

# ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF PROPAGANDA

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## Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of MA is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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## Summary

THE purpose of this study is to examine the “War on Terror” journalism of *The New York Times* and *The Irish Times*. These are the respective “papers of record” of the United States and Ireland.

The findings are based on an analysis of 1,000 front pages and editorials in *The New York Times* that refer to the events of September 11, 2001 and the ensuing “War on Terror” The period studied is from September 12, 2001 to November 28, 2004. The study compares this data with coverage in *The Irish Times* over the same period to see how it has interpreted the same events.

The methodologies used are quantitative and qualitative analysis and Herman and Chomsky’s “Propaganda Model”. Every headline, photograph, caption, blurb and editorial from the period is examined to provide empirical data.

The results conclude that even since its admission in May, 2004, that reporting in a number of stories leading up to the attack on Iraq “was not as rigorous as it should have been”, *The New York Times*, partly because of deeply embedded factors, continues to facilitate some of the most questionable aims of the US administration. The dissertation is also presented as a website to allow for wider dissemination.

## CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO STUDY

That's probably why you see such different reactions (to September 11) on the two sides of the Irish Sea which I have noticed, incidentally, in many interviews on both sides, national radio on both sides. The world looks very different depending on whether you are holding the lash or whether you are being whipped by it for hundreds of years, very different...<sup>1</sup>

Naturally the common people don't want war...But after all, it is the leaders of the country, who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship ... Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

On July 11, 2001, *Irish America* magazine hosted a function at the top of New York's World Trade Centre to honour 50 Irish Americans for their success on Wall Street. Throughout the course of the event, I interviewed several people for a piece I was doing for the *Irish Independent*.<sup>3</sup> Eight weeks later, the Trade Centre was in ruins and nearly 3,000 people were dead, including many of those

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<sup>1</sup> Noam Chomsky, "The New War Against Terror", Address to the Technology & Culture Forum at MIT, October 18, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> This quote was made by Herman Goering to an Allied officer during the Nuremberg Trials on April 18, 1946, and was subsequently published in the book, *Nuremberg Diary*. Information accessed online at [www.globalissues.org/HumanRights/Media/Military.asp](http://www.globalissues.org/HumanRights/Media/Military.asp)? April 22, 2003

<sup>3</sup> Fincham, Kelly, "Turning Irish rags to riches of Wall Street," *Irish Independent*, July 19, 2001 p13

who had attended that function. In the ensuing weeks, I filed story after story for the *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Voice*, interviewing the families of those who worked in the Trade Centre and those who went into the towers to rescue them.

The story of one man in particular, Sean Cummins, a fire-fighter from Dublin, haunts me still. He had swapped two shifts with two friends so he could drive his mother to the airport on September 11. By the time he arrived at the trade centre, his entire squad, 12 men in all, had died in the collapse of the two towers, including the two friends he had swapped with. In addition, an Irish American fire-fighter from Boston who rented his basement apartment also died. Sean has never really recovered from the events of September 11.

Like everyone else who lived in New York over that traumatic period, I stopped paying attention to the wider world. Every day brought a new tale of horror from lower Manhattan where an acrid burnt smell lingered until January. New York was still so shell-shocked that no-one had taken down the fliers of the people who were supposed to be missing. They flapped forlornly on the walls at Grand Central when I left for Ireland that Christmas.

I mention this to try and put this period in context. It was only when I arrived at home that Christmas that I realised how disconnected I had become with my New York-centric worldview. In Ireland, the national debate in the paper of record, *The Irish Times*, centred on the Afghan refugee issue and the futility of bombing a starving nation. There was no such national debate taking

place in the US paper of record, *The New York Times*, where stories and editorials focused on the suffering in America.

This project grew out of that sense of disconnection as I tried to understand the reasons behind these two different debates. The research was initially based on the US and Irish media coverage of the September 11 attacks; because Ireland, unlike most European countries, has a common language and a shared heritage with the US. But as the gulf between the Irish reaction and the US reaction widened and deepened to a fully-fledged transatlantic rift (which did not include Ireland) in early 2003, the research also widened.

The September 11 attack on New York played out on the world's television sets. It was not the first time that so many humans had died such horrific deaths but it was the first time that the world had a ringside view. For example, imagine if there had been cameras fixed on the Titanic or at Hiroshima?

As regards the events themselves, there is no debate about what we saw. The first plane was caught on tape and television viewers world-wide witnessed the second plane going into the Trade Centre. Subsequently, while the events themselves are not disputed, their explanations have a different narrative in Europe and the US. This seems to be impossible. The events, fixed as they are in the camera, never change, so how can the information about them change? The answer, of course, lies in how that information is disseminated and how we, the citizens, receive that information.

A brief comparison of the two newspapers of record over Christmas, 2001, revealed quite a bit of difference in the coverage of US foreign policy. *The New York Times* did not challenge the US administration on foreign policy except for such topics as costs and tactics, whereas *The Irish Times* offered criticism of US actions and a wider range of topics.

As the US media critic, Robert McChesney, wrote soon after September 11, the US coverage made it seem as if the attacks had come from outer space.<sup>4</sup> The US coverage contained no context. In Ireland, there was plenty of context. Irish people were less shocked. Horrified, but not shocked.

I began this project believing that *The New York Times* was a great liberal newspaper. Unfortunately, the research did not bear this out. *The Irish Times* and *The New York Times* are, on the surface, quite similar publications with a strong pro-business ethos. However, *The Irish Times*, while not exactly a watchdog, still barked more often, and more loudly, than did *The New York Times*.

The renowned US scholar and political thinker Noam Chomsky also noticed the difference. In October 2001, he described how *The New York Times* was ignoring calls from the international aid community to stop the bombing of Afghanistan; stories which the Irish papers were running. "If you read the Irish press...that close," he said, "reactions are very different."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> McChesney, Robert, "September 11 and the structural limitations of US journalism", *Journalism after September 11*. Eds Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, p91

<sup>5</sup> Chomsky, Noam, "The New War against Terror," Speech at Massachusetts Institute of Technology," October 16, 2001  
Accessed online at [www.zmag.org/GlobalWatch/chomskymit.htm](http://www.zmag.org/GlobalWatch/chomskymit.htm) January 24, 2007

Chomsky, along with Ed Herman, devised the “Propaganda Model” in 1988 to try and predict the behaviour of the modern media. The model presupposed that the mass media should be viewed as a company trying to sell a product (audiences) to other companies (advertisers). During a 2004 interview with Chomsky, he said he would be “amazed” if the model didn’t extend to the Irish media. He said *The Irish Times* would be comfortable criticising the US government, but not so comfortable criticising the Irish government.

If you’re talking about criticism of the United States, that’s a lot easier to get through the Irish media or the British media or the French media or anything else. But try talking about criticism of Ireland in Ireland; you’re cut off at the pass. Ireland, England, France, they want to hear criticism of other people, not themselves.<sup>6</sup>

Eight months into the invasion of Iraq and US writer Susan Sontag said the US media was framing European criticism of America in dangerous conceits; “free” new US versus “old” Europe. Her essay touched on theories expounded by the Italian intellectual and politician, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), who developed the idea of “hegemony.” Gramsci described hegemony as the success of the ruling elite in portraying their view of the world so convincingly that the general public accepts it as “common sense.”

In her essay, Sontag vividly highlighted the gap between Europe and America. She pointed to the conservative culture of America, its

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<sup>6</sup> Private interview with Noam Chomsky See Appendix



“extraordinary...passivity and conformism of public opinion and the media” and the media filters through which Americans viewed the world.<sup>7</sup>

As Sontag noted, the “latent antagonism” between America and Europe was, and is, nothing new. She cited Alexis de Tocqueville and DH Lawrence for their much earlier observations that “America, the child of Europe,” would be the “antithesis of Europe.” She chided those who promoted the idea of “an inevitable clash of interests and values” for failing to recognise this.<sup>8</sup>

She pointed readers to Lawrence’s observation that America was seeking to destroy Europe, “using cultural democracy, democracy of manners - as an instrument.” And she said, Lawrence had warned that when that task was accomplished, “America might well turn from democracy to something else.”<sup>9</sup> As she said in an aside, “What that might be is, perhaps, emerging now.”<sup>10</sup>

What did emerge, in the years after September 11, was an “increasing estrangement,”<sup>11</sup> between the US and Europe as the US squandered the sympathy it had gained in the wake of the attacks. The extent of that estrangement can be seen in a comparison between the September 12, 2001 edition of the centrist *Le Monde* when its front page declared; “Nous sommes tous les Américains,” (We are all Americans) and the front page of the February 14, 2003 edition of the right-wing *New York Post*. *The Post* superimposed the heads of weasels onto the

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<sup>7</sup> Sontag, Susan, “Between Europe and America,” Acceptance speech at the Friedenspreis prize, Frankfurt Book Fair, October, 2003

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence, DH, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, New York: T. Seltzer, 1923, p13

<sup>10</sup> Sontag, Susan, “Between Europe and America,” Acceptance speech at the Friedenspreis prize, Frankfurt Book Fair, October, 2003

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

French and German representatives to the UN under the headline “UN Meets.”<sup>12</sup> In such a poisoned atmosphere, it was difficult to believe that any French newspaper had ever found common cause with America.

Their reluctance to join the US mission relegated France and Germany to the ranks of “old” Europe; “new” Europe was reserved for those who supported the US. This ingenious device also helped present “new” countries as more enlightened states while France and Germany, were portrayed as anachronistic entities. Not un-coincidentally, the “old” countries were also dismissed as being out-of-touch for advocating such “old standards” as the welfare state.

In 1831, when Alexis de Tocqueville visited the US, he was surprised at the “extraordinary power of the consensus and the passivity and conformism of public opinion and the media.”<sup>13</sup> In 2003, Sontag echoed de Tocqueville, saying that the power and the conformism had only strengthened and she offered an explanation of why the “idea” of America was so often at odds with the reality;

The answer, surely, lies in the disconnection between official rhetoric and lived realities. Americans are constantly extolling “traditions”; litanies to family values are at the centre of every politician's discourse. And yet the culture of America is extremely corrosive of family life, indeed of all traditions except those redefined to promote “identities” that fit into the larger patterns of distinctiveness, co-operation, and openness to innovation.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *The New York Post*, January 21 2003 and February 14, 2003

<sup>13</sup> Sontag, Susan, “Between Europe and America,” Acceptance speech at the Friedenspreis prize, Frankfurt Book Fair, October, 2003

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*

This disconnection between rhetoric and reality has enabled successive US administrations, including the Bush II administration, to mobilise US public support for relentless aggression on countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Vietnam, by claiming that they were on the brink of being taken over by “communists” and so posed a threat to the American way of life.

Chomsky noted that the propaganda didn’t work so well outside the US. For instance, he kept up with the “Central American wars” in *The Irish Times* rather than *The New York Times*.

Their (*Irish Times*) coverage was very good. I think mostly because the Irish priests who were in Central America were sending back information that never appeared here.<sup>15</sup>

Nowadays, in a country where people are “used to thinking of the world in terms of enemies,”<sup>16</sup> the more “flexible” threat of “terrorism” is used instead of “communist.” As Sontag wrote, this allowed America to claim its violence was righteous, a “righteousness” which was derived from the US idea of religion;

In the United States it's not important which religion you adhere to, as long as you have one ...they all preach something similar: reform of personal behaviour, the value of success, community co-operativeness, tolerance of others' choices. The very fact of being religious ensures respectability, promotes order, and gives the guarantee of virtuous intentions to the mission of the United States to lead the world.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Private interview with Chomsky, Dec 2004, See Appendix

<sup>16</sup> *New York Post*, January 21 2003 and February 14, 2003

<sup>17</sup> Sontag, Susan, “Between Europe and America,” Acceptance speech at the Friedenspreis prize, Frankfurt Book Fair, October, 2003

This particularly American belief in the country's righteousness consistently underpins public support for US military action. Thus, without any genuine internal debate, Americans feel that the invasion and occupation of Iraq was "right", and that the righteousness of this quest was, and is, never in doubt.

For example, the US began to pull out of Vietnam once public support had dropped too far, all the while claiming that the "noble" cause had been undermined; that the US had "misunderstood the cultural and political forces at work," and that the losses were more than the kindly US could bear.<sup>18</sup> It is expected that something similar will be said about Iraq.

The dissemination of this story line depends on a compliant media and it is a curious fact that America, despite having the most deregulated media system, and the greatest amount of media in the world, has the most passive and conformist media system in the developed capitalist world.<sup>19</sup>

This point is often overlooked in media analysis as the debate tends to focus on allegations of a "media conspiracy" or bias amongst journalists. This "manufactured debate" misses the point. The dominant ideology in the newspaper industry, in common with all other modern Western industries, is capitalism; the pursuit of profits. Contemporary newspapers have to make profits for their shareholders and are thus treated as just another consumer product.

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<sup>18</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon, 2002, p173

<sup>19</sup> Shaw, Helen. *The Age of McMedia, The challenge to information and democracy*, Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs at Harvard, Fellows Paper, Accessed at [www.wcfia.harvard.edu/fellows/papers02-03/shaw.pdf](http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/fellows/papers02-03/shaw.pdf) on March 23, 2004

The Irish media critic, Helen Shaw, cited the Mexican Nobel prize winning author, Octavio Paz, who likened the media industry to McDonalds. Paz said that the free market actually had no real goal, because “its sole purpose is to produce more in order to consume more.” Shaw said the McDonalds comparison was apt; “The only way for the food industry to increase its profit margins is to make people consume more, even if that is counter-productive for its target audience by making them obese.”<sup>20</sup>

In much the same way, the only way for the information industry to increase its profit margins is to make people consume more. The irony is that people in the most technologised society have access to less information than ever. For example, in October 2003, a US survey about Iraq found that the more commercial media a person consumed, the less they knew about the issues and the more they supported the US administration.<sup>21</sup> Reacting to this poll, McChesney, said:

Even allowing for a significant margin of error, a more damning comment on the US news media would be difficult to imagine as it goes directly against what a free press is supposed to do in a democratic society. Instead it seems to follow the dictum Josef Goebbels had for the Nazi media: the more people consume, the less capable they are of being critical, and the more they will support the Nazi party.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Shaw, Helen, 2003. "The Age of McMedia The challenge to information and democracy," *Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs at Harvard, Fellows Paper*, at [www.wcfia.harvard.edu/fellows/papers02-03/shaw.pdf](http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/fellows/papers02-03/shaw.pdf), accessed 1 March 2004

<sup>21</sup> "Misperceptions, the Media and the Iraq War," Program on International Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland, October 2003. Accessed January 25, 2007 [www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/international\\_security\\_bt/102.php?nid=&id=&pnt=102&lb=brus](http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/international_security_bt/102.php?nid=&id=&pnt=102&lb=brus)

<sup>22</sup> McChesney, Robert. *The Problem of the Media*. Monthly Review Press, New York, 2004, p 123

This equation; more media = less information, is directly related to the economic structure of the US mass media. However, this finding also holds ramifications for Irish media as we import more and more of America's ideas.

Curiously, as the gap between the US and "Old Europe" widened, Ireland pulled closer to the US. Indeed, in the run-up to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003; *The Irish Times* quoted an anonymous government official as saying;

Our bottom line is we will do what the Americans want...the Government does not intend to take any position that would put it in opposition to the United States.<sup>23</sup>

Ireland is a natural ally of the United States; there are strong historical and economic links between the two countries, which will be examined in the next section. However, the Irish support for the US placed Ireland at odds with European allies such as France and Germany.

This support extended to official pronouncements from the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern, urging anti-war protestors not to picket the June 2004 visit by US President George W Bush. This sentiment was allowed to pass unchallenged in *The Irish Times*;

He said the US economy was now doing very well and there was a prospect of promoting investment and trade. 'This is an opportunity for Ireland,' he said.

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<sup>23</sup> Brennock, Mark, "Cabinet to support US even without UN input", *The Irish Times*, Feb 12, 2003, p1

## OVERVIEW OF US AND IRISH HISTORICAL LINKS

Of all other nationalities, Irish people probably feel the closest affinity to Americans. History and blood link our two countries and we owe a great deal to our transatlantic cousins, apart altogether from economic considerations.<sup>24</sup>

This section takes a very broad look at a selection of themes which demonstrate the depth of the links between Ireland and the US; business, immigration, the Irish in US politics and media and September 11, 2001.

Ireland and America are arguably more interconnected by economics and history ties in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than at any other time since the first Irish person stepped ashore in the US in 1548.<sup>25</sup> In 2006, 600 companies were reported as having invested over \$73 billion in the Irish economy, with the creation of 120,000 jobs. Irish companies were reported to have invested \$25 million in the US economy with the creation of 70,000 jobs in America.<sup>26</sup>

The so-called “Celtic Tiger” is largely an American creation owing much to the huge investments made by US companies drawn to what Irish sociologist Kieran Allen described as called a “tax haven on the edge of Europe.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “Harney's View Of Anti-War Protest,” *The Irish Times*, Editorial, February 24, 2003

<sup>25</sup> Meagher, Timothy, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2005, p3

<sup>26</sup> US Ambassador James Kenny, March 17, 2006. Quoted in White House Press Release. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ask/20060317.html> Accessed June 12, 2006

<sup>27</sup> Allen, Kieran, *The Celtic Tiger, The myth of social partnership in Ireland*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2000, p25

The pro-business environment in Ireland, combined with a young, educated, English-speaking work force combined to attract enormous amounts of US capital. The low rates of pay helped too; in 1998, the average wage in Ireland was half that of Germany's.<sup>28</sup>

The 2005 figures from the American Chamber of Commerce show that the US poured \$3.4 billion into Irish manufacturing in 2005; putting Ireland third in place behind Britain (\$13.2 billion) and Canada (\$5.5 billion). US investment stocks were valued at \$73 billion, roughly five times the amount in China (\$15.4 billion).<sup>29</sup> Ireland's small population (3.7 million) makes the Irish worker, and the Irish economy, extremely dependent on US foreign investment.

While Ireland is dependent on US foreign investment, the US has been dependent on cheap Irish labour. Between 1548 and 2005, almost seven million people emigrated from Ireland to North America, with most settling in what is now the US. The numbers have ebbed and flowed with the tide of America and Ireland's fortunes. For instance, the majority, about five million, left between the 1820s and 1920s<sup>30</sup>, providing the US with a huge workforce for such enormous projects as the Erie Canal and the transcontinental railroad.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Allen cites US Department of Labour figures from 1998 which showed total hourly compensation for Irish workers at \$14 an hour compared to \$28 an hour in Germany

<sup>29</sup> American Chamber of Commerce, "U.S. Investment in Ireland", <http://www.amcham.ie/article.cfm?idarticle=144> Accessed online January 4, 2007

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p3

<sup>31</sup> "The Making of a Melting Pot," Policy Report from the American Immigration Law Foundation. Accessed online at [http://www.aif.org/ipc/policy\\_reports\\_2001\\_Irish2.asp](http://www.aif.org/ipc/policy_reports_2001_Irish2.asp) December 31, 2006



A 19<sup>th</sup> century newspaper report spelled out the importance of Irish immigration to the US; “America demands for her development an inexhaustible fund of physical energy, and Ireland supplies the most of it.”<sup>32</sup>

However, the modern numbers of first-generation Irish Americans are shrinking; down from 250,000 Irish-born residents in 1980 to 128,000 in 2005.<sup>33</sup> This number is expected to decrease further in the 2010 census as fewer people emigrate from Ireland. In 2005, just 2,088 legal Irish immigrants came to the US out of a global total of more than 1 million. Most of the legal Irish gained “green cards”<sup>34</sup> through marriage.<sup>35</sup> It is no longer feasible for a US citizen to sponsor a brother or a nephew and Ireland gets about 100 visas a year in the lottery.

US historian Timothy Meagher attributed the fall-off in immigration to the success of the “Celtic Tiger.” The “Tiger” economy even drew an estimated 4,000 Americans to an Irish jobs fair in Manhattan in October, 2006.<sup>36</sup> However, this explanation fails to account for the estimated 50,000 undocumented Irish immigrants in the US.<sup>37</sup> Several experts, including Senator Edward Kennedy, believe the Irish have been literally squeezed out of the US by the lack of immigration opportunities. Speaking at a Senate immigration hearing in July 2006, Senator Kennedy said:

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid , p3

<sup>33</sup> O’Dowd, Niall, “Why ILIR Must Succeed”, *Irish Voice*, August 30, 2006, Periscope

<sup>34</sup> Card showing proof of legal residency, popularly known as a green card, although the current version is pink.

<sup>35</sup> Figures from the Department of Homeland Security.

[www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/statistics/data/DSLPR05c.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/statistics/data/DSLPR05c.shtm) Accessed online December 31 2006

<sup>36</sup> McGoldrick, Debbie, “FAS Fair Draws Huge Crowds”, *Irish Voice*, October 24, 2006, p5

<sup>37</sup> Figures from the New York-based Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform.  
[www.irishlobbyusa.org](http://www.irishlobbyusa.org)

Prior to the '65 act, we had about 30,000 Irish that were coming in, and then we had those reduced to about 20,000... But then with the changes that were made and even the acceptance of the diversity program, each and every one of those brought a gradual reduction, really unintended. What we were trying to do was eliminate the discrimination that existed in the law, but the way that that legislation was developed worked in a very dramatic and significant way against the Irish.<sup>38</sup>

One of the panel members at Kennedy's immigration hearing was Irish American publisher Niall O'Dowd who set up the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform in December 2005. A veteran of the earlier Donnelly and Morrison visa campaigns, O'Dowd catapulted the Irish to the forefront of the 2006 debate by mobilising an amateur army of waitresses and construction workers.

Two days before the hearings, *The New York Times* had described the Irish illegal issue as "a green sprig of parsley in the melting pot"; given the 50,000 Irish caught up in an issue affecting 12 million people.<sup>39</sup> The parsley jibe was a backhanded compliment to the ILIR's effectiveness in US politics.

The enormous influence of the Irish on US politics has often been traced to Ireland's familiarity (albeit non-participation) with Anglo-American government, unlike the Poles, Germans and Italians, who were not ruled by England.<sup>40</sup> The French political thinker and historian Alexis De Tocqueville (1805 - 1859) also attributed this to the effect of Irish Catholicism in the US

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<sup>38</sup> Transcript at [www.irishlobbyusa.org/toolkit/transcript.php](http://www.irishlobbyusa.org/toolkit/transcript.php). Accessed December 29, 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Downes, Lawrence, "Day Labourers, Silent and Despised, Find Their Voice", *The New York Times*, July 10, 2006

<sup>40</sup> Meagher, Timothy, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2005, p184

which, he said, formed the basis of “the most republican and democratic class there is in the United States.”<sup>41</sup>

De Tocqueville, whose classic analysis of the US, *Democracy in America*, was first published in 1835, visited Ireland in July and August that year. He was unimpressed with what he saw:

If you wish to know what the spirit of conquest, religious hatred, combined with all the abuses of aristocracy without any of its advantages, can produce, come to Ireland.<sup>42</sup>

But De Tocqueville also observed that while the oppressed peasant class in Ireland did not participate in the government institutions; they were well versed in communalism and group solidarity; traits which would give them a political advantage in the new world.<sup>43</sup>

Andrew Jackson (1767 – 1845) was the first Irish American president of the US. Since then, a total of 10 presidents have claimed Irish ancestry, including Woodrow Wilson, Richard Nixon, John F Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.<sup>44</sup> During the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, three Irish American Catholics; John McCormack, Thomas “Tip” O’Neill and Thomas Foley, held the powerful post of Speaker<sup>45</sup> in the House of Representatives. Also, in 1962, the three most

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<sup>41</sup> De Tocqueville, Alexis, (Eds Mansfield, Harvey, Winthrop, Debra) *Democracy in America*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2002, p275

<sup>42</sup> Eds Kahan, Alan, Zunz, Olivier, De Tocqueville, Alexis, *The Tocqueville Reader. a life in letters and politics*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2002, p149

<sup>43</sup> Meagher, Timothy, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2005, p184

<sup>44</sup> Ann McFeatters, “10 U.S. presidents had Irish ancestors”, *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, March 17, 2000 Online [www.post-gazette.com/magazine/20000317irish9.asp](http://www.post-gazette.com/magazine/20000317irish9.asp) Accessed December 31, 2006

<sup>45</sup> The Speaker is the most senior political position in the House Chamber

powerful politicians in the country were all Irish American Catholics; President Kennedy, House Speaker McCormack and his Senate equivalent Michael Mansfield.<sup>46</sup>

The prowess of the Irish Americans in politics extended to Ireland in the 1990s when a group of politically active Irish Americans helped to bring about one of the biggest success stories in Irish politics; the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement in the North. The group comprised Niall O'Dowd, former congressman Bruce Morrison, billionaire philanthropist Chuck Feeney, Mutual America CEO Bill Flynn and labour leader Joe Jamison.

Their first major success was in convincing the US State Department to grant Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams a visitor's visa. From there, the use of Irish America as a "third party"<sup>47</sup> in the Irish British negotiations helped pave the way for the historic agreement.

This skill at organising groups to create change is a hallmark of the Irish. American society, as de Tocqueville observed in 1831, does not encourage communalism, instead fostering individualism.

Meanwhile, the ties between Ireland and the US could be seen in the news reports about September 11, 2001, when a significant number of Irish Americans were killed. The casualties ranged from the blue-collar firemen who

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<sup>46</sup> Meagher, Timothy, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2005, p183

<sup>47</sup> Elliot, Marianne, (ed) *The Long Road to Peace in Northern Ireland*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2002, p3

trudged up the doomed buildings to the white-collar finance workers they were trying to rescue. As Jim Dwyer wrote in a moving essay for *The New York Times* on November 11, 2001, one in five names of the 2874 dead were Irish:

That would be one measure of the number of Irish-Americans killed by terrorists on Sept. 11. Another would be the lists of the lost: the Kevins and Maureens and Timothys and Patricks. Among the surnames of the dead or missing are 12 Lynches, 10 Murphys, 9 Kellys, 5 Egans, 4 McCarthys, multiples of Kennedy, Sullivan, O'Brien, Gallagher. And so on.<sup>48</sup>

The death toll included Irish-born carpenter Kieran Gorman who played for Sligo GAA in New York and US-born finance broker Damien Meehan who played for Donegal.

However, even though both Gorman and Meehan's parents were born in Ireland, the Irish media did not include Meehan in its death toll of eight Irish.<sup>49</sup> Niall O'Dowd, who wrote a book about the Irish victims of the attacks, argued that being Irish should transcend birthright and he counted approximately 1,000 Irish dead in the attacks.<sup>50</sup> This question of being Irish comes up repeatedly in Irish America; particularly in relation to American patriotism.

Conor Cruise O'Brien has said that there are sometimes none so patriotic as the Irish American, a patriotism that he believed was inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century immigrants:

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<sup>48</sup> Dwyer, Jim, "Sonuvagun, if It Isn't Dommon", *The New York Times*, November 11, 2001, Magazine, p63

<sup>49</sup> O'Clery, Conor, "President recalls Irish emigrants caught up in attacks on US", *The Irish Times*, March 16, 2002, p7

<sup>50</sup> O'Dowd, Niall, *Fire in the Morning*, Bandon Books, Cork, 2002, Introduction

The same people who had oppressed America were still oppressing Ireland. So an Irishman could be a patriotic American, perhaps a more patriotic American than any other Americans.<sup>51</sup>

Although this thesis will argue that American patriotism is a direct result of US internal propaganda, Cruise O'Brien's point is well made. This patriotism, fuelled as it was by anti-English sentiment, made it easier for the Irish in America to oppose British rule in Ireland than it was for the "Anglicized" Irish left behind.<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, the patriotism is questionable because the Irish Americans were declaring loyalty to the same Protestant establishment which had oppressed them in Ireland.

An EU poll carried out in Ireland in December 2001 provoked some fury among those patriotic Irish Americans in New York after it showed minority support for US access to Shannon airport. Irish American congressman Peter King (R-NY) attacked the Irish for opposing the US:

I think it's time for some of the European states to realize that if it wasn't for the U.S. they would be speaking with Russian or German accents.<sup>53</sup>

King's perception of America as the World War II liberator demonstrated the success of the internal US propaganda system. But King was missing the point; the Irish Government, unlike the Irish public, would not oppose the US. Irish Government support for the US was so strong that Ireland shut down to

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<sup>51</sup> Cruise O'Brien, Conor, *States of Ireland*, Hutchinson, London, 1972, p44

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p44

<sup>53</sup> McGoldrick, Debbie, "Ireland: Fair Weather Friend", *Irish Voice*, December 5, 2001 P1

mark the “national day of mourning” on September 14, 2001. It was the only country to do so.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, just days after the attacks (and several weeks before the EU poll), the Irish Government had already offered Shannon airport to the US. On September 21, 2001, the Associated Press (AP) reported:

The Irish government has aligned itself with Britain's uncritical support for America and said the U.S. Air Force can use Irish airports. Prime Minister Bertie Ahern said his government "would support anything America wants to do in that regard."<sup>55</sup>

On September 29, 2001, two days before Ireland took the rotating presidency of the UN, AP reported Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Brian Cowen saying Ireland "cannot be neutral on international terrorism."<sup>56</sup>

Between then and the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Irish Government never wavered in its support for the US. In February 2003, as the UN debated whether or not to endorse an American-led attack on Iraq, *The Irish Times* reported that Ireland would not be opposing the US:

"Our statements are highly nuanced", according to one well-placed source. "But our bottom line is we will do what the Americans want...the Government does not intend to take any position that would put it in opposition to the United States."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Doherty, Caroline, "US firms open for business", *The Irish Times*, Sept 15, 2001.p4

<sup>55</sup> "Overseas Actions Connected to Attacks", Associated Press News Update, September 21, 2001. Accessed online on January 3, 2007

<sup>56</sup> "The World's Reactions to US Attacks", Associated Press News Update, September 29, 2001. Accessed online on January 3, 2007

<sup>57</sup> Brennock, Mark, "Cabinet to support US even without UN input", *The Irish Times*, Feb 12, 2003, p1

## ORIGINS & OVERVIEW OF US PRINT MEDIA

I do not know of any country where, in general, less independence of mind and genuine freedom of discussion reign than in America.<sup>58</sup>

Advertisers pay for space and time in paper and magazine, on radio and TV; that is, they buy a piece of the reader, listener or viewer as definitely as if they hired our homes for a public meeting.<sup>59</sup>

The media have become a significant anti-democratic force in the United States, and to varying degrees, worldwide. The wealthier and more powerful the corporate media giants have become, the poorer the prospects for participatory democracy.<sup>60</sup>

The challenge of American newspapers is not to stay in business - it is to stay in journalism.<sup>61</sup>

The history of the US newspaper industry has been described as being closely linked to the history of the United States itself. This history dates to the early colonial days when the nascent printing industry helped shaped the colonies by publishing all government-related documents.<sup>62</sup> The first US newspaper went to press in 1690, more than 200 years after the 1455 invention of moveable type.

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<sup>58</sup> De Tocqueville, Alexis, (eds Mansfield, Harvey; Winthrop, Debra) *Democracy in America*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2002, p188

<sup>59</sup> McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media, The Extensions of Man*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1994 ed, p206

<sup>60</sup> McChesney Robert, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy, Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, New Press, New York, 2000, p2

<sup>61</sup> Harry Evans, quoted in Reeves, Richard, *What The People Know*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p49

<sup>62</sup> Martin, Shannon E and Hansen, Kathleen A. *Newspapers of Record in a Digital Age: From Hot Type to Hot Link*, Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers, 1998, p17.



Between then and the 1990s, when circulation started to decline, newspapers have generally functioned as the primary medium of information.<sup>63</sup>

That first newspaper, *Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick*, debuted in Boston in September 25, 1690, and lasted just one issue.<sup>64</sup> *Publick Occurrences* may have been short-lived but it inspired so many other attempts that by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the US had more than two-thirds the number of newspapers available in England, despite having only half the population.<sup>65</sup>

In 1786, the Founding Father and former printer, Benjamin Franklin, observed that Americans “were so busy reading newspapers and pamphlets that they scarcely had time for books.”<sup>66</sup> Fifty years later, the proliferation of newspapers in the US was one of the first things the French writer, Alexis de Tocqueville, noticed about America: “The number of periodical and occasional publications which appear in the United States actually surpasses belief.”<sup>67</sup>

De Tocqueville travelled across the US in 1831 and 1832 to study American democracy and his resulting book, *Democracy in America*, has often been described as a masterpiece.<sup>68</sup> The US political writer Richard Reeves, who retraced De Tocqueville’s steps in 1979, believes there should be a special key to

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<sup>63</sup> “The State of the News Media, Annual Report on American Journalism,” The Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2004. The Project for Excellence in Journalism Accessed January 5, 2007 [http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/narrative\\_newspapers\\_audience.asp?cat=3&media=2](http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/narrative_newspapers_audience.asp?cat=3&media=2)

<sup>64</sup> Postman, Neil, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, Penguin Books, NY, 1985, pp 35, 36

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p37

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, pp41, 37

<sup>67</sup> Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1899, p191.

<sup>68</sup> Staunton, Denis, “Battle-lines drawn on French view of US culture”, *The Irish Times*, February 18, 2006, world

insert the line; “As Alexis de Tocqueville said”, for anyone writing about the US. “De Tocqueville did say much of what there was to be said about us”, he said.<sup>69</sup>

De Tocqueville’s observations on the press are equally relevant to anyone studying the modern US mass media. For example, he identified the conflict at the heart of free-market journalism; the inverted relationship between the amount of media and the amount of dissent. De Tocqueville found a paucity of debate despite the presence of so many newspapers. Moreover, he said:

Opinions established in the US under the liberty of the press are frequently more firmly rooted than those which are formed elsewhere under the sanction of a censor.<sup>70</sup>

He theorised that Americans were unwilling to entertain new ideas because they did not feel that they had been coerced into their opinions.

They cherish them because they hold them to be just, and because they exercised their own free will in choosing them; and they maintain them not only because they are true, but because they are their own.<sup>71</sup>

This inverted relationship would be exacerbated by events he could not have foreseen, such as the major advances in technology and capitalism which

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<sup>69</sup> Reeves, Richard, *American Journey, Traveling with Tocqueville in Search of Democracy in America*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982, p14

<sup>70</sup> Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America* trans. Henry Reeve, vol. 1, New York: D Appleton and Company, 1899, 185.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p 817

utterly transformed the form and content of the media and concentrated it into fewer hands.

However, even in 1831, De Tocqueville could see the signs of an emerging commercial media because of the greater weight given to advertising.

In France, the most essential part of the journal is that which contains the discussion of the politics of the day. In America, three quarters of the enormous sheet...are filled with advertisements...<sup>72</sup>

Although US newspapers were already attracting considerable advertising, Tocqueville could not see a potential for profit. "Nothing is easier", he wrote, "Than to set up a newspaper, and a small number of readers suffice to defray the expenses...but the extent of competition precludes the possibility of considerable profit."<sup>73</sup>

*The invention of the telegraph changed all that. In fact, the growth of the telegraph is regarded as a key development in the dominance of big business in America.*<sup>74</sup>

Before the telegraph arrived, the government had controlled and subsidised newspaper distribution through a special Post Office mailing rate. The government deliberately enforced this cheap rate to encourage the production and

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p190

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, pp 191, 192

<sup>74</sup> McChesney, Robert, *The Problem of the Media*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2004, pp 33, 35

distribution of information, and, by 1832, newspapers accounted for 90 per cent of post office traffic.<sup>75</sup>

The telegraph changed the form and function of news in two ways. First the content changed, from functional information with action-value, to a “commodity, a thing that could be bought and sold irrespective of meaning.”<sup>76</sup> Secondly the profit-motive changed as big business successfully fought to keep the telegraph out of government control.<sup>77</sup> There would be no government subsidised delivery.

The first commercial use of the telegraph in the US took place in 1844 when Samuel Morse transmitted the phrase “what Hath God wrought” from Washington to Baltimore. The answer, said Postman, was “a neighbourhood of strangers and pointless quantity...God, of course, had nothing to do with it.”<sup>78</sup>

The telegraph collapsed time and space, allowing Postman’s “pointless” information to be delivered across the US continent almost instantaneously. By the end of the US civil war (1861 – 1865), Western Union had emerged as the dominant telegraph company. It used its monopoly to help develop the US wire service, Associated Press (AP), in collaboration with the big newspaper publishers of the day. AP went on to become the only US wire service because Western Union refused to allow potential competitors to use its wires.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, pp33, 35

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p 65, 66, 67

<sup>77</sup> McChesney, Robert, *The Problem of the Media*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2004, p35

<sup>78</sup> Postman, Neil, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, Penguin Books, NY, 1985, p 65, 66, 70, 71

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p35

The consequences were inevitable; AP became the main voice of most US journalism and that voice had a decided pro-business slant. Together the AP and Western Union monopolized the national news.

The growth of this monopoly coincided with two other elements which remain pertinent today; the increasing consolidation of power in the US newspaper chains and the economic importance of advertising. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was “virtually impossible” for an independent effort to succeed.<sup>80</sup>

Over the past century, the relentless consolidation in the industry has reduced the number of major media organizations in the United States to just five. Writing in 2004, the legendary US journalist Ben Bagdikian said: “Their concentrated influence exercises political and cultural forces reminiscent of the royal decrees of monarchs rejected by the revolutionists of 1776.”<sup>81</sup>

The way in which the US commercial media system has developed is often referred to as “natural.” Yet it’s clear that a “natural” development would have included some sort of government subsidy for newspapers; as the Founding Fathers had intended. McChesney described their subsidy as “enlightened public policy,” in that it worked to ensure diversity of opinion in a “free market.”<sup>82</sup>

The “free market” newspapers in the US are still cheap by Irish standards (*The New York Times* costs \$1.00 or about 70 cent while *The Irish Times* is more than double that at €1.60). However, the cover price is now subsidised by

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<sup>80</sup> McChesney, Robert, *The Problem of the Media*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2004, p35

<sup>81</sup> Bagdikian, Ben, *The New Media Monopoly*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2004, p10

<sup>82</sup> McChesney, Robert, *The Problem of the Media*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2004, p34

advertisers, rather than the government, and the power of the advertising supported model is enough to deter any independent ventures.

