

**FOREIGN CONFLICT REPORTING POST-9/11 AND POST-COLD WAR: A COMPARATIVE  
ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis explores the state of European foreign conflict reporting by public sector broadcasters, post-Cold War and post-9/11. It provides a comparative analysis of the news values of three television news providers from three differing public systems: BBC's *News at 10*, representing a British public service broadcaster, nominally independent of government control; Russia's *Vremya* on Channel 1, a state-aligned broadcaster used, to a large extent, as a mouthpiece for the government; and France 2's *20 Heures*, a public service broadcaster, from a media system with a long history of state intervention. By investigating their reports, the study identifies and analyses the differing roles of public and state-aligned broadcasters. It examines the priority they place on certain values leading to particular aspects of a news story becoming news in one part of the world but not in others.

The case study under investigation is a two-year period (2006-2008) from the ongoing Middle East conflict which both pre-dates the change in East-West relations and the events of 9/11 and provides a meeting point of many of the geo-political and post-imperial global struggles facing the three selected news reporting countries. The analytical chapters examine a peace conference, Israeli-Palestinian fighting and intra-Palestinian fighting, which reflect discrete aspects of this conflict and enable the broadcasters' overarching and specific narratives to be considered. The thesis uses these events to assess relations between state and broadcaster and the attendant associations with the war on terror which emerge in the foreign conflict coverage. It investigates possible imbalances in the reports to the detriment of one of the warring parties and contributes to understanding how the broadcasters perceive their own and other countries.

The study examines the broadcasters' news values and agenda-setting techniques. By focusing on these two areas, which influence the shaping, length and positioning of broadcasts, news reports are analysed both quantitatively (e.g. running order, airtime, number of items per programme and subject matter) and qualitatively (e.g. the portrayal of news values and agenda-setting attributes displayed). The overarching argument illustrates that the hierarchy in news values is never arbitrary but can be explained, in part, by the structure of the broadcasters and by events occurring within, or associated with, the reporting country. As a result, the thesis investigations help identify nationally differentiated perceptions of conflict throughout the world and, in a broader context, contribute to studies in the areas of media, foreign conflict and Middle East conflict reporting.

## **DECLARATION**

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning. It is all my own work, unless referenced to the contrary in the text.

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## THE AUTHOR

I graduated with a BA (Hons.) Russian and French from Heriot-Watt University in 1989 since which time I have worked as a translator, working principally on technical and commercial documents. I graduated with an MA (Russian Studies) with distinction from the University of Manchester in 2010 and I then started my doctoral study at the same university. I have thus far presented aspects of my research at eleven conferences and have published one paper in 2014 entitled "Comparative media: *Vremya's* manipulation of foreign conflict reporting in Russia in the context of Western news providers" (Slovo 26(1): 2-17).

## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

When possible, Russian words that appear in this thesis have been transliterated into their most common English forms. For words that are not commonly used in English, I have used the 'Modified Library of Congress' system. One major exception is the transliteration of the Russian news broadcaster, *Vremya*. In this case, I have used '*Vremya*' throughout the thesis rather than '*Vremia*', which would be recommended by the above system, as this is the transliteration used by the broadcaster itself in its own documents and on its own website.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The daily interpretation and reporting by national television news channels of foreign conflicts and associated international intervention play a central role in informing the domestic audience based on the broadcasters' construction of the apparent realities of the causes, protagonists and proposed solutions to a given war. We live in a world where war and conflict is a constant presence yet, for the majority, the main representation of these events is via the global news media. The primary objective of the thesis is to investigate the state of European reporting of foreign conflict in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period. It contributes to the understanding of three principal areas which are analysed in combination. The first of these focuses on foreign conflict reporting. The second is the provision of this reporting by public sector television broadcasters. The third is the influence of the new international environment on this reporting. It examines the specifics of news reporting within the context of these overlapping periods which symbolise the emergence of a new world in which the established East versus West status quo has crumbled, leaving longstanding global relations shaken, to be replaced by a war on terror conflict frame. To achieve its objective, the thesis examines the coverage of the Middle East conflict during the period 2006-2008 by analysing the news values of television broadcasters from three differing public systems. News values are factors which describe events and, in combination, determine which stories are more likely to be prioritised in news programmes. The three broadcasters are BBC's *News at 10*, representing a British public service broadcaster, nominally independent of government control; Russia's *Vremya* on Channel 1, a state-aligned broadcaster, broadly used as a mouthpiece for the government; and France 2's *20 Heures*, a public service broadcaster, from a media system with a long history of state intervention. This emphasis on news values is used to explain why representations of conflicts vary so much from broadcaster to broadcaster. Although news values may be globally similar and adhere to



comparable definitions, differences in the newsworthiness of reports do occur between national media systems such that what is highly valued in one country may be of less importance elsewhere. The thesis illuminates, comparatively, the relationships between the above news providers and their respective states and regulatory frameworks and the social, cultural and political contexts within which they conduct their foreign conflict reporting. The study's overarching argument illustrates that the hierarchy in news values is never arbitrary but can be explained, in part, by the structure of the broadcasters and by events occurring within, or associated with, the reporting country.

A corpus of material was used for the analysis comprising recordings of the broadcasters' main evening news from November 2006 to September 2008. The entire period was used for the quantitative investigation, enabling a thorough longitudinal examination to be conducted. A specific case study – the Middle East conflict – was selected. As a term, the “Middle East” is as contentious as the region it covers. It was initially popularised by Mayan in his 1902 publication *The Persian Gulf and International Relations* in the National Review (Adelson 1995) and was a colonialist construct imposed on the region rather than being invented by its inhabitants. The term “Middle” was used to describe a geopolitical region between the “Far” and “Near” East – also imperialist expressions – which extended from the Eastern Mediterranean to Mesopotamia: Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Iran. In French and Russian this region is referred to as “*le Proche Orient*” and “*Ближний Восток*” respectively, both translating as “Near East” rather than “Middle East”. In the case of France, “Near East” was used as a synonym for the Levant following the First World War and included the mandates of Syria and Lebanon whilst Palestine, Iraq and the West Bank (British Mandates) were considered as being in the “Middle East” (*Moyen-Orient*) (Laurens and Cloarec 2005). The Russian inclusion of “East” questions the very use of

this term and demonstrates that it has no geographical logic, to say nothing of linguistic or cultural logic.

Numerous definitions of this region exist but for the purposes of this analysis it comprises Israel, the Palestinian territories and Lebanon. The broadcasters' own definitions of the region, which form part of the object of my study, are discussed as they emerge. Israel and the Palestinian territories would be included in most definitions of the Middle East. As an ongoing conflict with origins pre-dating the change in East-West relations and the events of 9/11, the region provides a meeting point of many of the geo-political and post-imperial global struggles facing the three selected news reporting countries, domestically and internationally, forcing them also to confront political legacies inherited from previous regimes. The latter – Lebanon – was included because of the effects of, and responses to, the Israel-Lebanon war of July 2006, immediately prior to the comparison period, which continued to be reported for many months by all the broadcasters and represented an integral part of many reports on Israel and on the Palestinian territories. The events under analysis occurred at a time when not only was the media about to enter a period of significant change in view of technological developments with the field of social media, social networks and citizen journalism being in its infancy, but also political change in the region was looming in the shape of the Arab Spring of 2011. This is not to say that this period represented a lull in global conflict: far from it, given the fallout from the events of 9/11 and the then ongoing situation in Afghanistan and Iraq and the many acts of violence, including attacks and bombings, which had occurred globally.

One time frame used as a point of contextual reference in the thesis is the post-9/11 period, which is also referred to as the 'war on terror', 'war on terrorism' and 'war against terrorism',

terms abandoned by the UK in 2007 (BBC News Channel 2007a) and subsequently by US President Obama in 2009 (Berkeman 2009). It was declared by his predecessor Bush in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001 and led to an international military campaign, against specific targets, and included the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite initial wide support for this war amongst US allies, scepticism amongst them quickly grew regarding US counterterrorism efforts and its use of 9/11 to justify aspects of its foreign policy, notably the invasion of Iraq (Byman 2006).

The events of 9/11 clearly did not mark the start of terrorism per se and over the years, it has included violent political and religious attacks in many countries. They did, however, mark the start of a new understanding of terrorism in which, suddenly, only certain radical militant Islamists were perceived to be the perpetrators. According to Lewis and Reese, the ideologically-loaded term 'war on terror' is now viewed as a politically uncontested policy and a 'taken-for-granted worldview' (2009: 86). It is a frame or an 'organizing idea' (Gamson and Modigliani 1989) according to which 'the world was [bifurcated] into two camps: those who were with the United States and those who were with the terrorists' (Levenson 2004).

Although the target of this war was initially named as Al-Qaeda, it also led to widespread pejorative stereotypes implicating all Muslims. This point is relevant here given the associations of Israel and the Palestinian territories with Islam and that the majority of the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank is Muslim. The latter also constitutes the largest religious group in Israel after the Jewish population. It is additionally pertinent as the war on terror was not intended to target Palestinian fighters or those in Lebanon and a critique of the broader application of the term forms an essential part of the thesis.

The term terrorism also requires discussing as no international or national consensus exists regarding its definition. Terrorism is a judgemental term applied to one's enemies or opponents and depends heavily on one's point of view. It therefore is a loaded term because of the level of subjectivity involved. As Jenkins states, 'if one party can successfully attach the label *terrorist* to its opponent, then it has indirectly persuaded others to adopt its moral viewpoint' (1980: 10). The manner in which the news providers may represent fighters as terrorists in their broadcasts will depend on whether they reflect an element of support or opposition for the groups in question. Certain characteristics defining terrorism could include its political nature, violence, innocence of victims, psychological repercussions and the fact that is perpetrated by non-state entities (Hoffman 2006). Yet this latter feature is misleading as it excludes the existence of state terrorism and questions whether certain violent acts (the definition of violence itself being problematic) would be considered to be terrorism if they were not government sanctioned. The thesis therefore not only examines the manner in which the broadcasters construct terrorism but also illustrates the complexity of using such controversial and subjective terms.

Another term used throughout the thesis is the 'West' or 'Western'. This was defined, historically, as being 'non-Communist states of Europe and North America, contrasted with the former Communist states of Eastern Europe', or even 'Europe and North America seen in contrast to other civilizations' (Soanes and Stevenson 2003: 2001). There is also the geographical opposition between US/Europe and Asia, but this is simplistic as Australasia is perceived to be Western despite being positioned more to the east of US/Europe than Asia. These definitions are limited geographically and do not refer to the interrelations between many political, economic and cultural definitions of this term. They exclude many nations which may be considered Western, such as Japan for example, because of their industrialised

nature. In the thesis, I use “West” and “Western” in a deliberately broad geo-cultural manner against which I analyse the definitions provided by the three broadcasters for their own understanding of this concept.

### **1.1 Research context**

The area of foreign conflict reporting has received considerable academic scrutiny over recent years from many angles. This includes the anti-state reporting during the Vietnam War, media management and the embedding of journalists in subsequent wars, particularly the Iraq War in 2003, the influence of the news media on state policies, and the use of the media as an important political tool in achieving public consensus on the political viability of government actions. The news media are expected, and indeed tasked, in many countries, with acting as a fourth estate, or watchdog, and with providing independent and accurate information to the population. This is a clearly stated statutory requirement of two of the broadcasters under analysis (BBC 2010; France Télévisions 2011a). However, the media are also subject to the criticism that, in times of conflict, their news reporting may adopt a national bias and may support the opinions of the political elites, possibly because of limited information sources, media management and the considerable impact of lobby groups.

The television news media is a main source of information for many populations. According to Standard Eurobarometer (2011), television is the main source of information (64%) in EU member states. This figure was even higher in Russia where, according to a 2004 survey, ‘national television remained the most popular media outlet with eighty-two percent of the respondents watching it routinely’ and sixty-two percent viewing it as a source of information, particularly regarding politics (Oates 2006: 33). The international media, because of their global reach, also have the potential to influence governments and international

organisations. The influence of the Western media is evident and many of the major news-providing agencies are Western, for example, Associated Press, Agence France Press and Reuters. This influence has an ideological character and an agenda-setting effect resulting in the news media having a significant impact on conflict-management, either obstructing or assisting certain outcomes. Kursaphic (2003) illustrates in his study on the media in the Balkans conflict the extent to which the media can be used in a conflict-management role suggesting that greater use could have been made of the media during that conflict to voice the opinions of those advocating peace and non-violence. This, he contends, may have resulted in more negotiations before the actual violence occurred.

The broad area of foreign reporting is considered by many academics to be receiving declining attention from the media despite its importance (Hoge 1997; Utley 1997; Hargreaves 2000; Franks 2005). Hargreaves even questions whether there is a future for foreign news especially given the blurring of the distinction between domestic and foreign news (2000). Indeed, the term “foreign news” is ‘inadequate to capture many of today’s economic, political, cultural and social interconnections that seem to overlook political borders’ (Vargas and Paullin 2007: 21). It is perceived as less important than domestic, local or sports news and, in America, in order ‘to be published in the mainstream media, foreign news must have a more profound impact on the political, economic or cultural concerns of the United States than domestic news. It must involve people of more exalted status and entail more violence or disaster’ (Graber 2010: 287). The attachment to America in foreign reporting extends beyond coverage by just the US media, which is confirmed by Graham and De Sabbata’s detailed examination of events between 1979-2013 (2013). Using text analysis, it mapped news coverage and illustrated that amongst the countries which have dominated headlines since 1979, the US was the ‘core geographical focal point’.

The declining attention paid to foreign news may result from increased commercialisation of the media and the impact of market forces, a situation which can lead to viewers being insufficiently informed and to inadequate space for debate (Dahlgren and Sparks 1991; Calabrese and Ruth-Burke 1992). It may also be caused by a perceived lack of interest amongst the audience who not only consider foreign news to be confusing but are 'too busy, preoccupied or uninterested in digesting long, detailed newspaper articles. They want their news in short, pre-chewed morsels' (Cook, Gomery et al. 1992: xv). This can result in the media providing short, easy-to-understand news items with short narratives and little contextual background, which only serves to confuse the reader or viewer further (Wu and Hamilton 2004). Cost may also be a factor, which is reflected in the significantly diminished number of foreign bureaus. This is overcome by "parachute" journalists who either bring about a reduction in reporting quality because of their inadequate background knowledge of the countries and events in question, or raise the newsworthiness of an item because of their own celebrity (Wolter 2006).<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, a consensus that conflict and disaster news stories are the most interesting of foreign news, especially if there is a human interest. According to surveys and based on analysing international news in 2010-2011, Reuters showed that these types of news stories had the highest news value, particularly those concerning the Chilean miners and Haiti earthquake news items (Sambrook, Terrington et al. 2013). Regarding the agenda-setting level of foreign news, Wanta and Hu illustrated that reports on abstract issues would have a

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<sup>1</sup> "Star" correspondents are parachuted in to report on foreign events as they have greater on-screen ratings than either their colleagues or the reporters on competing channels. 'It is often said in Britain that an international crisis wouldn't exist unless Kate Adie or John Simpson had arrived on scene' (Williams 2011).

lesser influence than those on conflict as the latter could be more readily understood by the audience than concepts such as foreign trade – especially if aided by visuals (1993).

Foreign conflict reporting – representing the more specific field of research of the thesis – has witnessed significant changes in technology used by the media. This has affected the nature of reporting, increasing the reach of the media, and much scholarly analysis has emphasised the 24/7-news environment and its effect on both the news and government policies and strategies. Thussu and Freedman (2003: 117-132) highlight changes in the type of news which is being reported as a result of commercial competition, the increasingly global nature of news and the growing need for infotainment. The latter requirement, they state, forces news to be a form of entertainment providing video and chat show format interviews with experts and to report unattributed sources and promote speculation. They also highlight the implementation of advanced reporting technology, especially since the 1991 US attack on Iraq, to broadcast images of surgical strikes using intelligent military hardware and allowing the public to receive satellite imagery and also a computer game-style view from cockpits of precision bombings. The broadcast media, therefore, provided their audience with dramatic graphic visuals in support of state actions whilst blurring the boundaries between factual news reporting and entertainment. The extent to which graphic and war-related imagery can be used is analysed by Johnson and Fahmy (2010) who examine whether users of the English language Al-Jazeera website are in favour of such graphic images and whether such information could be a worthwhile addition to Western news programmes. This point is also raised by Hoskins and O’Loughlin, who question whether television news should act to contain news reports to protect the public by ‘sanitising graphic and disturbing images of violence, bodily injury and death’ (2009: 14).



The widely discussed 24/7 news environment has also affected the role of the news media and their international and foreign conflict coverage because of the ability to provide permanent live reports. According to Hoskins and O'Loughlin, an 'economy of liveness' defines the values of newsworthiness, placing a 'premium of significance on the immediate' (2009: 18). This requirement to continuously broadcast newsworthy items is additionally fuelled by the provision of news via the internet which, because of its greater speed and immediacy, rivals mainstream television news media. Thurman discusses the overlap between the mainstream news media and online news websites and illustrates how, rather than fighting the relatively new phenomenon of "citizen journalism", broadcast on the internet, the traditional news media are adapting by encouraging such online contributions to their web publications (see, for example, Hammond 2007; Aday and Livingston 2008; Thurman 2008; Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2009).

One widely-analysed outcome of this 24/7 news environment is the discussion about the 'CNN effect' since the mid-1990s (Livingston 1997; Robinson 2002) and its ability to prompt a significant change in public opinion. Livingston describes the CNN effect to be when the 24/7 news environment becomes a policy agenda-setting agent, accelerating foreign policy decision-making. In other words, real-time communication technology forces the public and political elites to respond to global events, for example, through the provision of humanitarian aid or endorsement of mediation or peacekeeping activities. Babak Bahador provides a summary of the CNN effect and the relationship it has with war and foreign policy (2007). He applies this to the Kosovo conflict, questioning whether the CNN effect pushed the West into this conflict. Sceptics of the CNN effect claim that continual war coverage showing suffering and atrocities prevents governments from intervening militarily as the images from

this intervention might actually overturn the initial public support (see, for example, Jakobsen 1996; Natsios 1996).

The role of state-media relations in foreign conflict reporting and its associated developments has also been discussed widely, particularly concerning the US media, a subject which has been widely researched, as will be shown below. Coverage of the Vietnam War, which was the first television war, provided a clear example of news media acting independently of government control. One of the most contentious issues at the time was how US media reporting, which was considered to be anti-war and openly critical of the government's military actions, undermined public support for the war and how it was ultimately held responsible for America's defeat. Robert Elegant, when writing with reference to the Vietnam war, stated, 'the outcome of a war was determined not on the battlefield, but on the printed page, and above all, on the television screen' (1981: 73). Ranney adds that the 'constant denigration' provided by the televised reality 'lower[ed] public confidence in the very institutions of government itself' (1983: 77). The US television news media during the Vietnam War was seen to fulfil an adversarial role, broadcasting reports which contradicted those of official government sources. That the US media was the cause for America's defeat has been widely challenged by, for example, Hammond (1998), who illustrates that the media simply reflected the changing views of the Administration rather than influencing them, a point made by Hallin who describes the media as 'followers, not leaders' (1986: 163). Williams (2001) also outlines criticism of the media during this war, stating that the situation had been caused by the very advent of television as a mass medium and the prevailing lack of formal censorship. He emphasises the importance of information sources to news media and uses the Vietnam War to illustrate this. He states that because the American political elite

was so divided, the US media could not rely on a single source of information, which explains why they were not wholly supportive of the administration in their broadcasting.

The subsequent shifts in US state-media relations in later wars have also been discussed at length, particularly regarding the 2003 Iraq War. These shifts included the denial of access to journalists during the 1983 US invasion of Grenada, the use of restricted press pools in the first Gulf War and then journalists' reactions to such restrictions by ensuring their own presence in Haiti and Somalia even before the troops. Regarding post-9/11 foreign conflict reporting, Lewis stated in his account of the relationship between television coverage of the 2003 Iraq War and resultant changes in opinions in Britain, that the war was a 'perfect news story' (2004: 307), which possibly explains the volume of scholarly interest in it. It was 'perfect' as it was short, lasting only three weeks and, therefore, media companies could devote substantial resources to its coverage; it provided a demonised leader needing to be overthrown; and it exemplified the embedding of journalists, an important characteristic of modern war reporting. Embedding the press in military combat units, which served to overcome the animosity caused between the military and the media during previous conflict coverage, operates by granting journalists access to conflicts by attaching them to specific military units.

Embedding journalists was widely used for the first time during the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and it is an effective method to satisfy the requirements of the military, media and the public: the military can determine and control levels of press access and can guarantee operational security is not compromised; the media gains access, albeit limited, to conflicts; and obligations to provide the public with information are fulfilled (Paul and Kim 2004: xvii-xxi). Paul and Kim, however, question state-channel relations as it is the military which controls

the access granted to the media. In other words, the military determines which journalists get access to which assignments and therefore the state, via the military, can exercise considerable media management, thus limiting the aspirations of potential impartiality of the media. Thomas Rid (2007) continues this debate on US state-channel relations, stressing that the US government acknowledges the importance of embedding journalists to ensure that the public receives information which supports and legitimises state actions.

Wide-ranging scholarly analysis has been conducted into associations between the so-called war on terror and war reporting. This research has demonstrated how the focus of foreign conflict reporting has shifted from a Cold War frame to a distinctive post-9/11 frame, a point raised by Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2009). This shift is reflected in my choice of broadcasters and supports the inclusion of a Russian broadcaster as Russia is no longer one of the protagonists in an 'East versus West' war. It is, instead, trying to find a new global position for itself. This is a position which the UK and French broadcasters will also recognise as their reporting countries, similarly, are no longer on the other, Western side of the same war and are also seeking a new diplomatic role for themselves in the changing international environment. By interviewing US journalists, Lewis and Reese (2009) demonstrated how the war on terror frame has become a socially-shared organising principle according to which foreign and domestic policy and media discourse are now shaped. Keller (2004) acknowledges the influence of the corporate media in the US and the Western world in supporting US military action and raises the possibility that the internet and also the global peace movement might play a greater role in countering Islamist terrorism and US militarism. Returning to my earlier discussion on the definition of terrorism, the very use of "US militarism" and "Islamist terrorism" employed by Keller highlights the subjectivity involved in selecting one of these

terms over the other, with the clear implication that state action, rather than non-state action, is legitimised.

Spencer (2005) explains how the news media has become the key ground where conflict occurs. He shows that although the US news media provides a homogenised image of Islam presenting Muslims as a generalised threat to Western capitalism, those who are perceived to be terrorists and represented as such by the US news media also use this mediated space and that there is 'a constant reworking of the threats and fears which derive from the dramatic narratives which are constructed within that space' (2005: 153). Hoskins and O'Loughlin, whilst primarily examining coverage of the 2003 Iraq war and Hurricane Katrina, also extend the field of research from news reporting to television dramas to illustrate how the war on terror frame is shaping the UK schedules. Allan and Zelizer (2004) continue these themes to discuss comparative contexts in which US and UK media report and how censorship, propaganda and new technology shape foreign conflict reporting.

Much of the abovementioned scholarship centres on the evolution of the media's role – particularly the American media – since the Vietnam War and how it is managed by governments to portray and legitimise the latter's actions. Alongside discussions of the influence of modern technology on reporting, there also is a concentration in scholarship on the coverage of short, 'dramatic' wars such as Iraq 2003 rather than ongoing, lengthy wars. Nonetheless, the Middle East conflict receives disproportionate media coverage, with 35% of the foreign news coverage on US television in the early 1990s despite representing only 5% of the world's population (Hess 1996: 41). Media coverage of the conflict is examined widely in literature. Wolfsfeld (1997) uses the Middle East conflict to examine the role of the media in different types of political conflict illustrating, through interviews with protagonists and

journalists, how this role changes depending on the nature of a conflict and how favourable reporting of one side would result in sympathetic public opinion of that side. Elements of bias have been widely discussed in scholarship relating to the Middle East conflict. Chomsky (1999) discusses the 'specialist relationship' between the US and Israel, its effects on the Palestinians and whether the US media provided a pro-Zionist representation of the conflict. Possible pro-Israeli bias in US media coverage is also discussed by Dunsky (2001; 2008), who illustrates how specific media framing by the US media reflects American state policy. Other cases of bias are discussed by First (1998; 2004), Korn (2004) and also by Philo and Berry (2004; 2011). The latter examine UK media coverage of the conflict and provide surveys of audiences and journalists to illustrate how media reporting can shape public opinion.

Although much has been written examining the media's role in conflict reporting, the scholarship discussed above largely deals with American media and its responses to wars in which the US has directly participated or to wars where the US is militarily involved. Analyses of other Western media and the many non-Western media systems, for example, Russian or Chinese, appear rare in general coverage of the role of the media and the journalistic culture of conflict reporting. This leads to claims being made and approaches being outlined which, implicit or not, may appear generically true of all Western media and creates an impression of an apparent amplified importance of US media influence. Despite a recent growth in scholarly interest in European public sector broadcasting (Harrison and Woods 2001; Esser, deVreese et al. 2012), analyses of cross-national comparative studies remain uncommon (Couldry 2007) and might challenge such a situation.

The many advantages of comparative studies are explained by Hallin and Mancini (2004) who state that, through comparisons, it is possible to move away from ethnocentric studies and

incorporate the experiences of other national media rather than generalising those of just one country. They provide detailed accounts of the similarities and differences of political and economic coverage in the press in Western Europe, UK and US. Much comparative research covers the print media rather than television. As examples, Stromback and Dimitrova (2005) concentrate on coverage of the Iraq War by US and Swedish printed media in their comparison, illustrating that the US press reporting was characterised by its use of government sources and its emphasis on the military conflict in contrast with the Swedish press which highlighted protests and adopted a negative tone towards the war. Esser (2006) provides further comparisons of the print media and analyses the use of press frames and the influence of political communication cultures in the US, Britain and Germany during elections. Hotchkiss (2010) provides a longitudinal and cross-cultural comparison of national security coverage in the print media in France and America.

Cross-cultural comparisons of television news media are less common. This medium is a valuable source for analysis as shown by Flood, Hutchings et al (2012) in their investigations into French, Russian and UK media. The additional function of moving images and visuals is covered by Esser (2009) in his discussion of sound and image bites in election coverage by news media in France, Germany and UK. Dimitrova, Kaid et al (2005) also provide a comparison of transnational differences in frames used by international news websites during the Iraq War, however, this work is based on online news rather than television news.

Similarly, Thomson and White (2008) provide a multilingual comparison of news-reporting discourse in the printed media. They suggest that the lack of multilingual comparisons could lead to journalistic practices, which are often specific to individual nations, being replaced by homogenised global practices. This concern is partly answered by Powers' article (2008),

which examines contrasting cross-cultural reactions to the Danish cartoon affair<sup>2</sup> and in which different reactions to one event are discussed. Hammond (2007) provides a further comparative study, again on the print media, which is not cross-cultural but compares UK press coverage of six different crises. He discusses dominant themes which link these crises to explain the post-Cold War international order and to explain changes post-9/11, questioning whether the media has acted as the conscience of the West and whether it has promoted awareness of humanitarian issues. Although this same concern regarding the globalisation of news and the homogenisation of individual news practices, also discussed by Bennet (2004), Bagdikian (2004) and Herman and McChesney (1997), is raised in much of the scholarship, the influence of the surrounding culture and the inability of the media to exist outside their specific political and social world are affirmed frequently (Allen and Seaton 1999; Frosh and Wolfsfeld 2007; Hammond 2007; Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2009; Hotchkiss 2010). As McQuail states, 'the media are both a product and also a reflection of the history of their own society and have played a part in it. [...] They reflect, express and sometimes actively serve the "national interest"' (1994: 121). Sparrow (2006) goes further, stating that the media's role is that of a political entity whose autonomy is limited by institutional and cultural norms resulting in a reliance on official sources.

Challenging the transnationalist nature of media, which has resulted from globalisation and similarities in media structures and organisation, can form a central goal of comparative research into differing news media systems, particularly during times of war when the relationship between state and media are highlighted and the latter become more partisan. A valuable contribution to scholarship could be made by comparative research, which could

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<sup>2</sup> Controversial satirical cartoons of Muhammad published in a Danish newspaper led to demonstrations in some Muslim countries.



exclude America, whose media landscape has been widely researched, and include a system not always considered Western, for example, Russia. If America is to be excluded, it is essential that Russia be included if foreign conflict reporting is to be discussed within a post-Cold War frame given its role as one of the main protagonists in the Cold War. A cross-linguistic comparison would be additionally beneficial, as this would allow for commentaries and reports, which are not all English-dependent. However, material acquired from Western agencies would still represent an important source of information. In this case, it would be interesting to analyse the impact of images bought from the West but which are accompanied by the voice-overs provided by a country with a different media system. Detailed research into the debate on 'visuals versus voice-overs' has been conducted by Graber (1988; 1990).

Therefore, my decision to compare the representations of conflict by Russian, French and UK television news media systems is motivated by the fact that it brings together European public sector broadcasters, thus shifting the emphasis in scholarly analysis from American media and from events in which the reporting countries are militarily involved. It is also cross-linguistic and, pertinently, involves countries with many shared associations with the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods which emerge particularly as a result of selecting their Middle East conflict coverage for analysis. My investigation of these representations examines the broadcasters' own values and illustrates which aspects of the reported events are perceived as having greater significance and why. It also provides an understanding of the role assumed by the broadcasters. This particular combination of news providers is rare, although comparative analyses of news coverage by broadcasters from these countries do exist focusing on representations of Islam rather than military conflicts (Flood, Hutchings et al. 2012). By selecting these countries, three different broadcasters are compared: *Vremya*, from Russia's Channel 1; *News at Ten* from the BBC; and *20 Heures* from France 2. My analysis

contributes to existing literature by contrasting three different broadcasters which have varying media-state relations and by examining the extent to which television news coverage can result in different representations of a same event within the domain of war and conflict.

Scholarly analysis of the BBC's foreign conflict reporting is wide-ranging and because of the broadcaster's worldwide reputation for its journalistic output, viewers in the UK turn to the BBC News in times of crisis to watch its coverage rather than that of the UK commercial channels (McNair 2009). Although viewed as independent, the BBC has encountered controversy for its standards of journalism. Following the 2003 Iraq War, it was criticised for its reports that claimed that the government had knowingly exaggerated the situation regarding weapons of mass destruction, ultimately leading to the Hutton enquiry (2003) and to questions being raised about television-state relations (Barnett 2005). These relations, although not necessarily connected with controversies, permeate analyses of British conflict reporting. This research concurs with general scholarship in this domain as it indicates that the media support state policies during times of war and discusses state management of the media, including embedding journalists (Carruthers 2000). Existing research in this area concentrates on the 2003 Iraq War. Tumber and Palmer (2004) analyse press coverage of this war to determine which elements were considered relevant for news purposes. They also engage in discussions of the BBC-state relationship and the Hutton enquiry. Lewis et al (2006) discuss the embedding of British journalists and conclude that, despite assertions that such a policy would result in pro-state and pro-military reporting, there is evidence of independent journalism. State management of the media and plurality of views within the British printed press is also widely discussed by Goddard, Robinson et al (2008; 2009; 2010). However, scholarship concentrates on the general British journalistic culture and media landscape of wars, with an emphasis on the printed press, and mainly investigates whether a united

approach is adopted across countries or whether journalists can and do act independently of the state, rather than on the news values used by specific broadcasting companies.

It could be thought that there are too many similarities between the French and British media systems to provide a fruitful comparison. However, although geographically close, the systems are distinct and the French media have been extensively researched by Kuhn (2005a; 2005b; 2006; 2007; 2010). Differences between the two systems are discussed in detail by Scriven and Lecomte (1999), who provide a comparative analysis of the respective media systems' state regulations, audio-visual environment, programming models and the effects of new media. Much of the available literature on French television is either general in nature or questions the influence of the French television on French politics or past elections. Although an understanding of this media influence is indeed useful, the thesis's analysis of France's conflict reporting is valuable as it focuses in detail on a specific area rather than generalities.

Although full independence from the state may be impossible, a primary aim (attained or not) of a public service broadcaster in many Western democracies, represented here by France and the UK, remains the promotion of civic values (see, for example, BBC 2010). Russian news broadcasters have not succeeded in fulfilling the role of the fourth estate presented to them in the 1990s, as part of a newly reforming economy (Oates 2006a). Scholarly research has discussed the many stages in the evolution of post-Soviet media, from the immediate post-Communist period and the relative freedoms it then enjoyed, the evolution of the various media oligarchs, and the current state control of the media (for example, Mickiewicz 1997; Zassoursky 2004; Koltsova 2006; Aruntunyan 2009), along with much analysis of Russian media representation and also Russian news provision (Beumers, Hutchings et al. 2008; Hutchings and Rulyova 2009). State control over the major national TV channels has

expanded to the extent that news companies increasingly act as powerful mouthpieces for the Kremlin. Clear examples of ways in which the news has been used to influence the nation can be seen in scholarship on coverage of state elections (Oates and Roselle 2000; Oates 2006) and also, more recently, on the war in Georgia. Research in this area outlines the media war between Georgia and Russia and the use of the media as a propaganda tool (Mickiewicz 2008; Akhvlediani 2009; Heinrich and Tanaev 2009). Journalistic self-censorship is ubiquitous as a result of top-down state restrictions on media content and media news freedom is severely limited by weekly central meetings, which define the content of the news (Fishman 2008). Although research provides general information on Russian media and news provision it provides no comparative angle. With the exception of literature on the war in Georgia – the latter involving a conflict in which Russia was one of the warring parties and which could lead to expectations of partisan reporting – analyses of Russian media coverage of a war or conflict, in which Russia was not actively involved, are rare. This further justifies the selection of Russian news provision as one of the broadcasters for analysis. The study contributes to research into foreign conflict reporting by Russian broadcasters, not in isolation, but in comparison with other European broadcasters.

## **1.2 Contributions of the Study**

My analysis makes an original contribution not only to media studies – particularly that of the three reporting countries – but also to foreign conflict and Middle East conflict reporting. My comparative study of the foreign conflict reporting by UK, French and Russian broadcasters in the Middle East – which is particularly relevant as it is ongoing and brings together the geopolitical and post-imperial difficulties facing the reporting countries – provides a new understanding of how the national specificities of a country's news reporting are shaped and contributes to the currently limited field of cross-cultural comparisons of conflict reporting.

By focusing on European broadcasters, rather than American ones for example, and by drawing on news values as a theoretical framework, my investigations help explain different perceptions of conflict throughout the world. It also illuminates the role assumed by public and state-aligned broadcasters in different countries and illustrates how their definitions of what is newsworthy within the post-Cold War and post-9/11 reporting frame influences which stories become news and what is finally broadcast.

The theoretical framework and methodology used in my investigation regarding the newsworthiness of reports items are discussed in detail below. But first follows an outline of the research questions which emerge from the survey of the literature.

### **1.3 Research objectives and research questions**

The main objective of the thesis is to investigate a combination of three elements to explain why representations of the Middle East conflict differ from country to country. The first of these is foreign conflict reporting; the second is the provision of this reporting by public sector television broadcasting; and the last is the effect, or influence, of the new international environment marked by the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period on the broadcasters' reporting. The overview of the literature reveals that while there is a substantial body of research examining both American foreign conflict reporting – particularly in the printed media – and wars of short duration, there is remarkably little which combines analyses of ongoing conflicts within a post-Cold War and post-9/11 context by European broadcasters. The objective of the thesis will therefore be achieved by examining the news values found in the reporting of the Middle East conflict from November 2006 to September 2008 by three European news providers. This examination helps explain the differing roles of public and state-aligned broadcasters and determines which values they rate highly – and why –

resulting in certain aspects of a news story becoming news in one part of the world but not in others. This analysis of news values, which is central to the analysis as it highlights the aspects of the conflict considered most newsworthy by the broadcasters, is applied to discrete events used as case studies in separate chapters. Each chapter examines different aspects of the Middle East conference: a peace conference, Israeli-Palestinian fighting and intra-Palestinian fighting. My investigations also provide a quantitative analysis of the two-year period.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of news values, five principal and overlapping research questions are addressed, through which I examine similarities and differences between the news providers, challenging or confirming potential stereotypes.

1. What are the relations between the state and broadcaster? To what extent do the news providers endorse, and even actively promote, their own reporting country's external stance and are national interests and discourses prioritised in the foreign conflict reporting?
2. Do the broadcasters, in their foreign conflict reporting, attach particular and ongoing significance, through their agenda-setting or their broadcasting approach, to any new geopolitical allegiances which have emerged post-Cold War and post-9/11? Does their coverage foreground the emergence of certain new political blocs, and are the reports framed by the broadcasters so that both their reporting countries and the Middle East are situated in a particular manner in relation to these new blocs?
3. How, based on findings from the previous question, do the broadcasters map the world, and specifically, the Middle East region?
4. How do the news providers represent the warring parties and is one party portrayed to the detriment of others? The case studies examine whether all sides are perceived as equal participants or whether one is attributed greater responsibility for the causes and

consequences of the fighting. This raises discussions of aspirations of 'impartiality' and 'balance', principles which France Télévisions (2011b) and the BBC (2013a), in particular, state they uphold in their news provision.

5. Are portrayals of the victims of the conflict considered newsworthy by the broadcasters?

This will reveal any significance attached by the broadcasters to humanitarian aspects of war, allowing differences in portrayals between the news providers to be scrutinised.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

This section outlines the conceptual framework used to address the objective of the thesis. My analysis investigates foreign conflict reporting by public broadcasters and focuses on the newsworthiness they attach to certain aspects of their reports. The methodology I therefore use in the study encompasses both agenda-setting and news values: the former determines the salience of the media agenda and the transfer of that salience to the public agenda; and the latter determines how an event is considered sufficiently important to gain a place in the news. Working in a cooperating manner, these two areas, which influence the shaping, length and positioning of a broadcast, allow the news reports in the comparison period to be analysed first quantitatively through an analysis of the running orders, airtimes, number of items per programme and subject matter; and then qualitatively, through an examination of the broadcasters' portrayal of news values and agenda-setting attributes found in the same choice of news items. There are two levels of agenda-setting. During the quantitative phase, the use of level one agenda-setting enables the subject matter – be it the Middle East conflict as a whole or one of the specific case studies used in the chapters – to be situated within the overall agenda. Contributing to the construction of differing maps of the world by the broadcasters, the salience of a specific subject matter can be established, on that day or over time, in comparison with other Middle East items. Agenda-setting at this level also allows the

overarching scene to be set. This does not, however, help explain why these items have been placed in high ranking positions in the schedule so it is at this point that news values can be used to explicate the factors behind the ranking. At the final stage of the analytical process, we return to agenda-setting to complete the formation of the conceptual tool to illustrate how the broadcasters can shape viewers' perceptions about the given subject. This can be shown by analysing second level agenda-setting attributes, or the 'presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments' (Entman 1993:52). It is the manipulation of these attributes which can influence the newsworthiness of an item and even contribute to the foregrounding of certain news value factors. The individual roles of both agenda-setting and news values will now be discussed to illustrate how their functions may help address the objectives of the thesis.

#### **1.4.1 Agenda-setting**

A key point of interest in the thesis is the manner in which the European broadcasters arrange and shape a particular version of political reality for their audience. This shaping is engendered by choices made by editors and news providers when broadcasting news. The role of agenda-setting research in determining the influence of the news media on public thinking is significant given the transfer of issue salience from the media agenda to the public agenda (e.g. McCombs and Shaw 1972). Wanta, Golan et al (2004), again using US media, demonstrated the clear relationship between media coverage of particular nations and individuals' perceptions of those nations: the greater the media coverage of a nation, the more an individual considered that nation to be important to the US. Wanta and Hu (1993) had previously shown that stories with high levels of foreign conflict had the highest agenda-setting effects, particularly when such conflict involved the US. Indeed, numerous



investigations have illustrated an apparent link between media news and their perceived salience in public opinion and also the limited capacity of the public agenda challenged by an increasingly greater diversity in knowledge brought about by education (Dearing and Rogers 1996; McCombs 2004). Regarding public policy, Christie (2006) illustrated the interaction between public opinion and media agenda. Using research from two distinct timeframes, he demonstrated that, during the period of high public support for the Iraq War in 2003, there was extensive media coverage of government rationale for the war, but this was not the case the following year when support for the war was low. Similarly, in a field of research associated with that of the thesis, Rill and Davis (2008) show how readers had different perceptions of Israel and Hezbollah when presented with differently framed reports, illustrating the influence of the media on viewers.

Initial research in this area examined the salience of specific topics in the news media and its influence on cognitive awareness (level one agenda-setting). This led to research into second-level agenda-setting which then illustrated how the particular attribute salience of these same topics may affect public opinion and attitudes, in other words, 'readers learn not only about a given issue but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position' (Cohen 1963). Given the media's apparent importance in swaying public opinion and attitudes, an analysis of the two levels of agenda-setting is particularly valuable here in determining both the main subjects covered by the three channels during the comparison period and their news priorities. By examining first-level agenda-setting effects which centre on the frequency or salience of a topic, the main subjects or issues covered during the comparison period can be identified and categorised on an individual and comparative basis.

Although the quantitative data concerning news items provides valuable information regarding the foreign conflict reporting priorities of the news reporters, I also analyse the attributes of these broad issues – or second level agenda-setting effects – whereby ‘certain perspectives and frames are employed in news coverage, [drawing] public attention to certain attributes and away from others’ (McCombs, Shaw et al. 1997). Indeed, frames, or framing, is described by Edelman as when the ‘character, causes and consequences of any phenomenon become radically different as changes are made in what is prominently displayed, what is repressed and especially in how observations are classified’ (Edelman 1993: 232). This is supported by Entman, who defines this practice as being the selection of ‘some aspects of a perceived reality [to make] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation’ (1993: 52). Frames can be influenced by society’s values and the ideology and policies of journalists and elites (Scheufele 1999; Shoemaker and Vos 2009). Framing complements the public salience of a topic by media emphasis of certain attributes of that topic. In the case of foreign conflict reporting, negative or positive emphasis may be placed on one warring party or another, or on particular leaders or particular strategies, for example, whilst others may be omitted altogether reducing their corresponding salience. Although a single conflict or event occurs, news organisations may frame it in such a way that they each create a ‘pseudo-environment’ (McCombs 2004: 21) which is specific to that organisation. While the frequency of occurrence of a particular topic in an agenda may be similar between news channels, it is this representation – the second-level agenda-setting – which may prove to be the distinguishing factor. For example, status conferral – a first-level agenda-setting effect – may raise the salience of a military leader as a result of the frequency of appearances yet it is the image building and the stereotyping (second-level agenda-setting effects) which facilitate the transfer of attribute salience to the public (McCombs 2004). Thus,

news channels can selectively frame, or shape news items using various techniques such as image repetition, keywords and phrases and particular visual shots, to encourage a particular response (be it negative or positive) and to promote a particular ideological stance. Examining these techniques will be valuable when conducting the overall categorisation of news items and also during the close analyses of the case studies to assess the portrayal of the conflict by the news providers, both individually and comparatively.

#### **1.4.2 News values**

News values, as a concept, establish a number of interacting factors which determine the conditions of “newsworthiness” of a news story and which allow an event to be transformed into news. In the quantitative phase, level one agenda-setting will have determined which items are in the schedule and, now, news values can assess *why* they are there. Given the importance of television news as a source of information, news values provide a useful tool to discuss possible reasons why an item might be selected for broadcast and also to determine which values are rated higher than others by certain news providers. They therefore contribute to addressing the research questions by explaining why the representations of the Middle East conflict, although based on a single event, differ so much from broadcaster to broadcaster.

By discussing news values alongside agenda-setting and by building on the quantitative analysis in Chapter 3, a conceptual framework is developed to illustrate the media practices of the news providers highlighting influences, both within the news schedule and within each news item, which lead to the shaping of that story. Through the broad framework of agenda-setting, the news providers’ media agenda can be analysed determining which events are broadcast, in which order and for how long. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), the

salience of these events is then increased and transferred from the news media to the public agenda. Investigations into the agenda set by a news provider illuminate how one event exerts an influence over another in the media and public agenda, and how pressures on public sector broadcasters from other items in the news schedule or other events, occurring at the same time or in the lead-up, result in certain items being aired, emphasised or shortened. The salience of an item is, therefore, 'not an absolute but to some extent a relative matter' (Lang and Lang 1981: 453). For two of the three case studies, I examine the interrelationship of agenda items both on individual days and over the course of several days leading up to a particular news programme. News values help illustrate not only how a news provider represents a foreign conflict (in this case, the Middle East) but also how an image of its own society and the world around it is constructed.

These news values, in contrast to ethics that can also be named 'values' and which are either the ethical standards expected of journalists in their work or a code of ethics or canons of what is perceived as responsible journalism, can be understood in the context of the influential study by Galtung and Ruge (1965). Their article, published in the *Journal of International Peace Studies* over four decades ago, remains the core text for the analysis of news values; it focused on foreign reporting and although it dealt with the print media it is relevant to the analysis in the thesis. They established twelve factors which determine the conditions of "newsworthiness" of a news story – the greater the number of factors which an event possesses the higher the likelihood that it will be aired. These factors, or news values, can be grouped into three main areas: impact of the event; audience identification; and media effects.

### *Impact of the event*

FREQUENCY: Items, which unfold at the same pace as the news schedule, are reported more than long-term trends.

THRESHOLD: News items must pass a threshold in order to be broadcast, for example, a gruesome murder or an event which affects a large number of people.

UNAMBIGUITY: The clearer a news story the more likely it will be selected.

NEGATIVITY: Bad news (wars, murders, deaths....) is more interesting than good news.

UNEXPECTEDNESS: News stories which are out of the ordinary are more attractive than routine stories.

### *Audience identification*

PERSONALISATION: These are "human interest" items or stories involving the actions of individuals or which can be seen in personal terms prove attractive.

MEANINGFULNESS: Cultural similarity with the audience, or a sense of identification, contributes to an event being selected.

ELITE PEOPLE: Items relating to the elite are more likely to broadcast.

ELITE NATIONS: Items relating to elite nations are more likely to become news stories than an obscure nation.

### *Media coverage*

CONSONANCE: This heading also includes predictability. The more an event concurs with a mental image of what is expected, the greater the chance of that event being broadcast. This heading must equally include dissonance: any event which does not conform to a given stereotype might prove newsworthy as it is unpredicted.

CONTINUITY: Once in the news, the familiarity of the event renders it accessible and comprehensible.

COMPOSITION: Stories may not be selected if a similar one has already been chosen in order to maintain balance within the programme.

Although these factors can be individually identified, it is rare that they would occur alone, implying a level of interrelatedness. For example, a news item covering a murder would include unexpectedness (presumably had the murder been expected it would have been prevented), unambiguity (a person is dead), negativity (a murder), meaningfulness (the murder infringes society's laws) and so on. The more criteria an event satisfies, the greater the likelihood of it becoming news. The application of news values is understood to occur at several stages through the agenda-setting process according to several hypotheses: *selection hypothesis* – generally, news values make an item more likely to be chosen to become news; *distortion hypothesis* – according to which an item is then exaggerated; *replication hypothesis* – the distortion process is then emphasised at each stage in the production process; *complementarity hypothesis* – if an event or story is lacking in one of the news value categories, it must compensate for this in another category; and finally *additivity hypothesis* – the more news value an item or story has the more likely it is to become news (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Sande 1971; Harcup and O'Neill 2001; Zelizer 2004). The cumulative effect of these factors is significant and results in the reporting of an event which differs significantly from what actually happened.

Since Galtung and Ruge's work was published, news values have been widely discussed and, although the key components remain the same, certain modifications have been introduced either to adjust the original factors or make them more relevant to a twenty-first-century

media world. The original news values have faced criticism as they focus on specific events (McQuail 2000; Harcup and O'Neill 2001). In fact, many values are simultaneously applicable to complex world events at any one time which are not, in fact, events, but are trends and patterns which subsequently become news. Such events, trends and patterns may all score highly on news values yet must compete with similarly high-scoring items for airtime. In this case, the analysis of news values must be complemented by an analysis of the news provider's agenda-setting policies.

Many events which become news are not natural events but are staged for the media (Curran and Seaton 1997) raising the possibility that the value attached to these events may be reduced as viewers' cynicism increases because of this "staging". The role of the journalists' own news values has also been discussed as to whether they, in fact, reject Galtung & Ruge's accepted list (McQuail 1992) with some stating that their work is 'largely instinct' (Hetherington 1985: 9). A quandary, therefore, exists regarding ownership of news values: whether they belong to media systems, individual channels or the journalists and editors who work within these organisations (Tunstall 1971). Nonetheless, news values are widely recognised as pervading the media and 'although they are nowhere written down, formally transmitted, or codified, news values seem to be widely shared between the different news media, ... and form a core element in professional socialisation, practice and ideology' (Hall, Critcher et al. 1978: 54).

### **1.4.3 Proposed definitions and national interests**

The thesis uses a specific conceptual framework based on Galtung and Ruge's news values. Slight modifications have been introduced to ensure that the news values reflect both a modern-day media world and the domain of foreign conflict reporting. It must also be stated

that although these proposed definitions are analysed throughout the comparison period, it can be expected that different broadcasters may adhere to different definitions reflecting their own values and resulting in a final set of values which are specific to each news provider. Indeed, Galtung and Ruge's list of news values, which, as it concerns Western media, is far from universal. According to Campbell, countries 'exhibit very different culturally specific attitudes towards an event's news values' and he asserts that in authoritarian states, 'a pro-social function is usually part of the job, promoting activities of the state rather than focusing more on a critical watchdog role' (2004: 123). Mellor's work on Arab news media reinforces this, concluding that the latter 'had a social responsibility' associated with the promotion of Islamic values (2005: 76). My analysis is, therefore, based on the realisation that news values may vary from country to country because of national specificities. Despite their reporting countries being similar as they are members of the EU and part of the capitalist Western world, France 2's news values may not coincide entirely with those of the BBC.

News values in Russia are different again as the media is influenced by its Soviet past. Lendvai outlines that the principle used in Soviet times to select what was news was based on 'good news is news – bad news is not really news at all' (1983: 72). This is based on the Marxist view according to which media was used to promote all aspects important to the class struggle whilst sidelining other stories which might have cast a shadow on its ideological aspirations or revealed positive aspects of capitalism, for example. He quotes Hollander (1972: 39) who states that 'in the Soviet context basically anything which can be used to illustrate current party policy or economic progress is considered worthy of publication and almost anything else is considered unimportant and unworthy'. This is no longer the case, despite the simplistic similarity that those in charge maintain control over the media, which served and serves a political role, as the ideological framework of the Cold War era is no longer in place



and has been replaced by a commercial environment in which news programmes must ensure their newsworthiness as ratings are all important in securing advertising revenue. Yet, rather than adhering to Galtung and Ruge's list of news values, there is a dominance of news items broadcast because of their positive reporting of Russian politics or Russia which are described here as having "imposed" news values.

Additions and amendments have been made by researchers to the original news values, and although useful as they reflect the increase in infotainment (celebrity reporting, for example, in current and particularly domestic news items) they are not so relevant to foreign conflict reporting and are not included here. The manner in which the original news values can be interpreted must be examined and defined before being put to use. The following clarifications, based on the original news values, are therefore required:

**FREQUENCY:** This now includes trends and speculation and not purely events as stated by Galtung and Ruge.

**THRESHOLD:** Threshold is determined by each news provider as they will have their own subjective evaluation.

**UNAMBIGUITY:** The clearer a news story the more likely it will be selected. Again, a news provider's own agenda must be taken into account as the reporting of events can be managed by journalists to become more or less ambiguous.

**NEGATIVITY:** The level of negativity differs from one news provider to another as what is bad news for one may be good news for another.

**UNEXPECTEDNESS:** Similarly, this depends on the angle taken by the individual reporter.

**PERSONALISATION:** This is a human interest or individual angle. A sub-category here could include the **CELEBRIFICATION** of journalists (McGregor 2002) – a concept which was

considerably more infrequent when Galtung and Ruge's original news values were published in the 1960s. In contemporary reporting, the more a journalist appears in person, the greater the chance of that item becoming news. Particular techniques of on-the-ground reports and pieces-to-camera create an apparent relationship with the viewer and the journalist acquires a voice which might not have been heard four decades ago and s/he is perceived to be an expert delivering judgements, often having the last word in a report. The inclusion of a reporter, and particularly a well-known reporter, raises the newsworthiness of an item.

