

War Journalism Where There's No War: Critical Discourse Analysis of Russo-Ukraine Conflict in Pakistani Elite National Press

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Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan (PMIK) visited Russia in the wake of news coverage of the Russian military escalation against Ukraine on Feb 24, 2022. His and all other diplomatic efforts however failed and the war was started. For conflict resolution mass media boundaries, the wars could be managed (if not avoided) by preemptively mediating through Peace Journalism (PJ) model. Scholars hold that by applying the PJ framework of peace-war discourses in news media, conflicts can be averted from their violent outcomes (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Shaw et al., 2011; Tarique & Shaheen, 2022), and then manage for peaceful resolution (Hoffmann, 2014). Furthering the mediatization of wars, more methodological fronts were introduced which hold that PJ resulted well by supplementing it with critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Ottosen, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick 2013; Shaheen & Tarique 2022). Due to the importance of the Russo-Ukraine conflict, the elite Pakistani national press had attracted vast coverage. The research investigates the journalism stances taken by the mainstream Pakistani press before the start of the Russo-Ukraine war. Selection of one month period till the start of the war found that Pakistani national journalism didn't follow the rules of conflict resolution emancipated by the PJ. On the CDA fronts, and in line with the best orientation of the PJ, the research suggested that overall War Journalism (WJ) syntax was ensued with meaningless hyperboles juxtaposed with local and global semantics. The time period was selected to give allowance of the major assumption of PJ theory which advocates preemptive intervention by journalists.

Keywords: mediatized Russo-Ukraine War, PJ theory, peace-war discourses, violence, CDA, elite Pakistani national press, (ex)Prime Minister Imran Khan

Media, Public Opinion and Implications

The aim of print media is to inform but the way they inform the public is questionable. Because of the pervasiveness of the media's portrayal, they assume the position of “public political discourse in the form of a dialogue and generate replies from others” (Mehan et al., 1990). Mass media Conflict resolution researchers believe that media more often become the mass organ to accentuate and augment conflicts which resultantly divide opinion and cause-specific spheres of public opinion giving birth to dominant voices over ‘other’ and becoming provocative for ‘them’ (Tarique, 2017). The research also holds that absence of ‘weak’ voices representing ‘others’, either in minority or otherwise, takes such a

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stand most of the time against peaceful rebirth and regeneration of ideas (Tarique, 2017). For example, the evolution of nuclear conversation and the US nuclear policy in the 1980s were debated in such a syntax due to which the Ronald Reagan government's discourses of nuclear deterrence lost the nuclear control narrative which consequentially undermined the regime's deterrence and further opening of new media discourses which resulted in the dangerous proliferation of nuclear arsenals (Mehan et al., 1990).

Wars are horrible, and the Russia-Ukraine war is no exception. In wars, truth is the main casualty, where the journalists' restraint to counter-check multiple resources (Pavlik, 2022). In the Pakistani setting of journalism, the pursuit of truthful reporting is increasingly compromising due to the lack of basic journalism orientation, relevance and spirit, the literacy level of journalists and their outdated (re)sources adaptation (Tarique, 2017), the argument has also been iterated in the research which holds that the journalists do not investigate the stories and usually become the organ of the state (Tarique & Shaheen, 2017). Turning to the other side and since restrictions of advocacy model(s) for journalists (like PJ) (Appendix), Artificial Intelligence based software journalism has been trying to evolve the options with inter-faculty involvement of algorithmically generated software journalism to avoid propaganda and fake news (Tarique, 2022).

Critical Discourse as a Framework of Analysis (CDA)

The CDA discussion expands on the (power) abuse, injustice, and inequality that result from it, as well as the emancipation of the whole belief system (ideology) (van Dijk, 1993). As an academic movement, CDA is a way of analyzing from a critical perspective and frequently centers on hypothetical ideas of force (power), belief system (ideology) and control (domination) (Baker et al. 2008). It discursively sees the text to find out the biasness, especially in the news reports and government communication. And if it comes together with PJ, a mere objective reporting of an event doesn't well conclude the reported event. For the PJ, "the text is an engaged and committed partner of the event, and doesn't see itself as a dispassionate and objective event; it is a form of intervention in social practice and social relationships" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Mass media since their larger impacts are the major carrier of powers and ideologies in their texts. Carrying the dominant political and ideological discourses bring opportunity, optimism, and hope for peace, whereas inappropriate violent discourses diminish trust-building among people and nation (Mandelzisz, 2007). Taking Oslo Accord between Palestine and Israel as a case study, Shinar (2003) elucidates that "the use of inappropriate discourses bears negative consequences". How 'metaphors' in the news media language can kill, has also been elucidated in the pretext of the 2003 Iraq war, like 'Games of Saddam', 'the Patience of the White House', 'Making the Case' and 'Selling the Plan' etc. (Lule, 2004). Similarly, the word 'countdown' was used as a 'metaphor' and assumed that the upcoming event of hitting Iraq was inevitable. Same as, 'hyperboles' are extreme exaggerations "use to make a point valid" (van Dijk, 2005). The usage of hyperbole 'everywhere- it is war everywhere'

is usually used for a single event, and ‘tricks- the alleged admission of force against the enemy’ are the CDA framework usually used in violent conflicts.