Retracing De Tocqueville's steps in 1979, some 148 years later, Richard Reeves interviewed Allen Neuharth, the president of the Gannett Corporation. Gannett owned 82 newspapers with a combined circulation of 3.6 million.<sup>83</sup>

Our business is the sale of news and information. Store news. Other than that we provide diversity according to the wants and needs of our readers...Our papers are edited in response to the wants and needs of our readers.

Reeves asked him if the newspapers had a role in educating the public.

“We may have a bit of a role”, he answered, “but not so much that it gets in the way of the information they want and pay for .. this is, first, a business to make money.”<sup>84</sup>

This profit motive is key to any analysis of the US media. For instance, *The New York Times*, unlike *The Irish Times*, is not run as a “trust.”<sup>85</sup> It is a publicly traded company and in 2005, it declared \$3.4bn in revenues. In addition to *The New York Times*, the company owns *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Boston Globe*, 15 other daily newspapers; nine network-affiliated television

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<sup>83</sup> Reeves, Richard, *American Journey*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982, p76

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p 77

<sup>85</sup> *The Irish Times* Trust is not a charity and does not have charitable status. It has no beneficial shareholders and it cannot pay dividends. Any profits made by *The Irish Times* cannot be distributed to the Trust but must be used to strengthen the newspaper. Information from *The Irish Times* website, [www.ireland.com/about/p\\_theiristimes.htm](http://www.ireland.com/about/p_theiristimes.htm) accessed on Jan 29, 2007

stations and two New York radio stations; and 35 Web sites, including NYTimes.com, Boston.com and About.com.<sup>86</sup>

Here's an excerpt from the section entitled "About Us," taken from the website of *The New York Times* which explains the company's mission.<sup>87</sup>

- Enhancing the positions of our strong brands through the introduction of innovative new products and services across media platforms.
- Pursuing leadership positions in key content verticals, both in print and online.
- Building a vibrant long-term innovation capability that helps us anticipate consumer preferences and create ways of satisfying them.
- Rebalancing our portfolio of properties and exercising financial discipline as we allocate capital for the benefit of our shareholders.

Clearly, *The New York Times* believes that the business of *The New York Times* is business. The emphasis is on "strong brands", "key content verticals", and the allocation of capital for the shareholders' benefit. Not a word about serious issues or news values. There's no reference to journalism for instance.

De Tocqueville's first impression of US journalism had been to describe it as the literature of democracy.<sup>88</sup> Today, it might best be described as the literature of the free market.

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<sup>86</sup> All information from the website of *The New York Times* www.nytimes.com

<sup>87</sup> "Our Company", *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/company.html> Accessed January 5, 2007

<sup>88</sup> de Tocqueville, Alexis, *Democracy in America* vol. 2, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1899, p540

## ORIGINS & OVERVIEW OF IRISH PRINT MEDIA

This research was based on *The New York Times* and was thus heavily focused on American print journalism. The depth of the research limited the examination of the development of the Irish print media; which deserves a study of its own. This section is thus confined to a bare bones context.

While profits have long been the driving force in the US, religion and politics were the key factors in the development of Irish journalism. For instance, the Protestant tradition dominated Irish journalism in the two centuries from 1649 to 1842 (which saw the start of *The Nation*). *The Nation* is believed to have been the first truly popular Irish newspaper with some 250,000 readers by 1843.<sup>89</sup>

During the post-Famine period, several Irish papers were founded to fight for land (with the Land War at its height c1880-1881) and later to endorse Irish nationalist policies. A combination of Catholic political agitation, new technologies and the rise of literacy in English combined to create a dynamic new press which championed Irish nationalism.<sup>90</sup> The 1916 Rising was thus significantly fomented by journalism even though it's known as "A Revolution of Poets".

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<sup>89</sup> Lalor, Brian ed , *Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 2004, p571

<sup>90</sup> Lalor, Brian ed., *Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 2004, p571



By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were three main titles publishing daily; *The Irish Times*, *The Irish Independent* and *The Irish Press*. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were only two; *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Independent*.

*The Irish Times* had been launched in 1859 to reflect the aspirations of the Protestant middle class while *The Irish Independent* was launched much later, in 1905, to reflect the aspirations of the Catholic middle class. They were joined in 1931 by the *Irish Press*, a newspaper established by Eamon De Valera in support of Fianna Fail. The protracted, and peculiar, collapse of the *Irish Press* (See Mark O'Brien, *De Valera, Fianna Fáil and the Irish Press*, 2001) left the other two newspapers in a commanding position. But they were unable to withstand the onslaught from British titles, which, by 2001, accounted for one-third of all daily and Sunday newspapers sold in the Republic.<sup>91</sup>

However, despite all these events, the creation of Independent Newspapers, which is now the largest newspaper group in Ireland deserves the most attention. The group, controlled since 1973 by the Irish billionaire Anthony O'Reilly, and its overwhelming dominance of the Irish market - have changed Irish journalism in ways which are still emerging today.

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<sup>91</sup> Lalor, Brian ed., *Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 2004, p571

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### THE PROPAGANDA MODEL

“The power of the US propaganda system lies in its ability to mobilize an elite consensus, to give the appearance of democratic consent, and to create enough confusion, misunderstanding and apathy in the general population to allow elite programs to go forward.”<sup>92</sup>

There are major things that are suppressed (in the US media) on a level that you couldn't reach in a totalitarian state. Like say, take right after September 11 how quickly the Bush administration announced that it was going to bomb Afghanistan. An international Gallup poll of people's attitudes around the world found there was virtually no support for it (bombing Afghanistan). But that was completely blanked out of the American press.<sup>93</sup>

Sociologists have traditionally examined the news media's role in society from within one of two conceptual frameworks: the dominant and the competitive paradigms. The dominant paradigm can be summarised thus:

Material wealth, concentrated in the hands of a few individuals and organisations, buys ownership of media institutions, allowing direct proprietorial intervention in editorial policy, down to the level of 'spiking' - or, more likely, not commissioning - unwanted or inconvenient stories.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Herman Ed, “The Propaganda Model Revisited,” *Monthly Review*, New York, Vol 48, July-August 1996

<sup>93</sup> Private interview with Noam Chomsky, MIT, December 2004

<sup>94</sup> McNair, Brian, *The Sociology of Journalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p24

The competitive paradigm can be summarized thus;

Diversity of media ownership within a particular capitalist economy guarantees plurality of journalistic viewpoint and the genuine competition of ideas.<sup>95</sup>

Sociologists argue that, apart from direct proprietorial intervention and external economic influence (e.g. in advertising and public relations, both government and private), dominance also exerts itself on a political level, through the regulatory and legal environment in which journalists operate and on a cultural level through the dominant ideology in which the individual journalist has inevitably been immersed.

The extent to which direct proprietorial intervention occurs - in the sense of a proprietor walking onto the newsroom floor to 'spike' a story - is doubtful. Journalists are ethically bound to resist such intervention, as they are to resist undue intervention by advertisers.

These theories<sup>96</sup> form part of the so-called "gatekeeper" models which can be used to analyse the media. Herman and Chomsky argued against gatekeeper models, saying that they "imply that journalists and their sources, rather than proprietors and owners, are the key actors in the production of

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<sup>95</sup> McNair, Brian, *The Sociology of Journalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p20

<sup>96</sup> McNair has since advanced these theories to suggest a new sociology of "cultural chaos" which would emerge from a combination of "technological innovation", the "collapse of social deference toward elites", and the "competitive pressure on media to deal in the new." Nair claims that the signs of "cultural chaos" and its "dissent and intellectual diversity" can be seen in the mainstream media place accorded Noam Chomsky in the USA. However, Chomsky has been ignored by the mainstream US media for years. Over the course of this sample, *The New York Times* published just one opinion piece by Chomsky: "A Wall as a Weapon", Feb 23, 2004, p21

news.”<sup>97</sup> They proposed a “propaganda model” (PM) to analyse the agenda and framing of news production and to explain why it so rarely deviated from the policies set by US corporate and political elites.<sup>98</sup>

Their model, which was introduced in the 1988 book, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*,<sup>99</sup> held that structural influences such as ownership, funding and sourcing, filtered out dissenting voices and created “systemic biases.”<sup>100</sup>

We had long been impressed with the regularity with which the media operate within restricted assumptions, depend heavily and uncritically on elite information sources, and participate in propaganda campaigns helpful to elite interests. In trying to explain why they do this we looked for structural factors as the only possible root of systematic behaviour and performance patterns.<sup>101</sup>

These structural factors, or filters, were the basis of the propaganda model. They referred to ownership and control, funding-by-advertising, the media’s routine reliance on “official sources” in government and business, flak (the ability to mobilise large-scale complaints about news), system-supportive

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<sup>97</sup> McNair, Brian, *News and Journalism in the UK*, Routledge, London New York, 1999, p65

<sup>98</sup> Herring, Eric and Piers Robinson, “Too polemical or too critical? Chomsky on the study of the news media and US foreign policy,” *Review of International Studies*, October 2003, p 553 - 568

<sup>99</sup> The book’s title was itself a reference to the phrase “manufacture of consent” which was coined by the US writer Walter Lippman in his book, *Public Opinion*, (Allen and Unwin, London, 1921)

<sup>100</sup> Herman Ed, “The Propaganda Model Revisited,” *Monthly Review*, July-August 1996 New York

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*

talking heads (the experts who confirm the “official slant”) and the ability to fix society’s “basic principles and ideologies.”<sup>102</sup>

The authors said the filters were controlled by the same “powerful societal interests,”<sup>103</sup> which financed and controlled the mass media. The filters fixed the premises of public discourse, or what the public was allowed to “see, hear and think about.”<sup>104</sup> Thus, powerful private and public interests could control the parameters of debate.

This ability to control the parameters of debate is a feature of “hegemony”, a theory which attempts to explain how dominant groups or individuals, (hegemon) maintain their power. Gramsci believed that hegemony depended on the dominant elite’s ability to persuade the masses to *internalize* elite ideologies as “common sense.”<sup>105</sup>

Herman and Chomsky argued that the dominant elite needed “systematic propaganda” to achieve that consensus and proposed their model to explain how that happened.<sup>106</sup> The authors described the PM as a “guided market system,”<sup>107</sup> or “free market analysis,”<sup>108</sup> because it presupposed that the media’s core

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<sup>102</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York. Pantheon, 2002, Introduction, px1

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, Introduction

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, preface.

<sup>105</sup> Herman Ed, “The Propaganda Model Revisited,” *Monthly Review*, Vol 48, July-August 1996

<sup>106</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent. The Political Economy of the Mass Media* New York: Pantheon, 2002, Introduction, px1

<sup>107</sup> Herman Ed, “The Propaganda Model, A Retrospective,” *Against All Reason, Propaganda, Politics and Power*, Volume 1, 2003. Accessed online at <http://human-nature.com/reason/> December 12, 2003

<sup>108</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent. The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon, 2002, pxii

business was the sale of audiences to other businesses through advertising and that its core motive is profit.

In this way, modern global media, like other large industries, is subject to the same profit-seeking forces; such as the converging interests of globalization, marketplace and national interests. This profit motive ensures that news will always be of lesser importance to profit.

The Propaganda Model was not based on a conspiracy theory. It did not allege any conspiratorial behaviour by individual journalists, nor did it say that journalists were coerced or manipulated at work. Rather, Herman and Chomsky said bias was facilitated by structural factors; such as the hiring and promoting of “right-thinking people” and the internalization of elite priorities in the newsroom.<sup>109</sup>

Personal experience from nearly 20 years in Irish, Australian and American, newsrooms has persuaded me that these filters are so internalised that most journalists are not even aware of them. Former political correspondent for *The New York Times*, Richard Reeves, put it this way:

The deepest fault line in the geography of press standards is self-censorship; reporters and correspondents generally give editors and owners what they want, because what they want is what they print and show.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, Introduction, px1

<sup>110</sup> Reeves, Richard, *What The People Know, Freedom and The Press*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p68

This indirect control means that big ideological issues, such as US foreign policy or market fundamentalism are never considered in mainstream US media and any debate is usually restricted to smaller issues such as costs and tactics. For example, during the Vietnam era, the larger questions of US actions and intent in Vietnam were never on the table. Any dissent about US foreign policy was limited to American - not Vietnamese - costs (lives and money) or tactics (the execution of the policy was a failure, not the policy itself).

Criticisms of the Propaganda Model run the gamut from “highly elective...confusing... propaganda,”<sup>111</sup> to Oliver Boyd Barrett who argued that the model was actually too weak on the media complicity during wartime.<sup>112</sup>

(The) "propaganda model which helps account for media complicity with propaganda, does not sufficiently address evidence of direct state penetration and the covert control of supposedly independent, privately-owned media."<sup>113</sup>

The PM never claimed to predict the effect of the media on the audience. Instead, it offered a model for predicting media performance under certain conditions. Chomsky likened it to the way a scientist would study a molecule:

“You take a look at the structure and then make some hypothesis based on the structure as to what the media product is likely to look like. Then you investigate the media product and see how well it conforms to the hypotheses.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Lang, Kurt and Gladys Engel Lang, “Noam Chomsky and the Manufacture of Consent for American Foreign Policy”, *Political Communication*, 2004, Jan/March 2004, p93-101

<sup>112</sup> Boyd-Barrett, Oliver. "Understanding," *Reporting War. Journalism in Wartime*, Ed. Stuart Allan and Barbie Zelizer, Routledge, New York, 2004, p25

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p39

<sup>114</sup> Chomsky, Noam, “What Makes Mainstream Media Mainstream.” From a talk at the Z Media Institute June 1997

## THE PROPAGANDA MODEL FILTERS

The filters which news must pass through before it's "fit to print",<sup>115</sup> are:

- Ownership and profit motive
- Funding/advertising
- Sourcing
- Flak
- Anti-communist ideology

### *FILTER 1: OWNERSHIP AND PROFIT MOTIVE*

This filter referred to the inherent clash of interest between the media's perceived role as a watchdog of the elite, and its own role within that elite. It emphasised the shared common interests between the "size, ownership and profit orientation of the mass media", and other big businesses and government.

The cost of establishing a media company is so prohibitive that information is literally in the hands of wealthy individuals or corporations. In recent years, a wave of mergers and mega-mergers has resulted in a highly consolidated and centralised media landscape.

In 1988, Herman and Chomsky counted 24 major players in the US media market,<sup>116</sup> by 2002, there were just nine.<sup>117</sup> In 2003, Ben Bagdikian found

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<sup>115</sup> Slogan of the *New York Times*



that just five global firms, Time Warner, Disney, News Corporation, Viacom and Bertelsmann, owned most of the media output.<sup>118</sup> As Bagdikian put it:

No imperial ruler in past history had multiple media channels that included television and satellite channels that can permeate entire societies with controlled sights and sound.<sup>119</sup>

This was quite a change from 1967 when three government commissioners had vetoed a merger of ABC News and the International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) because, as Commissioner Nicholas Johnson, said:

It would have placed this...mass media, and one of the largest purveyors of news and opinion in America, under the control of one of the largest conglomerate corporations in the world... the integrity of the news judgment of ABC might be affected by the economic interests of ITT...a company whose daily activities require it to manipulate governments at the highest levels would face unending temptation to manipulate ABC news.<sup>120</sup>

Johnson understood that media needed to be kept apart from big business.

I would urge the minimal standard that no accumulation of media should be permitted without a specific and convincing showing of a continuing countervailing social benefit. For no one has a higher calling in an increasingly complex free society bent on self-government than he who informs and moves the people.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, p3

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p12

<sup>118</sup> Bagdikian, Ben, *The New Media Monopoly*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2004, p3

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p4

<sup>120</sup> Johnson, Nicholas, "The media barons and the public interest", *The Atlantic*, June 1968, p329

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p346

Herman and Chomsky agreed with Johnson. They believed that the profit motive would affect news performance and that owner's and shareholder's interests could take precedence over journalism. In addition, the corporate dependence on favourable government policies provided a powerful, albeit subtle, form of control. As Reeves wrote in 1980:

Tax benefits, merger approvals or investigations and prosecutions were becoming more useful tools of government control over information than a blatant and clumsy censorship ever could be.<sup>122</sup>

Given that the major mass media have such shared common interests with business and government; it is not surprising that this relationship could affect news choices.<sup>123</sup> In addition, the authors wrote that the first filter would also exclude any information which would challenge either the power of the owners or the system that kept the owners in power.<sup>124</sup>

## *FILTER 2: ADVERTISING*

The second filter referred to the mass media's reliance on advertising as a source of revenue. This dependence had made advertising a "de facto licensing authority" because newspapers which failed to attract advertising would fail to survive in the "free market."<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Reeves, Reeves, *American Journey*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982, p80

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, p14

<sup>124</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* New York Pantheon, 2002, p13

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, p14, quoted in Curran and Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, p31

Before advertising became the major source of revenue, newspapers had to cover their costs through their circulation sales. Advertising changed that relationship because newspapers which attracted advertising could afford to sell their publication at a lower price. This resulted in the marginalisation, if not outright collapse, of newspapers which relied on sales alone.

Herman and Chomsky said this was a natural consequence of the free market system, but not because readers had “voted with their pocketbooks.”

With advertising, the free market does not yield a neutral system in which final buyer choice decides. The *advertisers’* choice influences media prosperity and survival.<sup>126</sup>

Also, the content of the media is dictated by the advertiser as they want to advertise to a receptive audience. The authors cited the case of Britain’s *Daily Herald*, which folded in the early 1960s. In its last year of production, it had 4.7 million readers, which was almost double the readership of *The Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian* combined.<sup>127</sup> However, its readership was mostly made up of trade union members and they were unreceptive to advertising which kept advertisers from doing business in the Herald. Subsequently, the *Herald* was killed off and re-launched in 1964 as *The Sun*, (now owned by Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation) and aimed at the “young and upwardly-mobile, including career-oriented women.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, p14

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, quoted in “Advertising and the Press” in James Curran , ed., *The British Press: A Manifesto* (London Macmillan, 1978) pp 252- 255

<sup>128</sup> Douglas Torin, “*Forty years of The Sun*”, *BBC News Magazine*, September 14, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3654446.stm> Accessed on October 16, 2004

In 2003, *The New York Times* launched a marketing campaign to assure advertisers that its affluent readers were “buyers, not shoppers.” The Sunday edition of *The Times* looks more like a high-end shopping catalogue than a newspaper. For instance, ads for upmarket department stores such as Saks measure 20.5 inches tall by 10.5 inches wide, leaving just two inches for news.<sup>129</sup>

The difficulty for journalism in an advertising-supported system is two-fold. The publication needs to attract a certain type of audience and it also needs to provide a certain type of content which does not interfere with the “buying mood.”<sup>130</sup> The advertisers’ demand for “soft stories” limits the availability of hard news. Herman and Chomsky predicted that the advertising-based system would increase advertising time and “marginalise or eliminate altogether programming that has significant public-affairs content.”<sup>131</sup> They pointed to the experience of the US public television station, WNET, which lost corporate funding in 1985 after showing a documentary called *Hungry for Profit* which criticised multinational activities in the developing world.<sup>132</sup>

A more recent example occurred in 2002 when ABC tried to cancel *Nightline*, the only traditional news show left on national US television. ABC (itself owned by Disney) wanted to replace *Nightline* with light entertainment; not because *Nightline* was unpopular, but because a lighter show would earn more advertising dollars.

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<sup>129</sup> Correspondingly, there is very little news in the Sunday edition of *The New York Times*.

<sup>130</sup> Bagdikian, Ben, *The New Media Monopoly*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2004, p242

<sup>131</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon, 2002, p16

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, p17

In addition, Nightline's audience was mainly over-35 and thus considered "brand-averse" in industry language. US media watchdog FAIR said:

If Disney/ABC replaces Nightline with more entertainment programming, it will be strong evidence of the threat to journalism represented by TV networks that have been taken over by entertainment conglomerates. The show is in danger simply because it doesn't attract the kind of audience that big advertisers most want to sell to.<sup>133</sup>

The move eventually fell apart because of contract issues but the episode highlighted the extent of the advertising industry's power and control. Again, this is not the result of a conspiracy theory; this is the result of the normal workings of the "free market."

Another example of advertising control could be seen in the reaction to US comedian's Bill Maher's comments about the September 11 hijackers. Maher, speaking on his show, *Politically Incorrect*, on September 17, 2001, said:

We have been the cowards lobbing cruise missiles from 2,000 miles away. That's cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building, say what you want about it, it's not cowardly.<sup>134</sup>

Two of the show's biggest advertisers FedEx and Sears pulled their ads and the show was eventually cancelled in May 2002.<sup>135</sup> Maher's comments also

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<sup>133</sup> <http://www.fair.org/press-releases/nightline-letterman.html>

<sup>134</sup> Armstrong, Mark, "Maher causes 'Cowardly' Flap," EOnline! Sept 20, 2001 [www.eonline.com/News/Items/0,1,8852,00.html](http://www.eonline.com/News/Items/0,1,8852,00.html) Accessed May 4, 2003

<sup>135</sup> Carter, Bill, "ABC to End 'Politically Incorrect'," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2002, pC8

sparked this unsettling comment from the then White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer: "People have to watch what they say and watch what they do."<sup>136</sup> Maher had flown straight into the twin towers of media bias; money and politics.

The advertising filter also worked to exclude any ideology which challenged specific advertisers or advertising in general. Just as media in single-party states cannot avoid control by the state, media in single-ideology states cannot avoid control by that ideology; in the developed capitalist economies of the West, this ideology means business.

### *FILTER 3: SOURCING*

The third filter was the reliance on official sources for news. Again this pointed to common shared interests between the media and the elite. The media needed a dependable flow of news stories, and the elite interests (business and government) needed a dependable PR tool.

This relationship is facilitated by gathering sources and journalists into the places where "significant news often occurs, where important rumours and leaks abound and where regular press conferences are held."<sup>137</sup>

In the US, reporters are placed on beats at the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department and regional government and police centres. In Ireland, the

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<sup>136</sup> Carter, Bill and Barringer, Felicity, *Nation Challenged Speech and Expression in Patriotic Time. Dissent is Muted. New York Times*, September 28, 2001, p.1

<sup>137</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon, 2002, p18 and p19

beats would include police, local and national governments, Department of Justice etc. This creates an elite level of “official sources” and also gives such figures a standard of credibility.

Official sources make it their business to know the mass media’s “routines and dependency”,<sup>138</sup> indeed, many are former journalists. The “official sources” present their information well. A press release from an official source will invariably be written in an easily-edited format and will include layout-friendly photographs in portrait and landscape modes.

In 2003, Herman described the power of the American PR industry thus:

This industry understands how to utilize journalistic conventions to serve its own ends. Studies of news sources reveal that a significant proportion of news originates in public relations releases. There are, by one count, 20,000 more public relations agents working to doctor the news today than there are journalists writing it.<sup>139</sup>

Mark Fishman found that reporters were predisposed to treat official sources as factual because journalists were also part of this “normative order of authorised knowers.”

Reporters operate with the attitude that officials ought to know what it is their job to know...<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid, p23

<sup>139</sup> Herman Ed, “The Propaganda Model, A Retrospective,” *Against All Reason, Propaganda, Politics and Power*, Volume 1, 2003. Accessed online at <http://human-nature.com/reason/> December 12, 2003

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, pp 19 & 22. Quoted in Fishman, Mark, *Manufacturing the News*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980, p143, 144, 145, 153

This symbiotic relationship between journalists and their sources means that many reporters feel obligated to try not to offend their sources. As Herman and Chomsky wrote:

It is very difficult to call authorities, on whom one depends for daily news, liars, even if they tell whoppers... the primary sources may be offended and may even threaten the media using them.<sup>141</sup>

This symbiotic relationship between journalists and their sources has also shaped the supply of so-called “experts”, the talking heads who are seen as the ultimate in “authorized knowers.” Herman and Chomsky provided comprehensive evidence that the influence from these “authorized knowers” pervaded all levels of the newsgathering business, drowning out other voices.

For instance, a 1986 analysis of experts on a PBS<sup>142</sup> TV news show found that nearly 70 per cent came from government or conservative elements or conservative “think tanks.”<sup>143</sup> A 2003 analysis of NPR<sup>144</sup> radio found elite sources still dominated the airwaves. The survey, by the media watchdog, FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) found 64 per cent of experts were either

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p22

<sup>142</sup> PBS (Public Broadcasting Service), headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, is a non-profit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 348 public television stations. PBS serves nearly 90 million people each week. Source, www.pbs.org Accessed September 14, 2006

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p24

<sup>144</sup> NPR (National Public Radio) produces and distributes non-commercial news, talk, and entertainment. A privately supported, not-for-profit membership organization, NPR serves about 26 million Americans each week in partnership with more than 800 independently operated, non-commercial public radio stations. Source www.npr.org Accessed September 14, 2006



“government officials, professional experts or corporate representatives”,<sup>145</sup> and that conservative think tanks were the most likely to be quoted.<sup>146</sup>

The authors also quoted the success of the World War I “US Committee on Public Information” or Creel Commission, as a prime example of sourcing. The committee “discovered that one of the best means of controlling news was flooding news channels with ‘facts’, or what amounted to official information.”<sup>147</sup>

#### *FILTER 4: FLAK*

The first three filters were based on analysis of standard market mechanisms. Flak was different as it referred to an intentional effort to control information by a barrage of negative responses to a statement or programme. Such responses could include government moves, letters, emails, phone calls, petitions, speeches, or even the threat of lawsuits. Herman and Chomsky said this would usually be carried out by powerful concerns, and was aimed at discrediting organizations or individuals who challenged elite assumptions.<sup>148</sup>

Large-scale flak can be extremely costly to media, especially those which depend on advertising. The Bill Maher controversy demonstrated how quickly

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<sup>145</sup> Rendall, Steve and Daniel Butterworth, “How Public is Public Radio,” *Extra!* June 2004 p16.

<sup>146</sup> Dolny, Michael, “Think Tank Coverage,” *Extra!* June 2004

<sup>147</sup> Herman Ed, & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* Pantheon, New York, 2002, p23, Quoted in Vaughan, Stephen, L, *Holdng Fast the Inner Lines*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1980, p194

<sup>148</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, New York Pantheon, 2002, p26

advertisers would react. Maher's comments scared off Sears and FedEx because they would have been afraid of a potential boycott.

Herman and Chomsky found that during the McCarthy years,<sup>149</sup> much of the US media was "effectively coerced into quiescence and blacklisting of employees" for that same fear; an organized boycott would force advertisers to stop supporting shows which challenged the Red Scare.<sup>150</sup>

Flak has been nicknamed Astroturf in the US, because of its deliberate attempt to look like a grassroots effort. For example, in January 2003, when the White House was secretly preparing America for war, a flood of letters appeared in 75 newspapers in praise of President Bush. The letters had been organised by the Republican National Committee through its website; [gopteamleader.com](http://gopteamleader.com).<sup>151</sup>

This screenshot (overleaf) shows how simple it was to generate flak. Visitors to the site could select from a scripted email and send it to their local media outlets. The RNC had taken all the hard work out of being a grassroots activist.<sup>152</sup>

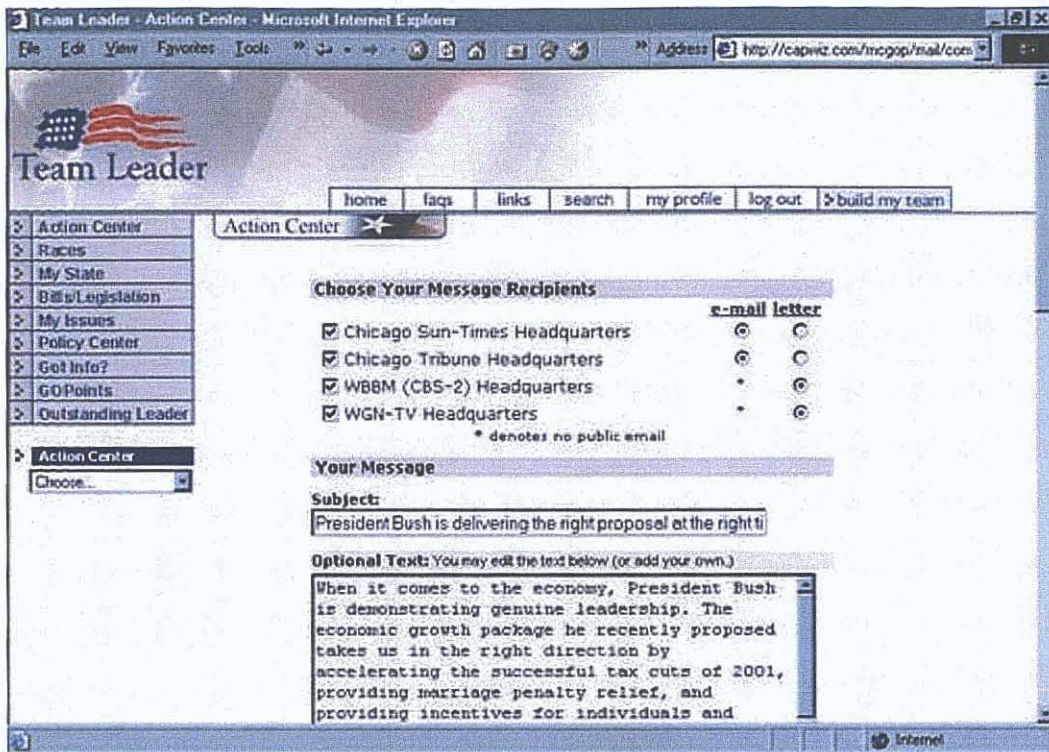
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<sup>149</sup> McCarthyism described a period of intense anti-Communist suspicion in the US from the late 1940s to the late 1950s. The term derives from Irish American U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy

<sup>150</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, New York: Pantheon, 2002, p26

<sup>151</sup> Klein William S, Faking the voice of the people, *Christian Science Monitor*, January 31, 2003 <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0131/p11s01-coop.html> Accessed on October 15, 2004

<sup>152</sup> Screenshot from the Republican National Committee website accessed on <http://gwobdine.tripod.com/rncspam.html> Accessed on October 15, 2004



### *FILTER 5: ANTI-COMMUNISM*

It (the fifth filter) provided journalists with a ready-made template with which to ‘understand’ global events and provided the political elite with a powerful rhetorical tool with which to criticise anyone who questioned US foreign policy.<sup>153</sup>

The fifth filter described how the fear of one ideology, in this case communism, could be used to maintain support of another, usually capitalism. The collapse of the Soviet Union made that anti-ideology redundant. Since September 11, 2001, the fear of “terrorism” has taken its place. This is probably the most important filter in this research as the fear of “terrorism,” which as

<sup>153</sup> Herring, Eric and Piers Robinson, “Too polemical or too critical? Chomsky on the study of the news media and US foreign policy,” *Review of International Studies*, October 2003, p 553 - 568

Sontag had said, was a far more flexible concept,<sup>154</sup> than “communism,” really drove public support for every foreign policy decision taken by the US administration after September 11.

During the McCarthy years, the media framed the “Red scare” as “a dichotomised world of Communist and anti-Communist powers, with gains and losses allocated to contesting sides, and rooting for ‘our side’ considered an entirely legitimate news practice.”<sup>155</sup>

The filter drew a veil over the coverage of US foreign policy because it pointed to the triumph of communism as the worst imaginable result and mobilised US public support for any “anti-Communist” action. It also helped create opposition to anyone supporting social democracy as they could be accused on “playing into Communist hands” and being “soft on Communists.”<sup>156</sup>

Chomsky believes that himself and Ed Herman “really did a dumb thing” in 1988 by not making anti-terrorism a stronger part of the filter. However, the fifth filter was always about the way in which citizens are encouraged to support the free market; Chomsky called it “market fundamentalism.”<sup>157</sup> It’s almost a moot point as to which ideology citizens are scared of, the point is to encourage fear. In this way, the majority can be persuaded to support the dominant ideology even if it is against their interests.

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<sup>154</sup> Sontag, Susan, “Between Europe and America,” Acceptance speech at the Friedenspreis prize, Frankfurt Book Fair, October, 2003

<sup>155</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* New York: Pantheon, 2002, p30

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, p29

<sup>157</sup> Private interview with Chomsky, MIT, December 2004, See Appendix

The dominant ideology is legitimised by the use of code words. On the night of September 11, 2001, the US President George W Bush, introduced what would become the defining code of the fifth filter; the idea of a “war on terror,” or “war against terrorism” as it appeared in its first draft;

America and our friends and allies join with  
all those who want peace and security in the world.  
And we stand together to win the war against  
terrorism.<sup>158</sup>

As Herman and Chomsky wrote in 1988, the filter meant that;

We would anticipate the uncritical  
acceptance of certain premises in dealing with self  
and friends - such as that one's own state and  
leaders speak peace and democracy, oppose  
terrorism and tell the truth - premises which will  
not be applied in treating enemy states.<sup>159</sup>

In addition, they also found that when such anti-ideology fervour was aroused, there was a drop in the demand for “serious evidence” and “charlatans can thrive as evidential sources.”<sup>160</sup> This would be amply borne out by the coverage of the “war on terror” in *The New York Times*.

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<sup>158</sup> “A DAY OF TERROR; Bush's Remarks to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks,” Transcript of Bush speech, *The New York Times*, September 12, 2001, p4

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, pp 34, 35

<sup>160</sup> Herman, Ed & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* New York: Pantheon, 2002, p30

## DICHOTOMISATION AND PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS

A propaganda system will consistently portray people abused in enemy states as worthy victims, whereas those treated with equal or greater severity by its own government or clients will be unworthy.<sup>161</sup>

The Propaganda Model proposed that the individual or additive effects of the filters limited the range of news topics, thus causing dichotomisation and propaganda campaigns. The authors predicted the following outcomes:

- Stories which were “hurtful to large interests,” would “peter out quickly, if they surface at all.”<sup>162</sup>
- Official sources would take precedence over messages from dissidents or “weak, unorganized individuals or groups.”<sup>163</sup>
- The media would disseminate the official line whereas any dissent to the official line would elicit powerful flak. Conversely, “if the theme collapses of its own burden of fabrication, the mass media will quietly fold their tents and move on to another topic.”<sup>164</sup>
- The dichotomisation campaigns would be so effective that “the result is the same as if a commissar had instructed the media; ‘Concentrate on the victims of enemy powers and forget about the victims of friends’.”<sup>165</sup>

It is often suggested that the media ignores certain groups of victims because they are “faraway” and “so unlike ourselves that they are easy to

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161 Ibid, p37

162 Ibid, p32

163 Ibid, p30

164 Ibid, p30

165 Ibid, p32

disregard.”<sup>166</sup> However, Herman and Chomsky empirically proved that the main reason certain victims generated “sustained news campaigns,”<sup>167</sup> depended on whether or not US interests were involved.

The authors picked paired examples of similar events and then analysed the coverage in *The New York Times*, *Time* and *Newsweek* and CBS News.<sup>168</sup> They measured the column inches of the stories, how often they appeared, if they appeared on the front page, and how many editorials were written.

They predicted that obvious differences would emerge in quality, quantity, placement, tone and context, which would indicate the issue’s importance. The research into the “unworthy victims” is discussed here, along with *The New York Times* analysis.<sup>169</sup>

### *THE “UNWORTHY VICTIMS” IN THE NEW YORK TIMES*

A priest murdered in Latin America is worth less than 100<sup>th</sup> of a priest murdered in Poland.<sup>170</sup>

The first case study compared the US mass media’s treatment of the 1984 murder of the Polish priest, Fr Jerzy Popieluszko, and the murders of a sampling of 100 religious workers in Latin America between 1964 and 1985.<sup>171</sup> The details

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid, p39

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, p30

<sup>168</sup> These were believed to be the quality media of the era

<sup>169</sup> The other media outlets have been excluded as the research is based on *The New York Times*

<sup>170</sup> Herman, Ed and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, New York: Pantheon, 2002, p39

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, p38

of the murders were roughly the same as all were believed to have been murdered by their respective states.

However, there was one crucial difference; the US was propping up the murderous regimes in Latin America, whereas Communist Russia was propping up the one in Poland. The Propaganda Model thus anticipated that Fr Popieluszko was a worthy victim whereas the others were not.

This expectation was amply fulfilled in the media's performance. Popieluszko's death received disproportionately more attention in the US. It accounted for 78 articles, 1183 column inches, 10 front page articles and three editorials in *The New York Times*.<sup>172</sup>

The 100 religious broke down into the following groups;

- Archbishop Oscar Romero, El Salvador (March 24, 1980)
- Four American women; three nuns and a lay missionary, El Salvador (Dec 2, 1980)
- 72 religious, Latin America (1964 - 1978)
- 23 religious, Guatemala (Jan 1980 - Feb 1985)

The murder of an Archbishop, shot dead while saying mass at a cancer hospice, was a huge story, and the political implications were enormous.<sup>173</sup> Romero was murdered just weeks after he had begged US President Jimmy

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid, p84

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, p48



Carter to stop funding the ruling junta; the same junta which was believed to have murdered him. This issue was ignored in the US media. “Any possible connection to the crimes, was, of course, ‘far out’, and could not be raised.”<sup>174</sup>

Archbishop Romero was doing exactly the same work as the Solidarity activist Fr Popieluszko yet his murder did not result in the same quality or quantity of news coverage. *The New York Times* ran 16 articles, just four on the front page and no editorials. In fact, the 100 deaths would pass “without a single editorial denunciation for the murderers of the unworthy victims.”<sup>175</sup>

The authors concluded that “the only plausible rationale for the US cover-up is that the administration wanted to minimize adverse publicity concerning the performance of its murderous client.”<sup>176</sup>

The percentages and column inches are presented below for contrast.