**MEANINGFULNESS:** Cultural similarity, or a sense of identification with the audience, is a subjective category and is a factor in an event being selected.

**ELITE PERSONS:** This can mean any rank of celebrity and is no longer just those in power. Hence, this definition will be replaced with Harcup and O'Neill's term "POWER ELITE", which is understood to be elite organisations and institutions as well as people, which is useful when discussing bodies such as the UN, NATO and governments. (Harcup and O'Neill also devised a "celebrity" category for people who are famous whether or not they are powerful but this is more relevant to domestic reporting than to foreign conflict reporting).

**ELITE NATIONS:** The definition of elite nations differs amongst news providers. They are considered "elite" within the context of the Middle East.

**CONSONANCE, CONTINUITY and COMPOSITION** are all discussed in conjunction with level one agenda-setting and the predictability or relevance of an item must be examined as part of a series of news either within an individual programme or within a chain of programmes.

A further factor to be added is that of 'VISUALNESS' (Harcup and O'Neill 2001; McGregor 2002). When analysing television news, it is hard to ignore not only the increasing significance of images but also that the ability of an event to be broadcast may be dependent on its accompanying striking images. As Dondis stated, our 'language-dominated culture has moved

perceptibly toward the iconic' such that 'the visual dominates: the verbal augments' (1973: 7).

A final news value to be examined in contemporary foreign conflict reporting is that of COMPASSION or the HUMANITARIAN aspects of war. Although this is an extension of the personalisation news value mentioned above, it is relevant to this type of reporting as it highlights the suffering of those caught up in the conflict. This is a modern news value, which is becoming increasingly widespread in media coverage. It is used, however, more noticeably by certain broadcasters than others. The concept of compassion, or 'a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's undeserved misfortune' (Nussbaum 2001: 301) is a subject which is increasingly associated with media coverage of foreign conflict (see, for example, Boltanski 1999; Tester 2001; Chouliaraki 2006). Rather than reporting an event this value now invites the viewer to engage with the suffering of those seen on the screen and even, going further, to take a moral stance about an event (Silverstone 2007).

Three case studies are used for the analysis. These have been identified as "events" as they represent discrete occurrences with a specific duration during the comparison period and their start and end points can be identified, to a certain degree. The number of news reports within each event is determined and, for two of them, these are situated with regard to airtime and positioning in the running order, within that day's schedule and within the news schedule for previous days or weeks. This identifies particular agenda-setting trends and patterns associated with the event and allows the values of consonance, continuity and composition to be discussed. The newly-defined Galtung and Ruge news values in the events are then quantitatively determined to establish a hierarchy of values for each broadcaster. This confirms, or not, the choice of news values attached to the main research questions. The

case studies are also examined qualitatively responding to the main research questions and by analysing the images and texts produced by news values.

Agenda-setting and news values are used in combination as one conceptual tool in the following three analytical stages. The first stage incorporates the analysis of level one agenda-setting and also certain news values (consonance, continuity and composition). This is conducted in the quantitative analysis and establishes the contents of news programmes, the frequency of appearances, and the positioning of news items in the schedule. In the second stage, news values are examined to determine which factor(s) has led to a story being aired, for example, is it newsworthy because an event is local to the target audience, or because it involves a celebrity/elite person, or because the news event reveals a high level of injuries or fatalities? The third stage analyses level two agenda-setting (key words and phrases, framing, specific images) to illustrate how the broadcasters portray or represent a subject and which techniques they use to raise the item's newsworthiness.

## **1.5 Chapter structure**

To address the main objectives and research questions, the remainder of the thesis is divided into seven further chapters: one background, five analytical chapters – including a quantitative investigation and an examination of three case studies – and ends with an overarching conclusion. The background chapter provides information on the broadcasters and on the Middle East during the comparison period.

The first of the analytical chapters provides a quantitative examination and discusses the broadcasters' agenda-setting, focusing on the running order, airtime and number of items per programme and subject matter of the reports, both within that day's schedule and also within

the news schedule for the previous days or weeks. This illustrates the importance attached to international news and, correspondingly, to foreign conflict reporting and to Middle East reporting by the news providers. It also determines whether a hierarchy in subject matter emerges within these reports. It identifies particular areas which are important to the broadcasters and addresses the research questions by looking at the quantity of airtime spent on covering state-related items, conflict items and also specific other countries. This provides a strong framework within which the qualitative analysis can be conducted as a broadcaster's particular relations and stances with the state and between its reporting country and other countries will have been determined.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, examines the first case study, focusing on coverage of the Annapolis Peace Conference. It analyses the first research question as the broadcasters have the opportunity to comment on the peace process and the role of the various participants, potentially aligning themselves with their country's stance and its relations with other countries. The chapter discusses whether, in the international arena, relations with other countries are highlighted or, indeed, omitted. Addressing the second research question, it examines how the broadcasters situate their reporting country globally and how shifts in allegiances, which reflect the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period, are reported. This chapter also responds to another research question by asking how the broadcasters represent portrayals of the Middle East by the international community: whether it is viewed as being connected with the war on terror or as a discrete ongoing conflict. It also questions whether the broadcasters include in their coverage the reasons for the peace conference (the conflict itself) or whether they concentrate on the events in Annapolis.

The fifth chapter focuses on the Middle East and discusses Israeli-Palestinian fighting in Beit Hanoun. It addresses the third research question and examines whether a different reality of foreign conflict emerges in relation to that portrayed during the peace talk coverage and whether the conflict is represented through the eyes of one party to the detriment of the other. It discusses coverage of authorities at the site of the conflict and any potential attribution of responsibility. It also examines the portrayal of subjects such as religion and determines whether the news items reflect domestic policies or the domestic discourse of the reporting country. This chapter analyses the broadcasters' coverage of victims and the extent of their humanitarian coverage, allowing the fifth research question to be addressed.

The sixth and seventh chapters shift the focus from Israeli-Palestinian fighting to discuss Hamas-Fatah intra-Palestinian violence in Gaza and the West Bank. The first of these two chapters analyses how the Palestinians are represented when they are fighting against each other, rather than as a more unified block against the Israelis. It addresses several thesis research questions as it investigates the broadcasters' representations of the warring parties and whether they perceive all sides to be equal participants in the conflict. It examines how the news providers portray their own reporting country and its relations to other nations and also how they map the world, particularly the Middle East region.

The seventh chapter also continues to analyse the intra-Palestinian fighting. It addresses the final research question regarding victims and examines how the Palestinians civilians are represented and how the news providers reflect not only daily life in the region but also the good or bad governance of those in authority. The manner in which the broadcasters' reports encourage compassion from their viewers is discussed in particular.

## **CHAPTER 2: COUNTRIES AND BROADCASTERS**

This chapter provides background information to support the thesis analysis. It initially discusses the individual broadcasters before outlining relations between the reporting countries and the Middle East. It finally situates the three case studies to be examined in the analytical chapters in their appropriate context.

### **2.1 The Broadcasters**

Items from specific news programmes on the flagship channels of the UK, France and Russia, are analysed. These news programmes are *News at Ten*, *20 Heures* and *Vremya* and represent the main evening news broadcasts on each channel. Despite the three channels having differing structures and differing levels of state intervention, they all encountered similar challenges posed by the global communications revolution, particularly the ever-increasing use of web-based news sources influencing and, to an extent, replacing traditional national broadcasting. All three systems faced similarities in that each experienced a change in government during the comparison period which resulted, in the case of France, in significant adjustments to the media system. In the UK, Gordon Brown replaced Blair as Prime Minister following the latter's resignation; in France, Sarkozy replaced Chirac as President following national elections; and in Russia, Medvedev replaced Putin as President after the latter's constitutional mandate expired.

#### **2.1.1 *News at Ten***

The BBC, as part of the UK media system, enjoys a global reputation for its journalistic output both in television and radio broadcasting. Regarding television broadcasting, it encompasses BBC1 and BBC2 – the flagship channels – and also several others (BBC3, BBC4, CBBC,

CBeebies, BBC News and BBC Parliament) available through free-to-air digital terrestrial television, and a comprehensive website. It is a public service broadcaster (PSB) in the UK and its independence from the government is guaranteed by its Royal Charter and Agreement. The BBC's independence is ensured by being funded by an annual licence fee paid by viewers; however, it is the government in office which determines the size of the fee. It receives an additional income from the commercial activities of BBC Worldwide Ltd. In recent viewing figures for 2010, BBC1 claimed 44.6m viewers each week and a lead over other terrestrial channels in peak and all hours (BBC 2011a). *News at Ten*, the news provider discussed here, is broadcast nightly in the same format with the bulletin lasting thirty minutes with a shorter version at weekends.

Although independent, the BBC is still subject to PSB requirements and the media content regulations laid down in the Charter and Agreement (BBC 2011b) and it is monitored by Ofcom (2011). It is governed by the Trust, which sets the overall strategies for the BBC and acts in the interests of the licence payer. The BBC determines its own remit through its mission statement to 'inform, educate and entertain' (BBC 2010). Alongside its tasks to provide independent, impartial and honest reporting, it also aims to boost creativity and diversity, represent the UK audience and its religions and communities, engage a wide audience in current affairs and encourage debate about news (BBC 2010).

'Impartiality', which is discussed further on page 63, is an important concept when analysing the sensitivities of war reporting and is heavily emphasised by the BBC. Although impartiality, as an aspiration, is written into the mission statement and inculcated into every person at every level of the organisation from the moment they enter it, media management by the government is a feature of the BBC as it is, for example, with France Télévisions, where there



is a long history of state control. The comparison period witnessed a change in the UK leadership with Gordon Brown replacing Blair as prime minister. The latter adopted a mediatised style of leadership where presentational skills and public performance were optimised. The New Labour spin machine, reflecting the Bush Administration's spin, provided fine examples of media management – particularly in domestic and international reporting rather than the specific area of foreign conflict reporting – promoting leaders and specific individuals and events whilst minimising the impact of incidents which were potentially harmful to the government. Faced with this type of “machine”, the BBC was challenged to remain within its self-imposed impartiality remit.

Therefore, the BBC occupies a position of independence, nominally free from government intervention and, because its main income is from the licence fee, it is not reliant on advertising for its survival, although it is subject to independent reviews by the National Audit Office to ensure value for money for the licence payer. The BBC will, no doubt, encounter strong media management forces in future from whichever government is in power, potentially clashing with its aims to provide impartial broadcasting. Like other Western broadcasters, it will continue to face the challenges of a fragmenting audience and increasing supply as a result of the ever-expanding use of internet news sources to which it responds with its own online service.

### **2.1.2        *20 Heures***

The French broadcaster to be analysed is France 2's *20 Heures*. Since the post-war period, when it was initially under a state monopoly, the French media system has been dominated by state control. Commercial competition was introduced in the 1980s with the introduction of both free-to-air and pay-tv terrestrial channels. Privatisation of the main public channel TF1

resulted in major audience gains for this channel at the expense of the remaining public channels, which were integrated into the newly created management structure – France Télévisions which now incorporates the public television channels France 2 and France 3, and also France 4, France 5 and France Ô. France 2, representing France’s public service broadcasting, is a general interest channel providing a wide variety of programmes, including the *journal de 20 heures*, the main half-hour evening news which is under analysis here (hereinafter – *20 Heures*). Its main competitor is the privately owned TF1. France 24 is the rolling international and current affairs channel funded by the French government, but operated by a Groupe TF1 and France Télévisions partnership, aimed at the overseas market and broadcast in French, English and Arabic with the aim of presenting a francophone viewpoint.

At the time of the analysis, France Télévisions was funded by a licence fee and also, in contrast to the BBC, by advertising revenue meaning that an element of competition between public and private channels existed to attract viewers and therefore advertisers. Not only did the public channels have to compete with the private channels for advertising revenue but they also faced strict regulations concerning quotas on certain programme genres, potentially reducing their viewing audience, and on the amount of advertising (for example, adverts were prohibited during feature films). The introduction of President Sarkozy’s law in 2009 abolishing advertising on all France Television’s public channels further hindered its revenue-making ability. The ban, which initially withdrew advertising at certain points of the day, was to be fully implemented by the end of 2011. It was proposed that the resulting shortfall in income would be met by two new taxes on media and telecommunications companies (Donders and Lamensch 2010).

Being in receipt of public funds for its operations, France Télévisions' public service broadcasters are bound by certain state policies and regulations affecting their content by either limiting certain subject matters or promoting others, including French language and culture. They are also bound by similar impartiality and independence remits to the BBC (France Télévisions 2011b). Their aim is to offer programmes and services targeted at the broadest public, to offer diverse high quality programming to educate, inform and entertain (Direction générale des medias et des industries culturelles 2011). This broad scope is monitored by the CSA (*Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel*), an independent body, whose task is to regulate broadcasting media content (CSA 2011). France Télévisions is also governed by its own *cahier des charges* which provides strict quotas regarding the range of genres to be broadcast and also the national origin of these broadcasts (Journal Officiel 2009). Thus, regulating media content continues to be part of public policy with public broadcasting being more strongly regulated than private channels.

Significant changes, some regulatory, have been introduced to the public broadcasting sector since Sarkozy's election in 2007 and a clear commitment to representing the French population's ethnic diversity is present throughout its charter (France Télévisions 2011b). The comparison period extends over the presidencies of both Chirac and Sarkozy which incorporate major differences in attitude towards state intervention, media management and image building. Continuing the practice of the post-war state monopoly, the Gaullists used government control over television media to boost public consensus for its policies, appointing their supporters to key managerial positions (Chalaby 2005). Although an element of censorial autonomy of public broadcasting was apparent from the 1970s, allowing for a separation between state and the public television channels, and despite the commercial competition introduced in the 1980s, which is itself highly regulated, the political executive

has continued to try to shape the news agenda and manage the television news in favour of the state. Television represents an important means for political information in France (share of audience figures in 2009: France Télévisions – 32.7%, TF1 – 26.1% (France Télévisions 2009)). Strong links therefore exist between the state and the broadcasting media as politicians recognise television as an important instrument for image building. Media-state links are noticeable on the CSA which, despite its apparent independence, still has three out of nine board members who are appointed by the President.

In contrast to Chirac's style of media management when television appearances by the president were a rarity, thus emphasising their impact, Sarkozy actively courted those who had media influence, from journalists to media owners to even, using more official routes, the inclusion of the clause in the 2009 law stating that the president now could appoint the head of the two public broadcasting companies, France Télévisions and Radio France (Kuhn 2011). This interdependence whereby favours, both political and personal, are exchanged, has resulted in a greater, and more positive, media presence for the President (Kuhn 2010). French television broadcasting also faces the additional challenge of the switch from analogue to digital television, a process which began in the 1990s with completion in 2011 (for details on the digital switch-over, see CSA 2010) and is diluting its audience through the resultant nineteen free terrestrial channels. This is further exacerbated by the widespread use of the internet and additional pay-to-view channels.

### **2.1.3        *Vremya***

Russia's Channel 1, represented by its main evening news programme *Vremya*, contrasts strongly with the BBC whose independence from government intervention is legally guaranteed through its Charter. Television news programmes within the Russian media

system fulfil the role of a key political resource, with the three main state-aligned television networks (Channel 1, Rossiya and NTV) providing the major source of news information for the population. In addition to domestically broadcast news programmes, there is also RT, formerly Russia Today, the digital state-controlled news network targeting the overseas market, transmitting in English, Arabic and Spanish, with the aim of presenting the Russian viewpoint. Channel 1, via *Vremya*, can be used to illustrate the very close relations between the state and media companies. These relations are exemplified financially as the channel is controlled, mainly, by either state-owned companies or companies loyal to the state (Mickiewicz 2006a; Oates 2007a). As Aruntunyan states, in controversial matters such as the Khodorkovsky trial, balanced coverage on Russian national television would be rare (2009: 55).

The main channels, although state controlled, face stiff competition amongst themselves for advertising income. Therefore, news programmes are carefully programmed before or after popular high-rating entertainment shows to ensure that audiences are not lost during the bulletins. Another important source of revenue for the television channels is the state. That the news is considered by the Russian government to wield a significant influence over the nation in highlighting or reinforcing state policies is evident by the 33.4% increase in 'awareness-raising' spending in 2009 compared to 2008 (Interfax 2009).<sup>3</sup> Journalistic self-censorship is ubiquitous due to top-down state restrictions on media content and media news freedom is severely limited by weekly central meetings, which define the content of the news (Fishman 2008).

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<sup>3</sup> Clear examples of ways in which the news has been used to influence the nation can be seen both during coverage of state elections and also during the war in Georgia (see, for example, Mickiewicz 2008; Akhvlediani 2009).

The main Channel 1 News, *Vremya*, is scheduled at 9pm to last thirty minutes; however, it can be extended by additional coverage of events considered particularly important by the State. Although television media acts as the state propaganda tool and portrays the prevailing state policy during the news, viewers display an element of trust towards it (Oates 2007b). This trust varies depending on the type of news portrayed (Mickiewicz 2006) meaning that the viewer may be left with an image of the news that is either contrary to that desired by the authorities or requires consolidation. It is to clarify such possible confusion that Channel 1 utilises an op-ed (opinion editorial) – *Odnako* – at the end of the evening news bulletin *Vremya*, to provide an ideologised summary of the events covered in the main news reports. As the op-ed is positioned immediately following the news, it almost forms an integral conclusion to the latter. *Odnako* does not have a regular slot in the schedule; instead, it is broadcast only when deemed necessary by the government, to reinforce the latter's actions or to clarify its opinion on particular issues to the population, gaining the greatest impact.

*Vremya*, in contrast with *News at Ten* and *20 Heures*, is, therefore, state-aligned and its news provision is a political resource. Like UK and France, Russia experienced a change in leadership when Dmitri Medvedev replaced Putin as President. However, Putin's sideways move to Prime Minister did not lead to any significant change in the state management of the media and Putin's televisual image building continued over and above that of Medvedev. Russian terrestrial television faced the similar changing media context to the UK and France with rising numbers of the population having access to the internet (Alexanyan 2009), and the contrast between internet news provision and the highly controlled political environment of Russian terrestrial television news is apparent.

There are notable similarities and differences between the broadcasters. All three represent major channels with recognised news programmes within their own country's media systems. They each have been subject to news management by the political executive, but to varying degrees and the fact that they acknowledge that not only does their news possess a specific emphasis but that it may require defending, is apparent through their desire to broadcast this digitally to the overseas market, i.e. via BBC World, RT and France 24. They differ in their levels of state intervention and also in the way they are financed, be it licence fees, advertising, state involvement or a combination of these. By selecting these three systems and given this contextual information, it is possible not only to conduct a useful comparison of the respective foreign conflict reporting but also to contribute to an understanding of the roles played by the news and foreign conflict reporting within each system.

Because I examine whether one of the warring parties is portrayed to the detriment of another as part of the research questions, it is important to discuss any legal requirements concerning impartiality, balance and neutrality imposed on the broadcasters. Impartiality is important when analysing contentious subjects such as the Middle East conflict and when discussing the coverage of these broadcasters as they are within the public, rather than private sector. The BBC places great emphasis on impartiality and much research, also with regard to its Middle East coverage, has examined this (see, for example, Philo and Berry 2004; 2011). An internal and unpublished review was undertaken by Malcolm Balen in 2004 following allegations of anti-Israel bias. A BBC Trust report was published just prior to the comparison period (2006) and the implementation of its recommendations are considered in the thesis. A similar, later report and a follow-up were published on the Arab Spring (2012; 2013). The broadcaster's definition is accompanied by the qualifications "due" and "over time". It dedicates a section to this subject in its Guidelines, which state that 'due impartiality

is often more than a simple matter of “balance” between opposing viewpoints. Equally, it does not require absolute neutrality on every issue or detachment from fundamental democratic principles’ (BBC 2013a). The Guidelines stress that balance may be achieved over time and that news programmes will achieve this by the ‘consistent application of editorial judgement in relevant subject areas’ and that the ‘the approach and tone of news stories must always reflect our editorial values’ (BBC 2013a: 4.12-26). No clear definition of editorial judgement or editorial values is given; however the closely-associated ‘editorial justification’ is defined as being ‘central to the application of our values and standards. It is a judgement on the particular circumstances of each case, balancing the editorial purposes of our output or actions with their impact on our audiences and people in our output’ (BBC 2013: 2.4). Although the BBC clearly states that impartiality is central to its commitments to its audience, its guidelines carefully define how the application of this concept is to be understood.

The concepts of balance and impartiality are similarly apparent in France Télévisions’ Charter yet they are not emphasised to the same extent. No distinction is made between them but they are stressed as being important to ensure the integrity, honesty and credibility of the channels. France Télévisions’ professionals must ‘avoid any situation which may cast doubt on the impartiality of the company and on its independence in relation to pressure, ideological, political, economic, social or cultural groups’ (France Télévisions 2011b: 6.1.1). Impartiality is applied particularly to journalists and guests appearing on programmes whose affiliations must be clearly stated.

As Channel 1, and therefore *Vremya*, is not governed by equivalent written documents, no legal framework concerning impartiality is provided here. The concept, as it emerges in the analysis of the broadcasts, will still, nevertheless, be discussed.



#### **2.1.4 The Middle East**

One of the many aspects which characterises the Middle East conflict is the disparity between Israel and Palestine. The former is in a position of strength as an economically and militarily developed country whilst the latter is neither – a situation which is exacerbated by Israeli occupation (a term first used in UN Security Council Resolution 242 following the 1967 Six-Day War (1967)). The occupied territories are therefore dependent on a neighbouring state which they do not even recognise. Attempts to outline all the events both during, and in the immediate run-up to, the comparison period would incur accusations of being unavoidably selective and would be an impossible task especially given the sensitivities of this long-standing, bitterly contested conflict. This section very briefly provides some context to events covered in the three case studies analysed in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 and then discusses the three reporting countries' relations to the region. Any further background needed for the case studies is provided in the corresponding chapters.

The two-year comparison period comprises a full range of events including a peace conference, an identifiable war, flashpoints and also quieter periods of lulls between the fighting. Two significant events occurred in the lead-up to this period. Firstly, the region witnessed the democratic elections of Hamas to the Palestinian Legislative Council, contrary, in particular, to the US's expectations that Fatah would be the victors (Rose 2008). This triggered, on one hand, economic sanctions being imposed by the Quartet<sup>4</sup> and Israel on the Palestinian territories resulting in a significant number of Palestinians living in 'deep poverty' (UN News Centre 2006). Tensions with Israel increased with numerous fatal air attacks by the latter on Gaza and with Hamas's military wing abducting Israeli soldiers, including Gilad Shalit,

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<sup>4</sup> The Quartet on the Middle East is a group of countries and international entities and comprises the European Union, the United States, Russia and the United Nations. Its mandate is to help mediate the Middle East peace process.

audiotapes of whom when in captivity are discussed in Chapter 7. On the other, intra-Palestinian fighting and finally civil war ensued with the Palestinian territories being ultimately split in 2007 into Hamas-run Gaza and Fatah-run West Bank.

Secondly, in July-August 2006, prior to the start of the comparison period, the Israel-Lebanon war occurred, involving Hezbollah attacks on Israel and full-scale Israeli air attacks on Lebanon destroying much of Lebanon's civilian infrastructure. The fighting and attacks resulted in many fatalities on both sides and the displacement of Lebanese civilians as large areas of southern Lebanon became uninhabitable because of unexploded cluster bombs launched by the Israelis. A UN sponsored ceasefire was implemented and the number of UNIFIL troops was significantly increased (for details on this war see: Cordesman, Sullivan et al. 2007; Hovsepian 2007; Norton 2007).

### **2.1.5 The reporting countries and the Middle East**

#### *UK and the Middle East*

During the comparison period, there were mixed emotions amongst the British public regarding the ongoing war on terror. Initial and widespread acceptance of the Bush doctrine and joining a US-led multi-national coalition in the early 2000s had faded over the years as scepticism emerged about the possible success of, and even justification for, sending British troops initially to Afghanistan and then to Iraq (Hollis 2010; Scotto, Reifler et al. 2011). Despite reduced public backing for the UK government's close relations with the US and for the UK's sanctioning of pre-emptive strikes, there was significant public support for the troops, which becomes apparent on *News at Ten*. Attacks in the UK including the London suicide bombings in July 2005, and other attempts in Glasgow and London in 2007, raised

public sensitivity to terrorist threats. This added to increased levels of Islamophobia within the UK with many Muslims sensing increased religious prejudice (Department for Communities and Local Government 2009). The UK, like France, has a large nominally Muslim population, representing 3% (1.5 million people) and 5% (2.7 million people) according to the 2001 and 2011 census respectively (Office for National Statistics 2013) and attempts to facilitate greater integration of ethnic minority populations within the UK resulted in the introduction of government legislation targeting migrants amongst such groups (for details see MPI 2007).

The UK has historical links with the Middle East (Monroe 1981) and is currently positioned between being an EU member state and a close ally of the US. During the comparison period and particularly under Blair, the UK government – in comparison with European fellow member states – was more likely to defer to the US, in mediation attempts (Stein 1997).<sup>5</sup> Blair, a staunch ally of Bush, supported the latter's pro-Israeli stance and it could be considered that the UK's role, internationally, was eased when Blair was replaced by Gordon Brown in 2007, ostensibly increasing UK's independence from America. Like France, the UK government supports a two-state solution in the Middle East (gov.uk 2013a) and states that it is diplomatically active in pursuing a peace agreement via negotiations. Economically, bilateral trading relations between Israel and the UK on one hand are significant and on the other, an extensive programme of aid is being provided to the Palestine territories (gov.uk 2013b).

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<sup>5</sup> This was evident in July 2006 during the Israeli-Lebanese War when some in the cabinet, including Jack Straw the former Foreign Secretary, urged Blair 'to place distance' between him and Bush over the crisis. As a response Blair declared he 'would never apologise for Britain being a strong ally of the US' (Hinsliff, Temko et al. 2006).

### *France and the Middle East*

France's relations with the Middle East experienced transformations as a result of the change in president from Chirac to Sarkozy in 2007. France's historical legacy is important and relations with many French-speaking Arab countries were boosted in the late 1990s as the then government expanded trade and cultural exchanges with the region. Chirac's affinity for the Middle East and his pro-Arab stance is widely documented (see Youssef 2003; Boniface and Billion 2004; Guitta 2005) as was his no vote against authorising the 2003 invasion of Iraq which did little to consolidate France's relations with the US (for details on Chirac's no vote see Styan 2004). Yet Chirac's stance was also, to a degree, at odds with France's involvement in the ongoing international war on terror and its own implementation of counter-terrorist legislation in response to various global and domestic terrorist acts (Legislationonline 2012).

Following his election, Sarkozy declared his government's ongoing support of Israel's right to defend itself and that 'France will never compromise on Israel's security' (AJC 2008). Sarkozy declared that he 'would refuse to greet any world leader who does not recognise Israel's right to exist' (Balmer 2008). Whilst attempting to improve relations with the US (Kuthy 2007), Sarkozy also endeavoured to boost France's diplomatic role as part of the EU and accordingly promoted the latter's policies towards the Middle East. Diplomatically, it supports the EU two-state stance towards Israel and Palestine and considers the Palestinian Authority to be the prefiguration of the Palestinian State. It joins 'the international community [in wanting] to play a concrete role in laying the foundations of a viable Palestinian State' (France Diplomatie 2008). France hosted the Donors' Conference for the Palestinian State in December 2007, which the government used to demonstrate its political and diplomatic aims. Sarkozy himself was active in the region through visits representing France and the EU as its President (in 2008) as he attempted to raise his own profile. France enjoys good relations with Lebanon

and is one of its main trading partners and by 2007, it had up to 2000 UNIFIL soldiers stationed there. Although France, being a member of the EU, classified Hamas as a terrorist organisation, it refused to recognise Hezbollah – which operates as a political party within the Lebanese government and which has a military wing – in the same way.<sup>6</sup>

### *Russia and the Middle East*

The events leading up to the comparison period exemplify Russia's stance in the region. Russia was in a unique position with long-standing ties with certain states, for example Syria and Iran, but also with non-state actors in the region. It does not recognise Hamas as a terrorist organisation because it was democratically elected and this stance separates Russia from other countries represented within the Quartet. It is possible that it does not recognise Hamas as terrorists because Russia only lists groups which directly threaten its own security (Stepanova 2006). Russia treads a fine line between maintaining existing relations with the Arab world for many reasons not least so that it might delegitimise the Chechen rebels, whilst simultaneously remaining pro-Islam. Diplomatically, Russia's stance differed from that of the US and Israel. It called for an international conference on the conflict and for the Quartet to reduce its sanctions against the region. By using its relations with Syria and Iran in negotiations, it demonstrated its desire to be seen as a major diplomatic global player. As a result, rather than advocating sanctions and aggression, Russia appears to emphasise negotiation, a course of action which also boosts its own diplomatic image.

Economically, Russia is keen to extend and reinforce ties. It is not dependent on the broader Middle East region for energy and is, therefore, on an equal footing with it. As Putin stated, Russia and the oil-producing states in the broader Middle East region are not rivals in the field

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<sup>6</sup> The EU added Hezbollah to its list of terrorist organisations in July 2013 (European Council 2013).

of energy but are 'in fact allies and partners' (Freedman 2007). Russia trades closely with Israel in the technology, communication and energy sectors and provides arms to the region which Israel has claimed end up being used by Hezbollah. The Israel-Lebanon war highlighted the humanitarian aid offered by Russia again emphasising its non-military and diplomatic stance in the region. It dispatched engineers to participate in the reconstruction programme of civilian sites destroyed by the war. These state actions were then widely promoted on *Vremya*.

#### **2.1.6 Case Studies: Contextual Information**

##### *Context for the Annapolis case study*

The analysis in Chapter 4 focuses on the one-day Annapolis conference hosted by George Bush in November 2007. Nearly fifty countries were present and it was the first of its kind since the Camp David Summit in 2000 (Smith 2010). Although the conference aimed, as a legacy to Bush prior to the end of his second term of office in January 2009, to revive negotiations to create a Palestinian state and to secure a peace treaty focusing on a two-state solution, its discussions on the core issues – Israeli settlements, Jerusalem, return of refugees and borders – only resulted in a vague joint declaration on principles for peace (for texts, see Institute for Palestinian Studies 2008). Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, and Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority' president, arrived in Annapolis facing strong opposition at home questioning their authority to negotiate any peace deal. Earlier that year, attempts at a Fatah-Hamas unity government, which went against months of US diplomacy during which America was unremitting in its efforts to overthrow Hamas, resulted in fierce Fatah-Hamas fighting in June 2007 and in Hamas taking control of Gaza and in Fatah controlling the West Bank (for details, see Rose 2008). It was against the background of these events that the talks were

held. Bush was eager to achieve a peace deal within a specific timeframe, Olmert faced opposition to his concessions on settlements and to his handling of the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War and Abbas did not have a mandate to represent Hamas who considered him to be a traitor to their cause and who had boycotted the talks.

#### *Context for the Beit Hanoun case study*

The events investigated in Chapter 5 occurred in November 2006 in the densely-populated town of Beit Hanoun, located in the north of Gaza on the Israeli border where the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) tanks and artillery batteries were stationed. The town was subject to a six-day incursion by the IDF, which the latter codenamed 'Operation Autumn Clouds'. These actions had been initiated to stop Qassam rocket-launching activity by Palestinians from Beit Hanoun into neighbouring Israeli towns, particularly Sderot, and because the former town, according to the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 'is a hub of activity for the different terror organizations in the Gaza Strip' (2006). This increased military activity resulted in the deaths of seventy-seven to eighty-two Palestinians and around 250 injured (UNRWA 2006). During this period, Israeli troops restricted the movements of residents by imposing curfews, carrying out search and arrest operations, cutting off energy supplies, bulldozing homes and flattening agricultural areas. On 8 November, Israeli shells hit a residential area in northern Beit Hanoun resulting in the deaths of nineteen civilians including women and children, many from one family, and injuring over forty. The action was described as 'disproportionate and indiscriminate' by UN Human Rights Council (2007: point 12). The Israeli government apologised, blaming a technical malfunction. International responses ranged from calls for revenge from Palestinian leaders, supported by the Arab League, to calls for restraint by both parties from the EU and much of the international community, to the US Israeli Ambassador

stating 'Israel has a right to defend itself and the lives of its citizens' (US Mission to the United Nations 2006).

*Context for the intra-Palestinian fighting case study*

The analyses in Chapters 6 and 7 relate to the sporadic fighting between the Palestinian factions of Hamas and Fatah which had been ongoing since Hamas's victory in the January 2006 parliamentary elections. This outcome led to economic crises as the US and EU, viewing Hamas as a terrorist organisation, froze their aid to Gaza, and Israel halted the transfer of tax revenues accounting for half of the Palestinian Authority's income. The fighting escalated during May 2007 and peaked in mid-June 2007 when Hamas seized Gaza, taking control of key security buildings and outstripped a fragmented Fatah whom Hamas considered to be collaborators with Israel and its allies. Although it suffered a weakened command structure because many of its key leaders were absent from the region, Fatah took control of the West Bank and the fierce fighting, which resulted in 130 deaths and 630 injured (ICRC 2007), received international condemnation for human rights violations by both sides (Amnesty International 2007). The Palestinian Territories were divided into Hamas-led Gaza and Fatah-led West Bank. The Unity Government, formed in February 2007, with Hamas's Haniyeh as PM, was suspended by its President – Fatah's Abbas – who, on 17 June 2007, declared an emergency government which excluded Hamas. The global implications of the events, evident in the divided international reaction, underscored the geo-political complexities of the Middle East and the prevailing international fears about instability in the region and the possibility of repercussions spilling over to neighbouring countries. The US and the EU condemned the June violence but backed the Emergency Government stating that they would lift aid embargoes. The Arab League called for a revival of Palestinian negotiations, whilst supporting Abbas's



new government. The latter was criticised by Iran and also Saudi Arabia for undermining the Palestinian cause and furthering Israeli interests.

### CHAPTER 3: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS PROVISION

This chapter addresses the objective of the thesis, which is to investigate the state of European reporting of foreign conflict in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period, by examining the accommodation of foreign conflict reporting and its interaction with domestic and international news within the different news programmes. The discussion of the contours of news provision by *News at Ten*, *20 Heures* and *Vremya* from November 2006 to September 2008 provides a preliminary insight into the influence of their core news values when reporting on foreign conflicts. It offers a backdrop for the subsequent qualitative analysis of their Middle East coverage by illustrating how the selection and positioning of news stories reveal much about a broadcaster's (or country's) news values. The Middle East conflict, rather than wars of short duration, has been selected for analysis as the vast array of subject matters it contains, and which are available for selection by the news providers, highlights these particular news value characteristics. These subject areas extend beyond "foreign conflict reporting" to reflect the everyday existence of those living against a background of conflict. This chapter demonstrates how the Middle East conflict, by its ongoing nature and by conflating this multitude of issues, can, depending on a broadcaster's news values, be portrayed as just a conflict region, as a region surviving alongside the consequences of conflict or as an area where non-conflict-related events do occur.<sup>7</sup> The controversial nature of this conflict, the sensitivities it contains and the boundaries between "conflict reporting" and "general" reporting emerge as I discuss which items are selected and which correspond to the broadcasters' own news values whilst still satisfying time constraints and competition from other newsworthy items. I also present any principal distinctions between the seemingly

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<sup>7</sup> Three areas of conflict coverage emerge: "conflict" items which include fighting, warfare, violence and hot spots; the consequences of, and background to, the "conflict"; and "non-conflict related" items which are portrayed as being completely unrelated to "conflict".

comparable news providers – all are either public sector broadcasters or state-aligned broadcasters – to reveal particular state/news value dynamics.

Having selected three diverging television news providers for the comparison of foreign conflict reporting, it could be expected that their news agenda and the news items they broadcast will differ revealing the domestication of international news events. Many distinctions between foreign (conflict) reporting in different countries result from the widely discussed dominance of both national media structures and cultural national identities which create a distinct ‘us/other’ relationship (Gurevitch and Kavoori 1994; de Vreese 2001; Rossler 2004; Riegert 2008). This is despite their potential use of some identical original sources associated with the reliance on few international news agencies. The newsworthiness of stories is determined by the specific systems of news values at work in a country’s media organisations or within a particular broadcaster of a given country. Foreign conflicts, also viewed through this national prism, produce reports which are shaped and influenced by geopolitical and cultural links to the reporting country. This can be to the extent that, as Chang, Wang et al (1998) illustrated in their comparison of US and Chinese television news, differing state structures and systems influence notions of newsworthiness in contrasting ways ultimately producing different television news content, affecting the public agenda. Moreover, although a constant portion of a news programme may be allocated to foreign news provision, the latter may serve to privilege domestic news over foreign news by being represented from a national viewpoint.

By discussing the particular aspects of airtime, running order and subject matter, I examine in this chapter how foreign reporting, and particularly the Middle East conflict, is accommodated by the news agendas of three broadcasters from differing systems. The

continuing nature of this conflict, resulting in parallel portrayals of conflict and ongoing situations, distinguishes the Middle East from other examples of war and helps identify how the varying news values influence conflict reporting. I based my analysis on a catalogue of recordings comprising 30,846 full evening news programmes from *News at 10*, *20 Heures* and *Vremya* from November 2006 to the end of September 2008. The catalogue provided dates, running orders, lengths and a short description of each item. For the analysis, I categorised each national catalogue into “international” news, using the item description confirmed by additional research. Each of these categories was then refined to a “foreign conflict” news subset and again to a “Middle East” news subset, using the same process, to compare the airspace and running orders of news stories in each category by each broadcaster. The “international” news subset was sorted according to the country which was foreign to the reporting country and which was mentioned in the report. Where there were two international presences within one item, for example, a foreign leader visiting a different foreign country, the news item was classified according to the latter. If, however, a foreign leader was visiting France, for example, then that item was categorised according to the country of that leader. One problem associated with foreign reporting, in addition to commercial constraints and the increasing desire for entertainment-driven news, is the need for the foreign event to have a domestic link which restricts the scope of potential information for the audience (Wu 1998; Lichter, Butterworth et al. 2004; Fahmy 2010). Accordingly, a reporting country’s news provider constructs a media map of the world which reflects its own past and present. The international subset was categorised into a foreign conflict reporting subset which included, for *News at Ten*, events in Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Burma, Kenya, Tibet, Georgia and also events viewed as terror attacks abroad. The main areas covered by *20 Heures*’ foreign conflict reporting were Iraq, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Burma, Georgia, Kenya, Pakistan, Darfur and Somalia and

by *Vremya* were Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East, Georgia, Somalia, Nigeria and Pakistan. These are distinguished from the more general international stories by their coverage of actual wars, conflicts, uprisings and related demonstrations and protests; their connection to related peace negotiations; and their broader humanitarian reports on the same violent events. For all three broadcasters, coverage of international sport, including the Beijing Olympics, was excluded from the international news subset. In contrast to the other two news programmes, one element of sport was included in *Vremya*'s figures as it covered the Channel 1 sponsored Football Cup held in Israel, involving champion teams from only Russia, Ukraine and Israel. It was included because of its direct connection to the host country and Channel 1 – which involved using airtime for significant self-promotion – and also to other narratives in the news such as the presence of the Russian-speaking diaspora in Israel.

For all three broadcasters, Middle East items focused on stories relating to the Palestinian territories, Israel and Lebanon, in accordance with the thesis definition for this region. It was intended that this group would form a subset of foreign conflict reporting, however, Middle East items, depending on the news provider, incorporated a broad range of subjects which were not all conflict-based. It was decided to include these non-conflict items as they would help determine not only the specific understanding of the Middle East by each broadcaster but also their understanding of, and approach to, foreign conflict reporting.

The airtime for each news item in these categories was determined using the running times provided in the catalogue. The total overall length of the news programmes varied between broadcaster: *News at Ten* lasted between twenty-four and twenty-seven minutes during the week with the weekend editions being fifteen and seventeen minutes; *20 Heures* lasted between thirty-three and thirty-eight minutes; and *Vremya* was more erratic varying from

between twenty-five and thirty-eight minutes but, being a state-aligned broadcaster, could also be lengthened to provide extended coverage of certain stories. For example, in August 2008, news programmes lasted forty-five minutes to one hour to provide coverage of the war in Georgia. A news item lasting five minutes for example, would therefore, as a proportion of the overall programme length, have greater value on *News at Ten* than on *20 Heures* and even more so on *Vremya*. However, although differences exist between lengths of programmes, they are not sufficient to constrain a 'meaningful comparison' (Blumler, McLeod et al. 1992: 13) and still allow the trends and patterns of individual broadcasters to be analysed and compared. Using this background of differing total programme lengths and the running times from the original catalogues, each broadcaster's airtimes for the various subsets were documented, and then compared to situate them in relation to each other and to determine any trends which might appear over the course of the comparison period.

The running order analysis was based on the positioning in the overall line-up of news items from the "foreign conflict" and the "Middle East" categories. The frequency of all the news items was recorded according to their position in the line-up. This revealed which slots were used most frequently by the broadcasters for each category and consequently the value attached to them, given that the higher the position of an item in the line-up the greater its importance. As with any comparative analysis, differences in the source data must be acknowledged. Indeed, it is as a result of differences that interesting national or contextual factors become apparent (Peschar 1984). Therefore, in this case, further information on the line-ups of the different broadcasters must be taken into account in order to compare the running orders. The number of news items per programme differed between the three broadcasters and this could influence any interpretation of running orders. On *News at Ten*, there were most frequently between seven and ten news items per programme from a

maximum fifteen positions noted over the period (Figure 1). On *20 Heures*, the number of items ranged from a minimum of seven to a possible twenty-eight, with sixteen to twenty news items per programme proving the most frequent (Figure 2). On *Vremya*, the maximum number of news items per programme (twenty-nine) was comparable to *20 Heures* and the most frequent number of news stories varied between eleven and fifteen per programme (Figure 3). Any news item occupying, for example, the fourth slot in the line-up on *News at Ten* would be viewed as a middle-ranking story whereas on *20 Heures* and *Vremya* such a position would be considered as almost a top story appearing near the beginning of a programme. The data for each broadcaster's running orders has, therefore, to be understood within its own corresponding structure.

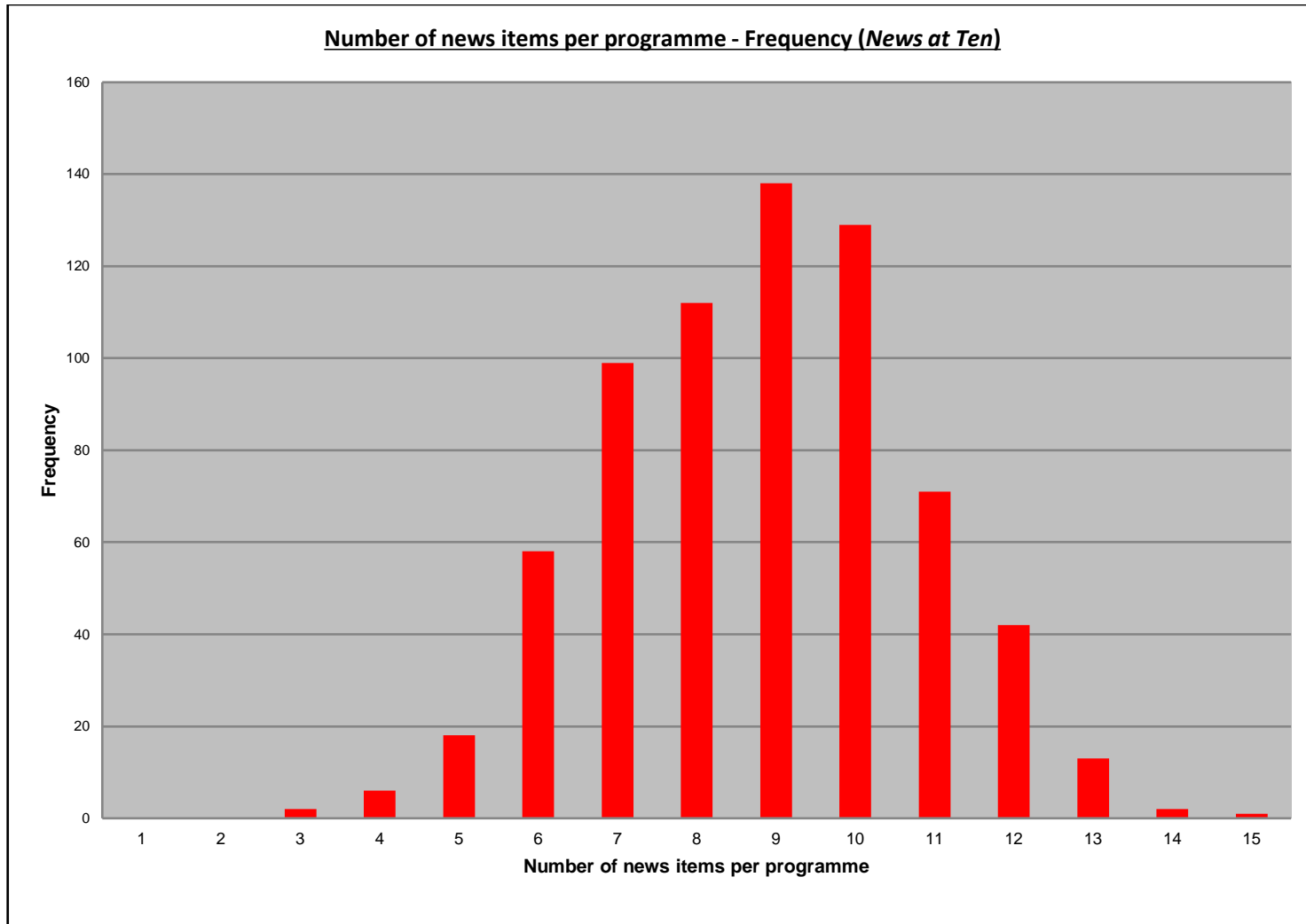


Figure 1 Number of news items per programme (*News at Ten*)



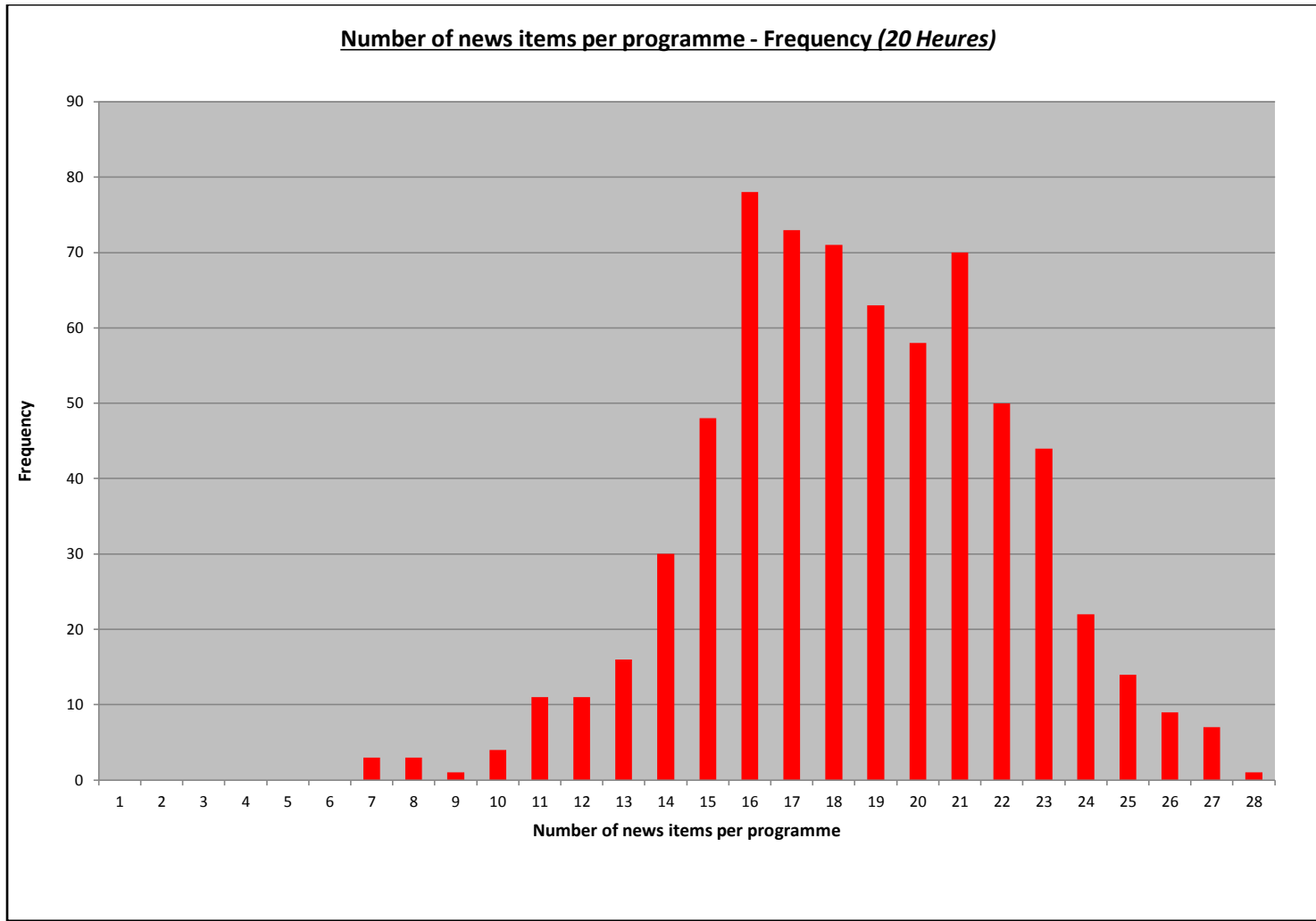


Figure 2 Number of news items per programme (20 Heures)

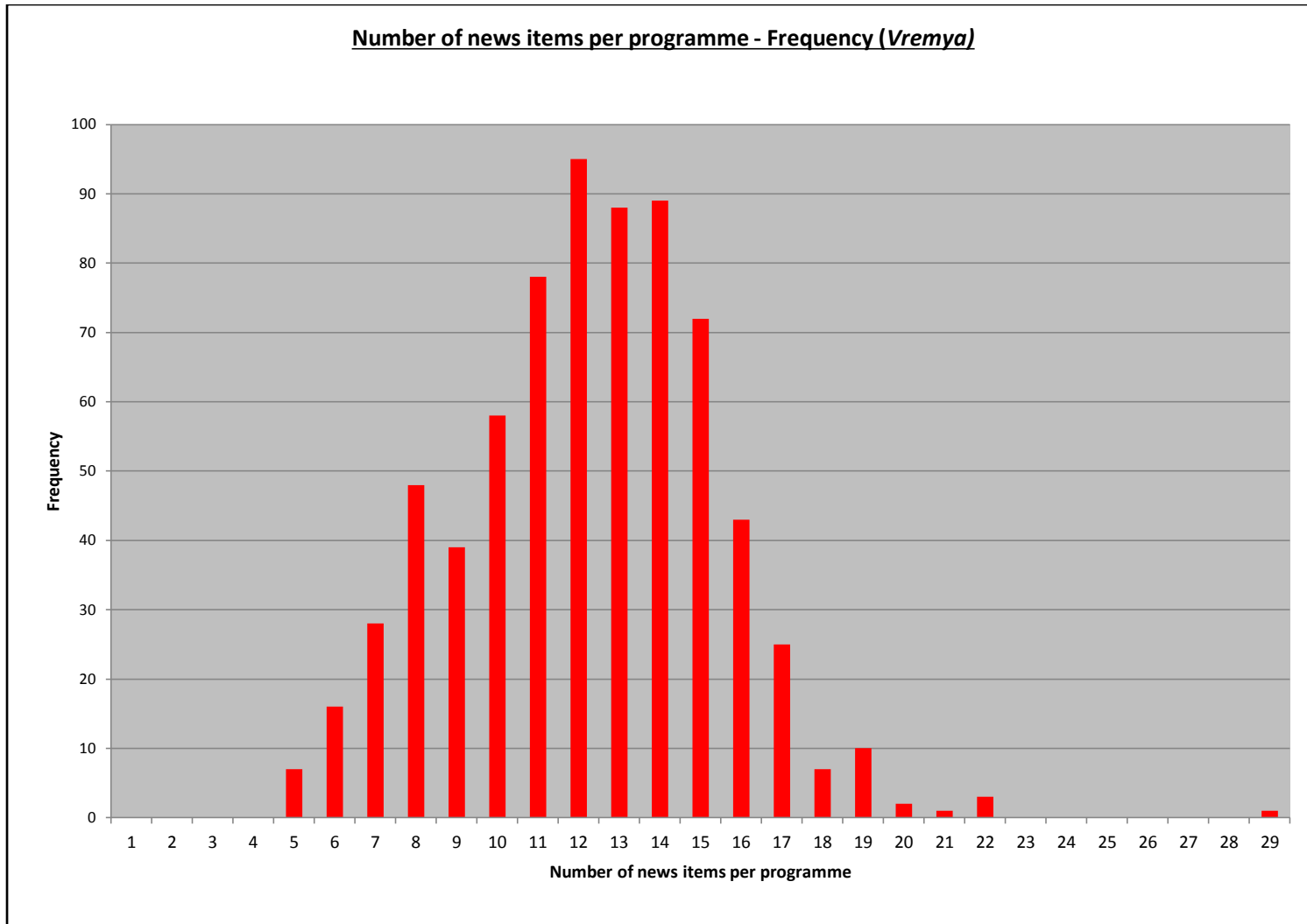


Figure 3 Number of news items per programme (Vremya)

Lengths of individual items within news programmes must also be considered. With few exceptions, lengths of news items on *20 Heures* are fixed between up to one minute and up to three minutes. Time is a major determinant and the news item must be adapted to the slot, not vice-versa. *Vremya's* approach is similar but not as strict as certain items last up to nineteen minutes. On *News at Ten*, the story dictates the length of the item rather than the other way round. These different approaches to news structure illustrate different attitudes to news itself. Through its rigid structure where items are of similar lengths regardless of the perceived importance of one story over another, *20 Heures* may restrict itself to providing facts, sacrificing details and the opinions which prevail on the more flexible *News at Ten*. In contrast, *News at Ten* and *Vremya* may be more detail-driven providing multi-aspectual reporting. These figures merely highlight questions which are discussed in later analyses.