Historical Traces of the Ukraine-Russia Conflict

As a result of the dissolution of the United Soviet States of Republics (USSR) and the creation of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991 (Miller, 2017), Ukraine emerged as an independent state. Russia however was hesitant to give Ukraine an independent status because of its fertile soil, vast yields, and majority-Russian origin population (Qualls, 2009). The capital city of Ukraine, Kyiv was a part of Russia until the 9th century AD when war caused it to be split apart (Kuzio, 2019). But in the 13th century, Ukraine had been reclaimed during Katherine-the Great’s rule. Crimea, a territory of Ukraine, was also given to Ukraine by Khrushchev in 1954, but the USSR at the time never approved of it (Chatterjee, 2014).

Russia courted pro-Russian factions inside Ukraine after 1991. In the 1990s, Russia had driven the West out of Eastern Europe and established its rule in what it refers to as the “near abroad”⁶⁶. In 2014, Russia finally succeeded in establishing its titular government in Crimea, and it has since continued to attempt to support pro-Russian movements in the Eastern Ukrainian provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk (Kuzio, 2019). Since Russia’s invasion and occupation of Crimea in March 2014, the conflict has been rampant throughout Ukraine’s eastern regions (Gorbach, 2021).

Moscow recently moved to stop NATO’s further eastward expansion by filing two draft agreements on December 17, 2021. Additionally, it was meant to prevent the alliance from stationing troops along Russia’s borders or deploying long-range weaponry in countries in Europe that would pose a danger to Russia. Moscow requested that NATO revoke the 2008 summit declaration that suggested that Georgia and Ukraine might join the NATO alliance to achieve this. It should clearly announce that it will desist from further growth, especially in the post-Soviet space, and withdraw all troops stationed in Eastern Europe after May 1997. Moscow was violating both the European Security Charter and the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act (Richter, 2022).

In January 2022, the proposals were discussed bilaterally with the US in Geneva, and multilaterally with the OSCE and the NATO-Russia Council. Richter (2022) stated the West demanded that Moscow withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian border after rejecting Moscow’s requests for a halt to NATO expansion.

Russia however had maintained that it is not planning an invasion and that Western countries are jeopardizing its security as NATO approaches its borders. The Kremlin has come up with a list of security demands, including guarantees that Georgia and Ukraine won’t join NATO and a cancellation of some ex-Soviet states’ force deployments (Kibry, 2022).

In and around the situation discussed above, the present study frames the following question;

Q1. Which media discourses in terms of peace-war journalism are moved by the mainstream Pakistani National Press to portray the Russo-Ukraine War?

Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used to explore an in-depth understanding of the Russo-Ukraine war portrayal (i.e., discourses) in Pakistani newspapers. The categories of the CDA, are lined-up with the categories defined. The research paper aims at finding out the 'construction of war when there was no war' with special reference to the PJ. Having a supervisory and advisory position in critical media research, PJ holds that conflicts should be seen and intervened preemptively- a framework to be followed by the journalists.

Table 1. *News Discourses*

US discourse (Including allies, as well as NATO)	<i>Biden orders nearly 3,000 US troops to Eastern Europe to counter Russia (WJ)</i> [the US and NATO escalation]
UN discourse	<i>Deeply worried- UN chief says time to defuse Ukraine crisis; "Abandoning diplomacy for confrontation is not a step over a line, it is a dive over a cliff (PJ)</i>
Pakistani discourse	<i>Pakistan is not part of any bloc- PMIK (PJ)</i> [If the media support Russia or any one party in the conflict (WJ)] [If media mediate among parties talking all sides (PJ)]
International discourse (Outside and Russian Bloc)	<i>Turkey ready to accommodate a flood of refugees (WJ)</i> <i>China urges the U.S not to go further down the wrong path (WJ)</i> [Taking one side in the conflict]
Ukrainian discourse	<i>Ukrainian president asks for western support (WJ)</i> [Western support is needed against Russia]
Russian discourse	<i>Russia rejects claims it was responsible for the cyberattack on Ukraine (PJ)</i> <i>Russia would ensue war if concerns are not addressed: (WJ)</i> [Concerns are always addressed through peaceful means and dialogues rather by ensuing war]

Selection of News

Four major English language dailies are taken for their respective coverage of the Russo-Ukraine war.

Express Tribune

The second largest and most popular Pakistani English national daily. The date-based archive data algorithm of the newspaper from <https://tribune.com.pk/listing/2022-02-01> was taken from 1st to 25th February 2022.

Pakistan Today

The third largest Pakistani English national daily. The data was taken from <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/01/> from February 1, 2022 to February 25, 2022 archive.

Dawn

The leading English national daily of Pakistan. Date-wise and page-wise news data was taken from <https://www.dawn.com/newspaper/front-page/2022-02-01> from February 1, 2022 to February 25, 2022 archive.

The News

It's a leading group's English national daily, <https://e.thenews.com.pk/laore/01-02-2022/page1>. The algorithm of the site of daily doesn't permit searching within the e-paper. The data was taken from February 1, 2022 to February 25, 2022.

Analysis***US Discourses*****Fomenting War Hysteria without War**

In one of the descriptions of the newspaper, “**US says war appears imminent**”¹ and spread of war to other flash points “... if war between the US and Russia doesn't **materialise** then perhaps Iran or N Korea will **spark something similar**”². Another news story ‘*semantically moves*’ the failed diplomacy “...**constant vigilance** is needed ... **timeline and growing number** and capability of **Russian forces close to Ukraine** could suggest the window for **diplomacy is shutting**”³ ...”. Well before the start of the war, and when the diplomatic efforts were being deployed to stop the clash, the news media were framing to immediately start the war.