<i>The New York Times</i> ; Coverage of Selected Murders		
	Popieluszko	Romero
Total Articles	78	16 (20.5% of Popieluszko)
Column Inches	1,183	219 (18.5% of Popieluszko)
Front Page Articles	10	4 (40% of Popieluszko)
Editorials	3	0 (0% of Popieluszko)

Once they had demonstrated the quantitative analysis, the authors carried out a qualitative analysis. Contemporaneous accounts, such as this one from *The New York Times* detailed the savagery inflicted on Fr Popieluszko:

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, p55

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, p39

<sup>176</sup> Ibid p 69

The sources who saw the priest's body on Tuesday said it was badly bruised, indicating he had been beaten after he was kidnapped on a highway near the town of Tournon. The autopsy also showed that Fr Popieluszko had been gagged at the mouth and apparently tied with a rope from neck to feet so that if he struggled he would strangle himself.<sup>177</sup>

However, when the authors examined the 100 other reports, the "drama conveyed in the accounts of Popieluszko's murder was entirely missing."<sup>178</sup> For example, *The New York Times's* coverage of the four murdered American women was "very succinct" and "omitted many details." They found nothing to compare with what they found in Raymond Bonner's account.<sup>179</sup>

In the crude grave, stacked on top of each other were the bodies of the four women. The first hauled out of the hole was Jean Donovan, twenty-seven years old, a lay missionary from Cleveland. Her face had been blown away by a high calibre bullet that had been fired into the back of her head. Her pants were unzipped; her underwear twisted round her ankles. When area peasants found her, she was nude from the waist down. They had tried to replace the garments before burial. Then came Dorothy Kazel, a forty-year-old Ursuline nun also from Cleveland. At the bottom of the pit were Maryknoll nuns Ita Ford, forty, and Maura Clarke, both from New York. All the women had been executed at close range. The peasants who found the women said that one had her underpants stuffed in her mouth; another's had been tied over her eyes. All had been raped.<sup>180</sup>

The murders merited little attention in *The New York Times*; three front page articles and zero editorials.<sup>181</sup> The authors called it a virtual news black-out

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<sup>177</sup> *The New York Times*, December 29, 1984,

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, p61

<sup>179</sup> Bonner, Ray, *Weakness and Deceit*, Times Books, New York, 1984

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, p62 Quoted from Bonner, Ray, *Weakness and Deceit*, Times Books, New York, 1984

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*,p40

and “a matter of editorial choice. The drama is there for the asking – only the press concern is missing.”<sup>182</sup>

Reports of Popieluszko’s death emphasised that he had been “murdered by officials of the state and this was intolerable,” whereas the churchwomen were “victims of the mindless, increasing violence” in US-backed El Salvador. As the authors noted, there was no comment about the source of the “increasing violence” in El Salvador, or even that the US backed the regime.<sup>183</sup> Again, a table is presented here for contrast;

<i>The New York Times; Coverage of Selected Murders</i>		
	Popieluszko	Four American women
Total Articles	78	26 (33% of Popieluszko)
Column Inches	1,183	201.5 (17% of Popieluszko)
Front Page Articles	10	3 (40% of Popieluszko)
Editorials	3	0 (0% of Popieluszko)

The paltry coverage of the deaths of the Archbishop and the four American nuns extended to the other 95 religious, with just one front page article and no editorials, even though another three US citizens were murdered. Herman and Chomsky concluded that the US support for the repressive regimes of Latin America precluded any media debate about the victims there. The overall tables are presented here for contrast.

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid,p40

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, pages 61 to 63

<i>The New York Times; Coverage of Selected Murders</i>			
	Popieluszko	72 religious Latin America	23 religious Guatemala
Total Articles	78	8 (10.3% Popieluszko)	7 (9% of Popieluszko)
Column Inches	1,183	117.5 (9.9% Popieluszko)	66.5 (5.6% Popieluszko)
Front Page	10	1 (10% Popieluszko)	0 (0% Popieluszko)
Editorials	3	0 (0% Popieluszko)	0 (0% Popieluszko)

The 23 religious people killed in Guatemala between 1980 and 1985 did not merit a single front page or editorial, even though an American citizen, Stanley Rother was among the dead. Some 40,000 people were believed to have disappeared in Guatemala since the 1960s, with 1978-1985 referred to as the “holocaust years.” The number of civilians murdered ... “may have approached 100,000, with a style of killing reminiscent of Pol Pot.”<sup>184</sup>

The final case study compared the coverage of Popieluszko’s murder to four other murders in Guatemala. They included the torture and murder of a young man (Hector Orlando Gomez), a young mother (Maria Rosario Godoy de Cuevas), her 21-year-old brother, and her two-year-old son.<sup>185</sup>

De Cuevas and Gomez worked with the Mutual Support Group (GAM) in support of the families of the “disappeared.” De Cuevas was abducted and murdered while Gomez was abducted with her brother and her son in a separate incident. When the Gomez bodies were found, “her breasts had bite marks and her underclothing was bloody; her two-year-old son had had his fingernails

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p40 and p75

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p82

pulled out.”<sup>186</sup> Their deaths did not merit an editorial or a front page article in *The New York Times*. There were five inside articles measuring 80 inches, none of which mentioned the condition of the bodies or that the child’s fingernails had been pulled out.<sup>187</sup> This was how the paper reported the discovery of the bodies:

“The body of the secretary of the Support Group for Families of the Disappeared was found Friday in a ravine nine miles south of Guatemala city, according to a spokesman for the group. The bodies of her brother and young son were also in the car.”<sup>188</sup>

The meagre qualitative attention paid to the GAM murders was more than matched by the scant quantitative attention. All four deaths merited just five articles, none of which were on the front page, and a total of 80 column inches of copy. There were no editorials and a table is presented for contrast:

<i>The New York Times; Coverage of Selected Murders</i>		
	Popieluszko	GAM murders
Total Articles	78	5 (6.4% of Popieluszko)
Column Inches	1,183	80 (6.8% of Popieluszko)
Front Page Articles	10	0 (0% of Popieluszko)
Editorials	3	0 (0% of Popieluszko)

Herman and Chomsky clearly demonstrated that the US mass media would play down any atrocities which occurred within the US sphere of influence and highlight those which occurred in “enemy states”, such as Poland.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid,p82

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p83

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, p83

Fr Popieluszko's murder unquestionably deserved sustained news coverage, but so did the assassination of an Archbishop, the abduction, torture and murder of a mother and toddler, the rape and murder of four American women, and the murders of the other "unworthy" victims in Latin America.

This dichotomisation campaign was equally prominent in the coverage of the Vietnam War which was discussed at length in *Manufacturing Consent*. The "unworthiest" victims of US foreign policy may well have been the estimated 3-million-plus Vietnamese who were murdered by the Americans.<sup>189</sup> However, the authors found that the "massacre of the innocents was a problem only among emotional or irresponsible types."<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid, p169

<sup>190</sup> Ibid,p238

## THE PROPAGANDA MODEL REVISITED

The Propaganda Model has attracted a wide range of criticism since it was published in 1988. As Ed Herman said, mainstream critics have accused the authors of “conspiracy theory,” and failing to take account of “media professionalism and objectivity.”<sup>191</sup> Philip Schlesinger said the model was “highly deterministic,” with “a straightforwardly functionalistic conception of ideology,”<sup>192</sup> while Jeffery Klaehn, in a detailed critique of the model, could only fault it for failing to theorise audience effects.<sup>193</sup> However, as both Herman and Chomsky have repeatedly said, “It is a model of media behaviour and performance, not media effects.”<sup>194</sup>

Herman responded to Schlesinger directly in a 1996 essay where he also addressed the mainstream criticisms. Both allegations (conspiracy theory and media professionalism) rest on the assumption that journalists are powerful individual actors and can thus influence the media from within. Herman reiterated that the Propaganda Model was based on external structural factors rather than internal actors. He did agree that individual journalists *contributed* to the propaganda model (by internalizing elite priorities), but added that this was, again, a result of structural factors.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Herman, Ed, “The Propaganda Model: Revisited,” *Monthly Review*, July, 1996

<sup>192</sup> Schlesinger, Philip, “From Production to Propaganda?” *Media Culture and Society*, Vol 11, pp 283- 306, 1989

<sup>193</sup> Klaehn, Jeffery, “A Critical Review and Assessment of Herman and Chomsky’s ‘Propaganda Model’,” *European Journal of Communication*, Vol 17, No 2 pp 147-172, 2002

<sup>194</sup> Herman, Ed, “The Propaganda Model: Revisited,” *Monthly Review*, July, 1996

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*

Herman singled out Schlesinger for his detailed summaries and discussion, but rejected Schlesinger's claims of "determinism," and "functionalism," as "dubious." Herman said that any model would, of necessity, involve "deterministic elements," and that Schlesinger seemed to be contradicting himself by seeing merit in the analysis of "micro-corporate" influences of the media while downplaying the importance of a model which analysed global-corporate influences.<sup>196</sup>

Herman ended his essay by pointing to what he called the "enhanced relevance" of the Propaganda Model in media debate given that the first two filters; ownership and advertising have become so much more important.<sup>197</sup> Klaehn, who closed his critique by emphasising Herman and Chomsky's "forceful and convincing" analysis, also argued for the inclusion of the model in scholarly media debates.

This thesis applied an amended version of the Propaganda Model over the performance of *The New York Times* in its coverage of the "global war on terror" to see if there was a slant in favour of the US administration. The front page headlines and photographs about the "war on terror", along with the editorials, were examined for the emergence of groups of worthy or unworthy victims, dichotomisation campaigns, and to see how closely the newspaper reflected the US administration's point of view.

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid

<sup>197</sup> Ibid



The coverage was then compared with the coverage in *The Irish Times* to see if any differences had emerged. *The Irish Times* was chosen because I worked for 20 years in Irish journalism and *The Irish Times* is Ireland's paper of record. In addition, both newspapers publish in the English language which makes analysis easier to interpret. Ireland was also a strong supporter of the US action in Afghanistan and Iraq which would indicate that both governments would take broadly similar positions.

The Propaganda Model was chosen for the analysis because its quantitative and qualitative method is an empirical way of measuring the data. However, there were two issues which were updated for this research; the fifth filter (anti-communism) in the initial model was updated and the photographs and the placement of stories were included.

Chomsky has conceded that the fifth filter was a mistake on their part

The filter was much too narrow, the anti-Communist filter. It applied in the 1980s but now it's just much too narrow. Market fundamentalism is a similar filter and that's unbelievable... We really did a dumb thing in regard to anti-terrorism (*by not making it a stronger component of the fifth filter*). Both of us, Ed and I, knew about this, we'd been writing about it for 10 years, so how we didn't look at this, I can't understand, but yes, that's another part of the filter.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Interview with Noam Chomsky, MIT, Cambridge, MA, Dec 10, 2004

This research is based on the front pages of the respective newspapers and thus included the front page placement of certain stories plus the frequency and placement of photographs. Neither element was included in *Manufacturing Consent* which counted the column inches, frequency and importance of certain stories.

The Propaganda Model; and the presumption that the corporate media will not bite the hand that feeds it, is based on the US media but both authors believe it would apply to any country with a similar economic structure. Chomsky said he would be “amazed” if it didn’t apply to Ireland. “It’s not specifically limited to the US. In fact, every place I’ve looked carefully comes out the same.”<sup>199</sup>

In 1998, a senior news editor in the *Sunday Independent* told me, paraphrasing former British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, that the refugees leaving Kosovo were not a story because; “they are a far away people of whom we know little.” However, once the US and NATO had depicted Serbia as the aggressor, the Kosovo refugees began to attract heavyweight media attention, particularly in the *Sunday Independent*. According to Herman and Chomsky’s model, the change in attitude was to be expected. The refugees’ circumstances had not changed, their status had. They had moved from being “unworthy” to “worthy” victims.

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid

This pattern is constant. Sustained news campaigns are reserved for stories which do not challenge elite interests. Thus, with corporate hegemony firmly entrenched in both Ireland and America, we hear a lot about the “welfare scroungers,” and very little about corporate theft. We hear a lot about the “triumphs of globalism” and the profits for Western companies, and very little about its victims, such as the 11,499 people who died at work in China in the first nine months of 2003.<sup>200</sup>

This disconnection highlights the way in which the mass media influences those beliefs; setting the cultural, social and political agenda. The media is also creating a new kind of Gramscian “common sense,” a common sense at odds with the common experience of the common man.

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<sup>200</sup> Kahn Joseph, “China Blames State-Owned Company in Gas Blast That Killed 233,” *The New York Times*, January 4, 2004, p3

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The most effective propaganda relies on framing rather than on falsehood...Framing is achieved in the way the news is packaged, the amount of exposure, the placement (front page or buried within, lead story or last), the tone of presentation (sympathetic or slighting), the headlines and photographs...<sup>201</sup>

The methodology is beholden to the Propaganda Model and detailed content analysis, both qualitative and quantitative. The date range of this sample (September 12, 2001 to November 27, 2004) was too large to include a thorough listing of all the headlines and captions in the appendices.<sup>202</sup> Subsequently, a selection of the most prominent headlines will be included in the body text to show how these conformed to the Propaganda Model.

The Propaganda Model predicted that the commercial mass media could be expected to behave in a specific manner under certain conditions (or filters). The authors chose paired groups of events and then subjected the coverage of those events to an empirical analysis to see if the coverage differed in tone and content.

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<sup>201</sup> Parenti, Michael, "Monopoly Media Manipulation," May 2001, Available from <http://www.michaelparenti.org/MonopolyMedia.html> Accessed October 26, 2005

<sup>202</sup> Excerpts from the research will be available on the internet version

Herman and Chomsky's analysis examined:

- The frequency of a certain topic in articles and editorials
- The column inches allotted to the story or editorial
- The placement (page one, inside or back page)
- The tone (outraged, indifferent and variations on the theme)

This research was based on an updated version of their methodology and measured the following:

- The frequency of certain topics in the headlines of articles and editorials
- The frequency of such front page or editorial headlines
- The placement on the front page (above the fold, or below the fold<sup>203</sup>)
- The frequency of certain topics in front page photographs and captions
- The tone (outraged, indifferent and variations on the theme)

The primary content analysis was restricted to headlines as the sample of 1,000 days was too large to try and measure the column inches of certain stories. However, headlines are supposed to indicate the content, and, in the case of *The New York Times*, there is ample space in the headlines and sub-heads for content analysis.

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<sup>203</sup> The place on a broadsheet newspaper where it folds in half is the "fold"

This type of detailed research can only be carried out by using microfilms. The LexisNexis database is useful for searching the content of newspapers but it offers no clue as to story placement or photographs. The research was collated in a custom database created in Microsoft Works. Every front page headline, photograph or editorial which referred to the so-called “war on terror”, was recorded in the database, along with its placement, as can be seen in the following example.<sup>204</sup>

	Date	Joint Lead	AF 1	AF 2	AF 3	AF 4	Display.PIX
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12/09/2001	US attacked Hijacked jets destroy twin towers and hit Pentagon in day of	President vows to exact punishment for evil	A creeping Horror Buildings burn and fall as onlookers search for elusive			lead composite four pics to end of page Main picture taken seconds
<input type="checkbox"/>	13/09/2001	Stunned rescuers comb attack sites, but thousands are presumed dead: FBI	A grim forecast Barest count, by three of hundreds of firms, has 1500	Bin Laden tie cited; Agents say they know accomplices names, search is			lead "Rescue workers yesterday searched through the debris that
<input type="checkbox"/>	14/09/2001	Bush and top aides proclaim policy of ending terror: local	President to visit New York - Bin Laden singled out	9 others detained US says one had fake pilot ID - one tried to fly on Tuesday	No Middle Ground		lead Paste-up prayers people have posted fliers across New York
<input type="checkbox"/>	15/09/2001	Bush leads prayer, visits aid crews: Congress backs use of armed force	A day of mourning President in New York, offers resolute vows	US demands Arab countries 'choose sides'	An unobtrusive man's odyssey		lead "presidential visit: Mayor Giuliani and Fire Commissioner Von
<input type="checkbox"/>	17/09/2001	Nation shifts its focus to Wall Street as a major test of attacks' aftermath		Pakistani team giving Afghans an ultimatum	A new war and its scale	US binds wounds in red, white and blue	standalone "Many faiths, one vigil. A candlelight service for Arab
<input type="checkbox"/>	18/09/2001	Wall Street re-opens six days after shutdown Stocks slide 7%, but investors		Bin Laden is wanted in attacks 'dead or alive' president says	Taliban refuse quick decision over bin laden		two business pics used as composite of NYSE caption- Trading resumed
<input type="checkbox"/>	19/09/2001	US widens policy on detaining suspects Troubled airlines get federal aid pledge	Immigrant arrests 75 in custody following terror attacks can be		World leaders list conditions on co-operation		lead composite Bell men at the Plaza, Empty ticket areas at
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/09/2001	Bush orders heavy bombers near Afghans, Demands bin Laden now, not	Deploys warships President is addressing Congress tonight	Bush advisors split on scope of retaliation	Pakistan defends joining with US 'Trust Me'	Peacetime recruits getting ready for	lead "Sailors and marines on Theodore Roosevelt airplane
<input type="checkbox"/>	21/09/2001	Bush pledges attack on Afghanistan unless it surrenders Bin Laden now; he	Bars talks, saying hosts will share the terrorists' fate	Top air chief sent Ground units deployed joining bombers and	A Clear Message: 'I will not relent'	many Listeners are reassured	lead "Addressing Congress, President Bush held the badge of

The research concentrated on the front page and editorials because they are both statements of importance and indicate the story’s value to the media organisation. US media critic Jim Naughton said the front page “codified the

<sup>204</sup> AF1, AF2, etc indicate placement on the page, AF1 is the lead, AF2 is the offlead and so on.

magnitude of what happened” on September 11, 2001.<sup>205</sup> Throughout the sample, the front page continued to codify, and signify, important events. It also provided an unambiguous signpost to the publication’s news values.

Both *The Irish Times* and *The New York Times* present their most important stories on page one, but they use different signposts to indicate which is the lead. Placement determines the lead in *The New York Times* whereas it is the point size of the headline which indicates the lead in *The Irish Times*.

The two newspapers also use different layouts. *The New York Times* stacks its stories vertically and the most important story is placed at the top of the far right vertical column. This is common practice in most US broadsheets and *The New York Times* is said to be the strictest about this rule.<sup>206</sup> The offlead is then set to the top left or directly underneath the lead.

*The New York Times* provides another visual clue by using capital letters for the lead. It also occasionally uses joint headlines which denote that the story is even more important than usual. The first use of these in the sample was on September 12, 2001 and the newspaper would use 92 joint headlines over the 1,000 days.

Thus we can see from the following graphic that the most important story on the May 29, 2005 edition was “Pentagon Sees Non-Nuclear Sub Missiles.”

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<sup>205</sup> Naughton, Jim, “Ms. Future and the Caveman, A Civilized Debate on the Design of Wednesday’s Front Pages, The Poynter Institute.” Published Sept 25, 2001, Accessed on October 30, 2006 [http://www.poynter.org/dg.lts/id.5930/content.content\\_view.htm](http://www.poynter.org/dg.lts/id.5930/content.content_view.htm)

<sup>206</sup> Alsdorf, A, “Explaining Today’s Papers”, *Slate*, Sept 7, 1999 <http://slate.msn.com/id/1003564> Accessed April 19, 2005



The offlead was: "Iraqis' Accounts Link Marines to the Mass Killing of Civilians," and the display picture showed a group of children who had lost a parent to the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The third lead was also about the children. The fourth most important story was "Target of FBI Had Bold Climb to Capitol Hill. The story about the Somalis was number five, with a tale about wildlife clocking in at number six. The index at the bottom included the blurbs for lesser stories within the paper.

**"All the Times That a Fox is Free"**

# The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2008 \$5.00

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## Iraqis' Accounts Link Marines To the Mass Killing of Civilians

Military Inquiry Could Lead to Murder Charges

**2**

By Andrew Ross and ...

... the ...



**PENTAGON SEEKS NONNUCLEAR TIP FOR SUB MISSILES**

... the ...

## Target of F.B.I. Had Bold Climb To Capitol Hill

... the ...

**4**

## After Loss of a Parent to War, a Shared Grieving

... the ...

**3**

## Somalis Brave a Sea of Perils For \$50-a-Month Jobs Abroad

... the ...

**5**



**Unto the City The Wildlife Did Journey**

... the ...

**6**

---

### Search Drive to Swallow Feet Burns, Officials Say

... the ...

### Chen Would Be Full-Time

... the ...

### The Road to ...

... the ...

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**6**



**6**



**6**



The *Irish Times* uses a “modular” layout which treats newspaper design as a stack of vertical and horizontal rectangles. White space is used both horizontally and vertically in a modular layout. In common with most Irish newspapers, and unlike most US newspapers, *The Irish Times* usually keeps its front page stories on page one and generally turns stories inside from an index or a display picture.

The story hierarchy is indicated by the story with the largest point size. Thus the most important story for *The Irish Times* on the same date, May 29, 2005, was “Employer and union differences deadlock pay talks.”

The offlead and the display picture reported the Indonesian earthquake. This story was excluded from the front page of *The New York Times*.

# THE IRISH TIMES

LEADING VAT | Monday, May 29, 2005 | WWW.IRISHONLINE.COM

**Derry beat Tyrone**

CORK EASE PAST CLARE ♦ SportsMonday

**PHASING IN GARDA RESERVE COULD HELP RESOLVE ROW** ♦ Feargal Quinn: page 14

WHAT'S THE STORY WITH HIGH DEFINITION TV ♦ PriceWatch

**NewsDigest**

**State may change law on sex with underage boys**

The Government will tomorrow consider the possibility of amending the Criminal Justice Act to allow for the prosecution of men who have sex with boys under the age of 17. The new measure would be a significant change in the law.

**Pope issues plea for world peace at Auschwitz**

Pope John Paul II made a plea for world peace as he visited the site of the Holocaust in Poland. He urged people to work together to build a better world.

**HomeNews**

**Local building, The Commission's plans**

The Commission's plans for the local building industry are being reviewed. The plans include changes to the way the industry is regulated.

**BusinessNews**

**CSO has to lead the way**

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) has to lead the way in the collection and analysis of data. The CSO is responsible for providing the government with the information it needs to make decisions.

**WorkNews**

**EU consultation on working in Europe**

The European Union is consulting on the way it will regulate the working conditions of people who work in Europe. The consultation is part of a wider effort to improve the lives of workers.

**SportsMonday**

**Flanagan 12 up 1 shot**

Flanagan is 12 up 1 shot in the Open Championship. He is leading the field by a significant margin.

## Employer and union differences deadlock pay talks

Adjourned negotiations are expected to be resumed today

**2**

The talks between employers and unions have reached a deadlock. The negotiations have been adjourned until today. The employers are demanding a 3% increase in wages, while the unions are demanding a 4% increase. The talks have been going on for several weeks.

**QUAKE SURVIVORS: coping with the aftermath**



**Life of a village devastated by earthquake that killed 4,600**

The village of Banda Aceh in Indonesia has been devastated by an earthquake that killed 4,600 people. The village is now a scene of utter desolation. The houses have been destroyed, and the streets are covered in rubble. The people of the village are struggling to cope with the aftermath of the disaster.

**Loach scoops the Palme d'Or at Cannes with Irish-made film**

Michael Loach has won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival with his Irish-made film 'The Wind That Shakes the Barley'. The film is a historical drama about the Irish War of Independence. It is a significant achievement for an Irish filmmaker.

**ADVANTAGE 30 30DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT**

Cutting edge rate

Up to 3.25% CAA 12/05

**IRISH NATIONWIDE**

01 609 6490

Both newspapers put their most important stories “above the fold” (where a broadsheet newspaper folds in half) so that the stories are clearly visible at the newspaper stand.

Subheads were included in this analysis as they give a more complete picture of the front page of *The New York Times* than the headlines alone. *The New York Times* often uses subheads to expand a story out from the original headline which is a disadvantage for researchers who rely on LexisNexis or indeed *The New York Times* database, as they do not record the subheads.

In addition, photographs and captions (which are often excluded from LexisNexis and thus most media analysis) were included here as they are literally a strong visual guide to a story’s significance.

Finally, while Herman and Chomsky searched for dichotomies by comparing the coverage of similar events in *The New York Times*, this project searched for dichotomies by comparing the coverage of the same events in *The New York Times* and *The Irish Times*.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS & CASE STUDIES

*The New York Times* is certainly the most important newspaper in the United States, and one could argue the most important newspaper in the world. *The New York Times* plays an enormous role in shaping the perception of the current world on the part of the politically active, educated classes. Also *The New York Times* has a special role . . . in the sense that *The New York Times* creates history. That is, history is what appears in *The New York Times* archives; the place where people will go to find out what happened is *The New York Times*. Therefore it's extremely important if history is going to be shaped in an appropriate way, that certain things appear, certain things not appear, certain questions be asked, other questions be ignored, and that issues be framed in a particular fashion. Now in whose interests is history being so shaped? Well, I think that's not very difficult to answer.<sup>207</sup>

Noam Chomsky

For me, it is virtually impossible to look at TV and to even read papers like *The New York Times* without the need to correct them because they are so deceitful, so full, in my opinion, of wrong perspectives, and the contexts are often wrong.<sup>208</sup>

Edward Said

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<sup>207</sup> Quote taken from an interview with Noam Chomsky accessed on his official website at <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/1992----02.htm> on July 18, 2004

<sup>208</sup> Said, Edward, *Power Politics and Culture*, Vintage Books, New York, 2001, p416

## INTRODUCTION

The following discussion is centred on an analysis of 1,000 editions of *The New York Times* and *The Irish Times*. Many of the key events which occurred over the 1,000 days raised serious questions about US foreign policy. However, such information was regularly excluded from the US paper of record, or, when it was included, there was little or no context.<sup>209</sup>

The section is broken down into the following topics;

- The coverage of September 11 from September 12 – September 18
- An Overview of the One Thousand Days
- Observing the Propaganda Model's Advertising Filter at work
- The Unworthy Victims of Afghanistan
- Product Iraq
- Build-up to the Invasion
- Reporting the Invasion
- The Unworthy Victims of Iraq

The following four events featured heavily in *The Irish Times's* front pages and editorials yet they were not so prominent in *The New York Times*.

- The US-led murders of civilians in Afghanistan
- The US claim about Iraq WMDs
- The US-caused trans-Atlantic crisis
- The US-led murders of civilians in Iraq.

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid, p416

The first indications of a pro-White House bias in *The New York Times* appeared on September 22, 2001, when it ran this headline as the page one lead: “Officials Say Course of War on Terrorism is Still to Be Decided.” There were no quote marks around “War on Terrorism.” As Nancy Snow would later write;

The phrase “war on terrorism” is itself a propaganda message. By design, it elevates the language of conflict, suggesting that all other options (negotiation, international courts of justice, international policing) have been exhausted, when the reality is that they were never seriously considered.<sup>210</sup>

The lack of quote marks (to indicate reported speech) showed that the newspaper was already identifying with the US government aims. The headline also foreshadowed the decision by more populist media such as Fox News Channel to run loud taglines which proclaimed “America’s War on Terror.” The use of such rhetoric mediated the White House agenda and showed how that agenda had become “common sense.” This was a key idea from Gramsci who believed that power really succeeded when it convinced the average man to believe that its agenda was common sense.

*The New York Times* also made US President George Bush synonymous with the administration.

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<sup>210</sup> Snow, Nancy, *Information War. American Propaganda, Free Speech, and Opinion Control Since 9/11*, Seven Stories Press, New York, 2003, p63

The word “Bush” was swapped with US so often that he appeared to be single-handedly running America, rather like an emperor would:

- Bush Orders Heavy Bombers Near Afghans, Demands Bin Laden Now, Not Negotiations (*NYT*, Sept 20, 2001)
- Bush Pledges Attack on Afghanistan unless it Surrenders Bin Laden now (*NYT*, Sept 21, 2001.)
- Bush Freezes Assets Linked to Terror Net; Russians Offer Airspace and Arms Support (*NYT*, Sept 24, 2001)

Although the word “Bush” is easier to fit into a single column headline (always a consideration for rushed sub-editors), this does not explain why a four-letter word was substituted so often for a two-letter word; “US.”

Also, if the restriction on headline space was responsible, that raises a bigger question of whether the infrastructure of journalism is contributing to the problem with the media. This practice was not confined to *The New York Times*. Six leads from *The Irish Times* referred to Bush and five to the US. The trend was most noticeable in the first week, but it was consistent throughout:

- ‘World in shock as Bush vows terror will not defeat freedom’, (*IT* Sept 12, 2001);
- ‘Bush will end conflict ‘at way and hour of our choosing’.’ (*IT* Sept 15, 2001),
- ‘Bush prepares US public for war’, (*IT* Sept 17, 2001)



## COVERAGE OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, for most Americans, were similar in effect to having a massive attack from outer space. Almost entirely ignorant of global politics, devoid of any understanding of the Islamic world, educated primarily by Hollywood movies featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis, and Sylvester Stallone, Americans were ideally prepared for a paranoid and hysterical response.<sup>211</sup>

### FRONT PAGE STORIES

This section looks at the first seven days of coverage to show how the attacks of September 11 were recorded in the two newspapers. A montage of front pages from American newspapers is presented below:



<sup>211</sup> McChesney, Robert, 'September 11 and the structural limitations of US journalism' in B Zelizer and S Allan's *Journalism After September 11*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, p91



A typical front page from *The New York Times* resembled the page at right. The lead story would run in the right hand column and the lead headline would be restricted to a single column. The September 12 front page broke with that template and was much more dramatic.



The newspaper abandoned its usual text-heavy driven layout, settling for a graphic, picture-driven page. The newspaper also gave 27 of its 28 news pages to what it tag-lined: "A Day of Terror." The 28th page was an unrelated full-page ad for the phone company Verizon. The headlines signalled the newspaper's future coverage. The headlines spoke of terror and horror, evil and punishment, enemies and terrorism.





As would be expected in a New York newspaper, the story led the front page for the following week and the headlines are presented here for the record:

- **Sept 12, 2001:** US attacked/Hijacked jets destroy twin towers and hit Pentagon in day of terror
- **Sept 13, 2001:** Stunned rescuers comb attack sites, but thousands are presumed dead/ FBI tracking hijackers' movements
- **Sept 14, 2001:** Bush and top aides proclaim policy of 'ending' states that back terror; local airports shut after an arrest
- **Sept 15, 2001:** Bush leads prayer, visits aid crews/Congress backs use of armed force
- **Sept 17, 2001:** Nation shifts its focus to Wall Street as a major test of attacks' aftermath
- **Sept 18, 2001:** Wall Street re-opens six days after shutdown/Stocks slide 7%, but investors resist panic
- **Sept 19, 2001:** US widens policy on detaining suspects/Troubled airlines get federal aid pledge

On September 18, *The New York Times* introduced a special section on “the terror attacks and their aftermath”, entitled *A Nation Challenged*. The section, which comprised 12 or 16 pages, and included the much-admired Portraits of Grief,<sup>212</sup> ran until December 31, 2001. US media critics Ed Herman and David Petersen said the pull-out was “hugely biased” because the public was being led to believe America was a “Pitiful Giant” with “its back against the ropes.”<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> The Portraits of Grief were snapshots of the people who were killed in the World Trade Centre compiled by reporters who spoke to relatives, friends and co-workers. They may have been the finest journalism to appear in *The New York Times*. Describing the Portraits of Grief, the late writer, Susan Sontag, said. "I read the 'Portraits of Grief,' every last word, every single day. I was tremendously moved I had tears in my eyes every morning."

<sup>213</sup> Herman E and David Peterson, “The Threat of Global State Terrorism: Retail vs wholesale terror,” *Z Magazine*, June 2002. <http://zmag.org/Zmag/Articles/jan02herman.htm>

*The New York Times* ran 49 front page stories about the attacks that first week. All 49 stories dealt with the effect on the US, ranging from the economic consequences to the likely retaliation by America.

Several front page stories named Afghanistan as a likely target for a US response. However, none of those stories referred to the dreadful situation within that country, nor the lack of international support for any military action there. The newspaper's exclusion of stories about the humanitarian disaster there was notable considering that 10 days earlier the newspaper had said: "After 22 years of war and 4 years of drought, Afghanistan is perhaps the world's neediest country."<sup>214</sup>

In Ireland, the front page of *The Irish Times* also focused on the attacks. On September 12, the front page headline, above a picture of the second plane approaching the blazing tower, said: "World in shock as Bush vows terror will not defeat freedom Thousands feared dead in massive attacks in US. Cork mother and daughter are named as first Irish fatalities."

The newspaper also led every edition with the attacks and ran 34 front page stories overall. However, three of those headlines, 10 per cent, reported the Afghan misery. This was in contrast to *The New York Times* which ran zero stories, or 0 per cent, about the "unworthy victims."

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<sup>214</sup> Bearak, Barry, "Afghans Shut Offices of 2 More Christian Relief Groups," *The New York Times*, Sept 1, 2001, A1 p3

On September 14, Ireland closed down for the “National Day of Mourning.” *The Irish Times* was the only newspaper to close in both Ireland and the US.<sup>215</sup> On September 15, *The New York Times* ignored the Irish, paying tribute to the “spontaneous” efforts in “Britain, France, Italy, Israel and other countries.”

By September 17, *The Irish Times* front page was reporting the refugee crisis in Afghanistan<sup>216</sup> On September 18, the page one story; “Fears growing of US attack on Afghans”, was accompanied by a picture of Afghan refugee children in Pakistan. Neither story merited page one of *The New York Times*.

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<sup>215</sup> Prior to September 14, 2001, the other official “Day of Mourning” in Ireland took place on February 2, 1972 in the wake of Bloody Sunday on January 30. There were no such official observances after either the Dublin/Monaghan bombings in 1974 or Omagh in 1998. *The Irish Times* did not suspend publication for any of those three Irish atrocities.

<sup>216</sup> “Miriam Donohoe with Afghanistan’s fleeing refugees,” Masthead Blurb, *The Irish Times*, September 17, 2001, p1

## FRONT PAGE PICTURES

*The New York Times* ran 18 front page pictures about September 11 and all 18 depicted the attacks through American eyes. The newspaper focused on the burning towers, the search for survivors and the sense of pathos in New York. It did not use any of the more gruesome images (such as the severed hand which *The New York Daily News* ran). Susan Sontag criticised this saying that it was never about “good taste,” but rather “a repressive standard.”<sup>217</sup>

*The Irish Times* ran 10 front page pictures and eight of those were similar in tone and content to *The New York Times*. However, the newspaper also used another two pictures (one above fold, and one below) which illustrated the “unworthy victims”; the swelling numbers of refugees in Afghanistan.

*The New York Times* did not carry a picture of the refugees at all until October 18 and, even then, the standalone picture (with no cross-reference) was buried at the bottom-left-hand side of the front page.

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<sup>217</sup> Sontag, Susan, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2003, p68

## EDITORIALS

The exclusion of stories about Afghanistan in *The New York Times* extended to the editorial page. The main themes were the attacks, the presumption of “war,” and likely consequences. The news value of the story can be gauged by the number of editorials; 17 in *The New York Times* and six in *The Irish Times*.

The first editorial in “the leading editorial voice in the United States,”<sup>218</sup> was headlined “The War against America.” It was divided into two parts, the first focusing on the horror and outrage of the attacks and the type of people who had perpetrated them, and the second on the type of response such attacks merited:

### War on America/An Unfathomable Attack

But it is just as important to consider the intensity of the hatred it took to bring it off. It is a hatred that exceeds the conventions of warfare, that knows no limits, abides by no agreements.<sup>219</sup>

### War on America/The National Defense

When retaliation is warranted, as it will be in this case once the organizers have been identified, Washington needs light but lethal weapons to attack terrorist compounds in remote locations.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Friel, Howard and Richard Falk, *The Record of the Paper*, Verso, New York, 2004, p15

<sup>219</sup> “The War Against America; An Unfathomable Attack,” *The New York Times*, Sept 12, 2001, editorial

<sup>220</sup> “The War Against America; The National Defense,” *The New York Times*, Sept 12, 2001, editorial

This editorial chose to ignore the much larger question of who the US could - or should - “retaliate” against. The idea that the US itself may have provoked such a savage action was excluded from the editorial. In addition, none of the 17 editorials in *The New York Times* spoke about the effects of a US attack on Afghanistan. The priorities of the editorial writers could perhaps be seen in this excerpt which praised the Stock Exchange for opening for business:

Eyesight blurs a little in the haze, and throats tighten, but the only real pause in the flow of people comes at the sight of the Stock Exchange itself, draped in a huge American flag. Everyone knows intuitively what a feat it was to resume trading on Monday, what a powerful demonstration of will and improvised engineering that was<sup>221</sup>

*The Irish Times* editorial of September 12, 2001 did not use the word “war.” Headlined; “Attack on America”, it linked the likely context to the deteriorating situation in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the Bush administration’s handling of the issue.

It acknowledged the horror of the attacks, but criticised the “extraordinary failure of intelligence” and the airline industry’s refusal to cooperate with security procedures, two elements which were left out of the editorial in *The New York Times*. It also cautioned the US against an “angry resort to arms.”

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<sup>221</sup> “The View From Wall Street,” *The New York Times*, Sept 20, 2001, editorial

It is critically important that the Administration adopts a cooperative attitude, drawing fully on this international goodwill, rather than rely only on their own immense military resources.<sup>222</sup>

Overall, *The Irish Times* ran six editorials about the attacks over the first seven days, all six of which sympathised with the US. However, four of those editorials raised questions about the US administration, questions which were not raised in the US, as can be seen in the excerpts below:

- There has been an extraordinary failure of intelligence, despite advance warnings that deepening conflict in the Middle East could provoke atrocities of this magnitude. (Attack on America, Sept 12, 2001.)
- ...it must also remember not to let those who used terror against the world's greatest democracy to set an agenda that would weaken its structures of freedom and law. (Shoulder to Shoulder, Sept 13, 2001.)
- If the US response is inspired only by vengeance or simple retaliatory action against Afghanistan, for example, it could easily rebound by recruiting even more people to the terrorist network. (A time of mourning, Sept 15, 2001.)
- ... pleas that indiscriminate civilian casualties be avoided in any retaliation, for proportional measures in line with international law and United Nations norms to be taken and for seeds of further religious or civilisational conflict to be avoided at all costs. (Consensus in the Dail, Sept 19, 2001.)

