



## RUSSIAN NUCLEAR NARRATIVE IN RT AND CNN

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### Abstract

The Russian nuclear narrative as portrayed in RT (Russia Today) and CNN (Cable News Network) has been a subject of interest in recent times, given the increasing geopolitical tensions between Russia and the West. RT, being a state-owned media outlet, often focuses on highlighting the strength and advancement of the Russian military, particularly the nuclear forces. On CNN, as a privately owned American news outlet, often covers the issue of Russian nuclear capabilities from a more critical perspective, focusing on concerns about the potential risks and threats posed by the Russian nuclear arsenal.

The Russian government has made significant investments in modernizing its nuclear forces, and RT has been actively promoting this modernization, showcasing the country's nuclear weapons as a symbol of national power and prestige. RT often emphasizes the advanced technology used in the production of Russian nuclear weapons and portrays the Russian nuclear deterrent as a crucial aspect of national security.

In contrast, CNN often discusses the potential dangers posed by Russian nuclear weapons, particularly with regards to their readiness, reliability, and the security of their command and control systems. CNN also focuses on the concerns of the international community about Russia's recent military activities and its apparent disregard for arms control agreements.

Overall, the Russian nuclear narrative as portrayed in RT and CNN highlights the difference in perspectives between a state-owned and a privately-owned media outlet. RT focuses on promoting the strength and advancement of the Russian military, while CNN focuses on the potential risks and threats posed by the Russian nuclear arsenal.

**Keywords:** Coverage of Conflicts, Ukraine War, Nuclear treat, International Community, Media.



## **Introduction**

The issue of nuclear weapons and their capabilities has been a matter of great concern for nations around the world. In recent times, the Russian nuclear narrative has gained significant attention due to the increasing tensions between Russia and the West.

The portrayal of the Russian nuclear arsenal in media outlets has an impact on the public perception of the issue and the way it is perceived globally. In this context, it is interesting to examine the Russian nuclear narrative as portrayed in RT (Russia Today), a state-owned media outlet, and CNN (Cable News Network), a privately-owned American news outlet.

The Russian government has made significant investments in modernizing its nuclear forces, and RT has been actively promoting this modernization, showcasing the country's nuclear weapons as a symbol of national power and prestige.

On the other hand, CNN often covers the issue of Russian nuclear capabilities from a more critical perspective, focusing on the potential risks and threats posed by the Russian nuclear arsenal. In this paper, we analyze the Russian nuclear narrative as portrayed in RT and CNN, and how the difference in ownership of the media outlets affects their coverage of the issue.

## **Understanding Coverage of Russia-Ukraine War**

The coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war has been a subject of considerable debate and controversy, with different media outlets presenting different perspectives on the conflict. The war, which began in 2014 after the Ukrainian revolution, has been characterized by military clashes between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists in the eastern region of Ukraine. Russian media outlets, such as RT (Russia Today), often portray the conflict as a result of western aggression towards Russia and the violation of the rights of ethnic Russians in Ukraine.

Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. Hybrid Wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors. (Hoffman 2015)



They often highlight the role of the Ukrainian government and western countries in the escalation of violence in the region. On the other hand, Western media outlets, such as CNN, have been critical of Russia's involvement in the conflict and its annexation of Crimea in 2014. They often focus on the human cost of the war and the suffering of Ukrainian civilians as a result of the military actions of Russian-backed separatists.

The Ukraine crisis was not just about Ukraine, or even Europe. It was about the global order, which promises a long competition with a yet-unforeseen result. Crucially, it is part of a pattern of changing relationships among the world's powers, with the US struggling to preserve its dominance. (Trenin 2015)

The coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war in media outlets has significant implications for the way the conflict is perceived globally and the diplomatic efforts to resolve it. It is important to understand that different media outlets may present different perspectives on the same event, and it is crucial to seek out multiple sources of information to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict.

## **Propaganda of War**

Propaganda is a systematic attempt to manipulate public opinion through the dissemination of ideas, information, or opinions. In the context of war, propaganda plays a significant role in shaping the public's perception of the conflict and influencing their support for it.

In times of war, propaganda is often used by governments and other stakeholders to justify their actions, galvanize public support for their cause, and demonize their opponents. For example, during World War I and World War II, both sides used propaganda to mobilize support for their respective causes, often presenting their own actions as just and heroic, while portraying the enemy as brutal and evil.

In modern conflicts, the use of propaganda has become more sophisticated, with governments and other actors utilizing media and technology to reach a wider audience and influence public opinion. The rise of social media has also made it easier for propaganda to spread quickly and reach a large number of people.



The main purpose of a cyber-attack is to steal and copy various types of information from an infected agency by all possible mechanisms and technical means. The virus file has the following functions: to send detailed computer information to the author of the virus, to search and copy documents encrypted by the NATO encryption standard, to infect and retrieve information from computers and tablets connected to a computer, high-level encrypted, and hidden virus discovery (control source). According to Kaspersky, the cyber attack allegedly used viral elements created by Russian and Chinese hackers at different times. (Tsozniashvili 2022)

While propaganda can be used to shape public opinion and support for a particular cause, it can also have negative consequences. Propaganda can lead to the spread of false information and undermine public trust in the media, while also contributing to the escalation of violence and the prolongation of conflicts. Propaganda plays a significant role in shaping public perception and attitudes towards war. It is important to be aware of propaganda and to seek out multiple sources of information to gain a more comprehensive understanding of conflicts.