Pakistani national press also portrays such ‘*moves of strategic persuasion*’ which meaningfully blurred the idea of the start of the war. Incidents are ‘*metaphorically*’ portrayed and ‘*hyperbolically*’ exaggerated (**millions of refugees** without war) with ‘*credible source*’ (the US officials) to ‘*manipulate their falsehood*’ “**A full invasion would also prompt the flight of millions of refugees and IDPs in Europe, Washington believes**”⁴. ‘*Strategic persuasive moves*’ by

¹<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/17/us-says-war-appears-imminent-after-shelling-on-ukraine-front-line/>.

²<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341986/is-a-world-war-coming>.

³<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342262/russian-forces-at-70-of-level-needed-for-full-ukraine-invasion-us-officials-say>.

⁴Ibid.

quoting American satellite reports as hardcore evidence “Russia has mobilised **more than** 100,000 forces along its borders with Ukraine and is **also in the process** of shifting **heavy weapons** to create ground for an **all-out** invasion. ... **prove that** President Putin will play **such a big** gamble ...”⁵.

‘*Persuasive war moves*’ are frequent and ‘*semantically*’ deployed in many ‘*localised syntactic structures*’ from the headline, to the body text and within, to the start and the finish lines in news reports. For the syntax-semantics relatives, it holds that ‘the sentence meaning (syntax) is a function of the meaning of its parts (semantic)’ (van Dijk, 1980). On examining the persuasive techniques used to support the power in the US-Iraq war, to Fairclough (1998), ‘Linguistic manipulation is consciously used in a devious way to control the others’ (p. 537). Similarly, the newspaper claims the power axis (a shift from the US to Europe) as legitimate in its moves (either wrong or right both), the former ambassador of Pakistan to the US, UK and UN said “French officials **claimed** the talks had moved the crisis towards **de-escalation** with Putin agreeing to continue talks in a **spirit of compromise**”⁶.

The US is responsible for provoking war as “US, India, Australia and Japan meet to deepen bulwark against China”⁷ and fomenting war hysteria in several news items, such that “Russia slams U.S. ‘**hysteria**’ about ‘imminent invasion of Ukraine’”⁸. “Moscow denies any such plans and has accused the West of **hysteria**”⁹, and “Ukraine crisis — and Russia, China and the US; While Western media builds war **hysteria**; the Ukrainian government and public downplay the threat of Russian invasion”¹⁰.

Russian Danger - Ground for Carrotting and Threat for Sticks

The carrot and stick policy is seen in US discourses of coverage, also the dangerous Russia. The ‘*persuasive peace-war mixed moves*’ as well as ‘*undesirable outgroup but still-it-counts*’ are seen “... Blinken **stressed** that Washington remained open to finding a **diplomatic solution, but warned** of a ‘united, swift and severe’ response if Russia does invade Ukraine. ...” and Russia is more dangerous than the US “... Blinken and Lavrov, both veteran diplomats who have encountered each other for years, Blinken is known for his **unflappable calm** and Lavrov for his **mordant intensity**”¹¹ ...” In the news title and the adjoining text “US, Russia hold talks on Ukraine war fears ... **US increasingly worried** that **Russia will invade despite warnings** of **severe reprisals** ...”¹², and at another moment, it is portrayed as “**Russia**, which already fuels a **deadly insurgency** in **eastern Ukraine** that has **killed more than** 13,000 people since 2014, **demanding**

⁵<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343226/dangerous-russia-ukraine-standoff> .

⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1674949/russia-may-use-surprise-pretext-to-attack-ukraine-us>.

⁷<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/11/us-india-australia-and-japan-meet-to-deepen-bulwark-against-china/>.

⁸<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/13/russia-slams-u-s-hysteria-about-imminent-invasion-of-ukraine/>.

⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1674949/russia-may-use-surprise-pretext-to-attack-ukraine-us>.

¹⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

¹¹<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/927038-us-russia-hold-talks-on-ukraine-war-fears>

¹²Ibid.

guarantees that NATO never admit the former Soviet republic in Moscow's old sphere ... US has declared the idea a **non-starter** and **accused Russia** of **undermining** Europe's post-Cold War order ..."¹³.

The use of **surface structures** in the news text where the text carries a different meaning than the actual meaning "PRC (Peoples Republic of China) has been a major partner in **reducing the pain of the US/Western sanctions** against Russia after the war in Georgia (2008) and Crimea (2014)"¹⁴.

US (Russia)-THEM (the US, Allies and NATO) Binary

A specific us-them binary where Russia (as vigorous US) versus the US, allies and NATO (as weaker THEM) is found "the **US/Western media builds the war hysteria**; the **Ukrainian govt besides European powers** like Germany, **downplay the threat** of an 'imminent' Russian invasion ... invasion would ostensibly solidify a **fractured NATO**; ... invasion keeps **US/NATO** guessing and somewhat **divided** in response"¹⁵. The situation repeats where the **US and the allies (them)** have been portrayed as ignorant & weaker. Comparing the present situation with the US withdrawal from Afghanistan without convenient facts, the PMIK has added that the Americans did not learn from Afghan history, "The whole **mission of the US** in Afghanistan was '**based on a false premise**'"¹⁶. The US attack would "... expose **differences** within the **Western** coalition ... intensified **East-West polarisation** ... tensions **soaring to a new high** ... **US-led NATO countries and Russia** ... **President Vladimir Putin**, witnessed **several waves** of NATO's eastward **expansion**, has **now** drawn a **red line** insisting on a **halt to more** expansion ... regards this as a **threat to Russia's security** and **intrusion** into its '**sphere of influence** ... Pentagon announced the **deployment of 3,000 troops** to Poland, Germany and Romania in **addition** to around **8,000 troops** already on **standby**'"¹⁷. It exposes the newspaper construction of the US's wrongful intention of *interfering Russian region*.

