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Body of Lies

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SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

This Honors thesis entitled

“Body of Lies”

written by

Ananda Boardman

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for completion of the
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meets the criteria for acceptance
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The idea that the government rarely tells the whole truth, and usually only communicates with the general public through propaganda, is not a new one. However, the idea that they now do so using specific terms that call into question the truthfulness of anything and everything is a more modern idea. "Framing" is one of the terms used to describe this new type of propaganda, and it is active in all aspects of communication, from the mainstream media to the White House, and everywhere in between. People use frames when they tell stories to each other, newspapers use frames when they decide what words to use as a headline, and governments use frames when they issue press releases and statements. This is not necessarily a bad thing when taken by itself, but in a culture of altered truth, is it even possible to find what really is happening, to know for sure what the "real truth" is?

While that question is not one that I can answer, I will try in the pages of this thesis to frame how this problem was created and what steps it took to go from obvious propaganda to more insidious, subconscious perspective-shifting. Two of the best illustrations for this are the White House and the mainstream media, as media frames are used by both entities to shape their meanings and in both cases the words chosen to craft the images and messages they send out cause the truth to be hidden in a sort of bodyguard of lies. This is most clearly seen in cases of war, when the lines between ethical and unethical are already blurred, which lead Sir Winston Churchill to remark once that "in wartime, truth is so precious she must always be attended to by a bodyguard of lies."

To understand what is happening to the truth, more so in the current global climate of constant conflicts and turmoil, the concepts of "frame" and "media frame" need to be more clearly explained. Pippa Norris, in *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government, and the Public*, states that the "idea of 'news frames' refers to interpretive structures that journalists

use to set particular events within their broader context.”¹ Therefore, a frame is a word or phrase used to set parameters around the word, topic, idea, or activity it is explaining.² A media or news frame is a frame that is used in the media. Think of it as a sneaky euphemism, or a word that sounds normal, but has subtly shifted a person’s thinking ever-so-slightly before they even hear the topic, making it difficult for them to get an entire, accurate picture of what they are being told. A news frame may also be defined as the “selection to prioritize some facts, images, or developments over others, thereby unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events.”³

Norris explains a news frame’s purpose as:

“bundling key concepts, stock phrases, and iconic images to reinforce certain common ways of interpreting developments. The essence of framing is selection to prioritize some facts, images, or developments over others, thereby conscious or unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events.”⁴

For example, in a post-9/11 world, “terrorism” is understood as “the systematic use of coercive intimidation against civilians for political goals.”⁵ Norris continues to explain that that understanding can be broken down into smaller pieces, sub-labeled techniques (how we understand ‘coercive intimidation’ to be carried out), targets (what we believe ‘civilian population’ to mean in a given terrorist situation), and goals (what we understand them to be after, in this case, political gain/s). Once these are understood, the frame is further broken down into state versus group terrorism. State terrorism occurs when a government is using terroristic

¹ Norris, et al. 10

² Norris, et al. 4, 6 “...the idea of news frames, representing persistent patterns of selection, emphasis, and exclusion that furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events.” Norris continues the explanation on pg. 6, “[this] conceptualization is intimately linked with theory, there can be no single ‘correct’ definition; instead concepts should be assessed in terms of the fruitfulness of the theoretical insights that flow from the understanding.”

³ Norris, et al., 11.

⁴ Norris, et al., 10-11.

⁵ Norris, et al., 6 “This concept identifies this phenomenon by the techniques, targets, and goals; and all these attributes are regarded as necessary and sufficient for an act to qualify as terrorism. “*Terrorists*” are those who employ the methods of terrorism.”

acts against its own people, and non-state terrorism is that type practiced by jihadist factions, radical insurgents, minority dissidents and other such non-state actors.⁶ Without even realizing it, the human brain uses what it already knows to fit the situation it is presented with into familiar terms. These familiar terms are often the ones used in media, which allows perceptions to be manipulated without their owner even noticing what has happened many times. While a frame is often an implicit reference, propaganda tends to be much more blatant. Propaganda is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the systematic dissemination of information, esp. in a biased or misleading way, in order to promote a political cause or point of view. Also: information disseminated in this way; the means or media by which such ideas are disseminated.”⁷

Before diving into the world of modern media frames, it is necessary to go backward in time to explore and explain the stages of their development, and how they evolved from clearly obvious propaganda to what they are today. Throughout history, governments have engaged in the use of propaganda and carefully crafted messages to “inform” their people. This is most blatantly seen in cases of war or leading up to a war. During wars the normal slant of a government’s message tends to become even more biased. A government uses both propaganda and specific frames to influence a population’s view on the conflict. One example of early propaganda is the use of the idea of the United States as a “liberator” nation to the people of the Philippine Islands during the 1890s. The Filipinos were portrayed as “heathens” and savages, the United States was portrayed as the opposite—a democratic, Christian country.⁸ Propaganda differs from a frame or media/news frame in that it is blatantly obvious, the audience realizes that it is a crafted message (though in countries such as China, it has a brainwashing type effect on them), and it usually originates from the government. A frame is not always as easily seen,

⁶ Norris, et al., 7-9.

⁷ “propaganda, n.”. 3rd definition. OED Online. November 2010. Oxford University Press.

⁸ Brewer, 19-21.

and may be government-created or crafted by a special interest group, or media outlet. The point is, it is normally possible to tell when propaganda is used by the United States Government, and it is not always possible to tell when a specific frame is being used.

A good example of a modern frame is President George W. Bush's use of the phrase "axis of evil" to represent the countries opposed to American values. Bush did not have to say them by name, he used a phrase and Americans (and the rest of the world) knew who he was referring to (North Korea, Iran, Iraq etc...). This is arguably because of the frames used in mentioning these countries prior to that speech.⁹ If a country is referred to as "evil," when an "axis of evil" is mentioned, the public subconsciously places that country into it; however, "axis of evil" is also propaganda. The line between these two concepts often overlaps, as they are, at the core, the same thing.

⁹ Kellner, 46-47.

