

FRAMING THE NATO AIR STRIKES ON KOSOVO ACROSS COUNTRIES

Comparison of Chinese and US Newspaper Coverage

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Abstract / Using a frame analysis technique, this study compares the way in which Chinese media, represented by the *People's Daily Online* and the *China Daily*, and US media, represented by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, covered the NATO air strikes in 1999. The content analysis of 200 news stories reveals that Chinese newspapers and US newspapers adopted two different media frames in recounting the large-scale military action. While the Chinese newspapers framed the air strikes as an intervention of Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territory, the US newspaper framed the air strikes as a humanistic aid to Albanians to stop the ethnic cleansing initiated by Serbians. The general corresponding reflections of government attitudes toward the air strikes in the newspapers indicate a considerable influence of national interest on media frames in newspapers. The author concludes that in international news reportage, national interest often outweighs other factors to play an active role in framing media texts.

Keywords / China media system / condensational symbols / content analysis / ethnic cleansing / framing / labels / media frame / national interest / NATO air strikes on Kosovo / referential symbols / US media system / Yugoslavia's sovereignty

At the end of the 20th century, an American-led NATO force initiated a military campaign on Kosovo, part of Yugoslavia, claiming humanistic intervention to stop Serbs from driving Albanians out of Kosovo. The large-scale air strikes challenged the international community with the issue in regard to balancing and weighing sovereignty vs human rights issues in maintaining international order. Based on concerns of national interests, different countries held different attitudes toward these issues. This study attempts to examine how the print media from two countries presented the event to their audiences and whether the presentation related to countries' national interests in a significant way.

There has been a lot of interest in studying international news coverage in US media since the 1980s with a focus on framing of issues and image portrayal of actors (Reta, 2000). For example, Entman (1991) studied American news magazines' contrasting frames of two air downing incidents – the Soviet Union's downing of a Korean Airline Flight 007 and the US downing of an Iran Air Flight 655. Reese and Bucklaw (1995) analyzed the framing of the Persian Gulf War by US local television news. Reta (2000) explored how the 1994 election in South Africa was framed in US newspapers. Not only did the studies find the news frames were prevalent in the various US media, but they also

suggested that the frames were influenced by government policies (Entman, 1991), American democratic values (Reta, 2000) and patriotism (Reese and Bucklaw, 1995).

On the other hand, some cross-national studies of international events identified various factors that might influence the international media coverage. In comparing US and Chinese national television news coverage in the post-Cold War era, Chang et al. (1998) found that it was the relative importance of the event in society not the attributes of the event that determined the worlds in news. The finding recognized the importance of contextual factors in shaping the world news. These factors can be political ideology (Wang, 1992; Pan et al., 1999), diplomatic sensitivity (Wang, 1992), history and organizational resources (Pan et al., 1999) and national interest (Lee and Yang, 1995).

While most of the studies examined the relationship between factors and news texts in a direct manner, this study argues that only from the framing perspective can the investigation of factors be more conceptually solid and empirically systematic. The ubiquitous nature of the framing phenomena in mass media establishes the platform to content analyze media texts, but the identification of factors in relation to framing explains why media texts are constructed the way they are. Entman (1991: 7) defined media frames as 'attributes of news itself'. Hence, this study attempts to explore the media frames of the US and China in covering the NATO air strikes on Kosovo. Specifically, attributes of news will be compared along the argument proposed by Lee and Yang (1995), that national interest serves as an important factor in filtering international news to the audience.

Literature Review

Framing and Factors Influencing Framing

News media research has produced ample evidence that news content is not an objective entity, independent of political, social, ideological or sociopsychological influences (e.g. Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Graber, 1997; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Gans, 1979). Gerbner (1964) pointed out there is 'no fundamentally non-ideological, apolitical, non-partisan news gathering and reporting system'. It is from this line of reasoning that the concept of framing is derived.

'To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them salient' (Entman, 1993: 52). Gamson and Modigliani (1987: 143) have put it: 'A frame is a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them.' As a cognitive device, framing is used in encoding information, interpreting information and retrieving information (Pan and Kosicki, 1993). While framing can be either studied as a strategy of constructing and processing news or explored as a characteristic of the discourse (Entman, 1993), this study takes on the latter approach by focusing on the characteristics of the discourse.

Researchers have identified many factors that influence the production and selection of news. For example, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) summarized all

the influences on media content from the most general and indirect to the most direct and specific: ideological and other macro-system factors, media organizational constraints and the more micro-characteristics of individual media workers. The combination of all the influences makes a significant contribution to the final product of news and eventually defines the landscape of media content. As is well known, it is impossible to make news without going through the framing process. Mass media actively set the frames of references that audiences use to understand public events (Tuchman, 1978: ix). Scheufele (1999) proposed that at least five factors potentially influence how journalists frame a given issue: social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressure of interest groups, journalistic routines, and ideological or political orientations of journalists.