At another time, the US alone is blamed responsible for the crisis, and the West is all exonerated and ask for diffusing the tension "... the **world will be dragged** into the **old cold war era** if the issue is not resolved ... France's Emmanuel **Macron** to defuse tensions **reflects Europe's preference** to avert conflict by diplomatic means. Macron's **addressing Russia's security concerns** ... **struck a different note from Washington**, which has continued to insist that a Russian **invasion is imminent** ... **growing East-West mistrust** and confrontation ... **world** increasingly riven into **two competing blocs**"¹⁸. '*Juxtaposing*' the irresponsible role of the US here is attached with the Afghan crisis by not pouring aid to Afghanistan "American Aid: "After 40 years, in an attempt to punish the Taliban government, a huge humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Afghanistan. If Afghanistan descends into chaos because of the [Western] sanctions, as its 75%

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342896/pm-imran-dismisses-west-suspicion-about-cpec>.

¹⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1675009>.

¹⁸Ibid.

economy depends on foreign aid, this will be the **biggest man-made human disaster**¹⁹.

West Needs Russia

But at the same time, without energy-rich Russia, the West can't serve its lifeline. The news highlights such concerns in terms of energy needs as, "35% of European **gas needs** are met by Russia ... make a **potent threat**"²⁰.

The US is Weak

The discourses are found where the US has been portrayed as weak "Biden battles accusations of 'weakness' against US rivals"²¹, wrong "China urges the U.S. not to go further down the wrong path"²², looser "Why big nations lose small wars: A case study of the US-Afghan conflict; The USA fell into known traps"²³.

UN Discourse

From the EU, to the SAARC and the ASEAN, the blocs are everywhere considered less likely to avert crises. Within the SAARC, Pakistan herself has been the facing the victim in Kashmir dispute. Despite the UN resolutions on Kashmir otherwise, the 'popular' Indian Bollywood industry keeps drumming up broader war journalism to dumb the reality (Tarique & Shaheen, 2021).

The War between West and Russia on Ukraine

It was not until Feb 15, 2022, that the top world forum, the UN was given coverage regarding the implications of the standoff²⁴, the body text of the news revolves around the West and Russia without taking responsibility by the UN itself. Not a single rule, or law has been formulated (according to media) to divert the any such war(s). The "UN chief Antonio Guterres warned that ... time to defuse tensions between Russia and the West over the Ukraine crisis ... de-escalate actions ... Calling for an end to incendiary rhetoric ... heightened tensions ... increased speculation ... potential military conflict in Europe ... Russia's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dymtro Kuleba ... Guterres remained convinced that Russia will not invade Ukraine"²⁵.

The category also mirrored in multiple news items and opinions, such as "Russia's military build-up near Ukraine is growing, not shrinking, warns West; Russia's defense ministry said its forces were pulling back after exercises in

¹⁹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342896/pm-imran-dismisses-wests-suspicion-about-cpec>.

²⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

²¹<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/03/biden-battles-accusations-of-weakness-against-us-rivals/>.

²²<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/07/china-urges-u-s-not-to-go-further-down-the-wrong-path/>.

²³<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/08/why-big-nations-lose-small-wars-a-case-study-of-the-us-afghan-conflict/>.

²⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343597/deeply-worried-un-chief-says-time-to-defuse-ukraine-crisis>.

²⁵Ibid.

southern and western military districts”²⁶, “Biden to Putin: Step back from the brink of war with Ukraine; US and NATO allies are prepared for whatever happens: Biden”²⁷, “payoff from Russia-US clash on Ukraine: Erdogan”²⁸, “Ukraine crisis: The West Versus Russia”²⁹, “Diplomatic flurry to avert Russia-NATO clash over Ukraine”³⁰.

Pakistani Discourse

Pakistani elite press although couldn't have a reasonable shopping list to suggest to stop the PMIK to visit Russia during the war, the earliest warning and alerts by the US regarding the Russo-Ukraine war were also played down “the US spoke the issue to the PMIK before his visit”³¹.

The US Hinders Pakistani Needs

“Pakistan is a gas deficient country ... our North-South Gas pipeline has suffered a **delay** because of the **US sanctions** ... we were negotiating for the construction of the pipeline. ... lifting of sanctions on Iran will also help Pakistan get the cheapest gas.”³²

The ‘*syntax*’ reveals otherwise “Not aware of any oil deal with Pakistan, says Russian envoy”³², the ill-timing visit was still portrayed as to cater the Pakistani needs. News portrayed the PMIK as ‘charismatic’ as both leaders agree to extend the meeting duration to ‘resolve every problem’ of Pakistan- mutual, friendly, bilateral, regional, economic relations, everything was on the slate, in an opinion title “... Ukraine crisis: Schedule of Imran-Putin meeting changed, **duration extended to 3hrs**”³³. The center stage agenda according to news discourses was ‘Russian petrol’ “Russia-Ukraine **conflict** may **jolt** Pakistan’s economy; Rising oil prices due to political tensions can have a devastating effect on growth prospects”³⁴. From ‘*global to their local semantics*’, discourses are conveyed “Ukraine crisis: Petroleum prices may rise by up to Rs7 per liter in Pakistan; ... Petrol price increases in Pakistan by Rs12.03”³⁵. On ‘February 15’, the government dropped a major bombshell on the people by **increasing** the price of **petrol by Rs12.03 per liter** due to an **increase in the prices** of crude oil in the **international market**. Moreover, according to (Baker et al., 2008) ‘*Concordance analysis*’ by

²⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343943/russias-military-build-up-near-ukraine-is-growing-not-shrinking-warns-west>.