Section I: History and growth of propaganda

World War I

World War I is considered to be the birth of modern day war propaganda. Due to the brutality and length of the Great War, as it was often called, a totally new type of propaganda was needed to keep up morale and public opinion; this was created using a barrage of messages phrased to persuade the public in a number of ways. “The cognitive, linguistic, and visual devices that fueled the war were recognized as a qualitative leap into effective mass persuasion.”¹⁰ Propaganda worked primarily, according to Andersen, by feeding the public’s hatred, fear, and most importantly, imagination.¹¹ The power of propaganda was analyzed by many scholars and political scientists between the World Wars as its power over the people was frightening.¹² Another facet of the First World War was the mass media. It was the first war in which newspapers and telegraphs could get the information out to many people in a relatively short amount of time. Woodrow Wilson established the Committee of Public Information (CPI) and headed it up with George Creel. Creel was a well-known, wealthy media mogul, who knew the ins and outs of crafting a message. His leadership of the CPI caused it to often be referred to as the ‘Creel Committee.’ President Wilson’s decision to hire Creel shows that he understood the need to tie media frames and government propaganda together as Creel was a newspaper editor and was familiar with framing.¹³ Another propaganda tactic used during World War I was that of the “new world” (i.e. the United States) coming to the rescue of the “old world” (i.e. Europe). Posters and rhetoric used by politicians supported this idea and made World War I a “Crusade

¹⁰ Andersen, 4-5.

¹¹ In *A Century of Media, A Century of War*, Andersen explores this idea over the past century of America’s involvement in war and conflict, and how propaganda was used and evolved.

¹² Andersen, 7.

¹³ Andersen, 6-8.

for Democracy.”¹⁴ A University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign study showed that in World War I, more inclusive language (i.e. “us v. them” or “Christians over barbarians,” “God on our side” etc...) was used when describing the war than in any war before it or after it. However, their study also showed (in post-hoc contrasts) that there was as much “our side” rhetoric used in the Iraq war, albeit in different forms.¹⁵

World War II

In contrast to the inclusive rhetoric used in World War I propaganda, the strategy employed in World War II (the Good War) was that of the politics of fear. This was the idea that if the Allies did not win, a terrible thing would overcome the world—not to mention the end of the American way of life.”¹⁶ The Office of War Information (OWI) was used to replace World War I’s CPI. Those in charge hoped to avoid the mistakes of their predecessors, and to restore the public’s faith in official propaganda. To accomplish this goal, when the OWI opened in 1942 they adopted a “strategy of truth” that was based on the idea (hope) that an informed public could make up its own mind.¹⁷ The OWI had overseas and domestic bureaus and their information focused specifically on distribution of its messages through the mass media. They promised to avoid using the “over the top” refrains used by the CPI and instead to “instruct the public in a straightforward and practical way.”¹⁸ While the messages purported to be these things, the reality was that they were slanted completely toward what the White House had

¹⁴ Brewer, 84-86.

¹⁵ Althaus et al., 16-17. “...the difference between wars are statistically significant, but post-hoc contrasts clarify that this relationship is driven by the prevalence of inclusive language during World War I against the more sedate coverage in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Although both world wars are remembered for their degree of patriotic fervor, this analysis reveals that World War I is the only standout...Post-hoc contrasts also reveal the surprising finding that there was just as much “our side” in coverage of Iraq as in World War I.”

¹⁶ Andersen, 20.

¹⁷ Brewer, 88-89.

¹⁸ Brewer, 87.

decided the policy needed to be. World War II propaganda mixed hard facts with uplifting and inspiring messages that tied into supportive cultural beliefs. This caused the lines between what was real, and what people wanted to be real, to blur, resulting in people believing things that were not necessarily true.¹⁹

Korea

After World War II the United States government next used propaganda in Korea from 1950-1953. During the Korean War, the United States was a part of the United Nations coalition and helped South Korea fight the North Koreans and Communist China. The main addition to the propaganda arsenal held by the government during this conflict was the television. While the 1950s were early years for mass production of TVs, their wide-spread popularity meant that Americans could now *see* their leaders telling them which way to think, and informing them on current events and happenings in Korea.²⁰ This made presidents and other officials more personable and easier to relate to (or built rapport with). The problem with television was that the networks were slow in the changeover from two-dimensional to actual footage. Because of this, they relied heavily on the U.S. Army Signal Corps and newsreel companies for their main footage. Hollywood film producers were recruited by these companies and given access to the information to be presented. However, it showed only what Americans wanted to see of the conflict (and what the United States government would allow of it).²¹ It is notable that during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War the government imposed strict censorship on the media. This was especially evident in the limited amount of negative news coverage allowed

¹⁹ Brewer explains these images, and how they were interwoven into the fabric of American lives in chapter 3, specifically on pages 98-136.

²⁰ Andersen, 36.

²¹ Andersen, 37.

from the actual battlefields.²² The censorship was so heavy that very little concrete information made it out of the country. General MacArthur's troops were the sole method of transportation for frontline reporters so that what was written was edited by central command prior to being transmitted back home.

While all of this was going on the media was being shaped by the anti-communist frame. Edward R. Murrow, a CBS broadcaster made famous (or infamous) by his 1952 broadcast "Christmas in Korea," said in an interview with his biographer, Ann Sperber, "It was simply up to us to learn the language, the better to win friends and keep the Russians from dominating them."²³ While Murrow would go on to change his views toward the end of the war, he was still bound by his network to use the frames that the government was allowing them to report on it.²⁴ Korea is often referred to as the "forgotten war," due in part to the strict censorship, and given the end result, it is no surprise that the government wanted the war swept under the rug as swiftly as possible. However, the contrast provided between Korea and the following conflict, Vietnam, was made all the more apparent by its absence from the memory of the American people.

Vietnam

Vietnam was the first uncensored coverage of a war in American history. Never before had media been allowed such free reign in reporting over a conflict, and the images that came out of the country were often graphic and bloody. The U.S. had been involved in the Vietnam conflict since 1956, but for many Americans the horrors of "Nam" started with the surprise

²² Althaus, et al., 11-14. Details the method used to collect the information used in their study, and explains the factors used in the analysis.

²³ Andersen, 38-39. Details Murrow's story, and utilizes quotes from Murrow's biographical interviews with Spencer.

²⁴ Andersen, 40.

attack on every major city in South Vietnam by North Vietnamese troops in January of 1968.²⁵ This came to be known as the Tet Offensive. Because the fighting erupted literally in the streets, without warning, journalists were able to look out of their hotel windows and see the conflict going on around them.²⁶ With satellite technology, it was possible for near-live images and video, leaving little time for editing.²⁷ A prime example of the switch from censored to uncensored was the showing of the execution of a Vietcong officer by a South Vietnamese general. While the end of the tape was edited for television, NBC's producer at the time, Robert J. Northfield, described it as "the strongest stuff American viewers had ever seen."²⁸ Many scholars have argued that it was images such as these that lost the Vietnam War, that the media, not the military, were to blame for the lack of a victory there. It was not so much these images in and of themselves, but rather the people's sudden realization that the military and the government had been lying about the actions taking place in war.²⁹ CBS evening news anchor Walter Cronkite traveled to Vietnam shortly after the start of the Tet Offensive and gave several reports from the country. Shortly after he returned to the United States, Cronkite presented his "editorial opinion" at the end of the nightly news broadcast on February 27, 1968 (an unprecedented step for an anchor). Cronkite said, "For it seems now more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate."³⁰ Brewer points out that the transition mid-conflict from Kennedy who was a well-liked, respected president, to Johnson a

²⁵ Andersen, 48.

