists. However, this only marked the beginning of the rhetorical parallels with Nazism as the 60th anniversary of the Victory in Europe celebrations neared.

In April 2005 during the ceremony accepting the credentials of the new foreign ambassadors in Moscow, Putin took the occasion to urge the need for nations to unite under a common threat – including terrorism.⁵⁴ This message was reinforced closer to the May 9 (Victory Day) celebrations, Putin left a message as part of an address on the official website for the celebrations (www.may9.ru); “we must remember the main historical lesson of WWII: only by joining forces can the world community stand up to violence and evil.”⁵⁵ An emphasis on fundamental human values (good and bad) were concentrated upon, such as was the case in an article that appeared in *Le Figaro* under the title ‘The Lessons of Victory over Nazism’ by Vladimir Putin.

⁵² *Terrorism Cannot be Eradicated by any one Country*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 15 September, 2004.

⁵³ *No Double Standards in Fighting Terrorism, Russia’s Putin says in Auschwitz*, Interfax, 27 January, 2005. JRL #9039, 28 January, 2005.

⁵⁴ *Lessons of WWII Must Unite Nations in Fighting new Threats – Putin*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 20 April, 2005.

⁵⁵ *Putin Calls for World Unity to Fight “Violence and Evil”*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 3 May, 2005.

“Nazism and international terrorism are enemies of human dignity, as well as the most sacred freedoms and values, the right to life, first and foremost. Nazism plunged the people of the World and Europe into an unprecedented tragedy. [...] This was truly a victory of good over evil and faith over blind fanaticism.”⁵⁶

Putin reinforced this argument in his article in *Le Figaro* by adding a comment on the UN, which proclaimed May 8 and 9 as days of Memory and Reconciliation. Once again he was urging the world community come together and act against a common threat.

“The UN proclaimed May 8 and 9 days of memory and reconciliation. In May this year, the General Assembly will hold a special session devoted to this date. In my view, this is yet another symbol indicating that the time has come for the people who fought on both sides of the front to reconcile once and for all and overcome mistrust between peoples. [...] the time has also come for all nations to resolutely unite in combating new challenges, such as terrorism and ideological doctrines based on racism and xenophobia. [...] And probably, the principle lesson is that nationalistic slogans always lead to pogroms, racial and religious superiority theories to terror and genocide against innocent people, and manifestation of weakness to an aggressor lead to global conflicts.”⁵⁷

The UN and the declaration of the days of Memory and Reconciliation in this case is used to justify the call for unity. Also rooted in the message is the implication that a new ‘pogrom’ could be launched by terrorism if it is allowed to develop. The ghosts of the Nazi past are resurrected here, and at the same time is the call for adversaries of the past to unite to meet the new challenge.

As a final commentary on the parallels drawn between Nazism and terrorism, I shall briefly remark comments in Putin’s opening address at a summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Moscow. Where he stated that; “Nazism, extremism and terrorism are threats nourished by the same ideological feeding trough.”⁵⁸ This remark not only places terrorism in the same category as Nazism and other forms of extremism, but also denigrates all of them to the level of animals (with the reference to the feeding trough).

In this part of the section, I would now like to turn attention to the issue of creating a sense of common suffering between Russia and other nations. This is used to try and close the perceived distance between the Russian experience and the experience of other countries, thus creating the possibility of being accepted more readily as a part of the

⁵⁶ *Nazism and International Terrorism Threaten Human Values: Putin*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 7 May, 2005.

⁵⁷ *World Should Unite in Fighting new Challenges – Putin*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 7 May, 2005.

⁵⁸ *Nazism, Extremism, Terrorism Have Common Ideological Roots – Putin*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 8 May, 2005.

‘We’ and not something outside this group. One incident in particular shall form the focus of attention here – the July 7, 2005 bombings in London. This sparked a flurry of news in the Russian media on the war on terrorism and the stories that appeared utilised most, if not all, of the rhetorical frames that have already been outlined.