²⁷<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343756/biden-to-putin-step-back-from-the-brink-of-war-with-ukraine>.

²⁸<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/02/erdogan-seeks-payoff-from-russia-us-clash-on-ukraine/>.

²⁹<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/05/ukraine-crisis-the-west-versus-russia/>.

³⁰<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/07/diplomatic-flurry-to-avert-russia-nato-clash-over-ukraine/>.

³¹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1676813>.

³²<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/968736-not-aware-of-any-oil-deal-with-pakistan-says-russian-envoy>.

³³Ibid.

³⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341183/russia-ukraine-conflict-may-jolt-pakistans-economy>.

³⁵Ibid.

'juxtaposing' Afghan issue, China's Winter Olympics side by side with the Western anti-Holy Prophet (PBUH) remarks, the national press attracts Afghans extra-favors, the "PM thanks Russian president for 'emphatic' statement against insulting Holy Prophet (PBUH)"³⁶. Giving extra care to the Afghan issue also to China attract a positive '*concordance*' for Afghanistan and China whereas negative '*concordance*' for the US "September last year, the two leaders had telephonically talked after the Taliban took control of Kabul in August in the wake of the **chaotic exit of the US-led foreign forces** from Afghanistan. ... PMIK and Putin discussed Afghanistan. ..."³⁷.

International Discourse

The news were also registered of countries including China, Turkey etc. (Russian Bloc), Canada, UAE, Kuwait and Iraq (the US Bloc).

The newspaper portrayed '*in-group communist regimes*' vs '*the out-group US and the West*' in their '*argumentation*', '*attribution*' and '*structure of polarization*' where the Indian follies are also brought where she fails to honor the human rights issues. The opinion reads as "People's Republic of China (PRC) emerged badly bruised from colonial occupation by the UK, US, France, Portugal, Germany and Japan, after the fall of Ming Dynasty (1644) till its independence in 1949 ... The communist consolidation was opposed by the powerful US/West ... Ever since **rising, China** is the centre of mostly '**hostile**' attention by the US/NATO ... The **Western Grand Strategy** ... its ideological mentor the Soviet Union ... **both China and Russia** ... **India has supported Russia** **India had voted in 2020 against Ukraine**-sponsored resolution condemning human rights violations in Crimea at the UN General Assembly"³⁸.

In another opinion, China's role is centripetal to Russia as "China-Russia alliance against the US & allies: IK's visit to Russia: context and circumstances; Growing Sino-Russian partnership has a very meaningful context in how Russia-Pakistan relation may also gain impetus"³⁹. The opinion where China is analysed the same way as "When terrain is the winner; in war, there are three domains that will determine the outcome of an undertaking: time, space and terrain, Opinion, pro-Russia"⁴⁰. Also "World cannot afford another Cold War: PM Imran"⁴¹. China is highlighted in the cold war era as "RCEP: A Geopolitical Gain for China; Another brick in the Great Wall against the US"⁴². In the situation where the US role of invoking war by arming the region has been portrayed as "China urges U.S. to revoke plan of \$100-million arms sale to Taiwan region" and "The US approves \$100mn arms sale to Taiwan for missile upgrades"⁴³.

³⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2339094/imran-putin-agree-to-liaise-on-afghan-crisis>.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

³⁹China-Russia alliance against the US & allies: IK's visit to Russia.

⁴⁰<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341829/when-terrain-is-the-winner>.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/04/rcep-a-geopolitical-gain-for-china/>.

⁴³<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/08/us-approves-100mn-arms-sale-to-taiwan-for-missile-upgrades/>.

The title of the news item reports the Canadian authorities concern that “Canada pulls troops from Ukraine amid **fears of Russian invasion**; temporary repositioning of forces does not signal end of the mission” “Force protection is the top priority for our training mission, of which operational security is a key component”⁴⁴. ... At another time, Canadian frustrated concerns are highlighted as “... tension **between Russia and the West** continues to escalate ... **‘immediately leave Ukraine ... I urge all Canadians to make the necessary arrangements to leave the country now’** ... Kremlin could be planning **another military offensive... ex-Soviet neighbor**”⁴⁵

And same is the situation for the UAE, Kuwait and Iraq rather opening up diplomatic fronts, the countries opt to pull out their nationals to give way to Russians to invade defenseless Ukraine “UAE, Kuwait, Iraq urge nationals to leave Ukraine amid tension; Tension escalates along Ukrainian border amid fears of possible Russian invasion”⁴⁶, and “UAE, Kuwait, Iraq urge nationals to leave Ukraine ... amid **fears of Russian**”⁴⁷.