²⁶ Andersen, 48-49. "Journalists not incapacitated from fear or depression could step out of their hotel rooms and into the midst of conflict. The war had come to them. Photographers captured images of battles being fought in the streets of Saigon, including wounded U.S. soldiers, and television brought those images into American living rooms during dinnertime."

²⁷ Andersen, 49. Andersen quotes Edward Epstein's *Between Fact and Fiction: The Problem of Journalism* on the near-live coverage of Vietnam. "Network producers in control rooms in New York had neither the time nor the opportunity to shield American viewers from the grisly close-ups of wounded Americans, body bags, and death."

²⁸ Andersen, 49.

²⁹ Andersen, 53-55.

³⁰ Simon, "The War in Vietnam, 1965-1968." After watching the broadcast and Cronkite's editorializing, President Johnson was quoted as saying "That's it. If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost middle America."

less well-known entity who lacked patience, did not aid the conflict's image either.³¹ Kennedy sent "military advisors" to assist the South Vietnamese, while Johnson signed for official United States soldiers to be sent in, further alienating the American people from the war and the White House.³² While Vietnam was uncensored, and graphic, it was still limited in the amount of news that could be broadcast in a given day, as opposed to the next conflict.

First Gulf War

The First Persian Gulf War was fought on air, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, on the Cable News Network (CNN). The war made CNN the leading "global" channel and "Operation Desert Storm changed the landscape of the American and international news media forever" because of this.³³ To understand how CNN could so easily slip into this role of leading news network, the scholar must understand that CNN spent the better part of the late 1980s developing an "international newsgathering and dissemination network."³⁴ This network was complete with barter-agreements and satellite hook-ups worldwide, as well as news bureaus in most major foreign countries. This gave CNN an advantage in Iraq that other networks were hard pressed to match.³⁵ While the network portrayed "both" sides of the issue, it is interesting to note that they labeled the Iraqi propaganda as propaganda but ignored the fact that the images released by the U.S. military were also propaganda, promoting the image of a successful and brief military campaign.³⁶ CNN's forceful reporting on the "idea of Iraq propaganda stood in

³¹ Brewer, 186-187.

³² Brewer, 188.

³³ Andersen, 186.

³⁴ Andersen, 186.

³⁵ Andersen, 185. "These practices gave CNN a presence in Iraq that is other American competitors could not match during Desert Storm."

³⁶ Andersen, 157. Due to the censorship and scarcity of battle images, the public saw only photos of bombings from the air, high-tech videos of smart bombs, graphics explaining the superior technologically advanced weapons used by the United States forces. A lack of images of wounded or dying military and civilian personnel, and no images of

sharp contrast to the media's silence about the arguably more effective U.S. Propaganda campaign."³⁷ As part of the way Operation: Desert Storm was run, journalists were organized into "pools" and these pools were given different access to different important military figures, but saw little actual war (they were prohibited from taking photographs of the dead and wounded, and were not allowed to be near the front lines), despite this, the media did not raise many complaints.³⁸ Much of the media compliance is linked to the use of "smart bombs" and flashy, high-tech weapons during the First Gulf War. While giving press briefings, the military and public relations personnel used videos showing the effectiveness of such weapons, and downplayed the loss of human lives by stressing how many were saved by the use of these "smarter" weapons. As the public wants to see success, rather than failure, journalists went along with the government's agenda.³⁹The "CNN effect" is generally considered to "portray the media as something that influences the policy process through its impact on public opinion."⁴⁰ However recent studies have shown that the media is more than just a public informant. "The media should be seen as an integral part of contemporary governance...it serves as a source of information for political actors and as an instrument of mobilization."⁴¹ The First Gulf War showed the convergence of global media and how twenty-four hour coverage could be used to portray both sides from the angle of the U.S. Government.⁴²

destroyed homes or villages (instead of destroyed munitions factories which were pictured etc...) led people to believe the war was going well.

³⁷ Andersen, 186-187. Andersen details the emphasis put on broadcasts from the Iraqi Television Network being controlled by Saddam Hussein's government, and subject to strict censorship, while the photos and information released by the United States government about Desert Storm was shown without the same caveat to it.

³⁸ Andersen, 155-158.

³⁹ Andersen, 158.

⁴⁰ Norris, et al., 44.

⁴¹ Norris, et al., 45.

⁴² Andersen, 189.

September 11, 2001:

While September 11, 2001, was not a war, it marked the start of the next shift in framing and led to the war in Afghanistan. The aftermath of the attack led to iconic images such as President George W. Bush standing astride the wreckage of the World Trade Center in front of the American flag, bull horn in his hand as he shouts encouragement to the rescue workers.⁴³ Staged images had evolved into a powerful tool used by the government to create public support and solidarity. The attacks also caused what is known as the “rally around the flag” effect.⁴⁴ This effect is normally seen when a nation, state, or region has been attacked or suffered a crisis of some sort. With “rally around the flag” the members of a nation-state will demonstrate increased faith in, and dependence on, their leader. This in turn increases the sense of national identity and unity. The September 11 attacks were also subjected to an unprecedented amount of media coverage. Many Americans saw the second World Trade Center tower fall, and images from that day have been replayed and reprinted countless times.⁴⁵

Iraq War:

The second Iraq war, which began in 2003, utilized a technique called “embedded journalism.” This is where the reporters are assigned to a unit of the military and travel everywhere with them. It is similar to Vietnam, but differs in that during the Vietnam conflict members of the press were not wanted and in Iraq, they were—as a means to show the rapid movement of U.S. and Coalition forces through the country.⁴⁶ Embedded reporters’ coverage, at

⁴³ Kellner, 28-29.

⁴⁴ Brewer, 11.

⁴⁵ Kellner, 28-35. Kellner details the over-saturation of September 11 coverage, explaining that many who witnessed the Twin Towers fall on live television suffered nightmares and needed counseling. The hype that surrounded the events led to a surge of support for the Bush presidency, and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan was in response to this desire of the public for the President to do something about the attacks.

