

Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail: The Role of Terrorist Threat in Russian
Election Campaigns

Sarah Oates
Politics Department
University of Glasgow
Glasgow G12 8RT
United Kingdom
Email: s.oates@socsci.gla.ac.uk

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As terrorist attacks have become more immediate threats for large nations, what role do fear and concern over terrorism play in campaign strategy, media coverage and vote choice during elections? Although terrorist groups and the mass media have had an uneasy relationship for decades, the events of 9/11 and its aftermath have intensified the classic journalistic dilemma. If terrorists are deprived of what Margaret Thatcher so famously called “the oxygen of publicity,” are they in fact denied part of their victory in a campaign of terror? Alternatively, if a public is poorly informed about either the political agenda of terrorists or their actual threat, are citizens left without both political knowledge and critical safety information? Election campaigns offer a particularly useful way to examine these issues, principally in countries that recently have experienced deadly terrorist attacks. While the public has relatively little input into security concerns in the short term, elections can offer a time for the public to express their opinion by choosing among various policy options. This paper is the first stage of a project that will examine the role of terrorist threat and security concerns in elections in Russia and the United States.¹ Under consideration is whether politicians, parties and the media use nationalist or xenophobic rhetoric in their discussions of these issues or whether any of those involved frame the discussion under the broader terms of international affairs and cooperation. This paper will use material from the main Russian nightly news in the 2003 parliamentary elections as well as focus-group discussions on the parliamentary and 2004 presidential campaigns to discuss the framing of terrorist threat in Russian elections. What emerges from the Russian study is that while the prime-time news shows on state-run and commercial television cover terrorism differently, neither provide in-depth or meaningful analysis of the events. State-run television news focused more on international terrorism, while commercial television news featured more on terrorism related to Chechnya and news on Chechnya in general. There was little discussion of any issues, including terrorism, in the 2003 parliament campaign. In turn, focus-group participants found little link between terrorism and vote choice, although the notion of strong, stable Russia was a part of their calculus in their support for the only viable presidential choice, Vladimir Putin, in 2004.

Terrorism, Media and Elections

Benson (2004) and Gitlin (2004) point to comparative media and politics as the most promising area in which to develop useful models of media behavior that are more analytical than descriptive. As Benson states: “Since variation at the system level is most clearly seen via cross-national comparative studies, international research is best positioned to build more generalizable theory about the production of journalistically mediated political discourse” (p. 275). In particular, Benson feels that comparative work lifts political scientists away from considering the media as a dependent variable: “The challenge, then, is to bring the same sophisticated analysis to bear on understanding media as an *independent* variable, as part of the process of political meaning making rather than just a convenient indicator of the outcome. This is a worthy, but difficult task” (p. 276, emphasis in original). There is relatively little work in comparative media and politics. Part of this reason is the difficulty of the task, as understanding media content and systems across a range of countries is enormously complex. There have been some excellent studies that have compared media in foreign countries, particularly in times of elections, which have offered

¹ This project is funded by a grant from the U.K. Economic and Social Research Council under its New Security Challenges Programme.

important comparative analysis and influenced the study in this paper (particularly Semetko et al. 1991 as well as Kaid and Holtz-Bacha 1995). This study is an attempt to look at how the politicians talk about terrorism and security issues; how major television networks cover these issues in the campaign; and how the audience responds in both Russia and the United States. The media function as an independent variable on perceptions on terrorism issues, how viewers filter these perceptions during the campaign and how the perceptions impact vote choice among viewers. The study lacks a large public opinion survey that could trace the statistical relationship among viewing patterns, attitudes and vote choice. However, this project will offer important qualitative comments from citizens in two countries about their reaction to terrorism coverage in elections, as well as develop a body of knowledge and analysis about the form of that coverage. In other words, this project is seeking the right questions to ask of an audience when considering how they evaluate and use messages about terrorism and international security in elections.

The central question regarding media and terrorism has been the dangerously symbiotic relationship of the two (Wilkinson 1997). Terrorists rely on the media to maximize the effect of their 'spectaculars' such as bombings and airline hijackings. As part of their coverage, the media will publicize and, to a degree, legitimize the terrorists by describing their political agenda, their background and other history. The media themselves are caught up in this dilemma, unable to ignore large events or the human tragedy of terrorist victims. In addition, the public is hungry for news and – arguably – for coverage that attempts to both explain the causes of terrorism as well as reassure the public of their safety. Although the dilemma is universal, the actual media coverage of terrorism differs markedly among countries and is particularly different in non-democratic systems. While Wilkinson points out that the media in a democratic society have a responsibility to rise above the tactics of the terrorists and provide fair, responsible coverage, this norm is not present in Russian journalism. While the 'objective' model of U.S. journalism and its role as a civic watchdog both have been sorely tried by 9/11, particularly as President Bush's initial frame for the attacks overwhelmingly dominated the news (Entman 2003), there has never been a balanced or objective media in Russia.

The Russian approach to terrorism coverage is best understood within the context of the highly polemical Russian media. Russian journalists adhere to neither the notion of balance nor non-biased reporting; rather their news is presented through the prism of political or commercial preferences. While this is not the Soviet style of propaganda, it is rapidly approaching a chorus of approval for Putin and his policies. As Putin and his administration are pursuing war against Chechnya, there is no attempt to analyze or understand the enemy. Rather, the bulk of the Russian coverage of terrorism is devoted to news from the scene of the latest atrocity and statements from leaders on how they will pursue the terrorists and re-impose order. That being said, Wilkinson suggests that the commercial media may use the intensity and drama of terrorist attacks as fodder for compelling coverage and notes that studies have shown increases in viewer ship during terrorist attacks (2003). The Russian case offers an excellent opportunity to see the differences in terrorism coverage in state-run and commercial television, serving as a measure of how much autonomy and variety remain in the media sphere in which freedom has narrowed rapidly.²