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<sup>222</sup> "Attack on America," *The Irish Times*, Sept 12, 2001, editorial

## CONCLUSION

By the end of the first seven days of coverage; the coverage in *The New York Times* had boiled down to the following narrative;

A benevolent, democratic and peace-loving nation was brutally attacked by insane evil terrorists who hated the United States for its freedoms and affluent way of life.<sup>223</sup>

The front page of *The New York Times* excluded any debate about the presumption of “war”, it excluded any debate about the need to attack Afghanistan, and excluded comment about the fact that most of the September 11 hijackers came from Saudi Arabia.

This framework, which reinforces Herman’s idea of the US narrative as a “pitiful giant”<sup>224</sup>, would predict that stories which contradicted this narrative, such as civilian deaths, the US-led carpet bombing, or the humanitarian disaster would be ignored or included without context.

Already, within the course of just seven days, *The Irish Times* had debated a wider range of topics, including the unworthy victims, on page one. Perhaps, more importantly, it had also issued a series of warnings through its editorials which would prove prophetic.

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<sup>223</sup> McChesney, Robert ‘September 11 and the structural limitations of US journalism’ in B Zeltzer and S Allan’s *Journalism After September 11*, Routledge, New York, 2002, p93

<sup>224</sup> Herman Edward and David Peterson, “The Threat of Global State Terrorism: Retail vs. wholesale terror,” *Z Magazine*, June 2002.



## OVERVIEW: SEPTEMBER 12, 2001 TO NOVEMBER 27, 2004

This section is a brief overview of the 1,000 days of coverage. The table below measured the page one lead coverage of the following stories; the civilian casualties in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the “weapons of mass destruction” and the trans-Atlantic rift.

<i>The New York Times P1 Leads</i>		Number of Stories	Total	Percentage
<i>Topic</i>	Civilian casualties	0	518	0.00%
<i>Topic</i>	WMDs	20	518	3.88%
<i>Topic</i>	Trans-Atlantic rift	29	518	5.62%
<i>The Irish Times P1 Leads</i>				
<i>Topic</i>	Civilian Casualties	7	167	4.19%
<i>Topic</i>	WMDs	1	167	0.59%
<i>Topic</i>	Trans-Atlantic rift	18	167	10.65%

### *FRONT PAGE STORIES*

#### **Civilian Casualties**

*The New York Times* ran 518 leads about the “war on terror” over the 1,000 days or 51.8 per cent. Not one reported civilian casualties in Afghanistan or Iraq while 10, or 1.94 per cent, were about the anthrax scare.

*The Irish Times* ran 167 leads about the “war on terror” over the 1,000 days (16.7 per cent) and seven of those - or 4.19 per cent – did report civilian casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Three of those headlines are presented here to show what types of stories were being excluded from *The New York Times*.

- Pakistan, US agree on future Afghan regime/Red Cross warehouse hit by two US missiles (October 17, 2001)
- Over 50 civilians die as bomb hits busy market, Iraqis claim (Mar 29, 2003)
- Hundreds of Iraqis reported dead in Falluja (April 10, 2004)

## **WMDS**

Twenty of the 518 (3.88 per cent) leads in *The New York Times* reinforced the White House claim that Iraq was a threat as can be seen here:

- Air Power Alone Can't Defeat Iraq, Rumsfeld Asserts/ Cites Secret Mobile Labs (July 31, 2002)
- Cheney Says Peril Of A Nuclear Iraq Justifies Attack (Aug 27, 2002)
- Bush Sees 'Urgent Duty' To Pre-empt Attack By Iraq/ He Cites Threat Posed To US And Allies (Oct 8, 2002)

*The Irish Times* did not run any lead stories referring to the “mobile labs”, “nuclear Iraq” or the “‘urgent duty’ to pre-empt attack.” It ran just one Iraq lead, on September 9, 2002, and it made clear that this was a “claim” from the White House; “US backs case for Iraq attack with nuclear weapons claim.”

## **Trans-Atlantic Rift**

*The New York Times* reported this story as if the US were a kindly uncle trying to placate squabbling siblings. It made just 29 of the 516 leads, or 5.62 per cent. Three of the leads are presented here:

- Urgent Diplomacy Fails To Gain Us 9 Votes In The U.N. (March 10, 2003)
- U.S. Still Hopeful of 9 Votes at U.N. For Iraq Measure (March 13, 2003)
- Bush And Allies Will Meet To Seek Ways To Sway U.N. (March 15, 2003)

*The Irish Times* approached the story differently. The newspaper ran 18 leads, or 11 per cent of the total, about the rift and the language made it clear that these were serious, rather than frivolous, divisions between the two continents:

- US-Europe divisions open as opposition to war builds (Feb 11, 2003)
- US to seek second resolution as UN divisions increase (Feb 15, 2003)
- US and Britain postpone vote on war as UN crisis deepens (Mar 11, 2003)

## DISPLAY PICTURES

A propaganda system will consistently portray people abused in enemy states as worthy victims, whereas those treated with equal or greater severity by its own government or clients will be unworthy. The evidence of worth may be read from the extent and character of attention and indignation.<sup>225</sup>

*The New York Times* ran 419 display pictures about the “war on terror”, or 41.9 per cent of the 1,000 editions. Seven of the 419 pictures, or 1.7 per cent, illustrated the “unworthy victims” and there was little indication of indignation or context in the captions. As predicted by Herman and Chomsky, the captions were “low-keyed, designed to keep the lid on the emotions.”<sup>226</sup> Three are presented here:

- The hungry far from the food: no aid from international relief groups has reached these refugees, among 20,000 at camp at Dasht-i-Arzana in northern Afghanistan. A lack of security is preventing aid agencies from getting to many regions. (Nov 30, 2001)
- Pashtuns young and old have been forced out of their villages and now live in caves in northern Afghanistan. (March 7, 2002)
- At a graveyard in Falluja, Iraqis said an American missile had struck a mosque there, killing up to nine people (July 2, 2003)

In the first caption, there was no indication that the US was responsible for the “lack of security”, in the second, there was no explanation for people living in caves, and the third caption was completely devoid of empathy or emotion.

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<sup>225</sup> Herman, Ed and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Pantheon, New York, 2002, p37

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid*, p39

*The Irish Times* ran far fewer display pictures, just 131 overall, but 15 of those, or 11.5 per cent, were about the “unworthy victims.” Not only did *The Irish Times* run more pictures, 15 to the seven in *The New York Times*, it also ran far more as an overall percentage; 11.5pc to 1.7 per cent. They also included more context as can be seen below:

- An Iraqi boy looks at a body next to a burnt-out car on a Baghdad street following an air strike on the city yesterday. At least 15 people were killed and 30 wounded in an apparent US strike on a residential and commercial street (March 27, 2003)
- Mr Abdul Hussein cries after seeing the dead body of his son, Heider (25) in the morgue of al-Noor hospital, following a bomb that landed in a busy market in Baghdad yesterday (Mar 29, 2003)
- GRIEF IN IRAQ: Eight members of one family killed in US strike/ caption - An Iraqi man shows photographs of his family members whom he says were killed on Wednesday when a US helicopter fired on a wedding party in a remote desert village. (May 21, 2004)<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Note: This last caption, “Grief in Iraq”, appeared under the lead headline: “US military defends attack on Iraqi wedding party.” Neither picture nor headline appeared on the front page of *The New York Times*

## LEAD EDITORIALS

“The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum - even encourage the more critical and dissident views. That gives people the sense that there's free thinking going on, while all the time the presuppositions of the system are being reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate.”<sup>228</sup>

This “lively debate” often takes place on the editorial pages. The Propaganda Model predicted that any controversy would be restricted to tactics, rather than moral questions such as the slaughter of civilians.<sup>229</sup> The research will show that *The New York Times* editorials debated issues within a framework which presupposed the unquestioned right of the US to invade other countries and which also presupposed benevolent US intent.

This section focused on the lead editorials first as this is where both newspapers discuss the most pressing issue of the day. Over the 1,000 days, *The New York Times* ran 322 lead editorials about the “war on terror” and *The Irish Times* ran 135.

Two of the 322 editorials in *The New York Times*, 0.62 per cent, explicitly addressed the “unworthy victims” although both referred to Iraq, not Afghanistan. Even then, the editorials adopted an “even-handed” tone and suggested that America was suffering, effectively neutralizing the dead Iraqis.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Chomsky, Noam, *The Common Good*, Odonian Press, 1998, p43

<sup>229</sup> Herman, Ed and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Pantheon, New York, 2002, p178

<sup>230</sup> “Death of the Innocents,” *The New York Times*, April 1, 2003; “How Precise Is Our Bombing?” *The New York Times*, March 31, 2003, lead editorials

The Irish editorial sample ended, poignantly, on November 17, 2004, with the news that the kidnapped Irish woman Margaret Hassan had been murdered. Throughout, *The Irish Times* put a higher priority on the civilian casualties, with six editorials out of 135, or 4.4 per cent. It was also more adversarial. For instance, on March 18, 2003, the editorial was headlined; “On the brink of an unacceptable war”, an opinion which was never expressed in *The New York Times*.

*The Irish Times* addressed several issues which were excluded from *The New York Times*, such as the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan<sup>231</sup>, the massacre of prisoners at Mazar-i-Sharif<sup>232</sup>, the anti-war marches in February 2003<sup>233</sup>, and the civilian death toll in Iraq<sup>234</sup>. These editorials stand out because they were so unlike anything in *The New York Times* over the same period. The *IT* did not confine its criticisms to the US; it also urged the Irish government to deny US access to Shannon airport,<sup>235</sup> and criticised the Irish Deputy Prime Minister, Mary Harney, for saying that being anti-war was being “anti-American”<sup>236</sup>.

A US poll from October 2001, (*USA Today*, CNN and Gallup) found that 88 per cent supported military action in Afghanistan.<sup>237</sup> The US public was unlikely to have been so supportive if they had known that the US was bombing famine victims. However, they would not have learned that from the front page

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<sup>231</sup> “Humanitarian crisis unfolds,” *The Irish Times*, October 10, 2001, lead editorial

<sup>232</sup> “The events at Mazar-E-Sharif,” *The Irish Times*, November 30, 2001, lead editorial

<sup>233</sup> “Not In Our Name, Say Marchers,” *The Irish Times*, February 17, 2003, lead editorial

<sup>234</sup> “US strategy for Iraq unravels,” *The Irish Times*, September 18, 2004, lead editorial

<sup>235</sup> “Decision time on Shannon,” *The Irish Times*, March 20, 2003, lead editorial

<sup>236</sup> “Harney's View Of Anti-War Protest,” *The Irish Times*, February 24, 2003, lead editorial

<sup>237</sup> “Benedetto, Richard, “Poll finds anthrax fear but no panic,” *USA Today*, October 23, 2001, p4

of *The New York Times*. Meanwhile, readers of *The Irish Times* were being told that aid agencies were “appalled” at the US action in Afghanistan.<sup>238</sup>

After the massacre at Mazar-I-Sharif, *The Irish Times* said there were “serious questions to be answered” about the deaths of hundreds of prisoners, “killed in a bloody fight to the end, backed up by intense US bombing.”<sup>239</sup> There was no comparable call for answers, or even an editorial in *The New York Times*.

During the crucial pre-invasion phase in 2003, *The Irish Times* was the only one of the two newspapers to address the worldwide anti-war marches which had taken place on Saturday, February 15, 2003. The editorial celebrated the “extraordinary Dublin turnout”, and warned the Irish government that it would ignore such criticism at its peril.<sup>240</sup> There was no comparable editorial published in *The New York Times*,<sup>241</sup> despite an enormous turn-out (500,000+) in New York.

One of the biggest findings from this research was the failure of *The New York Times* editorial page to challenge the US administration on Iraq. It overwhelmingly presented the White House claims as fact in all 72 editorials about Iraq between September 12, 2001 and March 21, 2003.

The first editorial in *The New York Times* to mention Iraq was published just over two months after the September 11 attacks, while the fires were still

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<sup>238</sup> “Humanitarian crisis unfolds,” *The Irish Times*, October 10, 2001, lead editorial

<sup>239</sup> “The events at Mazar-E-Sharif,” *The Irish Times*, November 30, 2001, lead editorial

<sup>240</sup> “Not In Our Name, Say Marchers,” *The Irish Times*, February 17, 2003, lead editorial

<sup>241</sup> There was also no post-march editorial in the Sunday edition on February 16, 2003



smouldering at the World Trade Centre. Headlined “The wrong time to fight Iraq”, it supported the idea of removing Hussein but said there were “no good short-term options for getting rid of him.”<sup>242</sup>

This would be a feature of the newspaper’s editorial treatment of Iraq. It supported an invasion, or what it termed “war”, as “a legitimate international goal against an execrable tyranny”<sup>243</sup>, but opposed the war if the US did not have “broad international support.”<sup>244</sup>

As Friel and Falk wrote: “This kind of advice is analogous to saying you can’t rob the bank because it mightn’t go so well without some help.”<sup>245</sup> This stance showed that the newspaper’s opposition did not stem from ethical or even legal concerns, another finding consistent with the propaganda model.

In the seven months leading up to March 20, 2003, when there was ample time to investigate the administration’s arguments on Iraq, *The New York Times* failed to exercise even the most basic standards of journalism.

Chomsky described September 2002 as “a massive government media propaganda campaign”,<sup>246</sup> and the following three editorials appeared in *The New York Times* that same month:

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<sup>242</sup> “The wrong time to fight Iraq,” *The New York Times*, November 26, 2001, lead editorial

<sup>243</sup> “War in the Ruins of Diplomacy,” *The New York Times*, March 18, 2003, lead editorial

<sup>244</sup> This phrase was used several times in editorials including this: “The Nation, the President, the War,” *The New York Times*, Lead editorial, January 29, 2003

<sup>245</sup> Friel, Howard and Richard Falk, *The Record of the Paper*, Verso, New York, 2004, p43

<sup>246</sup> Private interview with Noam Chomsky, December 2004, See Appendix

- Iraq, with its storehouses of biological toxins, its advanced nuclear weapons program, its defiance of international sanctions and its ambitiously malignant dictator, is precisely the kind of threat that the United Nations was established to deal with. (The Iraq Test, Sept 13, 2002)
- The combination of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, especially his effort to produce nuclear weapons, and Iraq's brazen defiance of the Security Council represent a serious threat to international order. (A Measured Pace on Iraq, Sept 14, 2002)
- That makes it all the more important to clarify what really counts in this conflict. The answer is the destruction of Iraq's unconventional weapons and the dismantling of its program to develop nuclear weapons. (A Road Map for Iraq, Sept 18, 2002)

By October 3, 2002, the newspaper's editorials were saying:

No further debate is needed to establish that Saddam Hussein is an evil dictator whose continued effort to build unconventional weapons in defiance of clear United Nations prohibitions threatens the Middle East and beyond.<sup>247</sup>

As events would later demonstrate, there was plenty of need for further debate.

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<sup>247</sup> "A Time for Debate and Reflection," *The New York Times*, October 3, 2002, editorial

## THE ADVERTISING FILTER AT WORK

This next section examined a filter of the Propaganda Model that could not be compared directly with *The Irish Times*, the power of advertising in the media. It is included because it gives non-US readers a sense of the US mood. The following campaigns appeared in *The New York Times* within 10 days of the attacks. The crassness of the ads passed without comment and there was no debate about allowing corporations to use patriotism as a marketing tool.<sup>248</sup>

On September 20, President George Bush asked Americans for their “continued participation and confidence in the American economy.”<sup>249</sup> On September 21, Ford launched its “Ford Drives America” campaign, followed swiftly by the other big car makers; General Motors, Oldsmobile and Mercedes Benz, all offering extremely cheap finance deals under the guise of patriotism.

None of their ads, excerpted overleaf, merited any debate in the US media. In addition, the then-California governor Gray Davis publicly equated consumerism with patriotism on September 30 and was not challenged on this statement: ““If you take a trip and invest money in our economy, it is literally an act of modern-day patriotism.”<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> The very first ad to mention the September 11 attacks in *The New York Times* appeared on the editorial page on the second day of coverage, September 13. From Exxon Mobil, it said: “Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their loved ones. We applaud the courage of those that have responded and continue to respond to alleviate the pain and suffering.”

<sup>249</sup> Address of the President to the joint session of Congress, September 20, 2001 State of the Union Speech [http://www.c-span.org/executive/transcript.asp?cat=current\\_event&code=bush\\_admin&year=0901](http://www.c-span.org/executive/transcript.asp?cat=current_event&code=bush_admin&year=0901)


<sup>250</sup> “Governor earmarks \$5 million for tourism ads,” Associated Press State & Local Wire, Sept 30, 2001. Accessed through Lexis-Nexis July 26, 2006

**Ford**


## Drives America

In light of these challenges, here  
we at Ford want to do our part  
to help move America forward.


### Announcing 0.0% APR financing on 2001 and 2002 cars and light trucks.




**FORD F SERIES**  
Number 1 selling truck  
for 23 straight years




**FORD EXPLORER**  
Number 1 selling  
compact sport utility  
vehicle year since  
its introduction.



**FORD TAURUS**  
One of the top  
10 best sellers  
in America\*



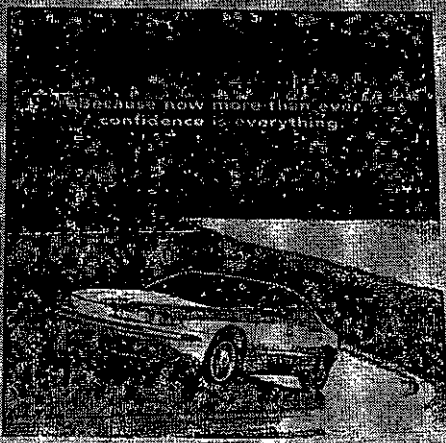
**FORD RANGER**  
Number 1 selling  
compact truck for  
13 straight years



**FORD FOCUS**  
One of the top  
10 best sellers  
in America\*

**AMERICA'S #1 CHOICE**

...because now more than ever,  
confidence is everything.




*[Small text at the bottom of the ad, mostly illegible due to graininess]*

### Our leaders have spoken And we are listening.

THE 2001  
FORD  
CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE  
AWARDS  
FOR QUALITY IN THE  
MILITARY AND NAVY

*[Illegible text about award details]*



*[Illegible text at the top of the ad]*

## KEEP AMERICA ROLLING

*[Illegible text at the bottom of the ad]*

•A montage of the US car ads which appeared in the weeks after September 11

On October 4, General Motors launched its “Keep American Rolling” campaign. This seemed like a shoddy attempt to capitalize on the publicity over United Flight 93 where one of the doomed passengers was reported to have said “Let’s Roll” before the plane crashed in Pennsylvania. The text is included here;

On September 11, the world as we know it came to a halt. We sat glued to our televisions, watching events unfold that shook us to our very core. And suddenly, the little things that had previously divided us seemed wholly insignificant. Now it’s time to move forward. For years, the auto industry has played a crucial role in our economy. General Motors takes that responsibility seriously. We think it’s important to keep workers working, and for the economy to keep rolling along. It won’t be easy. But nothing important ever is. So now, GM announces interest-free financing on every new GM car or truck. Every division. Every dealer. From now through October 31, 2001. If you were planning to go get a new car or truck, it’s time to stick with the plan. This may very well be the most serious crisis our nation has ever faced. In this time of terrible adversity, let’s stand together. And keep America rolling.”

On October 17, Ford said it wanted to salute the “spirit of America.”

Everywhere you look, the spirit of America is alive. We at Ford want to salute that spirit to help move America forward. Announcing Interest-free Financing on all 2001 and 2002 cars and light trucks.

On November 2, Mercedes-Benz borrowed directly from Bush’s speech to Congress and said: “Our leaders have spoken. And we are listening.” After quoting President Bush, “I ask your continued participation and confidence in the

American economy”, Mercedes-Benz said it was heeding the president’s advice and offering the “Confidence in America Lease/Finance Program.”

This transparent marketing-masquerading-as-patriotism passed without comment in *The New York Times*. The only mention of this patriotism-equals-shopping idea came on November 1, 2001 in a quote from a holiday shopper:

"I want to go shopping to help the economy," said Steve Wood, 29, a sales representative from Colbert, Georgia.<sup>251</sup>

No-one challenged GM. Of course, if any of the big media companies had challenged GM, or any of the other big car makers, they could have put their own profits at risk. In April 2005, GM pulled its advertising from the Los Angeles Times in a dispute “over how GM is portrayed.”<sup>252</sup> Gramsci must have been turning in his grave. Advertising had become common sense.

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<sup>251</sup>Kaufman, Leslie, “For Holiday Shoppers, Sale is the Only Thing,” *The New York Times*, November 24, 2001, p1

<sup>252</sup>“G.M. to Halt Ads in The Los Angeles Times,” *The New York Times*, April , 2005, Business, p2 (No byline)

## THE “UNWORTHY VICTIMS” OF AFGHANISTAN

The *New York Times* was able to interrogate friends and family of the New York dead, but for the Afghans, we will have to imagine the hopes and dreams of those who died, especially the children, for whom forty or fifty years of mornings, love, friendship, sunsets and the sheer exhilaration of being alive were extinguished by monstrous machines sent over their land by men far away.<sup>253</sup>

The Propaganda Model predicted that the media would not treat all victims equally. It said “worthy victims” would be “featured prominently and dramatically... humanized”, with “detail and context” to “generate reader interest and sympathetic emotion.” “Unworthy victims” would merit “slight detail, minimal humanization, and little context that will excite and enrage.”<sup>254</sup> Herman and Chomsky said it was as if the media had been instructed to “concentrate on the victims of enemy powers and forget about the victims of friends’.”<sup>255</sup>

This section has attempted to update that hypothesis by using the Propaganda Model to test how the victims of the US actions in Afghanistan were treated in the two newspapers. This section concentrates on front page stories<sup>256</sup> in the six months between September 12, 2001 and March 12, 2002, when coverage of the conflict in Afghanistan was at its height.

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<sup>253</sup> Zinn, Howard, “The Others,” *The Nation*, February 11, 2002. Accessed at <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020211/zinn> December 12, 2006

<sup>254</sup> Herman, Ed and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Pantheon, New York, 2002, p35

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid*, p32

<sup>256</sup> Photographs and editorials will be discussed separately

## *FRONT PAGE STORIES*

The importance of the “war on terror” to *The New York Times* could be seen in the launch of the standalone section, “A Nation Challenged”, which ran from September 18, 2001 to December 31, 2001. Between September 2001 and March 2002, the “war on terror” was clearly the main story for *The New York Times*. It led 108 of the 156 editions, 69 per cent.

Plenty of the leads in *The New York Times* announced new bombing raids as can be seen below:

- U.S. Special Forces Step up Campaign in Afghan Areas (Oct 19, 2001)
- U.S. bombs Taliban's forces on front lines near Kabul (Oct 22, 2001)
- U.S. Planes Pound Enemy As Troops Face Tough Fight (Feb 8, 2002)

There were no lead stories about Afghan casualties from such bombing raids. The first page one story about Afghanistan came on September 19, 2001, in a story which described the country’s poor quality as a military target; “Scarcity of Afghanistan Targets Prompts U S. to Change Strategy.”<sup>257</sup>

Overall, *The New York Times* would run 598 stories about the “war on terror” and only 11 of those, or 1.84 per cent, were about the Afghan casualties

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<sup>257</sup> Gordon, Michael R. Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, “Scarcity of Afghanistan Targets Prompts U.S. to Change Strategy’, *The New York Times*, September 19, 2001, p1 Below fold, second lead



or refugee crisis. None made the lead. Six of the 11 Afghan stories were placed above the fold and five below. However, the newspaper ran 397 “war on terror” stories above the fold and 201 below, which means that, as a percentage, the Afghans were still being relegated in the newspaper’s hierarchy, at 1.5 and 2.5 per cent respectively.

*The Irish Times* analysis revealed a different set of results. The “war on terror”, while of lesser importance, was still a major topic, with 75 front-page stories. Seven of those, or 9.33 per cent, were about the “unworthy victims” and two of them were leads. In addition, even though its coverage was just one-third of the US newspaper’s, *The Irish Times* ran a far higher percentage of stories about the “unworthy victims” and ran them more prominently. For instance:

- Five per cent of *The Irish Times* leads reported on the unworthy victims, compared to zero per cent in *The New York Times*.
- *The Irish Times* ran four times as many offleads on the same topic.
- Altogether, 9.33 per cent of the stories on the front page of *The Irish Times* were about the “unworthy victims”, compared to 1.84 per cent in *The New York Times*.

All in all, *The Irish Times* ran a higher percentage of stories about the “unworthy victims” in every section of the front page: leads, offleads, display pictures, below fold leads, etc. Also, given that the newspaper did not publish for four days,<sup>258</sup> the numbers, presented overleaf, could have been higher.

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<sup>258</sup> *The Irish Times* did not publish on September 14 (National Day of Mourning) Christmas Day, St Stephen’s Day and New Year’s Day *The New York Times* did publish on those dates.

<i>The New York Times</i>		<i>The Irish Times</i>	
Sept 12, 2001 to March 12, 2002		Sept 12, 2001 to March 12, 2002	
Afghan casualties leads	0	Afghan casualties leads	2
"War on terror" leads	108	"War on terror" leads	38
Per cent of total	0.00%	Per cent of total	5.26%
Total Afghan casualties	11	Total Afghan casualties	7
Total "war on terror"	598	Total "war on terror"	75
Per cent of total	1.84%	Per cent of total	9.33%

The table shows that the quality, quantity and placement of stories differed between the two newspapers and provides empirical evidence that the Afghans were treated as “unworthy victims” in *The New York Times*.

On September 18, 2001, *The Irish Times* was the first of the two newspapers to run a page one headline about the “unworthy” victims; “Fears growing of US attack on Afghans.” The story was accompanied by a picture of refugee children arriving at a camp in Pakistan. The caption read:

- Newly-arrived Afghan refugee children carry their belongings through the Jalojai refugee camp, Pakistan. About 80,000 Afghan refugees live in the camp.

In addition to being the first of the two newspapers to report the unworthy victims, *The Irish Times* was the only one to run any stories in the lead position. It ran two such stories; the first about the UN appeal for refugee aid,<sup>259</sup> and the

<sup>259</sup> Smyth, Patrick and Elaine Lafferty, “American, British Special Forces are in Afghanistan, UN appeals for \$584m in fresh emergency aid for refugees,” *The Irish Times*, Sept 29, 2003, p1 lead

second about the US bombing of a Red Cross warehouse.<sup>260</sup> Not only did neither story merit a front page lead in *The New York Times*, they also appeared late.

It took *The New York Times* a week to run the aid story (as an offlead) and when it did, it cast President Bush as a benefactor to the Afghan nation; “Bush plans to send \$320 million in food and medicine to Afghans”, (Oct 5, 2001). More importantly, it took *The New York Times* 10 days to report the Red Cross bombing on the front page, after the US had bombed the same building for the second time. The story was also placed as an offlead.<sup>261</sup>

The fourth of the seven front page stories in *The Irish Times* about the “unworthy victims” was this offlead on October 26, 2001; “Tiny bundle is first of Afghan victims.” The story described the arrival of a 12-month-old baby at a hospital in Pakistan who was one of only five people known to have survived a bomb attack on the village of Tarin Kannt. The reporter described this as the “first verifiable evidence that civilians are being hit by the nightly United States bombing campaign”<sup>262</sup>.

There was no similar report at all on the front page of *The New York Times* and certainly no similar headline. In fact, the only front page headline for this sample which acknowledged even the possibility of civilian casualties appeared four months later in February 2002, and referred, albeit obliquely, to

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<sup>260</sup> De Breadun, Deaglan, “Pakistan, US agree on future Afghan regime, Red Cross warehouse hit by two US missiles,” *The Irish Times*, Oct 17, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>261</sup> Becker, Elisabeth and Eric Schmitt, “US planes bomb a Red Cross site,” *The New York Times*, Oct 27, 2003, p1 offlead

<sup>262</sup> “Tiny bundle is first of Afghan victims,” *The Irish Times*, Oct 26, 2001, p1 offlead (No byline)

the same attack; “October Strike on Taliban Hit Civilians, Survivors Say.”<sup>263</sup> The differing treatment of the dead at Tarin Kannt<sup>264</sup> is a striking example of the Propaganda Model. Not only was the headline indifferent, but the story appeared four months after the event and was placed below the fold.

The fifth and sixth headlines in *The Irish Times* sequence referred to the jail deaths at Mazar-I-Sharif; “Amnesty demands inquiry on jail killings,” (Nov 29, 2001) and “Pressure for inquiry into Taliban deaths” (Nov 30, 2001). There was no similar call for inquiries on the front page of *The New York Times*.

On December 12, the final front page headline from *The Irish Times* reported; “US defends bombing after 65 Afghans reported killed.” This story; and its implication of US culpability in civilian deaths, never appeared on the front page of *The New York Times*. It was later referred to as a “disputed” incident.<sup>265</sup>

All in all, the seven front page headlines from *The Irish Times* conveyed a picture of Afghanistan which was largely absent from the 11 headlines which appeared on the front pages of *The New York Times*. It is worth reiterating that these 11 headlines about the “unworthy victims” accounted for just 1.84 per cent of the newspaper’s coverage of the “war on terror.”

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<sup>263</sup> Gall, Carlotta, “October Strike on Taliban Hit Civilians, Survivors Say,” *The New York Times*, February 13, 2002, p1

<sup>264</sup> *The New York Times* uses Tirin Kot while *The Irish Times* calls the town Tarin Kannt. I verified that this was the same town by checking news reports about the one-year old boy who was injured, Hamid Ullah, on the cursor.org website. Cursor.org is maintained by University of New Hampshire Economics Professor and Afghan war watcher, Marc W. Herold

<sup>265</sup> Schmitt, Eric and James Dao, “Use of Pimpot Air Power Comes of Age in New War,” *The New York Times*, December 24, 2001, p1 fourth lead above fold

The headlines were generally bland, such as this one from October 2001: “Escaping Afghanistan, Children Pay Price.” There was little attempt to humanise the children in the headline, although the content was shocking;

In the raw gloom, Haziza, 12, helped find her mother and baby brother, dead in the rubble of their collapsed home. It was early October, the first night of the American bombing of Kabul...In her mind's eye, the girl said she recalls two still bodies, ‘their faces crushed and covered with blood.’<sup>266</sup>

The story, which was buried at the bottom of the front page, was accompanied by a picture of Haziza. The caption did not mention that the girl’s mother and baby brother had been killed by US bombs. Instead it suggested that Haziza was almost better off in her new circumstances:

Haziza, a 12-year-old refugee with much younger classmates in Pakistan. In Afghanistan she was not allowed to go to school.

The paper consistently played down negative reports on the “war” in Afghanistan. For example, on October 30, 2001; it ran this headline “As Refugees Suffer, Supplies Sit Unused near Afghan Border”, on the fourth story below the fold. It turned out to page B5 where a much larger headline (at the bottom half of the page) said: “Refugees are dying as aid goes unused.” This was quite a change in circumstances. On page one; they were “suffering”, while on page B5, the refugees were actually dying.

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<sup>266</sup> Bearak, Barry, ‘A Nation Challenged: Refugees, Escaping Afghanistan, Children Pay Price’ *The New York Times* October 30, 2001. Bearak won the Pulitzer Prize in 2002 for this and nine other articles which include “Refugees Make Harrowing Trip to a Desolate Haven.”

As Bernard Cohen said in 1963:

The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.<sup>267</sup>

The 11 headlines which appeared on page one of *The New York Times* did not tell the Americans to think about the US actions in Afghanistan. They praised Bush, spoke of “battles” to feed nation, alluded to warlords, and in the rare instances when a headline painted the US in a poor light, the story appeared days, or even months, after the event. Three are presented here for contrast:

- Now, the Battle to Feed the Afghan Nation (Nov 16, 2001, Below fold lead)
- Aid Groups Say Warlords Steal As Needy Wait (Jan 4, 2002, Above fold, third lead)
- The Ravaged Minds From A Generation Of War (Jan 9, 2002, Above fold, fourth lead)

Furthermore, they certainly never used such emotive phrases as “carpet bombing” in a headline. On November 1, 2001, *The Irish Times* offlead was; “US begins major carpet-bomb raids.” Perhaps *The New York Times* had absorbed the 1975 admonition from US colonel David Opfer. Addressing reporters in Cambodia, he said: “You always write it's bombing, bombing, bombing. It's not bombing! It's air support.”<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Cohen, Bernard, *The Press and Foreign Policy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963, p13

<sup>268</sup> Holt, Eddie, “Shop till it stops,” *The Irish Times*, October 27, 2001, News Features

## FRONT PAGE PICTURES

US media critic Barbie Zelizer said the “visuals of September 11...made it easier to mobilise support for the war in Afghanistan.”<sup>269</sup> She also found *The New York Times* published “more photos, bigger photos, and more colour photos in the months following September 11 than in the preceding time period.”<sup>270</sup> None of those splashy photographs depicted the “unworthy victims.”

This research showed that *The New York Times* ran 101 pictures about the “war on terror” in the display spot, which is reserved for the day’s most important picture. Just four of those, or 3.96 per cent, depicted the “unworthy victims.” In comparison, *The Irish Times* ran 38 pictures in the display spot and seven of those, or 18.42 per cent were about the unworthy victims.

<i>The New York Times</i>		<i>The Irish Times</i>	
Afghan casualties display	4	Afghan casualties display	7
Total "war on terror"	101	Total "war on terror"	38
Per cent of total	3.96%	Per cent of total	18.42%
Total Afghan Pics	9	Total Afghan Pics	8
Total "war on terror" pics	209	Total "war on terror" pics	45
Per cent of total	4.31%	Per cent of total	17.78%

<sup>269</sup> Zelizer, Barbie, “Photography, Journalism and Trauma,” *Journalism After September 11*, Ed, Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, Routledge, New York, 2002, p50

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid*, p50

There were no front-page pictures of civilian casualties in *The New York Times*, whereas there were plenty of pictures of the military hardware being used to kill them.

This picture appeared on the front page of the paper on October 8, 2001. The caption said: "USS Enterprise; A bomb with a message was moved into position



on the USS Enterprise in preparation for yesterday's strike."

Photographs which illustrated the rightness and goodness of the US cause were given more prominence. For example, a caption from January 5, 2002, over a beautiful display picture of a large crowd of Afghan women suggested that life had improved for Afghan women since the invasion:

One More Door Opened in Afghanistan:  
Young women hoping for a university education gathered yesterday at the gates of the University of Balkh in Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan. They were barred from school during the first five years of Taliban rule. This year, the university plans to admit 400 women.



Zelizer wrote that governments have long treated the “still photograph...as a vehicle possessing tremendous potential influence over publics. The events of September 11 were no exception.” But, while the attacks on the US “were shaped largely through their visual representation,”<sup>271</sup> there was no such visual representation in the attack on Afghanistan. There was just a media-created void.

In January 2002, Gay Alcorn, the Washington correspondent of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, reported that a sub-editor from a major US regional newspaper, *The News Herald*, had written a memo telling the subs’ desk to keep pictures of civilian casualties off the front page.

DO NOT USE photos on Page 1 showing civilian casualties from the US war in Afghanistan,” wrote copy editor Ray Glenn to staff of the *News Herald* in Panama City, Florida.<sup>272</sup>

The story about the ban on front page pictures was also not reported in *The New York Times* and the visual exclusion of civilian casualties continued.

*The Irish Times* literally published a broader picture of events in Afghanistan with eight pictures of the “unworthy victims” in total out of 45 (18 per cent).

Seven of those pictures were above the fold. Five pictures showed refugees; one showed the remains of a UN agency after several people were

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid, p50

<sup>272</sup> Alcorn, Gay, “Civilian Deaths No Cause for Concern,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Jan 17, 2002 Accessed at [www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au) on July 12, 2005. Unknown page

killed by US bombing and the last showed the bodies of the prisoners killed at Mazar-I-Sharif. Three of the captions are presented here for contrast:

- A young Afghan refugee pleads with Pakistani police to be allowed to go with his mother to the hospital after she fainted in a temporary detention center in the Pakistani town of Quetta near the Afghan border (Sept 9, 2001)
- A bulldozer clears rubble of a United Nations funded demining agency yesterday At least four people were killed and one wounded as they slept in their offices at the UN - funded demining agency, a witness said. (Oct 10, 2001)
- A Northern Alliance fighter is surrounded with bodies of pro-Taliban forces in the fortress near Mazar-i-Sharif northern Afghanistan yesterday. Several hundred prisoners were killed during fighting after an alleged attempted breakout (Nov 29, 2001)

## EDITORIALS

The issue is not whether the United States should respond forcefully and decisively to these murderous assaults. With some 6,000 civilians feared lost in the attack on the World Trade Centre, America has every right to strike back against its assailants, wherever they may be.<sup>273</sup>

From September 12, 2001 to March 12, 2002, *The New York Times* ran 53 lead editorials about the “war on terror.” Most of these framed America as a force for good and reflected the newspaper’s belief in the inherent goodness and rightness of the US. One even paid tribute to the American people, “who, despite their grief and anger, have been patient as they waited for action.”<sup>274</sup> None of them, or zero per cent, were about the “unworthy victims.” The only mention of the “unworthy victims” came in three non-lead editorials, which is a statement of their importance to the editorial writers.

<i>The New York Times Editorials</i>		<i>The Irish Times Editorials</i>	
Amount lead editorials	53	Amount lead editorials	29
Afghan casualties leads	0	Afghan casualties leads	2
Per cent of total	0.00%	Per cent of total	6.9%
Overall Editorials	121	Overall Editorials	34
Total Editorials	3	Afghan casualties	2
Per cent of total	2.48%	Per cent of total	5.88%

*The Irish Times* ran 29 lead editorials over the same period and, as can be seen in the table, two of those, or 6.9 per cent, were about the “unworthy victims.”

