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Media coverage of third party peace initiatives^[1]

a case of peace journalism?

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Though the coverage of alternatives to violence can be regarded as a minimum requirement for peace journalism, it is not just the facts which are reported but rather the way they are presented which contributes to the escalation or deescalation of the conflict.

An interdisciplinary and multinational content analytical study of the Gulf War coverage in American and European media has shown that alternative ways to settle the Gulf War were among those themes that were discussed most extensively in the media. Statistical data analysis based on Latent Class Analysis revealed a total of 9 latent styles of the media coverage of this topic: Pure military logic, query of military logic, economic rather than military means, coverage of Iraqi peace initiatives, UN peace initiatives, Allied initiatives, third party initiatives, query of third party initiatives, and comprehensive discussion of

peaceful alternatives.

Since the analysed style characteristics only dealt with informations on the Gulf conflict which were given or denied by the media and with arguments they corroborated or refuted, the identified styles describe patterns of information that were made available to the public. They do not describe, however, how this information was presented, what means of propagandistic featuring were used, etc. In order to investigate this aspect of the gulf war coverage, a qualitative content analysis of a sample of representative news items from the original study was performed. The sample included American, German, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish media. For each of these countries those news items were selected for qualitative analysis, which represented the various styles of coverage most clearly.

Qualitative analysis of news items pertaining to the coverage of third party initiatives unveiled that most of these news items - though informing the audience about the existence of such initiatives - did not support them by any critical peace journalistic means, however, but were dominated by escalating aspects of conflict coverage.

1. Media and conflict escalation

The current discussion among journalists and scholars in media research and peace studies focuses on the question how the media can become vehicles for conflict prevention and constructive, nonviolent conflict transformation. This proposal of critical peace journalism as an alternative to traditional war reporting, is not suggesting that violence should not be reported, or what is reported as facts should not be empirically correct. It stresses the point however, that the form in which they are reported may contribute either to the escalation or to the deescalation of the conflict.

The Journalism in the New World Order project - which the present study is part of - has so far contributed to this discussion through an interdisciplinary and multinational content analytical study of the Gulf War coverage in American, German, Scandinavian and some Third World media as well as through studies of military-media-relations both historically and during the Gulf War, including interviews with journalists, analysing their working situation, professional constraints, impacts of recent developments in media technology, the influence of CNN and the role of PR agencies etc.

One of the main results of these studies is the development of a model of peace journalism, taking into account that escalating conflicts entail systematic distortions of how the parties in the conflict view themselves, their opponents and impartial third parties who try to mediate in the conflict, how they evaluate their goals and actions etc. (Kempf, 1996b). The more a society is involved in a conflict the more will its public and its media be susceptible to such distortions.

Even propaganda does not just invent some sort of propagandistic view of the conflict, but rather takes up and fosters those natural processes. Therefore, if a piece of journalism looks like propaganda, this does not necessarily mean that it was systematically constructed for

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propagandistic purposes. It may look so just because the respective journalist became victim himself of a heated public atmosphere. Critical peace journalism thus has to take these processes into account in order to break the propaganda trap.

War propaganda tries to maximize the citizens' own willingness for war by means of persuasion, or, as Lasswell (1927) puts it:

"Civilian unity is not achieved by the regimentation of muscles. It is achieved by a repetition of ideas rather than movements. The civilian mind is standardized by news not by drills. Propaganda is the method by which this process is aided and abetted."

In his book "The Ancient Foe", Luostarinen (1986) developed a model of war propaganda according to which both restrictive and supportive methods of information control are used by propaganda in order to get people to strongly and personally identify themselves with the goals of war.

1. Restrictive methods try to minimize all information which could cause negative effects on the fighting spirit.
2. Supportive methods try to maximize all information with a positive effect. According to Luostarinen, this is handled by fabrication, selection and exaggeration of information.

From this point of view, the coverage of alternatives to violence may be regarded as minimum requirement for peace journalism. However, it is not just the facts which are reported but rather the way they are presented which contributes to the escalation or deescalation of the conflict. Though truth is only raw material for the propagandist (and if you have to lie, that is only a technical and operational question, not a moral one), it is better if no lies are needed. This can be achieved if the propagandist succeeds to manipulate the audience's entanglement into the topic of propaganda in order to influence its interpretations in a way that is apt to reorganize its hierarchy of values "so that winning the war is on the top and all other values - for instance the truth, ethical considerations and individual rights - are only subservient to the goal" (Luostarinen, 1994, p.1).

2. Media coverage of alternative ways to settle the Gulf War

An interdisciplinary and multinational content analytical study of the Gulf War coverage (Kempf, 1996a) has shown that alternative ways to settle the war are among those themes that had been covered most extensively during the Gulf War.

2.1 Method

Sampling procedure

The sample of media that was analysed in this study included European, American and some Third World media (cf. [Table 1](#)).

The European subsample covered a total of 31 dates pertaining to 10 timespots between August 2, 1990 and January 15, 1993. At these dates the Gulf war coverage in the biggest nationwide prestige paper, in the biggest tabloid paper, in a major regional paper and in one of the most important noncommercial television channels in Germany, Finland, Norway and Sweden were analysed.

While the sample of American media followed the same rationale, it included no regional paper, however, and the American TV-material only covered timespots 3-7 for television channels ABC, CBS and NBC as (partially) distributed by Sky News over Europe.

The sample of Third World media included two Ethiopian prestige papers (for timespots 1-10) and the Iraqi Baghdad Observer, which ceased publication after the start of the air strikes, however, and therefore could be analysed for timespots 1-3 only.

type of media / country	TV-news	Prestige papers	Tabloid papers	Provincial papers
Finland (SF)	Tv-uitiset 20.30 YLE TV1	Helsinki Sanomat	Ilta-Sanomat	Turun Sanomat
Germany (D)	heute 19.00 ZDF	Süddeutsche Zeitung	Bild-Zeitung	Südkurier
Norway (N)	Dagsrevyen 19.30 (19.00) ^[2] NRK	Aftenposten	Verdens Gang	Bergens Tidende
Sweden (S)	Rapport 19.30 TV2	Dagens Nyheter	Expressen	Nerikes Allehanda
America (USA)	ABC / CBS / NBC	Washington Post	Akron Beacon Journal	-
Iraq	-	Baghdad Observer	-	-
Ethiopia	-	Addis Zemen / Ethiopian Herald	-	-

Table 1: The media sample

In order to make the change of the Gulf War coverage in the course of a longer period of time accessible, the selection of dates included timespots from the Iraqi invasion in Kuwait until after the end of the Gulf War. These dates are:

- Timespot 1: August 2-7, 1990 (Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait).
- Timespot 2: November 28-30, 1990 (UN Security Council's ultimatum to Iraq)
- Timespot 3: January 12-14, 1991 (US-Congress vote for a military intervention)
- Timespot 4: January 17-19, 1991 (Beginning of the air raids against Iraq).
- Timespot 5: February 13-15, 1991 (Bombing of the Amirya bunker: Iraqi civilian victims).
- Timespot 6: February 21-23, 1991 (Last peace proposals before the start of the ground offensive)
- Timespot 7: February 27-28, 1991 (Military defeat of Iraq).
- Timespot 8: April 26-27, 1991 (Allied measures in protection of Iraqi Kurds).
- Timespot 9: August 25-27, 1992 (Allied measures in protection of Iraqi Shias)
- Timespot 10: January 14-15, 1993. (Bombing of Baghdad in order to force Iraq to fulfill to the conditions of ceasefire).