Edelman (1993: 232) has asserted the news frame is 'driven by ideology and prejudice rather than by rigorous analysis or the aspiration to solve social problems'. Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (2000) did find that the dominant ideology of a nation was a major source of frame in their analysis of US press coverage of the Fourth UN Conference and the NGO Forum in Beijing. Reta (2000) reached the same conclusion in his analysis of the 1994 South Africa elections in US media.

This study argues that national interest is another potential variable that influences the framing process, especially in the international news-framing process. Ideology may share some overlapping meanings and implications with national interest. However, in terms of definition and usage, national interest differs from ideology considerably.

While ideology concerns a person's, an organization's or a nation's value or belief system, national interest is more closely related to a nation's standing in dealing with international affairs. As the Commission on America's National Interests declared in 1996, 'national interests are the fundamental building blocks in any discussion of foreign policy' (Nye, 1999: 25). Brands (1999: 239) noted that national interest is a 'conception of an overriding common good transcending the specific interests of parties, factions, and other entities smaller than the nation as a whole'. Nye (1999: 25) defined national interest in a democracy as 'a set of shared priorities regarding relation with the rest of the world'. These definitions and arguments point to the close relationship between national interest and foreign policies in international affairs. Since foreign policies usually guide the direction of news texts (Dickson et al., 1995; Kim, 2000; Chang, 1989), national interest, as the primary source of foreign policies, should play a central role in influencing news coverage (Lee and Yang, 1995).

Rachlin (1988) stated that the meaning of world events is colored by the host country's national interests, political and cultural perspectives. Tenney (1992) pointed out that when American reporters labeled the Tiananmen demonstration as 'the pro-democracy movement', such terminology was equated with a purely American definition and the media emphasized American values and interests. Henry (1981) has noted even more clearly that ultimately journalism is patriotism and reporters all become nationalists in the time of crisis. Therefore, in the process of producing international news, journalists select, prioritize and structure the narrative flow of events by identifying with

their own countries. They frame news accounts on the basis of their own country's ultimate interest.

Kosovo Crisis vs Chinese and American Government Reactions

Kosovo occupies a corner of Yugoslavia in the south bordering Albania and Macedonia. At present, 90 percent of the Kosovar residents are ethnic Albanians and the other 10 percent are mostly orthodox Serbs ('A Look at Kosovo's Troubled History', 1999). Historically, the Slavs (Serbs and Bulgars) first dominated Kosovo in the 5th century. Only after the occupation of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century did Albanians, mostly converted to Islam by the Turks, become the ethnic majority because of the migration of Serbs to the north of the region ('A Look at Kosovo's Troubled History', 1999). In the early 20th century, the Ottoman Empire was driven out of the Balkans. Serbia, having gained an independent state status, asserted control over Kosovo in 1912 (Daalder and O'Hanlon, 2000). After the First World War, both Serbia and Kosovo were integrated into the new country of Yugoslavia, with Kosovo a province of Serbia. Under the communist leadership of Marshal Josip Broz Tito from 1945 to 1980, Kosovo earned and enjoyed an autonomous status in Yugoslavia (Daalder and O'Hanlon, 2000).

After the death of Tito in 1980, Serb nationalists led by Slobodan Milosevic revoked the autonomy of Kosovo in 1989. In response to the revocation and growing Serb oppression, Albanians established parallel state structures and the Democratic League of Kosovo in the hope that Albanians in Kosovo could win international recognition of Kosovo's independent right one day (Daalder and O'Hanlon, 2000). In March 1999, the confrontation between Serb security forces and Albanians reached the stage of violence. Tens of thousands of people fled their homes. After several attempts made by NATO to persuade Milosevic to stop attacks on Kosovo failed, on 23 March NATO commenced air strikes on Serbian military targets. On 10 June 1999, after an air campaign lasting 78 days, the NATO's air operations against Yugoslavia were suspended ('NATO's Role', 1999).

China has long held that the 'Kosovo issue should be solved in a just and reasonable way through negotiations and under the prerequisite of respect for Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territorial integrity while ensuring the rights and interests of all the ethnic groups in Kosovo' ('China Reiterates Stance', 1999). Prime Minister Zhu Rongji said in the 3 April edition of Toronto's *Globe and Mail* that 'All the internal matters should be left for the country itself to resolve' ('The Kosovo Crisis', 1999). Some western analysts believe that China is uneasy about the growing influence of the US and a bigger and more powerful NATO in the world. On the other hand, China is facing similar problems with Tibet and Xinjiang separatists within its own border (Donfried, 1999). China's critical attitude toward the NATO air campaign intensified after the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was hit on 7 May by NATO weapons, resulting in the deaths of three Chinese journalists and injuries to at least 15 other Chinese citizens.

The US believes NATO had the moral and strategic right to use military

power in the Balkans. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright made it clear in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 20, 1999 that Kosovo was 'the critical missing piece in the puzzle of a Europe whole and free' ('US and NATO Policy', 1999). She emphasized that a united and democratic Europe was important to the US's own security. President Clinton voiced the same tone, that the US has a clear national interest in ensuring Kosovo's peace. 'If the conflict continues, there will certainly be more atrocities, more refugees, more victims crying out for justice and seeking out revenge' ('Remarks by the President', 1999). Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic (the Czech Republic is a member of NATO), claimed that this war of NATO against Yugoslavia gives 'human rights precedence over the rights of states' (Havel, 2000: 245).

