Artemis Allison

HU3621

Module 11 Comparative News Analysis

After the media has called the election in favor of Biden, Trump has decided to, in his own words, “terminate” the current Secretary of Defense Mark Esper. For the purposes of this weeks analysis, I’ve chosen to look at CNN, NPR, and the Time’s reporting on the incident; the former two sources are sources that I have already analyzed several times to serve as a comparison to the new source found in the Times. According to the venerable Media Bias/Fact Check, Times is less left biased than CNN – but more than NPR – and is rated as highly factual, slotting right between the two, with the caveat of course that CNN’s written articles are usually more factual than their video reporting. What makes this the most interesting, however, is that Time has what is arguably the most sensational headline of the three: “Esper's Firing May Be the Beginning of Donald Trump's Post-Election Reckoning” in comparison to CNN’s “Trump fires Secretary of Defense Mark Esper” and NPR’s “Trump 'Terminates' Secretary Of Defense Mark Esper”.

This same level of language kind of sticks on throughout the rest of the Time article, as well, describing this as a start to the week as “raucous” and going into Trump’s refusal to concede, and CNN shares a similar level of charged language in the usage of “jettisoned” to describe Esper’s firing within the article itself. CNN does, however, bring up an interesting link that Time and NPR leaves out, connecting how Trump and friends are upset with the director of the CIA under the accusation of her delaying documents that would expose a “deep state” plot against Trump from being released.

Which, ah, that’s a bit of a yikes that that’s what our president believes.

NPR’s article actually features Trumps tweet in its entirety, hyperlinked in; this is honestly something that I would have expected from the other two sources but not NPR. NPR’s plain language, in comparison to the other two, is also a welcome change, because it is a lot easier for us to read than the other two styles because there’s no worry about having to try to navigate an emotionally charged article to try and deduce what I should be feeling myself. The additional analysis provided by both Time’s and CNN’s articles is definitely appreciated, as it often includes details and connections left out by plainer reporting; there is a balance that definitely has to be reached.

I do wonder, though, if Esper’s firing was a deliberate act to try and make the time leading up to the election even more confusing and make the transition between the two presidents even more difficult. If it isn’t, then why would Trump fire someone who’s been called a yes man to him just over 70 days before the transition takes place? Hell, what even is the logic to firing someone when they’re liking going to be replaced by the next president anyways? Why is someone who’s supporting not misusing literal soldiers on our own land to quell protests being fired, when that’s the exact thing most Americans want?