Included in the content analysis were all news items and reportages dealing with the Gulf conflict at these dates. Since the news items in German print media outnumbered those in the

other European countries, however, minor articles with less than two headlines and less than two paragraphs were excluded from the German subsample. Altogether a total of $n = 4096$ news items was included in the analysis.

Quantitative content analysis

A total of $n=740$ (18.1%) of the analysed news items dealt with alternative ways to settle the war by allegation (+) or query (-) of one or several of the following arguments:

- 1 Force against Iraq is the only possible or most effective way to settle the conflict.
- 2 Economic embargo on trade with Iraq should be given or should have been given more time to be effective.
- 3 Iraqi initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.
- 4 Alliance's or member state's (excl. UN) initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.
- 5 UN initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.
- 6 Third party or neutral initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.

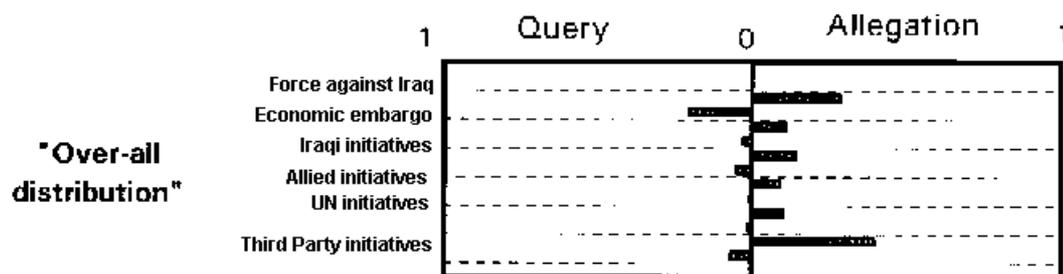


Figure 1: Alternative ways to settle the war: over-all distribution of style characteristics.

The over-all distribution of these arguments (cf. Figure 1) shows that force against Iraq was the most intensively and most controversially discussed mode to settle the conflict. In 28.4% of the news items it was presented as the only possible or most effective way to settle the conflict. In 20.0% of the news items this was denied, doubted or questioned. Third party or neutral initiatives for negotiations or peace talks follow in the second place (39.6% allegation; 6.8% query). The Alliance's or member state's initiatives for negotiations played the least role (9.2% allegation; 0.8% query).

Emphasizing Kracauer's (1952) argument, according to which it is not the frequency of style characteristics (= arguments or informations that serve as variables of the quantitative content analysis) but their pattern of combination which contributes in determining the direction of the overall text, the statistical data analysis was based on the method of Latent Class Analysis (LCA; Lazarsfeld, 1950).

The analysed media from various countries represent a wide political spectrum. Moreover, the analysed news items stem from different phases of the conflict. Accordingly, it cannot be assumed, that all the news items adhere to the same press coverage style nor that they combine the style characteristics in the same kind of patterns. The over-all distribution, therefore, may rather be a mixture distribution, resulting from the blending of various press coverage styles. Since it also cannot be assumed that all news items pertaining to the same media or to the same timespot make use of the same style of coverage, this problem cannot be coped with by simply producing distinct frequency tables for the various media or time spots, either. The style used in a given news item is only loosely linked to the manifest properties of

the source from which the respective item stems. The styles of media coverage, therefore, cannot be constructed from any a priori definition of membership of news items to the various styles of coverage, but they are latent to the probability distribution of the style characteristics. In order to reveal these latent styles, the mixture distribution must be unmixed by use of the LCA-method (Kempf, 1994b).

2.2 Empirical results

Statistical data analysis based on Latent Class Analysis revealed, that the distribution in Figure 1 is a mixture distribution of 9 latent styles of coverage which presented specific patterns of information to the public:

A total of 41.1% of the news items focused on the use of military or economic means against Iraq (cf. Figure 2):

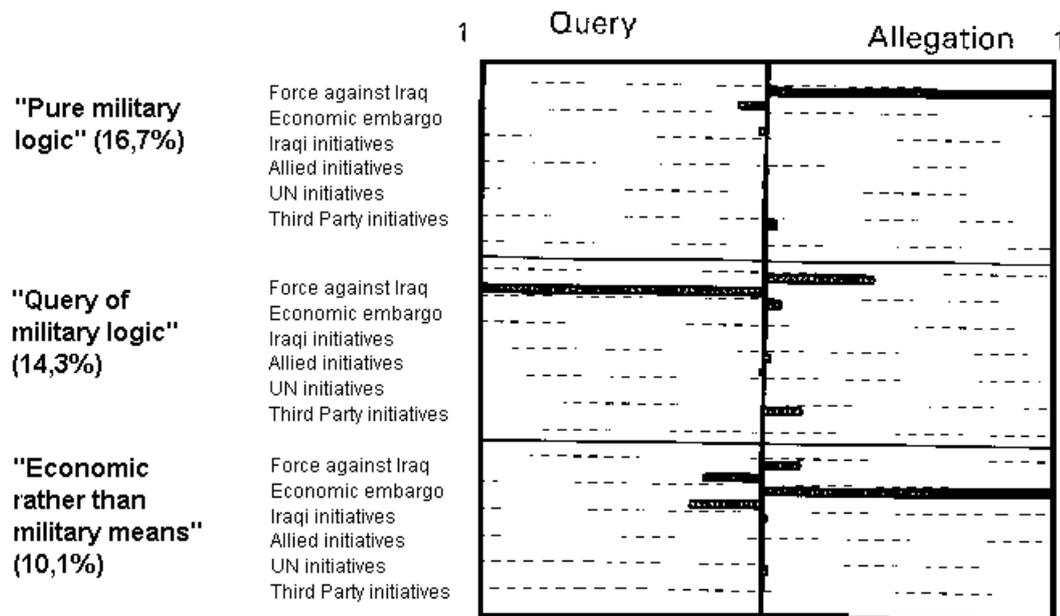


Figure 2: Military or economic force against Iraq

1. 16.7% of the news items presented pure military logic which described force against Iraq as the only possible or most effective way to settle the conflict (99.9%) and which did not take notice of any other alternative.
2. Although nearly the same number of items (14.3%) doubted or denied the necessity or effectiveness of force against Iraq (99.9%) and sometimes referred to third party peace initiatives (13.4%), these items did not reject the use of force unequivocally, however, but corroborated it quite often also (38.0%).
3. Another 10.1% of the news items argued in favor of economic rather than military means. Although it was said in these news items that the economic embargo on trade with Iraq should have been given more time to be effective (98.2%), however, only some of them doubted the need of force against Iraq explicitly (20.2%). Moreover, these items also did not favour the alternative of an economic embargo unequivocally, but doubted or denied it quite often (25.3%) and sometimes they even described force against Iraq as the only reasonable alternative (13.0%).