² The project will go on to compare election news coverage on ABC, CBS, NBC and the Fox Network from Labor Day 2004 through Election Day. The taping and coding of the U.S. news is being coordinated by Prof. Lynda Lee Kaid and the U-Vote team at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Hewitt (1992) is one of the few authors to highlight the unevenness in coverage of terrorist groups by country. For example, the German media have “exaggerated the dangers of terrorism and supported government countermeasures wholeheartedly” (p. 174). In Italy, coverage of terrorism changed significantly in 1970s, as a tolerance for the Red Brigade as a type of modern Robin Hoods gave way to “virtually unanimous” condemnation of terrorism in wake of escalating assaults and violence (pp. 174-5). Hewitt cites bias and unfairness in coverage of terrorists in democratic countries, particularly by the British media in Northern Ireland. Despite the variation in coverage among countries, Hewitt found certain parallels, such as extensive coverage including dead bodies, funerals, grieving relatives and physical destruction. He saw the tendency in North America and Great Britain for the media to ignore the social causes and goals of terrorism (p. 177). However, his research found that the media did not “invariably reflect the official perspective” (p. 177). Hoffman also found that “terrorist” was not necessarily a negative term for all audiences. For example, up to 95 percent of Palestinians had a positive view of the PLO “terrorists”, while in South Africa only 38 percent of blacks had a positive image of the ANC terrorists. Most of the research cited by Hoffman suggests that the level of support respondents in various countries felt for terrorists was much more closely linked to their own proximity to terrorist attacks rather than media coverage of terrorism. Although Hoffman wrote this chapter almost a decade before 9/11 and the spate of terrorist attacks in Russia, the point he makes is very salient to the present situation: The public respond more intensely and more emotively when terrorism ceases to be abstract and becomes concrete. Hoffman ends his chapter with a call for more research and – echoing Benson – a need to establish the media as an independent variable: “The cross-national variation in public attitudes is suggestive. To what extent does it reflect experience with terrorism and to what extent is it a result of differences in how the media portray terrorism?”

This project was designed to build on existing research on campaign coverage in state-run and commercial television in Russia (Helvey and Oates 1998, Oates and Roselle 2000, Oates 2004, Mickiewicz 1999, EIM 1995, EIM 1996, EIM 1999, EIM 2000, OSCE 2004). However, research in Russia over the past year has found little linkage between elections and terrorism because both the parliamentary and presidential elections were driven by personality and power as opposed to actual issues. At the same time, however, terrorism and security issues remained extraordinarily important to Russian citizens. Thus, this paper tracks two important indicators in the framing of terrorist threat in the Russian media during election campaigns. First, this paper offers a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of campaign coverage on the prime news shows on the two main state-run and commercial television channels in Russia. In addition, the paper presents the findings from ten focus groups of Russian citizens who discussed terrorism, the media and elections just after the March 2004 re-election of President Putin. At issue were the following questions that could be applied to the study of comparative media and politics:

1. Did the prime-time news shows on state-run television and commercial television cover terrorism differently?
2. Did the Russian audience, as expressed by the focus-group participants, perceive particular differences in the coverage of terrorism on state-run and commercial television?
3. What did the focus-group participants think of the coverage of elections and terrorism and did they equate the two?

Russian Elections: A Brief History

The 1993 Russian Constitution created a system with a president elected via popular vote and a two-chamber parliament called the Federative Assembly. The upper house of the parliament, the Council of the Federation, was popularly elected in 1993, but has since been filled by appointment via the regions. After the first Duma (the lower house of the parliament) sat for just two years, Duma elections have been held regularly every four years and voters cast two votes – one for their favorite candidate in their single-member district and the other for their favorite party on the national list. Half of the 450 seats are given to winners in 225 single-member districts and the other 225 are divided among parties that win 5 percent or more of the party-list vote. The 1993 elections featured a surprise victory by a nationalist party, the Liberal-Democrat Party of Russia, which won 23 percent of the party-list votes and a sizable faction in the new parliament. The pro-government party Russia's Choice, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and a liberal party called Yabloko also fared relatively well. The victory of the nationalists in the party-list ballot was balanced by a strong showing by pro-government candidates in the district races. To a degree, the first Duma elections in 1993 set a pattern for subsequent elections. While the fortunes of the Liberal Democrats and the Communists have waxed and waned over the years, they have won party-list seats in every election. The pro-government forces faltered, dropping to 10 percent of the party-list vote in 1995, but improved to overwhelmingly dominate both the party-list and single-member district races by 2003. While the central pro-Kremlin party has changed its name and its formation in the 1995, 1999 and 2003 Duma elections, the forces behind it have remained relatively static. The rising strength of the pro-government parties parallels the growing dominance of the central Kremlin forces in Russian politics.

At the same time, the pro-government Russian political parties developed aggressive media tactics, coming to dominate television. A particularly successful tactic, identified in earlier studies (Oates 2003, Oates 2004) was that of the 'broadcast' party, i.e. parties that eschewed policies and accountability for relatively slick, flashy imagery during the election campaigns. Pro-government forces, notably those backed by the Kremlin, were particularly effective at these tactics. By the Duma elections on December 7, 2003, there was little discussion of policies, platforms or even ideology in the campaign. Rather, the campaign was dominated by Putin, a small circle of Kremlin elites and messages of Russian solidarity and nationalism. In the 2003 elections, party-list seats were won by the pro-Kremlin United Russia party (37.6 percent of the party-list vote), the Communists (12.6 percent), the Liberal Democrats (11.5 percent) and a new nationalist party called Motherland (9 percent). The liberal Yabloko just missed winning party-list seats for the first time in a Duma election, with 4.3 percent of the party-list vote. Pro-government forces also were very successful in the single-member districts.

The 1993 Russian constitution calls for presidential elections every four years, with the first election being held in 1996 when Boris Yeltsin was at the nadir of his popularity. With heavy campaigning, self-censorship on the part of supportive journalists from all the major television channels and a promise to end the first Chechen war, Yeltsin managed to fend off Communist presidential hopeful Gennady Zyuganov. The ailing Yeltsin resigned on December 31, 1999, and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin became acting president. Putin won an easy victory in March 2000. By March 2004, Putin enjoyed a commanding dominance in Russian politics and won

with 71 percent of the vote.³ None of the Russian presidential campaigns have been a time for a dialogue with the Russian voters. In 1996, a fear of a Communist victory led Russian journalists, including the prominent NTV commercial television channel, to collude in hiding Yeltsin's serious health problems and widespread corruption of the Russian elite to fight off the Communist threat. By 2000, the lack of a viable alternative to Putin meant there was little news interest or impact of the campaign. This was even truer in 2004, when the chance of realistic political opposition was more or less impossible. Neither Yeltsin nor Putin has run under party labels, although they have made clear their preferences for the pro-government parties in the Duma races held a few months before each presidential contest.

The paradox of Russian elections is that while they appear to have less and less content, the Duma campaign remains important in acting as a yardstick for public opinion. Many parties, including well-financed organizations with strong government backing, have failed in Duma elections. Most successful parties became more nationalistic, more supportive of Russian military might and less enthusiastic about the market economy from 1993 to 1995 (Oates 1998) and the trend has continued. In this way, Russian parties have responded to the wishes of the electorate, which turned out to be more nationalistic, more supportive of military strength and more socialist than first thought by many observers and analysts. Public opinion surveys have shown that the campaign matters, as many people make up their minds in the final weeks or even days of the month-long campaigns for the Duma. In the fluid Russian electoral scene, it is difficult to say whether the voters are actually picking their favorite parties or merely pausing to figure out which party is supposed to represent which interests. Nonetheless, with an absence of platforms or policy statements, image and sound bite become extremely important. It also should be noted that the diversity of opinion and coverage of opponents to the Kremlin has dropped sharply in Russia, as news outlets fear intimidation, selective application of the law or even violence in response to the expression of divergent views. As a result, although Russia has a range of state-run and commercial media, there is little freedom of speech.