Ukrainian Discourse

Marginal Ukraine Versus Mighty Russia

For the columnist, it is *‘presupposed’* that Russia is fully controlled by President Putin and for him ‘Ukraine is lifeline to Russia’ and ‘contrary to the fact that Ukraine has the right to live independently i.e., “... not just **President Vladimir Putin** but the **Russian mindset**, overall, which is unable to comprehend that Ukraine has been an independent country since 1991”⁴⁸. Additionally, stronger and nuclear Russia can’t be harmed by retaliation from Ukraine and its allies. Baker et al. (2008) hold that the *‘juxtaposition’* of such words in the national press developed a deceitful genre with the constant ‘irrational’ characterization in connection to ‘reputable’. In the context of mediatized wars, the use of *‘collocations’* in communication structures at the start of war unfolds the war without reference to the use of any force (Lukin, 2019). In the minds of the readers *‘Collocation’* is not a mere *‘juxtaposition’*, but rather ‘an order of mutual expectancy’, where words are mutually expectant and prehended (Firth, 1957). The same is so in the caption story, “Ukrainian servicemen walk by a damaged vehicle ... Russia launched a **massive military operation** against Ukraine, in Kyiv”⁴⁹. In the news story “... the **fatal shelling** of a residential building in Kyiv”⁵⁰. The news story spreads across columns along a photograph of a longer line of smoke-emitting tanks *‘tells the story’* “...Ukrainian President will meet Russia as Putin **alerts nuclear deterrence forces** ... the Ukrainian President

⁴⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343398/canada-pulls-troops-from-ukraine-amid-fears-of-russian-invasion>.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343396/uae-kuwait-iraq-urge-nationals-to-leave-ukraine-amid-tension>.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343226/dangerous-russia-ukraine-standoff>.

⁴⁹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1677361>.

⁵⁰Ibid.

states that the **invading Russian troops ... biggest assault on a European** state since **WWII** ... the negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow is set to take place at the Belaurussian- Ukrainian border which is **nearby Chernobyl-** the site of the **world's worst nuclear disaster**⁵¹. The *'collocation of text'* as 'nuclear deterrence forces' and 'long lines of smoke' in the news headlines and the caption both. Here the news refers mighty Russia vs the abandoned Ukraine to hell and give no place to hide. The picture story *'presupposed'* the war policy of the 'mighty invader' would kill them-Ukrainians without seeing consequences. Putin: "... NATO's **aggressive statements** and Western **economic sanctions** against Moscow ..." with the *'presupposition'* that the NATO has *'no right'* to be aggressive against Russia. On the other hand, "... Zelensky in a video **message from the streets of Kyiv** ... We have withstood against enemy ... the fighting goes on ... Ukraine lodges complaint against Russia at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ... The ICJ **does not have the mandate** to bring criminal charges against individual Russian leaders." with the *'presupposition'* that 'poor' Ukrainians can't win over the 'mighty' Russians on-ground and in the Hague based ICJ- a distant remedy for Ukraine.

Giving a prominent headline space by the top national daily, the headline story quoting major international news distribution agencies "...Ukraine airbases **knocked out-** says Russian military"⁵², resonates the tons-of-effects upon the policymakers that the Russians can't be sidelined by threats merely and she should be considered a mighty force of war, has not started yet, the journalists roll up the sleeves to 'actively' participation in war arena in terms of 'if it bleeds, it leads. In another place, "...it was **Ukraine, not Russia**, where the economy was eroding the fastest under the threat of war ..." ⁵³ astonishingly signifies that (weak) Ukraine will pay the price of war and not (mighty) Russia. The villains are heroic in the eyes of journalists!

Even if the sanctions (*bad impacts for the US*) are harming Russia, she is strengthening herself "Russia remains **engaged with the PRC** in advanced technology, in addition to computers and broadcasting equipment in return for gas"⁵⁴.

Unreliable West

One of the news reveals that even the 'previous Western sanction' couldn't prove beneficent. Ukrainian president showed otherwise the US, West and the allies are doing against Russia. The low-tone of the Ukrainian president has been brought forth by newspaper's gatekeepers as, "... Banking sanctions part of a new round of **sanctions** aiming to impose ... cost on Moscow for the invasion ... **Zelensky reiterated his openness to talks with Russia** in a video message, saying he **welcomed Turkey and Azerbaijan** to organize **diplomatic efforts** ... **so far have faltered.** "We aren't going to lay down weapons, we will **protect**

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1676782>.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

the country”⁵⁵. Ukraine's weakness can also be seen “it had begun hard **talks on a ceasefire**, immediate withdrawal of troops and **security guarantees** with Russia, **despite fatal shelling of residential buildings** in Kyiv”⁵⁶. In a news story, the marginal Ukraine requests the West to act now with power against Russia “Ukraine neighbors close air space to civilian flights as **Russia’s Putin launches ‘military operation’**: Ukraine **‘knockout’**- Russian military: Ukraine imposes martial law: ‘Act immediately’⁵⁷.”

The West is also portrayed as not-a-savior of Ukraine but rather containing-Russia “Russia-Ukrainian crisis: A tragedy in making? Saving Ukraine is secondary, NATO wants to contain Russia”⁵⁸.