Military logic obviously set the agenda even for those news items which were critical about the use of

military force or which supported an economic embargo against Iraq.

One quarter (25.5%) of the news items focused on either of the war parties' initiatives for negotiations or peace talks (cf. figure 3).

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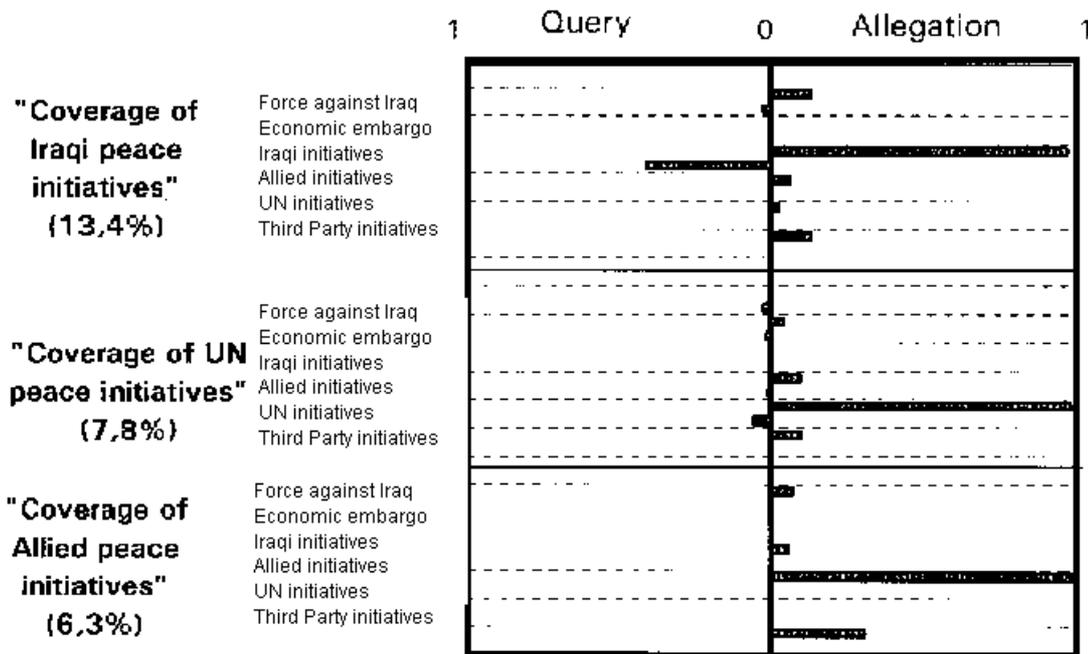


Figure 3: War parties' initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.

1. Although 11.4% of the news items took notice of Iraqi initiatives (97.0%) and sometimes referred to neutral or third party initiatives also (13.4%), these items often doubted, denied or questioned the Iraqi initiatives (41.0%) and tended to present military force as the only reasonable solution to the conflict (13.4%).
2. Those 7.8% of the news items on the other hand, which reported about UN initiatives (98.2%) raised only little doubt against these initiatives (6.2%). They tended to link them both to third party (10.2%) and Allied initiatives (9.9%), and they made no positive reference to the use of military force (0.1%).
3. Another 6.3% of the items focused on Allied initiatives (99.9%) without any doubt or questioning (0.1%) and often contextualized them with third party or neutral initiatives (31.0%). Though these news items even referred positively to Iraqi initiatives sometimes (6.0%), however, they still showed some tendency towards the approval of military force (7.6%).

The comparison of these patterns unveils two basic principles of an escalation-oriented conceptualization of the conflict: idealization of Allied intentions against which no doubt may be raised, and demonization of Iraqi intentions which are highly mistrusted. Moreover, it mirrors the ambiguous role which the UN played in the conflict which was defined as a UN-war and in which the UN was portrayed as some sort of neutral instance at the same time.

One third (33.3%) of the news items focused on third party or neutral initiatives for negotiations or peace talks (cf. Figure 4).

1. The majority of these items (29.0%) reported or at least mentioned third party initiatives (99.9%).

Although they doubted these neutral initiatives sometimes (14.1%), these items expressed only little approval of military force (3.4%) and even made some positive reference to Iraqi initiatives for negotiations or peace talks (6.7%).

2. A rather small number of news items (2.3%) put third party initiatives in the context of military logic. In doing so, these items either presented arguments pro and contra, or two sided messages, and they showed a clear bias towards refuting the initiatives and backing up a military solution:

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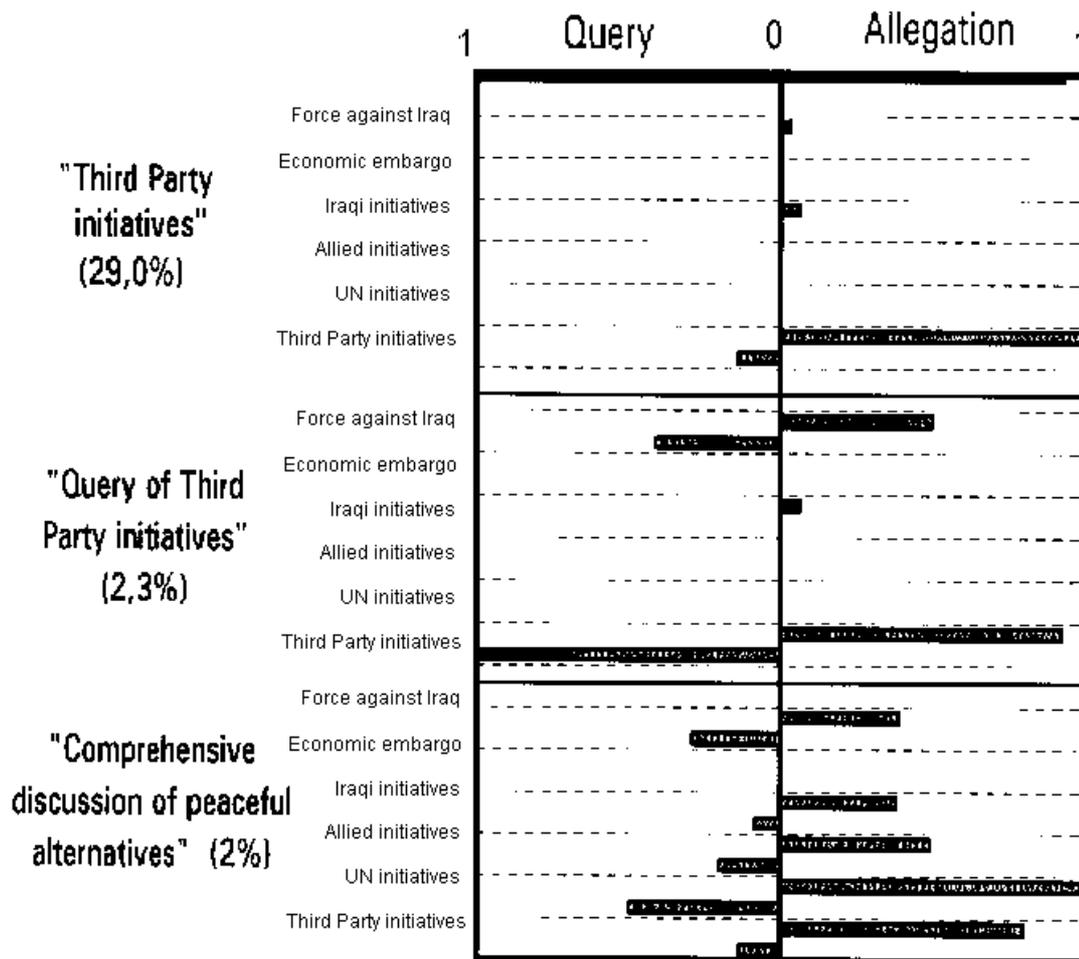


Figure 4: Third parties' initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.