Television News Content

This paper examines the issue of media coverage of terrorism and security threat from two levels of analysis. First, this paper employs a quantitative and qualitative review of news coverage on the main state-run and commercial channel news programs in Russia. The paper will compare coverage of security issues and terrorism in the 2003 campaign with coverage in the 1999/2000 election cycle to gauge whether coverage has changed in the wake of 9/11 and the second war in Chechnya (launched in 1999). In all of the elections, the methodology for examining the news content is the same. The author and collaborators have used a coding frame listing approximately 100 different topics and subcategories to label stories in the nightly news. Each news segment is timed and labeled with one or more codes, relating to the economy, the election campaign, the military, social issues, entertainment, etc. In addition, time devoted to newsmakers and political parties is tracked as well. We were then able to define how much of a particular news program was devoted to specific topics, newsmakers or political parties. This is useful not only for looking at how programs handle the daily news, but it is particularly helpful for comparing coverage across different channels.

³ Under Russian law, presidents can serve only two four-year terms. So far, no president has attempted to overstay this limit.

Since coding started in 1993, several important trends have been noted on state-run Channel 1⁴ and commercial channel NTV (coded since 1995). In particular, their flagship news programs have shown markedly different patterns of news coverage. Although commercial news had become noticeably more docile by 2003, it has provided some sharp criticism of government policy, notably in the first war in Chechnya. However, neither state-run nor commercial television has managed to develop into a watchdog of the state, invariably supporting particular interests of the elites that have distorted its coverage. The *Vremya* news program on state-run Channel 1 is particularly biased, devoting inordinately large amounts of coverage to those already in power and those deemed friendly to the Kremlin's interest. Those who challenge the Kremlin are either ignored or blackened with unfair reporting, rumor and innuendo. In addition to the analysis of the author and her associates over the years, these findings have been supported by media-content analysis projects by the European Institute for the Media (Düsseldorf) and the election monitoring programs by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. This paper analyses coverage on *Vremya* (9 p.m. weekday edition) and *Sevodnya* (7 p.m. weekday edition) from November 7 through December 5, 2003.⁵ Channel 1 has virtually global reach in Russia and surveys have shown it to be the most popular channel. NTV is the most popular commercial channel and the only commercial channel with any notable news content. NTV reaches about 75 percent of the Russian population, mostly in or near urban centers.

In the 1999 and 2000 election news, *Vremya (Time)* provided more coverage than *Sevodnya (Today)* on terrorism relating to Chechnya.⁶ For example, during the campaign for the December 1999 Duma elections, there were 33 mentions of Chechen terrorism among 509 news segments and 20 of those mentions were on *Vremya*. The same pattern held for the 2000 presidential elections, when *Vremya* mentioned Chechen terrorism in 24 news segments out of a total of 217 news items and *Sevodnya* mentioned it just 7 times in 208 news items. However, coverage of terrorism outside the Chechnya story was virtually non-existent, with only a handful of stories coded with a subject of non-Chechen "terrorism" – a total of four on both news programs during the Duma campaign and three during the presidential campaign. Thus, the coverage of terrorism was both concentrated on the state-run television Channel 1 rather than on the commercial channel and it was focused on the domestic issue of terrorism involving Chechnya.

What happened in the 2003 parliamentary elections? In terms of general news coverage, the findings were consistent with the pattern for the earlier elections, although by this time there were some significant changes in the media environment. Most importantly, any notion of independence of the commercial mass media had seriously eroded, as the Putin administration had managed to wrest control of both NTV and TV-6 from powerful media oligarchs Vladimir Gusinsky and Boris Berezovsky. Through a series of selectively applied laws, control of NTV was taken away from Gusinsky in 2001 and he has since fled into exile from charges of fraud and tax evasion. Berezovsky is now in exile in Britain. TV-6, in which he had a

⁴ The media entity that broadcasts on Channel 1 has changed its name twice and its structure once since 1993. For simplicity's sake, the current First Channel will be referred to as Channel 1 throughout.

⁵ While the main nightly news is just a fraction of the daily television output, it is the most important show relating to politics on the daily schedule.

⁶ The coding scheme defines terrorism relating to Chechen as either terrorism in the disputed territory or acts that were attributed to the Chechen terrorists/cause elsewhere.

controlling interest, was eventually turned into an all-sports channel. The financial empires of both men also controlled other media outlets, which also were affected by the switch in ownership.

Despite the government pressure that led to the ownership change, NTV remained distinctive in its 2003 election coverage from state-run Channel 1.⁷ An examination of its flagship nightly news program *Sevodnya (Today)* showed that it had markedly different content from *Vremya* on Channel 1. In fact, there were times when it was difficult to tell whether the news teams were covering the same country on the same day.⁸ The main news story just before the parliamentary elections was the arrest and imprisonment in late October 2003 of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the extraordinarily wealthy oligarch who headed the major Russian oil concern Yukos. Khodorkovsky had become increasingly involved in politics, funding media outlets and political parties, before he was arrested on charges of fraud and tax evasion. Yet it is striking how Khodorkovsky virtually disappeared from the main nightly news on Channel 1's *Vremya*. On NTV's *Sevodnya*, Khodorkovsky received more coverage during the Duma election campaign, yet the underlying human rights issue – the selective targeting of a wealthy rival to Putin in a virtually lawless system – was not discussed in a meaningful fashion. Rather, NTV's *Sevodnya* mentioned the issues in an ironic and sometimes indirect fashion.

The central themes on ORT's *Vremya* could be described as the efficacy of President Putin; the prominence of top leaders of the pro-government United Russia party and their close political relationship with the president; how the central government strives to fix problems in the region; and Russia's role in the international sphere. The main international story for Russia at the end of 2003 was the political turmoil in Georgia, which led to the ousting of Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze. NTV's *Sevodnya* presented somewhat more of the Russian political spectrum and less of Putin, yet the Russian president was still the dominant Russian personality on the newscast. NTV was somewhat less interested in the international role of Russia and more in general news item. While there was relatively little news on Chechen warfare on *Vremya*, *Sevodnya* still carried some news from the front, although it was only a shadow of the more aggressive war coverage during the 1995 Duma campaign. *Vremya* was generally more serious and didactic; *Sevodnya* was more relaxed, sometimes a bit sensational and more ironic. The most apparent difference was in the choice of which stories to run and how close to the top of the newscast the items appeared.