⁴⁶ Lewis, et al., 84-85.

least in the early parts of the war, tended to focus on the Iraqi people's welcoming the American troops and the American and Coalition personnel as "liberating forces" rather than the invaders Saddam Hussein attempted to portray them as.⁴⁷ Studies have shown that in the pre-war and early days of Operation: Iraqi Freedom the media, regardless of party-affiliated bias, tended to report positive aspects of the war, and to report with a "group mentality" where all stories across networks followed similar themes.⁴⁸ Both Lewis (et al.) and Guardino and Hayes point out that once embedded journalists had become casualties of war, the tone of the news began to shift in a less positive direction.⁴⁹ In addition to this, media coverage portrayed the reasons for war by using interviews with top U.S. officials, and used Iraqi or Middle-Eastern and French sources for the reasons against it. This meant that while the public was allowed to see opposing viewpoints on the issue, they saw the American side versus the rest of the world (another use of the ever popular "us v. them" idea). It reinforced the frame of the United States as a liberator nation, as well as used the threat of terrorism (another frame) to mobilize the American people in support of the war.⁵⁰ One of the best ways to view the war in Iraq through the frames and propaganda used is to look at press releases from the White House (under George W. Bush).

Starting as far back as 2005, the press statements issued by the White House take the tone of "Setting the Record Straight." This is a section of the press site that lists point-by-point, article-by-article the problems the White House has with the media's reporting. When the White House was accused of falsifying documents on pre-war intelligence, they issued a statement that listed six examples of *The Washington Post's* endorsement of this intelligence, detailing how the

⁴⁷ Lewis, et al., 133.

⁴⁸ Guardino and Hayes, 24-26.

⁴⁹ Guardino and Hayes, 27-28; Lewis et al., 141.

⁵⁰ Brewer, 235-239; Norris, et al., 145-147.

media's endorsement discredits their post-invasion criticism.⁵¹ Another example is Representative Nancy Pelosi, before her promotion to Speaker of the House, downplaying the progress made in Iraq. The press release goes through her statement point by point and refutes it, arguing "progress has been made on all the issues Rep. Pelosi mentioned."⁵² Scott McClellan, Bush's Press Secretary from 2003 to 2006, called another *Post* article "simply reckless and irresponsible...the lead in the article gave the impression for the reader that the president was saying something at the time that he knew to be untrue..." the Office of the Press Secretary used this quote in its entirety to lead the release; which was full of point-by-point refutations.⁵³ The NBC Network led a "Today" show with the main story of "Crisis After Crisis Has Undermined the Bush Doctrine" and found themselves the focus of a release the same day proving that Bush's policy approach was succeeding "The United States is rallying the world behind North Korea, behind its policy toward Iran, its policy toward Iraq etc..."⁵⁴ In July of 2008 the White House issued a four page release that took key Iraq "myths" and refuted them with lists of facts, while this was not directed at any organization in particular, it is clear from the tone that they were attempting to persuade media outlets that the Republican White House, in an election year, had not failed the American people as the Democrats were suggesting.⁵⁵ The tone of these releases implies that those who oppose the administration's views are incorrect, unpatriotic, and wrong. While some are more blatantly put than others, the general idea is clear—if you do not like what the president said or did, be prepared to read a nasty release about yourself.

There are two more examples of the tone the Bush administration took in their press releases. These differ from the above illustrations in two main ways: 1. they are both authored by

⁵¹ "SRS: The Washington Post on Pre-War...", 1-2.

⁵² "SRS: Rep. Pelosi...", 1.

⁵³ "The Washington Post's Reckless Reporting On...", 1.

⁵⁴ "SRS: President Bush's Foreign Policy...", 1-2.

⁵⁵ "Iraq Fact Check...", 1-4.

members of Bush's administration—but not directly by the Office of the Press Secretary, and 2. As a result of that, they are personal opinions from people whose voices carried weight with the public. The first is a letter from Ed Gillespie, counselor to the president, to NBC News President Steve Capus. The letter accuses NBC of editing crucial pieces of an interview Bush gave with Richard Engel. It then offers the actual statements misquoted by NBC and suggests in a not-so-kind tone that NBC correct these errors or run the risk of having people think the commentators of MSNBC run NBC as well.⁵⁶

The second and final press release to be looked at for this thesis is a statement issued by Stephen Hadley, national security advisor, referring to an editorial article in the *New York Times* that bashed Bush, pre-war intelligence, and the war in Iraq in general. Hadley refutes the false information and suggests that the *Times* just does not want to acknowledge the progress made in Iraq for implied reasons of political affiliation, a bold and ugly statement for someone to make. However, it was acceptable as Hadley was not a White House employee, and was unaffiliated with the Press Office.⁵⁷

The information in the section is by no means a complete set of the broad history of war propaganda and framing from WWI to the present. It hopefully serves as a Cliff Notes version of the types and uses of propaganda in the United States from World War I to the present-day conflict in Iraq.

Starting with World War I the U.S. government actively tried to influence the public through all available forms of media, be this outright propaganda — in its literal sense — or by the use of carefully selected news and media frames. As types of mass media emerged, they

⁵⁶ "SRS: President Bush's Interview...", 1-3.

⁵⁷ "Statement by National Security...", 1.

continued to expand their arsenal of opinion-altering rhetoric to better persuade the American people of the justness of “our cause” from conflict to conflict.⁵⁸

In the current conflict the use of media frames was more widely used than ever before, and the types of propaganda utilized were more varied (i.e. outright, embedded journalists, frames, press statements couched in specific terms et cetera). This shows the validity of Churchill’s quote from the introduction: “In wartime, Truth is so precious that she must always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.” In cases of war, the public does not always need to know the truth, and even when the “truth” is given them, they should understand that it is never what it seems. There will always be an altering of truth, because every person and/or government and media outlet will have a different view of which route the truth should take on its way to the masses. With truth being turned from black-and-white fact to shades of gray, it may not be possible to ever know what the real story or situation is.

The next section of this paper will focus first on a study of media framing in the context of global opinion of the United States post September 11, 2001, in which perception and opinion were directly and indirectly shaped for entire regions by world newspapers. The study also looks at the issues involved with the use of the frame “terrorism.”⁵⁹

Following that it will take a brief look at ways in which media are able to shape opinion based on what is not shown, which is not specific to any one event, but rather a daily occurrence. Both examples will serve to illustrate how the slant of a media outlet may be in the words used, or in what is not used. They will also show that a slant may be liberal or conservative, Western or Eastern, and may at times be just one person’s opinion, heard by many (Adolf Hitler, Soviet press, beat reporters, bloggers, etc...) in print, over the airwaves, or read via the World Wide

⁵⁸ Althaus, et al., 17.

⁵⁹ Norris, et al., 164.

Web.⁶⁰ With the advance of modern technology has come an even greater ability for the truth to be slanted, and for the story to be altered.

⁶⁰ Pratkanis, et al., 268-326.