- - Though third party initiatives were mentioned positively also (92.0%), they were doubted or denied nearly without exemption (99.0%), and
 - the need of military force against Iraq was rather approved (49.7%) than questioned (40.6%).
4. The remaining 2.0% of the items referred to third party initiatives in the context of a comprehensive discussion of peaceful alternatives:
 - In most cases these items referred positively to third party initiatives (79.8%) and only sometimes they expressed doubt against them (13.5%).
 - The focus of the items was put on UN initiatives, which were evaluated much more ambiguously, however (allegation: 99.9%, query: 50.0%).
 - Allied initiatives were reported less often but with the same ambiguity (allegation: 38.2%,

query: 20.3%) as the UN initiatives.

- Against Iraqi initiatives on the other hand, which were given the same positive reference as the Allied ones (38.2%), only less doubt was expressed (8.4%).

Although these news items were more critical about UN and Allied initiatives than they were about neutral and Iraqi initiatives, it cannot be concluded, that they took a pro-Iraqi point of view, however. Although they questioned the need of military force against Iraq quite often (29.3%), they rather approved of it (39.2%).

3. Limitations of quantitative analysis

From a peace-journalism point of view it is mainly three of these patterns, which are candidates of critical journalism - that is of a journalism which has not tapped into the propaganda trap: discussion of military logic (Fig.2.2) which is most critical about the use of military force against Iraq, coverage of UN initiatives (Fig.3.2), and coverage of third party initiatives (Fig.4.1) which show the least approval of military force.

Since the first of these patterns is rather ambiguous, and since the double role of the UN was highly functional for the New World Order rhetorics that dominated the Gulf War discourse (cf. Kempf & Luostarinen, 1997), however, it is the last pattern, which seems most likely to display at least some aspects of critical journalism: informing the audience about third party

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peace initiatives, it counterbalanced both, the depiction of military force as the only reasonable alternative to settle the conflict, and the picture of its worldwide consent.

Since this pattern was characteristic for 29.0% of all news items which dealt with different ways to settle the war, the Gulf War coverage apparently was less biased than it had seemed. But this is only one part of the story. It might as well be the case that quantitative content analysis just paints a too optimistic picture. Informing the audience about the existence of third party peace initiatives does not necessarily mean that these initiatives are supported. On the contrary, the peace initiatives might as well have been used as a means to portray the war as unavoidable and to stimulate its approval.

Which of these alternatives is empirically correct, cannot be concluded from the quantitative results, however, but calls for a more in-depth analysis of the material.

4. Media coverage of third party peace initiatives

In order to pursue this aim, a representative subsample of news items from the American and European media was subjected to a qualitative content analysis.

4.1 Method

Sampling procedure

As a first step of the sampling procedure those news items in the original sample were identified, which represent the various styles - or patterns of information - most exactly. Since prestige papers use to claim the highest standard of critical journalism, this sample was then reduced to those items that had been published in one of the national prestige papers. If there were no items representative for a certain style in

the prestige papers of a country, the sample included the regional papers instead, if there were no representative items in the regional papers as well, the sample included the tabloid papers, and only if there were no representative items in the tabloids either, the sample included items from TV news. From this choice of news items, finally, one item was randomly chosen for each style in each country.^[3]

Qualitative content analysis

Based on a psychological model of conflict communication (Kempf, 1996b) a qualitative method was developed (Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 1996) which analyses escalating and deescalating aspects of war coverage along a total of seven dimensions.

In any conflict there are own side's rights and intentions and other side's actions that interfere with them and threaten their pursue. But the other side also has rights and intentions that are threatened by our actions. Last not least, there are common rights and common benefits also, which may serve as a basis for mutual trust.

So far any conflict is open either to take a constructive course or to escalate into a destructive one. Which will be the case depends on whether the conflict is conceptualized as a cooperative (win-win model) or as a competitive process (win-lose model). Competitive processes tend to escalate the conflict (Deutsch, 1973) and the more a conflict has escalated, the more the parties in the conflict tend to idealize their own rights, intentions and actions, the more they tend to deny their opponent's rights and to demonize his actions and intentions, and the less they recognize common interests and common gains.

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<i>Escalating aspects: War propaganda</i>		<i>Deescalating aspects: Peace journalism</i>	
1. Conceptualization of the conflict			
W1	Support of war & military logic	P1	Query of war & military logic
W1.1	Construction of the conflict as a competitive process	P1.1	Query of the competitive character of the conflict
W1.2	Emphasis on military values	P1.2	Query of militarism and military values
W1.3	Designation of military force as an appropriate means to conflict resolution	P1.3	Query of the adequacy or effectivity of military force
W1.4	Refutation of peaceful alternatives	P1.4	Demands for peaceful alternatives
2. Evaluation of the war parties' rights and intentions			
W2	Antagonism	P2	Balance

W2.1	Denial of rights of the enemy and demonization of his intentions	P2.1	Respecting of rights of enemy and unbiased description of his intentions
W2.2	Idealization of own rights and intentions	P2.2	Realistic and self-critical evaluation of own rights and intentions
W2.3	Denial of common interests or of possibilities for cooperation	P2.3	Critical distance to both war parties, emphasis on their common interests and support of anti-war oppositions, signals of peace readiness and mediation efforts
3. Evaluation of the war parties' actions			
W3	Confrontation	P3	Cooperation
W3.1	Justification of own side's actions and underlining of own correctness	P3.1	Critical evaluation of own side's actions
W3.2	Condemnation of actions of the enemy	P3.2	Unbiased evaluation of the other side's actions
W3.3	Conversion of indignation with the war into indignation with the enemy	P3.3	Redirection of indignation with the enemy against the war itself by critical evaluation of both sides' actions, description of both sides' harm and description of the benefit that both sides could gain from ending the war

Table 2: Conceptualization of the conflict and evaluation of the war parties' rights, intentions and actions.

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Media coverage of conflicts may either join into these escalation dynamics by taking the position of either party in the conflict, or it may counterbalance the escalation by emphasizing those aspects that can be realized from a position of critical distance only.