Although news segments were very similar in length, the varying approaches to news topics, individuals and parties were distinctive (see Table 1: Topics Covered on *Vremya* and *Sevodnya* during the 2003 Duma Campaign). As in earlier years, *Vremya* focused to a greater degree on the campaign. Campaign characteristics were mentioned in 16 percent of *Vremya*'s stories, compared with 13 percent for *Sevodnya*. Meanwhile, *Sevodnya* had a heavier emphasis on both the former Soviet Union and crime. In addition, *Vremya* had twice as much coverage of the role of the president. As noted above, there was more coverage of Chechnya on *Sevodnya*. The commercial news show paid little attention to political parties, with just six mentions of parties

⁷ The official campaign period is one month before the elections, although there is a ban on reporting on the election 24 hours before the ballot.

⁸ The nightly news shows *Vremya* (The First Channel) at 9 p.m. and *Sevodnya* (NTV) at 7 p.m. were taped weekdays during the month-long campaign in Moscow. Due to technical problems, *Vremya* for November 17, 2003, is missing from the analysis.

over the entire course of the campaign, compared with 38 mentions on *Vremya* (see Table 2: Mention of Major Parties on *Sevodnya* and *Vremya*, 2003 Duma Campaign). <Tables 1 and 2 here.>

Terrorism was one of the leading topics on the news, not surprising given both the public interest in the problem in general and the terrorist attack on a train in Southern Russia that left more than 40 people dead just two days before 2003 Duma elections. Major terrorist attacks in Russia also have included the seizure of hostages at a Moscow theatre in late 2002 that left at least 170 dead and the mysterious explosions in apartment buildings in Moscow and other Russian cities in 1999.⁹ Altogether, nine percent of the news was devoted to terrorism during the Duma campaign. About half of the items (28) on terrorism related to Chechnya and the rest (26) were on other terrorism topics. While there was not an enormous difference in the total number of stories on each news program – 25 on *Vremya* and 29 on *Sevodnya* – the emphasis was quite different. *Sevodnya* focused more heavily on terrorism as it related to Chechnya, perhaps not surprising in that NTV offered far more coverage of the war and Chechen affairs in general. On the other hand, *Vremya* had more coverage (15 items compared with 11 on *Sevodnya*) of terrorism that was not related to Chechnya.

When summaries of the daily coverage relating to general terrorism and Chechnya terrorism on *Vremya* and *Sevodnya* are placed side by side, the differences in coverage are quite clear (see Table 3: Terrorism Coverage in the 2003 Russian Parliamentary Elections). Both news programs covered terrorist acts in Iraq on November 12, Turkey on November 20, and in Southern Russia on December 5. In particular, the bombing of the train in Esentuki just two days before the election generated in-depth coverage on both news programs, with more than 11 minutes of coverage on *Vremya* and more than 10 minutes on *Sevodnya*. Although both channels featured similar coverage of the disaster – clips of the wrecked train, medical personnel helping the victims and witness statements -- *Vremya* spent much longer focusing on the government reaction to the crisis. In line with its overall emphasis on the ‘cult of Putin’, *Vremya* showed Putin meeting with regional leaders and security personnel in two subsequent clips that totaled 5 minutes and 23 seconds. This compares with the actual report on the incident, which was far briefer at two minutes and 45 seconds (the two segments that lead the news program). *Sevodnya* covered the government response and showed Putin meeting with representatives of the police and military over the explosions, but this segment was relatively short (1 minute, 7 seconds) and the coverage of the actual explosion spanned eight minutes and 46 seconds. While there was some overlap between ‘official response’ statements and coverage of the explosion itself, *Sevodnya* provided more reporting on the explosion itself and less about the government response than coverage on *Vremya*. <Table 3 about here. >

That is not to say that *Vremya* was not being responsive to the needs of the Russian viewers as they expressed them in focus groups in 2000 and 2004.¹⁰ Many

⁹ There are many issues within the terrorism stories, not least that most of the theatre hostages were killed in the gas attack by government forces and that the culprits in the apartment bombings have never been identified. However, the history of problematic coverage and conspiracy theories in terrorism coverage in Russia is a topic for another paper.

¹⁰ In 2000, the author gathered material from 24 focus groups in Moscow, Ulyanovsk and Voronezh. In 2004, 10 focus groups were held in March and April in Moscow and Ulyanovsk. The groups were organised and moderated by Russian Research Ltd. (Moscow). The groups were divided into age groups with each had eight participants. The groups lasted about two hours each. All of the focus

Russian viewers said that they seek solace and comfort from the television in times of national crisis, especially after terrorist attacks in Russia. They are often distressed by the repetition of grisly scenes of destruction and many find interviews with victims distressing as well as a violation of good taste. At the same time, many respondents admitted that it is hard to stop watching this sort of coverage. However, if there is a particular news formula for terrorism, *Vremya's* approach at limiting the scenes from the explosion and spending a lot of airtime showing officials dealing with the problem is closer to that desired by many Russian viewers. This need for 'leadership reassurance' is certainly not unique to Russia. A study of appearances by U.S. President George Bush by Erik Bucy (2003) found that viewers felt the president's appearance was reassuring when paired with low-intensity images of traumatic news, although the palliative effect of seeing the president lessened with more high-intensity images. In addition, the appearance of nationalistic images – such as the reliance of *Vremya* on staged cabinet meetings held in the Kremlin – is not limited to Russia. Hutcheson et al. (2004) found that journalists responded to the renewed emphasis on "American core values" in their language in *Time* and *Newsweek* in the wake of 9/11 (p. 27).

Although *Vremya* and *Sevodnya* both covered the terrorist acts, they covered them in ways that related to their own needs as news outlets. There was some convergence, in the sense that both devoted the leading minutes of their nightly broadcast to the Esentuki terrorism story, displacing the usual 'last campaign day' roundup that is traditional in Russian news.¹¹ Both stations did fulfill what Doris Graber (2001) has identified as the 'mirror' model of the media, the extensive and immediate news coverage that follows a crisis. The 'mirror model' of the news should render other factors in media models -- such as the impact of political views, organization issues in the newsroom or professional concerns -- relatively unimportant. However, the output of *Sevodnya* and *Vremya* on December 5, 2003, suggests that even at times of crisis, the two main state-run and commercial television stations have markedly different coverage. For *Vremya*, this supports the agenda of showing a strong, responsive and effective Russian state. In the case of *Sevodnya*, showing terrorist acts fits well into the station's focus on sensational and attention-grabbing news. In both cases, there is no attempt to talk about why the terrorists chose to wage war on Russian citizens; rather the news focus is first on the event itself and the response by the Russian authorities.