Initial information was gained from examining the airtime and running order positions of news items allowing various sub-sections within news provision to be situated in relation to one another. For example, Middle East reporting was situated in relation to foreign conflict reporting which was, in turn, situated in relation to international news. This provided an initial insight into the broadcasters' approaches to the news. However, these figures did not provide information on the subject matter of the news items which would influence the running order position and would be indicative of a broadcaster's news values. Therefore, using inductive analysis, all the Middle East-related news items were grouped into varying typologies. This would highlight the value attached by the broadcasters to the reporting of various groups of information within the Middle East conflict, including non-conflict items, which might not be possible with coverage of other short-term conflicts. It would also determine which areas were of interest to each broadcaster and which areas appeared newsworthy at particular times (and in relation to other stories in the schedule). News items from this subset were

sorted into the following main subject categories, although it was recognised that many of these would overlap and interrelate and would require further defining in subsequent more detailed analyses. It was also acknowledged that other subject areas, such as gender, might prove worthy of analysis yet were not the sole focus of any one news item.

1. Conflict stories: these included explosions, violence presented as terrorist attacks, fighting and violent demonstrations. This forms what could be considered the anticipated core subject of the whole comparison.
2. Human interest stories: these included the consequences of, and background to, the conflict such as kidnappings, exchanges of prisoners, funerals, commemorations and anniversaries, hardship stories; and also non-conflict-related, general interest stories.
3. Religion and ethnicity: these items related to specific coverage of religious ceremonies, rites and celebrations, and to reporting of incidences or events the main focus of which was the ethnicity of those involved. These reports centred on ethnic differences and provided descriptions and context for these differences but were distinct from the “conflict” stories as they did not report directly on violence.
4. Political/Peace attempt stories: these included reports on the involvement of governments at various levels in the peace process. They ranged from international conferences to meetings, and telephone conversations, between leaders of various countries concerning the peace process.
5. Domestic-related stories: some overlap existed between this category and the previous one as visits to the Middle East by a broadcaster’s national leader which were not directly connected with the peace process, or with a meeting with another leader, or the purpose of which was self-promotion during a domestic election campaign, was in this category. Items involving a meeting between a broadcaster’s national leader and a foreign leader to

discuss elements of the peace process would be in the previous category whilst the involvement of the same national leader and former citizens of the broadcaster's nation in the Middle East would be in this category. It also included reports on the involvement of the broadcaster's nation and former citizens in the Middle East.

This chapter, therefore, illustrates how these principal aspects of agenda-setting cooperate and contribute to the emergence of contrasting representations of the Middle East conflict. Agenda-setting allows the overarching scene to be set and the salience of the region as a subject matter to be established. The chapter discusses how the very specific features of this conflict, for example, its controversial nature, the political instability of the region, and the boundaries between "conflict reporting" and "general" reporting result in differences in representations which reveal the broadcasters' own news values. The analysis of airtimes situates the various news item subsets within the overall news programme. The running order discussion reveals the salience attached to a subset by the news programmes and the resultant positioning and content of foreign conflict reporting. Finally, the typology of subjects in the broadcasters' Middle East coverage determines the main areas portrayed and whether a hierarchy exists amongst these subject areas. This illustrates whether the Middle East is portrayed purely as a conflict or whether the "conflict" element is assumed thus allowing airtime to be allocated to other areas within the Middle East coverage, that are not directly related to the conflict. This chapter responds to the following research questions:

- How is the reporting of "international", "foreign conflict" and "Middle East" news accommodated within the broadcasters' news agendas?
- What do the airtime allocation and running orders reveal about the agenda-setting processes of the three broadcasters?

- Does the broadcasters' hierarchy of subject areas in these three subsets, and specifically the Middle East coverage, reveal particular news values?
- To what extent is the dynamic between agenda-setting operations and news values apparent in certain political systems?

These questions are discussed individually in relation to each of the three broadcasters and also comparatively to determine the values attached by them to reporting of the Middle East conflict as an 'ongoing' presence in the news. They provide a quantitative basis on which further qualitative analyses of foreign conflict reporting may be conducted.

### **3.1 International reporting**

A difference in the broadcasters' global coverage is apparent and is shown in the map illustrations in Figures 4-6. As indicated earlier, the news providers construct very specific media maps of the world. On *News at Ten*, Iraq- and Afghanistan-related stories involving British forces provide a contemporary domestic link and are most frequently shown of its international items (30%). Interest is also attached to former British colonial interests: when events such as uprisings occur in these areas, *News at Ten* attaches greater value to them than *20 Heures* and *Vremya*. *News at Ten's* preference for conflict stories within international items extends to coverage of Darfur, Zimbabwe, Burma, Pakistan and the Middle East. International news stories also include religion and religious practices abroad; terrorism and security with an emphasis on Islamic extremism; multiculturalism; human and natural disasters; elections, deaths of famous people, state visits, international treaties and conferences; and international aspects of the financial crisis.

A similar situation regarding imperial links emerges on *Vremya*. In contrast with *News at Ten*, *Vremya* provides a large number of individual international items (2995) covering 141 countries (*News at Ten* – 120, *20 Heures* – 162). Yet over 34% of all these items are from, or related to, Former Soviet Union countries with a further 5% from former Eastern Bloc countries thus limiting space in the news schedule for other world events. Even after deducting coverage of the war in Georgia, which represented the most international news items on *Vremya*, this figure remains significant. Although preference is given to these geographical areas, value is also attached to post-imperial economic and political relationship building with other countries and raising Russia's status globally. For example, items including European countries (mainly UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain) represent 19% of all international items and those including the US represent 10% alone. International items also include elections, international conferences and summits, travel by Russian leaders abroad, and natural disasters.

Figure 4 Global representation of *News at Ten's* news coverage 2006-2008

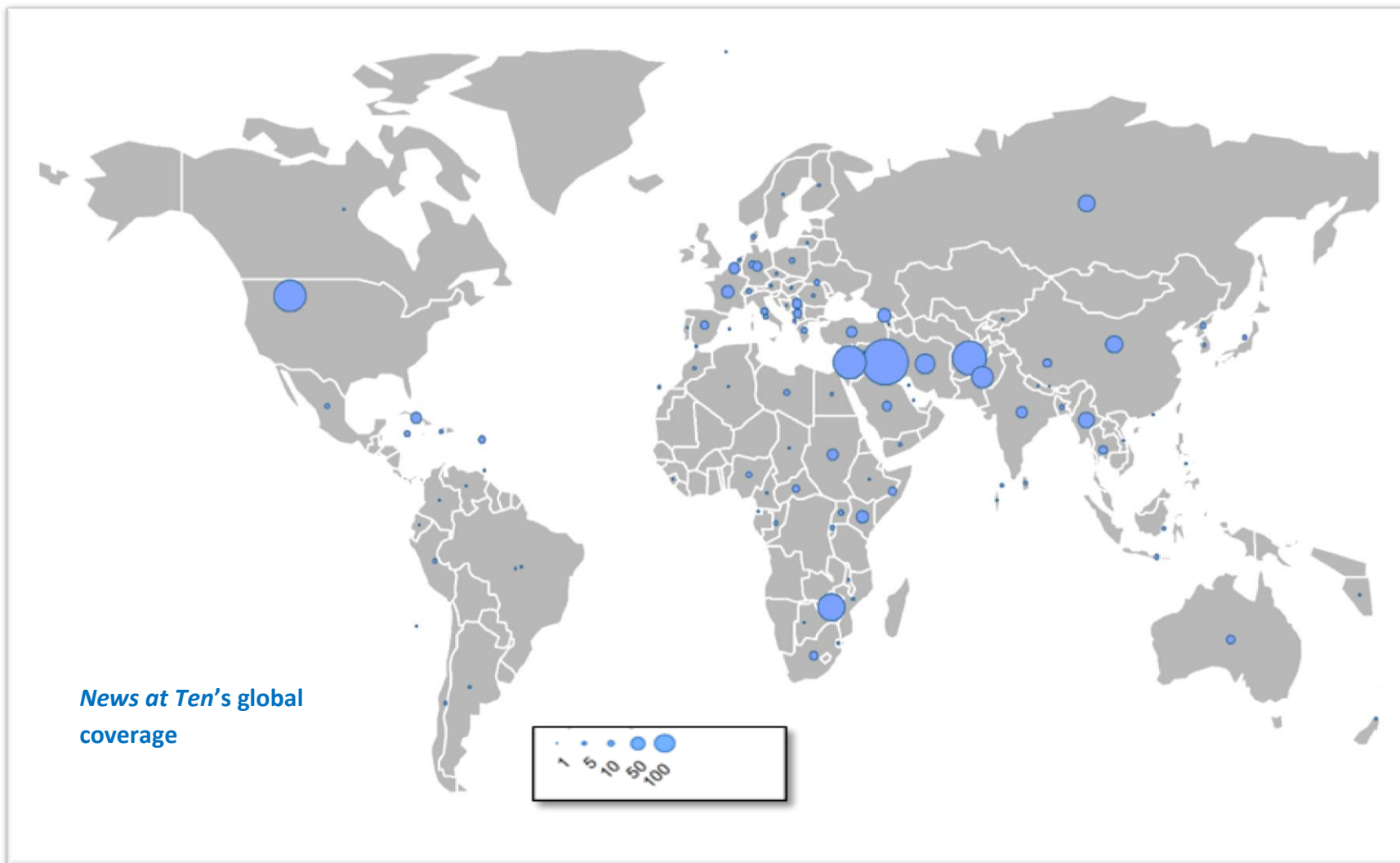




Figure 5 Global representation of *20 Heures'* news coverage 2006-2008

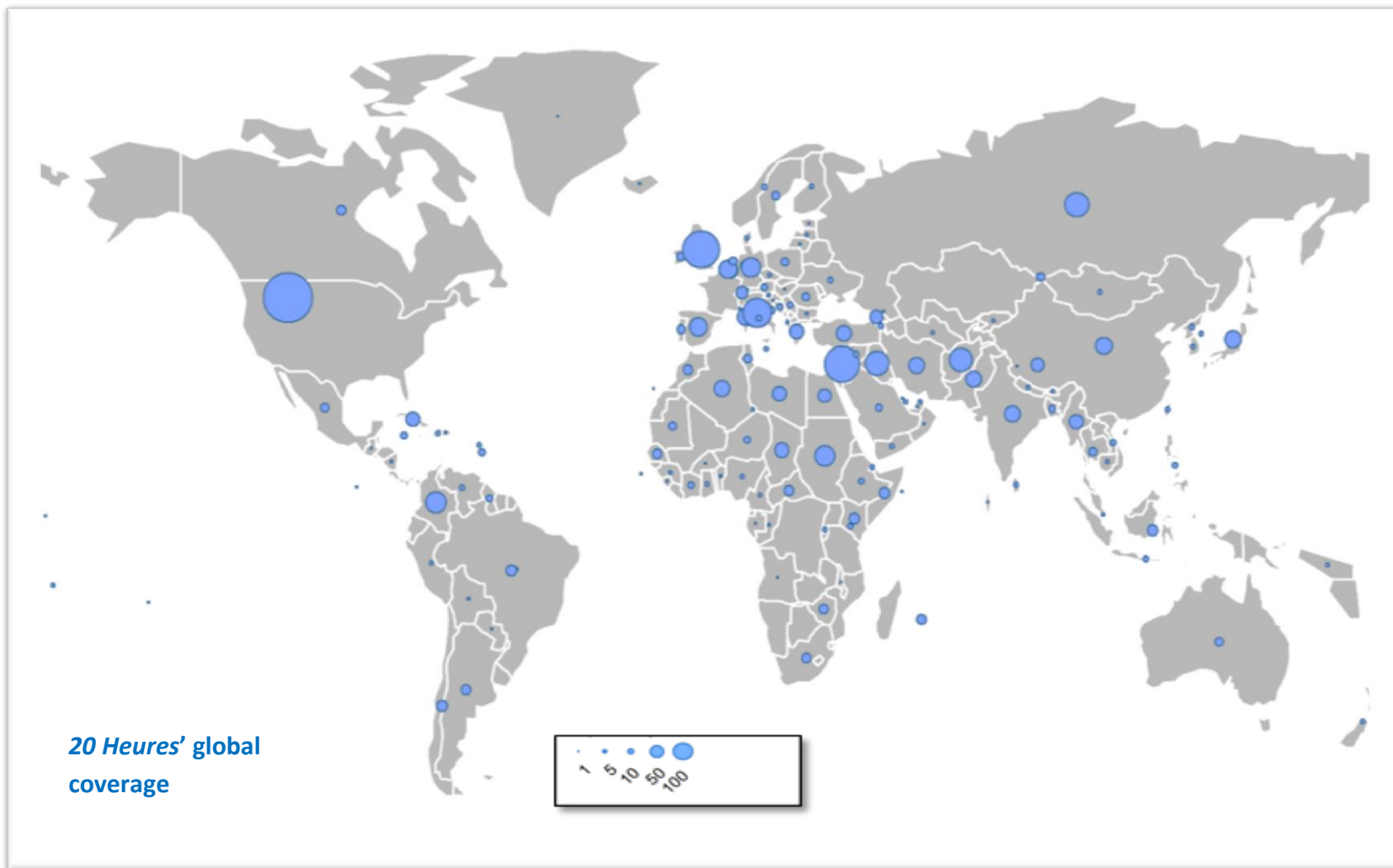
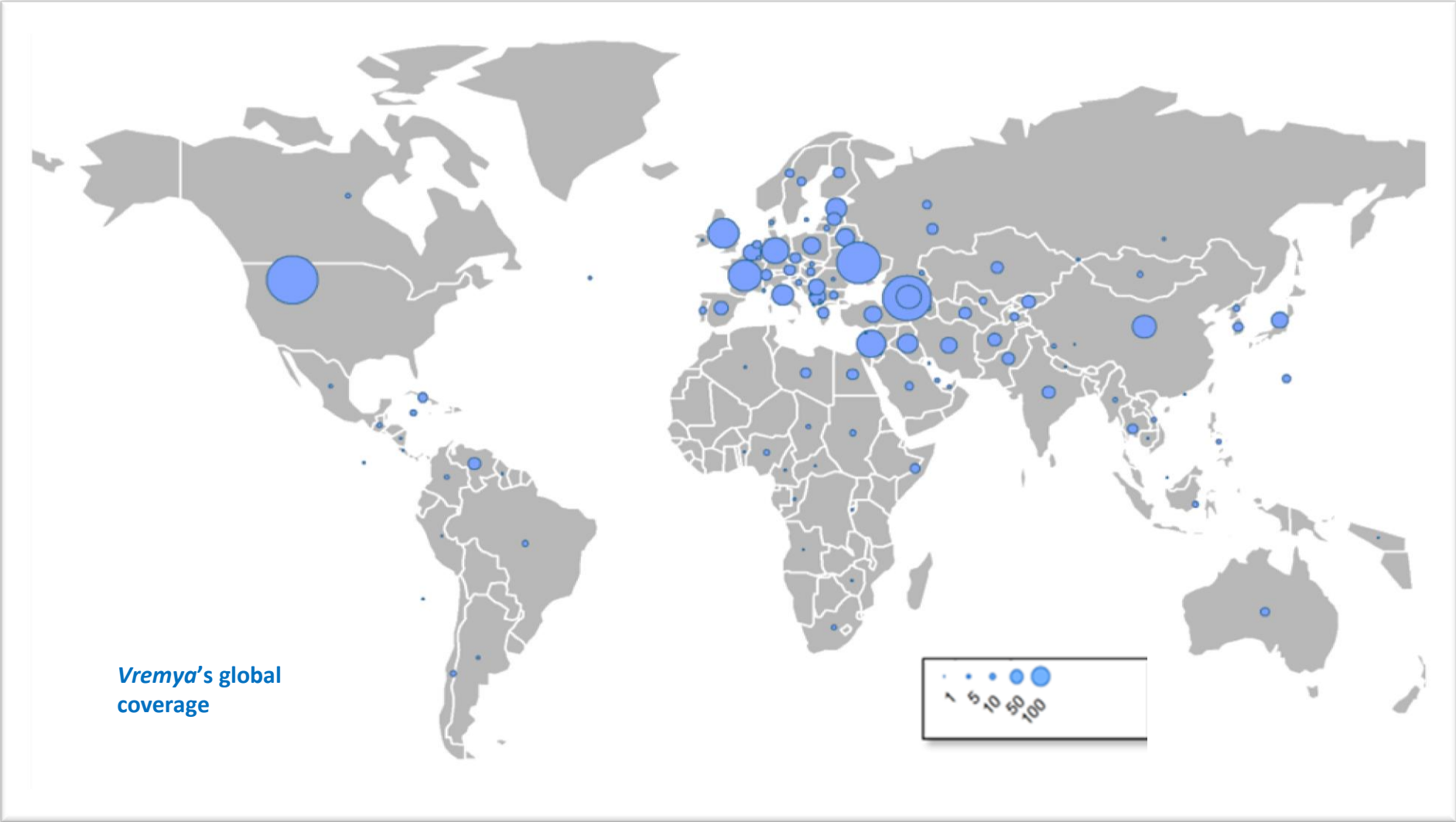


Figure 6 Global representation of *Vremya's* news coverage 2006-2008



Unlike the post-colonial and post-Cold War mapping of the other two broadcasters, *20 Heures*' construction of the world reflects the primary importance attached to its country's diplomatic efforts and its status in relation to other countries it considers diplomatically influential. The US and UK represent over 20% of international items whilst conflict items, which are of prime importance on *News at Ten*, are ranked lower. Even in this latter case, coverage of Iraq and especially the war in Georgia is accentuated because they highlight French attempts to forge diplomatic partnerships. Coverage of Afghanistan only represents 3% despite a large French contingent in action there. The broadest range of countries is found on *20 Heures* (162) yet 20% of these only gain coverage once over the two years. It is towards this lower frequency level that countries with historical (imperial) ties to France can be noted representing nearly 10%. International items include many entertainment-driven items, and coverage of the Pope, both at the Vatican and on state visits, is frequent. Although Catholicism is the main Christian denomination in France, its heavy coverage challenges France Télévisions' remit to represent the diversity of French society (2010: 42), especially since, despite France having the largest Jewish and Muslim population in Europe, other worldwide religious leaders and groups are comparatively neglected in the coverage. On all three broadcasters, the Middle East ranks highly amongst international items (third on *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* and fifth on *Vremya*), and is the only region which is ranked with similar importance by all three.

The "international" subset was then refined into a "foreign conflict reporting" subset, bearing in mind that *News at Ten* attaches primary importance to wars and uprisings; *20 Heures* stresses France's global and diplomatic status; and *Vremya* emphasises almost equally Russia's status globally and what it considers to be Russia's sphere of influence; and not only

do all three select items with imperial links but they are also striving to create a new post-imperial diplomatic role.

### **3.2 Airtime**

Foreign conflict reporting, as a subset of news, competes for scarce airtime within the overall news schedule with many other news stories with greater or equal newsworthiness. The airtime allocation reveals how Middle East reporting is accommodated by the broadcasters within their news provision. The quantitative information in this section centres on categories of airtimes within the broadcasters' news programmes. The first of the three news providers to be discussed is *News at Ten*.

#### **3.2.1 *News at Ten***

Over the two-year period, the total airtime provided by *News at Ten* and included in the analysis was just over 266 hours, averaging eleven-and-a-half hours per month of which news items with an international character occupied sixty-eight hours or an average of just under three hours per month. This represents an average of 25.65% of the total airtime. This peaked in August 2008, which could be attributed to the war in Georgia. The remaining time in the news schedule was occupied by opening and closing headlines, domestic news of all categories and sports news.

Foreign conflict reporting – a subset of international reporting – occupies forty-three hours of airtime, averaging one hour fifty-one minutes per month and representing 16.17% and 63.14% of the total airtime and international airtime respectively. Coverage of the Middle East conflict by *News at Ten* – a subset of foreign conflict reporting – represents just over five

hours, averaging fifteen minutes per month. Middle East reporting represents 2.37%, 8.95% and 15.75% of the total airtime, international airtime and foreign conflict airtime respectively. These figures appear relatively low, implying that running order is an important factor in determining salience.

As expected, the airtime occupied by each of these categories reduces accordingly. Being only one sub-section within the news, foreign conflict reporting receives a relatively significant and constant airtime averaging one hour fifty-one minutes per month, indicating that high value is attached to it by *News at Ten*. Similarly, the airtime allocated to Middle East coverage remains constant with an average of fifteen minutes per month, with notable increases in this figure in November 2006 (Israel-Gaza conflict and Lebanon assassination) and May-June 2007 (Fatah-Hamas conflict) and a notable decrease only in October and December 2007 (Figures 7 and 8). International and foreign conflict reporting times remained constant suggesting that there are limits on the monthly airtime allocated to these categories and that subsets within them have to compete to gain exposure. These figures indicate how editorial practices within *News at Ten* result in certain airtimes being given to international, foreign and Middle East coverage. That the airtime figures are approximately constant over the comparison period demonstrate that certain aspects of Middle East reporting are considered sufficiently newsworthy by *News at Ten* to be broadcast.

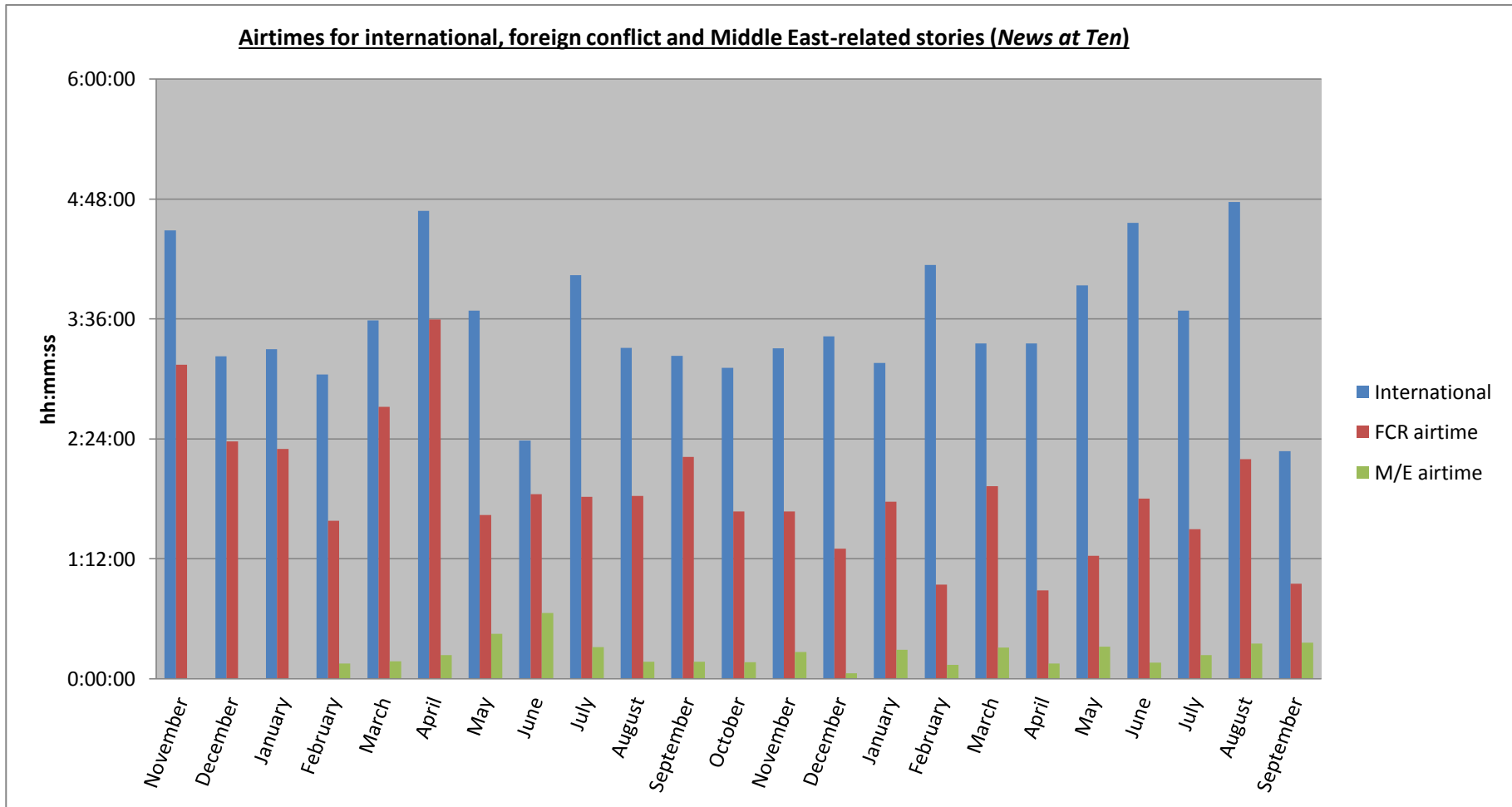


Figure 7 Airtimes for International/Foreign Conflict/Middle East stories (*News at Ten*)

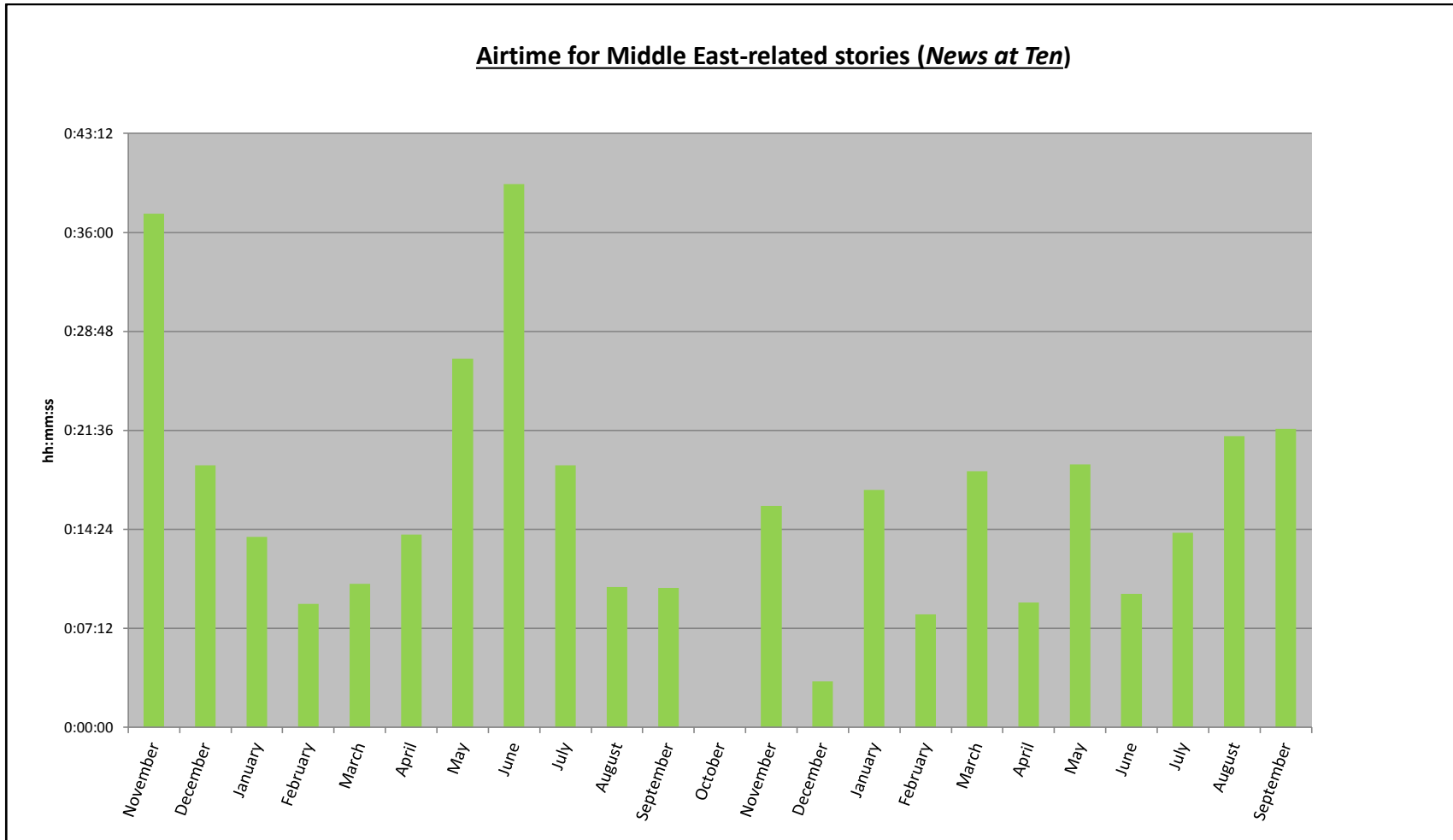


Figure 8 Airtime for Middle East-related stories (*News at Ten*)

### 3.2.2 20 Heures

On *20 Heures*, the total airtime under discussion is 421 hours, averaging at eighteen hours eighteen minutes per month, which is considerably higher than the total airtime of *News at Ten*. *20 Heures'* airtimes for the international news story category is higher than those of *News at Ten* being nearly eighty-one hours (*News at Ten* is sixty-eight hours) averaging three-and-a-half hours per month and representing 20.50% of the total airtime. Two peaks in international reporting occurred in December 2007, possibly attributed to increased coverage of Colonel Gaddafi's visit to France and Benazir Bhutto's assassination, and in August 2008 as a result of the war in Georgia.

The airtime dedicated to foreign conflict reporting by *20 Heures* is slightly under sixteen hours, averaging at forty-one minutes per month, which is considerably less than the same figure for *News at Ten* (forty-three hours), especially given the higher airtime for international news. This represents 17.75% and 3.68% of the international and total airtimes respectively, suggesting that less value is attached to foreign conflict reporting as a sub-section of the news programme by *20 Heures* than by *News at Ten*. Airtime given to Middle East-related items is four-and-a-half hours representing 1.06%, 5.54% and 34.05% of the total, international and foreign conflict airtimes. Although an average figure (a little over fifteen minutes) for Middle East-related items can be provided, this is not as meaningful as that provided for *News at Ten* as the monthly figures are not constant and vary between a few minutes per month to over half an hour per month, again illustrating the wavering importance attached to these items. The greatest peaks occur in November and December 2006 (Israel-Gaza conflict and the Lebanon assassination) and June 2007 (Fatah-Hamas conflict) (see Figures 9 and 10). The airtime for Middle East-related items over the course of the comparison period is similar (four-and-a-half hours) to that of *News at Ten* (just over five hours). However, as a percentage



of foreign conflict reporting this figure is twice that of *News at Ten*'s equivalent figure illustrating that, of the many news areas covered in this sub-section, Middle East reporting is considered newsworthy and valued by the programme-makers.

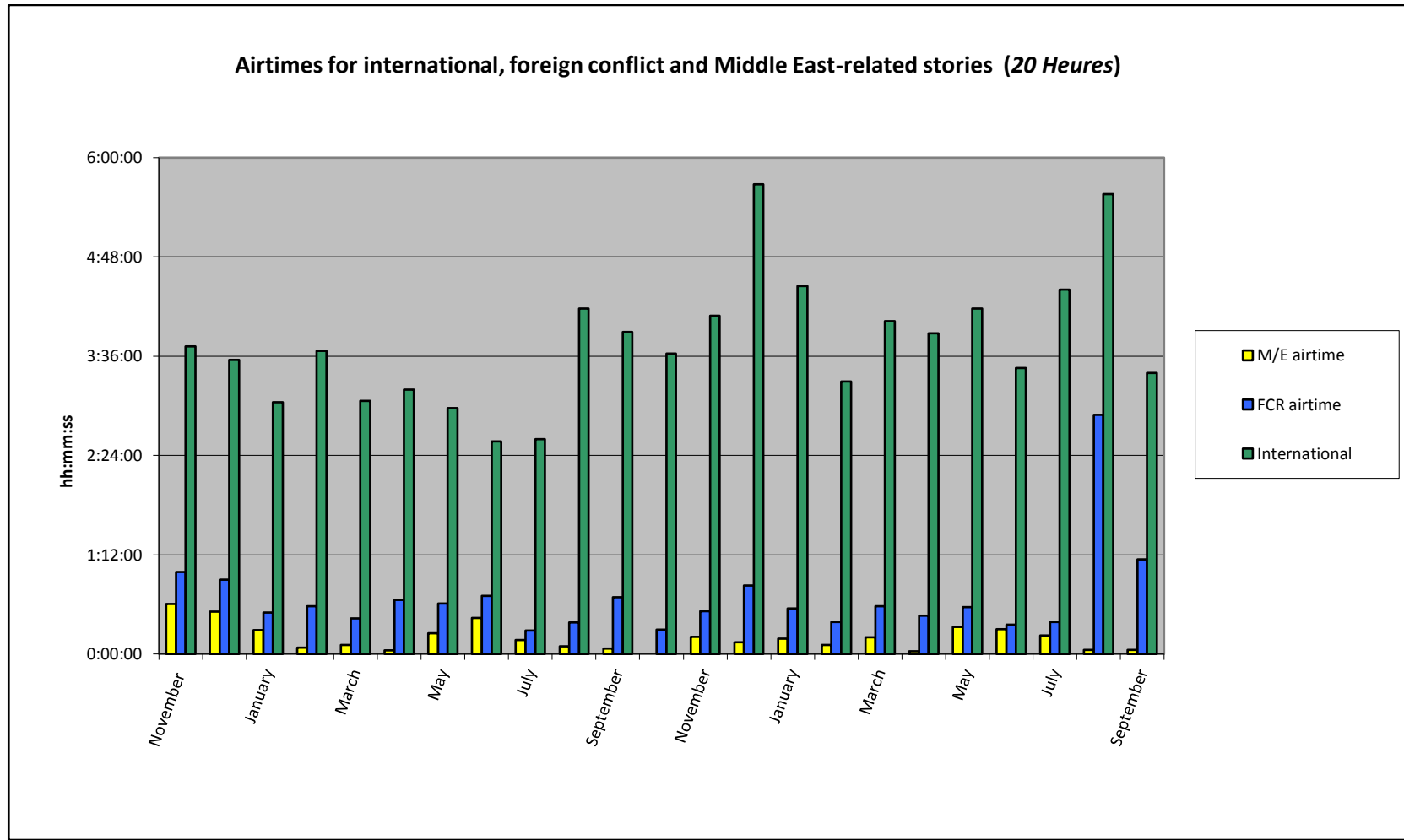


Figure 9 Airtimes for International/Foreign Conflict/Middle East stories (20 Heures)

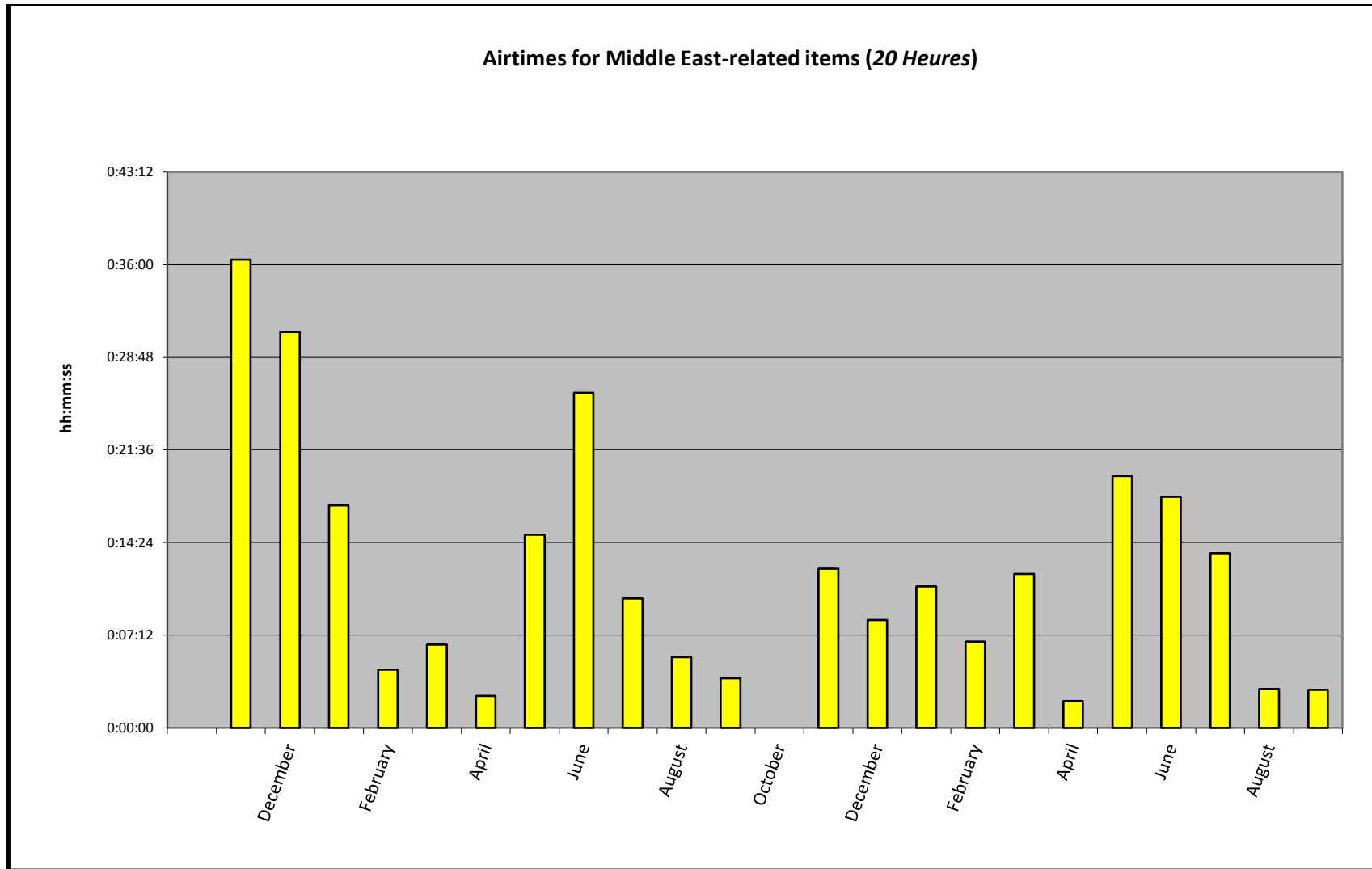


Figure 10 Airtime for Middle East-related stories (20 Heures)

### 3.2.3 *Vremya*

*Vremya's* total airtime is 382 hours, averaging sixteen-and-a-half hours per month which places the broadcaster centrally between *20 Heures* and *News at Ten*. The broadcasters' international airtimes differ and are highest on *Vremya*, where the figure for this sub-section is just over 123 hours, averaging at just over five-and-a-half hours per month. Foreign conflict reporting by *Vremya* represents almost thirty hours of airtime, averaging seventeen-and-a-quarter hours per month, which again is above that of *20 Heures* (sixteen hours) and below that of *News at Ten* (forty-three hours). This figure represents 6.55% and 18.39% of the total and international airtimes respectively, which is comparable to the same percentages for *News at Ten* and *20 Heures*. The airtime figures for foreign conflict reporting remain constant over the comparison period with the exception of August 2008 during the war in Georgia. Middle East-related reporting represents just less than four hours of airtime averaging eight minutes per month, representing 23.97%, 3.27% and 1.02% of the foreign conflict, international and total airtimes respectively. With the exception of peaks (see Figures 11 and 12) which occur in December 2006 (Israel-Gaza conflict and unrest in Lebanon) and June 2007 (Fatah-Hamas conflict), airtime for Middle East-related reporting remains relatively constant throughout, and illustrates the importance of this conflict in international news. In fact, it remains constant even during coverage of the war in Georgia in August 2008 indicating that, although *Vremya* allocates nearly all the total airtime of the news to this war, it still considers the Middle East sufficiently newsworthy for airspace to be found for its reports.

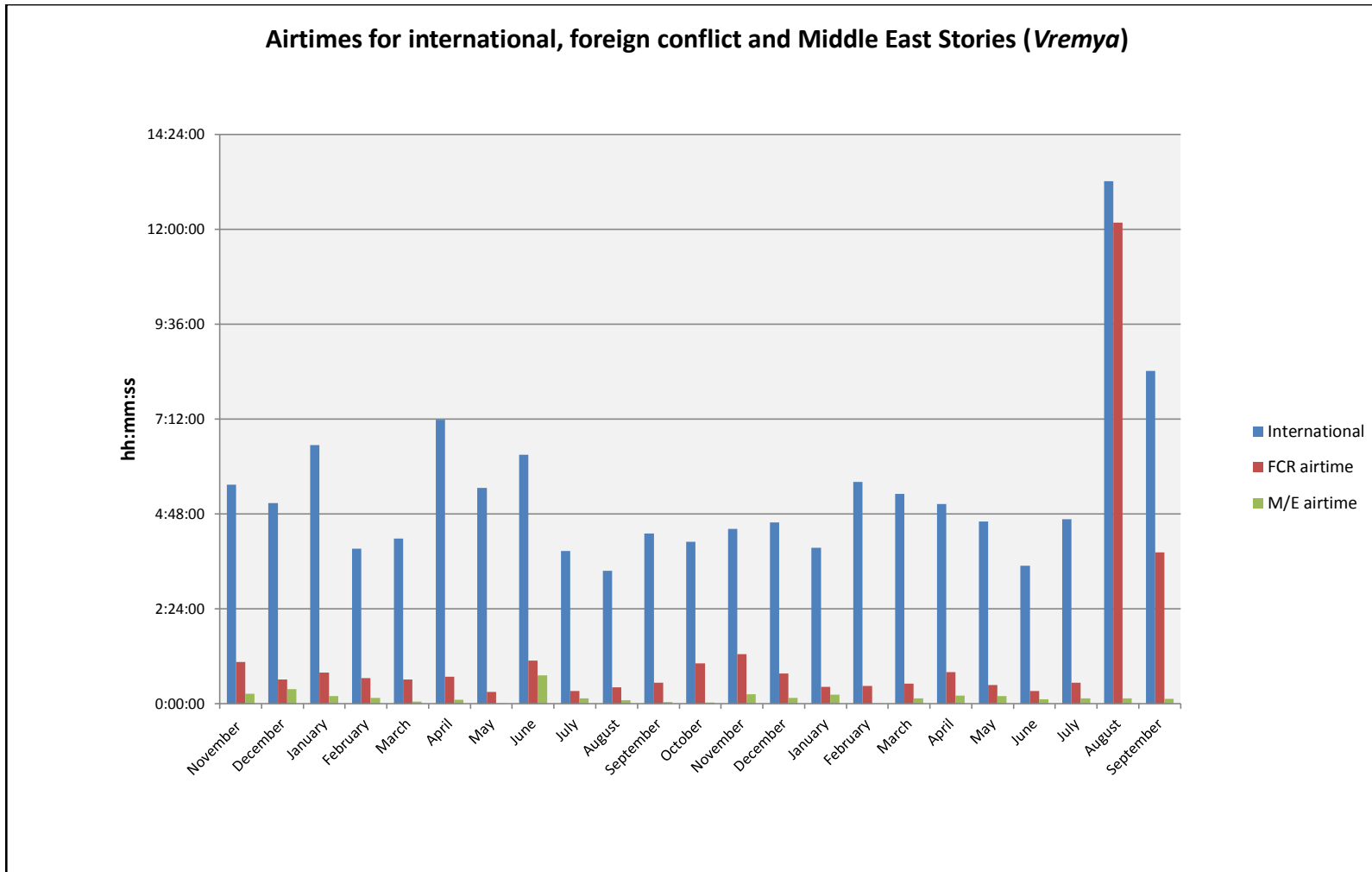


Figure 11 Airtimes for International/Foreign Conflict/Middle East stories (*Vremya*)

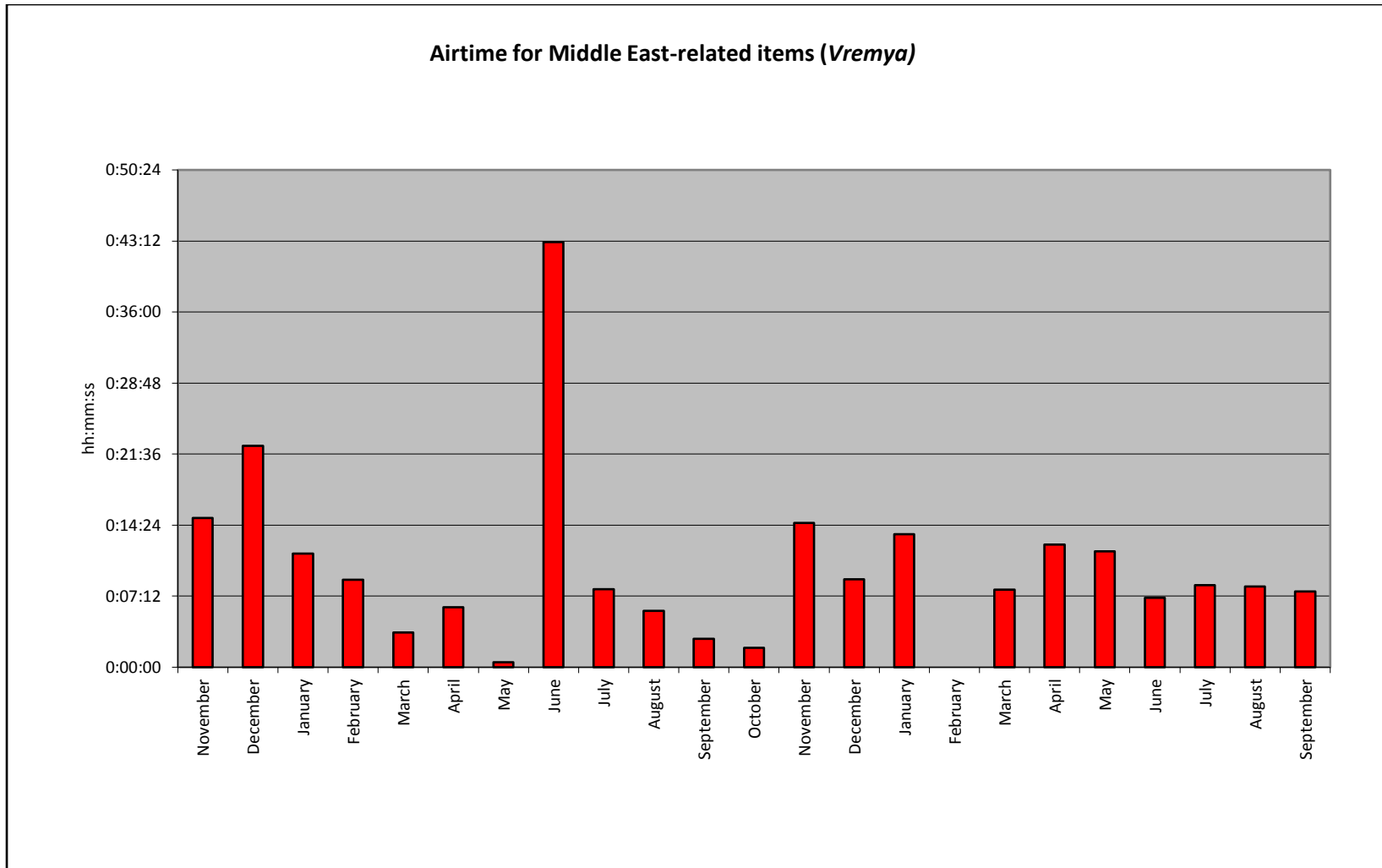


Figure 12 Airtime for Middle East-related stories (*Vremya*)

These figures, which offer an overview of total, international, foreign conflict and Middle East-related airtimes for the broadcasters, provide an initial insight into their differing editorial practices. *News at Ten*'s total airtime is shortest, followed by *20 Heures* and then *Vremya*. The differences in the broadcasters' airtimes for foreign conflict reporting indicate that the highest value attached to this whole sub-section is by *News at Ten* and the lowest is by *20 Heures*. The order alters slightly for the Middle East-related reporting, where the least airspace is provided by *Vremya*. Not only does *News at Ten* have the highest airtime for Middle East reporting but given that its total airtime is the shortest, it proportionately dedicates more of its programme to this subject than the other two news programmes.