In order to investigate, whether a piece of journalism rather contributes to the escalation or to the deescalation of a conflict, the first three dimensions of our content analytical system deal with these cognitive aspects of conflict perception (cf. Table 2):

1. While escalation oriented journalism conceptualizes the conflict in a way that gives support to war and military logic, deescalation oriented journalism keeps itself open for peaceful solutions, and queries war and military logic.
2. While propaganda-journalism evaluates the war parties' rights and intentions in an antagonistic way, peace-journalism aims at a balanced evaluation of both parties' interests.

3. While propaganda evaluates the war parties' actions in a framework of confrontation, peace-journalism stays in critical distance to both of them and focuses on chances for cooperation.

The next two dimensions deal with incentives for social identification and emotional involvement in the war (cf. Table 3). "So great are the psychological resistances to war in modern nations", wrote Harold Lasswell in 1927, "that every war must appear to be a war of defence against a menacing, murderous aggressor".

The purpose of war propaganda is to maximize the will of own soldiers and civilians to fight, and to minimize the fighting spirit of the enemy. As regards the own public, this requires to make it strongly identify with one's side and to keep a delicate balance between the emotions of feeling to be threatened by the enemy and feeling confident that the own side can win the war.

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<i>Escalating aspects: War propaganda</i>		<i>Deescalating aspects: Peace journalism</i>	
4. Emotional involvement in the conflict			
W4	Destructive emotions	P4	Constructive emotions
W4.1	Denial of threat to the enemy	P4.1	Recognition of threat to the enemy
W4.2	Confidence in own side's victory	P4.2	Recognition of the price of the victory
W4.3	Stimulation of the feeling to be threatened by the enemy	P4.3	Reduction of the feeling to be threatened by the enemy
W4.4	Stimulation of mistrust against the enemy, his allies and neutral third parties that try to mediate in the conflict	P4.4	Depiction of perspectives for reconciliation
5. Social identification and personal entanglement			
W5	Confrontative social commitment	P5	Cooperative social commitment
W5.1	Incentives for identification with own side's victims as "worthy", dismissal of the other side's victims as "unworthy" or minimization of suffering on both sides	P5.1	Incentives for identification with both sides' victims as victims of the war itself
W5.2	Incentives for identification with own side's (non-élite) actors, dehumanization of the other side's actors and/or dehumanization of those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution	P5.2	Impartiality towards both sides' (non-élite) actors and/or incentives for identification with those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution
W5.3	Incentives for identification with the own side's élite, dehumanization of the other side's élite	P5.3	Impartiality towards both sides' élites and/or incentives for identification with

	and/or dehumanization of élites that strive for a peaceful conflict resolution		élites that strive for a peaceful conflict resolution
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Table 3: Emotional involvement and social identification.

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1. While escalation oriented conflict coverage stimulates destructive emotions like mistrust against the enemy, his allies and third parties that try to mediate in the conflict, peace-journalism would rather try to reduce the emotional stress of the audience and to focus on perspectives for reconciliation. While propaganda stimulates confidence that the war can be won, deescalation oriented journalism would rather point towards the price that has to be paid for a military victory.
2. While escalation oriented journalism aims at a confrontative social commitment and gives incentives for partial identification with the own side only as well as for the rejection of those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution, peace-journalism would rather aim at a cooperative social commitment, try to stay impartial towards both sides and give incentives for identification with peaceful alternatives and their actors.

Social identification plays a crucial role for the last two dimensions of the analytical instrument also, which deal with communication disorders that are typical for propaganda (cf. Table 4).

6. Two-sided messages	
#6.1	Anticipation of criticism
#6.2	Rejection of the anticipated information
7. Double-bind communication	
#7.1	Inherent contradictions
#7.2	Emotional involvement with both contradictory messages

Table 4: Communication disorders.

6. "Two-sided messages" refers to a form of propaganda presentation which anticipates possible criticism and thus makes the propaganda more resistant against counter-propaganda (Lumsdaine and Janis, 1953). The critical point with two-sided messages, however, is that the counter information must not be accepted by the public. This can be achieved by means of social identification with the carrier of the propaganda message and, at the same time, social devaluation of the carrier of the counter message.

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7. "Double-bind communication" refers to a form of communication pathology that was first described by Bateson et al. (1956) in the context of clinical psychology and introduced into propaganda research by Kempf (1986). It is characterized by inherent contradictions of the propaganda message and the lacking of a chance, either to react to both of the contradictory messages, or to withdraw from the situation. As a result of emotional involvement with both contradictory messages it becomes difficult for the audience to query either of them.

If the public has no access to independent information - as is the case in total wars like the Gulf War - it has no other chance than either to believe the conclusions it is told by the propaganda or to withdraw into selective inattentence, prejudices or evasive sceptizism etc. - all of which are consequences that may serve the goals of psychological warfare by paralysing the capacity for resistance against the war (Kempf, 1994a).

According to Galtung (1987), a conflict takes place not only on the level of the topics which are matter in dispute, but it involves the levels of behavior and attitudes as well. These levels are not independent of each other. Any modification of one of them affects the complete system (cf. Figure 5).

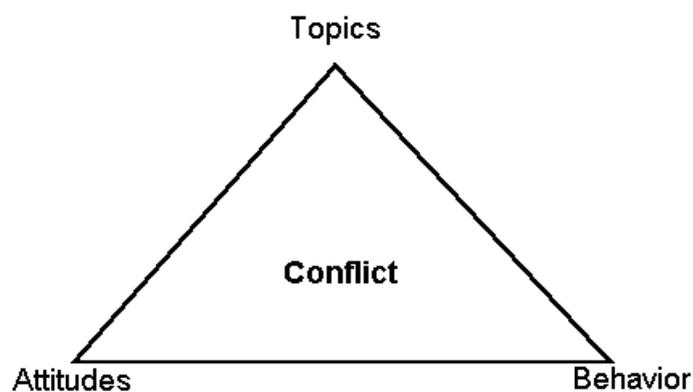


Figure 5: Galtung's Conflict Triangle

In conflict coverage these levels correspond to the three levels of propaganda as described by Luostarinen (1986):

- The level of the conflict context emphasizes the topics of the conflict. It tells us the roots of the conflict, why it was unavoidable, what we are defending and why did the enemy attack.
- The level of day-to-day events puts the behavior of the contractors in the fore. It contains classical propaganda material like description of battles, expressions of support coming from other countries, heroic stories and stories of atrocity.
- The level of myths, finally, targets on our attitudes, both towards our own nation and towards the enemy. It contains material about the logic of history, the meaning of life, the value of freedom, etc.

According to Luostarinen (1994, p.3) a typical pattern of war propaganda might be that "single day to day stories are selected and written in a way that fits into the conflict context which supports the suggested identification and which enforces the myths. Myths, as we know, are told in the form of concrete stories, and the order of the elements in the story tells the myths".

The content analytical system applied in the present study adheres to these levels and their mutual dependence in terms of analysing the argumentative structure of a text: Which level does it start from, how does the escalation process proceed through the various levels, and on which levels is it counterbalanced by the introduction of deescalating aspects?

The outcome which the qualitative analysis finally aims at, is the reconstruction of the text along these dimensions and levels of propaganda and peace-journalism.

4.2 Empirical results

The results of qualitative analysis demonstrated a dramatic lack of critical journalism in the Gulf War coverage and a wide variety of modes how the coverage of peace initiatives was used in order to raise support for the war - even if the initiatives themselves were not questioned explicitly.