The news agency *Interfax* ran a number of articles on the day of the act of terrorism in London. A selection of the articles carried messages of sympathy, tinged with a reminder of double standards existing. At the time of the attack, a G8 meeting was being held at Gleneagles in Scotland. Putin issued a statement on the attack:

“An enormous crime has been committed in London today. I would like to say that Russia has itself repeatedly experienced terrorist attacks, brutal and bloody, which have taken hundreds of our innocent civilians. For this reason, in no other country has this event evoked such a response, and in no other country has such sympathy been shown for those affected or have such condolences been expressed as they have been in our country.

What has happened is extra evidence that all of us are doing too little to pool our efforts in the most effective way in combating terrorism.

I would none the less like to express, not only hope, but also confidence that the world community, discarding double standards in the assessment of bloody crimes such as the one that has been committed in London today, will have enough strength to stand firm against terror, to stand firm against it together, and will be able to eradicate this plague of the 21st century, eradicate it completely and indefinitely.”⁵⁹

Putin begins his statement by establishing Russia as a victim and therefore has already experienced these horrors and is able to empathise with the British. This very soon, however, gives way to the aspect of double standards and the need for the world to act in concert. Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov echoed Putin’s sentiments from Moscow. “Combating terrorism is a burning problem that calls for joint efforts on the part of all countries. We must not forget this for a single day.”⁶⁰ Alexei Kudrin, the Finance Minister issued a statement on the need to bring terrorists to justice, in addition to the double standards question. “Terrorists must be caught and brought to justice everywhere, including the United Kingdom, which to our mind, sometimes gives them asylum.”⁶¹ The comments made by Putin and Fradkov alluded to what Kudrin stated, but in a more diplomatic manner.

Focus on the first day’s news began to move on to the international dimension of terrorism, drawing comparisons and links between terrorism in Russia with acts of terrorism in Europe and the United States. Alexei Malashenko, a political scientist and member of the Moscow Carnegie Centre’s Expert Council, stated that he thought that the

⁵⁹ *Putin: London Blasts an “Enormous Crime”*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 7 July, 2005.

⁶⁰ *Russian PM: London Blasts “World-Scale Tragedy”*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 7 July, 2005.

⁶¹ *Terrorists Must be Tried Everywhere, Including the UK – Kudrin*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 7 July, 2005.

attacks on 9/11, in Madrid and London were all linked and assigned the blame. "My theory is that the blasts were carried out by Islamic terrorists. Who else would have done that?"⁶² A little later in the day, Malashenko's comments were developed further by Safonov. "Judging by preliminary information, the way the bombings were carried out is similar to the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid, Istanbul and Moscow. This organisation is either directly or indirectly connected with al-Qaeda."⁶³

News from the day after the attack revolved heavily around the themes of the need for global unity and cohesion in the war on terror and linking terror attacks outside Russia with terrorism in Russia. One of the messages that came out was the need for constant vigilance in the struggle and that mutual distrust and enmity needs to be abandoned if the War on Terror is to be successful. A *RIA Novosti* story ended on a sombre note with the unity call: "Solidarity is essential. The blood shed in New York, Moscow, Madrid or London is the same colour."⁶⁴ A negative article appeared on the 8th of July too, in a media outlet that had built its reputation as being part of the opposition camp (to the Russian government and Putin). The story focused upon President G. W. Bush and Putin's political careers being built upon the premise of fighting terrorism. And commented on just how ineffective these measures have been to date. It also questioned the need and motives for curbing press freedom and other restrictions as tactics in fighting terror.⁶⁵

The FM released a statement on their website (www.mid.ru) on the 8th of July that linked various terror acts, such as Moscow (2002), Beslan (2004) and London (2005).

"The terrorist attacks in London, as well as the tragic events in Dubrovka and in Beslan are links of the same chain of international terrorisms evil deeds, which we can only fight when united. We extend our sincere condolences to the victims, people and the government of Great Britain. The UN Security Council has confirmed its determination to continue fighting against international terrorism in accordance with its obligations under the UN Charter. Russia, being well acquainted with the dreadful nature of terrorism shares the resolution's appeal to the world community to actively cooperate in prosecuting the organisers of these crimes."⁶⁶

⁶² *London Blasts Similar to US, Spanish Terrorists Acts – Expert*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 7 July, 2005.

⁶³ *London Bombings Similar to Those in New York, Madrid, Moscow – Envoy*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 7 July, 2005.