<sup>273</sup> “Calibrating the Use of Force,” *The New York Times*, Sept 22, 2001, editorial

<sup>274</sup> “The American Offensive Begins,” *The New York Times*, Oct 8, 2001, editorial

The first editorial in *The Irish Times* referred to the unfolding humanitarian crisis<sup>275</sup> and the second to the massacre at Mazar-I-Sharif.<sup>276</sup> In the editorial about Mazar-I-Sharif, the newspaper said there were “serious questions to be answered” about the deaths of the prisoners at the Mazar-I-Sharif jail and asked if “the intense US bombing was intended to annihilate them rather than bring the uprising under control.”<sup>277</sup>

*The New York Times* did not raise any questions over these deaths and excluded the incident from its editorials, a finding that supports Chomsky’s belief:

Where the locus of responsibility is at home, we find... silence or apologetics; avoidance of personal testimony and specific detail; world-weary wisdom about the complexities of history and foreign cultures that we do not understand; narrowing of focus to the lowest level of planning or understandable error in confusing circumstances; and other forms of evasion.<sup>278</sup>

In addition, throughout all 34 editorials on the “war on terror”, *The Irish Times* mentioned either the civilian death toll or the humanitarian disaster in approximately every second editorial. *The Irish Times* editorials consistently expressed concern and fear for the refugees in Afghanistan with statements such as “Food is what these Afghans urgently need, not some ill-directed mass

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<sup>275</sup> “Humanitarian Crisis Unfolds,” *The Irish Times*, Oct 12, 2001, editorial

<sup>276</sup> “The Events at Mazar-E-Sharif,” *The Irish Times*, Nov 30, 2001, editorial

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid*, editorial

<sup>278</sup> Chomsky, Noam. *Necessary Illusions*, South End Press, Boston, MA, p137

bombing campaign,”<sup>279</sup> and that, “this could become a humanitarian disaster on a colossal scale, comparable to Rwanda or Ethiopia.”<sup>280</sup>

*The New York Times*, meanwhile, did not use words such as catastrophe or disaster and it certainly did not compare the situation to such iconic disasters as Rwanda or Ethiopia. Even when it did mention the “unworthy victims”, in the three non-lead editorials, the newspaper still framed their suffering in the larger context of benevolent US intent. The editorials also managed to suggest that the bombing was beneficial for Afghanistan as can be seen in these two excerpts:

But the hope is that the next time rural Afghans hear a plane approaching, they will find the United States and its allies dropping bags of wheat rather than the bombs that the Taliban says are coming.<sup>281</sup>

Over all, American military action in Afghanistan has probably saved tens of thousands of civilian lives by evicting the Taliban and allowing relief agencies to resume food deliveries to famine victims cut off by an uncaring government and endless civil war . . .<sup>282</sup>

The third editorial to mention the “unworthy victims” appeared in January, 2002. While *The Irish Times* was already using terms such as “mounting civilian casualties,”<sup>283</sup> *The New York Times* was not convinced that the US was

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<sup>279</sup> “Hot Pursuit In Afghanistan,” *The Irish Times*, Sept 29, 2001, editorial

<sup>280</sup> “Humanitarian Crisis Unfolds,” *The Irish Times*, Oct 12, 2001, editorial

<sup>281</sup> “The Exodus from Afghanistan” *The New York Times*, Sept 29, 2001, editorial

<sup>282</sup> “Afghanistan's Civilian Casualties,” *The New York Times*, Feb 13, 2002, editorial

<sup>283</sup> “The Need For Coalition Unity,” *The Irish Times*, Oct 30, 2001, editorial

killing civilians. It dismissed such allegations with a flippant “whatever” response:

Some elements in Mr. Karzai's interim government charge that bombing attacks have injured innocent civilians, an accusation rejected by the Pentagon. Whatever the truth, the pressure on Mr. Karzai and his aides seems to be growing to ask for a halt in airstrikes.<sup>284</sup>

Throughout the sample, as will be seen in the following sections, the American newspaper would pay very little attention to the victims of US action. However, the following editorial, which appeared during this brief period, still counts as one of the most egregious editorials in *The New York Times*.

America did not go to war in Afghanistan so that women there could once again feel the sun on their faces, but the reclaimed freedom of Afghan women is a collateral benefit that Americans can celebrate.<sup>285</sup>

Less than a year later, the same newspaper would run a report describing how Afghan women were experiencing "catastrophic" death rates associated with pregnancy and childbirth -- the world's worst, doctors believe."<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> “The Challenge in Afghanistan,” *The New York Times*, Jan 5, 2002, editorial

<sup>285</sup> “Liberating the Women of Afghanistan,” *The New York Times*, November 24, 2001, editorial

<sup>286</sup> Miller, Judith and Carlotta Gall, “Women Suffer Most in Afghan Health Crisis, Experts Say.” *The New York Times*, Oct 27, 2002, p3

## PRODUCT IRAQ: THE SOFT LAUNCH<sup>287</sup>

This section examined the prominence of Iraq on the front page and on the editorial page in the first 12 months after September 11. Iraq was an unlikely focus of attention given the “war on terror” in Afghanistan and the knowledge that 15 of the 19 hijackers came from America’s ally, Saudi Arabia.<sup>288</sup>

The section is divided into three parts; September 2001 to January 2002, January 2002 to May 2002, and May 2002 to September 2002.

### *SEPTEMBER 2001 TO JANUARY 2002*

Iraq was the topic of seven front page headlines in *The New York Times*, with six of those stories, or 86 per cent, above the fold. In comparison, the “unworthy victims” in Afghanistan merited just four above the fold.

The first front-page mention appeared on October 27 in a story above the fold. Headlined: “Czechs confirm Iraqi agent met with terror ringleader,”<sup>289</sup> the story clearly linked September 11 to Iraq.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> According to marketing lore, new products are sometimes given a “soft launch,” with limited advertising and marketing, to see how the product settles in the marketplace.

<sup>288</sup> The other four came from Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Egypt

<sup>289</sup> Tyler, Patrick and John Tagliabue, “Czechs confirm Iraqi agent met with terror ringleader,” *The New York Times*, October 27, 2001, p1, fourth lead above fold

<sup>290</sup> This story would later be singled out by *The New York Times* in its apology of May 26, 2004. The placement of the apology was interesting. Unlike the massive Jayson Blair mea culpa, which

The remaining six headlines described Iraqi training and terrorism,<sup>291</sup> Iraq's "WMDs,"<sup>292</sup> and banned arms,<sup>293</sup> the "threat" from Hussein,<sup>294</sup> chemical and nuclear arms<sup>295</sup>, and Iraq's "links" to anthrax<sup>296</sup>.

The sense of menace was palpable. By January 2002, the US public was so frightened of Iraq that a Pew Research poll<sup>297</sup> found that 73 per cent favoured the use of force. Another 41 per cent said they would back a US attack on Iraq even if America's allies didn't support it.

This manufactured fear of Iraq was exacerbated by the frequency and tone of stories about "terror alerts." Headlines such as "FBI issues alert on signs of new terror" (Oct 12, 2001) and "Ashcroft Warns of Terror Attacks Soon against US" (Oct 30, 2001) contributed little to the average American's knowledge. Between 2000 and 2003, 5.1 million Americans lost their health insurance, yet there were no regular "health insurance alerts."<sup>298</sup>

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was showcased on page one, the Iraq apology was tucked inside page 10 without even a cross-reference from page one.

<sup>291</sup> Hedges, Chris, "Defectors Cite Iraqi Training For Terrorism," *The New York Times*, Nov 8, 01, p1 fourth lead above fold

<sup>292</sup> Bumiller, Elisabeth, "Readmit Inspectors, President Tells Iraq; 'Or Else' Is Unstated," *The New York Times*, Nov 27 01, p1, third story below fold

<sup>293</sup> Tyler, Patrick and David Sanger, "U S. to press Iraq to let U.N. search for banned arms," *The New York Times* Nov 30 01, p1 off-lead

<sup>294</sup> Tyler, Patrick, "U.S. again placing focus on Hussein, Dec 18, 2001, *The New York Times*, p1 fourth story above fold

<sup>295</sup> Miller, Judith, "Iraqi Tells of Renovations at Sites For Chemical and Nuclear Arms," *The New York Times* Dec 20 01, fourth story above fold

<sup>296</sup> Broad, William and David Johnston, "U.S. Inquiry Tried, but Failed, To Link Iraq to Anthrax Attack," *The New York Times* Dec 22 01, fourth story above fold

<sup>297</sup> "Americans Favour Force in Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and..." January 22, 2002 <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=148> Accessed on Nov 21, 2004

<sup>298</sup> "The Economic Downturn and Changes in Health Insurance Coverage," 2000-2003. Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. Released in September 2004, Accessed on September 30, 2004 at <http://www.kff.org/uninsured/index.cfm>



The newspaper did not run any front page display pictures about Iraq during this sample, but it did publish one editorial “The Wrong Time to Fight Iraq” which said that while deposing Saddam Hussein was an admirable aim; there were “no good short-term options for getting rid of him.”

Meanwhile, on Dublin’s D’Olier Street, the home of *The Irish Times*, there was just one mention of Iraq, a page one offlead by Patrick Smyth. Headlined: “Bush warns Iraq on weapons inspections”; the intro said President Bush had signalled “an escalation in US war ambitions” with his warnings to Iraq.

## JANUARY 2002 TO MAY 2002

On January 30, *The New York Times* ran the first “axis of evil” lead headline. “Bush, Focusing On Terrorism, Says Secure U.S. Is Top Priority/ Sends A Warning/ In Speech, He Calls Iraq, Iran And North Korea 'An Axis Of Evil'.” This was one of two leads and a below fold offlead about Iraq during this period<sup>299</sup>. All three framed “war” as a US prerogative and none challenged the US.

The newspaper also ran two specific editorials, or 5.13 per cent of the total 39. An additional LexisNexis search found that nine editorials in total made reference to Iraq while just one mentioned the civilian deaths in Afghanistan.

Both Iraq editorials both appeared in January. The first said the invasion of Afghanistan was a “war against terrorism” and endorsed widening that action to other countries. There was no debate about as to whether “terrorism” could be an armed response to other stimuli, or even if the US practiced “terrorism.”<sup>300</sup>

The second said that Iraq was “on notice” that the US would not let it “develop biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.”<sup>301</sup> The remaining seven editorials repeated the administration claims, and one linked September 11 to

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<sup>299</sup> See “Bush, Focusing On Terrorism, Says Secure U.S. Is Top Priority/ Sends A Warning/ In Speech, He Calls Iraq, Iran and North Korea 'An Axis of Evil',” Jan 30, 2002 and “Powell Says U.S. Is Weighing Ways To Topple Hussein/ Cheney Will Visit Region/ Action Not Imminent, Officials Say, And A Direct Attack Is Not The Only Option,” Feb 13, 2002

<sup>300</sup> “Terrorism’s Other Battlefields,” *The New York Times*, Jan 9, 2002, editorial

<sup>301</sup> “George W Bush’s Moment,” *The New York Times*, Jan 30, 2002, editorial

Iraq, saying: “The attacks of Sept. 11 left the United States no choice but to defend itself”<sup>302</sup>.

*The Irish Times* ran just one front page story, a lead on March 12, 2002. This is a useful comparison as both newspapers reported the same story, a press conference by President Bush. *The Irish Times* said: “Bush and Blair move towards new war on Iraq/US President reiterates his pledge to fight terrorism.”<sup>303</sup> *The New York Times* said: “Bush Vows to Aid Other Countries in War On Terror/ Widens U.S. Commitment.”<sup>304</sup> *The Irish Times* was talking about “war” while *The New York Times* spoke of “aid.”

*The Irish Times* also ran five editorials, and although none of those were specifically about Iraq, they said that any attack on Iraq, “without clear evidence, an express mandate from the United Nations and the concurrence of its allies” would be “a foolhardy and dangerous exercise in unilateralism.”<sup>305</sup> It also referred to the disquiet in Asia and Europe over the US “war against terrorism” and questioned whether an attack on Iraq could be justified.<sup>306</sup>

Although *The Irish Times* had cut back its main coverage, the newspaper raised two issues through its Index section which were excluded from the front

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<sup>302</sup> “The Limits of Power,” *The New York Times* Jan 31, 2002, editorial

<sup>303</sup> Smyth, Patrick and Frank Millar, “Bush and Blair move towards new war on Iraq/US President reiterates his pledge to fight terrorism” *The Irish Times*, Mar 12, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>304</sup> Bumiller, Elisabeth, “Bush Vows To Aid Other Countries In War On Terror/ Widens U.S. Commitment,” *The New York Times*, Mar 12, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>305</sup> “Bush speaks to Congress,” *The Irish Times*, Jan 31, 2002, editorial

<sup>306</sup> See “Mr Bush’s Visit to Asia,” *The Irish Times*, editorial and “War in Afghanistan,” *The Irish Times*, March 21, 2002, editorial

page of *The New York Times*, the empty “WMD” canisters in Afghanistan and the growing trans-Atlantic rift.

On January 17, 2002, *The New York Times* third lead quoted US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld saying that the empty canisters which had been found in Afghanistan “appear to be weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>307</sup> Those same canisters featured on the front page of *The Irish Times* on the same day under the headline: “Al Qaeda canisters feared to hold deadly weapons empty.”<sup>308</sup>

It took another five weeks for *The New York Times* front page to report that the canisters had turned out to be harmless, and still it did not challenge Rumsfeld. In fact, the reporter attempted to explain the earlier reports by claiming that bin Laden must have been swindled.

The analysis of suspicious canisters, computer discs and documents conducted by the government suggests, in fact, that Mr. Bin Laden and Al Qaeda may have been duped by black-market weapons swindlers selling crude containers hand-painted with skulls and crossbones and dipped, perhaps, in medical waste to fool a Geiger counter, officials said.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Schmitt, Eric, “The Dragnet, Tribes Balking At Cave Hunt, Pentagon Says,” *The New York Times*, Jan, 17, 2002, p1

<sup>308</sup> This headline is not available in either LexisNexis or Ireland.com. It was caught by the microform analysis. The headline is not included in the LexisNexis database as it is from the front page index, and it is not included in *The Irish Times* database as it was added to the paper for the city edition. This underlines the need to ensure that such databases are reserved as secondary rather than primary research tools.

<sup>309</sup> Shanker, Thom, “U.S. Analysts Find No Sign Bin Laden Had Nuclear Arms,” *The New York Times*, Feb 26, 2002, p1

The early signs of what would become the trans-Atlantic split could be seen in the coverage of Guantanamo; there were 18 front page mentions in *The New York Times* yet only one<sup>310</sup> referred to the international outcry over America's treatment of prisoners there.<sup>311</sup> There were two front page mentions in *The Irish Times*<sup>312</sup> and both of these referred to the disquiet over the US actions.

Both newspapers ran editorials on Guantanamo and again there were sharp differences. *The Irish Times* said the US-led coalition was under strain "because of the way the United States is treating the prisoners", and warned that America was "in danger of undermining support it gained during the last four months"<sup>313</sup>

*The New York Times* did not say America was in danger of undermining international support, instead commenting that it was in America's interest to give the prisoners "humane conditions" and "basic standards of due process."<sup>314</sup>

Another example of the provincial mindset in *The New York Times* could be seen in the coverage of European criticism.

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<sup>310</sup> Seelye, Katharine, "Rumsfeld Defends Treatment by U.S. Of Cuba Detainees/An Outcry From Abroad/ In Lengthy Briefing, Defense Chief Calls Criticism Armchair Hyperbole," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2002, p1 offlead

<sup>311</sup> For example see: "Camp X-Ray row threatens first British split with US. Pictures of prisoners fuel outrage: Straw demands explanation," *The Guardian*, London, Jan 21, 2002, p1, "Pressure builds on US over conditions at Cuba prison," *The Financial Times*, London, Jan 21, 2002, p1

<sup>312</sup> "Government favours tribunal to test status of al-Qaeda prisoners," *The Irish Times*, Jan 22, 2002, p1, Lead Index; "US unapologetic about treatment of prisoners on Guantanamo base," *The Irish Times*, Jan 23, 2002, Index lead

<sup>313</sup> "The prisoners of Guantanamo Bay," *The Irish Times*, Jan 20, 2002, editorial

<sup>314</sup> "The Prisoners at Guantanamo," *The New York Times*, Jan 21, 2002, editorial

In February 2002, the then French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine had blasted the US actions as "simplistic", and advised the US to stop acting "unilaterally." *The Irish Times* put this story on the front page: "France criticises 'simplistic attitude' of US on world."<sup>315</sup>

*The New York Times* moved the story inside to page 14.<sup>316</sup> Again the newspaper was signalling that external criticism of the US was not a priority for its readers.

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<sup>315</sup> "France criticises 'simplistic attitude' of US on world," *The Irish Times*, February 7, 2002, p1 index (no byline)

<sup>316</sup> Daley, Suzanne, "French Minister Calls U.S Policy 'Simplistic'," *The New York Times*, February 7, 2002, p14

*MAY 2002 TO AUGUST 2002*

Product Iraq became more prominent in the summer of 2002. *The New York Times* increased its coverage; nine leads and nine other above-the-fold stories. The story-count of 18 made up 14 per cent of the 129 “war on terror” stories. All the stories were above the fold.

The first lead; “Threat from Iraq Must Be Faced,”<sup>317</sup> appeared on May 24, 2002. Again, *The New York Times* dispensed with journalistic convention in removing quote marks from the word “threat.” By June 17, it reported that plans on Iraq were intensifying<sup>318</sup>, without providing any justification.

Between July 31 and August 27 the newspaper ran five leads on Iraq of which two referred to “secret mobile labs”<sup>319</sup> and the “threat of a nuclear Iraq”<sup>320</sup> as if these assertions were unassailable truths.

None of the leads challenged the White House and the last lead, which was published on August 27, began with this intro, which presented the “rationale” as “comprehensive”;

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<sup>317</sup> Sanger, David, “In Reichstag, Bush Condemns Terror As New Despotism/ Seeks To Reassure Allies/ Pledges to Consult Europeans, but Says That Threat From Iraq Must Be Faced,” *The New York Times*, May 24, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>318</sup> Sanger, David, “Bush To Formalize A Defense Policy Of Hitting First/ Plans On Iraq Intensify President wants a Strategy for Nations Seeking Weapons or Sponsoring Terror,” *The New York Times*, June 17, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>319</sup> Schmitt, Eric and James Dao, “Air Power Alone Can't Defeat Iraq, Rumsfeld Asserts/ Cites Secret Mobile Labs,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>320</sup> Bumiller, Elisabeth and James Dao, “Cheney Says Peril Of A Nuclear Iraq Justifies Attack/ Sees Big Risks In Inaction,” *The New York Times*, August 27, 2002, p1 lead

Vice President Dick Cheney today presented the administration's most forceful and comprehensive rationale yet for attacking Iraq, warning that Saddam Hussein would "fairly soon" have nuclear weapons...<sup>321</sup>

This focus on Iraq also featured heavily in the editorials where six of the 32 "war on terror" editorials, or 19 per cent, were about Iraq and four of those were leads.

Three excerpts are presented here to show how *The New York Times* was relaying the White House claims without checking the facts:

- Mr. Hussein may not be as easily deterred from using his hidden stocks of anthrax, botulinum toxin and VX nerve gas. (Battle Plans for Iraq, *The New York Times*, Jul 6, 2002)
- He is known to possess the ingredients for making deadly biological and nerve gas weapons and has already demonstrated the will to use such weapons against civilian populations. (Filling in the Blanks on Iraq, *The New York Times*, Jul 30, 2002)
- The point is not that Saddam Hussein poses no threat to the United States and its interests in the Middle East. He unquestionably does. (Warning Shots on Iraq, *The New York Times*, Aug 16, 2002)

In *The Irish Times*, front page coverage of the "war on terror" was well down, to just one lead,<sup>322</sup> three kickers and no display pictures.<sup>323</sup> Iraq comprised

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid, p1

<sup>322</sup> Smyth, Patrick "Dirty nuclear bomb' plot against US foiled/ Unfolding terrorist plan disrupted, says Ashcroft," *The Irish Times*, June 11, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>323</sup> Reasons for this include the Irish general election which took place on May 17, 2002



just two blurbs and 18 stories in the index. However, *The Irish Times* still covered a wider range of topics than *The New York Times* with headlines such as:

- Proof of Saddam threat sought (Aug 13, 2002)
- US criticised over 'warlike' atmosphere' (Aug 14, 2002)
- Warning on Iraq (Aug 16, 2002)

Rounding out *The Irish Times* coverage for this period were four editorials, two about the general “war on terror” and two about Iraq. With regard to Iraq, there were no mentions of biological toxins and nuclear weapons. Instead the newspaper continued to argue that “an assault on Iraq” would “divide the USA from many of its allies and raise international tensions”,<sup>324</sup> and that the US hawks had failed to “justify such a risky strategy” with their “unproven assumption.”<sup>325</sup>

The divisions between the two newspapers were quite apparent as the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks neared. *The New York Times* was presenting Iraq as a threat while *The Irish Times* was urging restraint and caution.

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<sup>324</sup> “New US Thinking On Iraq,” *The Irish Times*, July 31, 2002, editorial

<sup>325</sup> “Bush Has Yet To Prove Case On Iraq,” *The Irish Times*, Aug 12, 2002, editorial

## THE BUILD-UP TO THE INVASION OF IRAQ

Take Iraq - September 2002 was a crucial month. That's when Washington declared their national security strategy, to dominate the world by force. There was a midterm election coming up so it was important to frighten the population into supporting the Republicans, and they also crucially announced the invasion of Iraq. The month started with Condoleeza Rice saying that the next time we hear about Saddam Hussein it would be a mushroom cloud in New York and it went on from there.

Through the month there was a massive government media propaganda campaign... and you can see the polls shift radically. By the end of the month about 60 per cent of the population thought that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the existence of the United States; that he was responsible for 9/11; that he's planning more attacks, and that he's worked with Al Qaeda. Nobody else thought that.

For example, in Iran and Kuwait, where they hate him, where they would have been happy to slaughter him, nobody was afraid of him. They hated him, but they weren't afraid of him because they knew it was the weakest country in the region. Barely held together with Scotch tape, couldn't threaten anybody. But here, it went from not a major concern to over 60 per cent, real fear. This has always been a very frightened country and it doesn't take a lot to terrify it.<sup>326</sup>

Noam Chomsky

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<sup>326</sup> Private interview with Chomsky, MIT, Boston, MA, USA, December 10, 2004

This section is divided into two parts; the period from August 2002 to December 2002, and then from December 2002 to March 19, 2003. The first section is examined below;

<i>The New York Times</i>		<i>The Irish Times</i>	
“War on terror” stories	222	“War on terror” stories	26
Iraq stories	121	Iraq stories	22
Per cent of total	54.4%	Per cent of total	84%
“War on terror” leads	121	“War on terror” leads	11
Iraq leads	3	Iraq leads	9
Per cent of total	2.48%	Per cent of total	82%

## *AUGUST 2002 TO DECEMBER 2002*

### *FRONT PAGE STORIES*

Between August 28, 2002 and December 21, 2002, *The New York Times* ran 222 front page stories about the “war on terror.” One hundred and twenty-one stories, or 54.4 per cent, were about Iraq.

As Chomsky noted, September 2002 was a crucial month in America. *The New York Times* ran 34 front page stories about Iraq in September alone. Sixteen of those were leads, with another 16 above the fold and just two below the fold. The tone and content of those stories gave the American people the impression that there was much to be frightened about.

On September 7, 2002, *The New York Times* ran a front page story saying the White House had launched a PR campaign to win support for an attack on Iraq in early 2003. The story said that the President’s September 11 speech

would be a “centerpiece” of this “meticulously planned strategy” to sell the idea of Saddam as a threat. The story was a clear indication of the White House intent.<sup>327</sup>

Over the next few days, as the anniversary of September 11 neared, the front page leads publicized the supposed threat from Iraq.

On Monday, September 9, *The New York Times* led with “Bush Officials Say the Time Has Come for Action on Iraq” and quoted the then national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice: “We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.”<sup>328</sup> On September 11, 2002, it led with: “US Steps up Alert as Solemn Day Arrives”<sup>329</sup>

On September 12, 2002, *The New York Times* marked the lowest point in its performance over the 1,000 days with a front page which specifically linked Iraq to September 11.

The lead headline “Bush to Warn UN; Act on Iraq or US Will; He Leads Nation in Mourning at Terror Sites”, was placed above an emotive image of a policeman kneeling at the World Trade Center site. The picture evoked horror and loss; the enduring heartbreak of the survivors.

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<sup>327</sup> Bumiller, Elisabeth, “Bush Aides Set Strategy to Sell Policy on Iraq,” *The New York Times*, Sept 7, 2002, p1 above fold fifth lead

<sup>328</sup> Purdum, Todd, “Bush Officials Say The Time Has Come For Action On Iraq/ United Front On Camera,” *The New York Times*, Sept 9, 2002, p1

<sup>329</sup> Sanger, David and David Johnston, “US Steps up Alert as Solemn Day Arrives, Bush Issues Order,” *The New York Times*, Sept 11, 2001, p1 lead

The headline was based on the text of President Bush's upcoming UN speech,<sup>330</sup> which, the newspaper noted, had been leaked by Bush aides.

The insinuation, both in Bush's speech, and the layout of the front page, was inescapable.

As Chomsky said;

Now if you talk to the media... they say we're not producing any propaganda, we're just reporting what they're saying. Which is true. But if you report uncritically what is being said by the government and you don't have any critical commentary, then yes, you're a propaganda machine.<sup>331</sup>

This front page, which is reproduced overleaf, is one of the most illuminating from this entire research, as it clearly shows how *The New York Times* facilitated the Bush administration's aims, aims the newspaper had signposted itself on September 7.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Full transcript of speech online at [http://www.un.int/usa/02\\_131.htm](http://www.un.int/usa/02_131.htm) Accessed on July 25, 2005

<sup>331</sup> Private interview with Noam Chomsky, MIT, December 10, 2004

<sup>332</sup> Bumiller, Elisabeth, "Bush Aides Set Strategy to Sell Policy on Iraq," *The New York Times*, Sept 7, 2002, p1 above fold fifth lead



"All the News That's Fit to Print"

# The New York Times

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## Bush to Warn U.N.: Act on Iraq or U.S. Will; He Leads Nation in Mourning at Terror Sites



### GOLF EXERCISE SET

#### In Speech Today, Amon Will Urge Americans Not to Move Abroad

**By MICHAEL SANCHEZ**  
and IAN FRENCH

President Bush is set to deliver the United States' most significant address since the Sept. 11 attacks, as he addresses the nation and the world in a speech today. The president will urge Americans not to move abroad in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, warning that the United States will remain a global superpower.

President Bush will deliver his address at 8 p.m. Eastern Standard Time from the White House. The speech is expected to be one of the most significant of his presidency, as he addresses the nation and the world in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.

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### A Single Grief Knits Together A Vast Country

**By STEVE WILSON**

AMERICA'S GRIEF HAS KNITTED TOGETHER A VAST COUNTRY IN A SINGLE DAY. The country has become a vast, unified community of grief, as millions of Americans have gathered in public squares, parks, and churches to mourn the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks.

The grief has been a unifying force, as people from all walks of life have come together to share their sorrow. From the streets of New York to the heart of the South, the nation has been united in a common purpose: to remember the lives lost and to find a way forward.

The Sept. 11 attacks have changed the way we see the world. The towers of the World Trade Center were not just buildings; they were symbols of our nation's strength and ambition. Their destruction has left a deep wound in the fabric of our society, and we are all feeling the pain of that loss.

### A Day of Tributes, Tears And the Litany of the Lost

**By BOB ROY**

They followed one another down, down the anniversary lists in Lower Manhattan yesterday. Hundreds of names, of lives lost, were read out loud, and many were sobbing. The list of names was a litany of the lost, a day of tributes and tears.

The names were read out loud in a solemn ceremony at the World Trade Center site. The list was long, and the names were read out in a slow, deliberate pace. Many of the names were of children, and the tears were particularly poignant.

The ceremony was a powerful reminder of the lives that were lost. It was a day of mourning, a day to remember the names of the victims and to honor their memory. The list of names was a testament to the human cost of the Sept. 11 attacks.



### A NATION CHALLENGED

**World Focus: Pain of U.S.**  
The Sept. 11 attacks have brought a sense of global unity and solidarity. People around the world have expressed their sympathy for the victims and their families.

**Call for Arms of Pentagon**  
The Pentagon has called for arms to be donated to the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks. The arms are being collected to provide comfort and support to the families of the victims.

**A Big Day in a Small Town**  
A small town in Pennsylvania is celebrating a big day. The town is holding a memorial service for the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks.

**Changing Faces of Grief**  
The faces of the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks are being preserved. The faces are being preserved in a way that will allow them to be seen by the public.

**Resilient Behind the Scenes**  
The resilience of the people of the United States is being tested. The people are showing a great deal of strength and courage in the face of adversity.

### Lamenting Death, and Vulnerability

**By MICHAEL SANCHEZ**  
and IAN FRENCH

The Sept. 11 attacks have reminded us of our vulnerability. We are all mortal, and we are all subject to the same fate. The attacks have shown us that we are not invulnerable, and we must be prepared for the possibility of another attack.

The Sept. 11 attacks have also reminded us of the value of life. Life is precious, and we must cherish every moment. The attacks have shown us that life is fragile, and we must be grateful for the time we have.

The Sept. 11 attacks have also reminded us of the power of love. Love is a powerful force, and it can overcome all obstacles. The attacks have shown us that love is the greatest strength we have, and it is the only way to truly win.

**INSIDE**

**Johnny Whitak Dies**  
The actor who played the young Jesus in the 1977 film "The Jesus Movie" has died. He was 52 years old.

**Market Commentary**  
The stock market closed higher today, as investors showed confidence in the economy.

**Markets**  
Dow Jones Industrial Average: 10,800.00 (+100.00)  
S&P 500: 1,200.00 (+20.00)  
NASDAQ: 2,500.00 (+50.00)  
NYSE: 1,500.00 (+30.00)  
AMEX: 500.00 (+10.00)  
NYSE Composite: 1,000.00 (+20.00)  
NYSE MidCap: 500.00 (+10.00)  
NYSE SmallCap: 200.00 (+5.00)  
NYSE MicroCap: 100.00 (+2.00)  
NYSE Biotech: 1,500.00 (+30.00)  
NYSE Energy: 1,000.00 (+20.00)  
NYSE Health Care: 1,500.00 (+30.00)  
NYSE Tech: 2,500.00 (+50.00)  
NYSE Telecom: 1,000.00 (+20.00)  
NYSE Utilities: 1,000.00 (+20.00)

Meanwhile, *The Irish Times* kept the stories separate, focusing on the anniversary for their page one lead.<sup>333</sup> The story about the speech, which was placed on page 11,<sup>334</sup> said Bush would receive “a cool welcome” from the international community because of “widespread skepticism” over Iraq. *The New York Times* did not refer to this “cool welcome” or “widespread skepticism.”

With the anniversary out of the way, the Bush administration stepped up its Iraq campaign. On September 13, 2002, *The New York Times* lead reported that President Bush had “challenged” the UN “to force Saddam Hussein to disarm and end torture and repression of his people” and that action was “unavoidable” if Iraq “continued its defiance of international resolutions.”<sup>335</sup>

Iraq was treated as a much more prominent story in Ireland with 82 per cent of the “war on terror” leads. However, even though it ran far fewer stories overall, the tone was markedly different. For example, the newspaper was the only one to feature analysis and commentary by Noam Chomsky.<sup>336</sup> In addition, the newspaper also ran 56 headlines in the blurb or index sections and of these, 13 pointed to significant disagreements both within and without the US over Iraq. The same stories rarely made the front page of *The New York Times*.

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<sup>333</sup> O’Clery, Conor “America unites in grief/Names of the dead echo through a silent Manhattan,” *The Irish Times*, Sept 12, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>334</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “‘War-time president’ to go on the offensive,” *The Irish Times*, Sept 12, 2002, p11

<sup>335</sup> Sanger, David and Ehsabeth Bumiller, “Bush Presses U.N. to Act Quickly on Disarming Iraq/Threat of War is Implied, Not Stated,” *The New York Times*, September 13, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>336</sup> “Noam Chomsky’s View,” *The Irish Times*, September 10, 2002, Masthead blurb

For instance during the final days of August, 2002, *The Irish Times* front page reported that EU ministers opposed invading Iraq,<sup>337</sup> and a page one story in September, 2002, highlighted German chancellor Gerhard Schröder's opposition to the war<sup>338</sup>. Neither story received front page treatment in *The New York Times*. *The Irish Times* also reported that US senator Edward Kennedy had "attacked" the planned invasion of Iraq<sup>339</sup>, whereas *The New York Times* said he had merely expressed "reservations"<sup>340</sup>. *The Irish Times* said French President Jacques Chirac "used his strongest language yet in warning Bush against invading Iraq",<sup>341</sup> while *The New York Times* dismissed this as just "pressure" from France.<sup>342</sup>

On September 17, 2002, after Iraq had agreed to the return of weapons inspectors, *The Irish Times* ran the news as a straight breakthrough,<sup>343</sup> while *The New York Times* said it could be a ploy.<sup>344</sup> *The Irish Times* editorial hailed the decision as "a triumph for the primacy of the rule of international law"<sup>345</sup>, while *The New York Times* played down the offer saying it could be "an insincere gambit aimed at delaying and dividing the Security Council."<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> "EU Ministers against invasion of Iraq to topple Saddam," *The Irish Times*, Aug 30, 2002 p1 index (no byline)

<sup>338</sup> "Schröder opposes war with Iraq," *The Irish Times*, Sept 14, 2002, p1 index (no byline)

<sup>339</sup> "Leading Democrat urges Bush to consult Congress over Iraq," *The Irish Times*, Aug 28, 2002, P1 index (no byline)

<sup>340</sup> Firestone, David, "Liberals Object to Bush Policy on Iraq Attack," *The New York Times*, Aug 27, 2002, p1 above fold offlead

<sup>341</sup> "Chirac warns Bush over Iraq," *The Irish Times*, Aug 30, 2002, p1 index (no byline)

<sup>342</sup> O'Connell, Richard and Julia Preston, "Administration Seeking to Build Support in Congress on Iraq Issue," *The New York Times*, Aug 30, 2002, p1 offlead

<sup>343</sup> O'Clery, Conor, "Iraq agrees to return of UN weapons inspectors - Annan," *The Irish Times*, Sept 17, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>344</sup> Preston, Julia and Todd S. Purdum "U.N. Inspectors Can Return Unconditionally, Iraq Says/Bush Is Sceptical/ Offer is seen as a Tactic to Forestall Action by Security Council," *The New York Times*, September 17, p1 lead

<sup>345</sup> "Iraqi Crisis Still Not Resolved," *The Irish Times*, Sept 18, 2002, editorial

<sup>346</sup> "A Road Map for Iraq," *The New York Times*, Sept 18, 2002, editorial



In America, readers were bombarded with such agenda-reinforcing headlines as:

- Bush Has Received Pentagon Options On Attacking Iraq/ Most Specific Plans Yet (Sept 21, 2002)
- Rumsfeld Favors Forceful Actions To Foil An Attack (Oct 14, 2002)
- Bush Team Urges Bold Inspections Of Iraq's Arsenal (Oct 21, 2002)

On October 2, 2002, *The Irish Times* reported that Iraq had agreed to resume weapons inspections but that the US would “thwart” any such inspections.<sup>347</sup> *The New York Times*, covering the same story on page one instead said inspections needed to be delayed until a new Security Council resolution.<sup>348</sup>

On October 10, *The Irish Times* said the CIA believed Iraq posed little or no threat to the US and that war would be counter-productive.<sup>349</sup> *The New York Times* said the same report pointed to “divisions within the administration” about Iraq’s “intentions and its willingness to ally itself with Al Qaeda.”<sup>350</sup>

The higher percentage of negative stories in *The Irish Times* underlined the deep unease in Europe about the US war plans. This unease was not reflected on the front page of *The New York Times* where front page headlines warned

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<sup>347</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “US to thwart return of UN weapons inspectors to Iraq,” *The Irish Times*, Oct 2, 2002, p1 offlead

<sup>348</sup> Purdum, Todd and Julia Preston, “Powell Says U.N. Ought To Hold Up Iraq Inspections,” *The New York Times*, October 2, 2002, p1 offlead

<sup>349</sup> Conor O’Clery, “CIA contradicts Bush on Iraq,” *The Irish Times*, Oct 10, 2002, p1

<sup>350</sup> Gordon, Michael, “US Aides Split on Assessment of Iraq's Plans/ CIA Sees Less Risk of Hussein Aid to Qaeda,” Oct 10, 2002, p1 offlead

about Iraq's "chemical warheads,"<sup>351</sup> the "'urgent duty' to pre-empt attack,"<sup>352</sup> "mobile weapons labs," underground plants,<sup>353</sup> and "missing chemical agents."<sup>354</sup> Readers were also treated to such terrifying scenarios such as:

President Bush declared tonight that Saddam Hussein could attack the United States or its allies "on any given day" with chemical or biological weapons.<sup>355</sup>

The midterm elections took place on November 5, 2002. The Republicans retained their majority in the House and also won the Senate giving them total control of the White House and Congress. As *The New York Times* noted, this put President Bush in a "commanding position" of his agenda.<sup>356</sup>

Before the election, *The New York Times* had said the US was "near compromise" on Iraq and that Bush "would agree to consult the UN."<sup>357</sup> With the election safely out of the way the tone changed as can be seen in this November 8 lead: "President Warns Hussein to Heed a Call to Disarm."<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Hoge, Warren, "Blair Says Iraqis Could Launch Chemical Warheads in Minutes/ Sees Nuclear Weapon Capability In 1 to 5 Years," *The New York Times*, Sept 25, 2002, p1 Off-lead

<sup>352</sup> Sanger, David, "Bush Sees 'Urgent Duty' To Pre-empt Attack By Iraq/ He Cites Threat Posed To U.S. And Allies," *The New York Times*, Oct 8, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>353</sup> Dao, James, "Arms Inspections Are Set To Begin At Sites In Iraq/ U.S. Team Arrives Today/ The Main Concerns Are Mobile Weapons Labs and Urban Or Underground Plants," *The New York Times*, Nov 25, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>354</sup> Sanger, David and Julia Preston, "Iraq Arms Report Has Big Omissions, U.S. Officials Say/ Missing Chemical Agents/ Questions raised By Earlier Inspections Not Answered, Analysts Conclude," *The New York Times*, Dec 13, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>355</sup> Sanger, David, "Bush Sees 'Urgent Duty' To Pre-empt Attack By Iraq/ He Cites Threat Posed To US And Allies," *The New York Times*, Oct 8, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>356</sup> Nagourney, Adam, "G.O.P. Retakes Control Of The Senate/ In A Show Of Presidential Influence; Pataki, Jeb Bush And Lautenberg Win," *The New York Times*, November 6, 2002, p1

<sup>357</sup> Weisman, Steven, "U.S. And France Near Compromise On Action On Iraq/ Issue Of 2nd Resolution/ Bush Would Agree To Consult U.N. While Still Retaining The Right To Act Alone," *The New York Times*, October 30, 2002, p1

<sup>358</sup> Sanger, David and Julia Preston, "President Warns Hussein To Heed A Call To Disarm/ U.N. Vote Set For Today/ Bush, at a News Conference, Says Military Strike Will Be Swift If Iraq Chief Balks," *The New York Times*, November 8, 2002. p1 lead

## EDITORIALS

The newspaper published 43 “war on terror” editorials; 22, or just over 50 per cent, were about Iraq. Fifteen of those<sup>359</sup> repeated the administration’s claims about Iraq’s WMDs without offering any independent evidence, as can be seen in these excerpts from each month:

- He (Saddam Hussein) has secretly and illegally developed biological and chemical weapons and may not be far from developing nuclear bombs. (Summons to War, Aug 28, 2002)
- Iraq, with its storehouses of biological toxins, its advanced nuclear weapons program, its defiance of international sanctions and its ambitiously malignant dictator, is precisely the kind of threat that the United Nations was established to deal with. (The Iraq Test, Sept 13, 2002)
- No further debate is needed to establish that Saddam Hussein is an evil dictator whose continued effort to build unconventional weapons in defiance of clear United Nations prohibitions threatens the Middle East and beyond (A Time for Debate and Reflection, Oct 3, 2002)
- ...a growing danger that Iraq's unconventional weapons will be used in war or passed on to terrorists. (A Unified Message to Iraq, Nov 9, 2002)
- Iraq has to get rid of its biological and chemical arms and missiles and the means to make them, and abandon its efforts to develop nuclear weapons. (Decisive Days for Iraq, Dec 6, 2002)

*The Irish Times* editorial desk made a much greater attempt to place events in context. It attributed any allegations about WMDs to actors such as the US government, President Bush and so forth. Thus, editorials would say; “Mr Cheney says the imminence of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”<sup>360</sup>,

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<sup>359</sup> See excerpts from the 15 editorials in Appendix WMD Editorials

<sup>360</sup> “Disquieting Tone of US Policy,” *The Irish Times*, Aug 29, 2002, editorial

“President Bush says Iraq is harbouring weapons of mass destruction”,<sup>361</sup> and “The United States Government insists Saddam Hussein possesses such weapons.”<sup>362</sup>

The long-awaited report from the UN weapons inspectors arrived in December 2002 and again the two newspapers presented a different interpretation:

*The Irish Times* concluded that although there were “serious deficiencies” in the reporting, they were “insufficient to justify war when Dr Blix’s inspectors are apparently being given free access to sites.”<sup>363</sup> *The New York Times* said that Iraq “has failed to pass its most important test” and that Baghdad “has not provided convincing documentation to back up its dubious claim to have eliminated all its illegal biological, chemical, nuclear and missile programs.”<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> “Why Iraq must comply with the UN,” *The Irish Times*, Nov 14, 2002, editorial

<sup>362</sup> “Relying on the United Nations,” *The Irish Times*, Dec 9, 2002, editorial

<sup>363</sup> “Waiting on Iraq,” *The Irish Times*, Dec 20, 2002, editorial

<sup>364</sup> “Iraqi Stonewalling,” *The New York Times*, Dec 20, 2002, editorial

*DECEMBER 23, 2002 TO MARCH 19, 2003*

"It is very interesting," Senator William Fulbright observed in Senate hearings on government and the media in 1966, "that so many of our prominent newspapers have become almost agents or adjuncts of the government; that they do not contest or even raise questions about government policy."<sup>365</sup>

## *INTRODUCTION*

As Chomsky (*Necessary Illusions*) and others have noted (see Herman, Bagdikian, McChesney etc) any debate in the US media about US government policy is tightly restricted, particularly during war time. During the Cold War, Chomsky found that the media worked off a "basic assumption" that the confrontation was a battle "between two superpowers, one aggressive and expansionist, the other defending the status quo and civilized values. Off the agenda is the problem of containing the United States, and the question of whether the issue has been properly formulated at all."<sup>366</sup>

Chomsky has written extensively about the success of the Creel Commission in persuading the pacifist American population to support the US entry into World War II (See *Manufacturing Consent, Necessary Illusions*). Two former Commission members, Ed Bernays and Walter Lippman, both described how consent could be "engineered" or "manufactured" through propaganda to

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<sup>365</sup> Hearings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, August 31, 1966; cited by Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions*, Pluto Press, 1989, London, p75

<sup>366</sup> Chomsky, Noam, *Necessary Illusions*, Pluto Press, 1989, London, p48

serve the purposes of the dominant elite. This manufacture of consent by the media could be seen during Vietnam and again in Iraq.