Washington Post, Jan.18, 1991.

SOVIET UNION, ALLIES SUPPORT U.S. IN LAUNCHING ATTACK ON IRAQ

Though selected as one of the news items most representative for the coverage of third party initiatives, this article takes up a last moment peace initiative by Mikhail Gorbachev only in order to give more weight to the Soviet Union's approval of the war and to portray the war as unavoidable. In the first two paragraphs it reads:

"The Soviet Union yesterday expressed strong support for the U.S.-led attack on Iraqi positions in the Persian Gulf even though Washington had refused its request to postpone the bombing just before war erupted so President Mikhail Gorbachev could make a final plea to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to back down.

The Soviet reaction was typical of that of countries around the world, many of which said they were saddened that hostilities had erupted in the 5.5-month-old crisis but recognized that the use of force was the only way to drive Saddam's forces from Kuwait. Gorbachev gave a national address to "express our deep sorrow that military confrontation could not be averted."

During paragraphs 13-15 the topic of Gorbachev's peace initiative is taken up again, demonstrating that even this last attempt at avoiding the war constructs the conflict as a competitive process (win-lose model).

"Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh told legislative deputies that after Washington notified Moscow of the bombing raids, an hour before they were to begin, Gorbachev instructed to ask him not to go ahead with this military action and to allow for additional time to undertake a last attempt to influence Saddam.

Gorbachev, Besmertnykh said in remarks televised in Moscow, wanted to warn Saddam that if he did not withdraw, 'Iraq will be hit because we have information to this effect from absolutely trustworthy sources.'

The message demanded an immediate withdrawal from Kuwait and said, 'Unfortunately, we could not stop the military action... We believe it is absolutely vital that you announce immediately the beginning of a withdrawal of troops from Kuwait.'"

The rest of the article reports positive reactions to the allied attack on Iraq by members of the international community. Some of them expressed concern, but supported the war nonetheless. Only Cuba, North Korea and Iran (about which the US public is most suspicious, anyways) condemned the bombing raids.

As a whole, the article is clearly dominated by conflict escalating aspects, mainly support of military solutions and construction of the conflict as a competitive process. Deescalating aspects, such as the (implicite) recognition of the price of military victory and the questioning of military force as suitable or necessary are reported also, but little emphasis is given to them. Instead, the article follows more or less a pattern of two sided messages, expressing support of the war and anticipating possible counter arguments.

Since the analysis of the American material (Nohrstedt, 1996) applied a simplified version of the content analytical method only, it cannot be decided, however, whether or to what extent this is the result of propaganda journalism or whether it is just a one-to-one representation of the international reactions which are reported in the article. Devaluation of counter arguments by means of social identification would be a clear indicator for persuasive means, but this was not explored by the Swedish research group who did the analysis.

Whatsoever, the mere dominance of escalating aspects in conflict coverage does not necessarily mean that a piece of journalism has stepped into the propaganda trap. Quality journalism claims to mirror and to reflect facts and to escape judgements. Even a story of diplomatic efforts to put an end to the war, can thus involve escalating elements, just because these efforts have failed.

Helsingin Sanomat, Feb.13, 1991

NO PROGRESS IN PEACEPROCESS. PRIMAKOV IN VAIN IN BAGDAD. NON-ALLIGNED COUNTRIES IN DISPUTE

which was analysed by Suikkanen (1996) as an example of the coverage of third party initiatives in Finnish media, is such a piece of journalism. The article is a partly in telegram style written newstext concerning two diplomatic efforts to stop the Gulf War.

The first theme of the article is the visit of Yevganij Primakov in Bagdad (as a special representative of Gorbachev's). The article tells (1) that Primakov was in vain in Bagdad (he didn't succeed to meet anybody), (2) that according to the allied sources the Allies didn't try by any means to protect Primakov from the Allies' air attacks, and (3) that the Soviet diplomats "assured that they do not have any secret deals with Iraq".

The second theme is the meeting of the non-alligned countries who "were in dispute" about the means to stop the war. It is mentioned that this movement represents mainly Third World countries and that Iraq and Kuwait - though members - were not present. The meeting is told to have a draft version for a declaration (not much different from the UN declaration), but Cuba, Algeria and the PLO who were demanding instant ceasefire might ruin the chance to get a common declaration.

Reporting mainly on the level of day-to-day events, the article involves quite a few escalating elements. Since most of them are denials of the efficiency of diplomatic or political means of conflict resolution, however, they seem to be rather unavoidable in reporting the events which are the topic of the article.

When the article underlines the "loneliness" of Gorbachev's representative in Bagdad, for instance, this might be read as some tendency towards marginalizing a member of the third party élite who tries to mediate in the conflict. But this marginalization is due to the facts reported and not to their specific journalistic presentation. On the contrary, by quoting his own words saying that he has nothing to tell and that he hasn't met anybody, the article rather takes up Primakov's own view.

As the article gives space to third party initiatives as an attempt to persuade Saddam Hussein to retreat from Kuwait, it includes a number of deescalating elements also: questioning of military force as suitable, demands for peaceful alternatives, perspectives for reconciliation and critical distance from both sides. Again, these are due to the facts reported and not to their specific journalistic presentation.

The only critical sequence of the article which might indicate some bias towards conflict escalation is when Gorbachev's spokesperson is put to assure that there are not any secret deals between Iraq and the Soviet Union. Reported quite abrupt and without any visible reason on the surface of the text, this sequence might rather stir up mistrust against the Soviet mediation efforts than build up trust in the mediating third party.

Even if a piece of journalism avoids judgements and reports facts only, it might construct different images the conflict, either by means of selection of facts to be reported or by means of their contextualisation.

As regards the selection of facts, a bias towards conflict escalation cannot be detected from the analysis of one single article taken for itself, however, but requires a comparison of the facts reported with the facts themselves or (since these are often available via other media only) with their coverage in different media with varying ideological and political background and with different affiliations to the war parties:

- A study by Meder (1994) compared the wording of the UN security council's Gulf resolutions with their coverage in the German speaking press and unveiled a selective reduction of informations which produced a strong bias towards the military option.
- Kempf & Luostarinen (1997), who studied New World Order rhetorics in American and European media, found neither a qualitative nor a quantitative difference in the rhetorical patterns quoted from political leaders in news items and (re)produced by journalists in the editorials. Since, on the other hand, there were significant differences between the media from the various countries that were included in the study, it can be concluded that quotations from political leaders in the news items were selected in a way that mirrored the editorial opinion.
- The present study on the coverage of alternative ways to settle the Gulf War (Kempf, 1996a) also unveiled gross national differences with respect to the selection of arguments and informations that were reported (cf. Table 5):

Style / Country	SP	D	N	S	1997	Total
No coverage at all	0.8259	0.6114	0.3886	0.8440	0.8691	0.3155
Pure military logic	0.0178	0.0917	0.0147	0.0169	0.0271	0.0313
Query of military logic	0.0119	0.1319	0.0029	0.0046	0.0027	0.0267
Rather economic means	0.0176	0.0249	0.0119	0.0257	0.0160	0.0188
Iraqi peace initiatives	0.0214	0.0377	0.0158	0.0113	0.0229	0.0214
UN peace initiatives	0.0107	0.0171	0.0160	0.0203	0.0068	0.0138
Allied peace initiatives	0.0131	0.0124	0.0065	0.0107	0.0155	0.0117
Third party initiatives	0.0692	0.0459	0.0421	0.0634	0.0398	0.0525
Query of 3rd party initiatives	0.0006	0.0152	0.0009	0.0006	0.0000	0.0044
Comprehensive discussion	0.0054	0.0113	0.0005	0.0021	0.0000	0.0037
Total	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000

Table 5: Alternative Ways to Settle the Gulf War: Style usage in western media

In the American media, the presentation of alternative ways to settle the war was clearly determined by the strategic interests of the US. UN and third party initiatives were paid much less attention than in the European countries. There was little query of military logic and no comprehensive discussion of peaceful alternatives at all.