The official declarations from China and the US on the issue of Kosovo exhibited two strikingly different national interests. While China upheld the principle of sovereignty, the US believed Europe's security, therefore its own security, had to be defended by providing humanistic aid to the Albanians in Kosovo. The central question to be asked in this study is whether national interests served as an overarching guide in directing US media and Chinese media's coverage of this delicate and complicated military crisis to their respective audiences.

Media Systems

US media are mainly known for journalistic professionalism, media independence and autonomy and concentration of ownership and capital (Chang et al., 1998). While the watchdog role is designed as their primary obligation (Graber, 1997: 98), the assumptions about the press mission are that news should stimulate critical thinking about major policies and news should be selected for audience appeal (Graber, 1997: 21).

As a propaganda tool of the government, Chinese media seldom deviate from the ruling ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Zhang and Kraus, 1995). Chinese news tends to serve the state's structural needs rather than enlighten the public, and the news content comes from defining and reproducing the central knowledge dictated by the state's political and ideological deliberations (Chang et al., 1998). Therefore, reports on party guidelines, policies and major decisions are expected to be carried in all Chinese papers according to party organ style (Li, 1994).

In spite of the differences found between the two media systems, one common feature that both media or all media systems share is that media frames are unavoidably employed by journalists in selecting and presenting media texts, which makes it possible to compare the coverage of certain events across nations.

Entman (1991: 7) explains that media frames are usually embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images in news narratives. By repeatedly using them, the news narratives reference some ideas but not others, which is exactly how frames work to highlight certain ideas. The study chose to examine keywords (how words were used to label the NATO air

strikes), metaphors (from what perspective the story was covered), and symbols (how headlines were symbolized). Sources (what information source was utilized in the story), topics (what specific topic the story focused on) and placement of the story (where the story appeared in the news space) were added to have more dimensions investigated in terms of framing analysis. Among others, symbols were examined by following the conception of Bennett (1980) on referential symbols and condensational symbols. Referential symbols are implied in the plain, clear and straightforward words. Condensational symbols are implied in the abstract and vague language.

Three research questions are to be addressed and six hypotheses tested.

Research Question 1: How did Chinese newspapers differ from US newspapers in the placement of news reports about NATO air strikes on Kosovo?

Research Question 2: How did Chinese newspapers differ from US newspapers in topics covered in news reports about NATO air strikes on Kosovo?

Research Question 3: How did Chinese newspapers differ from US newspapers in using sources in the reports about NATO air strikes on Kosovo?

Hypothesis 1a: Chinese newspaper headlines will use more condensational symbols than US newspaper headlines in the coverage of NATO air strikes on Kosovo.

Hypothesis 1b: Chinese newspaper headlines will use fewer referential symbols than US newspaper headlines in the coverage of NATO air strikes on Kosovo.

Hypothesis 2a: Chinese newspapers will use more anti-strike terms than US newspapers in the coverage of NATO air strikes on Kosovo.

Hypothesis 2b: Chinese newspapers will use fewer pro-strike terms than US newspapers in the coverage of NATO air strikes on Kosovo.

Hypothesis 3a: Chinese newspapers will have more stories from the Serbian point of view than US newspapers in the coverage of NATO air strikes on Kosovo.

Hypothesis 3b: Chinese newspaper will have fewer stories from the Albanian point of view than US newspapers in the coverage of NATO air strikes on Kosovo.

Method

This study used quantitative content analysis to identify the overall frames in the news and editorial content of two Chinese daily newspapers and two US daily newspapers. The US newspapers are the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The Chinese newspapers selected were the English-language *People's Daily Online* and the English-language *China Daily*. While the two US newspapers were well recognized as influential papers in the US, the two Chinese newspapers enjoyed the same reputation in China.

Sample Description

People's Daily is a state-owned, serious and quality newspaper in China (Chang, 1989). The paper has a circulation of 5 million, highest among China's

1776 newspapers (Chang, 1989). *People's Daily Online* English edition has been available since 14 January 1998, providing all major news stories from the *People's Daily*. With an average daily page-view of 1.5 million, *People's Daily Online* has established itself as one of the most influential Chinese websites in the world ('Partners', 2001).

China Daily was launched in 1980 to meet the needs of China's open policy and serve foreigners in China (Chang, 1989). This English-language newspaper was printed simultaneously in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, New York, San Francisco and London (Stone, 1994). With a circulation of 300,000, *China Daily* belongs to a group of international English-language newspapers that reach an international audience (Stevenson, 1994).

The two US newspapers were chosen because of their prominence and influence, especially regarding their coverage of international political news (Kim, 2000). The *New York Times* is generally considered to be the 'paper of record' for international news coverage and influences the content of other mass media (Gitlin, 1980). Its circulation has reached 1.1 million (Kurtz, 1993). The *Washington Post* is a morning daily and Sunday newspaper published in Washington, DC. Its circulation is around 838,000 (Kurtz, 1993).