It is important to note that this reflects a grave change in news coverage from NTV in the mid-1990s. For example, during the 1995 parliamentary elections, *Sevodnya* aggressively covered the war in Chechnya, consistently challenging the one-sided government reports of easy Russian victories as well as using sources from the Chechen side of the conflict. NTV's reporting on the failures of the Russian military, the defiance of the Chechen population and the rebel cause fed the anti-war movement in Russia. Eventually, the Yeltsin administration decided to pull out of the war, brokering a tentative truce that quickly gave way to more chaos in the region. By 2003, however, *Sevodnya* did not cover the Chechen cause in the same way. This was due to significant changes and pressures at the news organization. As discussed above, NTV no longer had relative editorial independence from the central government. Although still a commercial enterprise, the Putin administration had made it clear with its forced change of ownership in NTV's parent company (Media

groups were funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The groups were moderated by Igor Galin and Tatyana Burchakova of Russian Research.

¹¹ Due to the news blackout 24 hours before midnight Sunday, the technical start of Election Day.

Most) in 2001 that direct and sustained criticism of the Putin regime would no longer be tolerated. NTV was left in a gray area, free to pursue the news but aware that the central government could close or change the station completely through similar legal tactics. The second change was that the war in Chechnya had moved from a conflict limited essentially to one small region in Russia to one that involved high-profile domestic terrorism, including the deadly Moscow theatre siege. Sympathy for the Chechen cause or at least an antipathy for Russian troops being sent to the area dropped steadily. Journalists and media analysts in Russia had come to feel there was relatively little public interest in hearing the Chechen side of the story.¹²

In the case of the Chechen war where does the influence of government pressure end and viewer antipathy begin? This is an enormously difficult question to answer because of the reciprocal nature of coverage and viewer engagement. Much of the political communication literature argues that viewers must be 'primed' to follow stories and make them a part of their political consciousness. The broadcasts relating to Chechen terrorism in *Vremya* and *Sevodnya* presented the viewer with a very unsophisticated story line, one that stressed the evil intent of the terrorist and the necessity for a heavy-handed response from the government. It would be rational to argue that the two channels had different motivations for producing this particular coverage. In the case of *Vremya* on state-run television, the coverage further demonized the Chechens and gave justification for the heavy-handed state tactics that infringed human rights. In the case of *Sevodnya* on commercial NTV, the frightening images and unsettling notion of terrorism fit into their more sensationalized approach to the news. While it is impossible to speculate further on the news formulation without in-depth interviews with a range of editors at both channels, this does show the problems that the coverage of terrorism poses for both state-run and commercial television. In both cases, fear mongering and sensationalism appear to win out over a more balanced approach. Although the reasons for the direction of the coverage are different, the results show similar characteristics.

Media coverage aside, political parties and candidates did not provide a central, meaningful discussion about terrorism or Chechnya in the 2003 Duma campaign. From the platforms of the main political parties, it was impossible to identify any sort of political spectrum. Out of 82 pages of party platform material filed with the Central Elections Commission, only 15 paragraphs mentioned terrorism and it was cited in widely divergent contexts.¹³ The dominant, pro-government United Russia party noted the importance for co-operation with the United States in the fight against terrorism and called for the recognition that terrorism everywhere (i.e. in Chechnya) was equally evil to terrorist groups targeted by the United States (pp. 10-11). By contrast, the nationalist Liberal Democrats blamed the rise in terrorism on American expansionism and ambition to take over the world (page 4 of its platform). The Liberal Democrats devoted the most attention to terrorism, mentioning it in seven paragraphs in their 17-page platform. In addition to concerns about American expansionism, the Liberal Democrats suggested the death penalty for terrorists as well as significantly expanding Russian security forces to deal with terrorists and other criminals. The Liberal Democrats tempered their criticism of America by pointing out

¹² Author's interviews, Moscow, March 2004.

¹³ Based on a review of party platforms filed with the Russian Central Electoral Commission for United Russia (25 pages), the Communists (7 pages), the Liberal Democrats (17 pages), Rodina (15 pages), Yabloko (4 pages) and the Union of Right Forces (14 pages). These parties were the six most successful parties in the party-list vote in 2003 although Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces failed to cross the five-percent barrier to gain party-list seats in the Duma.

that co-operation with this strong country was important in the struggle against international terrorism (p. 9). The lone mention of terrorism in Motherland's platform was a demand for the end of violent television or 'on-screen terrorism' (p. 11, *ekrannovo terrorizma* in Russian). Yabloko complained that the police were not protecting people from either crime or terrorism and gave a rare plea for peace in Chechnya: "In Chechnya both soldiers and peaceful civilians continue to perish" (p. 3). A review of 99 paid advertisements during the Duma campaign reveals little reference to terrorism or international security, beyond some predictable comments from Liberal Democratic leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy about a need for victory in the Caucasus.¹⁴ The role of party leader Sergei Shoigu as Emergencies Situation Minister (including Chechnya) was noted in United Russia ads.¹⁵

The broad and uneven comments about terrorism in the party platforms were not particularly reflected in the coverage of political parties during the Duma 2003 campaign because there was barely any coverage at all. As in earlier years, political parties received a negligible amount of coverage and there was virtually no discussion of actual policies. Most of the campaign coverage, particularly on *Vremya*, displayed leaders and vague, populist statements by United Russia party leaders such as Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov. The characteristics of political parties were mentioned in seven percent of the news stories (44 stories total) on *Vremya* and *Sevodnya*, but all but six of the stories were on *Vremya* (see Table 1). As in earlier elections, *Sevodnya* devoted virtually no attention to political parties. The campaign was mentioned in 86 stories, but these were stories that dealt only with the campaign itself rather than party policies or characteristics. The campaign coverage was spread more evenly between the two news shows, with 49 stories on *Vremya* and 37 on *Sevodnya*. The six major parties were mentioned a total of 62 times on the two news programs during the campaign, but United Russia had the majority of the coverage with 19 mentions (see Table 2). Once again, *Vremya* was far more likely to mention political parties than *Sevodnya*.

The dearth of meaningful policy statements from political parties about international or domestic terrorism – in their own platforms or on the nightly news -- meant there was little structure for a meaningful debate. As a result, the electorate could not choose among options for dealing with domestic terrorism, aside from general rhetoric about strengthening security forces and 'getting tough' with terrorists. There was no debate about future policy direction. In a way, this is sensible, because the Duma has been unable to make a strong impact on policy direction, particularly in the area of international security. The problem was that the election for the president, held just a few months after the Duma elections, also was not a time for policy debate and the role of the Russian president is crucial in security issues. Putin had such a commanding lead in the public opinion surveys that it was clear there was no real need to campaign – or compromise – in order to win re-election.