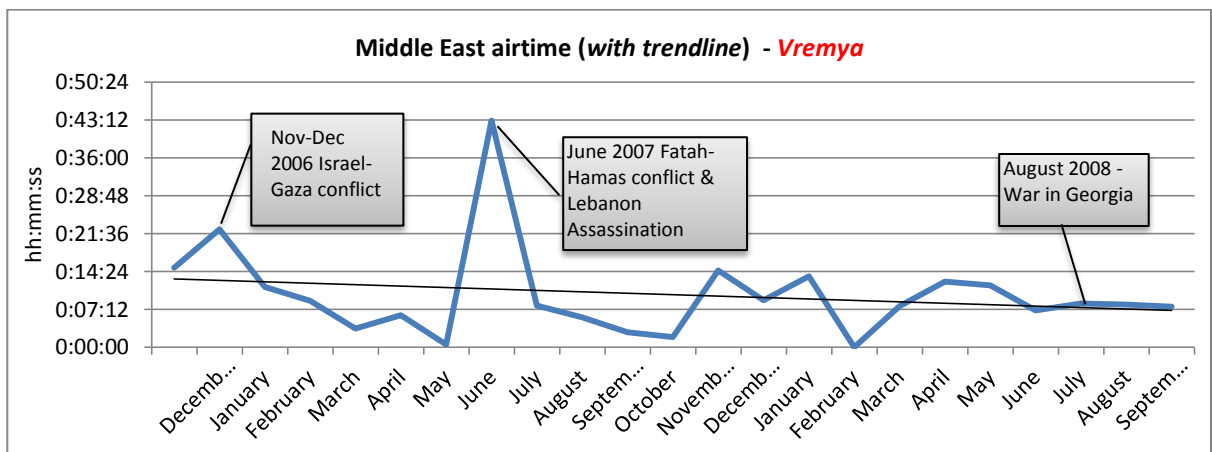
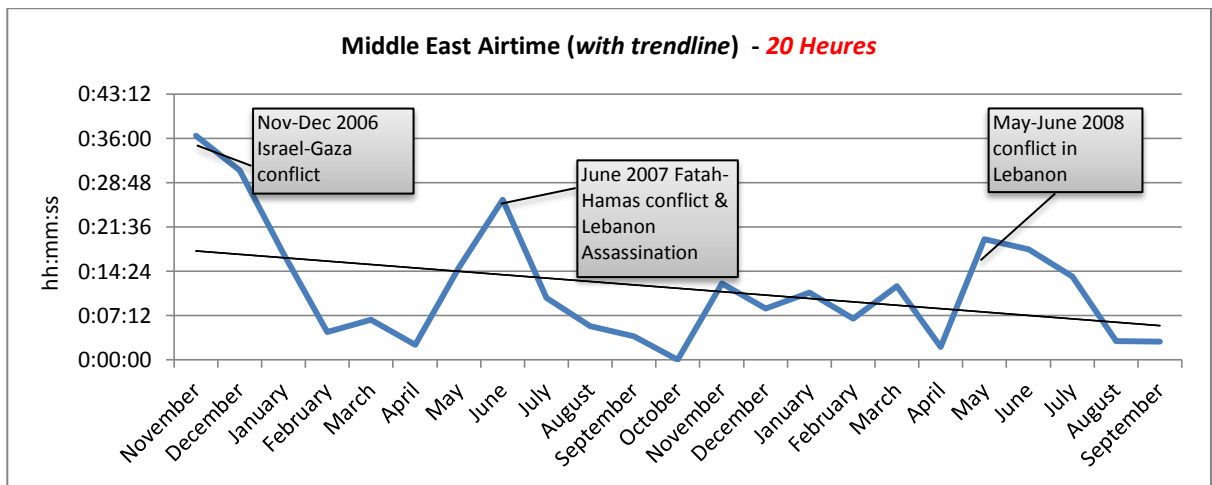
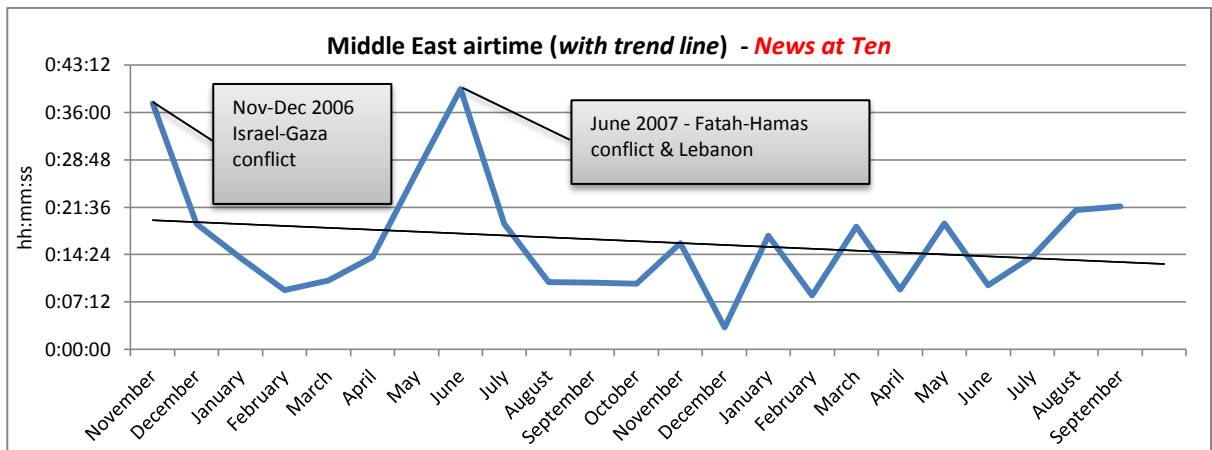


Figure 13 Middle East airtimes for the three broadcasters



### **3.3 Running Order**

Although information on airtime is important in determining the salience of a particular news area, it does not fully explain the value attached to it by a broadcaster and must be considered in combination with the position of that news area in the running order. The running orders of each broadcaster's programmes are therefore now discussed.

#### **3.3.1 *News at Ten***

Considering running order, and of a total of 1043 foreign conflict news items broadcast by *News at Ten*, significant value is attached to this subset. Nearly 50% of all foreign conflict items are shown in the first three slots in the running order and nearly 75% of them are shown in the first five slots from an average of thirteen running order positions per programme (including opening and closing headlines). Similarly, although *News at Ten's* Middle East reporting appears to occupy only a small amount of airtime of the total, its items are positioned relatively high in the running order, with most of these items appearing in slots three to six and nearly 75% appearing in the first six running order positions; this illustrates a high value attached to Middle East items within *News at Ten*. This shows the extent to which the relationship between airtime and running order can be used in cooperation to ensure the salience of an item. For example, although the items are allocated short airtimes, this is compensated by a high position in the running order to heighten salience. However, the positioning of an item in the news agenda does not appear just to be connected with the news values attributed to that item or to the individual influence exerted by editors discussed above. As the positioning of foreign conflict reporting in the running order on *News at Ten* is generally constant, with the majority of items in this subset being shown in the top half of the running order, the positioning of Middle East items is almost guaranteed a slot at least within

that constant band of foreign conflict positions, if not higher if a particularly interesting news story occurs, irrespective of the individual opinions that the editor may have.

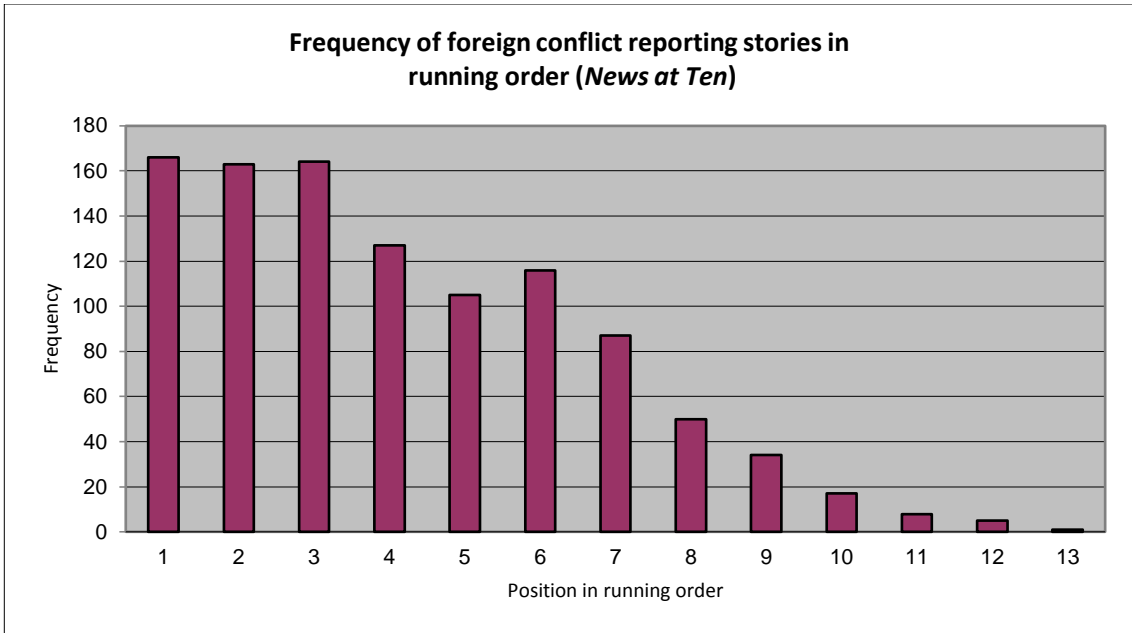


Figure 14 Frequency of foreign conflict reporting items in running order (*News at Ten*)

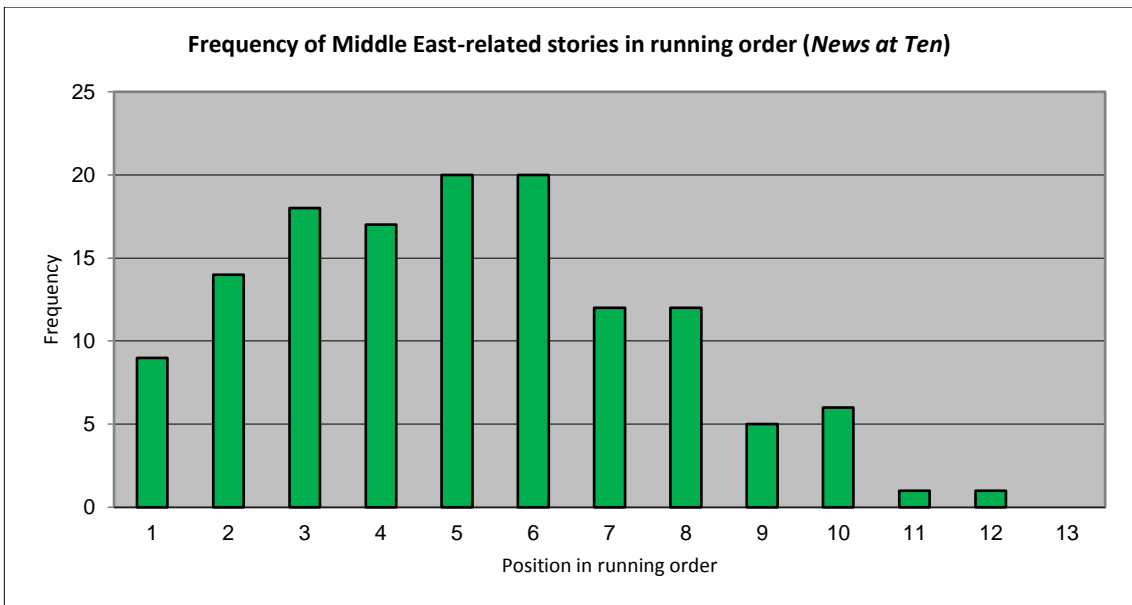


Figure 15 Middle East-related items in running order (*News at Ten*)

### **3.3.2      20 Heures**

In contrast to *News at Ten* where, according to their running order position, foreign conflict reports appear most frequently towards the start of a news programme, on *20 Heures* foreign conflict reports are spread over the programme with a steady number of these items occupying the first positions but shown most frequently towards the middle of the programme. Of a total of 492 foreign conflict items, which represents almost half of that of *News at Ten*, over a third of all these items appear in positions nine to thirteen in the running order of a possible twenty four. This same trend where the frequency of foreign conflict items rises towards the middle positions of a news programme is replicated with Middle East-related reports. Of 184 such reports, fifty-seven appear in positions ten to twelve. Of the five items that gained top running order position, one covered Sarkozy's visit to Israel (23/06/08), three covered assassinations and an attempted assassination in Lebanon (21/11/06, 13/06/07, 19/09/07) and one covered inter-Palestinian attacks in Gaza (17/02/06). Items which were given the most airspace (Israel-Gaza conflict – Lebanese assassination November-December 2006 and Fatah-Hamas conflict June 2007) were generally only allocated middle-order positions suggesting that, although airtime and running order can combine to heighten salience, *20 Heures* attaches relatively low importance to Middle East items which is illustrated by the only average salience of these reports.

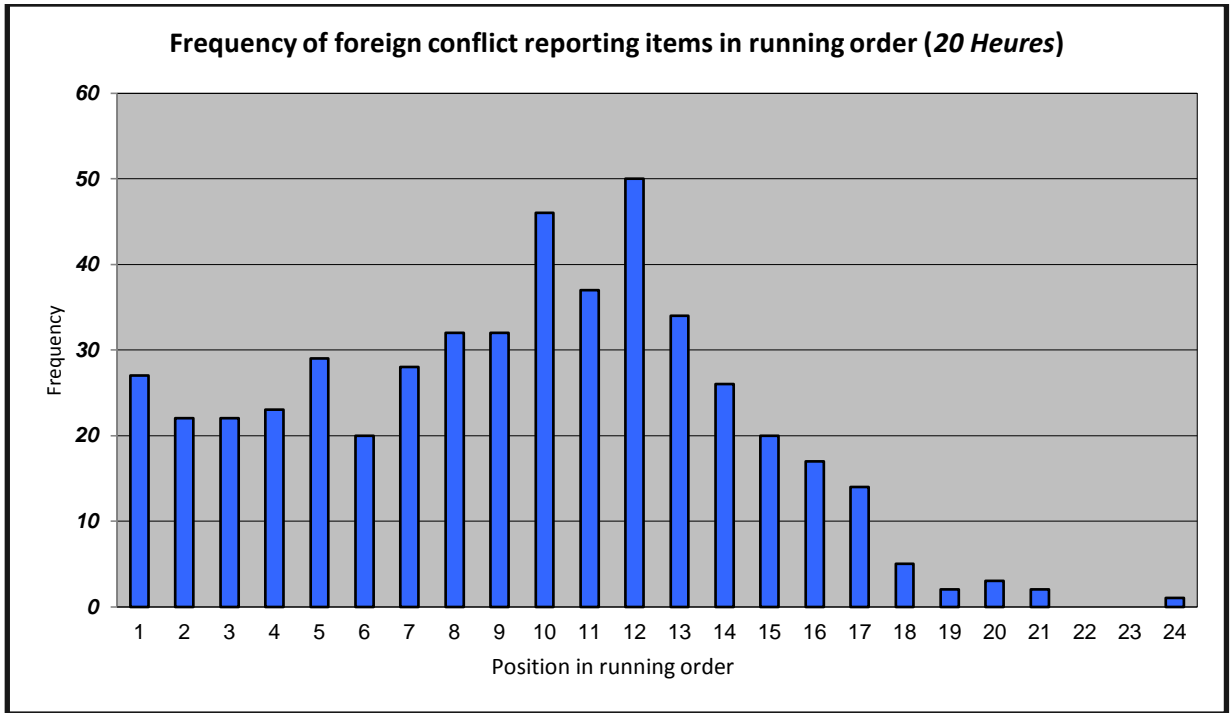


Figure 16 Foreign Conflict-related items in running order (20 Heures)

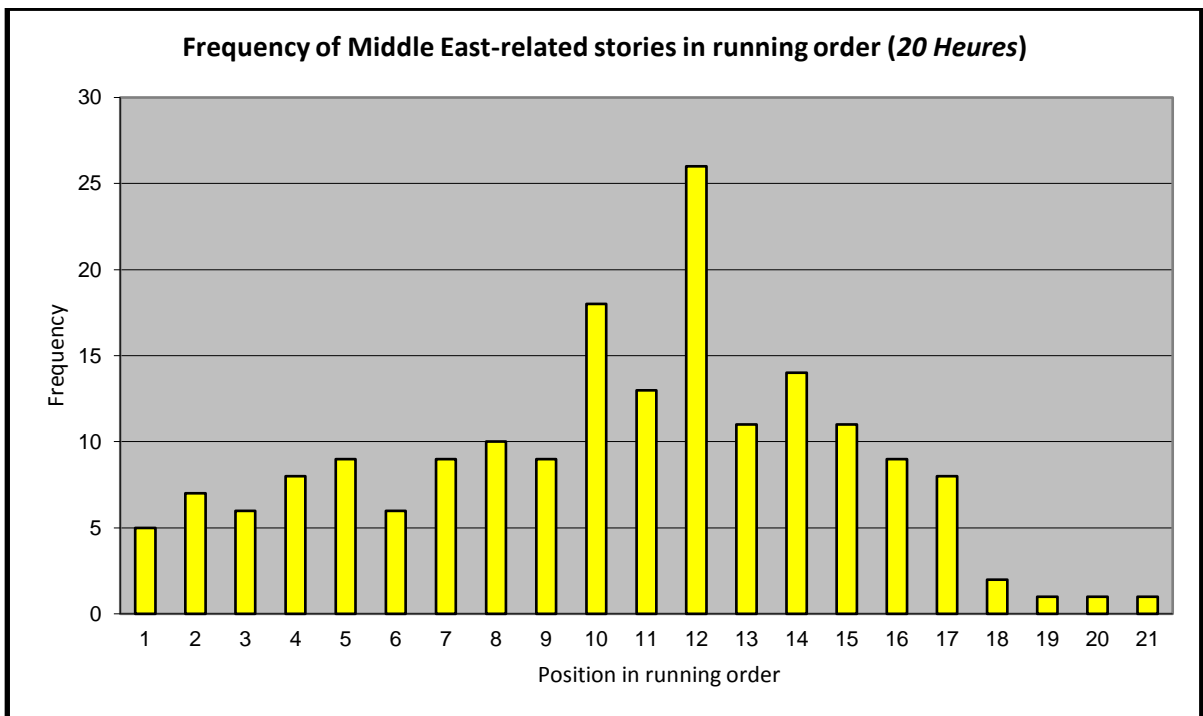


Figure 17 Middle East-related items in running order (20 Heures)

### 3.3.3 *Vremya*

The running order positions of foreign conflict items on *Vremya* are comparable to those of *News at Ten* as they are most frequent in the top positions of news programmes. During the comparison period, 753 foreign conflict items are shown on *Vremya* which is between *20 Heures* (492 items) and *News at Ten* (1043). These positions are reversed for Middle East-related items with *20 Heures* showing the most items (184), *News at Ten* showing 135 and *Vremya* only 108. On *Vremya*, of a possible twenty-four positions, 50% of foreign conflict items appeared in the first six slots and 75% were in the first nine positions showing the importance attached to this subset. Middle East coverage on *Vremya* does not follow the same pattern so closely. Although several stories are allocated the top position, the majority are in the middle-order slots, which contain over 52% of the 108 Middle East-related items. The impact of the almost blanket coverage of the war in Georgia must also be considered when discussing figures for the comparison period. *Vremya* maintains the presence of the Middle East in the news in August 2008 showing four items, three of which are shown outside the period of actual fighting in Georgia. The remaining item, on 11/08/2008, was directly connected with the war and was not a separate Middle East item, as it covered the supply of weapons to Georgia by Israel which, from then on, could only be used defensively.

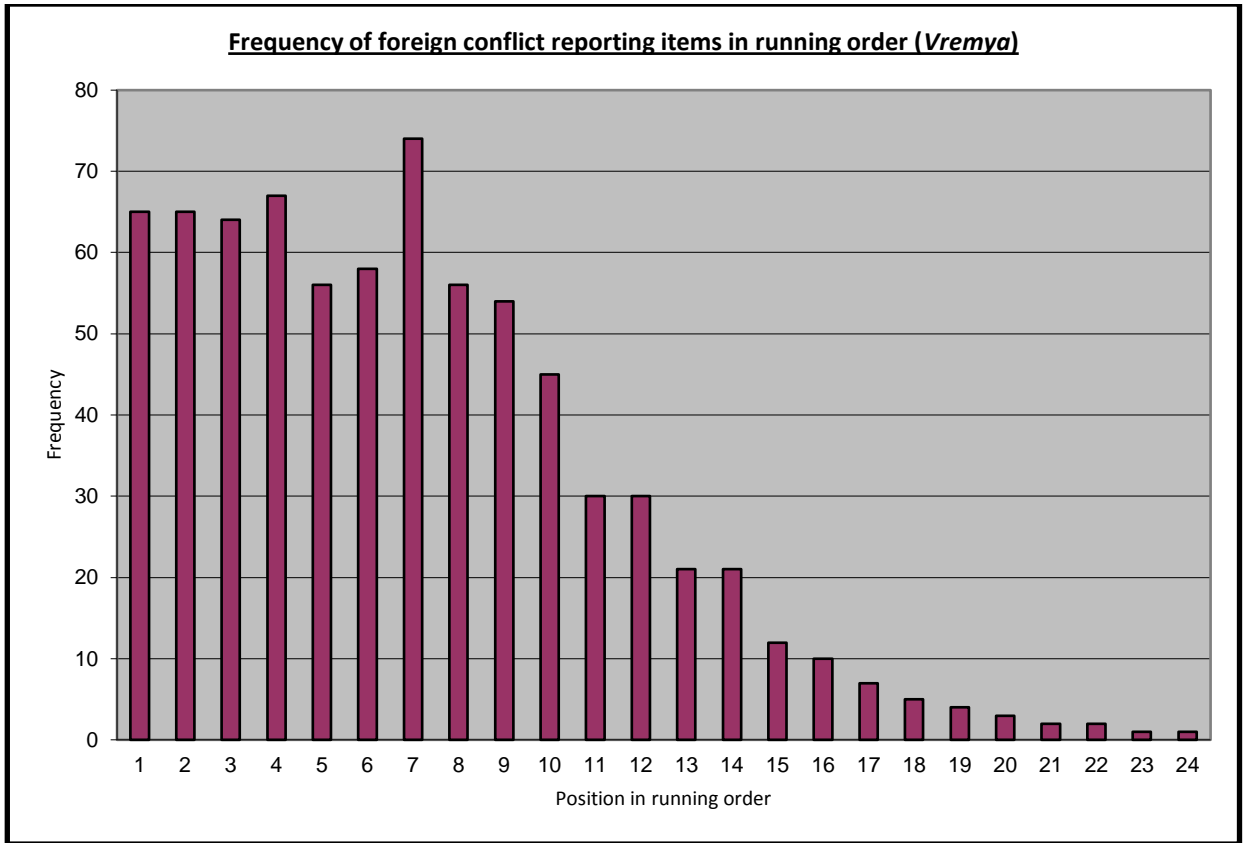


Figure 18 Foreign Conflict reports in running order (Vremya)

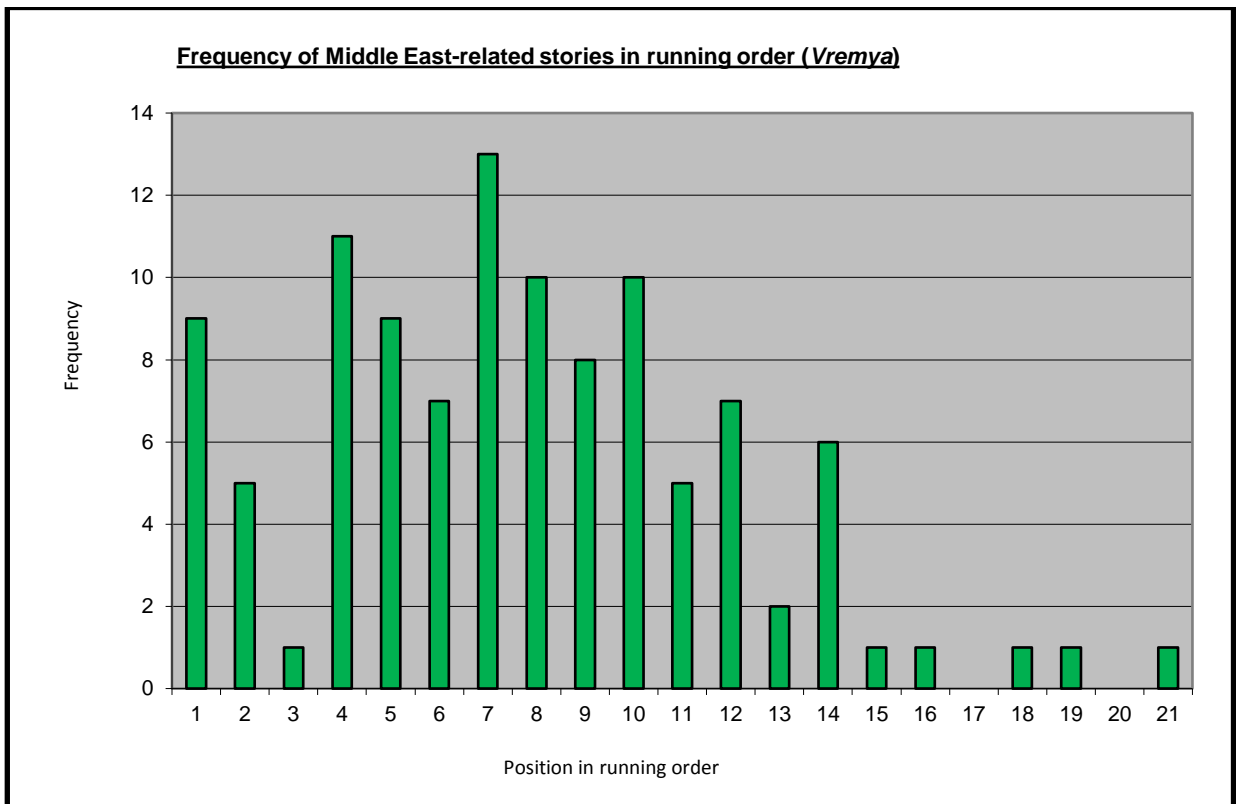


Figure 19 Middle East-related items in running order (Vremya)

These figures illustrate the importance attached to foreign conflict reporting by *News at Ten* and *Vremya* as these items are situated most frequently at the beginning of the news programme. In contrast, they are placed in the middle of the programme on *20 Heures*, which suggests that they are accorded less value. Although this pattern remains the same with *News at Ten's* and *20 Heures'* reporting of the ongoing Middle East conflict, *Vremya* downgrades coverage of these latter stories to middle order slots and they are therefore considered less important within the whole foreign conflict group.

### **3.4 Subject Areas**

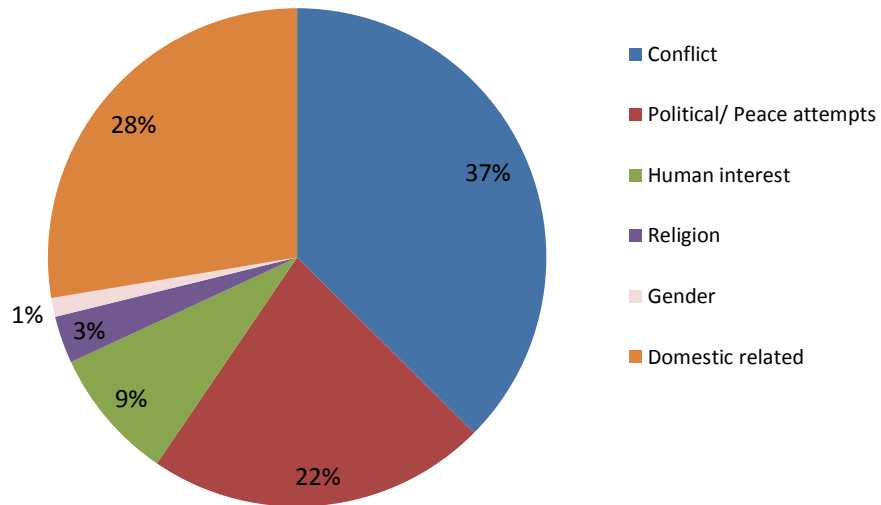
Although the above analysis of airtime and running orders allows an overall picture to be determined of a broadcaster's news provision and the role played by, and the value attached to, Middle East coverage, these figures reveal little about the subject matter of the reports. It is the very diversity of news stories within the ongoing Middle East conflict which enables a broadcaster's news values to emerge. By analysing the management of these diverse subject areas, one of the thesis research questions is addressed by determining how the Middle East is viewed and defined by the broadcasters. The analysis discusses how geographical definitions of the Middle East differ and also whether the chosen subject areas portray the region as foreign news, conflict news or a fusion of both. It questions how relations between a reporting country and the Middle East, and with other countries, are portrayed and whether they reveal tensions between possible post-imperial and post-9/11 narratives in which the Middle East may be viewed as "domestic" or "Other". These varying factors result in the news providers broadcasting their own specific narratives highlighting the role of news values in story selection and also the relevance of the Middle East as a case study. Subject areas are now examined based on the typologies outlined earlier.



### **3.4.1        *News at Ten***

The categories examined above were used to group the subject areas. It soon became apparent that *News at Ten* adopts a particular reporting strategy whereby the overwhelming majority of Middle East-related news items comprised a “main” story which introduced the news item and gained its position in the running order because of a particular news value. This was then used to bring in a secondary news item not necessarily directly related to the main item. An example of this occurred on 15/04/08. The introduction suggested that the report would centre on attempts by Israeli forces in Gaza to capture Palestinian fighters which raised the “conflict” value of the piece whilst, in fact, the remainder of the 3.18-minute item covered the effects on life in Gaza and on being isolated from the modern world. Similarly, on 18/06/07, the introduction to the report by the presenter suggested it would cover the new Palestinian Cabinet. The initial information was that the new Cabinet, excluding all Hamas members, had been sworn in. However, with the exception of these first few seconds, the report focused on the hardships of everyday life faced by the residents of Gaza and the West Bank. Therefore, based on the finding that two storylines run through the majority of the news items, the News on Ten stories are categorised twice. The first category represents the “headline” or “main” category and the second category represents a secondary category, or sub-category, which permeates the remainder of the item.

## Main categories - *News at Ten*



## Secondary categories *News at Ten*

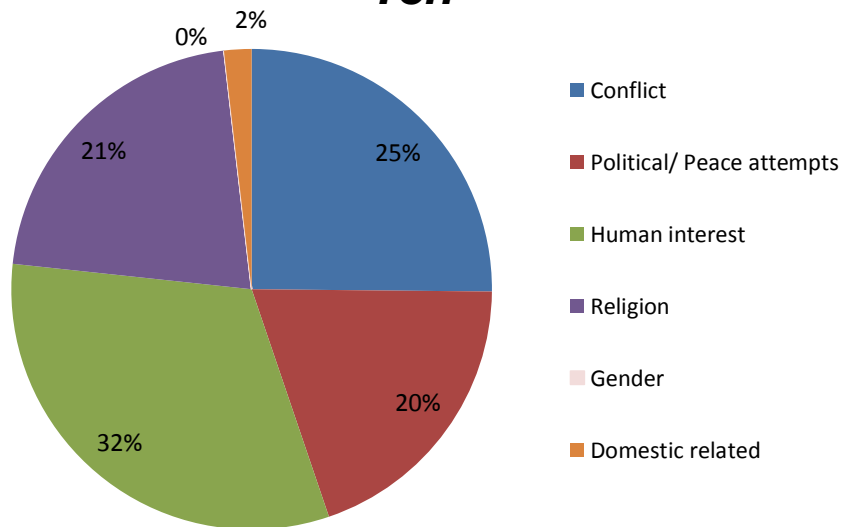


Figure 20 Main and Secondary categories of news items (*News at Ten*)

Categorising the subjects in news reports in this way illustrates that *News at Ten* devotes over a third of its headline news stories to actual conflict, yet the principal secondary category covered by over a third of the stories is in fact “human interest” stories which have already been defined as including general interest stories, kidnappings, exchanges of prisoners, funerals, commemorations and hardship stories. It can also be seen that the next main categories, following “conflict”, are “domestic-related” and “political/peace attempt” stories. It appears that these dual headings within news items have the effect of serving differing purposes: the “main” category highlights important subject areas which initially gain the viewer’s attention and ensures a high position in the running order; and the secondary category is possibly more representative of other values held by *News at Ten* and which might not, alone, have secured a good position in the schedule. In one example on 19/11/07, the item starts with Blair’s announcement of ‘a range of industrial and business projects aimed at revitalising the Palestinian economy’ and, because it is a domestic-related story and therefore of interest to the viewer it rises up the schedule to occupy position number three in the running order. The piece then focuses on sewage in the streets of Gaza and on unemployment and poverty levels, which highlight the humanitarian aspects of conflict reporting which permeate the majority of the Middle East reports. On one hand, these aspects appear to be highly valued by *News at Ten* yet, on the other, they are not considered sufficiently newsworthy to be a story in their own right.

In contrast, the “main category” news items or those which appear in the introduction, such as domestic-related items, are sidelined once the position in the running order has been secured and little further mention is made of them in the remainder of the item. It is during this latter secondary category that *News at Ten* manages to feature religion (ethnicity) and human interest stories in a major part of over 50% of its stories yet on initially examining the

“main category” stories, and had a secondary categorisation not been conducted, these areas might only have expected to feature in 12% of reports (see Figure 20). The majority of these religion (ethnicity) and human interest reports are from Gaza and to a lesser extent from the West Bank. Although this could be expected given coverage of the intra-Palestinian fighting, there are few, if any, reports featuring everyday life in Israel. Humanitarian reports from the Palestinian territories which show victims of fighting, or the hardship suffered by Gaza inhabitants as a result of the fighting and blockades, appear particularly newsworthy. However, this finding only reflects the subject and location of the reports and does not suggest any particular stance adopted by *News at Ten* regarding the actors in each report. More detailed qualitative analysis is required to discuss how these events are framed and how responsibility is apportioned for these situations. But it does reveal the value attached by *News at Ten* to events and circumstances experienced within the Palestinian territories.

Much is revealed about *News at Ten*'s own understanding of the Middle East and the divergence between this and the thesis definition of the Middle East. According to *News at Ten*'s coverage, the Middle East appears limited to the Palestinian territories, and mainly Gaza. Its Middle East reporting is consistently associated with conflict generally and, facing a tight schedule with limited airspace, *News at Ten* prioritises these news stories over any general interest (non-conflict) stories which may arise from the Middle East. Within the broad categories shown above, it selects news stories connected with the international peace process, fighting and the accompanying hardships. Stories about the elite, be they from the UK, the US or elsewhere who are involved in the peace process, are newsworthy and therefore gain airspace. By frequently juxtaposing 'Political/Peace attempt' stories with 'Human Interest' stories within a same news item, *News at Ten* appears to emphasise the disconnection between a remote dominant frame represented by those in power and the

practical realities of the insurmountable situation they are trying to resolve. *News at Ten* attaches great value to this latter area and to the need to raise the profile of the victims of the conflict to the domestic UK audience. Even the few stories which focus on religion, which could provide an opportunity for reports outside the conflict framework, are discussed against this very background. On 23/12/07, a report on Christmas in Palestine is timed to coincide with Christmas festivities in the UK and therefore gives it relevance. However, rather than portraying Christmas as a celebration, the report concentrates on life for Christians under Islamic Hamas rule in Gaza, how they receive death threats and their suffering under the blockade. An overall approach used on *News at Ten* for Middle East reporting is therefore revealed where “bad news” is of greater value than “good news” or even general non-conflict news. This, however, could be considered true of all news values systems, except perhaps the Soviet (and possibly, by extension, the Russian) one (Lendvai 1983: 72).

*News at Ten's* implied definition of the Middle East, both geographically and ideologically, is further developed as it groups this region with militant organisations, and their countries of origin, which are targeted by the war on terrorism. Its emphasis on the conflict when reporting about the Middle East, to the exclusion of general interest stories which may originate in that geographical area, reflects a war on terror narrative in which all branches of militant Islamism are merged into one transnational threat producing victims on both sides of the political division. Lebanon's Hezbollah and Palestine's Hamas are viewed indistinguishably alongside other members within this threat and, in many of the Middle East domestic-related stories, *News at Ten* associates UK politicians and representatives with those of the US in attempts by the latter to stand firm against Islamic militancy, uphold democracy and seek a peaceful outcome in the Middle East.

In short, the principal information given to *News at Ten's* viewers concerning the Middle East centres on a range of subjects within the conflict frame, for example, international boycotts, blockades, fighting and resultant hardships. Although rarely covered in dedicated news items, the peace process is commented upon frequently. It has an almost constant presence in reporters' concluding summaries even when the news item is not directly related to the peace process. Few facts are provided regarding the area geographically, economically or socially outside this frame. Although some information is provided over the course of many reports regarding gender, focusing particularly on women, and religion, these areas are rarely covered as individual news items. Further analysis in addition to this basic categorisation would illustrate how and in what quantities these subject areas are portrayed. A duality of information is provided to the viewer: the first being newsworthy, securing a high position in the running order; and the second revealing *News at Ten's* preferred subject for broadcast which focuses on the humanitarian situation. The broadcaster consistently maintains the Middle East's presence in the news. Despite the fact that this conflict, unlike wars of short duration, encompasses a great breadth of news items, *News at Ten* only selects conflict items, illustrating, even at this early stage in the analysis, the apparent significance *News at Ten* attaches to the foreign conflict aspect of Middle East reporting.

### **3.4.2      20 Heures**

The same categorisation approach was used for the French coverage of the Middle East. *20 Heures'* appears more straightforward than *News at Ten's* as it was not necessary to conduct a secondary categorisation as, largely, only one story is provided throughout a report rather than a main item then a secondary one which is the case with the UK broadcaster. If two news stories relating to the Middle East occur on the same day, they are generally shown

following each other. For example, on 1/12/06, two items are shown in succession. The first covers political demonstrations in Beirut which aimed to change the structure of the government or, failing that, to bring it down. The report, lasting just under two-and-a-half minutes, discusses the paradox in Lebanese politics and how the previous week the Christians were supporting the government following the assassination of Pierre Gemayel yet were now collaborating with Hezbollah in mass anti-government demonstrations. There follows another report from Lebanon of similar duration on Ségolène Royal's visit to the area, her meetings with French UNIFIL troops and her speech at the French Embassy as part of her presidential campaign. This report also touches on French policy in the Middle East. The two stories are reported as separate items yet, because of their positioning after each other in the running order the viewer may not be so aware of this distinction and may regard them as one story from the Middle East. Despite reference being made, during the Royal item, to the political unrest in Beirut, the two items are not associated by any editorial conclusion and no educative element or opinion is proffered by a reporter or expert, which might have been the case on *News at Ten*. The domestic aspirations of Royal are kept separate from the political chaos forming in Lebanon. This illustrates *20 Heures'* less complex manner of reporting in which it attaches specific values to discrete news stories and narratives resulting in them being covered in isolation rather than merged with other narratives. Thus, Royal's three-day Middle East visit is covered as part of the presidential campaign narrative and is not linked to events which are happening and being reported in a different Middle East narrative in the same news programmes.

*20 Heures'* items can now be grouped using the same categories of "conflict", "human interest", "political/peace attempts", "religion" and "domestic-related".

## Main categories - 20 Heures

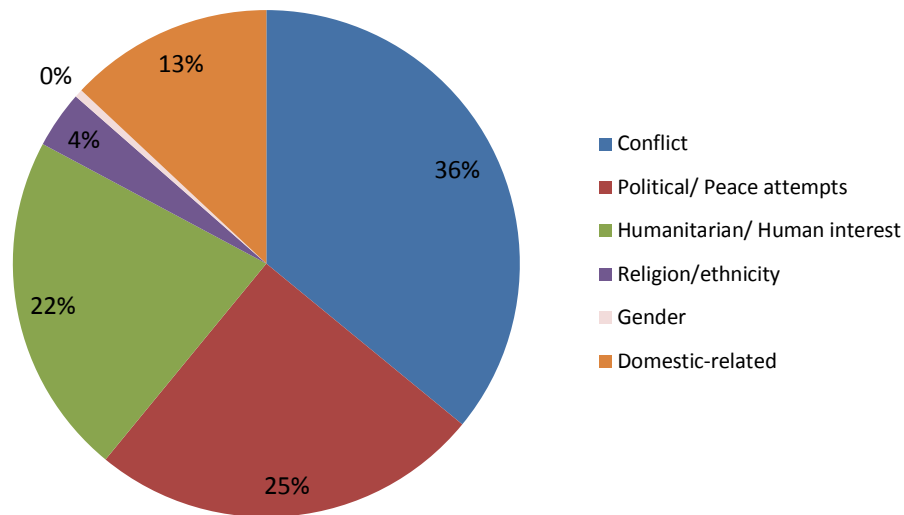


Figure 21 Main categories of news items on 20 Heures

Over a third of *20 Heures'* Middle East-related news stories are conflict-based with almost equal shares (22% and 25%) being human interest and political/peace attempt items respectively. Given that *20 Heures'* reporting results, largely, in separate stories – rather than merged narratives – these figures suggest that the Middle East is not necessarily treated as purely a site of conflict and that politics and human interest stories are considered newsworthy. *20 Heures* deviates from concentrating on conflict reporting when covering the Middle East by broadcasting many wide-ranging human interest and religion stories, illustrating a less restricted interpretation of the Middle East than that of *News at Ten*. It also illustrates, in contrast to *News at Ten*, that reports from this region fall under the rubric of “foreign reporting”, rather than just “foreign conflict reporting”. A particular narrative, which it introduces in November 2006, covers the departure of young French Jews for life in Israel.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This followed increased levels of anti-Semitism in France leading to a call by Ariel Sharon in 2004, and again in 2005, for French Jews to emigrate to Israel (For further details see Lichfield and Jacquet 2004; LeMonde.fr 2005).



This continues over the course of the comparison period with further coverage of French citizens now living in Israel. A report on 14/05/08 reports on life led by young people in the Tel Aviv “bubble”, highlighting many who have moved to Israel from France, far from religion and the taboos of Jerusalem and which concludes that their main aim is to stay in Israel.

Continual links with, and references to, France permeate *20 Heures'* coverage of the Middle East highlighting an apparent need to stress France's global diplomatic importance, especially in such a sensitive region. This can be seen with frequent coverage of official trips by various politicians to the area both before and after the presidential elections, for example, Ségolène Royal (30/11/06-4/12/06), Michèle Alliot-Marie (01/01/07), Bernard Kouchner on several occasions and Sarkozy (22-24/06/08), highlighting the value attached to the Middle East by both politicians and the broadcaster. Such reports contain sufficient coverage of domestic politicians to ensure that their focus can be categorised as domestic-related. France continues to be mentioned in other human interest stories, although to a lesser extent. For example, at Pierre Gemayel's funeral on 23/11/06, it is stated that Philippe Douste-Blazy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, was the only EU minister in attendance, emphasising France's diplomatic status. Similarly, in January 2007, one item mentions the €500m aid for reconstruction promised to Lebanon by Chirac, as it shifts from the conflict-reporting framework to a report on a ski resort in Lebanon to discuss how tourism is suffering from the situation in the country. Another report from Lebanon focuses on a yoghurt factory destroyed in the war by Israeli jet fighters and now only managing to remain in business by using milk imported from France (21/01/07). References such as these raise the newsworthiness of these items and, in combination with items directly focusing on domestic-related stories, illustrate the importance the broadcaster attaches to raising the status of France and creating a positive image of the country.

*20 Heures* provides wide-ranging reporting and demonstrates a broader geographical coverage and a greater diversity of society in the Middle East than that of *News at Ten*. Proportionally more news items focus on Lebanon than the other two broadcasters highlighting France's close connections with that area not only being its former mandate but also because of the close links France had been cultivating with the Arab world and its central diplomatic role in bringing a ceasefire to the region in August 2006 (Horsley 2006). Specific reports on religion are shown, although these only represent 4% of news items, ranging in content from Christmases in the West Bank, Jewish Passover (03/17/07), the ongoing Aliyah to Israel (29/11/06), coverage of a Gay Pride March and to reactions from Orthodox Jews (05/11/06). Such reports illustrate *20 Heures'* broader perception of the Middle East and the manner in which it raises a more all-round profile of life outside the conflict framework. A further example can be found on 08/05/08 in a report on 'Physicians for Human Rights-Israel' which illustrates how Jewish and Arab volunteer doctors cooperate to provide aid to Palestinian patients in the West Bank and how they arrange treatment and follow-up appointments for a young Palestinian teenager in an Israeli hospital. *20 Heures* does not show specific reports on Islamic practices and celebrations. There are, however, programmes which emphasise the use of Islamic propaganda, but these appear in connection with Hamas taking control of Gaza. On 13/11/07, a report tells of the positive reaction of prisoners in a Hamas-controlled prison when they receive reductions in their sentences for every verse of the Quran that they memorise. A similar report on Hamas's use of propaganda, this time via Hamas TV, is shown on 14/05/07 whereby a man-size Mickey Mouse, re-named Farfour, appears in a children's TV series to indoctrinate Muslim youngsters against Zionism. By 06/07/07, a final programme shows how this character, which has become a children's favourite, is actually killed off by the Israelis.

In sum, *20 Heures* provides a wider range of reporting than *News at Ten*. The former does not treat the Middle East as just a site of conflict but provides a broader representation of the region both geographically and within society, including information about everyday life in Israel and various religion events and opinions. The presence of the Middle East in the news, in between “conflict” stories, is therefore maintained by interspersing them with human interest stories particularly from areas with which France has close ties. News items from Lebanon are selected as they portray positive images of France’s diplomatic mission in the region following the Israeli-Lebanon war and its active role in the reconstruction and aid effort. During conflict reporting, information from both sides of the fighting is provided with many parts of reports concentrating on both Palestinians victims and Israeli victims. A high frequency of footage regarding the latter is broadcast from Sderot, the Israeli border town. Particular importance is also attached to news stories with any link to France, its leaders or its citizens.

### **3.4.3      *Vremya***

*Vremya*’s news item selection illustrates an important distinction between the broadcasters. Because this news provider is state-aligned, unlike *News at Ten* and *20 Heures*, the perceived newsworthiness of stories and subject areas on *Vremya* is largely determined by imposing state-related news items on the news schedule. This either overrules the lists of news values established based on Western media, or raises the meaningfulness value of items by emphasising or “imposing” cultural similarity and a sense of identification with the audience (Galtung & Ruge 1965). The emphasis placed by *Vremya* on domestic-related items during the comparison period is particularly high and represents 29% of total coverage. Similarly, many of the “political/peace attempt” items gain value either because of Russia’s involvement in a news item – for example, heightened importance is attached to the role of the Quartet – or

because references are made to other countries which may not necessarily be positive or whose positiveness is reduced in order to boost Russia's image. Negative reporting of other countries emerges during coverage of the political demonstrations in Lebanon when *Vremya* uses this opportunity not just to report on events in Beirut but to make cutting remarks about Europe. *Vremya* comments on the speed with which Europe has reacted to the events sending a UK-German mission to Lebanon and on the fact that the EU stated that the demonstrations should be halted and not be allowed to interfere with the work of the Lebanese government. It goes on to contrast this reaction with that of the EU two years previously when, in a similar situation, the latter supported the demonstrators in Kiev protesting against a government which was not sufficiently loyal to the EU (3/12/06, 10/12/06).

The imposed newsworthiness attached to the State, state policies and its leaders are identified by analysing the contents of news items using the same categories as for *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* (Figure 22).

## Main categories - *Vremya*

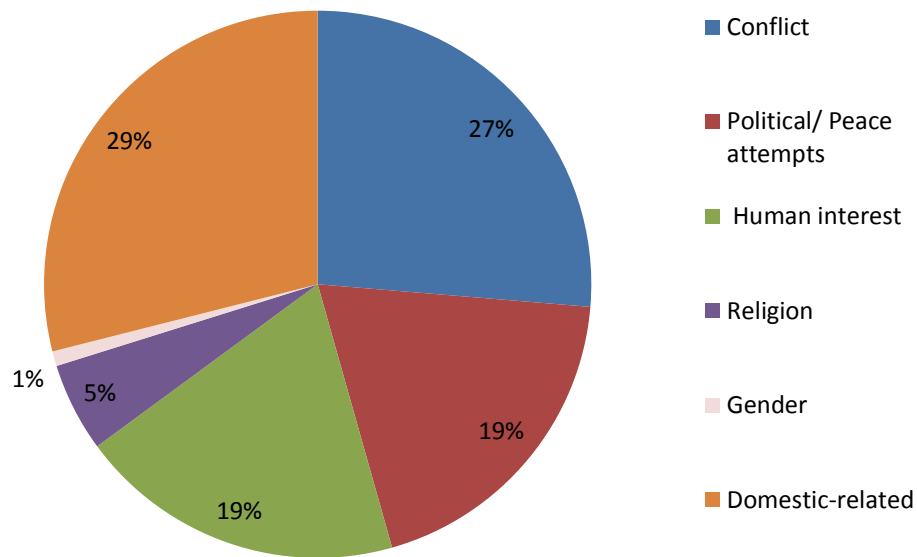


Figure 22 Main categories of news items in *Vremya*

As with *20 Heures* and for the same reasons, only one categorisation was conducted using the same groupings of “conflict”, “human interest”, “political/peace attempts”, “religion” and “domestic-related”. The results show that although Middle East reporting was initially considered to be a subset of foreign conflict reporting, more items are domestic-related than conflict-related. Although the reports may be conflict-related, the dominant category and main focus are Russia, its citizens, former citizens, policies or leaders. As with *20 Heures*, and in contrast with *News at Ten*, *Vremya* provides broad coverage of the Middle East, maintaining the latter’s presence in the news both inside and outside the conflict framework. In view of the fact that over a million Russian-speaking citizens of the FSU live in Israel and the economic and geo-political significance of Israel to Russia, the latter is keen to encourage the influence of its own diaspora in the national identity. This emerges in the many non-conflict-

related reports which focus on Israel and contribute to the construction of a narrative which centres on the need to maintain the relationship between Russia and an ethnic Russian group in Israel with ethnic culture, values and character (Ben-Porat 2011: 82). In this narrative, the Russian-speaking group is defined loosely and is not limited to “Russians” but citizens from the Former Soviet Union and generally referred to as compatriots (*sootchestvenniki*): an interesting reflection of how Russian national identity is now constructed and its relationship with Soviet identity. This is found in many reports such as Russia’s success in achieving visa-free travel for its citizens to and from Israel (January – March 2008) and the Channel 1 Football Cup held in Israel (8/12/06, 16/10/07, 25/1/07, 23/01/08). This narrative and the emphasis on domestic-related news items result in Israel being portrayed as a homeland, like other countries, with everyday events and lifestyle as befits a Russian-speaking diaspora, rather than as just a site of conflict which is the case on *News at Ten*. Such reports include, amongst others, coverage of an Israeli travel company which drags clients into buying timeshares by giving them ecstasy (11/11/06), strikes by civil servants (21/03/07), neo-Nazi crime (10/08/07), an apology issued by the Israeli authorities to the Beatles for cancelling their concert in 1965 (28/01/08) and a light-hearted report on an Israeli university which has created a robot receptionist (01/02/07).

The conflict and humanitarian categories, respectively representing 27% and 19% of coverage, extend *Vremya*’s focus on Israel and the Israelis’ way of life in the conflict. They illustrate the priority placed on items about Israel rather than Palestine or Lebanon which are generally only covered in connection with conflict events. There are reports about civil defence drills in Israel and the requirement for bomb shelters in each community (08/04/08) and, following a Hamas attack on a Jewish school, reports are broadcast on levels of security and technology required in Israeli settlements to ensure safety (10/03/08). *Vremya* offers this

information almost to the exclusion of the Palestinians yet coverage of humanitarian suffering as a result of the conflict is still considered newsworthy. There are reports on Palestinians using cooking oil as fuel in the Gaza Strip (26/05/08) and frequent references to cuts in food and fuel supplies. However these items are shown because of their personalisation and negativity news in contrast to reports on Israel which are given imposed newsworthiness through identification with the Russian-speaking diaspora. Thus, *Vremya* defines the Middle East as various entities: a “conflict-free” Israel, on one hand, providing a homeland to the Russian-speaking diaspora; an Israel suffering the consequences of war; and the Palestinian territories and Lebanon which are sites of conflict.

Imposed state-related news items on *Vremya* permeate the religious frame in which reports are not provided on the religious practices and celebrations of Jews or Muslims in the Middle East. Instead reports only appear newsworthy if they focus on references to Russia. For example, Easter in Jerusalem is reported by highlighting that sacred fire is to be brought from Jerusalem to Moscow for the preparations for the forthcoming Easter mass (07/4/07), an Orthodox festival in Jerusalem is covered as it involves Russian nuns and re-creation of Russian cuisine (12/04/08), and also active steps by Russia to buy Russkoye Podvorye, a complex of buildings in Jerusalem that used to belong to the Russian Orthodox Church but was sold to the Israeli authorities by Soviet leader Khrushchev, are covered in detail (19/12/07, 04/07/08).