The time frame of the study is 24 March 1999 when the air strikes began to 10 June 1999 when the NATO secretary general announced the suspension of the bombing campaign and Serb forces began to withdraw from Kosovo after signing the Military Technical Agreement ('Kosovo', 1999). Stories from the *China Daily*, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were all located by searching the Lexis-Nexis database with the keywords of 'NATO', 'bombing', 'Kosovo' and 'Yugoslavia'. The stories from the *People's Daily Online* were searched by using the newspaper's online archive. This procedure yielded a total of 1367 stories, with 429 from the *Washington Post*, 705 from the *New York Times*, 68 from the *China Daily* and 165 from the *People's Daily Online*.

Sampling Method

The US newspaper stories outnumbered the Chinese newspaper stories greatly in the coverage of the event. Therefore 100 stories from the Chinese newspapers and another 100 stories from the US newspapers were sampled with the systematic random sampling method. According to the proportion of the two Chinese newspapers, 29 stories were randomly taken from the *China Daily* and 71 stories from the *People's Daily*. American newspaper stories were sampled in the same way resulting in 38 stories from the *Washington Post* and 62 stories from the *New York Times*. Eventually, 200 news articles were content analyzed for this study.

Data Collection

Depending on the research questions and hypotheses, different coding units were used. For the purpose of describing the sample, all the articles were coded for their newspaper identity, day and date of publishing, type of reports, and total number of words. Placement of reports was noted by recording where

articles appeared in the paper: front page or inside page. Other variables coded were topic, symbol, key term, overall point of view and source.

One of the important elements in framing is the selection of some aspects of the event and making them salient (Entman, 1993). To assess what aspect of the crisis was featured in each news story, coders read the whole story and then decided what topic the story was mainly about, i.e. the dominant topic. A topic can be defined as a summary label of the domain of social experiences covered by a story (Pan and Kosicki, 1993). A total of 10 topics, developed by *Media Monitor*, in its analysis of television news coverage of the NATO strikes on Yugoslavia was adapted for this study. *Media Monitor*, a bimonthly publication by the Center for Media and Public Affairs, often presents a concise, readable analysis of contemporary media coverage and the controversies that surround it (*Media Monitor*, 2001). The 10 topics were air war, refugees, strategy/tactics, ethnic cleansing, civilian damage, prisoner of war, diplomatic negotiations, weapon systems, ground war debate and Macedonia ('Crisis in Kosovo', 1999). Six topics were kept: refugees, ethnic cleansing, civilian damage, prisoner of war, diplomatic negotiations and Macedonia. Two topics were combined into one: strategy/tactics and weapon systems. In addition, after an initial assessment of some Chinese news reports and US news reports, five more topics were added: air war updates, war debate, protest and condemnation, Russian aid to Yugoslavia, and other. The reason for this adjustment was that *Media Monitor* focused on a shorter period than the present study (from 24 March to 25 May) and the medium analyzed was US television broadcasts.

Each story's headline was coded for symbol usage. As the most important index for a news story, headline is the first place to skim in newspaper reading. Pan and Kosicki (1993: 59) pointed out 'a headline is the most salient cue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers' minds; it is thus the most powerful framing device of syntactical structure'. Symbols are important to examine because a symbol carries 'an attitude, a set of impressions, or a pattern of events associated through time, through space, through logic, or through imagination with the symbol' (Edelman, 1964: 4).

The study utilized Bennett's referential symbols and condensational symbols to identify how the newspapers appealed to the audience's feelings. 'Referential symbols are economical, concrete, and not prone to attract emotional baggage. They are made in specific and precise terms. Condensational symbols, on the other hand, appear in abstract contexts that are often ambiguous or have powerful emotional concerns for the audience' (Bennett, 1980: 256). For example, a headline such as 'NATO warplanes jolt Yugoslav power grid; 80 percent of Serbia blacked out as concentrated attacks damage 5 major plants' states the fact in concrete language and therefore employs a referential symbol. An example of a condensational symbol is 'Armed intervention is lawfully intolerable' because of the usage of ambiguous terms of 'lawful' and 'intervention'. 'Intolerable' also indicates the tendency of the paper to appeal to the audience's feelings.

Position toward the strike was coded by assessing terms used by the newspapers in reporting the NATO air strikes. Wang (1992) argued that how news events are symbolized influences the public's reactions to these events. Bennett

(1980) observed that the simple act of labeling could affect people's behavior toward that thing and even change the nature of the thing. Specifically, the study recorded the presence of every explanatory or descriptive term in reference to the air strike or the air campaign. An initial assessment of the stories produced three categories of terms: pro-strike, neutral and anti-strike. Examples of pro-strike terms were 'humanistic aid', 'peace protection' or 'human rights protection'. Examples of anti-strike terms were 'armed intervention', 'act of aggression', 'invasion', or 'violation of sovereignty'. The neutral attitude was coded if the terms did not suggest pro or anti attitudes.