This is particularly troublesome because there is ample evidence that Russians are both extremely concerned about terrorism and quite divided in their attitudes about the Chechen War. In a 2003-4 survey, 77 percent of the respondents felt that terrorism was a "very serious" threat to Russian security and an additional 18 percent

¹⁴ This was only one of several of the party's ads, however, which featured slogans ranging from ethnic cooperation to the need for government monopolies in the energy sector.

¹⁵ Russian parties also have free broadcast time, but the author has not completed a review of this material. A brief overview of the spots suggests there was little policy coherence.

considered it “quite serious”.¹⁶ The respondents were not as concerned about Islamic fundamentalism – 46 percent saw it as a “very serious” threat and an additional 28 percent perceived it as a “quite serious” threat. In terms of threats to their country, they were far more worried about the United States than Chechnya, with 23 percent citing the U.S. as major threat to Russia and only 3 percent saying the same for Chechnya.

Focus Group Findings

The respondents in ten focus groups held in Moscow and Ulyanovsk in early Spring 2004 found little connection between terrorism and the recent round of elections. There was very little recall of any discussion of terrorism in either the Duma or presidential campaigns. “Well, they made a lot of noise during the campaign, and now it’s come to an end and none of them are giving an account of themselves of what they have done,” said Sergei, a 40-year-old metalworker from Ulyanovsk. As there was little policy discussion in the Duma campaign and virtually none in the presidential campaign – in which Putin made no use of free time or paid advertising – this response is not surprising. Oksana, 38-year old stay-at-home mother from Moscow, labeled watching the campaign on television a “waste of time”, a sentiment with which many focus-group participants agreed. When asked whether terrorism played a role in their vote choice, most were unable to make any particular connection. While there was barely any mention of their vote choice in the Duma campaign, the participants were more ready to talk about their decision to vote for Putin in the more recent presidential contest. Indirectly, Putin’s stand on terrorism was relevant here, in that many of the participants perceived Putin as a strong, decisive leader, a man who once commented that he would “flush the Chechen terrorists down the toilet.” Even if the respondents paid attention to the campaign messages, they tended to be deeply skeptical of them: “In Russia, we’re used to not believing anyone,” said Dmitri, a factory worker from Ulyanovsk.

The reasons the focus-group participants gave for voting for Putin, in approximate order of importance, could be summarized as: 1) there was no one else; 2) he’s not like Yeltsin; 3) he’s presentable, i.e. “erudite”, doesn’t drink, is a sportsman; 4) nothing really bad happened in the four years of his first term; and 5) the system has stabilized to a degree, i.e. pensions are paid. As Lena, a homemaker in Ulyanovsk said, “I was also for him because there wasn’t an alternative. And there is the hope that he’ll do something.” There were hints at Putin’s personal appeal: “All woman forty and older are in love with him,” said Andrei, a factory manger from Moscow. Putin’s stand on policies, including the war on terrorism, were not mentioned by the respondents and, in fact, were not articulated during the campaign. Several respondents (particularly in the depressed city of Ulyanovsk) said that they abstained from voting, ticked “against all” on the ballot paper or voted for a minor candidate as a protest against the lack of real choice in the elections.

It is clear that terrorism is indirectly affecting the way in which these respondents analyze the political situation in Russia. There was a tendency to blame democracy for terrorism, both in the global and Russian contexts. For example, they perceived the expansionist ambitions of the capitalist U.S.A. as responsible for much of world terrorism, as smaller national groups attempted to fend off American domination. In the Russian context, the participants often commented that too much democracy was to blame for the lack of law and order. Terrorism linked to Islamic

¹⁶ From a survey of 2,000 Russians in December 2003 and January 2004, carried out by Russian Research Ltd. under the direction of Prof. Stephen White of the University of Glasgow. The British Economic and Social Research Council funded this survey.

extremism and terrorism related to the Chechen war was usually, but not always, mentioned separately by the focus-group participants. This means that for some participants it was important to think about the specific problem of Chechnya and the on-going war there in order to talk about addressing the problems of terrorism. For others, terrorism was a far more global problem, although they tended to perceive it as linked to Islamic fundamentalism and typically exacerbated by American imperialism.

Many of the focus-group respondents were sympathetic to the victims of the 9/11 attacks, but most saw the attacks as motivated by American greed and expansionism. As a result, they did not see clear parallels between the problems faced by American citizens by terrorist threats and those confronting Russian citizens. Pragmatically, they did not see the problem of terrorism as being 'solved' by a resolution of the conflict between Russian and Chechen troops in Chechnya. However, many respondents felt that a greater amount of Russian control in Chechnya would help contain some of the terrorist threat, although they remained somewhat skeptical and suspicious about exactly who was directing terrorist attacks in Russia. Thus, they saw the Chechen war as linked to terrorism, but saw no quick victory or resolution to problem. In terms of the United States, the focus-group participants overwhelmingly perceived the second invasion of Iraq by U.S.-led forces as more American imperialism motivated by control of oil resources in the Middle East rather than a military response to the 9/11 attacks.

The way that these attitudes translated into electoral choices was not particularly clear in the focus groups for two reasons. Even in the Duma campaign, in which the voters could pick among a set of powerful parties with quite different policy orientations, there was virtually no discussion of terrorism linked to Chechnya or terrorism in general. Even recall of the timing of terrorist acts and elections could be quite weak, as one respondent in Ulyanovsk claimed there were no terrorist acts around the elections. Actually, a train was bombed in Southern Russia two days before the Duma elections and the Moscow metro was bombed a few weeks before the presidential election. A second problem was that there did not seem to be broad agreement on a particular path forward. Those who saw terrorism as linked to the war in Chechnya pointed to a need for a resolution to the conflict, but feelings were quite mixed as to whether this meant more military intervention or peace talks. Thus, parties did not set out firm policies and voters did not articulate clear policy preferences. In terms of the presidential election, the issue is quite different. While the focus-group participants did not feel that issues *per se* played a role in the campaign, they made it clear that they had certain expectations of a president, even in a flawed democracy. They were frustrated by the apparent inability of the state to control or stop terrorism (either Chechen-related or in the international sphere). They quickly equated this to a lack of state effectiveness in other areas, such as providing employment, pensions or health care. Several times the policies of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin were praised as particularly effective. However, terrorism itself did not emerge as a distinctive issue in the election campaign.

Does the lack of policy content and choice render election campaigns essentially irrelevant in terms of terrorism or other aspects of Russian political life? Despite the relative lack of party development or balanced media coverage, election campaigns still provide limited choice for the Russian electorate. While some of the focus-group participants felt that the campaigns were a waste of time, others clearly felt it was a time that leaders were at least somewhat accountable to the populace. This perception of accountability was stronger among the Muscovite respondents than those in Ulyanovsk, who were disappointed by high unemployment and their

crumbling city infrastructure. Russians may find that their contemporary campaigns have more in common with Soviet elections, in which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union made moderate efforts to market itself to the population. Russian election campaigns may be better understood by looking at this Soviet model rather than at the relationship among parties, voters and the media in the West.