The most extensive and controversial discussion of alternative ways to settle the war was presented by the German media, who took up the topic more than three times as often as the average western media. While the picture painted by the German media followed the pattern of military logic three times as often as in the average, query of military logic was presented even five times as often as in the average of the western countries, and a comprehensive discussion of peaceful alternatives was presented three times as frequent as in the average.

In the Scandinavian countries military logic played a smaller role than in America and Germany. In the Finnish media, UN and third party initiatives were given great attention, and a comprehensive discussion of peaceful alternatives was presented more often than in all other western countries except Germany. In the Swedish media, the topic was also taken up more in connection with third parties' and UN initiatives. Moreover, they focused on economic sanctions more than all other countries' media did. The Norwegian media, finally, were the least prone to discuss how to settle the conflict. As in the American media, third party initiatives and alternative solutions were mentioned rather seldom and there was less query of military logic than in the other European countries.

Contextualisation of facts may involve both the choice of context in which a fact is reported and the sequence in which the informations are presented. While the first of these means can to some degree be detected by quantitative analysis, the second requires a more detailed qualitative analysis of the single news items.

- In his (quantitative) study of the coverage of UN resolutions in German speaking media, for instance, Meder (1994) found that the coverage of most of the resolutions was put in a context which put the military option in the fore and thus prepared the public opinion for further steps of conflict escalation.
The only exceptions were the resolutions No 665 (naval blockade) and No 678 (ultimatum) in which the option to use military force against Iraq already had reached the optimum of support, which seemed to be reasonable in the respective phase of conflict escalation.
- In a qualitative study, Kempf (1995) analysed, how an article on "Shot down pilots on Iraqi television", published by Die Welt on January 23, 1991, presented the information according to which the disfigured faces of the prisoners of war shown on television were not the results of torture, but were instead the result of bailing out of their aircraft with ejector seats.
As was shown, Die Welt presented this information which was reported on the same day in other media only after reporting public and private reactions to the parading of the shot down pilots, which made torture seem to be a fact, and made the audience identify themselves with those who do not believe that the disfigured faces of the shot down pilots could have any other cause: President Bush, the victims' relatives and their friends who gave proof of their solidarity.

Both aspects of contextualisation, the choice of context in which a fact is reported and the sequence in which the informations are presented, can be found in the coverage of Mikhail Gorbachev's last minute peace initiative in the Washington Post, Jan.18, 1991, also.

- The Washington Post presents the Soviet support of the attack on Iraq already in the headline of the article and reports on Gorbachev's initiative to postpone the bombing only after assuring the audience that the Soviet Union had expressed "strong" support "even though Washington had refused its request".
- Moreover, it puts the Soviet reaction in the context of support of the bombing not only by the Allies but all over the world except Cuba, North Korea and Iran: exactly those countries which - according to US ideology - never support the right things but always the wrong ones.

The same theme - international reactions to the air attack - is the topic of

Süddeutsche Zeitung, Jan.18, 1991.

SHOCK WORLDWIDE OVER THE OUTBREAK OF WAR. GORBACHEV BLAMES SADDAM HUSSEIN. IN THE OPINION OF MANY, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS FAILED.

also, which was analysed by Reimann (1997a) as an example of the coverage of third party initiatives in German media. The article begins with summarizing the reactions as worldwide "shock and concern" over the outbreak of war in combination with "restrained to unreserved

support for the actions of the multinational force", while there was "hardly any support" for Iraq. As in the Washington Post, the Soviet mediation efforts are reported not until the audience is told that Mikhail Gorbachev has immediately reacted to the air strikes by putting the blame for war on Saddam Hussein.

Next, the article lines up the reactions of various western (mainly European) states and politicians, most of which support the American policy. The tenor of these reactions is to regard the outbreak of war as a tragic event which was unavoidable, however, since the Iraq had shown to be unyielding. Consequently it is the Iraqi leadership and - in particular - Saddam Hussein, who is to blame for the outbreak of war and the further course of the conflict. Critical voices are quoted from Cuba, Yemen, North Korea, Jordan, Iran and Lybia. The UN secretary-general Perez de Cuellar feels "only sorrow over the war" and Pope John Paul II regrets the outbreak of war as "a grave defeat for international law and the world community" and expresses his "deepest grief" and "especially his sorrow for victims on both sides of the conflict", as well as his doubt, whether war is "an appropriate means for solving problems among nations". After these critical voices, the article ends with a statement by the Gulf Cooperation Council which welcomed the attack and with further reproaches against Saddam Hussein who made the outbreak of war "inevitable".

As in the article from the Washington Post, it is Gorbachev's mediation efforts that qualify the text as coverage of third party peace initiatives. The Soviet efforts are covered quite positively and with great detail. They are neither queried nor explicitly rejected. There are even incentives for social identification with Gorbachev.

As qualitative analysis unveiled, however, the whole article has the form of a two-sided message, for which the positive coverage of Gorbachev's peace initiative plays an essential role. Criticism of the Allied war policy as well as indignation with the outbreak of war and the failure of the international community are turned against Saddam Hussein. In this scenario, the detailed description of the Soviet mediation efforts and the incentives for identification with Gorbachev serve to reinforce the outrage at Saddam Hussein all the more. The more the Soviet mediators have strived for a peaceful settlement of the conflict and the more this is appreciated by the article, the more it is justified to blame Saddam Hussein for the failure of the mediation efforts, and the more can the responsibility and guilt for the war be attributed to Saddam Hussein; the more one ought to boil with indignation at him, and the more it seems justified to fall back upon military means.

At the first glance, the article seems to be a confusion of escalation- and deescalation-oriented elements. Closer inspection of the text allows to break the article down into five sequences, however, which can be identified as five argumentative steps towards the conversion of indignation with the war into indignation with the enemy:

1. The reader is dragged into an emotionally confusing double-bind situation that arouses the need for a reaction - i.e. for identifying someone who is to blame for the war.
2. This someone is presented in the next step. It is Saddam Hussein who is made responsible for the war, as he has rejected the Soviet mediation efforts. By this, the initial double-bind situation is resolved into a two-sided message that converts possible criticism of the Gulf War Alliance into criticism of the Iraqi leadership.^[4]
3. Next the article reports about worldwide support for the Alliance. In this context, possible criticism of the own side gives rise to portray its correctness and solidarity.
4. The fourth step leaves room for some deescalation-oriented elements like query of military logic, critical distance to both war parties and their élites, and accidental incentives for social identification with both sides' victims. As the critical voices are portrayed as a minority, most part of which can be regarded as political outsiders even, the criticism is taken the edge off.
5. In the fifth step, the article offers the seemingly one and only reasonable reaction, finally: to blame Saddam Hussein and to wage the inevitable war.