The analysis of the subject areas foregrounded as part of *Vremya*'s Middle East coverage suggests an approach to foreign conflict reporting which is similar to that of *20 Heures* but contrasts with that of *News of Ten* given its broader scope and inclusion of non-conflict-related stories, which indicates the complex maze of reporting possible when covering the

Middle East. Coverage of the close connections between Russia and the Russian-speaking diaspora in Israel is extensive and permeates many frames and yet, although imposed by a state-aligned broadcaster, this approach not only provides a more all-round image of a region at war, but also reveals more about the values and culture of that region thus shifting coverage of the Middle East from “foreign conflict reporting” to the broader “foreign reporting”. Overriding the newsworthiness of other subject areas, *Vremya* attaches particular significance to the positive role of Russians, Russian leaders, services and institutions in the Middle East which reflects Putin’s desire to raise Russia’s global diplomatic status and also characterises the news provision of *Vremya*.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the first of the main objectives of the thesis by examining the accommodation and salience of foreign conflict reporting within the overall agenda and its interaction with domestic and international news on *News at Ten*, *20 Heures* and *Vremya*. It has provided a preliminary analytical overview and offers a backdrop to the qualitative analyses in subsequent chapters. It has also highlighted any principal differences in state-news value dynamics between the seemingly comparable news providers and has examined how they have constructed different representations of a same region of the world. This was achieved by using a quantitative approach to analyse the overall airtimes and running orders of the news programmes and the typology of subjects in the broadcasters’ Middle East coverage. Four principal areas of interest were considered in order to help establish the news providers’ news values. These included the accommodation of international, foreign conflict and Middle East news within the corresponding news agenda; the allocation of airtimes and running orders; the hierarchy of subject areas; and a possible dynamic between news values and political systems.



The focus on the Middle East has highlighted the broadcasters' treatment of a conflict which contains many potentially newsworthy issues occurring simultaneously. Its continuing nature, resulting in parallel portrayals of conflict situations and ongoing situations, both distinguishes the Middle East from other examples of conflicts and helps identify how diverse news values influence portrayals of conflicts. This is seen in the hierarchy of subject areas which is consistently apparent in the three broadcasters' coverage. *News at Ten* prioritises coverage from within the Palestinian territories and emphasises conflict coverage and humanitarian issues to the exclusion of most general interest news stories. The Middle East is portrayed on *News at Ten* through images from Gaza and the West Bank and is treated as purely a site of conflict and only news items related to this general framework are considered sufficiently newsworthy to be broadcast. *20 Heures* provides broader coverage to include more detailed information about events in Lebanon and France's associated diplomatic role and also about everyday life in Israel and various religious events and celebrations. Information covering Israeli victims is also provided during the actual conflict reporting and priority is also given to news stories with any link to France, its leaders or its citizens. *Vremya* offers an even broader scope in its reporting by including many non-conflict related stories, particularly covering Israel. Again the Middle East is not purely a site of conflict and *Vremya* uses the overall conflict narrative as an opportunity to emphasise the close connections between Russia and the Russian-speaking diaspora in Israel.

Both differences and similarities in the broadcasters' coverage emerge as a result of the quantitative analysis. All three news providers construct a media map of the world which reflects their own past and present and select items with imperial links whilst striving to create a new post-imperial diplomatic role. Of the three broadcasters, *News at Ten* attaches most importance to both foreign conflict reporting and to Middle East reporting,

demonstrated by the lengthy airspace devoted to these areas and to their high ranking orders in the schedule. *Vremya* also values foreign conflict reporting but, like *20 Heures*, places its Middle East reporting more centrally in the line-up reducing its salience. Although the broadcasters were selected as being comparable, because, amongst other reasons, they are all either public sector broadcasters or state-aligned broadcasters, their news provision reveals a state-news value dynamic which displays the gradually increasing presence, and possibly influence, of the nation in the news selection process, from *News at Ten* to *20 Heures* to *Vremya*. This is most apparent on *Vremya* whose news values are the most influenced by the State. It is subject to imposed news values, which overrule more established lists of news values creating a new and different one which places the importance of the role of Russians, Russian leaders, services and institutions in the Middle East at the top of the subject hierarchy and illustrates that one global list of news values is unrealistic. On *20 Heures*, which is part of France Télévisions, a system with a long history of state intervention, news items related to French politicians, policies and citizens are particularly newsworthy but not to the extent displayed on *Vremya*, where domestic-related items gain top priority which changes the emphasis in foreign conflict reporting from the event, its causes and victims to Russia, its solutions and achievements. Although domestic-related items and state issues do have specific news value on *News at Ten*, other stories which fall into different subject matter categories are perceived as having equal or greater newsworthiness, which all highlights a principal difference between seemingly comparable news providers.

The initial overview of the broadcasters' news provision and their coverage of the Middle East has revealed that although they are, to a degree, structurally comparable, and although they may cover shared matters of concern, the differences in national identities which they portray for their countries and resultant news values produce unmistakably different representations.

The analysis, thus far, is limited as it only offers a quantitative response to the main objective of the thesis which is to determine the shaping of foreign conflict reporting by news values systems. It has examined the broadcasters' agenda-setting, establishing which items are in the schedule, how frequently they appear and their positions in the running order. This serves to demonstrate how the salience of certain aspects of their reports can be raised. A substantive qualitative analysis of the broadcasters' news values is now required to assess why these items appear as they do in the schedule. It determines which ideological and ethical principles shape the reporting and how such reports of the Middle East are culturally inflected. This enables us to gain a fuller understanding of the broadcasters' representations, as outlined above, and provides an analysis of their treatment of, and response to, events in the Middle East.

#### **CHAPTER 4: ANNAPOLIS 2007: CONFLICT OR CONFERENCE?**

This chapter builds on the quantitative assessment in Chapter 3 and develops the assessment of European reporting of foreign conflict, post-Cold War and post-9/11, by analysing the first of the case studies: the Annapolis conference of November 2007 (hereinafter the conference). Details of the conference are found in Chapter 2. The event triggering these reports is a peace conference rather than flashpoints in the conflict thereby acknowledging the integral part played by peace talks in foreign conflicts. These talks, which are geographically distanced from the main violence of conflict, are attended by global leaders each with potentially contrasting agendas yet all prepared to be seen participating at such talks. Representations of the many states, their policies and representatives and their interactions in the newly-realigned post-Cold War and post-9/11 international arena surface in the broadcasters' reports. This does not mean that the conflict, or the effects of the conflict, is not included in the news providers' coverage of the conference. Indeed, a section of most of the reports focuses on the conference and the remainder concentrates on its agenda. The conference also illustrates that the scope of foreign conflict reporting is not limited to the immediacy of fighting and violence but also includes the peace process.

Several areas of enquiry are pertinent when discussing coverage of this international conference, given that the main objectives of the thesis situate the overarching analysis within the context of the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods. For example, the manner in which state policies are portrayed and whether the broadcasters align themselves with these allows perceptions of the respective state-channel relations to be confirmed or refuted. Possible influences of the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods on interpretations of the Middle East and its coverage will emerge and will illustrate whether the reporting nations appear bound by the concepts of Cold War power blocs or whether new relations and

allegiances are, or have been, forged. Using the conference as a reflection of the international arena, the broadcasters' view of their reporting countries' global situation will become apparent as will the development, stagnation or deterioration in relations with other countries. Within the same context, the chapter provides an initial indication of overall perceptions of the Middle East and whether it is viewed as an ongoing conflict or as connected with the war on terror by the international community rather than as a discrete entity. Balanced or imbalanced portrayals of the protagonists in the conflict are also examined, for example, bias towards one or other of them, or towards one particular element of the conflict.

To address the research questions, this chapter uses agenda-setting to situate the conference with regard to airtime and positioning in the running order, both within that day's schedule and within the news schedule for previous days. This enables me to identify particular agenda-setting patterns associated with the event and allows the values of consonance, continuity and composition to be discussed. Through reference to the newly-defined values encountered in the case study, I establish a hierarchy of values for each news provider. The hierarchical importance attached to the power elite, to elite nations and to individuals and groups, which accentuate the personalisation (human interest) value of an item, is analysed. I examine the news reports qualitatively and respond to the main research questions by considering the images and texts produced by news values. I explore content which is both explicitly and implicitly conveyed, through the choice of words or images. I present comparative information regarding the airtime allocated to the conference by each news provider before discussing the reports in turn, starting with *News at Ten*, then *20 Heures* and finally *Vremya*.

#### 4.1 Airtime

Coverage of the conference by the three news providers was comparable both regarding total airtime in minutes and the number of days the coverage lasted. *News at Ten* allocates the greatest airtime, reflecting its heavy emphasis on international news reports (9.36 minutes over three days) (see Figure 23). *20 Heures* allotted 7.11 minutes over four days and *Vremya* had the shortest coverage in terms of both airtime and number of days on which reports were shown (5.31 minutes over two days). These figures must be understood within the context of the total programme times and the findings in Chapter 3 regarding airtimes and the significance of the Middle East in the overall schedule.

	Total airtime (mins) (A)	Total programme airtime for respective no of days (B)	(A)÷(B) %	No of reports	No of days
<i>News at Ten</i>	9.36	66.21	6.20	3	3
<i>20 Heures</i>	7.11	147.45	1.05	4	4
<i>Vremya</i>	5.31	72.28	3.84	4	3

Figure 23 Total airtime, number of reports and days dedicated to the Annapolis conference by the news providers

Date broadcast	<i>News at Ten</i> (mins)	Total <i>News at Ten</i> (mins)	<i>20 Heures</i> (mins)	Total <i>20 Heures</i> (mins)	<i>Vremya</i> (mins)	Total <i>Vremya</i> (mins)
25/11/2007	3.34	17.50	2.19	37.54	-	-
26/11/2007	2.40	23.47	0.32	36.32	1.11	45.49
27/11/2007	3.22	24.44	2.44	37.59	3.35 0.45	26.39
28/11/2007	-	-	1.36	35.20	-	-
Total	<b>9.36</b>	<b>66.21</b>	<b>7.11</b>	<b>147.45</b>	<b>5.31</b>	<b>72.28</b>

Figure 24 Airtime per Annapolis news report

## 4.2 *News at Ten*

*News at Ten* reported the conference over a three-day period with a two-day build-up to the actual event (Figure 24). Its conference coverage is divided into two sections: one which focuses on the conference and its proceedings and the other which concentrates on the conflict itself and the reasons behind it. This reflects the reporting strategy noted in Chapter 3 whereby reports by *News at Ten* comprise a main story which introduces the news item and secures its position in the running order because of the particular news value it reflects. This is then used to introduce a secondary news item not necessarily directly related to the main item. Day one of the coverage outlines certain issues on the conference agenda and highlights attendees and then reports from Jerusalem showing bar mitzvah celebrations and discussing Palestinian refugees, contested control of Jerusalem and the fears of Palestinians given expanding Israeli settlements. Day two introduces the conference, stating its importance, and then shows aerial shots of the Middle East which highlight the proximity of Israel and the Palestinian territories. Discussions of Israeli settlements follow with comments from both sides. Reports on day three concentrate on the conference and include close-ups of speeches by Bush, Abbas and Olmert, concluding with a lengthy explanatory piece-to-camera by Jeremy Bowen, the Middle East editor.

The lengths of the reports were similar and, given the findings from Chapter 3 that it is the story on *News at Ten* which dictates the length of the item rather than the story having to be adapted to fit a fixed airtime, this illustrates that importance is consistently attached to the conference. The running order position rises in the approach to the day of the conference shifting from near the bottom, to the middle, and then to the second item on the schedule. As noted in Chapter 3, *News at Ten's* items are structured so that they are introduced by the anchor who presents the main facts about an item, followed by subsequent reporting by

correspondents with specific knowledge of the event. Here, there are two correspondents: Jeremy Bowen (25/11/07 and 27/11/07) and Paul Wood (26/11/07). Bowen, as Middle East editor, offers in-depth comment on items which cannot but serve to influence the opinion of viewers.

It is worth emphasising the role of the correspondent in BBC news and particularly Jeremy Bowen, the Middle East editor. As a result of the Balen report,<sup>9</sup> Bowen was appointed to a newly-created role in 2005 which was 'designed to enhance our audience's understanding of the Middle East; and to provide extra commentary, focus and analysis to an increasingly complex area of the world' (BBC Press Office 2005). He would 'explain the complexities of the [Middle East] conflict' to tackle the audience's 'high level of incomprehension' (BBC News Channel 2006), a situation which is, presumably, the product of BBC's own previous reporting. As a result of this remit and as a direct policy decision, Bowen is allowed to use his 'professional judgement' to comment on events. He must, however, still remain within the impartiality limits laid down in the BBC Agreement (Department for Culture Media and Sport 2006). The term 'professional judgement' was used widely in a BBC Trust report (2009) from an inquiry into complaints against Bowen for infringing impartiality and accuracy guidelines. This was in connection with a BBC News Online article into the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and an item on BBC Radio 4's *From Our Own Correspondent* into Israeli settlements. The Trust report, which ruled against Bowen on four of the twenty four complaints, was itself criticised for its poor structure and for suggestions that it would result in increased tensions between the lobby groups on both sides. Pro-Israeli groups insisted the BBC should "take concrete steps" to combat its "chronically biased reporting" of

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<sup>9</sup> The Balen report was a report into alleged anti-Israeli reporting by the BBC, written by Malcolm Balen in 2004. Following several court cases, the BBC succeeded in blocking a Freedom of Information request to release the report to the public.



the Middle East’ whilst Palestinian groups felt that their fears about the BBC’s lack of impartiality were confirmed (Holmwood 2009). Such criticism is not unique to Bowen. Orla Guerin, BBC foreign correspondent, as one of many examples, was accused in 2004 of ‘deep-seated bias against Israel’ by the Israeli government following a report on a would-be teenager suicide bomber (McGreal 2004). Guerin was relocated to South Africa in 2006. Complaints such as these, which emphasise the BBC’s standing internationally and the assumed influence attached by many to its reports, highlight the contentious nature of reporting this conflict and illustrate that, however carefully worded the BBC’s guidelines may be, impartiality can only be an aspiration and not an achievement.

Day and date of broadcast	Position in running order	Duration (mins)
Sunday <sup>10</sup> 25/11/2007	5th of 7	3.34 mins
Monday 26/11/2007	6th of 11	2.40 mins
Tuesday 27/11/2007	2nd of 10	3.22 mins

**Figure 25** Position of item in running order and duration (*News at Ten*)

Because of the international nature of the conference, it is possible that its coverage will have been pre-planned and may have been allocated designated slots in the schedule, usurping other foreign items. The predicted nature of the event, which raises its compositional value, has elevated its newsworthiness even before its contents are discussed. This explains the lack of associated subjects acting as indicators in the schedule which relate to the Middle East or to other international talks (see Appendix 1). Also, the fact that most Middle East items appear in slots three to six and nearly 75% appear in the first six running order positions is

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<sup>10</sup> The length of weekend news programmes was approximately 10 minutes shorter than weekday news programmes.

reinforced here illustrating the high value *News at Ten* attaches to Middle East items regardless of the actual topic under discussion (see Chapter 3).

#### **4.2.1 Reporting the conference**

Although the items on the conference gain their position in the daily news schedule through their predictability (a contributor to their composition value), the primary news value influencing the status of these reports is their elite nation and power elite content. The introduction to all three reports concentrates specifically on the role of Bush and America at the conference with only two reports referring to other attending countries (Syria and Saudi Arabia). Given the location of the conference, it is reasonable for the report to refer to Bush and the US but because it downgrades and even omits the involvement of other world leaders, some of whom also spoke at the conference, the importance attached to the US's and Bush's global status by *News at Ten* becomes instantly apparent. The UK is not portrayed as a major player at the conference: there are no interviews with UK representatives and only one fleeting image of Blair,<sup>11</sup> the former Prime Minister, is shown beside Condoleezza Rice in the conference audience. The focus of interest is transferred from the domestic elite nation to one with similar established status which, here, appears to be the US, capable of representing the UK's viewpoint at the conference, at least for the purposes of reporting the event. The US is a plausible choice, not only as it is hosting the event, but also because it is a close UK ally both pre- and post-9/11 and the Cold War. On becoming Prime Minister in June 2007, Gordon Brown reasserted the special relationship between the two nations and the 'same enduring values about the importance of liberty, opportunity, the dignity of the individual' (BBC 15/07/07). This was despite his emphasis on pursuing multilateral, and particularly European relationships, rather than solely the US-UK alliance. It was also in the

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<sup>11</sup> Blair was appointed the Quartet's Middle East Envoy in June 2007 (BBC News Channel 2007b).

light of UK public unease with British involvement in the Iraq war and the Blair-Bush alliance. Although it reports the conference using the US as a central figure, *News at Ten* displays contradictions in its attitudes to America, which might leave viewers unsure whether the opinions they are receiving support those of some of the UK's population or those of the government. These contradictions illustrate challenges to state-channel relations, as the news provider appears torn between representing the government's stance towards the US whilst still backing that of the public, its audience.

Despite the dominance of the US, Israel receives significantly more mentions (twenty seven) (Figure 26) over the course of the three programmes, illustrating its apparent importance to *News at Ten*, at least from a quantitative viewpoint. It is followed by Jerusalem (eleven) which, although it is not a country, must be considered as an individual entity, due to its contested nature within the conflict. The US also gains more attention than a projected Palestinian state and the territories, demonstrating the uneven airtime given verbally to the various nations. As stated, there is also no mention of the UK, Europe or the Quartet, despite likely audience interest in these actors, indicating that the overall *News at Ten* coverage is somewhat imbalanced since it allocates greater airtime for references to Israel overall. This also suggests that the *News at Ten* is distancing itself from the conference and its organisers, and from the US whose role in the conference is treated with constant scepticism throughout.

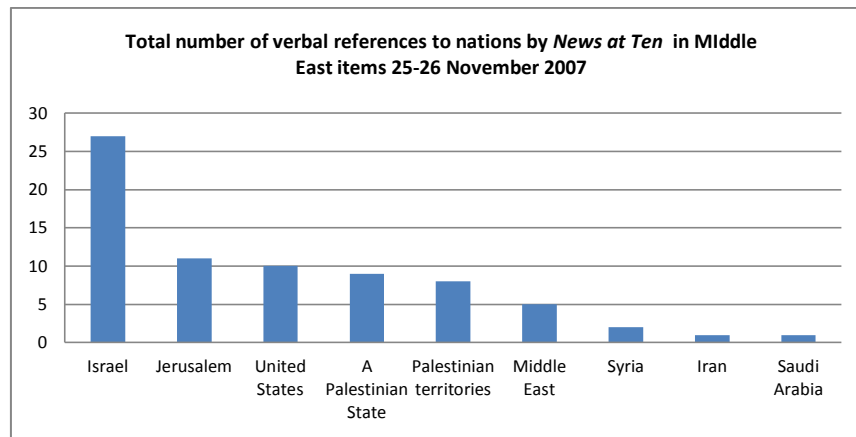


Figure 26 Total number of verbal references to nations by *News at Ten* in Middle East-related items 25-27 November 2007

*News at Ten's* scepticism regarding the conference's success punctuates the items. The anchors promote the conference as being the 'most significant',<sup>12</sup> the 'most serious', and 'the first major talks in seven years' (26/11/07). It is compared with the 2000 Camp David Summit, with the implication that this is a great opportunity in the peace process, yet no context or details are given regarding the success or failure of the 2000 Summit to which the conference is being linked. Although *News at Ten* boosts the conference in this way, it appears inevitable from its reports that the talks will fail. No further positive descriptions of the conference occur, highlighting *News at Ten's* struggle to align itself with why this particular conference is being held. The anchor introduces subsequent elements as 'reports on some of the obstacles to any agreement' (26/11/07) and the conference is often referred to as 'very ambitious' (Bowen 27/11/07) and denigrated to being 'talks about talks' (Wood 26/11/07) and that it is 'no wonder that so many people think [it] will fail' (Bowen 27/11/07).

<sup>12</sup> Given that this thesis encompasses a combination of three languages, all quotes will be in, or will be translated into English, unless the meaning of a particular word or phrase is difficult to convey in English. In this case, both languages will be shown.

The anticipated failure of the conference is associated with several aspects of both the talks and the conflict. In particular, President Bush and the US are treated with a degree of distance bordering on derision. It is made clear that Bush, approaching the end of his second term in office, has his own agenda in organising the conference. Bowen cynically comments that Bush is 'backing the Israeli-Palestinian talks business for the first time in seven years' (27/1/07) as he 'needs a legacy' (27/11/07) and a 'deal by the time he leaves office' (Wood 26/11/07). The fact that Bowen portrays the conference as 'flawed' (27/11/07) and doomed to fail is in no way connected to the UK, or even Europe or the Quartet, and responsibility is laid at America's feet. However, the global status of America still emerges, as does the fact that it is only with the latter's backing that the talks could succeed: Bowen states, 'this has to be seen as an opportunity [...] because the Americans are behind it' (27/11/07). The importance, and even dominance, of the US's role at the conference, emerges on many levels including, for example, a staged photo opportunity of Bush and Abbas against a clichéd American informal setting complete with lavish Christmas decorations adorning a grand fireplace. The importance of the conference, and the status of its host, continues to be reflected in other images. There is frequent footage – evocative of Hollywood movies – showing convoys of speeding armoured limousines, transporting VIPs to the talks, and security services around the conference building busily whispering into communication devices. All of these visuals portray a high-status, but clearly manufactured image of America. The cumulative effect of *News at Ten's* stories is that it is almost gambling on the failure of the conference by choosing to dissociate the US from other nations, highlighting the former and absencing the latter, in the expectation that the US will be held accountable for the failure.

Although *News at Ten's* correspondents appear prepared to provide sceptical reports on Bush's involvement in the conference, reflecting a certain disaffection amongst the

population of the special relationship between the UK and the US, they and the anchor are less willing to acknowledge any UK responsibility for its part in the conflict. By failing to give sufficient context (a criticism levelled at the BBC in previous analyses of its Middle East coverage),<sup>13</sup> the reports refer to the Middle East's history without any reference to the UK. The anchor states the issues considered important on the conference agenda as the 'creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, questions about Israeli settlements and Palestinian refugees and the future of Jerusalem' (25/11/07). Yet, when discussing the background to the current situation, Bowen only refers to dates forty and sixty years ago, 'when Israel was created nearly sixty years ago' (25/11/07), and 'the Wall was captured by Israel along with large areas inhabited by Palestinians forty years ago' (25/11/07). No attribution of responsibility associated with the creation of Israel, and the consequences thereof, can be found. Bowen removes the UK from any involvement in the Middle East's past and the UK is disconnected from the situation affecting the many 'Palestinian families who lost their homes when Israel was created' (27/11/07). This illustrates the influential role of public sector broadcasting in reprogramming cultural memory by manipulating the remembering and forgetting of an existing reporting country's role in a conflict (Halbwachs 1992). *News at Ten* effectively re-positions itself so that it can adopt the role of a judicious and blameless onlooker permitted to comment and pass judgement on the actions of others involved in this conflict and the overall situation in the region.

Although possibly understandable within the confines of daily news programming, this insufficient context, or perhaps *News at Ten's* technique of omission, is not limited to exonerating the UK from blame in the Middle East and to detaching it from its part in history.

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<sup>13</sup> An independent panel was commissioned in 2006 to examine the impartiality of BBC coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict 'with particular regard to accuracy, fairness, context, balance and bias' (BBC Trust 2006).

It also emerges in connection with other attending and non-attending countries. One significant omission is that of Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip and which boycotted the talks, reasserting, prior to the conference, its resolve not to recognise Israel or relinquish any of Palestine (Kershner and El-Khodary 2007). It is only the concluding piece-to-camera in the last report that briefly mentions Hamas, stating that it controls Gaza, but this is not sufficiently emphasised to correct any impression previously formed that all Palestinians are represented, not only at the conference, by the Palestinian National Authority which just governs the West Bank, part of the Palestinian territories. This forms a confused and inaccurate characterisation of the Palestinians for viewers and the broadcaster does not discuss the effect of Hamas's absence from the conference and the fact that an Israeli-Palestinian peace would therefore have to be negotiated between Fatah and Israel. Subsequent case studies in later chapters highlight how *News at Ten* further distinguishes Fatah from Hamas, splitting the region into 'us' and 'them' with Fatah, in this case, being portrayed as a suitable partner for negotiations.

*News at Ten* continues to undermine the US and associate it with the conference's lack of success through the fact that it names few other nations present at the conference, other than the US, Israel and the Palestinians. This is a global conference involving fifty nations (see USA.gov 2007) yet despite the multipolar nature of the world only two of the representative attendees (Syria and Saudi Arabia) are mentioned. No broader context is provided which could explain the apparent significance, reflected by their important position in the introductory sentences to two of the reports, of their presence at the conference. Although the lack of context may be caused by time pressures, it has the effect of sidelining positive diplomatic actions by the US. The presence of Saudi Arabia, a pro-Western and pro-US Arab state with no diplomatic relations with Israel, could be viewed as a US accomplishment as, on

one hand, it would represent a boost for Abbas in gaining an agreement with Israel. On the other, it would also help Olmert as he could use this to convince Israelis that peace with the Arab world might be facilitated. Leading up to the conference, Bush had placed sanctions on Syria because of the latter's alliance with Iran, support of Hezbollah and Hamas and attempts to destabilize Iraq. No background information is offered by the correspondents or the anchor on *News at Ten*. The US's current potential readiness, at least for the duration of the conference, to work with Syria, which was in opposition to the former's allies – Saudi Arabia and Egypt – is not made clear. These single omissions simplify the shifting, and albeit complex, global relations between the East and West erroneously; Syria and Saudi Arabia are consolidated by the anchor into one group representing 'Arab nations' (26/11/07) and providing an unclear definition of the Middle East region for viewers.

The fact that particular countries are mentioned in conjunction with unspecified and blurred national allegiances enables *News at Ten* to present a specific construction of the world. Although the subject of the conference is the Middle East conflict, there are several hints that the latter is not necessarily part of, but is being acted out against the backdrop of, the war on terror. The significance of the Arab world's role in achieving any form of peace is apparent as are the tensions which exist between it and the US. No other power bloc is mentioned, underscoring the importance of the relationship between America and the Arab nations. At the level of the conference, the conflict is viewed as a discrete entity yet, in the reports from the Middle East, there are assertions which associate the Palestinians with terrorists. One such contention is made clear in an interview-to-camera by Netanyahu, leader of the opposition party, Likud, which reveals an imbalance in coverage between Israelis and Palestinians. He is afforded the opportunity to implicitly link the Palestinians with Islamic Jihad, al-Qaida and Iran's proxies, stating that if Jerusalem is transferred to Palestinian



control, 'what they'll do, what they'll blow up, [...] could offset something that is so monumentally disastrous [...] it will be the beginning of a conflict we cannot imagine' (25/11/07). By allowing an Israeli politician to make this statement, warning of the dangers of the war on terror spreading to Jerusalem – which he considers to be Israeli soil – and the item creates an “us” and “them” situation with Israel firmly bracketed with the former. No counterbalance is given to Netanyahu and no individual of equivalent status is shown. Instead, a Palestinian, who built his house in infringement of the plans creating a town crisis between Israeli and Palestinian officials, is interviewed, accompanied by sombre images of male companions wearing traditional Palestinian keffiyehs. Bowen implicitly accuses the Israeli officials of lack of reason here. However, this is far outweighed by attention accorded to insinuations made by Netanyahu mentioning the Palestinians in the same sentence as al-Qaida.

The link between Palestinians and terrorism is also alluded to in the brief concluding piece-to-camera. The only visual images of Gaza are of mass demonstrations by thousands of Arabs, including many veiled women, carrying banners, described as 'demonstrating against the new Annapolis process' (Bowen 27/11/07), illustrating the force of the Palestinians' opposition to the Western-backed conference, about which *News at Ten* may indeed be sceptical. Labelled as under the control of the powerful Hamas, a group proscribed by the UK Home Office (2011), the Palestinians in Gaza are portrayed en masse as a dehumanised, anonymous horde. As a result, *News at Ten's*, or perhaps Bowen's, apparent desire to humanise rather than collectivise the conflict is contradicted (Media Lens 2008) and a certain tension between *News at Ten* and its editor is apparent. This contrasts with the manner in which politicians, sanctioned by *News at Ten*, and individuals in the street are presented using close-up images and whose statements and opinions are heeded respectfully. The fleeting reference to events

in Gaza is almost so brief as to raise questions about its inclusion in the report. Yet its newsworthiness lies not only in the “visualness” news value of the vast numbers of those demonstrating against a Western initiative (the conference) but also in its meaningfulness or consonance value as the viewer can associate the strength of feeling of this demonstration, which represents a culture opposing Western values, with many similar images frequently shown by news programmes which connect unrest in the Middle East region with the war on terror.

#### **4.2.2        Covering the conflict**

Coverage of the conference itself represents only part of the airtime in the first two reports, but all of the third report. The remainder of the time provides limited context to the conference agenda in which *News at Ten* is keen to reduce the conflict to the level of the individual and to humanise it. This is not just because images of human interest events are newsworthy but, following decades of Cold War reports in which national-level relations dominated, it now appears important to highlight the effects on individuals of decisions taken at conferences such as that in Annapolis. *News at Ten* covers both the Israelis and the Palestinians and discusses points on the conference agenda from Jerusalem, Israel and Palestine. However, the framing of the Israeli viewpoint is at times more positive. Reports on Israel always appear before those on Palestine and the Israelis are portrayed as victims, seemingly justified in their need to be certain of their security and in being fearful of a final border negotiation. Although Jewish settlements are discussed by the correspondents and appear in the footage, and although Wood states that they ‘drive a wedge deep into Palestinian territory’ it is intimated that, under a peace deal, the ‘Jews’ would be the

immediate victims, as they would be forcibly removed from certain settlements (26/11/07).<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to *20 Heures*, there is no discussion of Hamas, Fatah or fighting by any of those involved. These reports concern ordinary Israeli and Palestinian people and emphasise the ongoing nature of this conflict.

*News at Ten's* use of human interest stories is newsworthy for viewers because of their personalisation value, and the sympathetic treatment of settlers, mentioned above, can be seen as part of the same humanising frame whereby all ordinary people can be victims, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity or religion. *News at Ten* also uses human interest stories to emphasise another aspect connected with its predicted failure of the conference: the intransigence of both sides in the conflict. Irrespective of the order in which the sides appear in the reports, each is portrayed as equally uncompromising in its attitude towards the other. Despite the dominant portrayal of Israel's position, through increased references, airtime and order within items, which again reflects a certain imbalance in *News at Ten's* reporting, the intractability of the Palestinians is noticeable. The two sides are not compared on an equal basis, as the Israelis are broadly identified as Jewish, through both verbal and visual references in the correspondents' narrative, and therefore have a religious basis to their claims, thus validating the very foundation of Israel (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008). An Israeli settler calmly states in an interview, 'the simplicity of the matter is, is that this land belongs to the Jewish people, and the Jewish people are coming home' (Lea Goldsmith, settler 26/11/07) – a statement which appears unchallenged and with no counter example. This definition is not exclusive to coverage of religious ceremonies or interviews

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<sup>14</sup> This interpretation of the coverage may be relevant here, but would be a generalisation if applied to all reports. During the comparison period, Bowen, for example and as already mentioned, broadcast several critical reports of Israeli policies regarding settlements, to the extent that complaints were brought against him before the BBC Trust and which the latter partially upheld (2009). The complaints did not concern television broadcasts but rather an article on BBC Online News (2009) and a BBC Radio 4 radio item.

with religious representatives but extends to the frequent coverage of settlements which are also described as 'Jewish'. This is not only inaccurate but also conflicts with the BBC's Key Terms (2010) which states that 'settlements are residential areas built by Israelis' and warns journalists to 'be careful over whether you mean "Israeli" or "Jewish": the latter might imply that the story is about race or religion, rather than the actions of the state or its citizens'. This breach of guidelines may also be perceived as implicit acceptance by *News at Ten* of the West's endorsement of the state of Israel revealing news values which, as mentioned in Chapter 1, 'are nowhere written down, formally transmitted, or codified [... yet] widely shared between the different news media and form a core element in the professional socialisation, practice and ideology' (Hall, Critcher et al. 1978: 54). In contrast, *News at Ten's* definition of "Palestinian" is not supported by the weight of religion and could be understood as the state, or its citizens, who could be of any political or religious opinion, from any geographical area which they live in or lay claim to, refugees or those living in Israel. The intransigence of the two sides is further reinforced visually through images of stone-throwing Palestinian civilians and retaliating uniformed Israeli soldiers, the dominance and strength of the latter resulting in injuries to Palestinians. The visual power of the images is such that it negates the correspondent's accompanying narrative which justifies the actions of the Palestinians who are struggling to access their fields because of the construction of a new settlement. Instead, they are portrayed as agitators or troublemakers who flout the law and create disorder.

The lengthy editorials provided by the correspondents both during and at the end of the news items reinforce *News at Ten's* stance and elevate Paul Woods, the correspondent, and Jeremy

Bowen,<sup>15</sup> the Middle East Editor, from the status of mere reporters.<sup>16</sup> The latter, in particular, and who reports on two of the three days, is given considerable airtime. Over the course of the comparison period, the credibility of his reports is further strengthened by his status as a well-known figure, even a household name.<sup>17</sup> He leaves viewers in little doubt that, although they should be sceptical about the conference's success, attempts to promote peace processes such as these, 'however flawed and however difficult', must be seized 'because the consequences of failure could be very grave' (27/11/07). The emphasis on Bowen's serious tone in his pieces-to-camera and the close-up shots of him highlights the status of the editor on *News at Ten* and underscores the 'politically toxic' complexity of the conflict (27/11/07) and the intransigence of the sides, from the politicians in Annapolis to the individuals in the Middle East. The reports on the immensity of the conflict are strewn with supporting statistics and lists of impenetrable problems: 'deciding how much occupied land Israel will keep, and what about Israeli settlers and Palestinian refugees? 4.5 million Palestinians who want to return to homes now in Israel, and 450,000 Jews settled in the occupied West Bank and in East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law...' (Bowen 27/11/07). Although the use of these statistics illustrates that *News at Ten* openly recognises that Israel is in breach of international law, it also allows the narrative to focus again on the humanitarian aspect of the conflict and the number of displaced persons, regardless of their ethnicity.

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<sup>15</sup> Bowen could already be considered a celebrity in his own right having hosted the BBC morning TV news programme *Breakfast*, presented documentaries and appeared on panel game shows.

<sup>16</sup> Correspondents provide context to, and opinions about, an event whereas a reporter provides fact-based accounts.

<sup>17</sup> This "celebrification" value, merged with negativity and threshold values, is perfectly illustrated on 11/5/08 when a news item from Tripoli, Lebanon, becomes newsworthy: the camera follows Bowen as he is shot at and runs to safety.



Figure 27 Bowen's pieces-to-camera on *News at Ten*

This section has addressed *News at Ten's* portrayal of existing state policies and also revealed state-channel relations in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods. The analysis of *News at Ten's* use of elite nation and power elite news values has highlighted its complex portrayal of the conference. Imbalanced coverage has emerged in Israel's favour on one hand and regarding the US on the other. The broadcaster is not fully prepared to endorse the latter, an ally of the UK, in its peace attempts but still acknowledges its global status. *News at Ten's* perception of the Middle East in relation to the war on terror is also apparent, as is its perception of the futility of war and the associated peace process through the human interest stories in the reports.

#### 4.3 20 Heures

A contrasting representation of the conference emerges on *20 Heures*. Figures 23 and 24 show that the total airtime allocated to the conference by *20 Heures* (7.11 minutes) is less than that of *News at Ten* (9.36 minutes). However, the fact that the conference continues over four days rather than three, with an additional report summarising the event on the day after its conclusion, raises its salience. Day one comprises a brief introduction to the conference then a report on the power held by Hamas over Gaza and its intimidation of Fatah politicians and members. Day two shows a brief reminder of the conference (thirty-two

seconds) and summarises the agenda. Day three concentrates more on the conference itself and intimates a level of optimism regarding the outcome of the event. This is despite the larger part of the item being used to frame Hamas negatively whilst balancing this with the need for the Israelis to stop settlement building so that the negotiations can succeed. The report on the last day, 28/11/07, summarises the conference outcomes but quickly moves the viewers' attention to Nablus and the role of the police as they maintain law and order, especially in the face of al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. *20 Heures*, like *News at Ten*, uses a blend of news readers or anchors and Middle East and Washington correspondents, the latter providing expert analysis (Renaud Bernard, Gérard Grizbec, Alain de Chalvron).

Day and date of broadcast	Position in running order	Duration (mins)
Sunday 25/11/2007	11 <sup>th</sup> of 18	2.19 mins
Monday 26/11/2007	10 <sup>th</sup> of 16	0.32 mins
Tuesday 27/11/2007	9 <sup>th</sup> of 17	2.44 mins
Wednesday 28/11/2007	14 <sup>th</sup> of 20	1.36 mins

**Figure 28** Position of item in running order and duration (*20 Heures*)

The lengths of the reports fluctuate: that on day two is very short, serving only as a reminder of the next day's conference. The reports are not consistently representative of the findings in Chapter 3. On one hand, they are situated in the middle-to-bottom half of the running order which concurs with earlier findings. On the other, there are few international items aired over these four days (Appendix2), which contradicts Chapter 3's findings, possibly because they have been usurped by the broadcaster's focus on the Villiers-le-Bel riots, in north Paris. This highlights the importance attached to Middle East reports, especially on 27/11/07 when the conference is the only international report in the entire news programme. As with *News at Ten*, the reports concern an internationally planned event and its consequent predictability

raises its news value through the concept of composition, allowing it to be included in the news agenda in advance. The conference need not blend in with an existing schedule of news items as its inclusion would have been pre-planned. Similarly, there are no related subjects in the schedule which act as indicators.

#### **4.3.1 Reporting the conference**

Although the conference is the main subject of *20 Heures'* four reports, only a small proportion – in contrast to *News at Ten* – is devoted to events in Annapolis. The majority of the broadcaster's airtime focuses on providing viewers with extensive context which does not appear balanced and is representative of the French state's stance regarding the Middle East, as detailed in the Introduction. *20 Heures* frames its reports so that support for Israel and concern for the latter's security emerges throughout the news items and the broadcaster aligns itself with the state's policy of pursuing a new diplomatic role either alone or in association with the EU, in the post-Cold War international arena. It not only appears to endorse a positive approach towards Israel, but reinforces it by portraying a negative and blurred image of the Palestinians. The main objective of the conference according to *20 Heures* is the requirement that the Palestinians and particularly, but not exclusively, Hamas, stop their attacks on Israel whilst action by the latter to reduce its settlement construction is always secondary.

Such implicit endorsement of Israel is apparent in the brief report on 26/11/07. Despite reference to the presence of both the Palestinians and Israelis at the conference, the report contains very few images of Abbas. Instead, *20 Heures* appears to endorse the US-Israeli relationship and concentrates visually on combinations of Olmert, and Olmert and Bush engaged in convivial conversation at a press conference. The conference has news value



through its predictability, as on *News at Ten*, and, to a lesser degree, through its power elite and elite nation status. The latter are barely stressed and over the four reports, the negativity value of intra-Palestinian fighting supersedes any value held by the elite at the conference.

Compared with *News at Ten's* cynicism, *20 Heures'* reports on the conference are almost dismissive. Little information on the conference's status or purpose is provided, except that it will try to re-launch the Middle East peace process and that Olmert and Abbas have arrived and are meeting in America, all of which illustrates the scant elite value the broadcaster considers the event to have. In contrast to *News at Ten*, there is no verbal indication about the size or significance of the conference, no explanation about the host city, and, without the visuals, it would be hard to determine the scale of the event as there is no information regarding the attendees or their number. The anchor does state, however, on 25/11/07 that Iran, Hamas and Syria will not be participating (contradicting the other two broadcasters' information and also that of the US, which state that Syria will attend (USA.gov 2007)), but there is no contextual explanation why this is significant. De Chalvron, *20 Heures'* Washington correspondent, offers no verbal judgment about other participants and the focus is on Olmert and Abbas with little mention of Bush, who is not accorded added status or credit for hosting the event, except for reference to the US being a 'very active mediator' (27/11/07).

Visual images are crammed, in rapid succession, into the limited airtime allocated to the conference itself to compensate for some of the missing information: planes landing, limousines, conference halls full of delegates, banks of journalists, and images of Olmert, Abbas and Bush shaking hands on the podium. That France does not play a major role in the conference is another reason not to focus overly on the event. Despite this, *20 Heures* is not disparaging about the US hosting the event. This non-critical approach by the news provider

to the attempt by the international community to re-start the peace process illustrates the important diplomatic role it considers France to have in both this very community and as an EU intermediary. The actual conference is framed positively with de Chalvron providing reasons for hope: a deadline, a working method, Israeli and Palestinian leaders who are prepared to meet, a lively facilitator in the US and a will to succeed. He manages a fleeting reference to Bernard Kouchner, French foreign minister, who appeared 'very moved to have been present at the birth of a Palestinian state' (27/11/07). No close-ups of other nations' representatives are shown and the focus is kept on Bush, Olmert and Abbas on the podium with it being implied that, however positive *20 Heures* and its correspondents appear to be, there are more important areas for discussion, through which the broadcaster's stance and that of France could emerge.

*20 Heures* finally provides detailed explanations of the conference agenda using bullet points on 27/11/07, elaborated by the correspondent and accompanied by associated images, which draw the viewers' attention to certain issues. When discussing this list, the correspondent, Gérard Grizbec, allocates the greatest airtime to Israel's security demands, reflecting France's commitment to Israel's security (Economist 2007; Behr 2008). This particular point on the agenda is listed first, against visual images of masked Hamas gunmen, Palestinian demonstrators shooting guns, and rockets being launched, reinforced by Grizbec who states that Hamas refuses to recognise Israel and that it regularly fires rockets at the latter, thus justifying Israel's demands. The next point covers the end of settlement building and is the only image over the four days which concerns Israel. This short verbal segment mentions forced removals from settlements in Gaza but also the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank accompanied by visual images. Subsequent points are mentioned in quick succession with the relevant visual images, for example, images of Jerusalem, Palestinians

and national flags. Much information is broadcast and, superficially, it appears that balance between those involved in the negotiations is achieved in this section, but by listing the Israeli demands first and by allocating them more airtime, the overall impression is that the Israelis, although they must resolve key issues regarding settlements, are confronting a serious terrorist enemy represented here by Hamas, and at no point over the course of the reports is the Palestinian viewpoint regarding the Israelis discussed.

The introductory section to each report not only presents the conference but makes it clear from the outset that Hamas – a label which is used interchangeably with ‘Islamists’ or the ‘Islamist movement’, terms which are reserved for manifestations of extremism – is portrayed throughout as the main protagonist in the conflict. *20 Heures* espouses state policy echoing Sarkozy’s fear that a ‘Hamastan’ in the Gaza Strip may be the start of radical Islamists’ control over all the Palestinian territories (France Diplomatie 2007). This stance is immediately apparent on 25/11/07 when Hamas is described as considering Abbas’ team to be traitors. The former is therefore portrayed as being in opposition to the conference, which France appears to support.

#### **4.3.2 Reporting the conflict**

*20 Heures’* denigration of Hamas continues throughout, and forms the major part of its reports, which associate the conflict with the war on terror. Two distinct groups within the Palestinians are identified: the peaceful (Fatah) and the terrorist (Hamas). This confirms *20 Heures’* endorsement of French state policy towards the region, enabling the broadcaster to frame Fatah positively and raise the status of the conference, as the main parties involved in the negotiations – Israel and Fatah – are not depicted negatively. Any part played by France in the conference, even its alliance with the host nation, can then be sanctioned. A distinction is

made between the peace process discourse in Annapolis and the conflict discourse in the Middle East, and Hamas is unarguably perceived as being linked with the terrorist world throughout. The anchors (David Pujadas and Laurent Delahousse) can then appear to legitimise the conference as negotiations are not being held with those portrayed as extremists. However, this approach depicts the Israelis as victims and the Palestinians as aggressors. It allows *20 Heures* to shape a Middle East which is associated with the war on terror, rather than portrayed as a discrete entity.

*20 Heures* presents substantial context to the conference and this occupies the majority of the reports. The context only reflects the current conflict situation and, like *News at Ten*, omits any historical explanation to the conflict. References are made by de Chalvron to periods forty and sixty years ago but he does not explain the relevance of these dates and thus shields the reports from the past. Omissions continue with little mention of Israel's part in the conflict rendering it easier for *20 Heures* to portray a blurred image of all Palestinians as the Other. Although the conference objectives, outlined on 27/11/07, summarise the conditions imposed on Israel, the reports appear to discuss the intra-Palestinian conflict rather than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Despite the conflict being ongoing and pre-dating 9/11 by many decades, *20 Heures* views it, not in its own right as a discrete entity, which may, or may not have connections to the later post-9/11 period, but primarily against the backdrop of the war on terror.

It is through the negative portrayal of Hamas, which France does not recognise by being a member of the EU (Conseil de l'Union Européenne 2009), that *20 Heures* reinforces France's commitment to supporting the Palestinian Authority, viewed as the 'prefiguration of the Palestinian State' (France Diplomatie 2011a). As France is not a major participant in

Annapolis, the conference itself is not newsworthy for *20 Heures*, and given that elite nations and the power elite are not highly valued, it is almost pointless for *20 Heures* to dwell on the conference proceedings. In its place, it uses these reports to lay the ground for the forthcoming Paris Donors' conference to be held within the next three weeks, thus promoting France's 'political and diplomatic commitment to finding a political solution in the Middle East' (France Diplomatie 2011a) – an event which will offer a greater opportunity to focus on France and its input.

In contrast with *News at Ten* which values human interest stories, *20 Heures* focuses on conflict reports and does so on three of the four days from Gaza and Nablus. These are not directly linked to the conference although on 25/11/07 and 28/11/07, a line in the verbal introduction provides the connection. On 28/11/07, the anchor states at the start, 'as for the Israelis, [they must] stop settlement building in the West Bank and dismantle certain settlements. As for the Palestinians, [they must] regain control of security and control the militia'. By placing the two sentences in this order, *20 Heures* can proceed with a report on the Palestinians' task of regaining control of security and removes the need to discuss Israel. There is only one positive image of Hamas – that of a spokesman, Fawzi Barhoum. But his words condemn the conference, rendering the entire sequence negative. The remaining concentration of fast flowing visuals show masked fighters armed with M16 rifles and rocket launchers running over rubble, fighting, dragging victims along the street, reinforcing the terrorist label given to Hamas by the French, the remainder of the EU, the US, Canada and others. The negativity value of such images is supported by many statistics in the correspondents' narrative which detail the quantity of rockets fired by Hamas onto Israeli towns, the numbers of Fatah members killed or imprisoned by Hamas. There are no counteractive negative statistics. Fatah members, whose leader, Abbas, is nominally

conducting negotiations on behalf of the Palestinians in Annapolis, are portrayed as Hamas's victims, conducting their lives respectably, rather than as armed fighters, permanently having to seek refuge from Hamas attacks. As an old bespectacled man representing Fatah states on 25/11/07, 'Hamas is leading a pointless war. We should make peace with Israel. The Islamists are the obstacle'.

*20 Heures'* positive image of Fatah is short-lived as the item on 28/11/07 reports from Nablus, in the West Bank, on the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Fatah's military wing, and the police's struggle to contain them. However, no explanation or context is given and the former's identity could easily be blurred with that of Hamas. Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade members appear carrying rifles through crowded market streets. They, like Hamas, are attributed negative labels such as 'fighters' and 'militia'; and Nablus, from where it is implied they operate, is named 'the former bastion of terrorism' by senior correspondent, Renaud Bernard, who again merges the Middle East conflict with the war on terrorism.

Although there are images of Palestinians carrying out their daily routines, the focus of the reports does not concern the human, or individual, level of society. *20 Heures* focuses on the power of political organisations, such as Hamas or Fatah, and their representatives, and the manner in which the conflict is being conducted. In doing so, it clearly illustrates the types of groups the international community, including France, must deal with. In contrast with *News at Ten*, which concentrates on humanising the conflict, it is only in the background to images of Hamas or Fatah fighters that the viewer glimpses the lives of the general public: we see men shopping in market streets yet a close-up of a television screen on a shop floor shows a fighter brandishing a gun; youths with guns walking down busy streets inadvertently knocking children off bikes; a traditionally dressed, old and impoverished-looking Palestinian man, with

a stick, lying on a mattress in a narrow backstreet, with washing drying overhead. But this is only in passing, and is not the purpose of the report; these people are not interviewed and their opinion on the conflict is not sought. The individualised peaceful Palestinian is not of interest to *20 Heures*; instead the violence at all levels of those in power is highlighted, reflecting the scale of France's war on terrorism both internationally and nationally. The problem highlighted by *20 Heures'* images of Hamas's or Al Aqsa's fighters, be they individuals or organisations, are therefore actual, existing representations of what could possibly be the case in France if not countered now. In addition to the negativity value of such images, they undoubtedly would also have significant 'meaningfulness' value to many viewers, reflecting the very real threat of terrorism to them and their nation.



**Figure 29** Close up, on *20 Heures*, of a television screen on a market shop floor showing a fighter brandishing a gun

In short, by using and hierarchising particular news values, and although little time is allocated to the conference, *20 Heures* highlights France's desire to reinforce its position internationally. The news provider aligns itself with France's pro-Israeli stance and emphasises the need for the latter's improved security in the Middle East by framing the Palestinians, and particularly Hamas, as terrorists. This reflects France's desire to be

recognised as part of the international community’s war on terror, and echoes the similar struggle it faces against domestic radicalisation and extremism.

#### 4.4 *Vremya*

*Vremya* produces a different representation of the conference. This reflects its role as state-aligned broadcaster and accounts for its heavily Russia-orientated news schedule. *Vremya* reports on the conference over two days rather than three on *News at Ten* and four on *20 Heures* and the total airtime is less than the other two channels (5.31 minutes), although its coverage of the actual conference on 27/11/07 is the longest.

Day and date of broadcast	Position in running order	Duration (mins)
Monday 26/11/2007	7/8	1.11 mins
Tuesday 27/11/2007	7/14 8/14	3.35 mins 0.45 mins
Total		5.31 mins

Figure 30 Position of item in running order and duration (*Vremya*)

*Vremya* covers the conference in three items over the two days, with two reports appearing consecutively on the second day. The first two items on 26/11/07 and 27/11/07 offer factual information on the conference and omit any contextual detail. The anchor, Ekaterina Andreeva, states on 27/11/07 that almost fifty countries will be attending. *Vremya* places Russia second in the abbreviated list of attendees after America, the conference host, but before Europe and the Arab League, firmly attaching a position of importance to Russia within the groups of nations it considers to be the new world leaders, post-Cold War and post-9/11. No other nations are considered sufficiently important to be included. *Vremya* does state that the event is being boycotted by Iran and Hamas but no reasons are given for this. A positive,



yet guarded, approach to the conference emerges with the emphasis, wherever possible, being on Russia's participation and involvement in the peace process.

Because *Vremya's* general focus is on Russia rather than on the conference, the latter is not regarded in the same way as on the other two channels where its predicted nature ensures that it is included in the programme. The focus of attention on the reporting country varies from *News at Ten's* coverage in which the US is predominant, to *20 Heures* which, because of France's insignificant role in the conference, transfers the focus to the conflict, to *Vremya* which almost completely ignores the conflict itself manipulating the conference coverage to reflect Russia and its status. The compositional and continuity values of the conference on *Vremya* emerge as the item is linked on 26/11/07 with some of the other international items (Appendix 3). The preceding item on Georgia and the following one on Kosovo both relate to claims of independence, which are supported by the West but which Russia vehemently contests. These items emphasise tensions between the West and Russia which are also apparent in the conference coverage. The conference is placed close to an item on a shooting in Dagestan, which, although not an international story, concerns disputed territory and, through its own positioning in the schedule, connects Islamic terrorism – the focus of the story – with potential terrorism and conflict in the Middle East. Placing the peace negotiations amongst these items is not only logical but offers *Vremya* the opportunity to highlight the general discord in international relations between Western and Russian viewpoints and to promote Russia and its diplomatic role. Thus, the conference has been built into an existing schedule on *Vremya* and framed to blend in with the overarching Russia-dominated theme, contrasting with the other two news providers, where links between items are not apparent.