Section II: Media influence in framing world opinion

September 11, 2001

Immediately following the events of September 11, 2001, the news media worldwide began to do its part in shaping the United States' (and other nation's) views on the terrorist attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City. In *Framing Terrorism*, Norris et al. published an essay by Frank Louis Rusciano about the effects the Elite Press, or press with a widely-revered public, had on the framing of world opinion about the terrorist attack and the United States. World opinion is defined as "the moral judgments of observers which actors must heed in the international arena, or risk isolation as a nation."⁶¹ In Rusciano's essay⁶² the political scientist Samuel Huntington's theory of a "clash of civilizations" is applied to the press, and is used as a framework for viewing the "the changes in perceptions of world opinions over time...how these perceptions change as world events change."⁶³ Huntington stated in his argument that in the post-Cold War era, the major world conflicts would occur between different civilizations, or groups of people based on ethnicity, religion, and culture. Huntington names seven major civilizations when formulating his argument: Western, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Latin American, African, and Slavic-Orthodox. In his study, Rusciano contrasted Huntington's belief that world opinion was not possible, as the civilizations put themselves first, with "global opinion theory" which argues that "nations advance interpretations of 'world opinion' whose structure and content are favorable to their interests and values."⁶⁴ For each of Huntington's civilizations, Rusciano selected a newspaper or newspapers with an audience largely comprised

⁶¹ Norris, et al., 159.

⁶² *Framing World Opinion in the Elite Press*, published in *Framing Terrorism*.

⁶³ Norris, et al., 161.

⁶⁴ Norris, et al., 159.

of the people for that group.⁶⁵ All of the selected newspapers were published independently, with the exception of the *China Daily* (Sinic) and the *Arab News* (Islamic), which operate under government control. As the publications used by Rusciano are influential, the shifts and changes that the seven week study recorded arguably both reflected, and affected world opinion. The analysis of the newspapers' coverage of the 9/11 attacks showed that all of the newspapers used the phrase "world opinion" explicitly, or implicitly (in phrases such as "international opinion")

For the seven weeks of his study, Rusciano found 287 references to "world opinion" on the attacks were printed in the ten newspapers. Of those, the *International Herald Tribune* had the most references to the phrase, followed (but not closely) by the African paper.⁶⁶ Of the sample set of papers, sixty-seven percent of the references were in editorials, and the remaining thirty-three percent of the references were in actual reports or stories. In addition to this, Rusciano found that the phrase "world opinion" was more likely to be referenced implicitly, rather than explicitly.⁶⁷ Explicit reference included both the use of the phrase "world opinion" and of comparable phrases such as "international opinion," "international public opinion" and other like phrases. The implicit references "referred to some judgment or reaction being attributed to the world, such as 'worldwide shock,' 'world outrage,' and a 'complete political and ideological isolation of terrorists through international cooperation.'"⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Norris, et al., 160. Rusciano selected *The New York Times*, *The London Times*, and Israel's *Ha'aretz Daily* for Western Civilization, *The Arab News* for Islamic, *Times of India* for Hindu, *China Daily* for Sinic, the Argentinean paper *Nacion* for Latin America, The Nigerian paper *The Guardian* for African, and *Pravada* for Slavic-Orthodox. To account for newspapers with an international perspective, he used *The International Herald Tribune*. The analysis was done in English, with translations made into English where needed, though *Nacion* was read in the original Spanish. There are three newspapers for the Western section as Rusciano believed it important to include an American paper, a Western paper not published in the U.S., and the Israeli paper as the issue was so relevant to the Middle East.

⁶⁶ Norris, et al., 161. The *International Herald Tribune* had 72 references (25%), the *Guardian* had 34 (12%), *Ha'aretz Daily* was tied with *The New York Times* for 11%, *Nacion* had 9%, *Pravada* and the *Arab News* tied at 8%, *London Times* came in at 7%, and *China Daily* tied with *Time of India* for 5% each.

⁶⁷ Norris, et al., 161. The analysis showed that 91% of the time, the reference was implicit.

⁶⁸ Norris, et al., 161.

Another facet to the arguments made with the study are that the 9/11 attacks caused people to stop and wonder what world opinion of the United States was in general. Rusciano's analyses of various polls and the amount of coverage of the topic in his newspaper samples showed some surprising results. For example, the analysis of the data showed the amount of "positive evaluations of the nation [U.S.] outweighed the negative ones by a margin of twenty-seven percent to twenty-three percent."⁶⁹ However, the Israeli paper, *Ha'aretz*, the *Arab Times*, the Nigerian paper, *Guardian*, and the Russian paper *Pravada* showed that negative evaluations of world opinion (of the United States) outweighed the positive ones (this was the opposite for the other six newspapers). Upon further analysis, the results of the study show that although the Israeli paper and the *Arab Times*, agree that there is a greater negative evaluation of the United States worldwide than a positive one, they did so for different reasons. The Israeli paper, according to Rusciano, was of the opinion that post-9/11 "the United States, like Israel, understood how it felt to be under siege and surrounded by a hostile world."⁷⁰ The Saudi Arabian based *Times* indicated in their pages that they believed the attack on the United States was partially a result of the world's opinion toward American Foreign Policy, notable toward Israel and Palestine.⁷¹ However, overall, the results of the study showed that the positive opinion was in the lead until the week of October 3, 2001, after which positive opinion took the lead again, but at much lower levels, with no immediate indications as to why.⁷²

While the study was thorough, Rusciano states that it was difficult to arrive at a truly international consensus, as world opinion is a vague concept which varies country to country.

⁶⁹ Norris, et al., 162. The remaining 50% of references were neutral.

⁷⁰ Norris, et al., 163.

⁷¹ Norris, et al., 163.

⁷² Norris, et al., 164. Rusciano found that the American and British bombings of Afghanistan began on October 7, and the "the United States international image shifted from injured party to aggressor in certain foreign newspapers."

The study ran into a similar problem when analyzing the opinions on the word “terrorism.”⁷³ The data showed that in the references to world opinion made by the newspapers, “terrorism” was regularly damned and condemned as an action, but the issue then became how to define “terrorism.”⁷⁴ Rusciano discovered that as “terrorism is a method, rather than an ideology, a nation, or a leader; it is a difficult subject for world opinion.”⁷⁵ To attempt to resolve this dilemma, he broke the frame down into its components, using the interpretations utilized by several international newspapers. The terminology that the data showed most common is comprised of a moral and pragmatic components (values shared by all nations combined with interests shared by all nations tied to world opinion), the power of world opinion (its influence on world events and the behavior of nations), a nation’s image (reputation, as perceived by other nations and itself), the world considered as a unit (an international community which judges and responds to nations’ behaviors), and the threat of international isolation (a punishment for nations which depart from the prescriptions of world opinion).⁷⁶ The results of Rusciano’s tests of the variables showed that the “judgments rendered regarding world opinion were more driven by the interests nations were perceived to share.”⁷⁷

After breaking “terrorism” down into components, Rusciano reverts back to his original plan, comparing Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” with the “global opinion theory.” He

⁷³ Norris, et al., 164.