⁶⁴ Romanov, P., *Blasts in London Remind Anti-Terror Coalition it Cannot Relax*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 8 July, 2005.

⁶⁵ *Unprecedented and Useless*, Mosnews, www.mosnews.com, 8 July, 2005.

⁶⁶ (a) *Moscow, Beslan, London Linked – Ministry*, Interfax, www.interfax.ru, 8 July, 2005.

(b) *London, Beslan, Moscow Terrorist Attacks Links of one Chain – Russia's Foreign Ministry*, Mosnews, www.mosnews.com, 8 July, 2005.

(c) *London, Beslan, Nord Ost all Links of one Chain – Russian Foreign Ministry*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 8 July, 2005.

The UK and Russia are brought ‘together’ in this statement, through their shared experience of suffering at the hands of international terrorism. Although, the statement also makes clear that Russia’s history of suffering is greater. Appeals to the reader are made on both an emotional basis – defence against “international terrorism’s evil deeds, and on the basis of law and order, namely the UN Charter. The UN Charter is used to give added credibility to the FM’s call.

The last articles that will be analysed in this paper will be on the Russian feeling of resentment and isolation, expressed through the media, in the wake of the London bombings and reflecting upon Russia’s terrorism predicament. Vyacheslav Kostikov, previously a Press Secretary to former President Yeltsin gave an interview to the weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* where some of this frustration was publicly vented. The issue of granting asylum to Zakayev was mentioned in the interview, along with British naivety (on the basis that they should not believe that “terrorist would not rob or kill in their own street). The reported extracts from *RIA Novosti* finished with a dramatic warning/prediction of what may happen in the future: “If the West continues mumbling “let’s talk”, quietly gesturing towards Russia, soon Londonstan, where Islamic extremists feel quite at home, will be supplemented by a whole new continent, Europostan.”⁶⁷

Another two articles that appeared in *RIA Novosti* over July 2005 touched upon the issue of Russia feeling ignored and/or neglected. One of these stories focused upon how many times Russia was mentioned in by the British authorities in their statements on background information and overseas comparisons.

“[...] and presented the explosions in London as the first use of suicide bombers in Europe. Does this mean that Russia, which has suffered from suicide bombings too, is not a European nation?

Downing Street makes two statements a day about security measures, the background of the terrorist attacks, and progress made in the investigation. But it does not mention Moscow. Only once did Tony Blair mention Russia, alongside Saudi Arabia, Kenya and Tanzania. The British ambassador to Moscow has thanked Russian citizens who expressed condolences to Londoners. But this happened in Moscow, while London does not remember that over 40 people died in a Moscow metro explosion during the rush hour in February 2004.

[...] But the innocent victims of the Moscow metro bombings were not mentioned, as if Russia had been crossed out of the list of countries where people die from terrorist attacks. Russia was not mentioned, because this would have made London not the first European capital hit by suicide bombers.”⁶⁸

This was a brief selection of the story, obvious is the feeling of frustration and exclusion. The feeling of exclusion relates not only to Russia perhaps being ‘left’ outside Europe, but that the suffering of Russian citizens seems to be very quickly forgotten by other

⁶⁷ *Russia’s Sympathy to Londoners Tinged with Bitterness*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 15 July, 2005.

⁶⁸ Babaeva, S., *Without Compassion or Trust*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 22 July, 2005.

European nations. The 'forgetfulness' of the West is brought up again in another article, which asks readers not to try to create a world of 'good' and 'bad' terrorists as this will only lead to further tragedies, not only in Russia, but in the West too.⁶⁹

Conclusion

The mass media play an important part in establishing the identities and sides of a conflict – they bring to life the “us” and “them” aspect. In effect, the media can potentially mobilise the forces of polarity in a conflict or an issue via their framing of events and involved actors. This means that the mass media can perform a rallying or consolidating (society) function in times of difficulty or crisis. It is possible to describe the art of rhetoric as being a form that can eventually encourage self-censorship. A ‘natural’ discourse of a particular theme or subject is ‘born’ when one particular thread of discourse becomes dominant and is established as the primary means of explaining the phenomenon or events. Journalists entering the debate are socialised into the rules of the dominant pattern. And this pattern is in turn relayed to the audience. Although, whether or not the audience accepts the rhetoric is another matter.