Points of views about the conflict were coded by assessing the whole report. When the report presented the conflict as an internal affair, suggested that the separation of Albanians from Yugoslavia should not be encouraged and described the NATO action as an intervention, the article was coded as agreeing with the Serbian point of view. However, when the report presented the Kosovo case as ethnic cleansing or ethnic hatred, and depicted Serbians and Milosevic as perpetrator and Albanians as victims, it was coded as agreeing with the Albanian point of view. When the Kosovo conflict was not discussed in the article or when both sides were presented in the article, the article was coded as neutral.

The study also examined source usage. In news reporting, reporters rely heavily on sources to present a world of text to the audiences. The inclusion of some sources means the exclusion of others. Therefore, by examining the distribution of sources in news stories, a pattern of coverage can be traced and the media's institutional bias can be revealed (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). The source variable was classified into eight categories: Chinese, Russians, UN, Americans, NATO, Serbs and Yugoslavians, Albanians and others.

Statistical Tests

Chi-square tests for two independent samples (China sample and US sample) and the difference of proportion tests were conducted to address the research questions and test the hypotheses.

Intercoder Reliability

One graduate student and the author coded all the stories. Scott's π and Holt's R were used to check the intercoder reliability on 10 percent of the sample, with 10 stories randomly selected from the Chinese newspapers and 10 randomly selected from the US papers. The reliability coefficients (Scott's π) for placements of reports, topics of reports, headline symbols and points of view were 1.00, .82, .78 and .78 respectively. The reliability coefficients for key terms and sources (Holt's R was chosen because the variables used multiple coding) were both .69.

Findings

The study compared two US newspapers (the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*) with two Chinese newspapers (the *People's Daily* and the *China*

Daily) in the coverage of the NATO air strikes on Kosovo. Two hundred reports were analyzed with 100 from Chinese papers and 100 from US papers. There were a total of 157,231 words in the news reports. Chinese newspapers had 46,102 words (29 percent) and US papers 111,129 words (71 percent). Regarding types of news reports, 76 percent of the reports were news items and 24 percent were editorials or commentaries. Among the news items, there were 67 reports (44 percent) from the Chinese newspapers and 85 reports (56 percent) from the US newspapers. Regarding the editorials or commentaries, there were 33 (69 percent) from the Chinese newspapers and 15 (31 percent) from the US newspapers.

Research Question 1 asked how Chinese newspapers differed from US newspapers in the placement of news reports about NATO air strikes on Kosovo. The chi-square test indicated that there was no significant association ($\chi^2 = .221$, d.f. = 1, $N = 200$, NS) between placement of news reports and newspapers. Both Chinese newspapers and US newspapers exhibited the same pattern in placing news reports either on the front page or the inside page.

Research Question 2 asked how Chinese newspapers differed from US newspapers in topics covered in news reports about NATO air strikes on Kosovo. Table 1 shows that Chinese newspapers had a very different priority from their US counterparts in selecting news ($\chi^2 = 73.04$, d.f. = 11, $N = 200$, $p < .001$).

US newspapers allocated almost a quarter of their news space (22 percent) to 'others', suggesting a wider range of topics were covered in US papers beyond those designated by the study. However, Chinese newspapers devoted almost

TABLE 1

Comparison of Dominant Topics of US Newspapers and Chinese Newspapers on NATO Air Strikes on Kosovo

Topics	US Newspapers ($N = 100$) %	Chinese Newspapers ($N = 100$) %	Z-score
Air war updates	19.0	6.0	2.6*
War debates	13.0	9.0	
Refugees	11.0	0	3.7**
Strategy/tactics/weapons	5.0	2.0	
Ethnic cleansing	3.0	0	
Civilian damage	7.0	5.0	
Prisoner of war	4.0	1.0	
Diplomatic negotiation	13.0	12.0	
Macedonia	1.0	0	
Protest and condemnation	2.0	48.0	11.0**
Russian aid to Yugoslavia	0	3.0	
Others	22.0	14.0	
Total	100	100	

Note: $\chi^2 = 73.044$, d.f. = 11, $p < .001$.

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$.

half of their news space (48 percent) to ‘protest the air strikes or condemn the air strikes’. When the Chinese embassy was struck by three NATO missiles on 7 May, the condemnation topics intensified. For example, from 8 May to 12 May, almost all the topics covered in the *People’s Daily* were on ‘protest and condemnation’. A significant difference was identified in the news topic of ‘protest and condemnation’ between the two papers ($Z = 11.0, p < .001$).

The second most frequent topic for the US newspapers was ‘air war updates’ (19 percent), whose focus was on informing the public what was going on in Kosovo, such as how many military targets were blown up and how many sorties were sent. The difference of proportion test indicated the two papers varied significantly in the amount of stories given to the topic of ‘air war updates’ ($Z = 2.6, p < .01$). Another significant topical difference was on ‘refugees’. While the US newspapers covered a lot of the refugee issue stories (11 percent), the Chinese newspapers did not even have one single story on it ($Z = 3.7, p < .001$).