⁷⁴ Norris, et al., 164. “Problems arose regarding how to define ‘terrorism’ beyond the horrible examples in New York and Washington, D.C.”

⁷⁵ Norris, et al., 164. “...one may ‘know it when they see it,’ but generating a general description for all or even most nations to accept has proven elusive. If ‘terrorism’ can be defined to include unintended civilian casualties in a military campaign, for instance, along with the intentional targeting of civilian populations, it becomes very difficult to reach an international consensus on the term’s meaning or legitimate responses to it.”

⁷⁶ Norris et al. 164-165 ‘the *moral component* provides value-driven justification for condemning a given nation or action; the *pragmatic component* contributes to the *power* of world opinion to influence events, by convincing nations that what is moral is also consistent with the common interest. At stake for the subject country is the *nation’s image*, or its reputation in world opinion...citizens tend to integrate their nation’s international image into their construction of national identity...errant nations or leaders are threatened, or punished by, *international isolation* from the world community, or some other entity that defines the world as a unit.”

⁷⁷ Norris, et al., 165. Rusciano states that newspapers agreed that even without a moral agreement on what terrorism is, the acts of September 11, were a threat to the peace and security of all nations.

found significant statistical evidence to support that the timing of references to “world opinion” between the newspapers for the Western publications and the rest of the sample set papers was very close together. However, there was a slight difference in the amount of references between the Muslim newspaper and the Western newspapers, and between the Muslim newspaper and the rest of the civilizations newspapers. According to the results, when “the dates of references on a given issue converge among two or more media outlets, there is an apparent consensus on the agenda for world opinion in those media. When the dates of reference to world opinion diverge, it suggests an apparent disagreement on the agenda for world opinion.”⁷⁸ Rusciano uses this pattern to suggest that Huntington’s argument is less valid than global opinion theory.⁷⁹

In a highly technical factor analysis of still more newspaper articles the reactions to the Taliban bombing in Afghanistan were used to extrapolate what each region’s perception of terrorism is. The perception shown from the data for the Western civilization was “a region whose perception of world opinion requires them to link their very identities and images to the international community’s condemnation of their definition of terrorism, and support for the actions they deem necessary to combat it.”⁸⁰ In contrast, the analysis for the *Arab News* showed that they perceived the dangers of a “Western scramble for international status...the *Arab News* recognized the moral issue of terrorism, but [were] generally suspicious of the methods that might be used to combat it.”⁸¹ The other civilizations fell between Western and Islamic on their views of world opinion and saw it as holding power over the interests it defines for other nations, and the importance of taking a moral stand against terrorism for their own images. However,

⁷⁸ Norris, et al., 166-167.

⁷⁹ Norris, et al., 167. “If the clash of civilizations theory were correct, one would expect perceptions of the agenda to differ for the West and the Muslim newspapers; however, one would not expect the rest of the newspapers to correspond with the Western perception of this agenda.”

⁸⁰ Norris, et al., 172.

⁸¹ Norris, et al., 172-173. The Muslim civilization was also divergent from that of the United States/Western civilization in that defining “terrorism” versus “legitimate jihad” was problematic at times.

they were also fearful that going against the United States' wishes regarding terrorism would lead to putting their own national images at risk.⁸²

The conclusion of the Rusciano study was that while opinions vary from civilization to civilization, global opinion is an “ongoing process that potentially affects international images, and shifts it in response to world events.”⁸³ However, this does not, in his opinion, indicate an ongoing “clash of civilizations.” World opinion is stronger than the potential threat of a “clash” for Rusciano, and this counters Huntington’s argument. Moreover, he argues that it is more important for the world to reach a consensus on a definition for “terrorism” than to worry about Huntington’s theory. “A clear definition of terrorism must precede its condemnation, and such a definition has not yet been reached....even the general condemnation of terrorism is directed against a method, not a nation, leader, or some other actor on the international stage.”⁸⁴ The many interpretations of “world opinion” and “terrorism” that were broken down and analyzed, and the differences in their perception from civilization to civilization illustrates the danger of framing. If nations cannot agree on definitions for words such as these, misunderstandings are bound to happen as entire groups of people believe different definitions of the same word.

Perception by angle or oversight

Every day, around the world, there are millions of news stories happening, regardless of whether or not they receive attention from any form of media. From wars and riots, to spelling bees, credit card theft, political speeches and everything in between, life happens hour after hour and minute after minute and the news media cannot possibly hope to cover it all. So how do they

⁸² Norris, et al., 173-174.

⁸³ Norris, et al., 175.

⁸⁴ Norris, et al., 176. “...The tragic events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent continuation of terror as a weapon, suggests that resolving the underlying problem of definition demands the full attention of the world opinion and the international community.”

pick and choose? Estimates show that for a typical daily newspaper, more than seventy-five percent of the potential news items never see print.⁸⁵ In the case of network television news, and national broadcast and print media, the rejected number is even higher.⁸⁶ There are multiple armed conflicts occurring in the world today, but the reader of a daily paper, or viewer of a local news broadcast, may hear about two to three of them.⁸⁷ Even then, most people will probably not remember much about the conflicts chosen, unless the story comes with an image that is unforgettable, or a human interest line that hits home. For example: Ferdinand Marcos. The average person probably has no idea that Ferdinand Marcos was president (dictator) of the Philippines for many years. However, if a random person is asked if they have heard of Imelda Marcos' shoes, the odds of receiving an affirmative response increase significantly. Imelda Marcos, Ferdinand's wife, had thousands of pairs of shoes, representing virtually every color, style, and type. An image of her shoe closet accompanied an ABC News broadcast about Marcos' corruption toward the end of his tenure as leader. The image of all those shoes stuck with many people as it was a simple, but vivid and tangible example of the corruption of the upper echelons of the Philippine government.⁸⁸ This selectivity in news coverage is often considered the start of propaganda. Walter Lippmann believed this theory, and once said:

Without some form of censorship, propaganda...is impossible. In order to conduct a propaganda there must be some barrier between the public and the event. Access to the real environment must be limited, before anyone can create a pseudo-environment that he thinks wise or desirable. For while people who have direct access can misconceive it, unless he can decide where they shall look, and at what.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Pratkanis et al. 268

⁸⁶ Pratkanis, et al., 268. Pratkanis says that characteristically, the news that is reported on contains vivid images, which is what people prefer, rather than useful, accurate information.