The first two reports on 26/11/07 and 27/11/07 are framed to provide factual information about the conference itself and the event is isolated from the reason it is being held. A third short item is shown on 27/11/07, immediately following the Annapolis report, which could be perceived as providing possible context for the conference. *Vremya* reports on separate Israeli and Hamas demonstrations in Jerusalem and Gaza respectively yet no explanation is given about the reasons behind them or whether there is any connection between these events and the Annapolis conference. *Vremya's* structure reflects that of the other two broadcasters. An anchor introduces the item, or is the voice-over in the short item, and a reporter (Washington-based Igor Riskin) presents factual reports rather than a commentary on events. There are no reports from a Middle East-based correspondent.

On 27/11/07, riots in Paris are promoted from third to first position in the running order and are no longer grouped with the international news items. This is consistent with the findings in the Quantitative chapter (that *Vremya* places conflict items most frequently at the start of the news programme) especially as the escalation of these riots is now described as resembling 'real military action' (anchor 27/11/07). International events are then reported, interspersed by Russian Duma Election news or domestic news which either promote Putin or those in his party or denigrate those in opposing parties. From a compositional viewpoint, the conference on the Middle East is preceded by a previous item on Mikhail Fradkov, new Head of the Foreign Intelligence Service, which is 'a vital part of Russia's security system aimed at protecting the individual, society and the state from external threats' (The Russian Government 2012). This link is the opportunity for *Vremya* to promote Russia's diplomatic role and status both globally and within the Middle East through the conference. With the exception of the two Paris riots reports, all items over the course of the two days include Russia, one way or another.

#### 4.4.1 Reporting the conference

Over the three items, the conference itself receives the greatest attention from *Vremya* revealing its complex attitude to the international community. In contrast to *News at Ten's* scepticism and *20 Heures'* ambivalence regarding the conference, *Vremya* clearly endorses it and Russia's participation at it and in the entire peace process. With so many elite nations present, this is an ideal opportunity for the state-aligned broadcaster to highlight Russia's status in relation to them and to emphasis positive or negative relations with certain countries or groups of countries. The importance of the conference is stressed throughout by the anchor and reporters<sup>18</sup> as being 'most serious over recent years' (anchor 26/11/07) and 'one of the most important events in international politics' (Riskin 27/11/07) and it is noted that 'nearly fifty countries' (anchor 27/11/07) are attending. This validates Russia's involvement and its use of public diplomacy to promote itself and its inclusion in the international community. An essential feature of the post-Cold War period is revealed whereby Russia is now endeavouring to be part of the international community with all its shifting allegiances, an inconceivable situation during the Cold War when the distinct East-West power blocs gave Russia, as part of one of these, a dominant global status, contrasting with its weaker role here, however disguised by *Vremya*. The desire to be united with other countries in the peace process emerges in the reporter's commentary as *Vremya* links Russia with elite nations and groups of nations, considered by *Vremya* to be influential, such as the US, EU and the League of Arab States; Lavrov includes Russia in 'members of the Quartet' (27/11/07) and the anchor groups it with other nations who 'together' (27/11/07) wish to find a solution to the Palestine-Israel crisis, thus promoting the state's position. Many such positive statements are found towards the beginning of the items. However, *Vremya* tempers

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<sup>18</sup> Editorial content is limited from those reporting in the field on *Vremya*, therefore the term 'reporter' will be used for *Vremya* rather than 'correspondent' as on the other two broadcasters.

high expectations and becomes increasingly cautious about the outcome of the conference as the latter draws to a close. It distances itself from confident pronouncements about the event, with the anchor quoting vague sources, 'experts are placing great hopes on the summit in Annapolis' (anchor 26/11/07) rendering the success less certain. There is also the careful inclusion of, 'I do not want to offer you too much hope: things are not that simple,' uttered directly to the camera by Saeb Erekat, a Palestinian spokesman, in his statement on 26/11/07 and repeated on 27/11/07 by the reporter, Igor Riskin, 'no one is expecting a breakthrough today'. Such guarded statements from two different credible sources – *Vremya's* own reporter and a veteran Palestinian negotiator and adviser to Abbas – prevent Russia appearing ill-advised by attending the conference should it fail and allows potential criticism resulting from any such failure to be borne equally by the many other nations *Vremya* has been so insistent on flaunting verbally or visually.

*Vremya's* Washington reporter, Riskin, who offers no independent opinions, in contrast to Bowen on *News at Ten* and de Chalvron on *20 Heures*, succeeds in singling out the conference host, a particular elite nation whose global status *Vremya* is determined to demean. He belittles the location as the 'toy town' city of Annapolis (27/11/07) and his disparagement of the US continues with cynical comments regarding its President's actions – similar to those on *News at Ten* – that it would be to Bush's advantage, as he leaves office, to be remembered as a peacemaker. This is portrayed as merely a suggestion and, although the news provider agrees sufficiently with the criticism to broadcast it, *Vremya* again distances itself from such disapproval as Riskin loosely attributes it elsewhere, with the phrase 'observers comment that...' (27/11/07). Throughout the news items, the reporter's commentary is used to convey the principal information with visual images playing a secondary role, however the latter serve a useful purpose in that they show the progress and the outcome of the conference.

Images of the scale of the conference are broadcast, as are groups of delegates both before and during it. Although the outcome of the conference is barely mentioned by the reporter, there is a continuous forty-six-second clip depicting Bush, Olmert and Abbas shaking hands and smiling to applause. The effect is that a successful result is visually implied, saving the reporter's narrative for information about the significance of the conference, the number of delegates attending and Russia's role in shaping the agenda for that conference. Despite the fact that *Vremya* is eager to promote the conference as it is used to recognise Russia's status as an international player, this does not mean that it is willing to give any credit to the host or to raise the US's status above that of Russia. Its refusal to acknowledge the reality of the US remaining a superpower in the post-Cold War period is thereby foregrounded.

Security at the conference is emphasised throughout the items both visually and in the reporter's commentary. As above, the visual shots of armed security guards, sniffer dogs, and military vehicles are useful. They reinforce the need for security, which is mentioned repeatedly by the anchor and reporter, and highlight the importance of the event raising the possibility of potential attacks and terrorism as a whole. Igor Riskin emphasises that 'security measures are at a maximum, military patrols, police patrols. But all this indirectly highlights the status of the event' (27/11/07). Despite this, the war on terrorism, although portrayed as a very real threat in these reports, is not stressed to the extent that it is on the other two news programmes. One reference to this war appears on 27/11/07 in Bush's speech to the conference where he declares that 'we must not cede victory to extremists'. *Vremya* implicitly supports the war on terror and validates Russia's need to actively participate in it but, by allowing Bush rather than a Russian attendee to comment on extremism, *Vremya* again distances itself from this particular issue. It reveals a contradiction in its approach as it recognises on one hand that Russia needs to be part of the international community on this

matter yet on the other hand acknowledges that Russia is reluctant to aggravate its allies in the Arab world.

The significance of Arab states, which are barely mentioned on *News at Ten* or *20 Heures*, if at all, emerges throughout *Vremya's* reports. The Arab League is immediately included in the list of attendees by the anchor on 26/11/07 and then on the next day, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Arab League countries are described as 'key players' by the reporter. There is little mention of Israel except for its participation in the conference which, when described, is the Palestinian-Israeli conference. Similarly, Abbas is shown disembarking his plane but there is no equivalent coverage of Olmert; Abbas' comments on the conference are quoted in the conclusion to the longer item on 27/11/07 but there are no corresponding comments from an Israeli representative; Saeb Erekat is interviewed on 26/11/07 but no balance is provided through an interview with an Israeli spokesman; *Vremya* prefers to highlight Russian commitment to the Arab world rather than to Israel, given the latter's association with the US and its allies. This emphasis on Arab states does not mean that *Vremya* is allowing attention to be diverted from Russia. It succeeds, in fact, in associating Russia with other states in the Middle East region during a brief reference to the conference agenda by the reporter on 27/11/07. *Vremya* stresses that the adopted agenda is not that of the US, which was initially restricted to Israeli-Palestinian relations and therefore unsatisfactory, but instead that frequently proposed by Russia, which includes Syria-Israel and Syria-Lebanon relations. Although the conference is hosted by America – a fact which *Vremya* has been attempting to demean – its main scope has been proposed by Russia. On one hand, Russia's diplomatic role and its apparent recognition by the international community is thereby underscored. On the other hand, precedence is given to Russia's definition of the Middle East, which is broader than that of *News at Ten* and *20 Heures*, and extends to Syria and Lebanon.

The brief references to the conference agenda and almost absent context provides *Vremya* with extra airtime either to highlight Russia's good relations with some countries or to belittle others, such as the US. There is little information from *Vremya* itself to explain the conference and it is left to Erekat on 26/11/07 to outline the agenda: 'We will discuss very complex and very difficult issues – the status of Jerusalem, the status of Israeli settlements, the return of refugees, the issue of borders and a Palestinian state,' thus only presenting the Palestinian viewpoint. According to the reporter on 27/11/07, the conference task is to strive towards an independent Palestinian state and he gives no further context, no historical explanation and no information regarding the extent of the parties' involvement. Lavrov, in his interviewed statement to camera on 27/11/07, has already moved on from the conference to the next stage in the peace process which affords him the opportunity to promote Russia's future involvement: Russia's readiness to host a future stage in negotiations in Moscow and also its assistance at the forthcoming Paris Donors' conference for the Palestinian Territories. Russia's participation in these events is unquestionably perceived by *Vremya* to be important information. It is therefore communicated by a well-known member of the elite (Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister), rather than just the reporter or anchor, rendering the piece newsworthy and of interest to the audience. Lavrov speaks quietly but clearly, in a close-up to the camera, with nothing to distract the viewer from the significance of his words. He refers to the approaching Paris Donors' conference – which is not even mentioned on *20 Heures* – not to indulge the French, but rather to highlight the event's aim of supporting the Palestinians, 'who are indeed in need of help', again emphasising Russia's wish to be seen in support of the Arab world.



Figure 31 Close up of Sergei Lavrov on *Vremya*

#### 4.4.2 Reporting the conflict

As already seen, little emphasis is placed on the conflict, with *Vremya* paying no attention to its human consequences and instead reserving the airtime for the promotion of Russia's role. There is little value in showing images of the conflict purely to support the conference, and certainly not in comparison with the elite value attached to the latter.

Only the final short item on 27/11/07 covers the conflict, serving as a cursory nod to providing context, and images of mass demonstrations in Palestine and Israel are broadcast. Seven clips are aired over the forty-five-second item all connected with Hamas: large but peaceful demonstrations, rallies and speeches given by spokesmen. This very short item highlights the divergence between the talks in Annapolis and the reality of the conflict showing, as described by the anchor in a voice-over, 'those who will never agree to a dialogue'. The visual images of these demonstrations, possibly used for their negativity value, do not concur with the commentary by the reporter who, although he mentions Hamas protests, and specifies that Hamas is the 'sworn enemy' of Abbas (voice-over 27/11/07), also refers to violent demonstrations in Ramallah and Hebron including one death. The voice-over then cites demonstrations in Israel and quotes the Israeli opposition leader, Benjamin



Netanyahu – the first quote from an Israeli representative in any of the reports – who describes the conference as ‘a continuation of one-sided concessions’, despite still showing images of the same Hamas demonstrations. The relevance of these demonstrations to the conference and the reasons for them are not clarified by either the visuals or the reporter’s narrative and the only connection between Annapolis and these events is the quote by Netanyahu. *Vremya* does not translate or comment on banners carried by demonstrators written in Arabic which condemn the conference and the Americans. This lack of concordance between the visuals and voiced-over text may be explained by the unavailability of other images, highlighting *Vremya*’s reliance on external agencies for images and again illustrating the shifting role of both the Russian media and Russia itself in the post-Cold War period. This reliance on footage from abroad would have been improbable during the Cold War when previous authorities would not or could not have been able to purchase them. As such visuals may not fully concur with the intended message of the state-aligned broadcaster, the narrative of the anchor or reporter may have to contain the main, and sometimes opposing, information.

*Vremya*’s manipulation of the power elite and elite nation value of the conference emerges through its heavily Russia-oriented representation of the event. It endorses both Russia’s assumed post-Cold War diplomatic role and reinforces its stance wherever possible, particularly regarding its pro-Arab position. Both the content of, and the context to, the conference are unimportant to *Vremya* in comparison with promoting Russia, mentioning allies or denigrating rivals. Yet this does not signify that *Vremya* belittles the conflict, rather that the limited airtime cannot be allocated purely to the conflict when it could be used to promote Russia.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter contributes to the overall objective of the thesis to assess European foreign conflict reporting in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period, the influence of which emerges strongly in the conference coverage. The analysis of three broadcasters' representations has revealed significant divergences in approach, leading to different messages and emphases being conveyed. Using the Annapolis conference as a vehicle, the news providers disclose considerable information about their reporting country's stance on the event and on their relations with other countries, and reflect their own individual characteristics as public or state-aligned broadcasters. The chapter addressed specific research questions: the portrayal of existing state policy; how the news providers situate their reporting countries globally; their perception of the Middle East; whether they humanise the conflict; and whether there is a balanced portrayal of those involved in the conflict. The analysis of the broadcasters' news values has helped answer these questions as they demonstrated which aspects of the event were most newsworthy to each news provider, resulting in differing representations of the conference. Of the many possible news values, some were particularly apparent in the conference coverage: compositional value emerged on all three broadcasters due to the pre-planned nature of the conference; elite nation and power elite values also materialised on all three, revealing different emphases; and consonance news values were apparent especially on *20 Heures*, which implicitly linked the international war on terror with domestic radicalisation and extremism, and on *Vremya*, which overemphasised Russia-based aspects of the news, heightening the viewers' sense of identity with the story.

The nature of the conflict is shaped and modified by *20 Heures* and to a lesser extent by *News at Ten* so that it is viewed as connected with the war on terror and not as a discrete entity.

They are resolute in their portrayals of Palestinians and *20 Heures*, in particular, emphasises

the negativity value, associating it with terrorism and does little to correct this impression. *News at Ten* strives to provide a balance, albeit imperfect, between the sides in the conflict yet its coverage of Israel dominates; *20 Heures* aligns itself with France's pro-Israel stance and portrays the Palestinians, and particularly, Hamas, as terrorists. In contrast, rather than viewing the Middle East as being connected with the war on terror, *Vremya* is aware of Russia's need, in this post-9/11 period, to reinforce existing alliances with the Arab and Muslim world, thus breaking with the international fight in the war on terror which it appears to support.

The broadcasters' coverage of the conflict reveals differing perceptions of the Middle East which may be specific to attitudes of the reporting countries at the conference rather than to the conflict. Extremes in attitudes to the conflict emerge with *Vremya* providing the minimum of coverage, keeping its airtime to report on Russia, as its elite nation; *News at Ten* offers a balance between conference and conflict reporting and uses the latter's personalisation value to report on the effects of conflict on the individual; *20 Heures* focuses almost entirely on the conflict. Differences in structure appear associated with the individual characteristics of the channels as public or state-aligned broadcasters. The contribution and status of correspondents vary between broadcasters: *News at Ten's* Bowen is granted significant freedom to interpret and comment on events, undoubtedly shaping viewers' understanding; *20 Heures'* correspondents analyse events; and the *Vremya* reporter gives fact-based reports from Annapolis. This unbalanced contribution by journalists questions whether the viewer is receiving the journalist's opinions or those of the broadcaster. The role of the journalist also helps characterise the news providers themselves. Because only fact-based information is provided by *Vremya* with little individual journalistic opinion, and despite the serious omission of context, the influence of reporters is less than on *News at Ten* or *20 Heures*. This

finding conceivably contradicts images of state-aligned broadcasters. A difference in the “reporter” role of *Vremya* and *News at Ten* (and to a lesser extent *20 Heures*) is, therefore, discernible as there is little, if any, scope on *Vremya* for such an individual to present opinions yet, to all intents and purposes, and by replicating such a style of news provision, it purports that it does. In contrast, the role of the correspondent on *News at Ten* is widely recognised, and so long as the BBC impartiality constraints are respected, correspondents fulfil their remit by providing commentaries and explanations. Bowen’s apparent status on the news and his allocation of significant airtime for his commentaries exemplifies this, yet simultaneously raises questions as to whether *News at Ten* is providing news or speculation.

By examining elite nation and power elite values attached to the conference, I have shown how the news providers’ portrayal of their reporting country globally, and also relations with other nations, emerges. *Vremya*’s and *News at Ten*’s reports are similar as they both display indications of their country’s desired shift either away from Cold War loyalties or towards the formation of new allegiances. *Vremya* defines Russia to be a major diplomatic player in the post-Cold War international arena by shaping the conference agenda and contributing to forthcoming peace conferences. Frequent references to the Arab world and almost complete omission of references to Israel, in combination with denigration of the US, highlight the deepening Russia-US divide. It emphasises the diplomatic importance *Vremya* attaches to Russia as an independent power, not answerable to the West but able to affect changes in the Middle East region by reinforcing existing ties from the Soviet era. Anti-US sentiments are also apparent in *News at Ten*’s conference coverage. It becomes clear that the broadcaster supports the West’s war on terror but seeks a shift in the special UK-US relationship. The US is, however, prominent on *News at Ten*’s coverage and, although outside the scope of the thesis, this questions the influence or airtime dominance of the US in the BBC’s news

schedule generally, implying an ongoing, albeit reluctant, allegiance to the US. Although *20 Heures* does not allocate much airtime to the conference itself, it reveals France's desire to be considered a major player diplomatically within the EU and the international community. The analysis of various competing news values has helped account for the very different interpretations and representations of the event. It has demonstrated how all three broadcasters attach greater importance to certain aspects of the conference, such as, elite nations and the power elite. This shows that not only is there a difference in which specific news values are prioritised by the individual broadcasters when reporting certain events but that the way in which these same news values are enacted by different broadcasters can also differ.

The focus of the next chapter shifts from the international arena to Israeli-Palestinian fighting in Beit Hanoun to examine how, and whether, a different reality of foreign conflict emerges in relation to that portrayed here and whether the conflict is represented through the eyes of one party to the detriment of the other.

## **CHAPTER 5: BEIT HANOUN EXPLAINED – COVERAGE OF A SINGLE FLASHPOINT**

In the previous chapter, I analysed coverage of the Annapolis conference and demonstrated how the news providers and their reporting countries adopted different attitudes to the Middle East. These findings could not claim to be representative of an overall stance and must be complemented by further case studies, the next of which focuses on Israeli-Palestinian fighting in the town of Beit Hanoun in November 2006. This example is particularly relevant as it presents a contrast to the Annapolis analysis and shifts the emphasis from the international arena of the peace process, which is geographically remote from the Middle East, to the actual and all too real subject of these negotiations, represented by a flashpoint in Gaza. The event involves Israeli troops, Hamas and Fatah fighters and inhabitants of Beit Hanoun. Clear distinctions between the coverage of the opposing sides emerge in the broadcasters' reports. In parts, these concur with patterns detected in the previous chapter, whilst in others, they display a different representation of the conflict and illustrate initial indications of inconsistencies in the news providers' approach to the Middle East. Background information and context for this case study are outlined in Chapter 2. These events provide opportunities to analyse portrayals of victims and suffering and allows the humanitarian aspects of foreign conflict reporting to be foregrounded. The following case study discusses fragmented relations amongst Palestinian political groups, notably Hamas and Fatah, yet here, they are portrayed as a single unit opposing the Israeli forces.

This chapter builds on the preceding one by revealing potentially different realities of the conflict between representations of the seemingly calm diplomacy found in the remote, international political arena, on one hand, and the fraught and immediate environment of violence as part of the conflict, on the other. I analyse differences and similarities between the news providers' portrayals of foreign conflict reporting – one of the objectives of the

thesis – by continuing to address a question raised in Chapter 4. This concerns whether the news providers represent the Middle East through the eyes of one party to the detriment of the other. It asks whether potential imbalances arise because the events are viewed in association with the war on terror or because they are connected to historical relations of the reporting country with that party. If this is the case, do domestic religious and cultural influences play a significant role in the representation? By discussing this latter point, I address another research question concerning the broadcasters' humanitarian portrayal of the conflict, and ask whether the social, cultural and political contexts in which the broadcasters report are reflected in their news bulletins.

As with the previous chapter, I use agenda-setting to situate the events in Beit Hanoun with regard to airtime and running order in that day's news schedule. This highlights the compositional and consonance value of the news story and illustrates whether connections between it and other stories emerge. News values which are prioritised in the reports are also examined. In contrast with the Annapolis analysis where the power elite and elite nations appeared at the head of the news value hierarchy, it is anticipated that values such as negativity, threshold, meaningfulness and personalisation will prevail. I study the role of the correspondents to determine whether their task remains as significant as it was in certain instances in Chapter 4 or whether their role of interpreting, and speculating about, the news is replaced with carefully selected images of violence and its consequences. If the latter is the case, the very selection and placement of such images must also be explored as they reveal not only much about the broadcasters' threshold values, but also much about the news providers' ideological viewpoints: showing images of victims of one side whilst omitting the other, or images of certain categories of victims, for example. As different representations of the Beit Hanoun events are anticipated, I analyse each broadcaster's portrayals under

different headings which best highlight the angle from which they report. *News at Ten* is examined according to its portrayals of authorities and the individual; *20 Heures'* reports are examined from the angles of context and then the conflict; and *Vremya's* coverage is considered looking at its emphasis on terrorism and then its portrayal of the civilian.

## 5.1 Airtime

Coverage of the Beit Hanoun events differs from that of the Annapolis conference: in the previous chapter, the news items were reported over a similar number of days (*20 Heures*: three, *News at Ten*: four, *Vremya*: four), whereas in this case study *20 Heures'* allocation is twice that of *News at Ten* and *Vremya* (items over eight days rather than four and three days respectively) with a consequently higher total programme airtime. Despite this, the actual total airtimes for Beit Hanoun stories are comparable (Figure 32), which suggests that although *20 Heures* allocates less time than the other news providers to each report, it maintains the salience of the events through their frequent appearance in the schedules. As stated in the quantitative analysis in Chapter 3, airtime cannot be analysed alone and must be discussed alongside running orders, the total programme time and the frequency of reports.

	Total airtime (mins) (A)	Total programme airtime for respective no of days (B) (mins)	(A)÷(B) %	No of reports	No of days
<i>News at Ten</i>	7.11	105.07	6.77	4	4
<i>20 Heures</i>	7.29	211.35	3.53	7	8
<i>Vremya</i>	6.53	88.57	7.74	3	3

Figure 32 Total airtime, number of reports and days dedicated to Beit Hanoun reports by the broadcasters



Date broadcast	News at Ten (mins)	Total News at Ten (mins)	20 Heures (mins)	Total 20 Heures (mins)	Vremya (mins)	Total Vremya (mins)
01/11/06	2.34	27.08	-	-	-	-
03/11/06	2.40	26.00	1.50	36.00	-	-
05/11/06	-	-	2.25	34.17	-	-
07/11/06	-	-	0.23	36.49	2.49	37.55
08/11/06	1.41	25.55	2.11	34.20	3.04	30.02
09/11/06	0.16	26.04	0.22	36.03	-	21.00
11/11/06	-	-	-	-	1.00	-
12/12/06	-	-	0.18	34.06	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.11</b>	<b>105.07</b>	<b>7.29</b>	<b>211.35</b>	<b>6.53</b>	<b>88.57</b>

Figure 33 Airtime per Beit Hanoun new report

## 5.2 News at Ten

The events in Beit Hanoun offer a stark contrast to those of the conference and it is clear that the significance of power elite/elite nation news values is no longer as relevant and they have been replaced with negativity/threshold values. The latter are particularly evident in this close-up portrayal of the conflict as the fighting is emphasised by the immediacy of the action. Because of the negativity/threshold values, *News at Ten* is no longer obliged to divide the report into primary and secondary parts, as mentioned in Chapter 3, to gain the viewers' attention as this will presumably be achieved by the negativity of the event. Despite striking visuals now being used as they are important in conveying the broadcaster's message, the role of the correspondent remains similarly influential.

*News at Ten* covered these events in four reports on separate days over a nine-day period (Figures 32 and 33). Unlike the Annapolis conference, the Beit Hanoun events could not be classed as pre-planned or predicted and therefore their inclusion in the schedule depended on their potential news value and whether similar items would displace them. The negativity

and threshold values of the events are immediately apparent on Day one with the anchor's headline, 'deadly clashes in Gaza as the Israelis launch a major military operation' with deaths and injuries being reported, accompanied by live footage. Such images contribute to determining the *News at Ten's* threshold levels, which will differ from that of the other broadcasters as this is a subjective evaluation. The second of the four items on 03/11/06 reports on attacks on Muslim women called to protect Muslim men seeking refuge inside a mosque. Some men were allegedly disguised as women to help them in their attempts to flee. Many were wounded and one woman was killed. Again, this item is reported because of its negativity and threshold values and because it has meaningfulness value, eliciting cultural and religious awareness amongst its potential audiences. The third report (08/11/06) covers the aftermath of Israel's shelling of Beit Hanoun and shows images of the wounded and provides statements from Israeli spokeswomen. Finally, the report on 9/11/06 is very short – a mere sixteen seconds – and provides information on an apology issued by the Israelis. There are two reports on Hezbollah uprisings in Lebanon within this same nine-day period: the first just after the Israeli/Palestinian report on 01/11/06, with this juxtaposition serving to link them both thematically; and the second on 07/11/06 (Appendix 4). The latter displaces any potential news report on Beit Hanoun, on a day when the Israeli withdrawal from the area started, which, in turn, has the effect of restricting *News at Ten's* international reports to its self-imposed apparent average maximum for that week of three per day (see Chapter 3). The item on Hezbollah, a group proscribed by the UK Home Office (2011), may also have greater compositional value than the Beit Hanoun coverage as it complements existing items which already cover aspects of terrorism (Al-Qaeda terrorist jailed; a section within the US elections report; and the sentencing of Saddam Hussein).

Day and date of broadcast	Position in running order	Duration (mins)
Wednesday 1/11/2006	7 <sup>th</sup> of 14	1.24 mins
Friday 03/11/2006	4 <sup>th</sup> of 8	2.40 mins
Wednesday 08/11/2006	5 <sup>th</sup> of 7	1.41 mins
Thursday 09/11/2006	8 <sup>th</sup> of 12	0.16 mins

Figure 34 Position of item in running order and duration (*News at Ten*)

The compositional value attached to *News at Ten's* Beit Hanoun items is particularly noticeable on 03/11/06 and the overall theme of terrorism which pervades these news schedules continues, reinforcing the findings from the previous chapter that the broadcaster views the Middle East as connected with the war on terror. The report on the Middle East is fourth in the schedule and is preceded by an item concerning the appearance of a Muslim man at the Old Bailey accused of soliciting murder and inciting racial hatred during demonstrations against cartoons caricaturing the Prophet Mohammed (Dodd 2006). Footage of the accused arriving in full traditional Islamic dress of white kufi and dish-dasha are combined with a commentary from Andy Tighe, Home Affairs correspondent. The latter states that the accused had 'allegedly called for another 9/11 all over Europe,' which would leave the viewer in little doubt regarding the terrorism theme of this item. The Beit Hanoun report is then broadcast and is followed by a trailer clip<sup>19</sup> which introduces one particular item which is to appear near the end of the programme. This shows a Royal Marine leaving to fight in Afghanistan and the audience hears the anguish of his mother as she bids him farewell full in the knowledge 'that we know what is going on out there', again raising the subject of the war on terror and the reasons for his deployment. However unintentionally, the Beit Hanoun item finds itself, therefore, sandwiched between two items which are framed so that they are

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<sup>19</sup> A break appears approximately half way through *News at Ten* programmes, showing the *News* logo and playing the recognisable *News* theme, before which there are short trailers for items which are to appear later in the programme.

linked to terrorism, promoting the possibility that this report may too be connected with the same subject. This also reveals the prevailing “support our troops” theme privileged by the BBC schedule as a whole which is indicative of the broadcaster aligning itself with the UK government’s shift in stance from an approach of promoting invasion and occupation during the Iraq war to a softer one, with the aim of winning round public opinion, the majority of which had been previously lost (see for example: Ipsos Mori 2002; IDCR 2011).

The immediate and violent nature of the Beit Hanoun events characterises a different form of reporting from that of the conference. The reports form a snapshot of just one instance in the conflict. There is no requirement, and little time, to include context to make the outcome of these events and actions clear, despite the BBC’s prevailing emphasis on ensuring accuracy and impartiality in its conflict reporting. However, images of Palestinian victims and shootings dominate and the scant coverage of attacks on Israel is sidelined. As a result, impartiality appears less important than the negativity value attached to images of shootings. Although these events are represented with Palestinians being the victims and Israelis the aggressors, the apparent lack of balance in these few items does not conflict with BBC Guidelines, discussed in Chapter 4 which state that ‘impartiality does not necessarily require the range of perspectives or opinions to be covered in equal proportions either across our output as a whole, or within a single programme’ (BBC 2013: 4.42). This resultant portrayal of Israel as the aggressor is compensated to a degree by the representation of those in authority. Two aspects which represent portrayals of the individual in the conflict, on one hand, and officialdom, on the other, are now discussed.

### 5.2.1 Coverage of the individual

Three events in particular emerge as being newsworthy in *News at Ten's* reports starting with gun battles in Gaza on 01/11/2006, then the Mosque siege by Muslim women two days later and then the Israeli attack on 08/11/06, in which the news provider's ongoing theme of humanising the conflict continues. When discussing the portrayal of the individual, my analysis highlights differences between representations of the conflict here and at the conference; the extent to which the conflict is represented through the eyes of one party to the detriment of the other; and also the importance of domestic, religious and cultural influences in coverage.

*News at Ten's* tendency to focus on individuals during, and in the immediate aftermath of, violent attacks is facilitated by the positioning of its correspondent, Matthew Price, on the Gaza-Israel border, which allows him to report from either side of the divide. The role of Price as an individual cannot be ignored in these reports as his movements from one side of the border to the other illustrate an attempt to ensure a balance between viewpoints and also highlight, to the viewer, the proximity of Gaza to Israel (a fact which *News at Ten* repeatedly emphasises, for example, during the conference reporting). He can be present immediately following an attack which allows the visual images to provide the most significant information. This reduces the need for journalistic speculation, which was the case during the conference reporting. It is through Price that we see spent home-made shells, fired from Gaza into Israel, as he reiterates the identical phrase on both 01/11/06 and 03/11/06, 'they rarely kill, but that is what they're designed to do'. On one hand, he offers some justification for the Israeli attack on Beit Hanoun and on the other, he raises the futility of war for the first time in these reports.

Price becomes an integral part of the scene on 01/11/06 when interviewing the mother of injured nine-year old Saad. He crouches at the boy's bedside talking directly to the mother, with other women present, some peeking through the curtained-off window. Although Price is an outsider, shots of the distress on his face when interviewing the bereaved father of a six-month old baby on 08/11/06 foreground the "futility of war" concept which punctuates *News at Ten's* news reports, removing any context from this conflict and grouping it together with all other global conflicts. The events are not purely portrayed from one or other viewpoint of the parties involved but the personal and emotional reactions to these victims of the correspondent also emerge which transcend any cultural and religious attitudes which may be perceived throughout the remainder of these reports.



**Figure 35** Image of Price reporting from the bedside of nine-year old Saad



Figure 36 Image of Price interviewing a distressed Palestinian

The futility of war, which represents a different reality of conflict from that conveyed during the conference reporting, is heightened by the portrayals of families and children and the human interest news value of such items emerges clearly. There are frequent verbal references to wounded children, some fatally, with details of their injuries, but again the main information is conveyed through powerful visual images of pools of blood in the street and through young bloodied children being carried to and from ambulances, followed by their weeping distraught mothers.<sup>20</sup> There are no equivalent images of injured men, reinforcing the notion that it is stereotypically the “weakest” members of society, notably women and children, who are most affected by the fighting. The anguish of fathers is still shown: the contrast between visual images revealing the anger of a bereaved father followed by his collapse into grief is explained by Price as he observes from a distance, ““this is where one of the shells hit, I can’t believe it’s a mistake”, the man shouted. Seconds later, he was in tears. He lost his six-month old baby today.’ By not portraying these men in line with the many images of Palestinian fighters, and by not labelling them by their religion or nationality, *News*

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<sup>20</sup> According to the BBC Guidelines, ‘Although viewers of news bulletins expect some strong material [...] warnings are advisable before reports containing exceptionally strong or disturbing images’ (BBC 2012). This was indeed the case on 03/11/06. A warning was provided at the start of the report: ‘[this] report contains graphic images of the violence’.

*at Ten* depicts them simply as individuals, suffering as a result of conflict. As a result, a complex representation is revealed of Palestinian men: at times they are presented as terrorists whilst at others, they are mere civilians with whom the viewer could identify. Similarly, by “zooming in” on individuals and focusing on their suffering, there is little airtime for additional details which might distinguish this conflict from any other.

*News at Ten's* approach of identifying with, or eliciting sympathy for, victims is demonstrated on 03/11/06 when a crowd of heavily-veiled women break the Israeli siege of a mosque in Beit Hanoun, enabling dozens of male Palestinians, holed up there, to flee. This very short extract (1.05 mins) illustrates the interplay of many aspects of news values, ensuring that the report is broadcast. The unexpected gendered nature of the event in which a mass of Muslim women are the main protagonists is newsworthy in itself as it challenges the passivity of Palestinian Muslim women in the Middle East, found in stereotypes of dominant Western ideologies, which is one of a veiled nurturer within a patriarchal society, occupying a passive and familial role in society (Wilkins 1997). The visual images challenge this stereotype as they show the unassailable force of shouting, veiled women and track their movements as they run down streets, clamber over Israeli defences, swarm to avoid bulldozers and tanks and drop as one to avoid gunfire. The women finally scatter as two of their number are hit and fall. The images of the shooting help determine the *News at Ten's* threshold value based on which items may be broadcast, arguably leading viewers to question whether live shootings, which have been excused by the warning issued by the anchor at the start of the report, should be aired on television. The accompanying verbal commentary by Price emphasises the strength and volume of the women as they ‘pour over the earth defences’ and that ‘there was little the army could do to stop them’.



Price also appears keen to report that it was the political organisation, Hamas, which called these women, over the radio, to participate in such dangerous action, sending its women to fight as a last resort, and underscoring the West's dominant image of Hamas as coldblooded militants (Husain and Rosenbaum 2004; Sadiki 2010; Martin 2012). Despite Price focusing on the unexpected actions of women, who were then hailed as heroes by the Palestinians, the report still provided the opportunity to portray Hamas as terrorists. Justifications mentioned by Hamas to call the women to war are immediately negated by the Israeli statement, reported by Price, that 'what happened is proof that Gaza's fighters hide behind civilians'. The newsworthiness of this very short part of a single report is accentuated by the focus on the unexpected and non-stereotypical actions of the veiled women; by live images of two of them being shot; and also by the summoning of these women to action by a political organisation which is proscribed in the UK. Individually, these aspects might have been of interest to potential viewers but combining them in this particular way increases their salience. This also illustrates how, as stated in the Introduction, the higher the level of interrelatedness of an event's news values, the greater the likelihood that it will become news.

### **5.2.2 Coverage of those in Authority**

Although the portrayal of individuals as victims plays a dominant role in the coverage of these events, the way in which those in authority are presented is also important. "Authorities" is intended here to mean representatives of Israel, for example, the army and government spokespeople; representatives of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas; and also the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) which represents not necessarily a body with authority, but an impartial provider of humanitarian action whose role is essential in instances of conflict such as this. All three play an important role and their portrayal by *News at Ten* is, at face value, straightforward, showing them respectively as the aggressor, the

victim and the impartial aid organisation, but on closer examination a blurred representation emerges which is not so unambiguous and which also challenges the sympathetic depiction of Israel found in the previous chapter.

A single representation of Israeli authorities here is unattainable given the influence of variables such as the live capture of events which affords viewers the opportunity to form divergent opinions; images and information supplied by the Israelis themselves; and also the journalistic input by Matthew Price. The messages which the Israelis try to convey through their spokeswomen on 1/11/06 and 8/11/06 appear to be targeted at challenging any potential disapproval. The first report, which is directed at Western audiences, shows Major Avital Leibovich in a garden environment. The item draws on personalisation values and highlights the spokeswoman's long loose hair, make-up, jewellery and fluent English with a slight American accent. Leibovich promotes a female, caring image by talking of peace, despite also wearing a military uniform. She does not justify Israel's actions but rather condemns Palestinians' actions, which led to the events, as being 'the way of terror [...] infrastructure of terror, [...] we will not allow our cities [...] to be bombed day after day'. A similar approach is used on 08/11/06 by Miri Eisin, a similarly-presented Israeli government spokesperson, who brushes aside the Israeli tank attack as 'an unintentional tragedy' but then emphasises the ongoing Palestinian rocketing of Israel.

However pure, caring and Western these spokeswomen may strive to appear, and however much they presumably rely on the personalisation value of their appearance, their statements cannot withstand the continuous challenging of their actions, particularly by Price. The latter's own personalisation value, in conjunction with the negativity value of his reports, supersedes that of the spokeswomen, as he frequently queries the actions taken by the Israelis, whether

or not they are justified by the latter, with statements such as ‘a strategy that’s questionable’ and ‘questions are once again being asked about Israel’s actions: about what is acceptable force’ (08/11/06). Price’s reactions to the bereaved and injured, which are clear in the visuals, reinforce this lack of comprehension and this, in turn, is supported by a level of scepticism in his constant use of reported speech in his coverage. On 8/11/06, Price even answers his own question as to why Israel sent so many artillery shells in to a residential area with the unconvincing response, ‘Israel has expressed regret, but it says the army is trying to stop Palestinian rocket fire’ (his emphasis). Price’s increasing presence in Gaza, rather than on the Israeli side of the border, and his accounts, with clear visuals of destroyed roads and bridges and of damage caused by the Israelis, are powerful. It appears impossible for him to justify the results of these actions.

*News at Ten* still dedicates the last short item in this series to an Israeli apology for the events on 08/11/06. This sixteen-second item, with its minimal news value, reflects tensions between *News at Ten* and the UK government. As a public service broadcaster, the news provider is caught between supporting the UK’s generally pro-Israel stance, encountered in Chapters 1 and 2, by briefly airing Israel’s apology, on one hand, and endeavouring to dismiss this apology as insincere, on the other, by highlighting that the victims were mostly women and children and showing Palestinian crowds attending funeral ceremonies.

A clear contrast also emerges between the anonymity of the Israeli forces in action and Palestinian individuals, which supports Price’s ongoing questioning about the need for such displays of strength. His report on the Israeli forces coincides with images of rolling tanks and immense armoured bulldozers whose opposition appears to be small groups of unarmed civilians, even groups of young boys cowering round corners (03/11/06). The only Israeli

individuals who appear are the spokeswomen: not soldiers or snipers, and only the sound of their gunfire is heard. The image of the Israeli authorities is far removed from that portrayed by the conference coverage. In the latter, in the political forum of the international arena, a pro-Israeli Western stance prevails within a post-9/11 context, with Israeli actions being justified in connection with the war on terror. In contrast to the almost anecdotal evidence recounted by Bowen at the conference, the reality of actual injuries and fatalities in this case renders it virtually impossible for the correspondent to maintain this pro-Israeli stance.

Despite appearing to be very sceptical about Israeli actions and despite the evident support for Palestinian individuals injured by the attacks, *News at Ten* does not extend these portrayals to the Palestinian authorities. Initially shown on 01/11/06, the grandeur of their offices is shown in close-up, with images of the clean luxurious-looking building contrasting starkly with the poverty and destruction of the homes and streets of those they are representing. Images of security men, clad in black, with close-ups of their rifles, are described verbally as the offices of the 'Islamic movement Hamas'. Then, Ahmed Yousef, a Hamas official, appears yet speaks in barely comprehensible English, all contrasting poorly with the slick image portrayed by the Israelis. Undeniably, *News at Ten* can only broadcast the statement it is given,<sup>21</sup> yet it still has edited Yousef's statement to include references to the need to resort to 'suicide bombings', reinforcing the ongoing image of Hamas as terrorists. This same representation continues on 03/11/06 when Price discusses the firing of Palestinian rockets. Close-up images of a rocket in the previous report (01/11/06) is not sufficient and this has to be complemented by images from a poor-quality Palestine "militant" video, showing the launching of several rockets, the associated implications of which override the

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<sup>21</sup> Fran Unsworth, head of the BBC's Newsgathering operation at the time of these events, stated in 2010 'it's not our job to go out and appoint the Palestinian spokesperson' (Pilger 2012).

minimising verbal phrase 'they rarely kill'. Indeed, this same tag ('Palestinian militant video') also serves to group all Palestinians under one terrorist umbrella and extends the terrorist label beyond that of just Hamas.

The portrayal of the Palestinian authorities, therefore, appears to concur with that of the previous chapter, developing an already-established image perceived purely in connection to the war on terrorism. It also contributes to a complex representation of Palestinians with a demarcation between portrayals of individuals – presented as victims unconnected with extremism and prey to a greater, more powerful force – and portrayals of the militant authorities. As events develop, portrayals of the authorities grow fewer as the negativity value attached to injured or bereaved Palestinian individuals dominates, enabling *News at Ten* to shift any emphasis from terrorism to the futility of conflict.

The third organisation to be briefly mentioned here is the PRCS, whose actions receive no verbal comment from *News at Ten* yet which are visually noticeable on 03/11/06 and 08/11/06. It is through their actions that the negativity value of the items is heightened as they carry out their unenviable task, unable to stop the conflict, even when obvious danger, with its resultant injuries, is imminent, but able to alleviate the suffering in the aftermath and maintain the dignity of victims as they administer emergency health care. This is apparent on 03/11/06 as the ambulances and their crew wait powerlessly as the Muslim women surge forward towards the mosque, in the face of Israeli gunfire, in the knowledge, rightly, that their services will soon be needed. The PRCS action broadcast on 08/11/06 substantiates the anchor's warning regarding graphic images, as crew carry blood-covered infants, children and women through crowds into hospitals. Although their presence is not credited in the

correspondent's account, their role is not ignored visually as they form an integral part of the conflict scene being targeted themselves no less by the Israeli gunfire.<sup>22</sup>

*News at Ten's* coverage of the events in Beit Hanoun in November 2006 lasts just over seven minutes yet, during this time, blurred representations of both the Israelis and the Palestinians emerge contradicting images previously portrayed in the conference coverage. The negativity value of filming conflict in action dominates over a hierarchy of many other news values which contribute to the reporting. The values found in the reports, which become apparent through Matthew Price's highly personalised reporting as he emphasises the status of the individual in conflict zones, include compositional and personalisation values. On one hand, they support the UK government's shift in stance from an approach of promoting invasion and occupation during the Iraq war to a softer approach. On the other, they highlight an undertone concerning the futility of war, which potentially opposes state policy as the latter sends more troops abroad, illustrating the *News at Ten's* independence – a key feature in its Guidelines – as it functions as part of the BBC, a public service broadcaster.

### **5.3 20 Heures**

*20 Heures*, in contrast to *News at Ten*, starts its coverage of the Beit Hanoun events on 03/11/06, not 01/11/06, thus omitting certain events used by the latter broadcaster to contribute to the overall personalisation values of its reports. *20 Heures* broadcasts many reports of short duration, generally centrally positioned in the running order (Figure 32). The brevity of the reports is offset by their frequency, which maintains the events' salience. The first report focuses on the call for Muslim women to go to the aid of men hiding in a mosque

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<sup>22</sup> Two PRCS volunteers were killed on 03/11/06 by Israeli military operations south of Beit Hanoun (ICRC 2006).

and provides information about how this situation has transpired. The second covers life in a combat zone providing visual examples of Palestinian rockets and the consequences of the Israeli attacks; the third briefly mentions the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Beit Hanoun. On 08/11/06, the devastation caused by the Israeli attack is shown providing many graphic images of the injured and dead,<sup>23</sup> and many demonstrations by Palestinians throughout the Territories seeking vengeance for the attacks are also broadcast. The short reports on 09/11/06 and 12/11/06 cover mass funeral processions and mention the UN draft condemnation of the Israeli attacks.

I now analyse whether the representations portrayed by *20 Heures* here and during the conference coverage are similar and whether, as a consequence, the portrayal of the conflict as connected to the war on terror which was determined in the conference coverage is also apparent here. I also examine portrayals of authorities and events which may have cultural significance due to their representation by *20 Heures*. The Beit Hanoun items do not have any noticeable compositional value. The items are included in the international section of the schedule (see Appendix 5) but, in contrast with *News at Ten*, there is little, if any, connection with previous or subsequent international reports. However, if two discrete items concerning the Middle East appear in the same news programme, they are broadcast following one another. This is the case on 05/11/06 when an item concerning the anniversary of Rabin's death follows the Gaza report, and on 09/11/06 when a Lebanon item follows the Gaza report.

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<sup>23</sup> Graphic images must be preceded by a clear warning (France Télévisions 2010: 43).

	Day and date of broadcast	Position in running order	Duration (mins)
1	Friday 03/11/2006	7 <sup>th</sup> of 17	1.50 mins
2	Saturday 04/11/06	9 <sup>th</sup> of 22	1.27 mins
3	Tuesday 07/11/06	11 <sup>th</sup> of 19	0.23 mins
4	Wednesday 08/11/2006	7 <sup>th</sup> of 19	2.11 mins
5	Thursday 09/11/2006	13 <sup>th</sup> of 25	0.22 mins
6	Sunday 12/11/06	13 <sup>th</sup> of 21	0.18 mins

**Figure 37** Running Orders and Durations of News Items (*20 Heures*)

Consistent with the findings in the conference coverage analysis, *20 Heures'* reporting of the Beit Hanoun events includes significant context which exerts a considerable influence on the potential understanding of the events. Rather than concentrating on portrayals of the individual and then the authorities, which was the case with *News at Ten*, and which is not particularly applicable to *20 Heures'* coverage, this section examines the contextual information which permeates the reports and then the portrayal of the actual events to determine any potential overlap. Context is understood to be any information, over and above that concerning an actual event in Beit Hanoun. It may include events significantly prior to the dates in question and equally events happening in parallel but elsewhere.

### **5.3.1 Provision of Contextual [and Additional] Information**

The provision of significant context occurs throughout the coverage and at arbitrary points in each report and does not necessarily relate to the Beit Hanoun events but can support the existing discourse on the conflict as a whole. Messages are conveyed by the correspondent's narrative and by the visuals with either taking the leading role and the other providing supporting or even conflicting information. It is, however, primarily the vast quantity of visual images – which are shown in quick succession and appear characteristic of *20 Heures* – which



present these items with their newsworthiness chiefly found in their negativity and threshold values. In contrast with *News at Ten*, and given the clarity and graphic nature of many of the visual images, there is no speculation or interpretation of the news by the correspondent. During these reports, the correspondent, Charles Enderlin, plays a minimal role and appears only once in person. The remainder of the time he provides voice-overs and his function is more that of a reporter; and the fast flows of visual images by *20 Heures* ensure that the broadcaster complies with the Charter's requirement to offer rigorous and accurate information which reflects reality (France Télévisions 2010: section 4). This depends, of course, on whose reality is being reflected and the quantity of visual images may prove insignificant if their subject matter is either virtually identical or insufficiently broad. The same goes for the provision of context, the aim of which, according to the Charter, is to prevent any partial presentation of the facts. Some of the contextual information is helpful and informs the viewer about such items as the location of Beit Hanoun and the size of its population, but these are infrequent and the remainder of the context only appears to comply superficially with the Charter regulations on impartiality and, instead, seems to serve the specific purpose of providing, from the outset, an extremist interpretation of Palestinian actions.

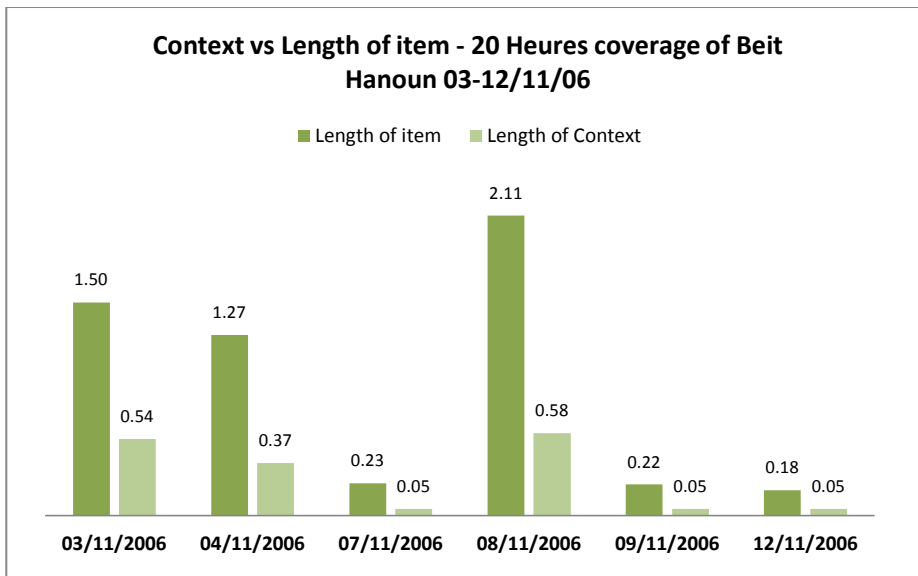


Figure 38 Proportion of news items allocated to context 20 Heures 03-12/11/06

At first glance, it appears that much of the context is balanced as similar airspace is allocated to both the Israelis and the Palestinians and alternating images of each are broadcast throughout. Yet it is the contents of such slots and the manner in which they are arranged which prove influential. Starting its coverage of the event relatively late on 03/11/06, 20 Heures uses information from preceding days as a framework in which to report current events. Despite the first report (03/11/06) covering the Muslim women going to the aid of men trapped in a mosque, fifty-four seconds of this 1.50 minute report is dedicated to providing context from previous days when no reports were broadcast, thus shifting the emphasis of the item. The correspondent discusses the siege of the town by Israeli troops and that they have combed Beit Hanoun and that ‘all the men have been taken away for interrogation’. This is supported by several images of Palestinian men crammed into trucks being driven away. However uncomfortable these images may seem for many viewers, evoking scenes from many past global wars and conflicts, they are immediately followed by images of rockets being launched. These are shown in a Palestinian militant video, similar to *News at Ten*, accompanied by the statement that, ‘300 rockets of this type have been fired

from Beit Hanoun over the past month', justifying the Israelis' need not only to interrogate the Palestinians but also to keep the town under siege. These same images of rockets are then linked to footage, which immediately follows, of a destroyed house on the Israeli side of the border with the statement that 'several civilians have been slightly injured', thus downplaying the Israelis' suffering. These alternating Israeli-Palestinian images continue with visuals of more rockets and each time they are followed by images of Israelis which justify their actions. For example, images of Palestinian rockets are followed by some of Israeli helicopters and planes over Beit Hanoun, the presence of which may well appear vindicated by the preceding visuals of rockets.



**Figure 39** One of several images of Palestinian men crammed into trucks being driven away

Reinforcing and excusing the Israeli action accords with France's ongoing support of Israel's right to defend itself and 'France's attachment to Israel's security', as stated by Philippe Douste-Blazy, French Minister for Foreign Affairs (Collection discours publics 2006) during a visit to Paris by Tzipi Livni, the then Israeli minister for Foreign Affairs and Justice. This statement is also reinforced by de Villepin, French Prime Minister, who declared that 'France will always stand by Israel's side to reaffirm our absolute rejection of terrorism, fanaticism, violence and intolerance' (French Embassy 2007). This latter statement, just a few weeks after the events in Beit Hanoun, could be viewed as being more in line with France's stance against

terrorism than its support of Israel, and therefore more in keeping with Chirac's pro-Arab stance. There is a prevailing trend in *20 Heures'* coverage to minimise the Israeli actions whilst simultaneously associating all Palestinian activities with terrorism. This is apparent in the very brief report on 07/11/06 on the Israeli withdrawal from Beit Hanoun. Despite a stream of many short sequences of images, from previous days, of the devastated town, *20 Heures* downplays Israel's attacks, labelling them initially as an 'operation' then recalling its withdrawal from Gaza the previous year, thus portraying Israel more as peacemakers. Although *20 Heures* does mention the number of fatalities caused by these attacks, by using the oft-repeated phrase immediately afterwards, 'aiming to prevent the firing of rockets onto Israeli territory', it offers an explanation of Israel's need to re-enter Gaza. Over the course of a twenty-three-second report, *20 Heures* has effectively shifted the emphasis from Israelis being the aggressors having destroyed a town, to them being forced into this action by continual rocket fire from Gaza into Israeli towns.