Russian Discourse

Russian Demands

According to the Pakistani media, the US is made responsible for not availing the chance to avert the clash “... Perturbed by the increasing NATO military presence in Russia’s neighborhood, Putin had sought security guarantees from Biden ... NATO kept the doors open and beefed-up Ukraine’s military defence...” The national press scripts Russian demands as ‘righteous’ even if ‘annexure’ of Crimea “... Russia had already **annexed Crimea** without invoking **much** of the **global hue and cry...**”, and claimed over Donetsk and Luhansk “...step toward reintegrating the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics ...”⁵⁹ The Russia’s war was highlighted in terms of “Russian securities: The Kremlin hunt for Kyiv; Russia doesn’t want war, but security”⁶⁰.

Powerful Russian Nationalism Guarantees Safe Ukraine

More than once, the selected opinions by the national press gatekeepers, Russia was depicted as ‘mighty’. In CDA, ideologies are pursued, straight and in reverse order both, such a move where ‘powerful us’ is depicted in a common reversal move- one of the techniques of CDA used in ‘contemporary race talk’, media represent members of ‘powerful us (majority group)’ as ‘victims’ of discrimination and ‘political correctness.’ (Augustinos & Every 2007, p. 138). Russians were considered as beleaguered and at another time they are emboldened by the media “The Post-Cold War **humiliation of disintegration** of the Soviet Union would not be lost on many **influential** and **powerful nationalist** circles within Russia now ... Nor would the actors behind this **epic saga** remain **unchallenged if Russia** could ever challenge **them** ... **polar bear** is harmless in hibernation; otherwise, it is **a deadly predator... tough, enduring** and **adaptable**⁶¹. In another opinion, Russia’s support of cold war rivals, are

⁵⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1677361>.

⁵⁶<https://www.dawn.com/news/1679957>.

⁵⁷<https://www.dawn.com/news/1676782>.

⁵⁸<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/14/russia-ukrainian-crisis-a-tragedy-in-making/>.

⁵⁹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341183/russia-ukraine-conflict-may-jolt-pakistans-economy>.

⁶⁰<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/17/the-kremlin-hunt-for-kyiv/>.

⁶¹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2342798/ukraine-crisis-and-russia-china-and-the-us>.

'structured' as "**From cold-war rivals to 'friends'**"; bilaterally, Russia and Pakistan are keen to expand their economic ties"⁶², and the support of Eastern European countries for Russia "**Armenia, Turkey resume first flights in two years**"⁶³.

"The **people of Ukraine will defend** their motherland with full force and prevent a Russian invasion at all costs ... there is **no hardcore evidence to prove** that President Putin will play such a big gamble and put his country in jeopardy"⁶⁴. The overall '*discourse strategies*' draw favors for Russia due to 'Ukrainians are Russian ethnic', 'Russians wouldn't attack Ukraine to kill own Russian race' otherwise the Russian population would be against Putin for putting Russian race into jeopardy. Russian nationalism in international perspective has also been highlighted in the opinion titled, where the former ambassador of Pakistan to the US, UK and the UN tries to make the '*Russian such act of war solidify the nationalism in the region against US hegemony*' "Echoes of the cold war: The **Ukraine crisis has pushed Russia and China into a tighter embrace and exposed divisions in the West**"⁶⁵.

Conclusion

'*Persuasive moves*' have longer and sharper effects on public opinion (Van Eynde, 1973). It appears to be a war between the US and its allies, rather between Russia and Ukraine, according to the Pakistani national media. Among them, the moves like '*moves of strategic persuasion*' blur the idea of war and exaggerated the consequences. When there was no war, the US discourse concentrated war fever, in meaning and description like words have their global and permanent meanings when it comes to war and peace (Beer, 2001). Panic and anxiety were caused by representations of the category news reports to the height of their hyperbolic exaggeration. In yet another US discourse, examples of earlier Russian invasions were highlighted and Russia was seen as a threat. It has been noted that certain discourses present Russia as "stronger us" and the US and its allies as "weaker them" and ignorant, like the US Afghanistan invasion is tagged with the aid, in the present situation. It is also revealed that the UN has no idea to castigate the usurpers in wars.

It's also a prevalent discourse that the US and its allies failed to defend the Ukrainians in their hour of need, which the Russians had evaluated carefully and prepared themselves well before the attack. Even though the Kremlin has guaranteed the US and NATO that there will not be any such move against Ukraine and Georgia (on numerous occasions), it appears that the Russians took

⁶²<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2344478/from-cold-war-rivals-to-friends>.

⁶³<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/02/03/armenia-turkey-resume-first-flights-in-two-years/>.

⁶⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2343226/dangerous-russia-ukraine-standoff>.

⁶⁵<https://www.dawn.com/news/1675009>.

⁶⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2341309/us-and-uk-ready-to-punish-putin-associates-if-russia-invades-ukraine>.

courage to attack Ukraine after evaluating the “lack of back” by the friends of Ukraine. More or so the discourses here by Pakistani media reveal that it is not the war of Russia and Ukraine but more than this is a war between the “West and the Rest”.

When it comes to the category “Pakistani discourse” on war, the national press strengthened the opinion that the US is putting barriers to Pakistani energy needs in concordance with the Indian acts the same and were never put to the criminals’ rostrum. For Pakistan, Russo-Ukraine war may cause an oil crisis, resultantly a significant spike in commodities costs, before war. Countries like China and Turkey were portrayed as the stronger Russian bloc, whereas Canada, and Gulf region were portrayed as US allies to some extent. Ukraine was portrayed as marginalized, powerless in the face of strong Russia.