What was noteworthy was in the US news account, ‘Russian aid to Yugoslavia’ was completely missing. In the Chinese news account, it was the topics of ‘refugees’, ‘ethnic cleansing’ and ‘Macedonia’ that were missing.

The two considerably different distributions of dominant topics between the US newspapers and the Chinese newspapers suggest topics had a significant association with the papers.

Research Question 3 focused on the source usage and specifically asked how Chinese newspapers differed from US newspapers in using sources in the reports about the NATO air strikes on Kosovo. Table 2 indicates that Chinese newspapers and US newspapers relied on very different patterns of sources ($\chi^2 = 483.1, d.f. = 7, N = 1037, p < .001$). The difference of proportion tests identified five significantly different source distributions by the two sets of papers. They

TABLE 2
Comparison of Sources of US Newspapers and Chinese Newspapers on the NATO Air Strikes on Kosovo

Sources	US Newspapers ($N = 864$) %	Chinese Newspapers ($N = 173$) %	Z-score
Chinese sources	1.4	53.8	20.7**
Russian sources	3.6	12.1	5.3**
United Nations sources	1.4	0.6	
US sources	36.7	8.0	7.3**
NATO sources (without US)	24.9	11.6	4.4**
Yugoslavia and Serb sources	12.5	9.2	
Albanian sources	10.5	0	5.3**
Others	9.0	4.6	
Total	100	100	

Note: $\chi^2 = 483.1, d.f. = 7, p < .001$.

** $p < .001$.

were Chinese sources, Russian sources, US sources, NATO sources and Albanian sources ($Z = 20.7, p < .001$; $Z = 5.3, p < .001$; $Z = 7.3, p < .001$; $Z = 4.4, p < .001$; $Z = 5.3, p < .001$). While Chinese newspapers relied significantly more on Chinese sources (53.8 percent) than US newspapers (1.4 percent), and on Russian sources (12.1 percent) than US newspapers (3.6 percent), US newspapers relied significantly more on US (36.7 percent), NATO (24.9 percent) and Albanian sources (10.5 percent) than Chinese newspapers on US (8.0 percent), NATO (11.6 percent) or Albanian (0 percent) sources. In other words, there was a significant association between sources and papers.

Hypothesis 1a proposed that Chinese newspaper headlines would use more condensational symbols than the US newspaper headlines. Hypothesis 1b stated that Chinese newspaper headlines would use fewer referential symbols than the US newspaper headlines. Table 3 shows that Chinese newspapers and US newspapers, in constructing headlines, indeed employed significantly different headline styles ($\chi^2 = 21.4, d.f = 1, N = 200, p < .001$). While Chinese newspaper headlines used more condensational symbols (57 percent) in comparison to US headlines (25 percent), they used fewer referential symbols (43 percent) than US headlines (75 percent). Both Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported. In other words, US newspapers tended to phrase the headlines in plain and straightforward language most of the time. For example, the *New York Times* on 1 April used this headline: 'The Kosovo Refugee Emergency'. On 3 June, the headline was 'Crisis in the Balkans: The Pentagon; US Military Chiefs Firm: No Ground Force for Kosovo'. However, Chinese newspapers tended to construct the headlines in vague and emotion-charged words. On 22 April, the *China Daily* presented the headline of 'Air Strikes Shatter International Law'. On 21 May, the *People's Daily* used the following headline: 'War Profits and Dollar Hegemonism'.

Hypothesis 2a predicted that Chinese newspapers would use more anti-strike terms to label the NATO air strike than US newspapers. Hypothesis 2b predicted that Chinese newspapers would use fewer pro-strike terms to label the NATO air strike than the US newspapers. Table 4 shows that Chinese newspapers used more anti-strike terms (98.8 percent) than US newspapers (62 percent) and fewer pro-strike terms (1.2 percent) than US newspapers (38 percent) ($\chi^2 = 75.18, d.f = 1, N = 277, p < .001$). Hence Hypotheses 2a and

TABLE 3

Comparison of Headline Symbols of US Newspapers and Chinese Newspapers on the NATO Air Strikes on Kosovo

Symbols	US Newspapers ($N = 100$) %	Chinese Newspapers ($N = 100$) %
Referential symbols	75.0	43.0
Condensational symbols	25.0	57.0
Total	100	100

Note: $\chi^2 = 21.4, d.f = 1, p < .001$.

TABLE 4

Comparison of Key Terms Labeling the Act of NATO Bombings in US and Chinese Newspapers on the NATO Air Strikes on Kosovo

Key Terms	US Newspapers (N = 34) %	Chinese Newspapers (N = 243) %
Pro-strike terms	38.0	1.2
Anti-strike terms	62.0	98.8
Total	100	100

Note: $\chi^2 = 75.18$, d.f. = 1, $p < .001$.