During Vietnam, the basic narrative said that the US had “intervened” in the “service of generous ideals, with the goal of defending South Vietnam from aggression and terrorism, and in the interest of democracy and self determination.”<sup>367</sup> Herman and Chomsky said this myth of the benevolent US was never questioned by the Vietnam-era press and endures today.

Thus, when US President Bush said that invading Iraq would give food, medicine and freedom to the Iraqis, safety to the Americans, and peace to the rest of the world, the US mass media did not challenge him. These “generous ideals” were given top billing on page one of *The New York Times*. “We exercise power without conquest,” Bush said, “and sacrifice for the liberty of strangers.”<sup>368</sup>

There are several parallels to be drawn between Vietnam and Iraq. The most obvious is the way in which the US Congress and the American people were convinced of the need for military action.

On August 7, 1964, after being told that American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin had been attacked by North Vietnamese gunboats, Congress passed a resolution authorizing President Lyndon B Johnson to “take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to

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<sup>367</sup> Herman Ed and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* New York: Pantheon, 2002, p169.

<sup>368</sup> Stevenson, Richard and David Sanger, “Calling Iraq A Serious Threat, Bush Vows That He'll Disarm It, And Also Rebuild U.S. Economy,” *The New York Times*, Jan 29, 2003, p1

prevent further aggression."<sup>369</sup> On October 10, 2002, after being told that Iraq posed a major threat to the United States, Congress passed Resolution 114 which authorized the use of military force to remove the alleged threat of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, albeit only if "diplomatic" efforts failed.

Herman and Chomsky (2002, p. 208) cited Daniel Hallin's study of the Vietnam War coverage (*Uncensored War*, Hallin, 1989) which found that "on virtually every important point, the reporting of the two Gulf of Tonkin incidents was either misleading or simply false...and in accordance with the needs of the US executive at that crucial moment." As Herman and Chomsky wrote: "There were ample grounds at the time for suspicion about the US government version"; but these "serious questions" were not aired in the mainstream US press<sup>370</sup>, instead they were debated overseas in such publications as *Le Monde* in France and *The New Statesman* in London (2002, p.209).

*The New York Times* did not investigate the "Iraqi WMDs" any more than it investigated the "Gulf of Tonkin."<sup>371</sup> Instead, during the crucial pre-invasion phase, it repeated statements from the White House as if they were hard news.

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<sup>369</sup> Wording cited on Department of Defence Website biography of then Secretary of State Robert McNamara. Accessed online at [http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/secdef\\_histories/bios/mcnamara.htm](http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/secdef_histories/bios/mcnamara.htm) on August 6, 2005

<sup>370</sup> The authors report that two US publications, *IF Stone's Weekly* and *National Guardian*, did provide "extensive, careful and accurate account of the events" but that they were outside the mainstream.

<sup>371</sup> There is now almost universal acceptance that the facts of the Tonkin incident were manipulated by the then US administration to mobilise support for expanding the war. However, on July 19, 2005, *The New York Times*, in an obituary for General William Westmoreland, did not describe the Tonkin resolution as such, saying instead: "After the announcement that American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin were attacked by North Vietnamese gunboats in August 1964..."

## FRONT PAGES & EDITORIALS

*The New York Times* was one of the few institutions in the country with the ability to slow down this rush to war and I don't think they did that very well<sup>372</sup>

This section concentrates on the 72 editions between December 23, 2002, and March 19, 2003, when the US invaded Iraq. Iraq dominated the "war on terror" coverage (front pages, display pictures and editorials) in both newspapers; comprising 100 per cent of *The Irish Times* and an average of 90 per cent in *The New York Times* as can be seen below:

<i>The New York Times Front Page</i>		<i>The Irish Times Front Page</i>	
"War on terror" stories	136	"War on terror" stories	58
Iraq stories	121	Iraq stories	58
Per cent of total	89%	Per cent of total	100%
"War on terror" leads	49	"War on terror" leads	41
Iraq leads	48	Iraq leads	41
Per cent of total	98%	Per cent of total	100%

As will be seen in this section, none of the lead stories in *The New York Times* challenged the White House on WMDs or the so-called threat from Saddam. Any stories which did appear about the rift between Europe, the UN, and the US were full of wrong perspectives and bereft of any context.<sup>373</sup> Only one lead would refer to the anti-war movement, and then to dismiss it.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Fortner Political Correspondent for *The New York Times*, Richard Reeves. Interviewed in Sag Harbour, NY, August 2005

<sup>373</sup> Said, Edward, *Power Politics and Culture*, Vintage Books, New York, 2001, p416

<sup>374</sup> Stevenson, Richard, "Antiwar Protests Fail To Sway Bush On Plans For Iraq," *The New York Times*, Feb 19, 2003, p1



The supposed benevolent intent of the US was never questioned; leading to such front page leads as this one from February 27, 2003: “Bush Says Ousting Hussein Could Aid Peace in Mideast.” (*The Irish Times* had already forecast that such an action would “exacerbate Middle East conflicts” and “reinforce terrorist movements.”<sup>375</sup>) Overall, during this period, *The Irish Times* would raise several important questions which were never raised in *The New York Times*

The first Iraq lead in either newspaper appeared in *The New York Times* on December 31, 2002. Relying solely on information from an official source (budget official Mitch Daniels) it reported that the White House had cut the estimated war costs by some \$140 billion to a more “politically palatable” \$60 billion.<sup>376</sup> It also said former chief economic adviser, Lawrence B. Lindsey had been “ousted” after making a public estimate of some \$200 billion.

In 2006, when it became clear that those estimates had been wildly understated, *The New York Times* merely recorded, in a story headlined: “Sharp Increase in Tax Revenue Will Cut Deficit”,<sup>377</sup> that the conflict’s cost would exceed \$200bn. Even then, that information was saved for the 24<sup>th</sup> paragraph of a 30-paragraph story. The newspaper never apologised for the earlier story, or its reliance on official sources.

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<sup>375</sup> “Iraq War Spectre Haunts World,” *The Irish Times*, Editorial, Dec 31, 2002

<sup>376</sup> Burniller, Elisabeth, “White House Cuts Estimate Of Cost Of War With Iraq/ \$50 Billion To \$60 Billion/ In Line With '91 Expenses - Previous Figures Were As Much as \$200 Billion,” *The New York Times*, December 31, 2002, p1 lead

<sup>377</sup> Andrews, Edmund, “Sharp Increase In Tax Revenue Will Cut Deficit,” *The New York Times*, July 12, 2005 p1

By January 6, 2003, *The New York Times* was so comfortable with the White House projections that it said Bush's national security team was finalizing plans for “administering and democratizing Iraq.”<sup>378</sup> US media critic Eric Umanskey said: “The article actually quotes some of the plan's listed objectives. Democracy isn't mentioned as one of them.”<sup>379</sup>

On January 10, 2003, the news broke that no “smoking gun” had been found. Given Condoleezza Rice’s warning about smoking guns and mushroom clouds in September 2002, this should have been good news; and perhaps lead news. However, *The New York Times* did not emphasize this, running the story as the third lead: “UN Inspectors Criticize Iraqis over Arms List” with the “smoking gun” line as a subhead. (“But Search Teams Find No 'Smoking Gun'.”) *The Irish Times* reversed the headline, using this as the bottomer: “No 'smoking guns' found but Iraq not co-operating – Blix.”

Throughout this period, there was no debate in *The New York Times* as to whether or not it was morally or ethically right to invade Iraq; it was assumed that the US was pursuing generous ideals and that Iraq posed a major threat to the US.

Forty per cent (19 out of 48) of the Iraq lead stories repeated the unproven allegations about the WMDs as can be seen in these three excerpts overleaf:

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<sup>378</sup> Sanger, David and James Dao, “U.S. Is Completing Plan To Promote A Democratic Iraq/Fast Action Sought to Protect Oil Fields - Trials Seen For Top Iraqi Leaders,” *The New York Times*, Jan 6, 2003, p1

<sup>379</sup> Umanskey, Eric, “Dividend and Conquer,” *Slate Magazine*, Jan 6, 2003, Accessed online through LexisNexis on August 8, 2005

- Bush Warns Iraq It Has Only Weeks To Yield Weapons (Jan 31, 2003)
- Experts Confirm New Iraqi Missile Exceeds U.N. Limit (Feb 13, 2003)
- President Readies U.S. For Prospect Of Imminent War/ Sees Direct Iraqi Threat (Mar 7, 2003)

The “Iraqi Missile,”<sup>380</sup> sounded particularly scary, but it transpired that it only exceeded the limit by some 24 miles.<sup>381</sup>

Nevertheless the editorial for the day urged Europe and the UN “to recognize that Saddam Hussein does pose a clear and present danger.”<sup>382</sup>

In Ireland, only five per cent of leads (2 out of 19) in *The Irish Times* positioned Saddam as a potential threat. Both were based on breaking news rather than recycled comments or opinions;

- EU says Iraq must disarm peacefully or it risks war (Feb 18, 2003)
- Saddam rejects Blix's call to destroy missiles (Feb 25, 2003)

In addition, on three occasions when both newspapers led with the same story; the interpretation was different as can be seen overleaf:

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<sup>380</sup> Preston, Julia and Eric Schmitt, “Experts Confirm New Iraqi Missile Exceeds U.N. Limit/ A Range Beyond 90 Miles/ Hussein Said to Be Positioning Explosives in the Country for Sabotage Campaign,” *The New York Times*, Feb 13, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>381</sup> Later reports said the missiles could travel the distance from Iraq to Israel, but the “threat” from Iraq had been sold on its threat to the US itself, not US interests

<sup>382</sup> “Back to The United Nations,” *The New York Times*, February 13, 2003, editorial

*The New York Times*

- U.N. Inspector Says Iraq Falls Short On Cooperation (Jan 28, 2003)
- Calling Iraq A Serious Threat, Bush Vows That He'll Disarm It, And Also Rebuild Us Economy (Jan 29, 2003)
- Powell, In U.N. Speech, Presents Case To Show Iraq Has Not Disarmed (Feb 6, 2003)

*The Irish Times*

- UN set to give Iraq 18 more days (Jan 28, 2003)
- Bush attempts to rally support for war against Iraq (Jan 29, 2003)
- Powell presents his evidence and makes US case for war (Feb 6, 2003)

In the first headline, *The New York Times* claimed Iraq was not cooperating and *The Irish Times* played it straight. In the second and third headlines, *The New York Times* reported the administration's claims as news whereas *The Irish Times* cited the administration as the source.

On January 27, 2003, Mohamed El Baradei, the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the organization responsible for the weapons inspections, issued a report which said;

We have, to date, found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons programme since the elimination of the programme in the 1990s.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> Transcript: "Nuclear Inspection Chief Reports Finding No New Weapons," *The New York Times*, Jan 28, 2003, p11

The following day, *The Irish Times* led with “UN set to give Iraq 18 more days.” *The New York Times* buried the transcript of El Baradei’s speech on page 11, and instead led with this headline: “UN Inspector Says Iraq Falls Short on Cooperation, No Proof found Hussein Has Disarmed.”

During the sample, *The New York Times* consistently excluded or downplayed stories which demonstrated Iraqi compliance while *The Irish Times* highlighted them.

Thus, on February 5, *The Irish Times* would run this front page headline: “Saddam insists Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction” and quoted Saddam saying:

If we had a relationship with al-Qaeda and we believed in that relationship, we wouldn't be ashamed to admit it.<sup>384</sup>

*The New York Times* hid the same story on page 11.<sup>385</sup>

In addition, it ran four front page headlines which alluded to a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda, including these three, overleaf:

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<sup>384</sup> Millar, Frank, “Saddam insists Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction,” *The Irish Times*, p1 index Feb 5, 2003.

<sup>385</sup> Van Natta, Don “Iraq Has No Banned Arms, Hussein Says in Interview,” *The New York Times*, Feb 5, 2003, p11

- Bush Enlarges Case for War by Linking Iraq with Terrorists (Jan 29, Below fold second lead)
- A Terror Lieutenant with a Deadly Past (Feb 10, offlead)
- Top U.S. Officials Press Case Linking Iraq To Al Qaeda<sup>386</sup> (Feb 12, lead)

On February 6, both newspapers used the same shot of Colin Powell holding an empty vial but there were troubling differences in the captions as can be seen overleaf. *The New York Times* linked Iraq and anthrax whereas *The Irish Times* did not.<sup>387</sup>

- Colin L Powell showed a vial he said could hold the amount of anthrax that shut down the Senate. Iraq, he said, had produced vast quantities (*The New York Times*)
- US Secretary of State Colin Powell holds up a vial that he described as one that could contain anthrax. (*The Irish Times*)

Powell's presentation was interesting given that just two years earlier, he had said the sanctions against Iraq were working:

Saddam Hussein has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction. He (Saddam) is unable to project conventional power against his neighbours.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Johnston, David, "Top U.S. Officials Press Case Linking Iraq To Al Qaeda/ CIA Chief Closes Ranks/ Powell Cites New Tape Said to Be of Bin Laden as Sign of Baghdad 'Partnership'," *The New York Times*, Feb 12, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>387</sup> The full caption for *The Irish Times* read "US Secretary of State Colin Powell holds up a vial that he described as one that could contain anthrax during his presentation on Iraq to the UN Security Council in New York yesterday and (left) an image shown during his presentation that included US intelligence from satellites, telephone intercepts and Iraq defectors "

<sup>388</sup> Source: Press Remarks with Foreign Minister of Egypt Amre Moussa. Accessed at the US State Department website at [www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/933.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/933.htm) on August 8, 2005

Meanwhile, as the trans-Atlantic rift worsened, *The New York Times* ran 20 front page headlines (42 per cent of the “war on terror” coverage) on the topic although many suggested that the Europeans, or the UN itself, were at fault

- Powell Calls for U.N. to Act on Iraq and Meets Deep Resistance (Feb 15, 2003)
- Urgent Diplomacy Fails To Gain U.S. 9 Votes In The U.N., (Mar 10, 2003)
- More Americans Now Faulting U.N. On Iraq, Poll Finds (Mar 11, 2003)

*The New York Times* actually accused France and Germany of being hostile to the US because they wanted “an alternative to war.”<sup>389</sup>

Also, the editorial page of *The New York Times* repeatedly claimed that the Europeans were at fault, as can be seen in these three excerpts:

...for the good of Germany and the United Nations, he (Schröder) must set aside campaign politics and cast Germany's votes on this critical issue on the merits... As the facts come in on Iraq, Germany should base its decisions on the record of Iraqi conduct.<sup>390</sup>

The Security Council already appears to be headed for another futile trans-Atlantic spat at its next meeting tomorrow. This gathering could be better used by the Council to pull itself together and approve a resolution setting a date for Iraq to comply with disarmament demands or face the likelihood of united military action.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Smith, Craig with Richard Bernstein, “3 Members of NATO and Russia Resist U.S. On Iraq Plans/ Serious Rift In Alliance/ Allies Block Effort to Aid Turks – Moscow Concur In Call for Deeper Inspections,” *The New York Times*, Feb 11 2003, p1 lead

<sup>390</sup> “Germany Takes Centre Stage,” *The New York Times*, January 3, 2003, editorial

<sup>391</sup> “Back to the United Nations,” *The New York Times*, February 13, 2003, editorial

France must cease acting as if the real problem were to contain the United States. The Europeans and the United Nations must recognize that Saddam Hussein does pose a clear and present danger...<sup>392</sup>

*The Irish Times* also ran several stories about the trans-Atlantic crisis, all of which supported the view that the crisis was rooted in European opposition to an invasion. Three are presented overleaf for contrast:

- Inspectors fear concessions by Iraq may not avert war (Feb 8)
- Franco-German move to defuse crisis angers US/ UN inspectors report change of heart in Baghdad and increase in co-operation (Feb 10)
- US-Europe divisions open as opposition to war builds (Feb 12)

This type of reporting was absent from *The New York Times*. For example, *The Irish Times* reported a “change of heart” and “increase in co-operation,”<sup>393</sup> a day after *The New York Times* decided that there was “no breakthrough.”<sup>394</sup> *The Irish Times* clearly positioned the European response (except for Ireland which had decided to support the US, no matter what) as anti-war, not anti-American, reporting the “political and moral pressure” against “a US-led war.”<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> “Back to the United Nations,” *The New York Times*, February 13, 2003, editorial

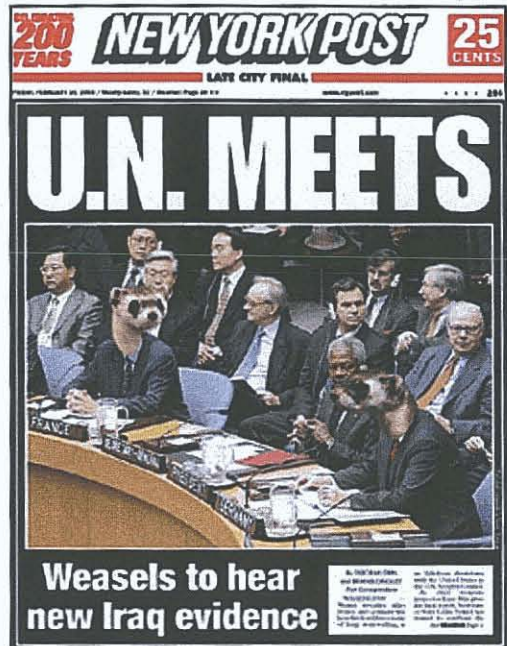
<sup>393</sup> O’Clery, Conor and Derek Scally, “Franco-German move to defuse crisis angers US/ UN inspectors report change of heart in Baghdad and increase in co-operation,” *The Irish Times*, Feb 10, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>394</sup> Weisman, Steven, “U.S. Demands Iraq Show Cooperation By This Weekend/ Powell Issues Warning/ Arms Inspectors Report Some Gains But No Breakthrough In Talks With Baghdad,” *The New York Times*, February 10, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>395</sup> O’Clery, Conor and Denis Staunton, “US-Europe divisions open as opposition to war builds,” *The Irish Times*, Feb 11 2003, p1 lead



Bad and all as things were in *The New York Times*, they were far worse in the more “popular media.” The picture on the right is the front page from the *New York Post* on February 14, 2003. Again, it is important to note that *The New York Times* is far and away the best of US mass media and is justifiably considered a “quality” paper. The problem with *The New York Times*, and other newspapers



such as *The Guardian* in England, is that their “smaller, more sophisticated bias is more likely to be believed and evade any corrective.”<sup>396</sup>

On Saturday, February 15, 2003, millions of people took to the streets across the world to march against the proposed invasion of Iraq. On Monday, February 17, 2003, *The New York Times* declined to write an editorial even though there were upwards of 250,000 people on the city’s streets. In Ireland, *The Irish Times* paid tribute to the “genuine outpouring of an internationalist spirit which many feared had been lost.”<sup>397</sup>

<sup>396</sup> Holt, Eddie, “Puppets of power” *The Irish Times*, August 5, 2006 Weekend Section

<sup>397</sup> “Not In Our Name, Say Marchers,” *The New York Times*, Feb 16, 2003, editorial

On February 18, both newspaper editorials mentioned the marches; *The Irish Times* said a peaceful solution would reflect European opinion in the wake of the weekend's huge peace demonstrations.<sup>398</sup>

*The New York Times* said that while the US should heed such views, it "does not need broad international support to prevail on the battlefields of Iraq."<sup>399</sup>

On February 20, *The New York Times* display picture announced the launch of the "Ready" Campaign<sup>400</sup> which the US government claimed would help Americans "prepare for terrorism."

The display picture, which is shown below, showed Tom Ridge, the Secretary of the new Department of Homeland Security, seated in front of a massive TV screen, beside a headline "Reshaping Message on Terror, Ridge Urges Calm with Caution/ Campaign Focused on Keeping Public Informed."

The message was inescapable.

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<sup>398</sup> "EU summit can be judged a success," *The Irish Times*, Feb 18, 2003, editorial

<sup>399</sup> "Reuniting the Security Council," *The New York Times*, Feb 18, 2003, editorial

<sup>400</sup> See [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for more examples of the same.

"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

# The New York Times

John Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is seen in a photograph on the right of the front page.

Vol. CLII, No. 5249

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2005

ONE DOLLAR

## Reshaping Message on Terror, Ridge Urges Calm With Caution

Campaign Focuses on Keeping Public Informed

By LYNETTE JOHNSON

CINCINNATI, Feb. 23 — A week after the terrorist attacks, some analysts predicted a fading sense of fear, and the nation's political leaders are trying to keep the public informed about the situation.

Addressing a group of public officials, Mr. Ridge said the nation's leaders must be clear about the situation. He said the nation's leaders must be clear about the situation.

The administration's address, delivered in a series of speeches, emphasized the need to keep the public informed about the situation.

Mr. Ridge said he had been asked to do this, and he said he would do it.

Mr. Ridge said he had been asked to do this, and he said he would do it.

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Political leaders. "We can be afraid, or we can be angry," Mr. Ridge said. "The fear of America's future is not the same as the fear of the world."

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Tom Ridge, the Homeland Security secretary, speaks at a podium with Gary Miller of the Cincinnati Red Cross and Representative Rick Warren, shown in a photograph on the front page.

## Shuttle Inquiry Is Again Focusing On Damage From Debris at Liftoff

By WILLIAM BRUNDAGE and FREDERICK BROWN  
After the shuttle orbiter was launched, the investigation of the shuttle Columbia, investigators are continuing to focus on the damage to the orbiter.

## 9/11 ACCOMPLICE GUILTY IN GERMANY

Mexican Ricketts Member of Qaeda Cell in Hamburg  
By SCOTT WATSON  
The German court has found the defendant guilty of terrorism.

## U.S. IS PESSIMISTIC TURKS WILL ACCEPT AID DEAL ON IRAQ

WHITE HOUSE FRUSTRATED  
Some American Allies Press to Extend Arms Inspections or Containment Strategy

By DAVID S. HANSEN and PETER FINNEN

WASHINGTON, Feb. 23 — White House officials said Tuesday that they were pessimistic about the possibility of a deal on Iraq.

The administration's address, delivered in a series of speeches, emphasized the need to keep the public informed about the situation.

Mr. Ridge said he had been asked to do this, and he said he would do it.

Mr. Ridge said he had been asked to do this, and he said he would do it.

## WMDS AND THE TRANS-ATLANTIC RIFT

The row between Europe and the US stemmed from the American desire to invade Iraq on the pretext that Iraq was in possession of so-called weapons of mass destruction.

*The Irish Times* reported the rift against that backdrop. On February 13, its lead described the “deep divisions” in the UN about the necessity for war.”<sup>401</sup> The same day *The New York Times* reported the story as if the row stemmed from an inexplicable European hostility to America. The paper said that France and Germany were “defying” the US was because “it is popular to do so.”<sup>402</sup>

This trend persisted throughout as *The New York Times* continued to disseminate this misperception.

For instance, on February 24, both newspapers led with two different versions of the weapons inspections. *The Irish Times* said UN weapons inspector Hans Blix was preparing his final questions for Iraq.<sup>403</sup>

*The New York Times* accused Iraq of only trying to “save its stock of barred missiles”, adding that:

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<sup>401</sup> O’Clery, Conór and Denis Staunton, “Britain and US working on new UN resolution,” *The Irish Times*, Feb 13, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>402</sup> Bernstein, Richard, “For Old Friends, Iraq Bares a Deep Rift,” *The New York Times*, Feb 14, 2003, p1, fourth lead above fold

<sup>403</sup> O’Clery, Conór, “UN to list its crucial remaining questions for Iraq,” *The Irish Times*, Feb 24, 2003, p1 lead

Diplomats here believe that Iraq will follow practically any request made by Mr. Blix in hopes of giving him the tools to help stave off a United States attack.<sup>404</sup>

The irony of the sentence escaped the reporter.

The US rhetoric hardened on February 25, 2003, when Iraq argued that the al Samoud missiles were not in violation of the UN resolutions and thus did not need to be destroyed.

In its editorial, *The New York Times* issued a virtual declaration of war, urging the UN to support the US resolution “reaffirming” that “Iraq has failed to disarm” and dismiss the one from France, Germany and Russia, which “prefers to give Hans Blix and the inspectors more time.” The newspaper said the situation demanded “an entirely different attitude from Iraq”, not more time.<sup>405</sup>

On February 26, *The Irish Times* reported that Iraq was displaying just that; an entirely different attitude:

Iraq has stepped up its co-operation with the United Nations and has provided documents that give new information about the destruction of its most lethal weapons in 1991.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> MacFarquhar, Neil, “Iraq Seeks Talks To Save Its Stock Of Barred Missiles/ Response To U.N. Order/ An Iraqi Rebuff Could Increase Support for U.S. Plans for a New War Resolution,” *The New York Times*, Feb 24, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>405</sup> “Facing Down Iraq,” *The New York Times*, Feb 25, 2003, editorial

<sup>406</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “Iraq provides UN with new details on weapons,” *The Irish Times*, Feb 26, 2003, p1 lead

This “entirely different” attitude did not merit a front-page headline in *The New York Times* where the lead continued to treat the invasion as inevitable.<sup>407</sup>

It was obvious that Iraq could not avert war, despite what Hans Blix had called “a very significant piece of real disarmament.”<sup>408</sup>

On March 1, the US called for Hussein to step down and *The New York Times* led with the story,<sup>409</sup> even though Iraq was in compliance with UN demands. The display picture showed US troops boarding airliners bound for the Persian Gulf.

The drumbeats continued. On March 3, *The Irish Times* editorial hailed Iraq’s “substantive” decision to work with Dr Blix; “In this fog of war propaganda, the only disinterested judgments will come from Dr Blix and his colleagues.”<sup>410</sup> *The New York Times* editorial was warning that “Iraqi biological and chemical weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists.”<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Schmitt, Eric, “Turkey Seems Set To Let 60,000 GI’s Use Bases For War/ Parliament Still To Vote/ Army’s Top General Estimates Several Hundred Thousand U.S. Troops May Stay,” *The New York Times*, Feb 26, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>408</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “Saddam’s move on missiles is welcomed by Blix,” *The Irish Times*, Feb 28, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>409</sup> Barringer, Felicity and David Sanger, “U.S. Says Hussein Must Cede Power To Head Off War/ Disarming Not Enough/ Divisions in the U.N. Harden as Russia Threatens A Veto on New Iraq Resolution,” *The New York Times*, March 1, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>410</sup> “Setting the UN agenda on Iraq,” *The Irish Times*, March 3, 2003, editorial This was the first day of a new design layout at *The Irish Times* and the first editorial was not capped up. This also coincided with the move of the newspaper’s printing operation from its long-time home in D’Olier Street to CityWest.

<sup>411</sup> “The Rush To War,” *The New York Times*, March 3, 2003, editorial

In fact, *The New York Times* lead on March 4 called the disarmament a “possible complication” and quoted White House spokesman Ari Fleischer;

"Here's the Catch-22 that Saddam Hussein has put himself in," Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, said today. "He denied he had these weapons and then he destroys things he says he never had. If he lies about never having them, how can you trust him when he says he has destroyed them?"<sup>412</sup>

On March 6, *The Irish Times* lead said the White House was not “backing down”<sup>413</sup> from attempting to wage war while *The New York Times* lead cast France and Russia as the villains of the piece: “France and Russia Ready to Use Veto against Iraq War”<sup>414</sup>

On March 7, both leads reported what *The Irish Times* reporter Conor O’Clery called a “hastily arranged”<sup>415</sup> press conference which took place during the previous night’s US TV prime time. *The New York Times* said Bush saw a “direct threat” from Iraq, “repeatedly invoked the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks”, and said the US did not need “anyone’s permission” to “defend itself.”<sup>416</sup> *The Irish*

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<sup>412</sup> Sanger, David and Thom Shanker “U.S. Aides Dismiss Moves By Baghdad But Feel Pressure,” *The New York Times*, March 4, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>413</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “Bush may give final weapons ultimatum to Saddam” *The Irish Times*, March 6, 2003 p1 lead

<sup>414</sup> Taghlabue, John, “France And Russia Ready To Use Veto Against Iraq War/ But Powell Is Dismissive/ He Says U.S. Would Use Force Even without the Backing of the U N. If Necessary,” *The New York Times*, Mar 6, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>415</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “Bush tells world to be ready for force if necessary/ Iraq engaged in 'wilful charade', *The Irish Times*, March 7, 2003, p1 lead, City Edition

<sup>416</sup> Sanger, David with Felicity Barringer, “President Readies U S. For Prospect Of Imminent War/ Sees Direct Iraqi Threat/ Nation Needs No 'Permission' to Defend Itself, Bush Says, Regardless of U N. Vote” *The New York Times*, March 7, 2003, p1 lead

*Times* saw it differently; it did not see any urgent need for action and described Bush as having “lost patience” with the weapons inspections.<sup>417</sup>

Bush’s press conference pre-empted the report from Hans Blix and Mohammed El Baradei who made their presentation to the UN on March 7. On March 8, both editorials referred to that report; further underlining the gulf between their reporting:

“Baghdad is still a very long way from living up to the Security Council's demand for it to give up its unconventional weapons.”<sup>418</sup> *The New York Times*

“Dr Mohamed ElBaradei has found little or no evidence for an Iraqi nuclear arms programme”<sup>419</sup> *The Irish Times*

The gulf widened as the invasion drew near. The March 11 lead in *The New York Times* said a majority of Americans blamed the UN for Iraq, supported an invasion, and were growing “impatient” with the world body.<sup>420</sup> *The Irish Times* lead described a deepening crisis.<sup>421</sup> The editorial said it would be “unconscionable and unacceptable” and “a reckless and dangerous act” to attack Iraq without “explicit UN approval or in contravention of a veto.”<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “Bush tells world to be ready for force if necessary/ Iraq engaged in ‘wilful charade’, *The Irish Times*, March 7, 2003, p1 lead, City Edition

<sup>418</sup> “A Fractured Security Council,” *The New York Times*, March 8, 2003, editorial

<sup>419</sup> “The Politics of Arms Inspections,” *The Irish Times*, March 8, 2003, editorial

<sup>420</sup> Nagourney, Adam and Janet Elder, “More Americans Now Faulting U.N. On Iraq, Poll Finds/Support For Inspections/ More Than Half in Survey Back U.S. Invasion Even Without Security Council Vote,” *The New York Times*, March 11, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>421</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “US and Britain postpone vote on war as UN crisis deepens,” *The Irish Times*, March 11, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>422</sup> “Mandate Needed for use of Force,” *The Irish Times*, March 11, 2003, Editorial



Monday, March 17 and the St. Patrick's Day parade took place on Fifth Avenue. There was a pall over the city as most bars tuned their televisions into the news channels. *The Irish Times* editorial accused the US of endangering the UN's procedures "and therefore its very existence"<sup>423</sup>. Meanwhile, the editorial in *The New York Times*, "President Bush Prepares for War", again took the French to task; saying they "must find a role for themselves in ending the Iraqi threat that goes beyond threatening a veto."

On March 18, 2003, *The New York Times* led with US President George Bush's threat to the Iraqi leader: "Bush Gives Hussein 48 Hours, and Vows to Act", running the headline across the entire width of page one<sup>424</sup>. The headline did not question the authority of the US president to order a leader out of his own country, nor did it challenge the right of the US to attack another country.

Three other stories above the fold reported that President Bush had, "cut through the debate over who has the right to ... overthrow brutal regimes,"<sup>425</sup> that officials were aiming for a "rapid and 'benign' occupation, "flag-waving crowds" and "an immediate positive image of American and British war goals";<sup>426</sup> and that there was "a suppressed but fevered anticipation of the changes for the better that could come."<sup>427</sup> The single story below the fold described the relief being felt by "anxious" Americans now that the war was felt

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<sup>423</sup> "Ultimatums to Iraq and the UN," *The Irish Times*, March 17, 2003, editorial

<sup>424</sup> The usual style in *The New York Times* calls for the lead headline to run as a single column on the far right hand side.

<sup>425</sup> Sanger, David, "A New Doctrine For War," *The New York Times*, March 18, 2003, p1 offlead,

<sup>426</sup> Tyler, Patrick, "Allies Hope To Move Quickly To Seize City in Iraq's South," *The New York Times*, March 18, 2003, p1 Fourth lead

<sup>427</sup> Burns, John, "People Prepare as War Looms," *The New York Times*, March 17, 2003, p1 fifth lead

to be finally underway.<sup>428</sup> There was little or no discussion of the implicitly negative effects of war on civilians.

In contrast, *The Irish Times* ran two stories on the front page and while the lead said “Saddam given 48 hours,”<sup>429</sup> the offlead described the fearful mood in Baghdad and reported that the UN had ordered its humanitarian and weapons inspection staff to leave.<sup>430</sup> There was no mention of any potential benefits accruing from an invasion.