⁸⁷ By the same token, there are more basic every day stories (such as school sporting events, church Passion plays, or car theft in a shopping mall parking lot) which will not receive coverage at all.

⁸⁸ Pratkanis, et al., 268.

⁸⁹ Pratkanis, et al., 269.

Hitler and the Nazi Party understood this concept, and early on in their rise to the top in Germany, they established a publishing company, Ehler Verlag. Hitler's message of hatred was designed to persuade an entire country to side with him.⁹⁰ And it worked. At the height of Nazi popularity, this company controlled more than one hundred fifty publishing houses, made a profit of more than one million marks per year, and employed an estimated thirty-five thousand people. Hitler also kept the press at bay by rewarding journalists he liked with special interviews, favors, and promotions, and by punishing those who disagreed with his policy (they were investigated by the government, limited in their access to news, and often had their operating licenses revoked or suspended).⁹¹

Long before their take-over of Russia in the Bolshevik October revolution of 1917, the Communist (Bolshevik) Party created the newspaper *Pravda*, to spread "news." The name, ironically enough, means "truth," and the more than seven-decade existence of *Pravda* censored and controlled the news distributed to the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe.⁹² State-run press, however open it may claim to be, is going to be slanted in a pro-administration direction as it is funded and controlled by the government.

However, not all slant is determined by what is not covered, or by whether or not the government runs the presses. Media may find biases creeping in with the average news reporter, especially if they work a beat.⁹³ A beat instantly adds a source of bias to the news, whereas something that happens between beats or off beat altogether has a much lower chance of being covered, unless it is a natural disaster, or rare and unique event. Roughly sixty percent of the

⁹⁰ In *Persuasion in Society*, Simons, et al., define "persuasion" as "human communication designed to influence the autonomous judgments and actions of others."

⁹¹ Pratkanis, et al., 269. "Any revolutionary or would-be leader worth his or her salt knows that a primary objective is to secure the public's source of news."

⁹² Pratkanis, et al., 270.

⁹³ Pratkanis, et al., 271. A beat is a "group of intuitions to cover such as the local criminal justice system or the White House or Hollywood or sports teams."

stories appearing *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are from routine beats and assignments.⁹⁴ This means that readers can expect the same types of stories day after day. There will be stories about movie stars' affairs in the Hollywood section and there will be articles detailing the suspected steroid use of a baseball player in the sports section. This pattern of repeat story coverage holds true for other categories of beat-reported news as well. Off-beat stories are rarely covered, and even then are often not considered news.⁹⁵

Reporters do not intend to be biased, rather it stems from being on deadline, expected to produce a set amount of copy by a set time on specific days. To accomplish this goal, reporters often prioritize and place a premium on good, trusted sources that can be counted on for an insider view or accurate, speedy responses. While helpful, this creates a media bias in two (and potentially more) ways. First, a reporter develops a routine for how they cover their stories (often ignoring other groups who may have insight on a particular article merely because if they report on a subject such as crime, they will contact police and the district attorney, but overlook welfare because it is not a common thought). The second accidental creation of bias in the beat is that this routine often ensures that the same type of people will be featured in the news.⁹⁶

Another issue which has inadvertently created bias or slant in the media, especially in print, is the growing trend for newspapers to be owned by corporations. In 2001 there were twenty-three corporations which owned most of the television, magazines, books, and movies in the United States. Some sixty percent of local, daily newspapers belonged in part, or completely, to one of fourteen corporate chains. There were three companies essentially in charge of the magazine industry, six record labels controlled eighty percent of the music production, and

⁹⁴ Pratkanis, et al., 271.

⁹⁵ Pratkanis, et al, 271.

⁹⁶ Pratkanis, et al., 272.

seventy percent of the primetime Network TV shows were created by nine film companies.⁹⁷ The concentration of ownership results in pressure on reporters to cover or not cover certain stories, and to avoid making the parent corporation look bad.

Lastly, journalists, both print and broadcast, have jobs only as long as they can keep the attention of the public, so the stories they research and print (or broadcast) must be what the public wants (to sell papers and attract ratings and advertising). Studies have shown that when most people watch the news “most viewers want to be amused and diverted; being informed is only a secondary motive for watching.”⁹⁸ In order to hit higher ratings, and generate more revenue “the mass media content tends to be agreeable and to require little effort on the part of the consumers, while still being arousing, emotionally engaging, and above all entertaining.”⁹⁹

There are, of course, other theories relating to media content and bias, however for the purposes of this thesis, these serve to illustrate several of the methods involved in shaping of perception of the news. At times the slant is purposed and other times it is an accidental consequence of the direction the industry has taken. Regardless of the method and intent, the truth, shaped by the government in many cases first, is further altered when it reaches the press, and by the time it reaches the general public, it is often difficult to determine what the original story really was.

⁹⁷ Pratkanis, et al., 273.

⁹⁸ Pratkanis, et al., 273.

⁹⁹ Pratkanis, et al., 273.

This paper began with the idea that in today's world truth is not absolute. That for any given situation, the truth of the matter has been altered, whether by the government or the mass media, and in most cases, people have no idea what they are accepting as fact is actually semi-fiction. The methods used to twist and shift the truth are not so much about blatant propaganda,¹⁰⁰ but about framing and its ability to change not necessarily the truth itself, but our viewpoint of it, without our consciously knowing that that is what has been done.¹⁰¹ The definition of a "frame" was defined and refined throughout these pages, but essentially a frame's function is "bundling key concepts, stock phrases, and iconic images to reinforce certain common ways of interpreting developments."¹⁰² Propaganda is usually thought of as a wartime phenomenon, used in situations where the line between ethical and unethical is often blurred, but in today's global climate of conflict, it seems that that line merely remains blurred, and that propaganda is then the rule of the day rather than the exception to the rule.

The birth of modern day war propaganda was World War I, in which the government used techniques that kept up American morale for a prolonged period of time based on hatred, fear, and imagination. They were able to do this in part because with the advent of the telegraph and newspapers achieving popularity, information could be quickly disseminated.¹⁰³ The Committee of Public Information, created by Wilson and run by media mogul George Creel, tied media frames into propaganda. The information released by the Creel Committee, as it came to be called, focused Americans on the "new world" versus "old world" idea, and the "us versus

¹⁰⁰ "propaganda, n." 3rd definition. OED Online. November 2010. Oxford University Press.

¹⁰¹ Norris, et al., 4, 6. "...the idea of news frames, representing persistent patterns of selection, emphasis, and exclusion that furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events." Norris continues the explanation on pg. 6, "[this] conceptualization is intimately linked with theory, there can be no single 'correct' definition; instead concepts should be assessed in terms of the fruitfulness of the theoretical insights that flow from the understanding."