The emphasis on portraying Palestinians as terrorists rather than victims, apparent on *News at Ten*, and also in *20 Heures'* conference coverage, is evident in the contextual information which explains the Palestinians' part in the conflict. Several video clips show rockets, armed fighters appearing diminutive as they stand alongside immense rockets, and also images of 'the armed groups' who are wearing black hoods with green headbands with Arabic writing and issuing press statements. The visuals conform to many Western images of terrorists, raising not only the negativity value of the item but also its meaningfulness and consonance value as this is an image which the Western viewer will easily recognise. Enderlin's voice-over on 03/11/06, for example, supports this argument by providing the ominous reported statement that these groups will 'continue the fight and avenge their dead'. This is contextual information which has been supplied to, or gathered by, *20 Heures* independently of the

events in Beit Hanoun. Yet, it is used here in such a way that it cannot but influence interpretations of portrayals of the attacks on the town.

The meaningfulness value, encountered above, emerges again through the reporter's brief reference on 04/11/06 to the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit<sup>24</sup> during cross border raids in June earlier that year, which likens these Israeli attacks to those aimed at securing the soldier's release. This reference is, at first glance, used to compare the scale of these operations with those of the previous summer. However, the mention of this soldier, with his dual French-Israeli nationality, serves to justify the Israeli actions earlier that year and also associates them with the current operation. The correspondent's narrative is accompanied by several quick images of groups of Palestinians, looking at mounds of crushed masonry, which emphasises the scale of the attack. Yet the recurring phrase promptly follows: 'the Israeli army says it wants to stop the firing of Palestinian rockets at Israel'. These words arguably negate any likely impact of the visuals, illustrating how *20 Heures* has managed the narrative so that it dominates the visual images.

*20 Heures'* ongoing tendency to include contextual – or merely additional – information, the news value of which is considered sufficiently great to displace a section of a report on actual events in Beit Hanoun, continues on 08/11/06. This was when an Israel attack killed eighteen civilians and injured many more. These events are covered in some detail by *20 Heures* but certainly not in the same detail as *News at Ten*. Mass demonstrations in the West Bank represent reactions throughout the Palestinians territories and reinforce an ongoing negative image of the Palestinians, emphasising their Otherness. Two separate demonstrations, held

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<sup>24</sup> The events surrounding Gilad Shalit's kidnapping led to Israel's first major ground invasion of Gaza since its withdrawal the previous year. These operations resulted in many injuries and the bombing of Gaza's civilian infrastructure. Shalit was released in October 2011 in a prisoner exchange deal.

simultaneously, are shown, focusing, amongst others, on the protests' segregated nature which conflicts with France's constitutional principal of equality. The newsworthiness of the protests by shouting and flag-carrying veiled Palestinian women highlights cultural differences between *20 Heures'* target audiences and challenges Western stereotypes of Palestinian women in the Middle East. This is an image which emphasises the integral role played by religion within this society. Yet it simultaneously opposes provisions in French law which bans the wearing of the veil in France (then, in primary and secondary education), which respects and upholds the latter's principal of *laïcité* (Bulletin officiel 2004) (for further information on debates surrounding the veil in France see, Tévanian 2005; Bowen 2007).

The second set of protests are by Palestinian men, demonstrating peacefully, yet the accompanying correspondent's narrative again mentions their 'cries for vengeance' and superimposes verbal labels on the visual image of these calm individuals. The correspondent groups them all together under the heading of ' Hamas and cells of Fatah' and declares that they are calling for a 'resumption of suicide attempts in Israel', thus transforming these united individuals into a representation of the strength of terrorism. This section of the report, which concludes the item, emphasises the image of an enemy which opposes not just Israel in this case, but also the Western world. The report also illuminates a certain tension between Chirac's widely-documented affinity for the Middle East and his pro-Arab stance<sup>25</sup> and France's involvement in the ongoing global war on terror and its own enactment of counter-terrorist legislation responding to various international and domestic terrorist acts (for details on legislation, see: Legislationonline 2012).

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<sup>25</sup> For information on Chirac's foreign policy see Styan (2004) and Charillon (2007).

Thus, a principal aim of providing context according to the remit is not achieved and, instead, the argument made in Chapter 4 – that the broadcaster portrays all Palestinians as terrorists – continues. *20 Heures'* volume of context contrasts sharply with that of *News at Ten's* representation, which clearly distinguishes individuals from authorities and uses the former to paint a generalised, and therefore non-contextualised picture, of the victims of war. Although Palestinian individuals are the victims of the Israeli attacks on the town, a subtext emerges that the Palestinians, as one, have significantly contributed to the events. The influential role of *20 Heures'* contextual information is, therefore, clearly apparent. Not only does this context occupy a significant proportion of the news items, particularly in the earlier reports, it also serves to influence interpretations by viewers of the actual events as they occur in Beit Hanoun. *20 Heures* fails, therefore, to adhere to its impartiality remit. The negativity value raised by the portrayal of hooded terrorists, and of rockets being displayed and launched, eliminates any need for speculation, interpretation or comment from the correspondent. Although certain information has been carefully selected, or omitted, by the news provider for broadcast, the correspondent's or anchor's narrative affords a more impartial representation of the events than that of *News at Ten* and it is only in combination with the visual images that any imbalance becomes apparent. *20 Heures'* careful arrangement of the visuals and the verbal narrative, and the repetition of common phrases, for example, the justification of Israeli attacks and calls for vengeance by Palestinians, creates an imbalance in the portrayal, with no further information being included about Israel's involvement in the conflict.

### **5.3.2 Portrayal of the Beit Hanoun events**

A clear message has been established by the contextual information which permeates *20 Heures'* Beit Hanoun reports, according to which, although the Israeli attacks are certainly not

condoned by the broadcaster, the latter seems to justify them to a degree by their portrayal of ongoing militant actions by certain Palestinians. Any portrayal of the actual events during this period must therefore be understood within the framework laid down by this context. As already stated, and in contrast to *News at Ten's* coverage, in which the correspondent plays a significant role in shaping the reports, Charles Enderlin, the *20 Heures'* correspondent, only appears once in a live link-up on 08/11/06 as he reports from a distance from Jerusalem. His geographical remoteness from the events results in reports which appear very factual with no speculation or interpretation. Having removed the context and the introductory information provided by the anchor from the overall airtime, little time remains to report on the immediate events happening in Beit Hanoun. The few events which are covered include the report on the Muslim women going to the aid of men taking refuge in a mosque, women shopping in between curfews, and the attacks on Beit Hanoun on 08/11/06.

In all these events, the visual images play the more important role with the correspondent's narrative merely providing a commentary. Very clear images of veiled women running en masse over earth defences are shown. There are dramatic scenes of bulldozers moving towards the women, shots being fired at them, women screaming in panic into the camera, and images of a blood-covered woman lying dead and another, injured, being carried away by several others. This is not accompanied by any narrative by the correspondent, either because this is because of his remoteness or because the images are, in fact, supplied to *20 Heures* rather than being the news provider's own images. Again, contrary to *News at Ten's* reporting where there is great emphasis on the fact that it is women who are coming to the aid of the men, this fact receives no comment on *20 Heures*. It is the negativity value of attacks on these Muslim women, represented as oppressed, which is newsworthy. Some of the subsequent images, which do not appear on *News at Ten*, are, however, selected to show



the men who have been rescued as they remove veils which had been used as disguise, which endorses Israel's claim, reported by Enderlin, that 'shots were being fired at armed men hidden amongst the women', further playing on French fears of Muslim veiling. This vindication of Israeli actions then continues in the remainder of the item with further contextual information on the quantity of rockets fired at the Israeli towns Sderot and Ashkelon.

A distancing technique is found throughout the *20 Heures* reports with few, if any, acknowledgments of personal pain suffered by individuals in Beit Hanoun. Fleeting, on 04/11/06, images appear of women and young girls running to find food during a brief two-hour respite in the gunfire. Although the women run past the camera there are no attempts to interview them, again implying a lack of narrative or that the images have been bought-in, but there is no indication of this on the screen. This glimpse into the everyday life of Palestinian individuals lasts but a couple of seconds before *20 Heures* reverts to providing more carefully selected context, again mentioning Palestinian rockets being fired into Israel. Greater attention is paid to covering the successful attack on a van carrying 'active members of Hamas'. This appears more newsworthy than images of individuals' suffering and *20 Heures* broadcasts close-ups of the damage caused to the now-destroyed vehicle. The latter is surrounded by crowds and the commentary gives a verbal tally of Palestinian deaths which include 'three activists from the Islamist movement', emphasising the ongoing extremist interpretation by *20 Heures* of Palestinian actions.

The only slight concession to providing any personalisation or human interest in the reports occurs on 08/11/06, when the pain of the relatives of those killed in the Israeli attack is evident. Yet, such individuals remain anonymous and Enderlin simply labels them, for

example, as 'a father who has lost his own'. Chaotic visual scenes of mourning by both men and women are preferred, accompanied by the numbers of those dead and generalised statements regarding 'entire families which have been decimated' and graphic images of deceased children lying side by side on a mattress and several severely injured children being carried into hospitals. Although such images may appear highly distressing, indicating a higher threshold value than on *News at Ten*, it is clearly stated in the television channel's charter that 'violence is often present in the news (wars, news items, for example) [...] and it is not a question for France Télévisions to propose a sanitised, and therefore misleading, representation of the world in which we live' (France Télévisions 2010: 42). One female survivor, Ilham Athamnih, is actually named, as she picks through the remnants of her fatally-wounded nephews' bedroom. Her words are spoken by a female voice-over in French demanding whether these schoolchildren were truly terrorists. Yet this does not represent an interview with a victim; no interaction with a reporter occurs and, although fleeting sympathy with this bereaved woman may be evoked, *20 Heures'* reports do not focus on individuals but "zoom out" in order to contribute to an overall impression of the situation in the conflict, with the Beit Hanoun events forming just one element of the overall picture.

In accordance with trends encountered throughout the Beit Hanoun coverage, only short-lived attention is paid to the leaders of those involved in the conflict. Israel is frequently described as responding to attacks on its territories by Islamists, with all its negative associations. There are references to calls made to the UN for an emergency meeting by the Palestinian Authority's President who, like many others in these reports, remains nameless. It is only on 08/11/06 that Abbas, 'the Palestinian leader of Fatah' and Haniyeh, 'his Hamas prime minister' are shown in a bizarre PR event donating blood alongside each other in a display of unity. By consenting to the image, however briefly, of these seemingly generous

leaders, *20 Heures* marks a divide between the ongoing portrayals of Palestinians as militants on one hand and their leaders, on the other, with whom France will have to negotiate. Apologies by the Israelis for the attacks on 08/11/06 do not appear, instead the anchor mentions in the introduction that 'Ehud Olmert has expressed his regrets', and in the conclusion, Amir Perez, the Israeli Defence minister appears at a press conference, again expressing his regrets, via a voice-over by Enderlin, with the brevity of this coverage of the leaders reflecting the fast pace of *20 Heures'* reports with its quick succession of alternating images.

In stark contrast with the amount of speculation and comment on *News at Ten's* coverage, little editorialising occurs on *20 Heures*. Instead, the latter relies on the provision of context and the careful alternating arrangement of images to provide interpretation. The only possible element of speculation occurs during Charles Enderlin's live link-in, which concludes the report on 08/11/06. He states that a ruling has been issued by the Israelis to cease their artillery fire, yet despite this, rockets from Gaza have again bombarded Israeli territory leading Enderlin to speculate that, 'evidently, the Israeli military tactic is a failure'; this statement serves to corroborate the dominant message concerning the relentlessness of Palestinian militant attacks regardless of Israeli actions.

*20 Heures* divides its image-laden reports into contextual information and coverage of the actual events in Beit Hanoun. The role played by the contextual information is significant and rather than seizing the opportunity to report on personal suffering, an approach used widely by *News at Ten*, large segments of *20 Heures'* news items are allocated to context. A hierarchy in news values emerges with negativity values proving most newsworthy illustrated by the constant images of rockets and ongoing sound of gunfire. Graphic images of the

deceased and injuries are plentiful, yet, despite their shocking nature, meet the provisions in the France Télévisions charter. Differences between *News at Ten's* and *20 Heures'* portrayals of the Beit Hanoun events are numerous as they approach the events from different angles: *News at Ten's* strives to portray the conflict from the individuals' viewpoint, from ground level, emphasising human interest news values and providing speculation and interpretation; whereas *20 Heures* reports appear indifferent to the sufferings of individuals. The French news provider does not offer emotive details of the attacks and views Beit Hanoun as just one small part of the ongoing conflict story, considered primarily as intrinsically associated with the war on terror and in which Hamas is presented as the main aggressor.

#### **5.4 *Vremya***

Building on the analysis of *News at Ten's* and *20 Heures'* reports, my discussion of news values in *Vremya's* coverage of the Beit Hanoun events highlights the similarities and differences which exist in relation to the former two broadcasters. It also reveals tensions which emerge in *Vremya's* own reporting as it responds to the inconsistencies of Russian state policy.

In contrast to its coverage of the conference, *Vremya's* reporting here is not so heavily Russia-orientated nor does it continue to view the Middle East as a discrete entity. It still displays a preference towards any angle which may include terrorism, supporting the state's anti-terrorist stance. With the exception of two clips of an Israeli spokesman and of Shimon Peres, coverage of Israel is scant, which replicates the approach in the conference coverage and emphasises Russia's frosty attitude in the international arena towards Israel, a US ally. In contrast with *20 Heures*, *Vremya* offers little context to the Beit Hanoun events or to the conflict itself. This is viewed in isolation as one event during the conflict and it is used by

*Vremya* to provide significant information about Islamist militants and their training. It dedicates more than half the report on 07/11/08 to this theme – a subject considered important by the Kremlin and therefore by *Vremya*. This emphasis could be viewed as a matter concerning international security in association with the global war on terror but also connected with the ethno-nationalist movement in the North Caucasus and many secessionist terror attacks engendered by the rise of Islamist radicalism that has occurred in Russia (Dannreuther 2009). Rather than raising concerns about potentially inflaming conflict amongst Russia’s own terrorist cells, *Vremya* persists in broadcasting similar images of Palestinian fighters which serve to create and promulgate stereotypes of extremist Muslims.

Day and date of broadcast	Position in running order	Duration (mins)
Friday 03/11/2006	10 <sup>th</sup> of 13	0.46 mins
Tuesday 07/11/06	10 <sup>th</sup> of 15	2.49 mins
Wednesday 08/11/2006	4 <sup>th</sup> of 12	3.04 mins

**Figure 40** Position of item in running order and duration (*Vremya*)

Despite its reliance on bought-in footage, *Vremya* adopts, particularly on 08/11/06, a similar approach to *News at Ten* with live link-ups with its on-the-ground reporter. *Vremya* shows three reports on the Beit Hanoun events which gradually move up the running order to occupy a position of relative importance (Figure 40). Yet, in contrast with the positioning of the conference news items, these events are treated as foreign news and on 07/11/06 and 08/11/06 are merely included in the international section of the schedule (Appendix 6). The first of the reports (03/11/06) briefly covers the storming of a mosque after sixty Hamas militants took refuge there, but barely mentions the role of the Muslim women in this event. The second (07/11/06) covers the unwillingness of the Palestinians to consider recognising

any potential fragile peace following the Israeli withdrawal and reports in detail from a militants' training camp. The final item covers the impact of Israeli attacks on Beit Hanoun with reports from *Vremya* reporter, Sergei Auslander, from inside bomb-damaged buildings and also from the overstretched Al-Shifa hospital, the central hospital in Gaza.

As there is little emphasis on Russia's involvement in these events, the elite nation and the power elite news values found extensively in the conference coverage are replaced with negativity and threshold values – which could be expected when covering a conflict flash-point – and also with human interest and personalisation news values through the portrayal of life in Beit Hanoun following Israeli attacks. The portrayal of these events provides an unbalanced view due to the almost total omission of information about Israel and the lack of any context regarding the conflict. Instead, as it has to reflect state policy, *Vremya* makes a clear distinction between two separate areas: coverage of terrorism in Gaza, on one hand, and coverage of Palestinians civilians, on the other. This section focuses on these two aspects of the reporting, illustrating how the reporter's commentary can be geared to override messages contained in the bought-in footage and how as a result these reports gain reduced airtime. This contrasts with the manner in which the commentary and *Vremya's* own footage are coordinated. My analysis initially focuses on the portrayal of Palestinians as radical militants and then I examine coverage of Palestinian civilians. With the exception of the direct examples mentioned above, and certain information regarding Israeli actions, coverage of Israel emerges through the words (directly or indirectly reported by *Vremya*) of the Palestinians, and these are examined accordingly.

#### 5.4.1 Portrayals of fighters in Gaza

Caught, on one hand, between the fear of Islamist radicalism both within its own territories and also in bordering nations, previously part of the Soviet Union, and the need to maintain relations with the Arab world on the other, Russia is obliged to tread a fine line between exacerbating its internal security problems and offending its allies (Kennedy-Pipe and Welch 2005; Cohen 2007). In its capacity as state-aligned broadcaster, *Vremya* adopts this same approach and conveys Russia's anti-terrorist preoccupation in two of the three reports, despite Hamas not being on Russia's list of terrorists (Associated Press 2006). The news provider pays particular attention to their actions and Fatah's actions during its portrayal of a Palestinian militant training camp. As Russia has no national interest in these events, the latter must be framed to serve a purpose which, in this case, highlights the role of terrorism. The events in Beit Hanoun present an ideal opportunity for *Vremya* to pursue this despite the fact that the Palestinians are presented as the victims here, not the aggressors. This fact is omitted in the first two reports when the focus of the items is diverted to the Palestinian militants.

The report on the mosque siege on 03/11/06 uses bought-in footage, which although identical, in parts, to that used by *20 Heures*, differs considerably in its coverage. With the exception of possible negativity and threshold news values, the visual images do not necessarily offer any information which is of particular interest to *Vremya* as a state-aligned broadcaster. This results in two parallel narratives emerging: one in the purchased visuals showing the role played by the Muslim women and detailed above in the *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* accounts; the other, in the commentary which contains additional information provided by *Vremya*. This is a rare occasion on which the Israeli actions are mentioned. The visuals portray the Israelis as an anonymous, dominant entity which targets its attacks and

gunfire at women, information which is neither disputed nor further explained by *Vremya*. A generally sceptical view of the scale of Israel's actions is conveyed through the anchor, the sole commentator, as she describes additional ammunition used by the Israelis. The mention of tear gas and stun grenades carefully coincides with images of women scattering. *Vremya* continues to expound the Russian government's stance with further information, not included by the other two broadcasters, that Israeli armoured bulldozers have caused the collapse of the mosque by smashing through one of its walls. It insinuates a lack of respect held for Muslims and their religious buildings by Israel, an ally of the West, simultaneously suggesting an element of shock from *Vremya*, the state-aligned broadcaster of a self-purported multicultural Russia, that such a violation could occur. Thus, Israel's bullying tactics – as portrayed by *Vremya* – and the justifications for these actions, which are introduced with the cynical comment 'as stated by the Israeli military', are framed disparagingly and continue the approach towards Israel found in the conference coverage.

The shaping of *Vremya's* Beit Hanoun coverage to accord with state policy is not limited to this disapproving portrayal of Israel, as *Vremya* also portrays certain groups of Palestinians as terrorists. Particular lexical references, such as 'militants' and 'terrorists', which appear to be interchangeable, are used to describe Palestinians fighters and are emphasised when placed alongside 'soldiers' in descriptions of the Israelis. The terms used for the Israelis throughout the reports complicate their portrayal and highlight tensions in *Vremya's* coverage as, although it disapproves of their actions here, it still illustrates grudging recognition of the official status of Israel's army. The terms used for the Palestinians ensure that fighters are clearly distinguished from civilians on 03/11/06. The anchor states that 'one woman has died and several civilians have been injured' which contrasts with the next statement that 'twenty Palestinian militants have been killed and fifteen terrorists have been arrested'.



Having determined the particular categories in which to place the various parties involved in these events, *Vremya* uses the lull following the Israeli withdrawal on 07/11/06 to report from a training camp for Palestinian militants. This report is justified by the alleged fear ('the Palestinian militants think that...') that the Israelis could return at any minute, again casting doubts on the reliability and trustworthiness of Israeli actions. The role of the reporter emerges here and continues in the subsequent news item – as he acts in this item as an embedded journalist amongst the Palestinian fighters – linking *Vremya's* reporting style to that of *News at Ten*. Before arriving at the military training camp in the south of Gaza, the reporter raises his own status by stressing the danger he is in undertaking this task. By having to seek the protection of armed bodyguards, seen in the accompanying vehicle, he associates himself with other foreign reporters, some of whom have, he states, been kidnapped.<sup>26</sup> During his reports, he distinguishes civilians from terrorists as he mentions the 'locals' on whose advice he hired the bodyguards, again emphasising his personal risk and eliciting concern for him amongst viewers. Images of the armed, hooded men engaged as protection and crowded into the accompanying vehicle indicate that Auslander is ironically seeking to be protected from terrorists by groups whose visual representation, to all intents and purposes, appears remarkably similar to that of the terrorists themselves.

By using reporters in this way and by personalising the news item, *Vremya's* Sergei Auslander, to all intents and purposes, assumes the role of "correspondent", providing pieces-to-camera, live action shots and gaining access to seemingly unprecedented "inside" information.<sup>27</sup> Yet in reality, any message he may want to convey remains restricted by his role within a state-aligned broadcaster. This highlights inconsistencies in *Vremya's* reporting approach: on one

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<sup>26</sup> All three broadcasters, particularly *News at Ten*, provide reports on the kidnapping from Gaza of Alan Johnston, BBC journalist, in March 2007. He was released in July 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Embedding journalists was widely used for the first time during the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and *Vremya's* use of it here can be interpreted as an imitation of US foreign conflict reporting.

hand it wishes to resemble Western broadcasters by providing on-the-ground journalism yet, on the other, it restricts its reporters' broadcasts so that they reflect state policy.

The report on the militant training camp includes shocking images, broadcast because of their indisputable negativity and threshold values which are evident in both the reporter's commentary and the visuals. The reporter does not appear in person but via a voice-over which accompanies the dramatic images of training in progress. Although "militant" vocabulary, punctuated by orders issued at trainees and frequent rounds of gunfire, does prevail throughout the voice-over, the general commentary is not as powerful as the visual images. The "visualness" value of *Vremya's* own images, in comparison with those it purchases, must not be ignored. There is little need to explain these visuals and the reporter even understates some of them. The accompanying phrase 'conditions must be as close to reality as possible' does not fully convey the horror of the images in which assembled trainees are randomly kicked in the head, chest or groin by their trainers, or in which one trainee must walk forward whilst balancing another standing upright on his shoulders whilst shots are fired in circles around his feet. There is no doubt that these armed, camouflage-clad and hooded individuals are to be understood as terrorists. This is further emphasised by the information that they are smuggling anti-tank rockets through tunnels from Egypt. However, this statement has to be confirmed by another one which is given to the camera by the militants' commander as it had initially been given in reported speech by the Israeli special services, and that opportunity had, in fact, been used by *Vremya* to question the integrity of Israel.



Figure 41 Images on *Vremya* of militant training camp

The declaration that Hamas and Fatah forces unite at these camps in order to face a common enemy eliminates the focus on religion and, despite it being clear from earlier references that

these militants are Islamist, the aim of the report is to associate them with terrorism generally, representing both the global war on terrorism and Russia's own security concerns. Religion is also isolated in this item and portrayed in a positive manner. It is associated with civilians in the closing image when a symbolic and intact minaret is shown at the centre of many destroyed buildings being assessed by small crowds of Beit Hanoun civilians. Reflecting a variety of news values, these items succeed in providing a representation of events which, on one hand, coincide with that of the previous chapter as, in the few instances covering Israel, *Vremya* disparages the latter and questions its actions. On the other, in contrast to the conference coverage, they do not portray the Middle East as a discrete entity, which again highlights inconsistencies in *Vremya's* reporting as it is forced to comply with the government's erratic policies. Instead, the Middle East is viewed in association with the war on terror and, to a degree, as a training ground for it. *Vremya's* portrayal allows religion to be disassociated from terrorism, representing the former as an integral part of the civilian life in the Arab world which Russia is careful not to aggravate. Although a clear image of the terrorists emerges, there is no accompanying context to explain the necessity for such training. *Vremya* therefore generalises its portrayal of terrorism – just as *News at Ten* does with its portrayal of victims and the futility of war – and the trainees are portrayed as fledgling terrorists receiving a form of specific militant training, the likes of which will be replicated throughout the world.

#### **5.4.2 Coverage of civilian life**

As demonstrated above, *Vremya* places great emphasis on discussing various aspects of terrorism in Gaza. As a result, the distinction it makes with civilians becomes clearer and the viewer can be left in little doubt that the broadcaster is discussing two discrete categories of people. These two groups are all but ignored during the conference coverage when *Vremya*

reserves any potential airtime for the self-promotion of Russia. The Beit Hanoun events do not offer any opportunity for this and they are instead re-framed to pursue this new theme which is of great importance to the Russia government. By using the plight of civilians as the contrast for representations of terrorism, *Vremya* promotes a different representation of the conflict to that in Chapter 4. It provides an imbalanced view of the events which are seen from an exclusively Palestinian, rather than a Palestinian/Israeli stance, conveying Russia's prevailing pro-Arab stance.

Civilians, who have already been portrayed as trustworthy by advising Auslander to engage armed security as protection, are shown in other areas of Gaza where life is 'relatively orderly'. Indeed, portraying the events from the Palestinian viewpoint is an obvious outcome of the fact that Auslander only reports from that side of the border where the ongoing events ensure a limitless supply of newsworthy coverage. There is no footage from Israel.

Understatements are used, as earlier, and are not borne out by *Vremya's* own footage: the phrase 'schools and kindergartens are running' is accompanied by the image of three small children looking, from the inside, through a hole in an outside wall, caused by the blast of a shell, at the reporter crouching on the other side; 'street cafes are open' is associated with images of a family sitting outside a bomb-destroyed building around buckets they are filling using a hose. This evident lack of concordance between the visuals and the voice-over and the resulting negativity and human interest value of the reports, succeeds in accentuating the stoicism of the Palestinian civilians.

Although the report on 08/11/06 focuses on the personal impact of Israel's attacks on civilians, the Israelis are not discussed in detail: official apologies are mentioned in passing and only occasional references to the Israelis are made. *Vremya* re-frames the latter to ensure

that the principal protagonists are those groups of Palestinians which it portrays as terrorists. Equally, although this re-framing is unmistakable, there is no information about what the terrorists actually do to the Israelis, nor is there any such information in follow-up items. When covering the events in Beit Hanoun, the question regarding who has done what to whom is not as newsworthy as reporting the immediate aftermath with its inherent negativity and human interest value.

As with *News at Ten*, the correspondent, Sergei Auslander, plays a prominent role in portraying the impact of the Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians. He reports from inside damaged buildings and beside the destroyed infrastructure and involves the viewers through his pieces-to-camera. Rather than providing images of the destruction with an accompanying voice-over, Auslander speaks directly to the audience and points to holes in walls where shells have penetrated the building, and the camera follows his indications to zoom in on the damage to highlight the horror of the situation. As he moves around the destroyed home, Auslander repeatedly indicates various points of impact with the camera changing its focus each time to film them. His own serious tone and expressions emphasise the personal suffering of the Palestinians and the series of shocking images shown in quick succession intensify the horror of the scene. In contrast to the *News at Ten's* correspondent, Auslander reports on the physical impact of the Israeli attacks on buildings and offers fewer examples of the emotional suffering of individuals yet the human interest value is still apparent.

As the report on 08/11/06 progresses, Auslander removes himself from the scene to provide voice-overs for chaotic hospital scenes with potentially upsetting images of injuries both before and after treatment. The few individuals selected for interviews are carefully chosen. A smartly-dressed Palestinian is interviewed conveying a sense of innocence and bewilderment

at the attacks as he states that, 'they'd been here for the whole week, looking for terrorists. They'd been through everything in my house. They didn't find anything. We thought it was all over, and now this'. In this short clip, the civilian and those he represents are instantly distanced from both the terrorists, on one hand, and the Israelis, on the other, to whom he refers as 'they' throughout, maintaining Israel's powerful yet anonymous status. Indeed, he implicitly accuses the former group of the Beit Hanoun attacks: had it not been necessary to search for terrorists, these series of events, to which he has been victim, might not have happened.

The second interviewee, despite saying little of interest as he merely lists various injuries he has encountered, is also carefully chosen. It appears that his intervention, in itself, has little value. Yet, the fact that he is a Russian-speaking surgeon means that the emphasis he places on the gravity of the situation contributes to the newsworthiness of this report. Other off-screen interviews are broadcast when Auslander asks direct questions in the voice-over but answers them himself with an apparently direct answer. For example, he asks the Israelis why a residential area was targeted by the attacks. The brief, directly-reported response that it was 'a tragic error', not only appears as an authentic Israeli quote but also allows *Vremya* to comment cynically on the frequency with which this understated phrase is now being used by the Israeli authorities.

In contrast with the previous chapter, there is little room for elite power value or portrayals of authorities resulting in very brief clips of Mahmoud Abbas, accusing Israel of not wanting peace, then Shimon Peres stating that the attacks were not deliberate. Again, as with the civilian mentioned above, the two leaders, interviewed en route to an official meeting, are distanced from any connection with terrorism. They represent international leaders who

must be treated as such, especially as Russia, a Quartet member, will inevitably have dealings with them in the future. Although Russia is not involved at any point in the Beit Hanoun events, the “imposed” news value of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs results in its opinions being mentioned by the anchor in the introduction on 08/11/06. It adopts a mediating role by calling for an end to Israel-Palestinian strikes, yet the government’s stance is immediately clarified by stating that Israeli actions will only exacerbate the conflict and no blame is attached to the Palestinians.

Although the reports last only just under seven minutes in total, *Vremya* manages to endorse the varying state policies, in parts continuing themes found in the previous chapter and in others having to adopt an altered viewpoint to adjust to a newly prioritised state programme. A dual representation of Palestinians emerges which portrays them either as terrorists, upholding the government’s anti-terrorism stance, or as respectable civilians, following Russia’s pro-Arab stance. The actions of Israel, as in Chapter 4, being US allies, are generally disparaged or viewed with cynicism. There are few references to religion, with the exception of occasional images of minarets and veiled women, which results in a virtually secular depiction of Gaza and in religion being distanced from terrorism. There is also no explanatory narrative and little context is provided to associate the Beit Hanoun events to the overall conflict and, with the exception of the extensive item on the militant training camp, these events are reported in isolation from the overall conflict. A hierarchy of news values emerges with threshold and negativity dominating, as could be expected when reporting on a flash-point during a conflict.



## 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter contributes to the overall thesis research objectives by further examining whether the conflict is viewed by the broadcasters in association with the war on terrorism and also the extent to which the news providers humanise the conflict. Using the events in Beit Hanoun as the second case study has revealed many commonalities between the broadcasters but also considerable distinctions in their overall portrayal of the events. There were also differences in the news providers' own portrayals of the conference and the Beit Hanoun events. In order to analyse these, the chapter addressed specific research questions: differences in the reality of the conflict portrayed here in comparison with the conference coverage; whether there is a balanced portrayal of those involved in the conflict and whether this portrayal is associated with the war on terror; and representations of authorities and officialdom. Agenda-setting and news values have proved a useful conceptual tool in addressing these questions. They have helped determine which aspects of the events are considered particularly newsworthy by the broadcasters and why three differing representations have emerged. A different hierarchy of news values emerged in comparison with the conference coverage with power elite and elite nation values being replaced. Compositional value was also less evident for two news providers but remained important for *News at Ten* when these reports represented one part of an overall, ongoing narrative in the news schedule concerning the war on terrorism. Generally, negativity and threshold values were key elements in the coverage, which could be expected when reporting on flash-points in a conflict, with *News at Ten* displaying the lowest threshold values. Human interest, personalisation and meaningfulness values were particularly visible on *News at Ten* and *Vremya*.

Even though the airtimes allocated by the news providers to the events were comparable, their actual coverage reveals differing perceptions of the conflict with each using different angles. *News at Ten* pursued a theme of humanising the conflict, already apparent in the conference coverage, and discussed the events from the angle of the individual and the angle of the authorities. Again consistent with the findings in the conference coverage, *20 Heures* allocated a considerable amount of its airtime to contextual information and the remainder to covering the events. *Vremya* used its reports to highlight the role of those it views as terrorists in Gaza dividing its airtime between portrayals of militant fighters and portrayals of the individuals and events in Beit Hanoun.

Regulated by the impartiality clauses in their remits, *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* endeavoured to broadcast balanced reports with the former providing comments from both sides in the conflict. At first glance, *20 Heures* appeared more impartial than *News at Ten* as its coverage did not include the same level of emotional reporting as that provided by Matthew Price. Indeed, *News at Ten's* Middle East correspondents, throughout their reports, appeared to be instructing the viewer what to think about the conflict. Yet, this reporting style which employs extra commentary is, in fact, encouraged by the BBC Guidelines but perhaps raises the question of whether the role of a public sector broadcaster is to influence the viewer in such a manner. Although dissimilar to *News at Ten*, *20 Heures'* approach was no less effective in encouraging viewers to side with a preferred interpretation. The fast flows of visual images on *20 Heures*, to some extent, meet the Charter's requirements for rigorous and accurate information. Yet its extensive context does not comply with the impartiality guidelines as it serves the specific purpose of foregrounding, from the outset, a radical interpretation of Palestinian actions.

Strong similarities appeared between *Vremya's* and *News at Ten's* coverage. They both used a reporter to present live pieces-to-camera, raising the human interest value of the events and making the negativity value of the horror appear even more immediate. Their reports were also similar in that neither included any, or adequate, context to the events. In both cases, the Beit Hanoun events were viewed in isolation and not as part of the overall ongoing conflict. *Vremya*, however, did not broadcast as many interviews with victims as the *News at Ten*, being seemingly content with providing footage of destroyed buildings. This technique camouflaged inconsistencies in *Vremya's* reporting, resulting from having to respond to contradictions in government policy. The findings concerning the broadcasters' use of context exposes important contradictions. On one hand, in the case of *20 Heures*, the use of too much context could be criticised as it appears to be used to influence viewers' understanding. On the other, in the case of *News at Ten*, the use of too little context could also be criticised as there is a failure to explain the cause of the events.

Although the emergence of negativity and threshold values when reporting a flash-point in a conflict is inevitable, the graphic images used by *Vremya* and *20 Heures* went far beyond those on *News at Ten*. Both the latter two broadcasters are restricted by their respective statutory provisions concerning the use of violent images yet the regulations covering *20 Heures'* enable, and even oblige, the news provider to broadcast its graphic visuals, rather than edit them which results in images of, amongst others, severely injured and even fatally wounded children.

All three news providers viewed the conflict as associated with the war on terror rather than as a discrete entity, continuing themes encountered in the conference coverage. There is little doubt amongst them that the Palestinians harboured terrorist elements. This was more

noticeable on *20 Heures* and most noticeable on *Vremya*, which showed details of a militants' training camp. Contradictions in *Vremya's* coverage emerged as it did not include all Palestinians in this terrorist category and made a clear divide between Palestinian militants and Palestinian civilians. It therefore appears supportive of the Palestinian cause in places, as it invokes its pro-Arab allegiances from the Soviet past, yet is also highly critical of Palestinian militancy as it faces its own post-Cold War fight against terrorism.

Varying representations of the Beit Hanoun events emerged and continued, in part, the trends in the conference coverage. *News at Ten* attempted a balanced portrayal yet the final product is swayed by, in particular, the first-hand involvement of the correspondent amongst the victims and his personalised reporting that resulted in critical coverage of the Israeli actions. The impartiality requirements in the Guidelines do not disallow such impassioned reporting as Price's or the taking of strong lines, especially if the events justify it. But – and this is particularly important to the thesis – the representation provided to the viewer is an interpretation by one broadcaster, and this interpretation is contingent upon which aspects of the news it considers most newsworthy. Other broadcasters might not consider the same aspects to be even remotely newsworthy and therefore will not provide this emotive coverage. *20 Heures'* reports did not include such overt verbal speculation and comment and its reports were comparatively more factual than those of *News at Ten*, where such techniques were widespread. *20 Heures* provided an unemotional report where the sufferings of individuals were unimportant in comparison with ensuring what appears to be radical interpretation of the Palestinians. This latter theme of terrorism in Gaza was also pursued in detail by *Vremya* which extended the subject so that it represented not just Gaza but was associated with the global war on terror.

In my analysis of this case study which focused on Israeli-Palestinian fighting, two of the broadcasters reported on the Palestinians as a whole, as one side in the conflict and with little distinction. This was not the case with *Vremya* which separated Palestinian militants from Palestinian civilians. The following chapter moves to the next stage of my investigation and examines which aspects of the intra-Palestinian fighting in June 2007 are considered newsworthy by the broadcasters. This forms an essential part of the thesis as it reveals the extent to which the news providers distinguish between the various Palestinian factions. Its discussions of the coverage of the Hamas-Fatah fighting also extend to the West Bank rather than being restricted to events in Gaza which provides a further opportunity to examine how portrayals of Palestinians may differ according to the geographical location of the action.

## CHAPTER 6: CAN “LOCAL” EVER BE “LOCAL”? COVERAGE OF THE CONFLICT IN JUNE 2007

My analysis of news values, thus far, has contributed to explaining why the three broadcasters provide different representations in their foreign conflict reporting. By starting the analysis with the international Annapolis conference and then focusing on the fighting in Beit Hanoun, I have been able to demonstrate that the broadcasters make clear distinctions in their representations of the Israelis and the Palestinians. This chapter now shifts the focus of the analysis from the Israeli-Palestinian fighting, which has been central previously in both previous case studies, to coverage of the geographically-localised factional hostilities, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, between Hamas and Fatah in June 2007 and the associated international reactions. I examine whether the broadcasters display a different attitude to the intra-Palestinian fighting and, by discussing how they present these seemingly local events, I analyse whether the coverage has a global dimension as it did for the Israeli-Palestinian reports. I focus on whether the broadcasters comply simply with their education and information remits (particularly relevant to *News at Ten* and *20 Heures*) by reporting who the parties were and why they were fighting; or whether they also respond to other aspects of their remits which state that their coverage must reflect ‘a global as well as national and local agenda’ (BBC 2011c) and ‘put events into perspective, underline their implications and their consequences on the lives of citizens, look in depth at situations, their scope, and specificities’ (France Télévisions 2011b).

In examining whether these events, which do not have obvious international ramifications are, nonetheless, internationalised by the broadcasters, this chapter contributes to addressing three of the thesis research questions. The first of these relates to how the news providers represent the warring parties and whether one party is portrayed to the detriment of others. It helps determine whether both sides – Hamas and Fatah, in this case – are

perceived as equal participants or whether one is attributed greater responsibility for the causes and consequences of the fighting. The second concerns whether the broadcasters attach particular and ongoing significance to any new geopolitical allegiances which have emerged in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 context. Discussing this question also helps determine whether the broadcasters' coverage foregrounds the emergence of certain new political blocs and whether the reporting countries are situated in a particular way in relation to these new blocs. The third thesis research question addresses how the broadcasters define the Middle East.

To achieve this, I analyse how the broadcasters present the various Palestinian factions when they are in conflict with one another, rather than with Israel, which is portrayed by all three as a Western-aligned state, and I compare this with representations in previous chapters. I discuss how, although the news story centres on the intra-Palestinian fighting and on action which is contained physically within Gaza and the West Bank, the broadcasters continue to be characterised by the fact that a dominant part of their reports is actually associated with international involvement and reactions to it. This highlights the global significance of the Middle East, which never appears to be viewed or reported in isolation by the news providers. It also allows attitudes and stances to emerge which are specific to the news providers or their reporting countries.

Many of the news values which have been discussed in earlier chapters – negativity, power elite and elite nations, for example, and which have been dominant previously – are evident here and continue to confirm the wider importance of the meta-narratives which permeate the broadcasters' coverage. Other values, which are also applicable to this chapter's investigations, emerge at certain points in the coverage, for example, meaningfulness and

consonance. The latter two, as used by the broadcasters, are helpful when analysing portrayals of the Palestinians in opposition to, or as a threat to the West, a term which is discussed in the Introduction and which appears throughout the thesis. According to Galtung and Ruge, the values of meaningfulness and consonance reflect whether the viewer agrees with an item or finds it culturally relevant or 'interpretable within [his/her] cultural framework' (1965: 66). They further emphasise this relevance stating that the viewer 'will pay particular attention to the familiar, to the culturally similar, and the culturally distant will be passed by more easily and not noticed' (1965: 67). This does not mean that events in culturally remote places are ignored: rather that they must be either 'loaded with meaning in terms of what [the event] may imply for the reader or listener' (raising the relevance value) or have unexpectedness value, as part of the meaningful and consonance value. In other words, as Galtung and Ruge suggested, and as will be demonstrated throughout this chapter, the broadcasters may use unexpected or dissonant aspects of the conflict, rather than the regular and institutionalised, to render an item more newsworthy. By using these news values in conjunction with others which have been encountered already, the broadcasters can associate a local conflict with the broader international picture.

In addition to addressing the abovementioned broader thesis questions, the investigation in this chapter concentrates on the following specific areas. I ask whether the broadcasters' portrayals of Hamas and Fatah in these internal events are consistent with those analysed in previous chapters. Following on from this, is the newsworthiness – and relevancy – of the reports raised by being associated with the international area and do the broadcasters view these two factions as one, in opposition to the West, or do clear distinctions between them and their roles emerge, heightened by the possible use of dominant negative attributes and leading to a reinforcement of existing stereotypes and the prevailing war on terrorism



narrative? Does this portrayal of the Palestinians in conflict also have an effect on how the broadcasters view, or even define, the Middle East itself? Because the broadcasters do not dissociate the fighting from international reactions, it is also appropriate to question the extent to which they raise fears about the possible impact of the fighting globally and whether the implications of these events are viewed as a potential threat to the West. In connection with this, I also investigate the news providers' perceptions of their own reporting countries and of other countries, thus determining the extent to which the broadcasters appear to find it impossible to report on the Middle East and events in that region without including both implicit and explicit references to the international arena.

Although the broadcasters' coverage of the fighting and the international reactions merge over the course of the days, I will analyse each of these aspects separately. The first section of this chapter investigates the broadcasters' portrayals of the localised fighting and the second discusses how the news providers interpret the role and actions of other countries in relation to the fighting, to themselves and to each other.

### **6.1 Coverage of the Palestinians**

The broadcasters' initial portrayals of Hamas and Fatah are confused as the coverage does not start from the outset of the action. Fatah, Hamas and Palestinian civilians are initially merged, visually and verbally, into one uncontrolled entity as the fighting and violence generally has more impact and is more newsworthy than providing explanations about the affiliations of those involved. On 12/6/07, Matthew Price merely identifies the protagonists in his first report as 'rival fighters, groups and clans [who] are killing one another' and on 13/06/07 20 Heures' Enderlin and *Vremya's* anchor, Ekaterina Andreeva, respectively refer to the fighters as 'they' and 'the Palestinians'. Repeated images of hooded armed fighters, firing

in the air, reflect the negativity values discussed in previous chapters and are widespread here as the broadcasters pursue the portrayal of Palestinian fighters as terrorists. All three present images of snipers on Gaza buildings, youths throwing stones and the general chaos of revenge fighting, representative of impending civil war. The lack of order is emphasised by *Vremya's* anchor's dramatic statement on 13/06/07 that 'gunmen are bursting into hospitals to reach the injured'. One event, filmed from different camera angles by *News at Ten* and *20 Heures*, shows a gunman, whose allegiance is not specified, firing into crowds of Palestinians protesting at the gunfire, then an unarmed protester as he rushes towards the gunman to stop him, highlighting the power struggle between the two main Palestinian groups, with the French broadcaster providing additional footage of the bloodied victims of gunmen's fire.

The impact of the initial drama and confusion of the fighting does not continue and its newsworthiness is continually boosted with other events occurring in parallel. As a result, the news providers quickly portray the Palestinians according to the three main groupings encountered previously and based on which the international consequences of the fighting become more apparent. Hamas is presented as the main aggressor and is associated with terrorism; Fatah represents the best chances of re-establishing hopes for peace talks; and the civilians are the main victims of the fighting. *Vremya* broadcasts the greatest quantity of images, especially of hooded Hamas snipers and gunmen in Gaza. But its overarching portrayal of Hamas as militants differs considerably from that of *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* due to the over-emphatic use of extra-diegetic music on the Sunday edition of the programme (17/06/07), which is more suitable to the introduction of villains in a Hollywood movie than to a news programme. The use of music also counteracts the effects of employing other reporting techniques found on *Vremya*, many of which replicate practices used in Western conflict coverage. The Russian broadcaster often uses on-the-ground reporters, for

example – a technique which is seen on *News at Ten*, in particular, in this analysis. This can suggest that the reporter has the freedom to move around a conflict zone, provide comment and gain first-hand access to events as they occur. It can also contribute to creating an air of impartiality which remains a principal aim of *News at Ten* and *20 Heures*. Yet, any of *Vremya's* potential aspirations to be perceived as producing impartial reports are thwarted when it superimposes this music on the images of Hamas, leaving little doubt that it is associating the political group with terrorism.

Despite continuing to make clear distinctions between the Palestinians, the broadcasters do not always view Hamas and Fatah as discrete entities whereby Hamas is the sole representative of “evil”. Rather, there is an inconsistent stance towards them. On one hand, they are divided into the groupings mentioned above ranging from the extremes of Hamas to the more Western-aligned Fatah, whilst on the other they are categorised as one, generally in opposition to the West, again highlighting the global implications of the fighting. There are instances when, on the level of the fighters, Fatah and Hamas are barely distinguishable from each other, particularly when the action in which they are involved appears more important than the participants. On several occasions (14-15/06/07) members of both factions are filmed by all three news providers as rebels break into and destroy their enemies’ properties and are involved in revenge attacks. This also illustrates the intensity of journalistic activity in the Middle East as reporters often appear to outnumber those they are filming, resulting in the same footage appearing on many channels, but with slightly different interpretations. As mentioned in the Introduction (Chapter 1), the Middle East receives disproportionate media coverage and, according to Hess, it is the focus of 35% of the foreign news coverage on US television in the early 1990s despite representing only 5% of the world’s population (1996: 41).

The military wings of each side in the fighting (for example, Hamas's Army of Islam, Al-Qassam Brigades, Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades) are frequently filmed by the broadcasters, possibly for the negativity value of the visual images, but they are not differentiated from one another, which has the effect of unifying Hamas and Fatah into one indistinguishable entity. On 13/06/07, both *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* film Hamas hostages being taken by Fatah and pushed into a van in a revenge attack. Neither the actions of Fatah nor Hamas, whose gunmen then fire at the kidnappers, are presented as more justifiable than the other: Enderlin, *20 Heures'* correspondent, states: 'Fatah responds with threats: if Hamas doesn't stop its offensive, Abbas's movement will lay into Islamists in the West Bank'. In line with previous chapters, *20 Heures'* images appear more dramatic than those of *News at Ten* and show not only the hostage-taking from several angles but also the scattering of civilians when Hamas fire. This emphasises the violence of the latter which, according to Enderlin, 'now controls 70% of Gaza, which is about to become a mini-Islamic republic'.

Yet divisions between the factions remain evident as the lack of governance and prevailing sense of chaos in Gaza are presented, throughout the coverage, by all three broadcasters as a threat to Western stability. Because they provide little context, at least initially, it is not clear who should actually be in power as there is scarcely any mention of Hamas's democratic election the previous year. This omission, deliberate or not, enables the broadcasters to pursue their prevailing narrative and to associate Hamas, which is portrayed as representing Islamic extremism, seemingly as the aggressors. Hamas is framed as answerable for the current violence and disarray and their leaders are presented as having no control over the situation in which civilians are the victims. Although *20 Heures'* attitude to Hamas appears the most clear-cut, with its reporter frequently stating that Gaza has been transformed into an Islamic republic, all three broadcasters continue to report the events as connected to the war

on terror, especially visually, as seen in previous chapters and a strong us/them configuration is established. Hamas fighters represent the greatest threat to overall control and are even dismissed by *Vremya's* reporter, Yevgenii Baranov, on 17/06/07 as 'unfettered by the values of civilization'. Baranov then emphasises this lack of control by reporting that it has resulted in Gaza being run by gunmen who threaten the possibilities of good governance in the region, a model used by the international community to determine the responsibility of a government and the extent of its decision-making process. According to the UN, good governance is 'democratic' [...] and must be seen to be free of corruption and accountable to the people. [It] promotes equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and the rule of law' (United Nations 2013). This is one of the universal set of principles of the UN and its members, and outwardly achieved by the latter. Such an understanding of good governance forms a cornerstone against which the three news providers evaluate the rule of law in Gaza and the West Bank. In the hope of achieving an acceptable level of democracy and good governance, all three reporting countries supported secular Fatah's control over the emergency government as the main solution to the fighting and based on which the Islamic threat, which is raised by all three broadcasters, could therefore be removed.

As already stated, once the initial drama of the street fighting died down, the broadcasters resort to other events, happening in parallel, to boost the newsworthiness of their coverage and all three highlight similar looting and ransacking events. The camera crews and reporters follow gunmen – from both Hamas and Fatah – as they force entry into the other's premises and proceed to destroy the contents. A noticeable shift in the broadcasters' approach to Fatah occurs here, and because the news value of the looting is greater than that of the participants themselves, a secondary group within Fatah emerges in the reports, which represents the fighters rather than the politicians. There is a dual representation of Fatah: on

one hand, there are its politicians or officials who are gradually portrayed as aligned to Western values and on the other, there are its fighters, categorised alongside Hamas and portrayed in an undifferentiated manner permanently in internal conflict and seemingly ungovernable and equally unable to govern. The looting events appear staged however, and the correspondents seem complicit in what is going on. On 17/06/07, the *Vremya* reporter, Baranov, accompanies members of Fatah's military wing as they wreck Hamas offices in Nablus, smashing desks, throwing chairs and breaking keyboards. Yet before they start the destruction, a gunman checks that the cameraman is watching. None of this appears spontaneous and although it may have initially been considered newsworthy to have an embedded *Vremya* journalist in place – again allowing the Russian news provider to illustrate its likeness to other Western media by emphasising the role of its embedded reporter – the action is far from convincing. One similarly staged event filmed by *20 Heures'* Enderlin, on 16/06/07, also involves Fatah gunmen, 'issuing warnings to civil servants affiliated to the enemy movement: they no longer have the right to come to work'. Again ensuring they are being filmed by *20 Heures*,<sup>28</sup> the gunmen burst dramatically into the offices, yet the reaction of the office workers is not the fear which viewers might anticipate given such an infringement of what could perhaps be assumed by the viewer as being basic rights to safety in the workplace.

In terms of political leadership, the news providers distinguish Fatah from Hamas and appear critical of Hamas's rule and its general lack of good governance. *News at Ten's* Matthew Price is unequivocal in his assessment of those currently in charge in Gaza, stating that it is no longer the '[Hamas] politicians who are calling the shots, but the extremists' (12/06/07), and

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<sup>28</sup> Such footage by *20 Heures*, where it films events which are ostensibly staged, appear to contravene France Télévisions' regulations on credibility and 'suspect images' which states, amongst others, that 'the use of sound or visual illustrations must not distort reality, nor dramatize it' (France Télévisions 2011b: 4.2).