That being said, what did the respondents think of the media's coverage of terrorism in general? Their responses paralleled comments in 24 focus groups held in 2000 that decried a lack of taste and decorum on television. They were particularly upset by disturbing film from the Moscow theatre siege and the bloody scenes after the Moscow metro bombing. "It isn't just adults out there," warned Pavel, a 31-year-old security guard in Moscow and a father of four. In addition, the respondents were concerned about the balance among the public's right to know, the people's need to know and security concerns. Many respondents felt that it was better to avoid publicizing details about the events not only to lessen possible offence to the public, but also to stop tipping off terrorists or giving them more publicity. They acknowledged that there was a fine line between informing the public by giving details of a terrorist attack and frightening the public with the same details. Many respondents felt that there should be more 'news you can use' in regard to terrorism, such as instructions on what to do in the aftermath of a large terrorist attack, but still others felt this would merely engender fear and panic in people. Most focus-group participants were not, however, offended by any racist comments or insinuations. In fact, many of the participants were openly racist, some even suggesting that clearing Moscow of anyone who even looked Chechen was a good idea. Concerns over security clearly won out over concerns for tolerance, although a few participants protested the overtly racist views. There was a general sense of despair over how to end terrorism, especially as it was so difficult to uncover the real roots of the problem in a multi-lateral world.

Many focus-group participants did perceive differences in programs on Channel 1 and NTV, although a high level of distrust of commercial television remained (as in the 2000 focus groups).¹⁷ They generally saw ORT's *Vremya* as more authoritative, decorous and less sensational. Many thought that NTV's news teams were less obedient to Putin's political line and, in particular, gave more news about Chechnya. This greater degree of openness was not always appreciated by the respondents, many of who said they preferred order to freedom on television. It is significant that respondents often talked about particular programs rather than specific channels in discussing the range of political news on television. Many participants mentioned NTV's *Namedni* and *Svoboda Slova* (cancelled since the focus groups were held) as particularly good in giving unusual and diverse opinions, although some disliked the more personalized tone of the coverage. It does suggest, however, that certain lacunae of media freedom can exist in the television sphere in Russia, as the hosts of these programs or others may re-launch similar programs. However, many of the participants were not sanguine about the ability of journalists to provide balanced or unbiased coverage in Russia, after all journalists "can be bought, can be shot or can be intimidated," said 37-year-old Igor, a Muscovite who works in the fur trade.

Conclusions

This paper posed three questions about terrorism and media coverage in Russia: an investigation into whether state and commercial television channels covered

¹⁷ It should be noted that some of the Ulyanovsk focus-group participants were unable to pick up the NTV signal.

terrorism differently; how the Russian audience felt about this coverage; and whether it affected their vote choice. An analysis of the nightly news on the main state-run and commercial channels on Russia shows significant differences in terrorism coverage. The state-run channel focused on terrorism abroad, while the news on the commercial channel spent more time on terrorism related to Chechnya. While both provided relatively extensive coverage of terrorist events, the state-run channel provided far more 'voices of authority' to contextualize the event and less time showing the scenes of devastation. The Russian audience appreciated this and most of them favored a more decorous, if perhaps less in-depth, approach to terrorism coverage. This could explain why so many questions about terrorist acts remain unexplored in the Russian media. In terms of voting, the connections are more difficult to perceive, particularly as neither the Duma nor the presidential election campaigns in Russia in 2003 and 2004 spent much time on issues. However, it is clear that the ability to 'talk tough' about terrorism – even if it apparently has little effect – is perceived as an important role for Putin.

What do these findings mean in the context of comparative media and politics? In particular, they suggest that it is immensely important to examine exactly what is being said on national television about terrorism. In Russia, the most popular state-run channel is favoring state posturing over a dissemination of facts about the terrorist acts. There is no attempt to place terrorist events in Russia within a political context or to discuss the causes of the rising tide of terrorism against Russian citizens. As a result, it is easy to slip into prejudices and assumptions about the 'enemy' rather than focus on the dwindling share of rights for all Russian citizens. Terrorism and the shadow of fear it casts can be used all too easily to obscure repressive government measures.

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Table 1: Topics Covered on *Vremya* and *Sevodnya* during the 2003 Duma Campaign (Rounded percentage mentioned in news stories, total number of stories)

Subject	Mention in news stories		<i>Vremya</i>		<i>Sevodnya</i>	
	Share	No. of stories	Share	No. of stories	Share	No. of stories
Campaign characteristics	15%	86	16%	49	13%	37
Former USSR	11%	63	9%	27	13%	36
Crime	9%	54	6%	19	12%	35
Party characteristics	7%	44	12%	38	2%	6
Economy	7%	40	8%	25	5%	15
Culture	6%	37	4%	12	9%	25
Terrorism related to Chechnya	5%	28	3%	10	6%	18
Role of president	4%	26	6%	18	3%	8
Terrorism	4%	26	5%	15	4%	11
Role of legislature	4%	21	4%	12	3%	9
Economic crimes	3%	19	1%	4	5%	15
Military general news	3%	19	3%	9	4%	10
Participation	3%	16	3%	10	2%	6
Iraq	3%	16	3%	10	2%	6
Social services	3%	16	4%	12	1%	4
Foreign policy (general)	3%	15	4%	12	1%	3
Other campaign news	2%	14	3%	8	2%	6
General politics	2%	14	2%	5	3%	9
Corruption	2%	13	2%	6	2%	7
Education	2%	13	1%	4	3%	9
Rules of campaign game	1%	8	1%	4	1%	4
Crime, law and order	1%	8	1%	3	2%	5
Criminal campaign acts	1%	7	1%	1	2%	6
Russian soldiers in Chechnya	1%	4	0%	1	1%	3
Media in campaign	1%	6	1%	1	2%	5
Chechen soldiers in Chechnya	1%	6	0%	1	2%	5
Health care	1%	6	1%	4	1%	2
Kompromat	1%	4	3%	3	1%	1
Total number of subjects coded		593		307		286

Source: Television programs coded by the author, Andrei Rogatchevski, Boris Rogatchevski and Katia Rogatchevskaia. Percentages add up to more than 100 because one story can have more than one topic (up to seven in the coding scheme).