¹⁰² Norris, et al., 10-11. This definition is expanded to include: "The essence of framing is selection to prioritize some facts, images, or developments over others, thereby consciously or unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events."

¹⁰³ Anderson explores this idea, and others in her book *A Century of Media, A Century of War*.

them” idea to maintain unity and common ground. A study by professors at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign showed that World War I used more inclusive language, such as “us versus them” than in any war before or after it, though Iraq used the same amount, but in different ways.¹⁰⁴

In World War II the tactics evolved to include the politics of fear. If the Allies did not win, a terrible thing would befall the world and the American way of life would end.¹⁰⁵ The Creel Committee was replaced by the Office of War Information (OWI) which promised accurate information, as opposed to the propaganda used in World War I. While the information released by OWI was newsy in tone, it was definitely slanted in a White House approved and endorsed direction.¹⁰⁶

The difference in reporting from Korea, the forgotten war, to Vietnam is stark because during Korea the press was given access to top U.S. officials, and people could see the president or whomever speaking to them. However, the censorship of the press actually in Korea during the war was very strict. News outlets had to have all copy run through General MacArthur’s office.¹⁰⁷ Whereas in Vietnam, the fighting was happening so quickly that journalists were able to see it up close and personal, and there was no censorship of what the media could report. It scared, appalled, and shocked the American public and gave rise to a growing distrust of the United States government.¹⁰⁸

With the advent of CNN and 24/7 news, the Persian Gulf War was an example of the government attempting to correct for Vietnam’s mistakes, while still shaping coverage of the situation. They did this by allowing networks to use military photos and graphics, and networks

¹⁰⁴ Althaus, et al., 16-17.

¹⁰⁵ Andersen, 20.

¹⁰⁶ Brewer, 87.

¹⁰⁷ Andersen, 40.

¹⁰⁸ Andersen, 49-55; Brewer, 186-187.

such as CNN gave largely one-sided interviews about the issues.¹⁰⁹

On September 11, 2001, media took center stage and beat the government to the frame, speaking out against radical Islamists and the terrorist attacks. The government quickly got onto the bandwagon, with terms such as “axis of evil,” “war on terrorism,” and others.¹¹⁰

The second Iraq war, also known as the War in Iraq, is still underway, though for the purposes of research, the information used in this thesis comes from the White House of George W. Bush. In the Press Office response to Iraq, it is possible to see that the government has adapted its old strategies of “us v. them”¹¹¹ and “right v. wrong,” but are now proclaiming this by refuting the quoted works of others, and by explaining that the United States is committed to protecting the rights of human beings across the world, a stance which has not been widely popular. They also used embedded reporters to show the speed with which U.S. troops took Baghdad, and framing in the way they referred to members of the coalition troops as “liberating forces” and even the name of the attack, Operation: Iraqi Freedom, attempt to skew public opinion.¹¹² The claims made by the Bush administration that there were weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq—the justification offered for the war, were ultimately based on faulty intelligence. However, even after this fact had come to light, the administration was able to spin the conversation away from their failure to act on accurate information, and instead focus on the fact that Saddam Hussein was responsible for funding terrorists and violating the basic human rights of his citizens. While the Iraq War lost popularity, the fact that the government had sold half-truths to the public about the reasons it went to war, and got away with it, was underreported and ignored by many. This goes to show that the frames of a “global war on

¹⁰⁹ Norris, et al., 45; Andersen, 189.

¹¹⁰ Kellner, 46-47.

¹¹¹ Althaus, et al., 16-17.

¹¹² Guardino and Hayes, 24-26.

terrorism” and a “campaign for democracy” were more successful at sticking in the minds of the American media and public than the ugly truth of the situation.

On the media side, September 11, 2001, offered a chance to attempt to measure world opinion and the way different newspapers seek to define both that, and the concept of “terrorism.”¹¹³ By cross-applying Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” model to the newspapers selected for the sample, Rusciano was able to compare the accuracy of Huntington’s theory against the alternative theory that there is an evolving “globe world opinion” instead. The results of his study did not definitively disprove Huntington, but did show more solidarity between certain civilizations than had been expected. While the world may be grouped into the seven distinct civilizations that Huntington posited, there is enough evidence, in newspapers at least, to support the idea that they are all concerned with the world opinion.¹¹⁴

Several theories of the media’s use of persuasion were considered, from government’s intentional control of the press and its message to persuade the population,¹¹⁵ to the accidental creation of bias in both print and broadcast journalism by journalists caught in an environment where corporatization has tied their hands on many issues, and the pressure to cough up similar stories day after day has increased the likelihood of them forming patterns of reporting which leave out entire sections of potentially valuable sources¹¹⁶.

The last of those theories briefly looked at the idea that people do not want to be informed, but rather wish to be entertained.¹¹⁷ This idea, if true, means that despite the propaganda, infoganda, and framing, people are essentially asking to be blinded to the true

¹¹³ Norris, et al., 166.

¹¹⁴ Norris, et al., 168-177.

¹¹⁵ Pratkanis, et al., 269.

¹¹⁶ Pratkanis, et al., 271.

¹¹⁷ Pratkanis, et al., 273.

realities of the world, at least in the United States.¹¹⁸ With a culture increasingly less interested in being informed and more interested in being entertained, does it even matter to people that truth has become irrelevant? Perhaps more importantly, in a country defined by consumerism, with easy-access to the Internet, cable and satellite TV, and sites like Twitter and Facebook, is it possible that Americans are now stuck in a cycle of entertainment news over truth.

If a person wishes to only hear one side of an issue, it is all too easy for them to completely avoid the other viewpoint. With sites like Google offering personalized pages to its users, Americans can filter the information they receive, effectively censoring themselves and keeping anything they disagree with from ever crossing their path. If Americans are so willing to “frame” their own news, is it really the fault of the government and the media that they are misinformed?

If people do not even know that there is a crisis in another country, because they care more about Justin Bieber’s haircut than the situation in Japan for example, they cannot be expected to become involved in relief efforts. If there is no coverage of human rights violations, no one will cry foul to the United Nations, when a heat wave in Russia makes a newspaper edition because it is accompanied by a photo of a Russian woman smoking in a bikini, instead of a story about the mudslides in Pakistan. Is it really such a surprise that Americans are considered lazy and poorly-informed by other countries?

The American people have got to realize that this steady diet of entertainment and soft news is contributing to their lack of good information, and that in this climate of global conflicts, truth is already compromised and needs all the help it can get to peek through the layers of creative packaging it is wrapped in. Perhaps when they reach this stage, Winston Churchill will be proven wrong, and the truth can stand without her “bodyguard of lies.”

¹¹⁸ Pratkanis ,et al., 273.

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