Although it reports about third party peace initiatives quite positively, the article does not give any perspectives for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. It simply misuses the Soviet mediation efforts in order to add to the plausibility and acceptance of the war.

Other news items which reported about third party peace initiatives dismissed the peaceful settlement of the conflict in a more straight forward way. An example for this is an article that was published towards the end of the war and analysed by Parashar (1997) as an example from the Norwegian press.

Aftenposten, Feb. 21, 1991

USA TROUBLED OVER CEASEFIRE

The main concern of this article is the eventual problems that Saddam's withdrawal from Kuwait will create. The headline "USA troubled over ceasefire" shows how the UN mandate has become synonymous with the US involvement in the war. The American concern is evident in the lead where top political leadership is reported to be worried over an Iraqi decision to abide by the peace proposals. The President himself refuses to elaborate on the subject. As we are told, it is not the prospects of peace but Saddam's remaining in power that concerns the Americans. The peace proposals initiated by Gorbachev are pointed out but not much credence is attached to the actual content of the proposal.

As the elimination of Saddam does not appear in any UN mandate or resolution, the Americans and the British do not officially talk about any attempts on the life of Saddam but the desire is definitely there. Another important aspect of the article is the actual war efforts and the talk about precision bombing and destruction of Iraqi military infrastructure. The whole article is loaded with symbols of war and war propaganda, i.e. destruction of tanks, superiority of American war technology and its humane side (precision bombing) and the necessity of preparedness (Iraqi forces breaking down but still capable of inflicting damage) etc.

The whole text is dominated by escalating elements, such as military values, emphasis on threat by the enemy, demonization of his intentions, and incentives for identification with the own side's élite. Only with a certain amount of good will, some (implicit) tendency towards critical evaluation of the Allies' intentions can be detected on the deescalating side.

The article already begins on a negative note. The prospects of peace are seen as worrisome and what could perhaps been seen as a perspective for peace is turned into the escalation of the conflict immediately. The headline "USA troubled over ceasefire" sets the mood of the article, already. The paragraphs that follow show how the removal of Saddam Hussein is far more important than a mere victory and liberation of Kuwait.

The first paragraph shows the dilemma the American political élite faced at the prospects of an eventual peace agreement. It indulges in demonization of the enemy when it equates Saddam to all the existing problems in the Gulf region. This identification of Saddam as the regional bully produces a clear bias towards the escalation and continuation of the war. Deescalating elements are either totally absent or in fact used negatively. Whenever there is any reference to the peace process, there is a use of negative connotations that precedes it; e.g. the fourth paragraph reads as follows:

"Bush has said that he will meet a request from President Mikhail Gorbachev and keep the Soviet peace proposal secret. But a leak from Italy yesterday said that it assumes a declaration of ceasefire and that Iraq starts its withdrawing from Kuwait latest 24 hours after that".

This juxtaposition of Bush keeping a promise to give peace a chance and the negative connotation

attached to the term "leak" promote peace in no way.

The fact that the Allied forces were sure to win militarily causes a problem as to the aftermath of the war. Iraq is defeated, Kuwait is liberated. But much to the anguish of Bush, Saddam is still there. This post-war scenario dominates the whole spirit of the article.

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The last paragraph, finally, is war propaganda, pure and simple. The precision bombing, the technological superiority of the American war arsenal and the number of helicopters destroyed seem like excerpts from Schwarzkopf's press conference.

Another line of promoting the rejection of the Soviet peace initiative is followed by an article which was analysed by the Swedish research group (Matton, 1996):

Dagens Nyheter, Feb. 23, 1991

ENTHUSIASM IN JORDAN

reports some Arab responses to the Soviet peace plan and the Iraqi acceptance of it. This is a clearly argumentative text that discredits the Soviet initiative and finally ends in warning of the risk that "the new Iraqi indulgence is merely a trick".

Nearly each single statement of the article gives expression to an escalation oriented conceptualization of the conflict. Main elements are the construction of the conflict as a competitive process, negative references to mediation efforts, refutation of peaceful alternatives, stimulation of mistrust against the enemy and demonization of his intentions. Even if some signals of peace readiness are reported, these are turned against the peace plan.

The logic of argumentation is rather simple and relies on a division of parties in antagonistic terms: the Allies are "uncertain" (which means: they oppose the peace plan) while others are "more positive". As it is understood that these countries are either anti-American or supporting Saddam Hussein, their "enthusiastic" reactions are "not surprising" and discredit the peace plan even more.

Reactions which do not fit into this logic are given special treatment: While positive reactions from Syria (which is a member of the Alliance) are dismissed by suggesting that the Syrian regime is not yet aware of the implications of the peace plan, the "bitterness" which the Iraqi acceptance of the peace plan might cause among Palestinians is turned against the credibility of Saddam himself: "When Saddam Hussein seems to forget their conflict, he risks to be seen as a traitor".

5. Conclusions

The results of the study demonstrate a gross orientation towards escalation of the conflict in the Gulf War coverage in American and European media. Although the media put high emphasis on reporting about alternatives to violence, there was extremely little critical journalism that gave peace a chance.

As was seen from a more in-depth analysis of the coverage of third party peace initiatives, this topic rather served as a means for portraying the war as unavoidable and for raising support for an escalation of war aims beyond the UN-mandate. On the historical background according to which the Gulf War ended with the liberation of Kuwait, it can be assumed that the latter was not official Allied propaganda, however. The respective journalists were rather caught in the propaganda trap themselves and made their own contribution to the dynamics of escalation.

On the other hand, the results also demonstrate some of the difficulties that the enterprise of a critical peace journalism has to face. If a peace initiative has failed, the mere coverage of this event may contribute to the plausibility of war and military logic. Critical peace journalism, obviously, demands more than to avoid judgements and to report facts only. It requires an intellectual capacity which goes beyond antagonism.

If journalists (cf. Stock, 1997) claim to contribute to the termination of war and violence, it does not suffice for them to stay neutral but they have to abandon the framework of war and military logic and to take a firm stand in the logic of constructive conflict transformation.

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Fußnoten:

[1] Paper presented at the IAMCR Scientific Conference in Oaxaca (Mexico), July 4-7, 1997.

[2] After March 1992

[3] An exemption from this rule is the Swedish subsample which included news items from prestige papers only. Therefore, no Swedish item representative for the style in Fig. 3.1 was analysed. The last two styles (Fig. 4.2 and 4.3) did not exist in the Norwegian and American media at all. The style in Fig. 4.2 also did not exist in the Swedish media.

[4] For more detail see Reimann (1997b).