In the Russia-Ukraine war, it is seen that mainstream selected press selected feature columns by non-journalists’ expert authors, diplomats, the foreign news services distribution and editorial write-ups. The less byline news coverage shows that either journalist couldn’t understand the regional diplomatic fronts or not ready to preemptively intervene the crisis.

The selected national press portrayed largely against the ‘undesirable out-group, as Russia, whereas the opinions carried the Ukrainian people and the government are the same race as that of Russia and for which the US, the West, the allies and NATO are guests-not-invited.

Future Agenda

The study may be extended to electronic media for the reason that the prime-time news bulletins of the national channels pick a dozen most important news to be relayed. Television represents the dominant reality (Liebes & Ribak 1991), so may be necessary to extend the debate in context of Pakistani national electronic media culture. With special reference to the foreign desk editors’ selection of the international news agencies contents distributed and consumed in Pakistan may also be needed to explore. As the social media perpetuate and propound the debate downward to the people, so it is also needed to explore the public opinion regarding Russo-Ukraine war. Since national language media (Urdu here) are considered the pulse of any nation so may be given a due weightage to Urdu Pakistani national media. Pictorial analysis may also be necessary for the understanding of the Russo-Ukraine war, as one photograph speaks one hundred words.

The agreements between the warring parties should also be put into the CDA framework of analysis for exploring their hidden aims and agenda.

As has been discussed above in the ‘UN Discourses- the contextual UN resolutions of such conflicts’ which media policy, laws, and reforms have been made or tabled by the respective countries under the UN auspices for a peaceful world.

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Appendix

Peace and/Conflict Journalism PJ	War and/Violence Journalism WJ/VJ
<p>1: Peace and/or conflict oriented/PJ1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [PJ1-1/Win-Win]Investigates the formation of conflict. X parties, Y aims, Z objects, general win-win orientation. • [PJ1-2/Giving Latitude]Open space & time. Causes & solutions looked for everywhere, also in history & culture. • [PJ1-3/Transparency]Make conflicts transparent. • [PJ1-4/Empathetic]All parties are interviewed. Capacity for empathy, understanding. • [PJ1-5/Creative]Conflict/war seen as the problem. Focus on creative conflict solutions. • [PJ1-6/Humanization] Humanization of all sides, the more so the worse the weapons. • [PJ1-7/Preventive/pre-emptive]Preventive: prevention of violence/war. • [PJ1-8/Reporting Effects/Coverage of Effects/Covering Effects]Focus on the invisible effects of violence (traumas & reputation, structural & cultural damage). 	<p>1: War and/or violence oriented/WJ1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [WJ1-2/Win-Lose] Describes the conflict arena. 2 parties, 1 aim (victory) war, general zero sum orientation. • [WJ1-2/Imposing/Putting Restriction]Restricted space & time. Reasons & solution sought on the battle field: "who threw the first stone?" • [WJ1-3/Obscurity]Wars made obscure. • [WJ1-4/We-Them/Us-Them /Propaganda] "We-them" journalism. Propaganda, vote for us. • [WJ1-5/Complex/Problematic]They are seen as the problem. Focus on who gets the upper hand in the war. • [WJ1-6/ Dehumanization]Dehumanization of others, the more so, the worse the weapons. • [WJ1-7/Reactive]Reactive: only violence is worth reporting • [WJ1-8/Spot Reporting/Covering Visible Scene/site]Only considers the visible effects of violence (Dead, wounded & material damage)
<p>2: Truth oriented/PJ2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [PJ2-9/Homogeneous Untruths Coverage]Exposes untruths of all sides. • [PJ2-10/Their Lies need disclosure]Discloses all cover-up attempts. 	<p>2: Propaganda oriented/WJ2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [WJ2-9/One-Sided Untruths Coverage]Exposes the untruths of the others. • [WJ2-10/Our Lies need not disclosure]Supports our cover-up attempts/lies
<p>3: People oriented/PJ3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [PJ3-11/All are Sufferers (of this unrest/conflict)]Focuses on all suffering; suffering of women, old people, children, gives the voiceless a voice. • [PJ3-12/Wrongs committed by all/both-sides bring violence]Names all wrongdoers. • [PJ3-13/People bring Peace]Stresses peace tendencies in the population. 	<p>3: Elite oriented/WJ3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [WJ3-11/We're Aggrieved/Sufferers]Focuses on our suffering; the men who make up the military elites; is their mouth piece. • [WJ3-12/Their wrongs bring violence]Names their wrongdoers. • [WJ3-13/Elite bring Peace]Stresses that only the elite can make peace.
<p>4: Solution oriented/PJ4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [PJ4-14/Creative]Peace= freedom for violence + creativity • [PJ4-15/Information Disclosure]Points to freedom initiatives, also to prevent the expansion of the war. • [PJ4-16/Peace lies in Culture]Structure & culture are important; a peaceful society. • [PJ4-17/Follow ups]Reports about the post war phase; conflict solution, reconstruction, reconciliation. 	<p>4: Victory oriented/WJ4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [WJ4-14/Armistice]Peace= victory + armistice • [WJ4-15/Information Concealment]Conceals peace initiatives as long as it is not clear who is winning. • [WJ4-16/Peace lies in Agreements]Treaties & institutions are important; a controlled society. • [WJ4-17/Absence of Follow ups]After the war is over, turns to the next source of conflict; goes back when the old one breaks again.

Source: Shaw, I. S.; Lynch, J.; Hackett, R. A. (2011).