### **Russian Nuclear Narrative in CNN**

CNN, as a leading American news outlet, has been covering the Russia-Ukraine war since it began in 2014. The network's coverage of the conflict has been characterized by a critical perspective on Russia's involvement in the war and its annexation of Crimea. CNN's coverage of the conflict often focuses on the human cost of the war, including the suffering of Ukrainian civilians as a result of the military actions of Russian-backed separatists.

“The US announcement is likely to increase tensions with relations between the two countries in the doldrums as Moscow continues its war on Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s nuclear saber rattling during the war has alarmed the US and its allies.” (Callahan 2023)

The network also highlights the violations of international law and human rights by the Russian-backed separatists and the Russian military in the conflict. CNN has also covered the diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, including the negotiations and agreements aimed at bringing an end to the violence. The network has also provided analysis and expert commentary on



the political, military, and economic implications of the conflict for Russia, Ukraine, and the international community.

In December 2022, Putin warned of the “increasing” threat of nuclear war, and in January 2023, Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia’s Security Council, threatened that Russia losing the war could “provoke the outbreak of a nuclear war.” “Nuclear powers do not lose major conflicts on which their fate depends,” Medvedev wrote in a Telegram post. “This should be obvious to anyone. Even to a Western politician who has retained at least some trace of intelligence.” (Callahan, US says Russia is violating key nuclear arms control agreement 2023)

In summary, CNN's coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war has been characterized by a critical perspective on Russia's actions in the conflict and a focus on the human cost of the war. The network's coverage is aimed at providing its audience with a comprehensive understanding of the conflict and its implications for the region and the world.

### **Russian Nuclear Narrative in RT**

RT, a state-owned media outlet in Russia, has been covering the Russia-Ukraine war since it began in 2014. RT's coverage of the conflict is characterized by a pro-Russian perspective and often seeks to downplay or justify Russia's actions in the war. RT's coverage of the conflict often portrays the Ukrainian government and Western countries as being responsible for the escalation of violence in the region and accuses them of violating the rights of ethnic Russians in Ukraine.

The conflict may add to concerns that the world’s two largest nuclear superpowers may no longer be able to work together on nonproliferation goals amid deteriorating relations between Washington and Moscow. (US accuses Russia of violating nuclear treaty – media 2023)

The network also highlights the role of the Ukrainian military in the conflict and the suffering of ethnic Russians as a result of the violence. RT's coverage of the conflict also seeks to present Russia's actions in a positive light, portraying the Russian military's involvement in the conflict as necessary to protect ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in the region. The network also emphasizes the role of the Russian government in promoting peace and stability in the region.



In summary, RT's coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war is characterized by a pro-Russian perspective that seeks to justify Russia's actions in the conflict and downplay the negative consequences of its involvement. The network's coverage aims to present a different perspective on the conflict from that presented by Western media outlets.

## **Comparison of CNN and RT on Nuclear Narrative**

The way that CNN and RT cover the nuclear narrative in Russia is largely influenced by their political perspectives and the interests of their respective governments. CNN's coverage of the Russian nuclear narrative is often critical of Russia's nuclear weapons program and its aggressive military posturing.

The network highlights the potential dangers of an arms race, the cost of maintaining a large nuclear arsenal, and the impact of nuclear weapons on global security. On the other hand, RT's coverage of the Russian nuclear narrative is often more positive, presenting Russia's nuclear weapons program as a deterrent against potential aggression from other countries. The network emphasizes the role of the Russian military in maintaining peace and stability, and downplays the potential dangers and risks associated with nuclear weapons.

Both CNN and RT use a range of sources to support their narratives, including expert analysis, interviews with political leaders and military officials, and news reports from the region. However, their coverage can also be influenced by their respective political perspectives, the interests of their governments, and the goals they seek to achieve through their reporting.

Because the way that CNN and RT cover the nuclear narrative in Russia is influenced by their political perspectives and the interests of their respective governments. It is important to recognize these biases and consult multiple sources of information to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Russian nuclear narrative as covered by RT and CNN reflects the political perspectives and interests of their respective governments. RT, being a state-owned media outlet in Russia, presents a



pro-Russian perspective that seeks to justify the country's nuclear weapons program and downplay the potential dangers and risks associated with it. CNN, as a leading American news outlet, presents a critical perspective on Russia's nuclear weapons program and highlights the potential dangers and risks associated with it. Both networks use a range of sources to support their narratives, including expert analysis, interviews with political leaders and military officials, and news reports from the region. However, their coverage can also be influenced by their respective political perspectives, the interests of their governments, and the goals they seek to achieve through their reporting. It is important for consumers of news to be aware of these biases and to seek out multiple sources of information to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. By doing so, they can gain a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the Russian nuclear narrative and its implications for global security.

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