Table 2: Mention of Major Parties on *Sevodnya* and *Vremya*, 2003 Duma Campaign

Party	Total mentions	Vremya	Sevodnya
United Russia	19	14	5
Communist Party	13	9	4
LDPR	10	6	4
Union of Right Forces	10	6	4
Yabloko	10	10	0
Rodina	5	3	2
Total	67	48	19

Source: Television programs coded by the author, Andrei Rogatchevski, Boris Rogatchevski and Katia Rogatchevskaia.

**Table 3: Terrorism Coverage in the 2003 Russian Parliamentary Elections
November 7 – December 5, 2003**

Note: “Segment” followed by a number indicates the order in which the story appeared in the daily broadcast.

DATE	VREMYA COVERAGE	NTV COVERAGE
November 10		Segment 5: Victims of the terrorist attacks in Moscow cannot receive their compensations (2 min, 35 sec)
November 10		Segment 9: Security measures of the Saudi government (40 sec)
November 12	Segment 1: A terrorist attack in Iraq leaves 25 dead, 40 wounded (3 min, 36 sec)	Segment 2: Terrorist attack in Iraq, 44 Italians killed (2 min, 57 sec)
November 12	Segment 6: Man arrested for planning terrorist attack in Moscow, driver was Chechen-born (1 min, 34 sec)	Segment 3: Russian Prime Minister promises victory over terrorists in Chechnya (1 min, 1 sec)
November 13	Segment 9: Putin and Ministry for Extraordinary Situations warn of rising threat of disasters, including terrorist acts (2 min, 56 sec)	Segment 2: Former Chechen leader Zakayev’s trial (3 min, 36 sec)
November 13	Segment 15: London court won’t extradite former Chechen leader Zakayev, Russians say this is double standard on terrorism(1 min, 50 sec)	Segment 5: Joint meeting of the Presidium of the State Council and the Security Council (terrorism mentioned) (3 min, 20 sec)
November 13		Segment 6: Update on the terrorist attack in Iraq (41 sec)
November 14	Segment 9: 2 people were rescued from the Chechens (45 sec)	Segment 10: Explosion of apartment house (1 min, 59 sec)
November 14		Segment 11: Colleagues of Chechen leader Gelayev found guilty in court (37 sec)
November 17	<i>Due to technical problems, this programmed is missing from the analysis.</i>	Segment 2: Prevented terrorist attack (1 min)
November 18		Segment 5: Chechen terrorist leader allegedly killed (47 sec)
November 19		Segment 2: Chechen citizen charged in terrorist attack (32 sec)
November 20	Segment 1: Terrorist attack on the English consulate and bank in Turkey (2 min, 10 sec)	Segment 1: New terrorist attack in Turkey (2 min, 7 sec)
November 20	Segment 2: Details of Turkish terrorism attack (2 min, 10 sec)	Segment 2: Bush speaks on terrorist attacks in Turkey (3 min, 1 sec)
November 20	Segment 3: Putin speaks calls Turkish prime minister to express his support (26 sec)	Segment 18: Update on the terrorist attack on the British consulate, etc., in Turkey (43 sec)

November 20	Segment 4: Putin speaks at official ceremony of receiving mandates from foreign ambassadors (mentions terrorism) (56 sec)	
November 20	Segment 11: People who were making counterfeit dollars were prosecuted (2 min, 10 sec)	
November 20	Segment 12: Putin sent his condolences and support to Blair over terrorist attack on consulate in Turkey (28 sec)	
November 20	Segment 13: A Turkish journalist comments on terrorist attacks in Turkey (56 sec)	
November 20	Segment 14: 3 new terrorist attacks in Iraq – no one claims responsibility (34 sec)	
November 20	Segment 15: Bush on official visit to London amidst British protestors (53 sec)	
November 21	Segment 2: More terrorist attacks are expected in Turkey; the British consulate is evacuated (3 min, 13 sec)	Segment 5: Prevented terrorist attack (52 sec)
November 21		Segment 6: Terrorist arrested (35 sec)
November 21		Segment 7 More terrorist attacks are expected in Turkey (2 min, 1 sec)
November 24		Segment 1: A large-scale military operation in Chechnya (3 min, 1 sec)
November 24		Segment 11: American casualties in Iraq (54 sec)
November 25	Segment 15: Terrorist arrested in Yemen (18 sec)	
November 26		Segment 7: Report from the Russian borders in the Caucasus (1 min, 51 sec)
November 26		Segment 10: Latest scandals reported from the election commission (terrorism mentioned) (1 min, 37 sec)
November 27	Segment 16: Overview of the recent terrorist attacks in Iraq (1 min)	
November 28		Segment 14: Trial of a terrorist (1 min)
December 1	Segment 13: Hostages go free from Nigerian oil rig (part of daily news roundup) (1 min, 44 sec)	
December 2	Segment 16: Update on the terrorist attack in Iraq (3 min, 37 sec)	Segment 1: Intelligence on possible terrorist attacks (2 min, 4 sec)
December 2	Segment 17: Four-year anniversary of terrorist hijacking of Armenian parliament (1 min, 22 sec)	

December 3	Segment 2: Meeting of the Security Council (mentions terrorism) (3 min, 13 sec)	Segment 3: Police search voting booths for bombs (57 sec)
December 3	Segment 9: Large group of paramilitaries surrendered today in Chechnya (2 min, 32 sec)	Segment 7: Large group of terrorists surrendered (43 sec)
December 4		Segment 8: Exiled oligarch Berezovsky travels to Georgia despite Russian arrest warrant (1 min, 39 sec)
December 4		Segment 15: Report from an Israeli navy base (2 min, 59 sec)
December 5	Segment 1: Bomb explosion in Esentuki (Southern Russia) (2 min, 4 sec)	Segment 1: Bomb explodes on train in the South of Russia in Esentuki (4 min, 4 sec)
December 5	Segment 2: More on bomb explosion in Esentuki (41 sec)	Segment 2: More on the bomb explosion in Esentuki (44 sec)
December 5	Segment 3: 8 Dec is announced a mourning day for terrorist attack in Esentuki (3 min, 13 sec)	Segment 3: Putin meets with representatives of police and military over bomb explosion in Esentuki (1 min, 7 sec)
December 5	Segment 4: Putin asks regional leader to take all possible measures to help the victims of Esentuki bombing (43 sec)	Segment 4: Hotline opened in Moscow relating to Esentuki terrorist attack (22 sec)
December 5	Segment 5: Putin's consultation with the representatives of Russian security service (4 min, 40 sec)	Segment 5: Update on those killed, wounded in Esentuki railway bomb (1 min, 56 sec)
December 5		Segment 6: More on the bomb explosion in Esentuki (1 min, 14 sec)
December 5		Segment 17: 40 people dead in the train blast in Esentuki (48 sec)

Source: Television programs coded by the author, Andrei Rogatchevski, Boris Rogatchevski and Katia Rogatchevskaia.