2b were also supported, indicating a significant association between key terms and papers. For example, Chinese newspapers used many terms such as ‘Nazi-like bloody strikes’, ‘inhumane bombing’, ‘NATO’s brutal attack’, ‘genocidal war’, ‘arrogance of hegemonism’ to label the act of NATO bombing on Kosovo, but US newspapers tended to label the act as ‘prevention of a wider war’, ‘restoration of Kosovars to their homes with security and self-government’, ‘prevention of atrocities and crimes against humanity’, etc.

Hypothesis 3a stipulated that Chinese newspapers would have more stories covered from the Serbian point of view than US newspapers. Hypothesis 3b stipulated that Chinese newspapers would have fewer stories covered from the Albanian point of view than US newspapers. Table 5 shows the distribution of points of views differed between the two types of newspapers ($\chi^2 = 66.43$, d.f. = 2, $N = 200$, $p < .001$). There existed a significant association between points of view and papers. Even though the majority of news reports in both the US (64 percent) and Chinese (62 percent) newspapers adopted a neutral point of view, the proportions of neutral stories in both papers were similar. It was in the remaining stories with a clear indication of points of view that significant differences were found. The Chinese papers had significantly more stories

TABLE 5

Comparison of Viewpoints of US Newspapers and Chinese Newspapers on the NATO Air Strikes on Kosovo

Points of View	US Newspapers (N = 100) %	Chinese Newspapers (N = 100) %	Z-score
Albanian	34.0	0	6.8**
Serbian	2.0	38.0	6.4**
Neutral	64.0	62.0	
Total	100	100	

Note: $\chi^2 = 66.43$, d.f. = 2, $p < .001$.

** $p < .001$.

covered from the Serbian point of view (38 percent) in comparison to the US papers (2 percent) ($Z = 6.4, p < .001$) while the US papers had more from the Albanian point of view (34 percent) in comparison to the Chinese papers (0 percent) ($Z = 6.8, p < .001$). Both Hypotheses 3a and 3b were supported.

Discussion and Conclusion

Six aspects of framing have been examined in this study. In terms of topics, there was a significantly larger amount of protest/condemnation news reports in the Chinese papers with ethnic cleansing and refugee stories completely missing. By emphasizing some topics and omitting others, the Chinese newspapers questioned and challenged the legitimacy of using force in the Kosovo crisis and made the claim of the air strikes on the basis of humanistic aid sound very suspicious. However, the US newspapers devoted most of their news space to topics of air war updates, others, and refugees. By informing the US public of how the air strikes were working in Kosovo and the miserable situations the Albanians were enduring, US newspapers presented to the American audience a picture of a just war providing humanistic aid to Albanians and the legitimacy of the action was taken for granted.

Regarding headline symbols, the Chinese newspapers used more emotion-charged words while the US newspapers used more plain and simple words, which was not a surprising finding considering the difference between the two media systems. In China, media are treated as a propaganda tool to promote party lines and policies. In the US, media are known for professionalism and autonomy. Since abstract and ambiguous headlines had a more powerful call than plain and straightforward headlines for the audience to protest and condemn the NATO air strikes, they were more prevalent in Chinese newspapers.

In terms of key words labeling the act of NATO bombings, the Chinese newspapers used more anti-strike terms and fewer pro-strike terms than the US newspapers, which reminded us of the two governments' attitude toward the NATO air strikes. Concerning points of views, the Chinese newspapers had more stories from the Serbian point of view and the US newspapers had more stories from the Albanian point of view. The last finding in the comparison showed that both sets of newspapers relied on their own people and their own allies as the main information sources. The dominant sources in the Chinese news reports were Chinese and Russians, and the dominant sources in the US news reports were Americans and NATO. This way of using sources subjected the news content of both newspapers to a very limited range of information, opinions and points of view and may have resulted in the substantial difference of the frames in the two sets of papers.

In summary, the Chinese government's stand of respecting Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and solving the Kosovo crisis through peaceful and political negotiations was echoed in almost all the aspects of media framing. Through selecting protest and condemnation topics and omitting ethnic cleansing and refugee topics, the Chinese papers focused on challenging the NATO air strikes. By choosing Chinese and Russian sources most of the time, the Chinese

papers adopted Serbian points of view more often than the US papers. The anti-strike attitude was also mirrored in using more anti-strike terms and displaying more emotion-charged headlines. Hence, it was reasonable to conclude that Chinese newspaper coverage reflected the Chinese government's reaction to the air strikes. The Chinese newspapers presented to the Chinese audience a frame of the NATO intervention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's internal affairs by force.

On the other hand, the US newspapers, by giving more focus on the topics of air war updates and strategy/tactics/weapons, took the justice of the air strike action for granted. By using American and NATO sources most of the time, the US papers covered stories from the Albanian point of view more frequently. The pro-strike attitude was also reflected in the usage of more pro-strike terms than the Chinese papers. Therefore it was legitimate to conclude that the way in which the US stories were framed corresponded to the US government's stand in the crisis: the action of NATO air strikes was in support of justice for the Albanians to stop an ethnic cleansing. Therefore, the American public was exposed to a different media frame than the Chinese public.