Both newspapers ran editorials on the likely invasion. *The Irish Times* said it was unacceptable while *The New York Times* said the US was fighting “a legitimate international goal against an execrable tyranny”, and that its only problem with the invasion was the way the administration had planned it:

This is, therefore, an unacceptable war of highly doubtful legality and legitimacy. It will endanger the international order which the United Nations was created to protect. (*The Irish Times*)<sup>431</sup>

This page has never wavered in the belief that Mr. Hussein must be disarmed. Our problem is with the wrongheaded way this administration has gone about it... (*The New York Times*)<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Halbfinger David with Jacques Steinberg, “Wait Over, Americans Voice A Mix of Relief and Anxiety,” *The New York Times*, March 18, 2003, p1 below fold lead

<sup>429</sup> O’Clery, Conor, “Saddam given 48 hours,” *The Irish Times*, March 18, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>430</sup> Marlowe, Lara, “On the streets of Baghdad, life goes on - for now,” *The Irish Times*, March 18, 2003, p1 offlead

<sup>431</sup> “An Unacceptable War” *The Irish Times*, March 18, 2003, editorial

<sup>432</sup> “War in the Ruins of Diplomacy,” *The New York Times*, March 18, 2003, editorial

On March 19, *The New York Times* led with “War Imminent as Hussein Rejects Ultimatum.” The fourth lead proffered that, ultimately, an invasion would be beneficial:

The striking thing was that for many Iraqis the first American strike could not come too soon...Many seemed ready to endure American air attacks and the armoured thrusts that are expected to follow them if the outcome is a new Iraq that brings freedom from the long history of repression here.<sup>433</sup>

And so, on the evening of March 19, 2003, a “predatory and dishonest war”<sup>434</sup> arrived in Iraq.

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<sup>433</sup> Burns, John, “As Baghdad Empties, Hussein Is Defiant,” *The New York Times*, March 19, 2003, p1 fourth lead

<sup>434</sup> Le Carre, John, “A Predatory and Dishonest War,” OpenDemocracy.net, December 1, 2003  
Accessed online at  
[www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article.jsp?id=2&debateId=88&articleId=882](http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article.jsp?id=2&debateId=88&articleId=882)

## THE POST-INVASION WMD COVERAGE

On May 26, 2004, *The New York Times* apologized for its Iraq WMD coverage saying that some of its reports had been “insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged.” The newspaper said it had failed to investigate its sources properly and had relied too heavily on “a circle of Iraqi informants, defectors and exiles bent on ‘regime change’ in Iraq . . . It is still possible that chemical or biological weapons will be unearthed in Iraq, but in this case it looks as if we, along with the administration, were taken in.”<sup>435</sup>

Leaving aside the question of whether or not *The New York Times* was “taken in”, this was an extraordinary admission. However, it did not go far enough. The “pattern of misinformation”<sup>436</sup> that the newspaper referred to was far greater than it conceded. In addition, it did not apologise for the way it framed “official” White House news, nor did it address the systematic failure to publish any substantial criticism of the administration. Tellingly, unlike the page one double-column top-left-hand panel for the apology about Jayson Blair’s plagiarism (May 11, 2004), the WMD apology was tucked away in a single paragraph on page two and cross-referenced to page 10.

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<sup>435</sup> From the Editors, The Times and Iraq, *The New York Times*, May 26, 2004, p2 and p10

<sup>436</sup> Ibid

This section<sup>437</sup> examined the WMD coverage in the 331 editions which appeared from 2003's "Mission Accomplished" to that Mea Culpa. As will be seen in the following and final section; much of the brutal business of armed conflict was kept off the front page and editorials of *The New York Times*. There were few images of US soldiers in body bags or coffins, fewer pictures of civilian casualties and very little evidence of the weapons of mass destruction.

<i>The New York Times Front Page</i>		<i>The New York Times Front Page</i>	
<i>Pre Invasion</i>		<i>Post Invasion</i>	
Iraq leads	48	Iraq leads	153
WMD leads	19	WMD leads	14
Per cent of total	40%	Per cent of total	9.15%

This section concentrates on the leads and editorials about the WMDs in *The New York Times*. During this period the newspaper ran just 34 stories about the "weapons of mass destruction," out of 637 stories about the "war on terror", or 5.34 per cent. The story's news value dropped quite sharply when compared with the pre-invasion period. As can be seen in the table above, the story made up 9.15 per cent of the newspaper's leads after the invasion, compared to 40 per cent beforehand. The figures show that *The New York Times* did not give the failure to find WMDs the same kind of treatment that it gave to the pre-invasion claims.

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<sup>437</sup> This section originally included the stories which formed the basis of the apology but I decided not to include them as there was plenty of other evidence of propaganda at work. For example, the first WMD story during this sample was the fourth lead above the fold on May 22, "U.S Analysts link Iraq Labs to Germ Arms." The newspaper later apologised for this story but said that the same reporters (Judith Miller and William Broad) had challenged that story on June 7, 2003, with a front page report That "challenging" story was given the banal headline treatment; "Some Analysts of Iraq Trailers Reject Germ Use."

Thus, the question mark hanging over the so-called WMDs, the very reason for the invasion, made little impact on the front page of the paper of record. The issue should have fuelled a *New York Times*-driven national debate over the Bush administration's rush to invade Iraq, but there was a deafening silence from the newspaper's offices on 43<sup>rd</sup> Street.

This timid lead: "President Denies He Oversold Case for War with Iraq,"<sup>438</sup> on July 31, 2003, was the closest the newspaper came to challenging the White House. *The New York Times* stuck to the administration's story; the failure to find WMDs was merely a failure of intelligence. These are just three of the headlines which will shape US history:

- Iraq Arms Report Now The Subject Of A C.I.A. Review<sup>439</sup>.
- Draft Report Said To Cite No Success In Iraq Arms Hunt<sup>440</sup>
- Officials Say Bush Seeks \$600 Million To Hunt Iraq Arms.<sup>441</sup>

There was plenty of scope over this period for *The New York Times* to question just about every aspect of the rush to invade Iraq: the alleged links to September 11, the alleged WMDs and the alleged benevolence of US intent. However, the newspaper ignored these angles, preferring to give a higher news value and story placement to official White House pronouncements.

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<sup>438</sup> Stevenson, Richard, "President Denies He Oversold Case For War With Iraq," *The New York Times*, July 31, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>439</sup> Risen, James, "Iraq Arms Report Now The Subject Of A C.I.A. Review/Data On Illegal Weapons/ Document, Given to Bush, Was Last Overview of Degree of Peril Before the War," *The New York Times*, June 6, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>440</sup> Jebl, Douglas and Judith Miller, "Draft Report Said To Cite No Success In Iraq Arms Hunt/ 4-Month Search By U.S./ No Illicit Weapons Found, but Officials Describe Evidence of Suspicious Material," *The New York Times*, September 25, 2003, p1lead

<sup>441</sup> Risen, James and Judith Miller, "Officials Say Bush Seeks \$600 Million To Hunt Iraq Arms/ Included In \$87 Billion/ New Request Is In Addition to \$300 Million Already Spent - No Success So Far," *The New York Times*, October 2, 2003, p1 lead

The first front page story to question the WMD issue appeared on May 22, 2003 as the fourth lead above the fold. Headlined; “Prewar Views of Iraq Threat Are under Review by C.I.A.”<sup>442</sup> this story could - and should - have been the lead. However, *The New York Times* was not in the business of pointing out that the emperor had no clothes. Any lead stories about the WMDs were quietly respectful of the president’s office and status as can be seen here:

- C.I.A. Chief Takes Blame In Assertion On Iraqi Uranium<sup>443</sup>
- Bush At His Side, Blair Is Resolute In War's Defense<sup>444</sup>
- President Denies He Oversold Case For War With Iraq<sup>445</sup>

Two of the main pre-invasion allegations in *The New York Times* had been the story about the uranium from Niger and the “arms trailers.”

The first editorial to question the evidence behind the invasion of Iraq appeared on May 26, 2003;

Given the scant findings in Iraq so far, it is disturbing to recall how gravely the administration portrayed the dangers of Iraq's unconventional weapons.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Risen, James, “Pre-war Views of Iraq Threat Are Under Review by C.I.A.,” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2003, p1 Fourth lead above fold

<sup>443</sup> Sanger, David and James Risen “C.I.A. Chief Takes Blame In Assertion On Iraqi Uranium/ Bush And Case For War/ Tenet Says Agency Should Not Have Approved Statement for President's Speech,” *The New York Times*, July 12, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>444</sup> Stevenson, Richard, “Bush At His Side, Blair Is Resolute In War's Defense/ Stands By Intelligence/Briton Calls Action Justified Even if No Banned Arms Are Discovered in Iraq,” *The New York Times*, July 18, 2003, p1 lead

<sup>445</sup> Stevenson, Richard, “President Denies He Oversold Case For War With Iraq/ Says Arms Will Be Found/ But He Takes Responsibility for Shaky Claim on Iraqi Nuclear Plans,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 2003

<sup>446</sup> “Reviewing the Intelligence on Iraq,” *The New York Times*, lead editorial May 26, 2003

This would have been the perfect time for the newspaper to revisit some of its earlier editorials and admit its own role in helping the administration create that portrayal. However, the newspaper ignored its own role and disseminated the “new” pronouncements from the White House.

On June 13, 2003, the editorial referred to the “news” that the story about Iraq buying uranium from Niger was based on forged documents;

President Bush cannot be pleased to know that his State of the Union address last January included an ominous report about Iraq that turns out to have been based on forged documents.<sup>447</sup>

The newspaper could have searched its own archive to see that it had already reported this story, albeit very, very quietly, three months earlier, before the US invaded Iraq;

Mohamed ElBaradei, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said that a report -- which had earlier been identified as coming from British intelligence -- that Iraq had tried to purchase uranium from Niger was based on fake documents<sup>448</sup>

The newspaper also ran two front page news stories which debunked the claims about uranium and trailers. Given that the US had said the invasion had

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<sup>447</sup> “The Vanishing Uranium,” *The New York Times*, June 13, 2003, editorial

<sup>448</sup> Barringer, Felicity, “U.N Split Widens As Allies Dismiss Deadline On Iraq/ A Us-British Proposal/ France, Russia and China Balk after Inspectors Cite Signs of Growing Co-operation.” *The New York Times*, March 8, 2003, p1 lead



been based largely on these claim, the stories should have been quite prominent. However, both stories were placed well below the fold and the headlines, as can be seen here, were pedestrian:

- New Details Emerge on Uranium Claim and Bush's Speech<sup>449</sup>
- Iraqi Trailers Said to Make Hydrogen, Not Biological Arms<sup>450</sup>

*The New York Times* has routinely ignored its own role in the dissemination of the administration propaganda.

For instance, on October 3, 2003, nearly a year after the US Congress had authorized an attack on Iraq, the US weapons inspector returned to Congress and said there were no WMDs in Iraq. Accordingly, there had been no justification for the invasion. *The New York Times* did not lead with the story, and it also downplayed the ramifications in the headline; “No Illicit Arms Found in Iraq, U.S. Inspector Tells Congress.”<sup>451</sup> The following day it ran this story as an offlead: “President Says Report on Arms Vindicates War.” This gives us an idea of the newspaper’s priority system.

In January 2004, when the US finally called off the search for WMDs, the story was given the smallest possible slot on page one; a tiny headline right at the bottom of the page. The headline was ambiguous; “Fewer arms hunters in Iraq.”

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<sup>449</sup> Risen, James and David E Sanger, “New Details Emerge on Uranium Claim and Bush's Speech,” *The New York Times*, July 18, 2003, p1, Third story below fold

<sup>450</sup> Jehl, Douglas, “Iraqi Trailers Said to Make Hydrogen, Not Biological Arms,” *The New York Times*, August 9, 2003, p1, Third story below fold

<sup>451</sup> Risen, James and Judith Miller, “No Illicit Arms Found in Iraq, U.S. Inspector Tells Congress,” *The New York Times*, October 3, 2003, p1 Third lead above fold

In comparison, the same story led the same day's edition of *The Irish Times* and received a much stronger headline: "US calls off search for weapons of mass destruction/ Military team scouring Iraq quietly withdrawn."<sup>452</sup>

<i>The New York Times Front Page</i>		<i>The Irish Times Front Page</i>	
"War on terror" leads	153	"War on terror" leads	10
WMD leads	14	WMD leads	2
Per cent of total	9.15%	Per cent of total	20%

*The Irish Times* ran three front page stories on the WMD issue. All three were negative and two made the lead. The news digest on the left hand side carried another 15 blurbs about the WMDs and the majority of these also carried stronger criticism as can be seen in these three headlines:

- Pressure increases on Bush over case for war June 2, 2003
- US inquiry to report no proof of WMD September 25, 2003
- US arms expert admits no WMD found in Iraq October 3, 2003

The differences between the two newspapers could be compared more directly though the editorial pages. *The New York Times* ran 119 editorials and 42 of those, or 35 per cent, addressed the WMD issue.<sup>453</sup>

Not one of those editorials challenged the US government over invading Iraq. The only criticism from the editorial page was based on tactics; the US should not have invaded Iraq without "broad international support."<sup>454</sup>

<sup>452</sup> O'Clery, Conor, "US calls off search for weapons of mass destruction/ Military team scouring Iraq quietly withdrawn," *The Irish Times*, January 9, 2004, p1 lead

<sup>453</sup> See WMD Editorials NYT in Appendix

By July 2003, the newspaper was saying that “a free and peaceful Iraq” was “a goal worth struggling for, even at great costs. We are there now, and it essential to stay the course.”<sup>455</sup>

The newspaper did not elaborate on who would be paying the great cost although a later editorial would say that, “for many Iraqis, freedom has come at a high price”<sup>456</sup>. Again, the newspaper declined to consider whether the Iraqi people had actually asked for this “freedom.”

*The Irish Times* published 52 editorials about Iraq over the same period and 13 of those, or 25 per cent, referred to the WMDs.<sup>457</sup>

*The Irish Times* was far more critical of the war, demanding to know why, in the absence of WMDs, it had been fought.<sup>458</sup>

It went on to say that US and British voters had been “misled,”<sup>459</sup> that the removal of Saddam Hussein was “dangerous for world order and security,”<sup>460</sup> and that “war was waged and people died under false pretences.”<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> “Mr Cheney, Meet Mr Kay,” *The New York Times*, Jan 27, 2004, editorial

<sup>455</sup> “A Bloody Peace in Iraq,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 2003, editorial

<sup>456</sup> “One Year After,” *The New York Times*, March 19, 2004, editorial

<sup>457</sup> See WMD Editorials IT in Appendix

<sup>458</sup> “The transatlantic relationship,” *The Irish Times*, May 31, 2003, editorial

<sup>459</sup> “Occupation hazards,” *The Irish Times*, July 15, 2003, editorial

<sup>460</sup> “Iraq framed a turbulent year,” *The Irish Times*, Dec 30, 2003, editorial

<sup>461</sup> “A bad week for the BBC,” *The Irish Times*, Jan 31, 2004, editorial

On March 19, 2004, *The New York Times* marked the first anniversary of the invasion with an editorial which said that were grounds for optimism in Iraq.

A bloodthirsty dictator who tortured and murdered his people, and sacrificed their well-being to his gilded palaces, is locked up. An interim constitution has been adopted, a step toward laying the groundwork for a democratic government in Iraq, should the country's fractious groups ever resolve their differences. American-led efforts to rebuild Iraq have progressed to the point that some services are better than they were under Mr. Hussein, and Iraqis are starting to express satisfaction with how things are going. Iraq's power grid, for example, generates more electricity than ever.<sup>462</sup>

*The Irish Times* did not share the US newspaper's optimism. On April 10, 2004, it marked the first anniversary of the "fall of Baghdad" with an editorial saying that the consequences of the invasion were "a devastating indictment of a deeply misguided policy."

The expressed objectives of the war are unfulfilled. No weapons of mass destruction have been found. Links between Saddam Hussein and the al-Qaeda movement responsible for the 9/11 attacks have been created by the occupation of Iraq, not destroyed by the war. The Middle East region is now more unstable than before.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> "One Year After," *The New York Times*, March 19, 2003, editorial

<sup>463</sup> "Finding a better course for Iraq," *The Irish Times*, April 10, 2004, editorial

*The New York Times* never reached the same conclusions. There were several editorial references to the “alarming”,<sup>464</sup> claims and “hyped judgement”<sup>465</sup>, which were in evidence before the invasion but it declined to criticise US foreign policy. It blamed the White House for failing to check its sources without considering its own behaviour. It also criticised the White House for gambling a war on information “given by the very people who had the most to gain from the invasion.”<sup>466</sup> There was no irony intended, as can be seen here:

It is important to remember that none of this might have happened if we had known then what we know now. No matter what the president believed about the long-term threat posed by Saddam Hussein, he would have had a much harder time selling this war of choice to the American people if they had known that the Iraqi dictator had been reduced to a toothless tiger by the first Persian Gulf War and by United Nations weapons inspectors. Iraq's weapons programs had been shut down, Mr. Hussein had no threatening weapons stockpiled, the administration was exaggerating evidence about them, and there was, and is, no evidence that Mr. Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks.<sup>467</sup>

It is true that President Bush would have had a harder time selling the invasion if the American people had known the facts. However, it was the newspaper's duty to investigate those claims. Not only did it fail in its duty, it also failed to apologise for its own role in facilitating the administration's agenda.

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<sup>464</sup> “The Vanishing Uranium,” *The New York Times*, June 13, 2003, editorial

<sup>465</sup> “Presidential Character,” *The New York Times*, Sept 9, 2003, editorial

<sup>466</sup> “Iraq Goes Sour,” *The New York Times*, Nov 16, 2003, editorial

<sup>467</sup> “One Year After,” *The New York Times*, March 19, 2003, editorial

## THE “UNWORTHY VICTIMS” OF IRAQ

Herman and Chomsky said the conflict in Vietnam was reported from “the standpoint of the aggressors;”<sup>468</sup> civilian victims of US atrocities were written off as “unfortunate accidents,”<sup>469</sup> and “massacres of the innocents,” were “a problem only among emotional or irresponsible types.”<sup>470</sup>

This section focused on the massacres of Iraqi innocents from May 3, 2003 to November 27, 2004 when the entire project ended.

The final month of the sample coincided with the publication of two major reports on Iraqi and US casualties. *The Lancet* medical journal in Britain estimated that 100,000 Iraqi civilians had been killed since the US invasion,<sup>471</sup> and a report in *The New York Times* said 1,242 American soldiers had been killed in Iraq.<sup>472</sup>

These casualties, both American and Iraqi, were largely invisible on the front page of *The New York Times* which reported the invasion and occupation as a generally bloodless endeavour.

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<sup>468</sup> Chomsky, Noam and Ed Herman, *Manufacturing Consent*, Pantheon, New York, 2002, p195

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid*, p194

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid*, p243

<sup>471</sup> Al-Rubeyi BI, “Mortality before and after the invasion of Iraq in 2003,” *The Lancet* - Vol. 364, Issue 9448, November 20, 2004, Pages 1834-1835

<sup>472</sup> “Names of the Dead,” *The New York Times*, November 30, 2004, Pg. 11

<i>The New York Times Front Page</i>		<i>The Irish Times Front Page</i>	
Iraq stories	895	Iraq stories	102
Civilian Casualties	6	Civilian Casualties	3
Percentage of total	0.67%	Percentage of total	2.94%
Iraq leads	233	Iraq leads	48
Civilian Casualties Leads	0	Civilian Casualties Leads	2
Percentage of total	0%	Percentage of total	4.17%
Iraq Display pictures	1	Iraq display pictures	1
Total Display pictures	202	Total display picture	46
Percentage of total	0.5%	Percentage of total	2.17%

As can be seen in the table above, *The New York Times* ran 895 stories about Iraq between May 3, 2003 and November 27, 2004. Just six of those, or 0.67 per cent, were about the unworthy victims. None were leads. Moreover, the lead stories regularly reported “violence and death”<sup>473</sup> in Iraq without any context, or indeed, any indication that the US was mostly responsible.

In addition, the newspaper’s display pictures framed the conflict through the American experience; 102 of the 202 pictures, or 50 per cent, had a US focus. Just one display picture of the “unworthy victims,” or 0.5 per cent, depicted the “unworthy victims.” None of the editorials referred to the civilian death toll.

There were also no editorials about the “unworthy victims” in *The Irish Times*. However, three of the newspaper’s 102 stories, or 2.94 per cent, were about the civilian casualties. Two were leads. *The Irish Times* also ran just one picture about the “unworthy victims” out of 46 overall, or 2.17 per cent. While

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<sup>473</sup> Tyler, Patrick, “As U.S. Fans Out In Iraq, Violence And Death On Rise/ Attacks And Retaliation/ 7 More Iraqis Killed, Military Officials Say, Including 5 in a Murky Encounter,” *The New York Times*, June 14, 2003 lead

the story and picture count was low in *The Irish Times*, it still provided a context which was absent from the front pages of *The New York Times*.

Three of the six stories about the “unworthy victims” in *The New York Times* were placed above the fold and three below. The headlines on the above-fold stories were ambiguous and carefully worded; with phrases such as: “veil of secrecy,” “disputed strikes” and “guilty or not.”

The first above-fold story, “Veil of Secrecy around Village Hit in U.S. Raid,”<sup>474</sup> appeared on June 25, 2003. The story referred to a US bombing strike on a village called Mugger Abdid which killed a young woman and her infant daughter. There was no evidence of outrage in the story at the US action or even compassion over the deaths.

The second above-fold story, “Guilty or Not, U.S. is Blamed in Mosque Blast,” appeared in July 2003, and it queried whether the US was responsible for the bombing which killed up to nine people. The reporter added, thoughtfully:

The reaction to the blast showed that American troops are being held responsible for every violent act that happens here as they try to maintain control and protect themselves, no matter who actually did it.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> Tyler, Patrick,, “Veil of Secrecy Around Village Hit in U.S. Raid,” *The New York Times*, June 25, 2003, p1, fourth lead above fold

<sup>475</sup> Waldman, Amy, “Guilty or Not, U.S. Is Blamed in Mosque Blast,” *The New York Times*, July 2, 2003, p1 third lead above fold



This story was accompanied by a photograph in the display position and it was the only display picture of the unworthy victims to appear in the sample. The caption was as restrained as the Propaganda Model had predicted:

- At a graveyard in Falluja, Iraqis said an American missile had struck a mosque there, killing up to nine people (July 2, 2003)

The final headline above the fold appeared on May 20, 2004; “Disputed Strike by U.S. Leaves 40 Iraqis Dead.” The subhead was equally ambiguous; “Target Called Insurgent Enclave, or Wedding.”<sup>476</sup> The report weighed the story in favour of the US military who said they had called in “air support”, because of “hostile fire” in the area. There was no picture with the story and the report said it was “impossible” to “sort out the conflicting claims.”

The same story ran as an “undisputed” offlead in *The Irish Times* on the same day. The newspaper ran a much stronger headline which presumed that the US was to blame; “US military defends attack on Iraqi wedding party.”<sup>477</sup> The newspaper also ran its single display picture about the unworthy victims with the story.

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<sup>476</sup> Filkins, Dexter and Edward Wong, “Disputed Strike by U.S Leaves 40 Iraqis Dead/ Target Called Insurgent Enclave, or Wedding,” *The New York Times*, May 20, 2004, p1 fourth lead above fold

<sup>477</sup> “US military defends attack on Iraqi wedding party,” *The Irish Times*, May 21, 2004, offlead (no byline)

Unlike the language used in the display picture used in *The New York Times*, the caption was more descriptive;

- GRIEF IN IRAQ: Eight members of one family killed in US strike; An Iraqi man shows photographs of his family members whom he says were killed on Wednesday when a US helicopter fired on a wedding party in a remote desert village near the border with Syria, killing up to 45 people.

The following three stories about the “unworthy victims” were placed below the fold in *The New York Times*.

- How And Why Did Iraqi Die? 2 Tales of Anger and Denial<sup>478</sup>,
- For Iraqis in Harm's Way, \$5,000 and 'I'm Sorry'<sup>479</sup>
- How Many Iraqis Are Dying? By One Count, 208 in a Week<sup>480</sup>

The first two stories were typical of reports being carried outside the US; the shooting death of a 14-year-old boy by American soldiers, and the grim tally of Iraqi deaths. However, both gave equal prominence to the US military and again there was no sense of outrage for the victims. As Herman and Chomsky said; “The drama is there for the asking – only the press concern is missing.”<sup>481</sup>

The last story in the below-fold trio referred specifically to the growing civilian death toll but the figures were far fewer than those reported in *The Irish Times* the previous month. In September 2004, *The Irish Times* had estimated a

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<sup>478</sup> Tierney, John, “How And Why Did Iraqi Die? 2 Tales of Anger and Denial,” *The New York Times*, p1 below fold lead

<sup>479</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey, “For Iraqis in Harm's Way, \$5,000 and 'I'm Sorry'”, *The New York Times*, March 17, 2004, p1

<sup>480</sup> Onishi, Norimitsu, “How Many Iraqis Are Dying? By One Count, 208 in a Week,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2004, p1, below fold lead

<sup>481</sup> Herman, Ed and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Pantheon, New York, 2002, p45

“likely” death rate of 30,000 with a daily rate of 59 deaths.<sup>482</sup> Four weeks later, *The New York Times* front-page story said the “best estimates” put the overall deaths between 10,000 and 15,000 with a weekly death rate of 138.<sup>483</sup>

The US newspaper’s reluctance to show the carnage from the conflict was most noticeable in the display pictures. Sixty six of the 202 pictures (32.67 per cent) showed the American troops at work in a “battle for democracy.”<sup>484</sup> Another 14 pictures, or 6.93 per cent, depicted the violence in Iraq without providing any context. According to the editors, the violence had just “happened”:

- Flames swept through a restaurant and another building in Baghdad after a car bomb exploded there killing at least five people (January 1, 2004)
- Bomb Kills 35 at Iraqi Recruiting Office: Abdul Munim Ali Hamood, 53, wept over the body of his only son, 22-year-old Riyadh, at Karam Hospital in Baghdad yesterday. His son was killed when a powerful suicide car bomb exploded near a group of men outside the army’s main recruiting station (June 18, 2004)
- The bodies of newly trained Iraqi soldiers on a remote road outside the town of Mandali yesterday. The gunmen who killed them, in the deadliest ambush of the insurgency, were reportedly disguised as policemen (October 25, 2004)

Only 10 pictures, five per cent of the total, specifically showed any US casualties. The military control of the media through its embed policy ensured that *The New York Times* shielded readers from the “grisly close-ups of wounded Americans, body bags and death.”<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>482</sup> “US strategy for Iraq unravels,” *The Irish Times*, Lead editorial, September 18, 2004

<sup>483</sup> Onishi, Norimitsu, “How Many Iraqis Are Dying? By One Count, 208 in a Week,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2004, p1, below fold lead

<sup>484</sup> Herman, Ed and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Pantheon, New York, 2002, p203

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid*, p201

However, there was one glaring exception; the April 2004 siege in Falluja. In Vietnam, the military briefly lost control of the press during the Tet Offensive,<sup>486</sup> as reporters, such as the legendary TV anchor Dan Rather, transmitted uncensored images live to America's living rooms after being caught up in the surprise attack.

Iraq's "Tet Offensive" moment came after the April 2004 ambush in Falluja. Photographers caught up in the chaotic wake of the ambush captured what would become the most horrific image to be published in the US media; the four charred American corpses swinging from a bridge. Over the next 14 days,<sup>487</sup> as the US military scrambled to regain control of the journalists, *The New York Times* published their most graphic images from Iraq. The five pictures were:

- The burned American corpses suspended from a bridge
- A US marine obviously crying as he carried a comrade in a body bag
- A wounded US marine evacuated by helicopter amid chaotic scenes
- A man brandishing the boots of a murdered American
- An American coffin being taken from an airplane in the US

These pictures were outside the norm. The US military's decision to embed journalists with the troops had resulted in the careful management of images. For instance, the American coffin was one of only two such pictures<sup>488</sup> which appeared in the display slot since the March 2003 invasion. The first was

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<sup>486</sup> Ibid, p201

<sup>487</sup> From April 1 to April 15, 2004

<sup>488</sup> A third photograph which showed rows of flag draped coffins was buried at the bottom left hand corner of page one. The display picture showed the Queen Mary arriving in Manhattan. (April 23, 2004)

published on August 2, 2003.<sup>489</sup> The absence of coffins and casualties on the front pages of *The New York Times* helped to ensure that the conflict was viewed as its planners had intended; a well-intentioned battle for democracy.

However, this tight control of the media did not apply outside the US where another story was being told. The different treatment within and without the US would be seen most sharply in the two sieges of Falluja in 2004. In particular, the coverage of the first siege really separated the two newspapers.

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<sup>489</sup> Caption: "A Tender Farewell/ Ron Creech at the grave site of his brother-in-law Sgt Chad Keith, in Arlington National Cemetery yesterday. Sergeant Keith, of Batesville, Ind , died July 7 when a bomb exploded while his Army unit patrolled in Baghdad."

## FOCUS ON FALLUJA: APRIL AND NOVEMBER 2004

When an Iraqi reporter at a news briefing said that General Kimmitt had spoken "of a clean war" in Falluja, while Iraqis watching Arab television channels like Al Jazeera, broadcast from the Persian Gulf state of Qatar, had an impression that "what is happening in Falluja is killing children," General Kimmitt responded, "Change the channel to a legitimate, authoritative, honest news station."<sup>490</sup>

So it has come to this. The US First Armoured Division is firing on ambulances and rocketing the homes of the Shia Muslims they came to save from Saddam's oppression.<sup>491</sup>

The Iraq Body Count,<sup>492</sup> (IBC) is an independent monitoring group which has been updating the civilian death toll in Iraq using reports from international media. In 2004, it said that the two sieges of Falluja resulted in the largest incidents of US-caused deaths of civilians across this date range.<sup>493</sup>

The IBC estimated that between 572 and 616 people were killed in Falluja from April 5, 2004 to April 30, 2004 and between 581 and 670 people were killed there from November 8, 2004 to November 30, 2004.

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<sup>490</sup> Burns, John, "Troops Hold Fire For Negotiations At 3 Iraqi Cities/ Helicopter Is Shot Down/ Both Crewmen Are Killed - 7 Chinese Abducted by Rebel Gunmen," *The New York Times*, April 12, 2004, p1 lead

<sup>491</sup> Marlowe, Lara, "The suffering on the streets of Sadr City," turns to "Death stalks Shia Muslims the Americans came to save from Saddam," *The Irish Times*, p1 masthead blurb, April 7, 2004

<sup>492</sup> www iraqbodycount org Accessed September 5, 2006

<sup>493</sup> This section is restricted to deaths reported AFTER President Bush declared the so-called "Mission Accomplished" on May 2, 2003

The IBC said the true numbers were probably much higher, but their methodology required the deaths to have been reported by two independent news organizations. The IBC report for 2004 estimated total deaths at 16,352 while *The Lancet* report for 2003/2004 estimated about 100,000 civilian deaths. The author of *The Lancet* report, Bushra Ibrahim Al-Rubeyi, said they had expected such a wide discrepancy because of the IBC's much more rigid reporting requirements. As Al-Rubeyi said;

In Iraq, thousands of violent incidents are never reported; the occupation authority's press officer does not record attacks that kill civilians unless they involve loss of life among coalition forces as well<sup>494</sup>.

This section compared the performance of the two newspapers over the course of the two attacks on Falluja. The first US attack took place in April 2004 in retaliation for the hideous murder of the four American private soldiers who had been ambushed, dragged from their car, set on fire and then mutilated.<sup>495</sup>

The story was prominently reported in both newspapers,<sup>496</sup> with subtle differences. *The New York Times* said the victims were "American security contractors,"<sup>497</sup> without providing any context. *The Irish Times* said that security

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<sup>494</sup> Al-Rubeyi BI "Mortality before and after the invasion of Iraq in 2003," *The Lancet* - Vol 364, Issue 9448, 20 November 2004, Pages 1834-1835

<sup>495</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey, "4 FROM U.S. KILLED IN AMBUSH IN IRAQ; MOB DRAGS BODIES/ Assault in Falluja - 5 G.I.'s Die In Bombing 15 Miles Away," *The New York Times*, April 1, 2004, p1 lead

<sup>496</sup> Marlowe, Lara, strip head "FALLUJAH ATTACK: Men taken from cars pleading for their lives," Main head "Mob mayhem as bodies are dragged through streets," *The Irish Times*, April 1, 2004, p1 lead

<sup>497</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey, "Up to 12 Marines Die in Raid on Their Base As Fierce Fighting Spreads to 6 Iraqi Cities," *The New York Times*, April 7, 2004, p1 lead

contractors were often targets for Iraqi anger as they were perceived “to be mercenaries for occupation forces.”<sup>498</sup>

Falluja in <i>The New York Times</i>		Falluja in <i>The Irish Times</i>	
Iraq stories	80	Iraq stories	14
Falluja civilians stories	0	Falluja civilians stories	6
Percentage of total	0%	Percentage of total	43%
Iraq pictures	36	Iraq pictures	5
Falluja civilians pictures	0	Falluja civilians pictures	0
Percentage of total	0%	Percentage of total	0%
Iraq editorials	17	Iraq editorials	5
Falluja civilians editorials	0	Falluja civilians editorials	0
Percentage of total	0%	Percentage of total	0%

As can be seen in the table above, *The New York Times* ran 80 stories, 36 pictures and 17 editorials about the occupation during the month of April, 2004. There were absolutely no front page stories, pictures or editorials about the civilian death toll in Falluja.

*The Irish Times* ran 14 stories, five pictures and five editorials over the same 26 editions. Six of the 14 stories (43 per cent) were about the “unworthy victims” in Falluja and two of those were leads:

- Hundreds of Iraqis reported dead in Falluja<sup>499</sup>
- Siege of Falluja lifts with Iraqi death toll at over 600<sup>500</sup>

<sup>498</sup> Marlowe, Lara, “More fighting likely after US pledge to hunt down al-Sadr,” *The Irish Times*, April 12, 2004, p1 offlead

<sup>499</sup> Marlowe, Lara, “Hundreds of Iraqis reported dead in Falluja,” *The Irish Times*, April 10, 2004, p1 lead

<sup>500</sup> Marlowe, Lara, “Siege of Falluja lifts with Iraqi death toll at over 600,” *The Irish Times*, April 12, 2004, p1 lead



This is not to say that the civilians were completely excluded from *The New York Times*; there were sporadic mentions buried in the copy; but the reporting was couched in equivocations.

For instance on April 10, 2004, *The New York Times* included the likely death toll of civilians in the 42<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of a 44-paragraph offlead. The headline did not mention the civilian casualties;

But the bleeding wound for both sides in the fighting was undoubtedly Falluja, where Iraqi doctors have put the death toll from five days of heavy fighting at more than 300 -- many of which have been civilians, including women and children...If the Iraqi casualty figures are not exaggerated -- and with the city under siege they have been impossible to verify -- few battles in last year's 21-day war to capture Baghdad will have taken such a heavy toll.<sup>501</sup>

That same day, *The Irish Times* lead headline said: "Hundreds of Iraqis reported dead in Falluja." There was no mention of exaggerated casualty figures as the intro lead off with the deaths:

At least 450 Iraqis died and more than 1,000 were wounded in the five-day assault by US marines on the Iraqi town of Falluja, according to Dr Rafi Hayat, the director of the town's main hospital.<sup>502</sup>

On April 12, 2003, *The New York Times* lead again excluded the civilian casualties, concentrating on the American troops "holding fire." The only

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<sup>501</sup> Burns, John, "Fighting Halts Briefly in Falluja; U.S. Convoy Hit Near Baghdad / 2 Senior Iraqis Quit to Protest American Actions," *The New York Times*, April 10, 2004, p1 offlead

<sup>502</sup> Marlowe, Lara, "Hundreds of Iraqis reported dead in Falluja," *The Irish Times*, April 10, 2004, p1 lead

mention of the civilian casualties appeared in the eighth paragraph and reported a “spokesman” who was being quoted by another news organisation.

A hospital spokesman in Falluja, quoted by the Associated Press, said the number of dead in the last week exceeded 600.<sup>503</sup>

In the same day’s edition, *The Irish Times* led with the deaths and attributed the quote to a named hospital director;

The US siege of Falluja eased yesterday but with the announcement that over 600 Iraqis have died in the town this week, according to Dr Rafa Hayad al-Issawi, the director of the city’s main hospital. He said the dead mostly included women, children and elderly.<sup>504</sup>

*The Irish Times* front page clearly provided a wider view of the conflict during this period, while *The New York Times* kept the “unworthy victims” off the front page.

Seven months later, in November 2004, Falluja was under attack again. This time, there was almost a total news black-out as Falluja was “virtually off-limits to journalists.”<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>503</sup> Burns, John, “Troops Hold Fire For Negotiations At 3 Iraqi Cities/ Helicopter Is Shot Down/ Both Crewmen Are Killed - 7 Chinese Abducted by Rebel Gunmen,” *The New York Times*, April 12, 2004, p1 lead

<sup>504</sup> Marlowe, Lara, “Siege of Falluja lifts with Iraqi death toll at over 600,” *The Irish Times*, April 12, 2004, p1 lead

<sup>505</sup> Iraq Body Count. [www.iraqbodycount.org](http://www.iraqbodycount.org) Accessed September 9, 2006

In addition, Lara Marlowe from *The Irish Times* had been posted to Paris and the newspaper was the poorer for it. The news black-out was reflected in the front page content of both newspapers.

Falluja in <i>The New York Times</i> November 8 - 27, 2004		Falluja in <i>The Irish Times</i> November 8 - 27, 2004	
Iraq stories	32	Iraq stories	13
Falluja civilians stories	0	Falluja civilians stories	0
Percentage of total	0%	Percentage of total	43%
Iraq leads	8	Iraq leads	3
Falluja civilian leads	0	Falluja civilian leads	0
Percentage of total	0%	Percentage of total	0%
Iraq display pictures	36	Iraq display pictures	2
Falluja civilians pictures	0	Falluja civilians pictures	0
Percentage of total	0%	Percentage of total	0%
Iraq editorials	5	Iraq editorials	3
Falluja civilians editorials	0	Falluja civilians editorials	0
Percentage of total	0%	Percentage of total	0%

As can be seen in the table above, neither newspaper ran a front page picture, story or editorial about the “unworthy victims” in Falluja.