Through this process, a pattern of routinised news making is established, through creating an unwritten set of ‘rules’ on how an event or phenomenon is to be described, through the use of specialised words or phrases that come to be dominant. ‘Outside’ or ‘foreign’ terminology that competes with the dominant line of discourse is contested and excluded from appearing in the mainstream news. This means that the event shall come to be described in a more uniformed manner due to the specific language employed.

The issue of double standards has an important influence on the nature of the rhetoric employed. It is not only used as a means to silence opposition to Russian strategies employed in their fight against Chechen separatism and terrorism, but also as a tool to influence foreign countries behaviour. The brief extract below will demonstrate these aspects and the importance carried by certain key words.

“Double standards are still there. Those who demolish skyscrapers in the US, blow up trains in Spain or the underground in London, or kill American soldiers in Iraq, are unequivocally condemned as terrorists. But those who detonate houses and seize a theatre in Moscow, or take hundreds of children hostage in Beslan, a town that was all but unknown until recently, are described as rebels, if not freedom fighters.”⁷⁰

The issue of double standards is not only used to try and reduce pressure on the Russian authorities regarding their ways and means of anti-terrorism, but also to try and put pressure on Western countries that have granted asylum to key Chechen figures (such as Zakayev) and also as a means of debating/contemplating Russia's place. By ‘Russia's

⁶⁹ Romanov, P., *How many Bombs Must hit New York Before the US Media will Learn to Differentiate Terrorists From Normal People?*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 29 July, 2005.

⁷⁰ Oganesyan, A., *New Generation Terror*, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru>, 15 August, 2005.

place' I refer to whether or not other European nations consider Russia to be European too or perhaps something else. A lot of the rhetoric in this category makes use of highly emotional words that are charged with imagery that utilises the spectre of dead children and civilians.

In the calls for unity, a different rhetorical strategy is employed. Taking the issue of national unity first, the calls centre on the issues of standing together in the face of an enemy that wants to divide the 'multi-ethnic' and multi-confessional' state, and the issue of mobilising the Russian people and resources. Emphasis is placed upon the diversity of Russian society and the need for retaining territorial integrity. The enemy is demonised, however, the call itself seems to use an argument of reason and logic of 'in the best interests'. That is, people will derive greater benefit staying within the Russian Federation. The calls for global unity have a similar message, which is a common enemy exists and unless everyone unites, this enemy will not be defeated. Appeals are made on an emotional and legal basis, international organisations (such as COE and UN) are used to add weight and credibility by the sender.

Episodes of common history and suffering make use of strong symbols and emotional rhetoric to get the message to the intended audience. Very specific references, times and places are used to achieve maximum effect. These are used to draw parallels between terrorists and dark periods of history. This is especially evident in the comparisons that have been attempted between the Nazis and contemporary terrorists, which create the 'ultimate' form of demonisation of an enemy. This also ties into the logic of the need for global unity message too. Significant historical places and times are chosen to deliver the message, such as Putin's speech at Auschwitz and the increased number of calls as the 60th anniversary of Victory Europe Day approached. Examples of common suffering are used by senders to try and bring Russia closer to the European/World community. In doing so, Russia could potentially be classified as constituting a part of the 'We' rather than being left outside of this group, it is a question of belonging and the consequences that this entails.

As a final wrap up, I shall return to the issue of the mass media and examine which of the three roles suits the current situation best, of 'mirror', 'witness' and 'transmitter'. Under the circumstances, i.e. tension that surrounds the War on Terror, media does not play the role of 'witness' - a watchdog that ensures the survival of democracy. Rather the role seems to vary between that of 'mirror' and 'transmitter'. 'Mirror' in respect that the media gives certain images of this conflict, and this is from where the public derive a measure of their 'reality' or understanding of the situation as a result of the information that they receive. And the category of 'transmitter' is of equal pertinence too, although in this case it is the authorities that are expressing themselves and transmitting a message through the mass media. Their messages are going to a domestic and an international audience, for example the message of national unity and the message to end double standards.

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