Tuchman (1978) has pointed out that mass media actively set the frames of references for the audience. By highlighting certain aspects of the event and ignoring others, mass media screened the reality for the audience and the audience can only view whatever the media chose for them. This is the case in the coverage of the NATO air strikes on Kosovo. By presenting two strikingly different media frames to the audiences, the Chinese and US newspapers reduced the delicacy and complexity of the Kosovo crisis to only one explanation: either a sovereignty issue or a humanistic issue. The 'window on the world' was narrow and small for both Chinese and US audiences.

I have argued that national interest would have a powerful role in framing the international media content because of its decisive role in making government policies and subsequent actions. The overall findings seem to be supportive of the argument. The media systems in modern societies have to depend on political, economic and other social systems to accomplish their information gathering, processing and dissemination goals (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989). In the arena of international news, the tie between the media organization and the government is even closer. The media have to rely on official points of reference to frame the issues within the confines of the government foreign policy (Lee and Yang, 1995) and order the media texts to their country's interests (Gans, 1979: 37). For instance, the coverage of the Tiananmen Movement in China reflected different vital interests of the US and Japan in China even though it was the same event: one was winning ideological victories and the other was to harvest economic gains (Lee and Yang, 1995). In addition, the similar student movements in Korea and China were covered differently by the same media because the policies and interests differ in different countries (Larson and Chen, 1992). Cumulative evidence seems to be very strong in pointing to the affinity between the media and national interests in reporting international news (Lee and Yang, 1995) suggesting the findings of the study were not an exceptional case to the general rule.

From March 1999 to April 1999, there was an increasing number of

Americans believing US interests were at stake and an increasing public support for the US to be involved in Kosovo to protect the US interests ('Public Opinion on Kosovo', 1999). In such a public opinion environment, how could it be possible for the US media not to join the public and government in the defense of the national interest? The symbiotic relations between the media, audience and society provide further testimony in favor of the national interest argument.

As an overarching diplomatic framework, national interest guides a country's relation with the rest of the world (Nye, 1999). Trespassing the defined boundary of the relation for the media is rare if not impossible. By uniting a nation in times of war, in times of emergency and in times of terror, national interest irons its marks in the international news content. The 'rally around the flag' not only symbolizes nationalism for patriots, but also represents an international news guideline for journalists.

Of course, the study has its limitations. Audience reaction or perception to these news reports is missing in the study because of the inherent limits of content analysis, therefore there is no way to know whether the audiences exposed to the news reports would be influenced in the same way as the news reports tended to. Survey or experiment research methods may identify the influences.

The choice of the English versions of the Chinese newspapers can weaken the validity of the findings because they may not fully represent what was presented in the native-language papers, which were much more widely read by the Chinese public. However, the choice was made on purpose out of the considerations for coding accuracy, consistency and efficiency. On the other hand, it is very doubtful the English-version paper and the native-language version paper would differ substantially because both versions are under the supervision of the same system and both serve the same purpose for the CCP. The difference might consist in the translation technique rather than in the message. Therefore the comparative findings are still meaningful and significant.

Future study using a wider choice of newspapers or media is required to extend the validity of the overall findings. For instance, a study of Russian media may disclose more valuable information on the relation of national interest and news framing because of Russians' role in the diplomatic negotiation between Yugoslavia and NATO in the Kosovo crisis. The study of the media coverage from Yugoslavia's neighboring countries such as Greece, Turkey, Albania, Hungary and Bosnia will be more illuminating because these countries are nearer to Yugoslavia and some have shared borders with Yugoslavia, therefore the security issue looms larger in their national interest agenda. Another alternative to study the role of national interest in framing is to conduct a longitudinal study to track the correlation between national interest and media frames over a period of time.

Research to date has investigated the cases of student movements (Lee and Yang, 1995; Larson and Chen, 1992) and NATO air bombings in relation to national interest. Future research along this line should be continued. In the present world of increasing political and social instability, critical historical events such as the September 11 terrorism attack on the US and the conflict between Israel and Palestine provide researchers with more cases. Even though

many factors may dictate the media frames from a variety of sources: social norms and values, organizational constraints, interest groups' pressures, journalistic routines, and ideological or political orientations of the journalists (Scheufele, 1999), national interest is found to be the most critical factor in framing international news, especially influential world events. It may be a potentially rich area of research to link framing and national interest factors in studying international news coverage. The conceptual and empirical exploration of the relationship will help integrate various international news studies into a coherent and systematic body of research with the construct of national interests as a core among other international news-shaping forces.

Lee and Yang (1995) noted news systematically constructs 'one picture of the world' over others by being cued in to certain events and issues by major institutions. In the case of international news contexts, the major institution to cue in the news organization is the nation. By transcending partisan rifts, factional differences and gaps between groups, national interest unites all the people under one flag including news organizations. As a result, what is presented in the news is a socially constructed product that has been filtered through the national interest.

Note

This article was originally presented at the Intercultural and Development Division of the International Communication Association for the 2002 Annual Conference in Seoul, Korea, 15–19 July 2002. The author is grateful to Dr. Jyotika Ramaprasad's constructive advice for writing this paper.

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