*The Irish Times* ran two stories in the front page Index which cross-referenced to stories inside. One described a report of an Iraqi father burying his nine-year-old son in the garden<sup>506</sup> and the other described the discovery of 22 bodies.<sup>507</sup> Apart from these two brief mentions, which could have been greater prominence, the civilian victims in Falluja were, to all intents and purposes, invisible.

<sup>506</sup> “10 US soldiers killed in Falluja attacks,” *The Irish Times*, Nov 11, 2004, p1

<sup>507</sup> “Warplanes bombard Falluja as bodies uncovered,” *The Irish Times*, Nov 16, 2004, p1 (no byline)

The lack of coverage was probably not surprising given that representatives from the mainstream media were unable to get into Falluja. However, although neither newspaper could get into the city, they both editorialised about the attack, and both arrived at different conclusions.

*The New York Times* ran five editorials about Iraq across the 19 days, and four of those made reference to Falluja. During this time, footage emerged of the shooting death of an unarmed Iraqi by a marine in a Falluja mosque. Not one editorial in *The New York Times* commented on this or the civilian death toll. One editorial went so far as to say that the military needed to concentrate “on winning hearts and minds.”<sup>508</sup>

*The Irish Times* ran three editorials over the same period. Two referred to the attack on Falluja. Unlike the editorial desk at *The New York Times*, which said that US success depended on the military winning hearts and minds, the two editorials put the conflict in context, a context which is still missing from the US media coverage today.

Firstly, the newspaper said the “insurgency”, was “driven and created in large part by the very occupation it resists,”<sup>509</sup> an analysis which is still unspoken in the editorial pages of *The New York Times*. And secondly, the newspaper described what it called “the invasion and occupation of Iraq,”<sup>510</sup> another analysis which is still absent from *The New York Times*, which still refers to a war and its implication of an equal battle.

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<sup>508</sup> “The Larger Battle in Iraq,” *The New York Times*, Lead editorial, November 15, 2004

<sup>509</sup> “The battle for Falluja,” *The Irish Times*, Lead editorial, November 9, 2004

<sup>510</sup> “A friend to the people of Iraq,” *The Irish Times*, November 17, 2004, editorial

Poignantly, this sample ended with the news of the death of the Irish woman Margaret Hassan who was abducted and murdered in the violence which has engulfed Iraq. Her death did not happen in a vacuum. Margaret Hassan would probably be alive today if the United States had not invaded Iraq; so would more than 100,000 Iraqis and nearly 3,000 Americans.

*The New York Times* bears a huge responsibility for those deaths by facilitating the White House and its relentless propaganda machine.

## POSTSCRIPT

On February 18, 2002, the Pentagon announced plans to open an information office to “sway sentiment abroad.”<sup>511</sup> On February 20, 2002, *The New York Times* editorial page criticised the move, saying; “Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld should call a halt to this misguided experiment in news manipulation.”<sup>512</sup> On February 27, 2002 the newspaper reported the Office of Strategic Influence was closed.<sup>513</sup> However, this was not the end of the story as a report<sup>514</sup> by the New York-based media watchdog, FAIR, demonstrated:

Rumsfeld has suggested that though the exposure of OSI's plans forced the Pentagon to close the office, they certainly haven't given up on its work. According to a transcript on the Department of Defense website, Rumsfeld told reporters: “And then there was the office of strategic influence. You may recall that. And “oh my goodness gracious isn't that terrible, Henny Penny the sky is going to fall.” I went down that next day and said fine, if you want to savage this thing fine I'll give you the corpse. There's the name. You can have the name, but I'm gonna keep doing every single thing that needs to be done and I have.”<sup>515</sup>

As of January 19, 2007, Mr Rumsfeld's comments, and the implication that the propaganda office was still open, were available on the Pentagon's website. They have still not been reported in *The New York Times*.

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<sup>511</sup> Dao, James and Eric Schmitt, “Pentagon Readies Effort To Sway Sentiment Abroad/ Debate Over Credibility/ New Office Proposes To Send News Or Maybe False News To Even Friendly Lands,” *The New York Times*, February 19, 2002, lead, p1

<sup>512</sup> “Managing The News,” *The New York Times*, February 20, 2002, editorial

<sup>513</sup> Dao, James and Eric Schmitt, “A ‘Damaged’ Information Office is Declared Closed by Rumsfeld” *The New York Times*, February 27, 2002

<sup>514</sup> “The Office of Strategic Influence Is Gone, But Are Its Programs In Place?” November 27, 2002, Accessed at FAIR online at <http://fair.org/index.php?page=1859> on June 27, 2005.

<sup>515</sup> Available at [http://www.pentagon.gov/transcripts/2002/t11212002\\_t1118sd2.html](http://www.pentagon.gov/transcripts/2002/t11212002_t1118sd2.html)

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

There was no war in the Gulf in 2003. Rather, a myth of heroic, spectacular warfare was manufactured, in large part, as a desperate measure to help provide a *raison d'être* for the (increasingly out-of-control) military industrial complexes in the US and UK - and to hide the reality of a rout of a hopelessly overwhelmed "enemy" army.<sup>516</sup>

The research has shown that, in line with the expectations of the Propaganda Model, *The New York Times* acted as a virtual press office for the US administration since the attacks of September 11, and that its coverage of the so-called "war on terror," helped to mobilise support for indefensible acts of violence against the people of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The newspaper's subservience to the US administration could be seen as early as September 12, 2001 when the newspaper first used the phrase, "war on terrorism," without the journalistic convention of quote marks, and without questioning whether the US was right to declare war.

Critics of this conclusion may point to the feted May 2004 apology. However the research showed that the newspaper disseminated White House propaganda on a far wider and broader scale than it acknowledged in that

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<sup>516</sup> Richard Keeble, "Information Warfare in an Age of Hyper-Militarism," *Reporting War Journalism in Wartime*, ed. Stuart Allan and Barbie Zelizer, Routledge, New York, 2004, p43

apology. Tellingly, unlike the earlier apology for Jayson Blair's plagiarism (for which no blood was ever spilled) it did not highlight that apology on page one.

Over the 1,000 days, whenever the US was the aggressor; the stories were either excluded from the front pages of *The New York Times* or presented late. "Unworthy victims" never made the lead spot, and when they did make the front page, they were given low-key headlines.

The subdued placement of stories about the "unworthy victims" in *The New York Times* was matched by the subdued tone and content. None of the headlines above the fold used emotive language and none attempted to engage reader interest or sympathy. The lack of photographs only served to highlight the exclusion of the civilian deaths.

The proof of this could be seen in *The Irish Times* coverage. The Irish newspaper, despite far less coverage overall, put a wider range of topics on the front page, especially the civilian deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq and the April 2003 attack on Falluja.

In particular, *The New York Times* failed to give its readers any sense of how American was being viewed outside the US. As my own experience in the weeks after September 11 demonstrated, the newspaper chose to highlight US concerns to the exclusion of any others, and those concerns were dictated by a narrow band of US political and corporate interests.



It remains to be seen if the US mass media will later be blamed for “losing” the “Iraq war,” or even the “global war on terror,” in the same way that the US media has been blamed by some for “losing” the Vietnam War.

The “media lost the war” theory conveniently ignores the documented facts; in both Vietnam and Iraq, that dissent was practically invisible in the US mass media and that the press, including *The New York Times*, hewed to the administration’s line from start to finish.

Journalism, at *The New York Times* and elsewhere, is being strangled by the corporate and political ties which bind commercial media. Journalists have to go along with the culture to succeed in the newsroom, and it’s a corrosive culture. The failure of journalism can not be blamed on the individual journalist, even journalists such as Judith Miller.

The corporate mass media reflects the aims and concerns of the dominant political and corporate elite. It is structured in such a way that it filters out any stories which challenge those concerns. *The New York Times* did not deliberately seek to exclude certain stories; it just failed to consider them.

This is how we have created societies which ferociously attack “welfare scroungers” but barely know about, or even understand, the extent of the corporate welfare scroungers.

De Tocqueville first identified the conflict at the heart of free-market journalism; the inverted relationship between the quantity of media and the quality of dissent. He also found that it was harder to shake an American of an idea once he got hold of it, because the American did not feel he had been coerced into that opinion.<sup>517</sup>

These conditions are perfect for propaganda. As Nancy Snow wrote in 2003, echoing Jacques Ellul, “propaganda works best when people feel they are not being manipulated.”<sup>518</sup>

Although this research concentrated on the US media, it could serve as a basis for examining the Irish media. For instance, as Chomsky said earlier, the Propaganda Model should be relevant for any media in a developed capitalist society. Irish society, which was once dominated by religious elite, is now increasingly dominated by political and corporate concerns.

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<sup>517</sup> Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America* trans. Henry Reeve, vol. 1, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1899, 185.

<sup>518</sup> Snow, Nancy, *Information War, American Propaganda, Free Speech and Opinion Control since 9-11*, Seven Stories Press, New York, 2003, p22

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### *THE NEW YORK TIMES*: WMD EDITORIALS

AUGUST 28, 2002 TO DECEMBER 21, 2002

1. He (Saddam Hussein) has secretly and illegally developed biological and chemical weapons and may not be far from developing nuclear bombs. (Summons to War, Aug 28, 2002)
2. Iraq, with its storehouses of biological toxins, its advanced nuclear weapons program, its defiance of international sanctions and its ambitiously malignant dictator, is precisely the kind of threat that the United Nations was established to deal with. (The Iraq Test, Sept 13, 2002)
3. The combination of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, especially his effort to produce nuclear weapons, and Iraq's brazen defiance of the Security Council represent a serious threat to international order. (A Measured Pace on Iraq, *The New York Times*, Sept 14, 2002)
4. ... force Iraq to give up its unconventional weapons. (The Iraqi Chessboard, Sept 17, 2002)
5. ..Mr. Hussein's defiance of the Security Council's longstanding instructions to dismantle Baghdad's nuclear weapons program and to eliminate all its biological and chemical weapons... (A Road Map for Iraq, Sept 18, 2002)
6. ... the United Nations will have a chance to resume weapons inspections and disarm Saddam Hussein's most lethal weapons before force is authorized. (The Healthy Politics of Iraq, Sept 26, 2002)
7. ... a resolution that affords time for further peaceful efforts to get Iraq to give up its unconventional weapons. (More Than One Option on Iraq, Sept 28, 2002)

8. No further debate is needed to establish that Saddam Hussein is an evil dictator whose continued effort to build unconventional weapons in defiance of clear United Nations prohibitions threatens the Middle East and beyond (A Time for Debate and Reflection, Oct 3, 2002)
9. Americans are worried about Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction (A Nation Wary of War, Oct 8, 2002)
- 10 As long as the United States continues to work with the Security Council to insist that Iraq comply, Saddam Hussein seems unlikely to strike out wildly with his chemical and biological weapons (The Hazardous Path Ahead, Oct 11, 2002)
11. ...a growing danger that Iraq's unconventional weapons will be used in war or passed on to terrorists. (A Unified Message to Iraq, Nov 9, 2002)
12. Iraq's statements, however, continue to be disturbingly evasive, including a brazen assertion that Baghdad has no unconventional weapons programs... (Inspecting Iraq, Nov 28, 2002)
13. Iraq has to get rid of its biological and chemical arms and missiles and the means to make them, and abandon its efforts to develop nuclear weapons. (Decisive Days for Iraq, Dec 6, 2002)
14. ...missing stocks of nerve gas and biological weapons material... (Iraq in The Dock, Dec 10, 2002)
15. In the nuclear area, Iraq failed to explain satisfactorily its recent purchase of aluminium tubes that can be used to enrich uranium for bomb-making. (Iraqi Stonewalling, Dec 20, 2002)

## APPENDIX TWO

### INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR NOAM CHOMSKY

MIT, KENDALL SQUARE, BOSTON, MA, DECEMBER 10, 2004

Professor Chomsky's office is, as one would expect, stuffed with books, the first of which on his personal bookshelf is Kieran Allen's *The Celtic Tiger*. The sloping walls and plants combine to create a spaciousness which is at odds with the industrial type design of MIT. On one wall hangs an illustration depicting the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero and on another wall is a giant replica of a postcard with the word "Palestine" serving as the mailing address. Stamped over "Palestine" is the familiar notice from the US postal service, "Returned: No Such Address."

*How familiar are you with the Irish print media?*

I don't read it regularly, of course, but friends send me things from *The Irish Times* mostly, especially during the Central American wars, because their coverage was very good. I think mostly because the Irish priests who were in Central America were sending back information that never appeared here. So a couple of Irish friends were quite regularly sending me stuff. But I couldn't judge it by that.

*Do you think that the Propaganda Model could be applied to the newspaper media in the Republic of Ireland?*

I'd be amazed if it couldn't. I mean it's not specifically limited to the United States in fact every place I've looked carefully comes out about the same. It differs, countries differ, the BBC isn't the same as CBS, it's not that different... I've had plenty of experience just trying to get; for example, if you're talking about criticism of the United States, that's a lot easier to get through the Irish media or the British media or the

French media or anything else. But try talking about them, you know, I've done it, talk about criticism in Ireland, you're cut off at the pass. Ireland, England, France, they want to hear criticism of other people, not yourself.

*On Sept 15, 2001, The New York Times ran a big piece on how the day of mourning had been observed in countries around the world. The piece did not mention Ireland, even though Ireland actually closed down on the Friday, completely ceased trading and The Irish Times did not publish. As far as I am aware, this was the only country that did that. Not even in New York, Washington or Pennsylvania were people given the opportunity to take the day off. Why did The New York Times leave that out? It was an interesting sidebar, even on its own.*

This is an extremely provincial country. They don't know about the existence of other countries. I mean probably Ireland is just not on their radar screen. Half the people in the United States probably don't know where France is. I checked once, back around the eighties, curiosity; I was interested in coverage of Israel. Israel is the only country where coverage (of Israel) is about as dense as it is here. The coverage of Israel is way beyond that of the coverage of any other country. I checked the index of the *Times* for just one year and I think that that Israel had more coverage than Europe, Latin America and Asia combined or something roughly like that. Most countries just aren't reported at all. Unless an earthquake happens or something. Or unless it is of some specific interest to US concerns. Otherwise nothing.

*Do you think there has been more disinformation in the US media since September 11 or is it in line with what you expected.*

It's about what I thought. It's the same. I don't see any difference. There are major things that are suppressed totally on a level that you couldn't reach in a totalitarian

state. Like say, take right after September 11 how quickly the Bush administration announced that it was going to bomb Afghanistan. There was an international Gallup poll, and Gallup is not an obscure organisation, taken to see what people's attitudes were around the world to the bombing of Afghanistan, and this was after it was announced, and before it started, towards the end of late September and the results were extremely interesting. It turned out that there was virtually no support for it. There were two questions asked; first: If the perpetrators of 9/11 are discovered to have been in Afghanistan (that was the assumption for all questions) Are you in favour of bombing if it attacks terrorist targets and second: Are in favour of bombing if it also harms civilians?

For just terrorist targets, in Latin America, it ranged from two per cent support in Mexico to 11 per cent support in Venezuela and Columbia and about 16 per cent in Panama, which is half US. In other words, nobody was in favour of it, even if it just hit terrorist targets and even if the perpetrators were known. In Europe, it went up to in the neighbourhood of 25 per cent and it varied depending on the country. In fact, the only two countries where it was over 50 per cent, for terrorist targets, were India and Israel. And they were not even thinking about Afghanistan. India was thinking about Kashmir and Israel was thinking about the Palestinians. Afghanistan; they didn't give a shit about one way or another.

So the main result is that if you know the perpetrators and you're attacking terrorist targets, there's very low support. And in the countries that know something about US intervention, it's (the support) undetectable. The second question: Suppose the bombing hit civilians, well then it went way down, and of course, it immediately hit civilians. Furthermore, they did not know who the perpetrators were so the fact is that all the questions were based on a false assumption. In fact, eight months after the bombing, the FBI conceded that they did not even know if Afghanistan had anything to do with it.

So the general fact is that there was almost no support for it. But that was completely blanked out of the American press.

There was somebody who did a careful Lexis Nexis study. One paper in Omaha mentioned it in about 10 lines and misrepresented it. And that's it for the entire American press. Everything you read tells you there was overwhelming international support for it. It's not even a question for the people who write about "just war" theories, the big thinkers and so on; they don't talk about this case as it was so obvious that everybody was in favour of it. Nobody was in favour of it, but this wasn't reported. But was that new after September 11? No. It was the same in Kosovo. I did a review of the international press. Here and in England, I don't know about Ireland, but in England and the United States, the story is "everyone supports it". The fact is everyone was opposed to it. In India, and even in Israel, which usually is reflexively pro-US, were criticising it as gunboat diplomacy, and so on and so forth. But it was just basically unreported.

Afghanistan? Is that a change? No, that's normal, that's the way it works. I mean even in the case of the Iraq war, it's very hard to stress the fact that everyone was against it. But the actual polls, like the international Gallup polls, I mean, if you read carefully, you'd find out that Spain didn't like it, In Europe, the highest support was 11 per cent in Romania, it's nothing on a poll. And most places were totally against it. But it's barely reported.

*Is this in line with what you expected?* It's exactly what you'd expect.

*Do you think that there is anything different in the information coming from the Bush administration, and, from that of the Creel Commission in 1916 which you have*



*written "succeeded in turning a pacifist population into a hysterical, war-mongering population" (Ibid. p7).*

Well, it was duplicated in a way. Take Iraq - September 2002 was a crucial month. That's when Washington declared their national security strategy, to dominate the world by force. There was a midterm election coming up so it was important to frighten the population into supporting the Republicans, and they also crucially announced the invasion of Iraq.

The month started with Condoleezza Rice saying that the next time we hear about Saddam Hussein it would be a mushroom cloud in New York and it went on from there. Through the month there was a massive government media propaganda campaign.

Now if you talk to the media, they don't say this, they say we're not producing any propaganda, we're just reporting what they're saying. Which is true. But if you report uncritically what is being said by the government and you don't have any critical commentary, then yes, you're a propaganda machine.

So there was a month of intensive propaganda and you can see the polls shift radically. By the end of the month, after one month of this, about 60 per cent of the population thought that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the existence of the United States, that he was responsible for 9/11 and he's planning more attacks, he's worked with Al Q'aeda. It was around 60 per cent of the population. Nobody in the world thought that. For example, in Iran and Kuwait, where they hate him, where they would have been happy to slaughter him, nobody was afraid of him. They hated him, but they weren't afraid of him because they knew it was the weakest country in the region. Barely held together with Scotch tape, couldn't threaten anybody.

But here, it went from not a major concern to over 60 per cent, real fear. This has always been a very frightened country and it doesn't take a lot to terrify it. And it's continued

The most recent studies are very interesting, so now, about 75 per cent of the public says we should not have invaded Iraq if they did not have weapons of mass destruction, and did not have ties to Al Q'aeda – 75 per cent. Fifty per cent think we should have invaded, why? Because 50 per cent think they did have weapons of mass destruction, and they had ties to Al Q'aeda. And where did they get that from? You can ask *The New York Times*, and they'll tell you, well, we didn't say that, which is true. They didn't say it; they just quoted people saying it. And without criticising them. And that's when it gets into people's heads. I mean the idea that half of Americans believe things like this tells you something. I don't think you could find 5 per cent of the population anywhere else in the world who believes that.

*Why is there such a difference between the perception of George Bush within the US and outside the US?*

A lot of people don't realise that we don't have elections in the United States. When you turn on the television tonight and you see ads for, say toothpaste, or an automobile, or lifestyle drug or something. Do you think they're giving you information about it? No, they're trying to delude you into buying it by projecting images

When they present a car ad, they don't say here are the characteristics of the car, that would take no expense, no time, nothing, what they do is show you a football player or a sexy model or the car doing something impossible, like going up in the sky or some crazy thing, and a lot of graphics, and the idea is to try to deceive you into buying the car.

The whole business spends hundreds of billions of dollars a year to undermine markets. What they teach you in graduate school is that our wonderful market system is based on rational choices by informed consumers. That's the core principle. That's the **last** thing business wants. They don't want informed consumers making rational choices. They spend probably a trillion dollars a year trying to prevent that. That's what *advertising is*, it's not a secret. Nobody thinks they're getting information from ads. You're being deceived by them. By undermining markets.

What do you think happens when the same people sell candidates? The elections are run by the PR industry. It's not a secret. They run the campaigns. They want to suppress issues, and the reason is because, on issues. You see, here's another case of suppression. Right before the election, two of the most important polling institutions in the world, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, which does regular monitoring of foreign policy attitudes and the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, which is the most serious academic-based polling institution in the world, they're very serious, they both published major studies about US public opinion on all sorts of issues. They were totally suppressed. And if you look at the results you can see why.

The population is kind of like Europe. A large majority, a very large majority, think the US should join the international criminal court, sign the Kyoto protocol, or follow the UN lead. A majority even think the US ought to give up the veto, large majority opposed to all this pre-emptive war business. It just goes down the line. The population is so far to the left of both political parties and the media that they can't even report it. Well, what do they do about that in the campaigns? Keep issues out of the campaigns. Nobody knows the stand of the candidates on issues. When they're asked what Bush thinks about the Kyoto protocol, Bush voters think he's in favour of it. Even

when the party has explicitly opposed it, they think he's in favour of it, because they don't know anything about issues.

To present issues would be as pointless as to present the truth about toothpaste when you're selling toothpaste. If you look at the campaign, it's just like toothpaste ads, it's projection of images. *Bush is crafted as an ordinary regular guy, friendly type, riding around in a battered car off to his ranch which they made up for him so he can take care of the cows or something. I mean I'm sure he's trained to do all these things that intellectuals ridicule, to say, "new-clear", "misunderestimate"; he's probably carefully trained to say those things so he looks like an ordinary guy.*

In fact, if you take a look at the polls, after the debates, in the elite press, after every debate, it was full of how Kerry won the debate. Yet if you take a look at the poll results, Bush's ratings went up after each debate. Why? Because here was this simple guy, just like us, doesn't know how to pronounce nuclear, and this fancy guy from Boston is trying to make fun of him. That's the imagery that's projected. I mean when they want to sell Kerry, do they tell you what his health plan is? Most people who were concerned about health voted for Kerry, but do they know what his plan is? No, you can't find it out; you have to do a research project. When they want to sell Kerry they have him out goose-hunting, literally, walking around shooting geese or driving a motorcycle or something.

The idea is that it is just like advertising on TV. The point is; you undermine markets by deluding consumers, you undermine democracy by projecting images, keep away from issues, because issues are just too dangerous. You don't want the public to be involved in issues, just look what their attitudes were. And people don't know – and they know that they don't know.

Say for example after the 2000 election. There was this huge fuss about the stolen election, Florida, chads, the Supreme Court people were writing books and law professors were screaming about the end of democracy and so on and so forth. You take a look and you notice that the public didn't give a damn, they just didn't care that the election was stolen. You want to know why? Before the election, about three-quarters of the population thought it was a complete farce. So who cares if it was stolen?

Right now, the left is making a big fuss about campaign fraud, voter denial in Ohio, the machines didn't work. I don't know if you're getting this stuff in Ireland but here's an industry that's trying to prove that the election was stolen. I keep telling my friends that you're wasting your time, nobody's going to care. Nobody cares about it. People understand that the election had about as much significance as flipping a coin to pick the king. So suppose the coin was biased; are they going to care? That isn't the issue; the issue is why isn't there even a semblance of a democratic election. Why can't people's attitudes and opinions and concerns even appear in the electoral arena? That's the problem. And there's nobody going to talk about this.

The big problem in the United States and everyone agrees on this, is the health system. It's the most inefficient system in the industrial world. The costs are way beyond anyone else like 50 per cent higher per capita. Outcomes are quite poor. The United States ranks at the low end of the industrial countries. It ranks less than some third world countries in fact on some measures. The reason, as every health professional knows, is because it's privatised. A privatised health care system is highly inefficient. You have level after level of bureaucracy, a lot of supervision, a ton of paperwork, a doctor writes a prescription, he knows some bureaucrat in the insurance company is going to look at it and say you could have done a cheaper prescription. All of that stuff adds up. Hundreds of billions of dollars a year.

So it's a very inefficient and expensive system and people are concerned because the costs are going out of control. People can't pay the drug prices, our drug costs here are three or four times as high as for the same drug in Europe because the drug companies can ride roughshod over everybody. I think this is the only industrialised country where the government doesn't use its purchasing power to negotiate drug prices because it's illegal here. You can't. The Pentagon does it for paper clips but you can't do it for drugs. And people are upset about it. And when you look at polls, a large majority favours some kind of national health plan. The last poll I saw was about 80 per cent said that the government should insure everybody, national health in other words, 80 per cent.

At the last debate, health was supposed to be on the domestic issues, right before the election, and if you take a look at the story that *The New York Times* ran on it, it's quite interesting. They said that Kerry could not bring up any government involvement in the health system because it has so little political support; meaning it's only supported by 80 per cent of the population. But they're right, it's opposed by the drug companies and it's opposed by the insurance industry, it's opposed by Wall Street, so it has no political support. And it's not that they're lying, that's what they think is political support. And that's just reported blandly and nobody comments on it. And this has been going on for years. When the attitudes on national health insurance are ever discussed, say in *The New York Times*, it's called "politically impossible". There are all these powerful institutions are against it. The idea that you might have a democracy is just out of everybody's head. So you can't say really that they're distorting it, it's just not a concept. The concept doesn't exist so you don't report it. Can you imagine the press reporting public attitudes of the kind I mention? It's impossible, they would be saying straight out that all of us are off in some corner, way to the right of the public, including the liberals... They don't take positions like this. These are crucial issues.

So what do people think about Bush? He's a nice guy, like to meet him in a bar; he's religious so he's going to help me. You want to look at Bush's actual moral values? All you've got to do is read the business press the next day. Euphoria in every boardroom. Is it because they're opposed to gay marriage? I mean CEOs have the same attitudes as Harvard faculty, they're social liberals. They don't give a damn about being opposed to gay marriage or being in favour of abortion. If their wives want to have an abortion, that's fine. But they also understand Bush's moral values; Give as much as you can to the rich and slam everybody else. Let our children pay the costs. Transfer the cost to the next generation.

*One thing that has shocked me about the US is its attitude to health care. I don't get it at all.*

The population does get it, and is opposed to it, but they're irrelevant. They do not count as political support. And neither party will try and appeal to them on it. No candidate's going to come out and say, "Ok, let's have a national health care, Canadian-style system." Nobody even knows what any other country has. But Canada they know because it's close by, so when people are asked which kind of health care system they prefer, it's usually Canadian-style, which is not the best one by any means. I don't know what Ireland's is like but I think Australia's is the most efficient in the world. But the US is down at the bottom and people don't like it and it really hurts them. About 25 per cent of the population just can't see doctors, and people can't take their medicines because they can't buy their drugs. That's not something that you can put aside, this idea of mothers and children suffering. This really hits people where it hurts.

And the fact is that there is universal insurance in the United States, its called emergency rooms. If you are really dying, and you go to a hospital, they have to take you in It's the most absolutely inefficient, inhumane, expensive form of heath insurance you can imagine. There's no preventive care, you only get people when they're

desperate If you're hit by a car and you're taken to Mass General Hospital, you'll get the best care in the world, the fanciest surgeons in the world will be down there. But it's not the way to give health care. So it's there and it's hopelessly expensive, but of course the insurance companies and the prescription drug companies insist on it.

*What do you believe has been the process whereby Americans have, by and large, been rendered so ignorant of the wider world? Has the US become utterly provincial now?*

Look. It's a big country. If you travel round Europe, you run into different kinds of people, you don't have to go very far, in fact if you travel round Ireland you see different people. But when you travel around the United States nothing changes, it's the same everywhere. The United States is a very homogeneous country. We know why it is - we wiped out the indigenous population. It was very varied but they're all gone So it was left to the Scotch-Irish immigrants So nobody cares about anything else outside. People don't know anything about the outside world.

In fact 9/11 had an interesting effect; it opened a lot of people's eyes. I could see it directly because I give tons of talks. Audiences shot up Invitations went out of sight. People became much more critical and open-minded. In fact the small publishers who published the dissident radical books wanted to start republishing books from the seventies and eighties. In fact they're all flourishing since 9/11 because they had dissident culture in them. This is partly patriotic they reported all the patriotic extremism but there was also this other development which went in the other direction

*How, if at all, have the five filters changed since yourself and Ed Herman devised the Propaganda Model?*



In the introduction we discussed what was in fact a mistake in the first edition, the fifth filter. The filter was much too narrow, the anti-Communist filter. It applied in the 1980s but now it's just much too narrow. Market fundamentalism is a similar filter and that's unbelievable. In England, and probably Ireland, but certainly England is about as bad in this respect. There are just hopeless illusions about how the economy works.

*The Financial Times* in London is as bad as any journal here. They do not understand anything about how the economy works. They think that we have a market economy based on entrepreneurial initiative and consumer choice. This barely exists. Consumer choice? The whole industry is designed to prevent it. It's advertising. Entrepreneurial initiative must have come from places like MIT. It was paid for by the Pentagon.

Take anything, take that – (the tape recorder) where do you think that come from. It came out of Pentagon-funded technology through places like MIT. Computers, internet, electronics, micro-electronics, pharmaceuticals. The basic costs are paid for by the public. The whole system is based on public cost and public risk taking and initiative in laboratories. Federal laboratories, university laboratories, and so on. The entrepreneurial part is there but it's in the marketing side.

When you try to tell that to some economists or business journalists, they won't know what you're talking about. They don't understand a thing about how the economy works. It's hard to find any part of it that does not work like this. The economy is computers, the internet, containers, lasers, aircraft and so on and it all comes out of the public sector. It's the same with pharmaceuticals and bio-technology and so on. If you were walking around MIT 20 years ago you would have seen small electronics firms spinning off the big Pentagon-funded electronics research; walk around Kendall Square today, you'll see small bio-technology firms spinning off the NIH-supported research that's going on and if they get rich enough Merck will bring them. That's after the hard

work is done. They're interested in the marketing side of research. Market fundamentalism is a major component, there are others, but the anti-Communism filter was much too narrow.

We really did a dumb thing in regard to anti-terrorism (*by not making it a stronger component of the fifth filter*). Both of us, both Ed and I, through the 1980s had been writing extensively about terrorism and the way it is used to control people.

This is another thing that the media suppressed. Take 9/11 - Did they declare the war on terror after 9/11 or did they re-declare it? No the war on terror was declared by the same people when they came into office in 1981.

When the Reagan Administration came in saying that a core principle of foreign policy was going to be the war on terror. The result is things like that (Here Chomsky points to the painting of the death of Archbishop Romero) the assassination of Archbishop Romero, and the six Jesuit intellectuals, they carried out a huge massacre on this pretext of a war on terror. It was the same rhetoric, a plague of barbarism etc, and it was used to terrify people. They controlled the population in the eighties through the fear of terror. Both of us, Ed and I, knew about this, we'd been writing about it for 10 years, so how we didn't look at this, I can't understand, but yes, that's another part of the filter.

## APPENDIX THREE

### INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD REEVES

Sag Harbor, Long Island. July 28, 2005

“I teach journalism but my students don’t read a newspaper unless I make them. The media business is the most profitable business in the country. The average is somewhere about 21 per cent a year and they get used to that. Knight Ridder (major US newspaper chain) has been destroyed by that. They want to keep that kind of profit margin but circulation and advertising are declining. The classifieds are being affected by the net. Luxury advertising is up everywhere. Magazines are in a position to use the technology to cut their costs tremendously. Publishers are using it to make more money, not to improve news coverage. You can see in 20 years time someone’s going to say “off the stone” and no-one’s going to know what they’re talking about.

When I worked at *The New York Times* (1966 to 1971 as chief political correspondent), it was clearly the best newspaper in the country. You can’t argue that it wasn’t the best paper. It had great people, the best people in the country wanted to work there. They may have worked for a good newspaper, say *The Detroit Free Press*, but if they were good, particularly if they won a Pulitzer, the offer would come from the *Times* and most of them would take it. Reporters were treated like little princes. When I began there we were required to fly first class because *The LA Times*, in an effort to recruit reporters from New York and Washington had offered higher salaries and first class travel. They particularly picked up people when *The New York Herald Tribune*, which I was on, folded in April 1966, which is when I went to the *Times*. And the *Times* pride was hurt by that which is why they said we all had to fly first class. It was amazing, I was 29 at the time and I was living like a king.

The power has shifted to the money people. I think this was because of the labour troubles<sup>519</sup> and various other problems during the sixties which affected the newspaper's revenue. They had no other stream of income and it was at that point that they basically decided they had to make it a business like other businesses. They began to hire more and more people from outside journalism; efficiency experts, accountants and managers of some sort.

Our definition of news was what we thought the public should know. Today news is defined as what the public wants. Nick Kristoff just ran a column in *The Times* saying that the way to save Darfur would have been to hold the Michael Jackson trial there. It was a very elitist definition of news at *The New York Times* and, in those days, if you were with the *Times* and someone from one of the other organisations, like *Time* magazine or CBS, had a story that you thought was a big deal they would come to you and give you the story because if the story ran in *The New York Times*, then it **was** a story and the other organisations would put people on it. We were that dominant. You only have to put it on the web now, you don't have to give it to *The New York Times* to start a firestorm although *The New York Times* has to become part of the story at some point. So much of the business world is in New York and it's the only general interest newspaper they read.

I would say *The New York Times* is more diverse today but it's also more like other newspapers than when I was there. It's more like other newspapers now, a better put out version of other newspapers around the country; the same colour pictures, the same wider columns, bigger headlines, more white space, Michael Jackson, the kind of stuff that we took pride in not covering that stuff or putting it way inside Today it's out there with everybody else.

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<sup>519</sup> There were two strikes at *The New York Times* during the Sixties; 1962–63: Dec. 8–March 31 and again in 1965: Sept. 16–Oct. 10. Source, New York Public Library. Accessed online on August 4, 2005. <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/grd/resguides/newspapers/nyc.html>

I think the *Times* behaved well after Sept 11. There was no way anyone could beat *The New York Times* on that story. They were there. It was in New York. They knew everybody and everything involved. I think they did good work in the wake of September 11 . . . up to the point where they joined in the rallying round the flag. I'm not sure they would have done it exactly the same way in earlier times. When the government cracked the whip, the *NYT* didn't do much initially to say wait a minute.

I think *The New York Times* long ago lost its virginity, but it lost whatever it else it had in the run-up to Iraq. They just printed everything the government said, and even when they checked and thought it was wrong, they still did it the government's way. And then later on, columnists and some other people would rail against the world, some of the people who understood that part of the world. But the fact of the matter is that people like Tom Friedman lost their senses. You should read his stuff during that period about why we should go to war. But if you knew the Middle East, which Tom and many other people did, you knew what was going to happen, anybody who lived and worked in that part of the world knew.

*The Times* was one of the few institutions in the country with the ability to slow that down and I don't think they did that very well; because they were afraid of these people (the government).

These people not only hate the press, they don't grant it any legitimacy. They think it's just another business; it's not selling oil, but it is selling information and the government has some control over oil and a lot of control over information. So I think they were afraid of the government on that level. I don't mean that every reporter was afraid; I mean the people who own the paper were afraid.

Over the years, from my time to now, the owners have changed, it used to be families, and it used to be people like Katherine Graham who gambled the family and the paper on two young reporters. Anybody who did that today would be considered insane.

It's being taken over not only by corporations but basically by entertainment corporations. The networks are owned by Disney, movie studios, you know Murdoch is basically in the entertainment business. The entertainment business is much bigger, much more popular, and its whole idea is not to offend, not to alienate your own people. And those people think, 'well, why run stories if they're going to make everybody mad, particularly our advertisers'.

So I think part of it was that the business people had more power, you had a much more aggressive and anti-press government who was really willing to go after the press and in fact looked forward to it. They were afraid of it, they didn't deal with it and they had obvious contempt for it. The press can be a nuisance and they didn't want nuisances.

There's great stuff in Bob Woodward's book about the run-up to Iraq where Woodward said to Bush: "Well, how are you going to explain this", etc etc, and Bush said: "I don't have to explain anything. I'm the commander in chief; People have to explain things to me". So the press could ask all the questions they wanted but these people were much tougher than they were used to and they also were willing, and anxious I think, to use the law and economic power against the press. I think that was part of it. Part of it was the *The Times* got caught. Everybody identifies with what they cover, Judy Miller was an example of that, and embedding really worked brilliantly for the military and for the government because the reporters came to identify with the troops

And finally, there may be other reasons in between, the agenda of the government as I interpreted it at the time was to 1) Stabilise oil short term, stabilise the oil industry and 2) Securing Israel, basically by having American bases all through that area, to move American bases from Europe to the Middle East and parts of Asia. I believe that the long range goal, the people who are doing this are not fools and they know that further down the line, the adversary's going to be China, not necessarily military, but for control over various things. China doesn't have a lot of oil and if we had an alliance of the United States, Russia and the Middle East, we could exert great leverage on the Chinese when they needed oil, which they need. And we fucked all that up.

We also, in terms of capitalism, fucked up the fact that if the Chinese were willing to pay, we were going to sell. We never seem to get that. And we see that now, if they're willing to pay a higher price, they're going to get what they want. So the whole idea .. Wolfowitz and those people...I don't think it was very well thought out anyway whether it would work. But they certainly believed it would work."

We happen to have a president who has no sense of history at all. What's the difference between this and the Philippines. It's easy to get in but once you occupy, you're eventually going to be hated and have to retreat. And that's happened in every place in the history of the world. The president didn't know that but *The New York Times* should have been reminding people every day. It was such a joke - it was like the fall of the British Empire with the film running backwards. It was exactly the same, the words were the same, the intention was the same. My reading of what happened to the British is that they had to keep "pacifying the borders" which meant they had to keep expanding wars they could never win.

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