'in a land without hope, it will be the gunmen and extremists who ultimately rule' (13/06/07). Enderlin's reports on *20 Heures* show close-up images of masked rooftop Hamas snipers surveying the streets below them to illustrate 'how Hamas [fighters] are establishing control over Gaza' (13/06/07), thus aligning himself and the broadcaster with France's condemnation of the events resulting in Hamas's takeover of Gaza in June 2007 (France Diplomatie 2011b). Hamas's politicians appear to have little power and Gaza is portrayed as being run by extremist factions – a point which is frequently repeated by *20 Heures* and *Vremya*. Hamas's lack of good governance is also foregrounded in reports covering the absent rule of law. This is emphasised by mass looting filmed in the immediate aftermath of the fighting, with Enderlin, in particular, filming the plundering of the former luxury offices of Abbas and Dahlan, the former head of preventive security forces. Thus, general chaos prevails in Gaza under the uncertain control of both Hamas leaders and those portrayed as extremists with few signs of democracy or rule of law.

A further clear distinction emerges between Fatah and Hamas when the news providers report on the absence of democracy in Gaza under Hama leadership. They comment on the lack of freedom of speech and media freedom being imposed by the latter, a newsworthy situation because of the differences in cultural values between Gaza and the reporting countries. *News at Ten* (13/06/07) and *20 Heures* (14/06/07) report indignantly on challenges to their own freedom to film after being prevented from doing so by the fighters and they go on to describe media restrictions being imposed. This comparison between their own reporting rights, which they perceive as being infringed, and the media situation being imposed in Gaza occur within one news item. It soon becomes apparent that Hamas wants full control over any information being aired. Expanding its descriptions of life under Islamic rule, *20 Heures'* correspondent, Sama Soulah, reports on 15/06/07 on death threats issued to

Gaza's Palestinian national television – and particularly to its women journalists – which had been accused of promoting immorality. Showing images of a veiled female journalist in a television studio, Soulah states that these acts of intimidation have led to complete censorship when the television company was subsequently closed down by Hamas, enabling the latter's own television broadcasts to dominate.<sup>29</sup> *News at Ten* and *20 Heures*, using explanatory but disparaging voice-overs, display the type of footage Hamas is showing its population as it parades its Fatah enemies half-naked through the streets (14/06/07) and graphic images of the lynching of a Fatah leader on 22/06/07 (*20 Heures*), who is being dragged through the street by Hamas fighters with acute gunshot wounds to his chest then dumped on the roadside (see Figure 42). These images, for which a warning has been given, were supplied by Hamas television and shown on *20 Heures* and appear to highlight how the former parades its spoils of war. The combination of the abuse of freedom of information and the barbaric and degrading treatment and torture dispensed to Fatah members ensures the newsworthiness of the items and also underlines clashes with values shared by target viewers.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> These events occurred when social networking was in its infancy and its influence in overcoming censorship was only just emerging.

<sup>30</sup> It is questionable whether the non-torture of enemies and their proper treatment can be considered a Western civilizing value particularly following the Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse revelations which came to light from 2004.





Figure 42 Images on 20 Heures of Al Aqsa footage showing Hamas treatment of Fatah enemies

The constant denigration of Hamas's control of Gaza forms a backdrop against which the broadcasters highlight aspects of Fatah's good governance over the West Bank, reflecting attempts being made, within the international community, to secure a partner for peace negotiations. *Vremya* shows Fatah's troops protecting schools in Ramallah resulting in a prevailing feeling of safety in the West Bank, in contrast with the situation in Gaza (14/06/07). But it is the general portrayal of Abbas by all three broadcasters which promotes Fatah's alignment to the West's position. Unlike Hamas's leadership, which either does not supply direct quotes to the news providers or is not filmed by the latter, Abbas is quoted on all three as he calls for the fighting to end and declares his party's readiness to work with the international community. *News at Ten* uses Bowen as a talking-head on 14/06/07 to separate Fatah from Hamas as he states: 'Fatah recognises Israel's right to exist, Hamas does not', 'Fatah is largely a secular movement', '[...Hamas] is Islamist with connections to other branches of political Islam across the Middle East' and 'Fatah is supported by America'. Bowen also reports on party leaders and broadcasts archive images of Mohammed Dahlan, described as the 'man the Americans hope would bring down Hamas', immediately juxtaposed with images of his office being rampaged by hooded Hamas gunmen.

Whilst the juxtaposition of certain events ensures that particular aspects of the reports are highlighted, the broadcasters use religion to make a further distinction between Hamas and Fatah, which both endorses the prevailing Western-aligned portrayals of the latter and again demonstrates the global importance the broadcasters attach to this conflict. This allows, on one hand, the specific narrative concerning Islam to be pursued, and on the other, the West to create an image of Fatah with whom a peace dialogue could be reasonable. In the brief context, Fatah is described as secular by all three, whilst Hamas, as previously, is labelled as

Islamic or the Islamists (Figure 36). *Vremya* goes further by also labelling Hamas as the ‘*radical* Islamist movement Hamas’.

	<i>News at Ten</i>	<i>20 Heures</i>	<i>Vremya</i>
<i>Hamas</i>	71	59	52
<i>Islam/Islamic/Islamist</i>	6	23	18

**Figure 43** Frequency of use of *Islam/Islamic/Islamist* alongside, or with reference to, ‘*Hamas*’ by the news providers

Although *News at Ten* does not verbally modify the term Hamas, it still associates Hamas with religion through its use of visual images. The impact of this is at least equal to, if not greater than, the repeated use of verbal modifiers, reinforcing the assertion by Messaris and Abraham that ‘the special qualities of visuals – their iconicity, their indexicality, and especially their syntactic implicitness – makes them very effective tools for framing and articulating ideological messages’ (2001: 220). Matthew Price reports on 14/06/07 that ‘one gunman, clutching the Quran, thanked God for their victory’. He later films masked Hamas gunmen flaunting stockpiles of weapons and equipment seized from Fatah, followed by clips of Hamas fighters kneeling in prayer. Price highlights cultural differences and clearly associates religion with potential acts of aggression and terrorism, stating that, ‘Hamas today celebrated what, to them, feels like an Islamic revolution’. *News at Ten* is not alone in using images to associate Hamas with religion. Following the fighting on 22/06/07, *20 Heures*’ reporter, Renaud Bernard, follows Hamas leader, Haniyeh, in a staged event as he enters a mosque surrounded by many cameras. The filming continues through the mosque door and viewers see Haniyeh as, according to the correspondent, he calls his troops to forgive their former Fatah enemies, clearly associating a political message to a religious service and location. This link between state and religion is alien to France’s policy of *laïcité* yet by highlighting this association, 20

*Heures* illustrates its own alignment with state policy whilst still adhering to its Charter obligations to represent cultural diversity (France Télévisions 2010; CSA 2012: articles 37, 50).

It can therefore be seen that despite the fighting being localised and physically limited to Gaza and the West Bank, the broadcasters' coverage strays significantly from the initial generalised picture of Palestinian fighting to definite us/them divisions between the factions as the international implications of the fighting become apparent. The portrayals found in previous chapters are endorsed as Fatah is aligned with the West and Hamas is presented as Islamist extremists and as a potential international threat. Differences between the realities of Hamas's aim to establish an Islamic Palestinian state, on one hand, and Fatah's secular aim to create the same state, on the other, are made clear in the coverage and are not necessarily media distortions of the situation. However, given that the coverage is provided against a post-9/11 background, the Islamist nature of Hamas does appear to be highlighted and contrasted with Fatah and especially its politicians who are shown to be more Western-orientated, whether or not this is the case. The war on terror narrative continues through the repeated use of similar images of fighters and the associated negativity and threshold values. Meaningfulness and consonance values are also apparent and differences in values between society under Hamas rule and that of the reporting countries emerge particularly with regard to religion and freedom of speech.

## **6.2 "Intrusion" of reports concerning the international community**

The analysis now turns to explicit references by the broadcasters to the actions of nations other than the reporting countries and also implicit ones which allow their definitions of regions such as the Middle East to be examined. Such constant references to other countries

illustrate how complex events such as these in the Middle East cannot be dissociated from the rest of the world and that coverage of it can be used to portray multilateral relations.

The broadcasters' coverage reveals particular anxieties, evidently considered sufficiently important to be aired alongside the conflict reports, which associate the fighting in Gaza with its possible impact globally. The prevailing theme on *News at Ten* is the fear of the potential risk to international stability resulting from the intra-Palestinian civil war. This fear, apparent in its coverage, results in the emergence of clear geo-political alliances, which replace the West-Soviet blocs and are a US-led bloc, on one hand, and a loosely-defined "Middle East", on the other. *20 Heures* views Hamas's takeover of Gaza as a *fait accompli* and a resigned acceptance of an 'Islamic Palestinian republic' within Gaza emerges. Its references to the international community are brief and infrequent, which indicates how *20 Heures* represents Gaza and the West Bank as an isolated entity despite its insistence on the perceived danger of the Islamic republic now formed within the Gaza Strip. *Vremya's* overarching perception is a continuation of themes already covered in its previous Middle East reporting in which self-promotion is paramount and denigration of the US prevails, all of which is indicative of its role as state-aligned broadcaster.

Divisions between the news providers' characterisations of the "West" have already emerged in previous chapters. Here also, the broadcasters' stance as to whether the fighting, generally, represents a threat to the West or whether certain factions are, or are not, in alignment with it appear contingent upon their understanding of the "West". *Vremya*, for example, appears selective about when to include Russia in the West, an approach which also reveals much about its role as state-aligned broadcaster. When 'corrupt' Fatah is associated with the West, Russia is implicitly not included. Whilst it approves of the resumption of aid by the US

following months of blockade (16/06/07), there is the implication that the humanitarian crisis – coverage of which is discussed in the next chapter – has been brought about by ‘Western countries’ because of their reaction to the Islamists’ victory in the Parliamentary elections, a situation in which Russia played no part. During the thirty-seven-second item, all important information, in this case concerning the role of the US and the West, is conveyed in the anchor’s commentary, which is characteristic of *Vremya*'s reporting, and is accompanied by disjointed visuals. These show the arrest of Hamas officials by Fatah and crowds of Palestinians jostling one individual out of a building. Images of hooded Hamas fighters follow. The same footage is also shown on the same day by the other two broadcasters suggesting that it has been obtained from a common, and possibly Western, source. The scene is explained by *Vremya*'s anchor with a very short verbal phrase which overruns and merges into the information about the US. As a result, neither the visuals nor the commentary are particularly clear yet it is apparent that further explanation of the images is not considered as important as denigrating the US and its Western allies.

On 15/06/07, *Vremya* does not include Russia amongst ‘Western leaders’ as they welcome the decision to form a new Parliament without Hamas and discuss sending peacekeeping troops to Gaza. The latter suggestion by Europe and the US is treated as hasty and imprudent by *Vremya* and is met with words of caution by Foreign Minister Lavrov, who advises restraint and the need to gain the agreement of all sides, including Hamas. *Vremya*'s broadcast of Lavrov’s comment reflects the Russian state’s guarded approach to align itself with the West. It treads a fine line between needing to maintain relations with the Arab world and its fear of Islamist radicalism at home, with this division in the West replicating that between the Palestinians. Yet, by recognising the presence of Hamas and the need for its involvement, *Vremya* bolsters Russia’s diplomatic image whilst challenging that of the West and suggests

the latter's complicity in dividing the Palestinian territories and in ensuring Gaza's exclusion from the international community. *Vremya* fluctuates therefore from being against the West, to supporting the Arab world seen in previous chapters, to supporting the West, when convenient, to boost Russia's image. This is seen when Russia's diminishing support for Abbas as he loses control of Gaza is reversed when humanitarian aid is restored not only by the international community but also by the Quartet, which ties Russia to the West.

*20 Heures'* reports contain similarly fluctuating sentiments towards the West as *Vremya* as it portrays France as being detached, on one hand, from the international community yet it is unclear who this community actually represents. For example, the rejection of Hamas's election result by the 'West' is covered by the correspondent, Soulah, on 15/06/07, but *20 Heures* does not seem to include France in this category as he goes on to describe the West as 'they', either assuming a more diplomatic role for France, or distancing it from contributing to the prevailing economic crisis in Gaza, a situation exacerbated by the international cordon sanitaire. On the other hand, positive associations linking Europe to the international community are important. The correspondent states that, 'only the authority of Mahmoud Abbas is recognised by the international community' (15/06/07) and it was the EU which was one of the first to reinstate its aid following the introduction of the emergency government by Abbas and to normalise relations with the Palestinian Authority (France Diplomatie 2011a). This dual approach prevails throughout *20 Heures'* coverage, reflecting France's allegiance to the EU and also *20 Heures'* reluctance to promote directly any specific opinion or involvement of France.

Following on from this discussion of the broadcasters' perceptions of the West, it could be assumed that similar divergences might also emerge regarding their representations of other

countries. This is, indeed, the case as, although all three do ultimately display an element of unanimity by supporting Fatah as a solution to the unrest, their dominant positions differ. The coverage of the intra-Palestinian fighting reveals various stances whereby, despite France and the UK both being allied to the EU, *20 Heures'* reporting portrays a significantly different attitude to that of *News at Ten*. It provides no references to the US and through this omission, it emphasises France's own European allegiance, a theme which permeates its coverage. During coverage of the fighting, both *News at Ten* and *Vremya* refer widely to the US, despite the fighting being localised, and their overall framing of the US replicates their Annapolis coverage. The news value attached to the US and its global status as an elite nation guarantees its inclusion in the reports and the fact that the Western bloc is led by the US is not disputed by either *Vremya* or *News at Ten*. However, the latter pursues its ongoing narrative of distancing the UK from America. Both broadcasters associate the US with assisting corrupt Fatah and, on 14/06/07, this does not go unnoticed by Bowen as he alludes to the US's non-impartial involvement in the region.<sup>31</sup> Through his intonation, he makes it clear that the US, in supporting Fatah, has backed a weak and unreliable side, something which is also remarked upon more explicitly by the *Vremya* reporter on 17/06/07.

Accompanied by archive images of Mohammed Dahlan, Bowen brings the US in to his report by explaining about the support it gave to the businessman, and that Hamas 'believe[d] that, with American help, [Dahlan] was trying to drive them from power', illustrating yet again that the fighting cannot be viewed merely as a localised event. Yet Dahlan was absent from Gaza during these events, instead undergoing surgery in Berlin. The aggression shown in the visual images of masked armed Hamas fighters destroying Dahlan's offices and shouting 'this is the fate of traitors, like the scumbag Mohammed Dahlan' implies that the US involvement has

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<sup>31</sup> For further information on US involvement prior to the fighting, see Rose (2008).



only exacerbated the fighting. The weakness of the US-led international community is also evoked by repeated use of phrases such as ‘despite international calls for restraint’ and ‘despite international sanctions’ and suggestions of widespread US interference and attempts to impose its will on the international community (‘the United States says the UN should consider sending in an international peacekeeping force’ (*News at Ten* anchor 14/06/07)). This all contributes to the overarching negative framing of the US by *News at Ten* which prevails throughout the comparison period: on one hand, the effect of this framing is such that UK is distanced from the US relations to the Middle East region whilst, on the other, there is still an awareness of the US’s global power in comparison with the UK, a fact which is apparent from the ongoing inclusion of the US throughout the BBC news schedule.

*Vremya*’s attitude to the US is also apparent in its coverage of these events and is similar to that of *News at Ten* as it not only seems critical of the apparent influence the former seems to wield but is also begrudgingly resentful of Russia’s own lack of power in the face of such arrogance. On 17/06/07, the anchor reports sceptically that ‘the Americans have *promised* to release financial aid to Palestine’ (original emphasis) and Baranov, the reporter, states that the West supports ‘corrupt Fatah’ and that the ‘West has been paying for [Fatah’s] trust for too long allowing it to play on a level playing field with the Islamists’. The denigration of the US is not just on a national level but also extends considerably to slurs being targeted at Condoleezza Rice, US Secretary of State, during the anchor’s introduction to the Sunday edition on 17/06/07. The formation of a new Parliament without Hamas is mentioned, yet the US’s influence in the process is made clear as ‘such a step was probably taken [...] after the telephone conversation with [...] Rice’. The anchor then accuses Rice of interfering ‘in all conflicts from the Ukraine to Palestine’ referring to a grudge harboured against her by the Russian government following her criticism of its action in the 2005 oil dispute with Ukraine

(for details see Cohen 2006). Therefore, even when Russia is not a direct participant in the events and when the part played by the international community is minor, *Vremya* fulfils its role as state-aligned broadcaster by highlighting the roles of both: bolstering Russia's whilst denigrating that of the US.

The broadcasters' portrayal of the fighting also provides considerable insight into their diverse representations of the Middle East. The volume of implicit or explicit references by the three broadcasters to areas in the broader Middle East, not including Gaza and the West Bank where the localised conflict is taking place, is significant. Regarding the *News at Ten*, and in comparison with its specific and detailed coverage relating to the US, its correspondents' portrayal of the Middle East as a bloc is not consistent and a blurred definition emerges. They make references such as: '[Palestinians'] Arab allies', 'they have no chance of a wider Middle East peace deal', 'other branches of political Islam across the Middle East' (14/06/07) and 'if there is no peace with Israel, the instability here will continue to radiate across the region'. By presenting this very broad definition of the Middle East, *News at Ten* extends the threat of the war on terror to far-reaching geographical areas and, by not naming the countries included in this area, implicitly encompasses a vast array of unspecified nations.

On *20 Heures*, the Middle East could be understood here as just Gaza and the West Bank, and Israel is a neighbour, affected by the fighting because of its geographical location but not a direct protagonist. Gaza and the West Bank, and increasingly just the former, are viewed in virtual isolation with its main relations being only with Israel. *20 Heures* shows several reports on Israel, some which include celebratory footage of Peres' election as President (13/06/07). Others show reports from residential areas in Sderot with cafes and well-supplied shops contrasting sharply with images of ruined neighbouring Fatah areas in Gaza which have been

wrecked by Hamas fighters as they create their Islamist republic. It is Israel which is said to be facing challenges set by the intra-Palestinian fighting rather than the global community. *20 Heures* displays a dubious attitude towards Israel, appearing sympathetic on one hand to the difficult situation it is in with increased violence on its borders. Personalisation news values emerge as the broadcaster reflects all strata of the Israeli population from an Israeli hairdresser allowed to speak of her growing concern given 'the formation of a Hamas state on our very borders' (15/06/07), to the Prime Minister, who fears a rapid deterioration of the situation. Yet, on the other, it is also increasingly critical of the lack of assistance it offers Gaza ('Israel increasingly intends to isolate Gaza', 'Israel has stopped supplies of fuel' (17/06/07)) which suggests that although Israel may be justified in its actions through repeated statements such as 'Hamas, classified as a terrorist movement, refuses to recognise the state of Israel' (anchor 15/06/07), it is the Palestinian civilians who are suffering most from the Israeli blockades.

In its coverage on the fighting, *20 Heures* associates Israel with Egypt and Jordan as it reports on the summit held on 25/06/07 and these three nations are assigned a peace-making role as they support Abbas. Fatah has by now been removed from any association with Hamas and *20 Heures* quotes Abbas who qualifies 'the Islamist leaders as murderers, assassins and putschists', prepared to negotiate with 'Hamas's sworn enemy, the State of Israel' (22/06/07), all supporting the broadcaster's own narrative regarding Hamas. Two brief references to this summit on 22/06/07 and 25/06/07 by the *20 Heures*' anchor allow the broadcaster to present an alternative portrayal of the Middle East with Egypt and Jordan no longer being considered part of a Middle East which is connected with the war on terrorism. Rather than associating them with Gaza, which it portrays as a newly formed Islamic republic, *20 Heures* represents them as allies. Egypt, particularly, is afforded considerable airtime over the comparison

period with twenty-two items, including three in December 2007, after these events and the Annapolis conference, when Sarkozy visited Cairo.

Israel also receives much attention on *Vremya*, despite not being directly involved in the fighting, and the broadcaster's unambiguous stance towards the US and the US-led West spills over into its portrayal of this region and a dual approach emerges. On one hand, Israel is viewed as a discrete entity, not part of the Middle East, with which Russia can maintain friendly relations both to emphasise its own diplomatic status and also to support the 1.5 million Russian-speaking diaspora in Israel. Throughout the comparison period, 'Middle East' (*Ближний Восток*) is used consistently for Gaza and the West Bank and is associated with conflict reports and 'Israel' is used for 'local news' items, 'non-conflict' items or items affecting the diaspora.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Israel is symbolically distanced from the Middle East. *Vremya* places greater emphasis than the other broadcasters on Israel and it is quick to report on Peres' election as Israeli President and on subsequent ministerial appointees. There is even a fifteen-second item on 15/06/07 dedicated to Putin congratulating Peres by telephone, though this may reflect more the news values imposed by the state-aligned news provider on the schedule than its desire to report on developments in Israel.

On the other hand, Israel is also presented as being unreliable and as a US ally, a representation which is used to promote a dependable and trustworthy image of the Russian state. On 17/06/07, it is suggested that Israeli troops will have to intervene if fighting breaks out in the West Bank yet there is no proof of this and the suggestion is introduced with 'many are inclined to think' which, through this unconvincing phrasing, renders it even less believable. Similarly, in the second report on the same day, introduced by 'there have been

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<sup>32</sup> The term "Middle East" is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

reports that...' and 'according to certain information', Auslander states that 'Israeli tanks have entered Gaza. But these reports have been refuted', which questions why this unsubstantiated information need ever be broadcast unless it is to frame the Israelis negatively. *Vremya* does broadcast Israeli explanations that it has halted fuel and other supplies because it no longer has any point of contact in Gaza since Hamas took control. Visuals are not used to any great effect to contest this as only images of Palestinians filling their cars at petrol stations, without any apparent supply difficulties, are shown. Yet the many verbal references to the exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis resulting from the Israelis' actions and the urgency with they are uttered by Auslander only further portray Israel as unfeeling and not to be trusted.

It is clear that despite the events in June 2007 being contained physically within Gaza and the West Bank, the broadcasters use them to report widely on international reactions, and also to proffer opinions, implicitly or explicitly, on other countries. For all three broadcasters, the power elite and elite nations appear to be an integral part of the conflict coverage alongside the fighting and their inclusion in the coverage allows the broadcasters to raise fears about the possible impact of the fighting globally and the potential threat it represents to a hard to define West.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

Having analysed the Annapolis peace conference and Israeli-Palestinian fighting in the previous two chapters, I shifted the focus here to the intra-Palestinian fighting of June 2007. My aim was to determine whether localised fighting, restricted physically to Gaza and the West Bank and with only Hamas and Fatah as the fighting parties, could be presented as such or whether the broadcasters would extend their representations to include a global

dimension. To do this, I addressed certain principal questions as to whether the Palestinians were perceived as being discrete groups or as one, in opposition to the West and whether this was consistent with the broadcasters' approach in previous chapters. I also asked if, during the course of the coverage, the broadcasters implicitly or explicitly raised fears about the impact of the fighting globally and whether this had an effect on how they viewed or even defined the Middle East and how they portrayed relations between their reporting countries and other nations.

All three broadcasters initially portrayed the factions as one unified group as the demarcation between them was not necessarily as important or as newsworthy as showing images of street fighting, snipers and random attacks. However, the focus on the fighting and the apparent unity between the factions soon shifted and particular narratives emerged to include an international element. *News at Ten's* coverage raised the fear of the potential risk to global stability resulting from the intra-Palestinian civil war. *20 Heures'* reports conveyed a resigned acceptance of an 'Islamic Palestinian republic' within Gaza and *Vremya* continued ongoing themes found throughout its Middle East reporting in which self-promotion is paramount and denigration of the US prevails, all of which is indicative of its role as state-aligned broadcaster. Within these narratives, and as the international implications of the fighting became increasingly evident, it appeared important to have clearly demarcated us/them divisions. Hamas, on one hand, was represented as the principal aggressor by all three and was associated with the war on terror. Fatah, on the other, was separated from Hamas so that it could appear aligned with the Western position as the broadcasters recognised that it presented the only rational option for potential peace negotiations and stability in the region. Because of this, the broadcasters emphasised Fatah's good governance which they contrasted with negative portrayals of Hamas, especially in its treatment of the

enemy. Hamas's actions, which could be considered by certain viewers as beyond what is viewed as acceptable behaviour, were particularly newsworthy because of their dissonance value. Several events concerning lack of freedom of speech, religion and equality gained prominence, particularly on *20 Heures*. News values were frequently combined, for example, threshold and dissonance, to gain additional newsworthiness and certain staging of events by the Palestinians, in which the broadcasters seemed complicit, were also filmed.

It very soon became apparent that the localised fighting would not be portrayed without the inclusion of many international references – indicating the global significance of events in the Middle East. Differing stances emerged as *Vremya* was initially reluctant to implicate Russia in any of the West's actions in the region. *Vremya* and *News at Ten* were most similar as they distanced their reporting countries from the US (*News at Ten*, in particular, through the editorialising comments from its correspondents). *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* occupied different positions with regard to the Middle East with the former including many unspecified nations in a loosely-defined Middle East, viewed within a war on terror context, whilst *20 Heures* perceived members of the region, such as Egypt and Jordan, to be Europe's neighbours. Russia, whose official state discourse was adopted by *Vremya* as its main stance, was portrayed as fluctuating from being against to supporting the West. *Vremya's* coverage demonstrated that Russia did not necessarily occupy a similar stance towards the Middle East as France and the UK, who considered themselves, willingly or not, as part of the US-led bloc.

This chapter has demonstrated that although these events in Gaza and the West Bank did not seemingly have international implications, they were nevertheless internationalised. The coverage focused on localised events which, in other parts of the world, might have remained internal and might not even have been broadcast. My examination of the intra-Palestinian

fighting in June 2007 has contributed to the overall thesis by demonstrating how the three news providers clearly differentiated between the warring factions rather than treating them as one homogeneous entity. Because the broadcasters' portrayals associated the fighting with the global arena, the analysis also illustrated differences between their presentations of emerging geopolitical allegiances in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 context and the way in which they not only define the Middle East but also their own reporting country's relations with the new political blocs. This, in turn, revealed the complex nature of foreign conflict reporting demonstrating how the reports draw on consonance and meaningfulness values to increase their newsworthiness. An event will therefore lose its "isolated" or "internal" nature and will become internationalised. The thesis has so far examined an international peace conference, Israeli-Palestinian fighting and local intra-Palestinian fighting. Yet one area, although it has been discussed to a degree in previous chapters, still requires more detailed analysis and this concerns the broadcasters' portrayal of victims. This group represents individuals who are caught up, however unwillingly, in the conflict and whose involvement must not be overlooked. Because the conflict is ongoing, interest may fade over time and therefore the newsworthiness of reports has to be boosted, possibly by drawing on compassion values. The next chapter considers this area of representation asking who the news providers perceive victims to be, how they are covered and how the broadcasters' reports differ.



## CHAPTER 7: CASUALTIES OF WAR – THE HUMAN ASPECT

In the previous chapter, I examined the broadcasters' portrayals of the intra-Palestinian fighting and their perceptions of both their own countries and other nations. I now illustrate how compassion for victims of the fighting adds to and maintains the newsworthiness of conflict reporting. It has been demonstrated that certain news values, which emerged in combination with widely-used negativity and threshold values, were gradually intermingled with, and replaced by, elite nation and power elite values. I also investigated how regions in the world, including the West and the Middle East, are presented by the broadcasters and how conflict in the Middle East is viewed as a potential threat to international stability. For certain news providers, particularly *20 Heures*, these two aspects, concerning the fighting and the elite, have dominated their Middle East reporting whereas coverage of the victims has played a significant role in *News at Ten's* and *Vremya's* reporting. Continuing to use the intra-Palestinian fighting in June 2007 as a case study, this chapter now seeks to address the final research question by analysing the newsworthiness of compassion found in the broadcasters' portrayals of victims. In addition to the protagonists and the so-called peacemakers, the sufferers represent an often underreported but still crucially important group of individuals, who are caught up, however unwillingly, in the conflict and whose involvement cannot be overlooked. This chapter examines two very different forms of victimhood: the first concerns large numbers of foreign people involved in an emerging humanitarian crisis as part of a drawn-out war and the second concerns the sudden and unexpected kidnappings of single persons of the same nation as two of the broadcasters. These two types of victimhood generate different forms of compassion by the broadcasters as they discuss the suffering self and the suffering other. The chapter therefore distinguishes between, and analyses, the different treatment of victims found in the news providers' reports to determine how the compassion news value of an item alters depending on the type of victim. Analysing victims

forms an important contribution to addressing the thesis research question on different representations of foreign conflict reporting by the broadcasters as conflict rarely, if ever, has no victims. Their coverage highlights further differences between the news provisions of public sector broadcasters (state-aligned broadcaster, in the case of *Vremya*) and also developments in victim reporting in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period.

The concept of compassion as a news value, as defined in the Introduction (Boltanski 1999; Tester 2001; Chouliaraki 2006; Silverstone 2007) has, to an extent, emerged in previous chapters – particularly through humanitarian and personalisation news values – and reflects the importance attached by the broadcasters to covering victims of the fighting. It has the potential to elicit an emotional response amongst viewers to the plight of those in distant places who are suffering as a direct result of conflict and, in doing so, it involves both the viewers' relationship with remote others and their recognition that these "others" are also part of a common humanity, regardless of where they are or who they are. An element of morality is thus imposed on "us" – the viewer – to engage with ethics of care, or to imagine putting ourselves in the position of the victim (Silverstone 2007). This chapter allows me to examine the techniques and approaches used by the broadcasters as they constantly define and negotiate the humanity of the sufferer. They face the challenge of bringing together common humanity on one hand, which is a unifying notion, with unfamiliar victims, who remain distanced from the viewer, on the other. The news providers' task of recognising these victims as being part of the same humankind may be restricted to acknowledging that, at best, a level of coexistence between the self and the other may be possible or, at worst, that the distance between them will remain permanent.

It is necessary, of course, to question whose understanding of humanity is being considered. Presumably, when discussing Western media and Western viewers, some might assume that the concept in question, and which will inflect representations of the victims, is grounded in Western perceptions, which suggests that anything that does not tie in with this may not be recognised and may consequently be excluded, thus further reinforcing any self/other divide. Appeals to dominant notions of a common humanity will not act as a unifying force but will represent 'a form of symbolic violence that aspires to expand our sense of care and responsibility towards those who are not like "us", yet manages to only confirm our existing communities of belonging' (Chouliaraki and Orgad 2011: 343).

Public awareness of the civilian population as victims in times of war has gradually been raised in the media through the ongoing and extensive reporting of global conflicts and the emergence of 'journalism of attachment' (Bell 1997; 1998), which describes a form of journalism which 'cares as well as knows; [and] is aware of its responsibilities' (1997: 8). Bell stresses that television, which he considers the most powerful part of the press 'does not stand apart from the world', and it should be morally aware of its influence and the compassion and emotions it should convey. Yet, the Western mediation of human misfortune has extended to the point that portrayals of it as a 'spectacle' have now become routine (Chouliaraki 2006). The choice of visuals and words to portray victimhood, as will be demonstrated throughout this chapter, present specific perceptions of the sufferers including potentially evoking certain responses amongst viewers. These images are, however, managed by values such as threshold – discussed in detail already and varying from country to country – which determine an economy of 'taste and decency', or what should be viewed, resulting in images that challenge the boundaries of this economy being domesticated by the use of language and montage (Campbell 2004: 70). Two particularly noticeable approaches emerge

in the mediation of victimhood and will be examined here (Boltanski 1999: 46-48). The first relates to feelings of empathy and the appropriate care to be given, and by whom, and the second concerns the injustice of the suffering and the condemnation, or denunciation, of those responsible. Analysing the news values encountered in the broadcasters' representations of the conflict in the Middle East will shed light on these two issues. On one hand, because it is an ongoing conflict, viewers' interest in, and empathy towards, its victims may wane over time and the prevailing newsworthiness of items must be boosted, perhaps by drawing on compassion values. On the other, the Middle East, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, is permanently internationalised – however local a specific event may be – resulting in it being possible to associate victims of the conflict, and those responsible, with broader more global matters.

The chapter addresses several research questions. I initially ask who is portrayed as a victim and whether the broadcasters similarly portray a feeling of sympathy towards them. In connection with this, do hierarchies in values and victims appear which illustrates that compassion is always culturally constructed and may well vary between different groups, societies and broadcasters? This may be constructed according to a Western conception, but, as discussed previously, this notion is contingent upon the understanding of the “West”. Although the actual effect on the viewer, and how this effect is measured, fall outside the scope of this research, it is still possible to analyse and compare the differing techniques and approaches used by the broadcasters when covering the plight of suffering civilians, who represent many tribes and clans<sup>33</sup> and whose dreams of peace are being shattered by the fighting. A further research question asks whether the news providers focus on this suffering

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<sup>33</sup> Of the three broadcasters, it is only Bowen on 13/06/07 and Price on 12/06/07 who refer to the clan structure of Palestinian society, further distancing the latter's culture from that of the UK.

or whether other aspects of the conflict are prioritised. I query whether the victims in Gaza are portrayed as a dehumanised group, distanced from the viewer, or whether the broadcasters' techniques attempt to bridge any remoteness between them and the viewer, in other words, whether a relationship is formed with the unfamiliar, or the other. Taking this further, do the broadcasters adopt similar approaches to each other with regard to the victims, or do they incorporate their own dominant narratives, as we have seen elsewhere, using these stories as support? Finally, is it apparent from the coverage, who, if anyone, is portrayed as accountable for the suffering and similarly who is perceived as capable of providing relief?

The chapter continues the analysis of the events of June 2007, discussed in the previous chapter. It comprises two sections which consider very different groups of victims, each featuring apparently powerless civilians caught up in the conflict. The first section examines coverage of Palestinian civilians who represent "the other" and are trapped in Gaza, affected by the emerging humanitarian crisis, whilst the second discusses reports on two hostages who have been kidnapped and who differ from the first group by not only being individuals rather than the masses but also because they can be perceived as being 'of one us', especially as the hostages are citizens of the countries of two broadcasters. The chapter therefore distinguishes between, and analyses, the broadcasters' varying approaches to victims to assess whether the manner in which they draw on compassion news values changes according to the type of victim.

### **7.1 The impact of the fighting in Gaza on civilians**

As could be expected from previous chapters, the humanitarian coverage of the conflict differs between the broadcasters with *News at Ten* appearing to focus most on the suffering

of the Palestinian civilians and *20 Heures* least. All acknowledge that the hostilities have resulted in victims but the manner in which the latter are perceived in the coverage differs greatly. There is little doubt about the extent of those involved and Auslander, *Vremya's* reporter, can only vaguely quantify those affected. He states that the 'civilians, and there are more than a million of them, are the real victims of the warring factions' (13/06/07) and reduces them to faceless masses. *20 Heures* is more specific and the anchor provides daily tallies of those who have died yet there is no further information about them, and the focus remains on the negativity value of the fighting. Despite its anchor also providing specific numbers for the dead, *News at Ten* homes in on the sufferers and immediately shows an individual who has been shot and who is now in hospital. Rather than going unnoticed, this man becomes the focus of the scene as Matthew Price, followed by the camera, walks into the patient's space – the hospital room – bringing the viewer with him, and sits alongside him at the same level, much as he did when interviewing the mother of Saad, the little boy injured in the Beit Hanoun bombing. Price, who has already been recognised for his personalised reporting of humanitarian events (see page 181), again acts as the mediator linking the victim to the viewer, a stark contrast with the situation on *20 Heures* where the reporter is mostly absent from the screen. This victim is now humanised, he has a name, he has a description, his injuries are described, the viewer knows how he has been shot, and, what is more, he is given a voice and is able to express his opinion about the injustice of his suffering. It is clear that this is not a unique occurrence and the danger of the ongoing nature of the fighting is rendered more apparent through Price's urgent real-time reporting.

*20 Heures* also broadcasts hospital images with footage of a baby connected to many machines, casualties being treated on the floor and pools of blood, but it does so at a distance. There are no interviews with these people or their relatives and the verbal

information is provided by the voice-over, as a factual account, with the sweeping statement 'the injured are far too numerous'. Techniques which could raise compassion amongst the viewers, and which prevail on *News at Ten*, are disregarded here allowing the victims to remain unfamiliar and dissociated from the viewer. Such an approach does not encourage viewers to engage with the sufferers, rather releases them from any responsibility to participate emotionally. Instead, and as seen elsewhere, negativity and threshold values remain the main priority for *20 Heures* and compassion values are sidelined. Potential opportunities to dwell on victim coverage are replaced by images of fighting and violence.

Although both *Vremya* and *20 Heures* initially portray the sufferers as dehumanised, these individuals are not completely stripped of their identities as details about them gradually emerge in the reports, but not to the extent seen on *News at Ten*. The depth of the coverage gradually increases and the victims appear in multiple scenes at food markets, in streets, at passport controls and hospitals and this extra information makes them more credible shifting them from the one-dimensional portrayal shown at the start. The extra detail continues through the use of clichéd images of queues, donkey carts used for transport and backstreet shops by all three news providers with similar portrayals and commentaries of the Palestinians during the crisis. The levels of engagement differ but all three broadcasters accentuate cultural differences between the Palestinians and the reporting countries. Yet, at times, the universality of the suffering overrules these cultural differences as the broadcasters all focus on iconic images of women and their children, representing motherhood, and the elderly as the victims. According to both Moeller (1999) and Christie (1996), these groups make ideal victims and create greater newsworthiness for a report than had images of men been broadcast. Yet it is *News at Ten*, again, which particularly engages with them by zooming in on their faces, their gaze looking directly into the camera, thus

bestowing on the victims an element of distinctiveness and identity. The difficulties that arise when using compassion as a news value, however, become apparent when *News at Ten* and *Vremya*, rather than engaging with the Palestinians as sufferers, focus on how children are used in the fighting. Drawing on the negativity value, *Vremya* shows disturbing images of children playing with machine guns and questions the concept of childhood innocence, which is being lost during the conflict. This does not highlight concern for the children but acts as a contrast between the inhumanity of the fighters, portrayed as aggressors, and the innocence of the young, potentially undermining ongoing attempts, particularly by *News at Ten*, to promote representations of the other as part of the same humankind. Their portrayals instead reinforce, and confirm, the distance between the viewer and the unfamiliar.

Although the broadcasters use compassion, albeit to differing degrees, to increase an item's newsworthiness in their coverage of the emerging humanitarian crisis, they still pursue certain prevailing narratives concerning the Middle East, which reveals a hierarchy in their new values and also a hierarchy of victims. By 18/06/07, *News at Ten's* Price shifts from his more prevalent individualised portrayals to a dehumanised view of 'several hundred people' at the border crossing point and states that 'eighty percent depend on aid hand-outs'. But this approach is used to emphasise the scale of the crisis and thus serves a purpose and enables the broadcaster to report on the role and involvement of external agents. On one hand, Price states, 'the UN and Israel are in talks to try and avert a humanitarian crisis'. Whilst, on the other, he emphasises the very scale of the suffering, emphasised by the gap in standards of living between the East and West in Gaza, and suggests it is a result of the West's dilatory actions.



Price also manages the humanitarian theme in his reports, and its priority position in the news values hierarchy is ceded to that of power elite and elite nation values to return to the ongoing 'shift from America' discourse on *News at Ten* (18/06/07). He thus transfers the focus from the humanitarian theme of pity to a political theme of denunciation. Allying Israel to the US, Price states, 'the US and Israel both say they'll work with [an emergency government]', 'the US and Israel are in talks to try and avert a humanitarian crisis but there is no agreement yet', with the implication, as the camera focuses on closed crossing points, that a solution could be found by simply opening the border and accelerating the agreement process.<sup>34</sup> He hints that the West is hiding behind displays of high-minded concern advocating Western universalising democracy and principles, whilst it too is contributing to the widespread indifference to the victims.<sup>35</sup> References by *News at Ten* to the US, the UN and to the international community, however negatively portrayed, do nonetheless undermine the promotion of Fatah's good governance shown by the news provider discussed in the previous chapter and reveal a prevailing discourse on *News at Ten* that, however hard Fatah may strive to meet the West's expectations, it is inferior and incapable and in need of humanitarian help and guidance from the West.

*News at Ten* stresses differences in cultures between Hamas-run Gaza and the West Bank, run by Fatah, which is represented as a better and more realistic option to pursue the peace process. It does this by frequently juxtaposing contrasting images on which its narrative hangs. On 18/06/07, it reports on the situation in Gaza, described by Price as 'sealed off from

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<sup>34</sup> A paradox emerges here between this 2007 portrayal by *News at Ten's* emphasis on Gazans' plight and their need for humanitarian aid exacerbated, but not initiated by, the intra-Palestinian fighting, and the BBC's refusal to air the Disasters Emergency Committee crisis appeal for Gazans in 2009, as it 'wanted to avoid compromising public confidence in its impartiality' (BBC 2009).

<sup>35</sup> America's universalism, in particular, is discussed by Spencer which he described as 'a circumscribed view of the world that propagates systems, priorities and courses of action that further only the special interests of American elites' (2006: 57).

the rest of the world' with images of Palestinians in seemingly endless queues as 'food supplies are already running low'. In contrast to the previous individualised portrayals of hospital victims, here, the Gazans, waiting helplessly at the closed crossing points, are stripped of any identity. Hundreds of civilians are shown sitting passively, desolately staring downwards. They do not look at the camera, let alone speak to it and they appear to be passive with no agency at all. All they can do, in a subsequent visual, is help off-load the abovementioned humanitarian aid from a truck. These images are contrasted with visuals of a comparatively safer, calmer West Bank, which, according to Price, is 'being brought in from the cold'. As a contrast to the images of the dehumanised masses at the crossing points, Price appears, chatting with a grandmother in the West Bank, who is named, surrounded by her grandchildren all wearing brightly coloured garments compared with the monochrome pictures of the Gazans. It is only with the support of international agents that such suffering, on such a scale, could be alleviated. Rather than focusing the narrative on just the plight of the sufferers, the broadcaster shifts spatially between images of the victims and images of potential international agents who, through this juxtaposition of images, are portrayed as the possible solution to the crisis.

*20 Heures'* use of compassion as a news value is least evident amongst the three broadcasters. Although it acknowledges the predicament of the victims and does broadcast similar images of the humanitarian crisis, there are few attempts to engage with civilian sufferers and the compassion news value appears to be given lower priority than negative or threshold values. *20 Heures* combines coverage of events, which could have sympathy as their dominant theme, with its more shocking visual reporting found in earlier chapters, particularly of the injured in hospital. Visual images of civilians at the Israel-Gaza border crossing on 17/06/07 are quickly replaced with images of the Fatah lynching mentioned

earlier. In the same item, when another opportunity to focus on the civilian victims arises, it is instead framed to highlight the role of Hamas in creating this situation, thus highlighting the hierarchy in *20 Heures'* news values. When a masked Hamas gunman and civilians appear in the same shot, rather than focusing on the victims, the gunman, who is controlling yet another barrier which they must get through to flee Gaza, is given the airtime to speak. This apparent reluctance to dwell too long on the unpleasantness of the humanitarian crisis emerges on 18/06/07. When the other two broadcasters concentrate almost solely on the desperate situation at the Erez border crossing, *20 Heures* dedicates the whole 1.41 minute item to the destruction of a Catholic church in Gaza during the fighting and provides yet another example of Hamas being incapable of ensuring a safe environment, this time for a minority religion.

Although *20 Heures* does broadcast images which could elicit empathy, the ongoing negative reporting of Hamas during the fighting reinforces its prevailing message that Gaza is now an Islamist republic and it pursues a clear theme of denouncing Hamas for the injustice of the suffering. The broadcaster presents a contrasting portrayal on 14/06/07 when it shows images of the severely wounded being stretchered into hospitals which create high visual impact through their threshold value. One individual in particular is not only cared for by Red Crescent paramedics but also by a hooded, Hamas fighter who is in a close-up, holding a drip for this same person with evident concern on his face. This challenges *20 Heures'* overarching representation of the pitiless Islamist fighter and, in fact, draws out a human element amongst them. Although the victims on *20 Heures* are not totally dehumanised as they appear in multiple scenes with a gradually increasing depth of reporting, the French broadcaster's coverage is characterised more by its lack of empathy than its abundance, especially in comparison with *News at Ten*. Because there is little interaction with those

shown to be suffering (few are given a voice, few appear in close-ups, little if any attention is paid to the victims' gaze), there is consequently little information about potential protectors or rescuers.

*Vremya*, like *News at Ten*, highlights the plight of the Gazans and uses similar techniques, yet its coverage changes after 18/06/07 and the Palestinians are no longer portrayed as the victims and any pity potentially elicited amongst viewers for them is diverted. This role is instead assumed by the hundred or so Russian-speaking expats relying on Russian state help for their evacuation.<sup>36</sup> So, from 18/06/07 to 24/06/07, the emphasis shifts and sixteen minutes twenty-seven seconds of the total thirty-nine minutes twenty-five seconds now focuses on a few Russian compatriots, which helps determine *Vremya's* hierarchy of victims. The Gazans are now reduced to distant and anonymous 'masses of refugees' contrasted with many individual, named Russian speakers who directly address the camera and provide exaggerated praise of the Motherland and Russia's assistance to its citizens who declare: 'Russia has not abandoned its own', 'thanks to our Russian state' and 'it remembers us'. This use of compassion by *Vremya* is very much instrumentalised and it has a strong nation-building function which contrasts starkly with how compassion is used for the suffering other. The real-time storytelling, as on *News at Ten*, suggests the indefinite nature of the crisis and the pressing need to evacuate these individuals. Their story is played out initially in a dream-like scenario reminiscing, on 18/06/07, about their hopes of living in 'faraway Palestine' yet *Vremya* brings the viewer instantly up-to-date with the visual images of the present crisis. The suspense continues over several days as "we" – the viewer – watch these evacuees as they

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<sup>36</sup> This broadly-defined group, which requires Russian aid, includes individuals from Ukraine, Moldova and other countries which the state considers to be within its sphere of influence. The value attached to covering this varied group (and to the Russian-speaking diaspora as a whole as mentioned in Chapter 3) reflects how Russian national identity is now constructed, and its relationship with Soviet identity. The question about over whom Russia, as a state, is claiming authority and rights is discussed by Ryazanova-Clarke (2013).

are subject to 'tortuous waiting'. We then accompany them as they move from Gaza, to Jordan and finally to Russia when coverage of them is only complete once they are in the arms of their loved ones in Russia, images of which are in frankly bizarre, slow motion accompanied by upbeat, reassuring music appropriate for a 'happy-ending', inviting viewers to engage with their ordeal through reflexive contemplation. Over the course of the days, the Russian-speaking victims have moved spatially from a position of danger to one of safety. The Palestinians, who were initially the focus of *Vremya's* humanitarian coverage, have long since been replaced in the hierarchy and their status as the other is confirmed.

The main victims are therefore perceived by *Vremya* to be the Russian-speaking compatriots, but the reporter also clearly frames the Israelis to be the persecutors despite the main cause of the conflict being the intra-Palestinian fighting. The Israelis are presented as accountable for the injustice of the suffering as they are 'not letting anyone through' and *Vremya* casts doubts on Israeli actions, questioning whether they will keep their promises to allow the Russians to leave. This enables the broadcaster to boost Russia's agency in the evacuation process by highlighting the embassy's role through repeated reports and pieces-to-camera which provide updates on their actions against the persecutor. There is no discordancy here between the footage and the verbal commentary as seen elsewhere and instead they cooperate to emphasise the comfort in which these individuals are treated as they are transported on luxury coaches to hotels, to the airport and finally flown to Moscow.

The victims become a prominent feature of the broadcasters' coverage during their reports on the Hamas-Fatah hostilities and, in fact, their plight takes centre stage as the fighting dies down. Rather than being portrayed as a universal moral value, compassion – or displays of humanitarianism – towards the anonymous masses of civilians is represented differently by

all three broadcasters and is constructed in order to suit, or reflect, their own narratives. Although the broadcasters' overarching moral values appear at least comparable, and although they are united in their approach from their 'Western transnational zone of safety' towards 'human life in the zone of suffering [which is the] West's "Other"' (Chouliaraki 2006: 10), their representations of the victims are culturally constructed. Regardless of endeavours by *News at Ten* and *Vremya* to elicit an emotional response amongst viewers towards the victims, their reports only serve to reinforce the us/other divide. *News at Ten* shows the highest levels of compassion and clearly incorporates its prevailing shift away from its former war narrative and *20 Heures* shows the least. *Vremya* departs abruptly from reporting on the Palestinians for whom attempts have been made to establish feelings of empathy and instead focuses on Russian-speaking compatriots, now portrayed as the victims caught up in the fighting in Gaza, foregrounding official Russian state discourse.

## **7.2 Hostage-takings**

The previous section analysed the broadcasters' coverage of the Palestinian masses caught up in the emerging humanitarian crisis and the manner in which they potentially elicit compassion in the viewer. This section now moves to investigate compassion of a very different order as the victim is no longer represented by the foreign masses but is instead – in the case of two of the broadcasters – an individual of the same nation and therefore is considered "one of us". I will therefore continue to discuss portrayals of the victim but examine how the approaches to generating compassion and the techniques used by the broadcasters establish any potential link between the viewer and the hostages differ depending on who the victims are. Because the victims are now Western and indeed citizens of two of the broadcasters' countries – and even the same organisation in the case of Johnston – the self/other divide which was particularly relevant when discussing portrayals of

the Palestinian civilians, is not so pertinent here. This does not mean that the hostages are any the less victims but the manner in which they are perceived by the broadcasters will differ. This part of the analysis therefore contributes to determining hierarchies in victims and, given that the hostages may be viewed as “one of us” by the viewers, asks whether the broadcasters make clear distinctions in their coverage between focusing on eliciting empathy for the hostages on one hand and denouncing their captors on the other.



Figure 44 Examples of the broadcasters' coverage of the victims: *News at Ten* – Queues at a crossing point; *Vremya* – Transporting Russian citizens from Gaza; *20 Heures* – Hamas fighter checking victim's papers



In addition to the overall discussion about compassion as news value, the analysis of the hostage-takings also illustrates the relationship between the media, as a whole, and those it portrays as terrorists given that 'the use of terrorists by the media turns out to be as crucial as the use of the media by the terrorists' (Schmid 1989: 539). This is because, on one hand, the broadcasters can increase their ratings, essential in a competitive market, as a result of the visually-compelling and dramatic footage they have been given, whilst on the other, the alleged terrorists are aware that they can receive widespread publicity and even legitimacy by virtue of access to such mass media. In this case study, the hostage-takers appeared to appropriate the high-intensity coverage of the intra-Palestinian fighting and its associated reports to gain publicity for the hostage-takings. (It must be borne in mind that an important characteristic of terrorist activity is that it is a public act, and without this publicity it could simply be labelled a crime (Martin 1985)). The broadcasters consequently stop focusing on the many Palestinian civilians who are caught up in the fighting with no other option but to wait for international assistance, revealing a distinct hierarchy in victims, and instead appear compelled to respond to what was widely perceived by media and governments to be terrorist propaganda by broadcasting the video and audio footage, to ensure that their programmes are the most informative, exciting and entertaining (Wilkinson 1997: 54).

By the end of this case study from June 2007, the coverage has moved from the initial theme of the intra-Palestinian fighting and has been broadened and extended to include two hostage-takings. Both hostages have been mentioned in previous chapters and are Alan Johnston, a BBC journalist, representing a British civilian who was non-military but in Gaza as a result of his own professional decisions and now involved in the conflict as a direct victim; and Gilad Shalit, an Israeli-French IDF soldier, in the Middle East through direct military involvement. Johnston was kidnapped in Gaza by the Army of Islam on 12/03/07 and was held

captive for 114 days with various unconfirmed claims and also videos of him being issued during that time. His kidnapping provoked many days of action for his release by colleagues both in the UK and abroad, leading up to events to mark his hundredth day in captivity on 20/06/07 – coinciding with the kidnappers’ video being aired. His abduction was associated with releasing Muslims jailed in Britain (BBC 2007). These reports are broadcast approximately three weeks before his release. Shalit was captured by Hamas militant wing fighters in June 2006 near the Israel-Gaza border. He was held for five years during which time communication with him was sparse including only a few letters and the audio tape broadcast as part of these events.

	<i>News at Ten</i> <i>mm:ss</i>	<i>20 Heures</i> <i>mm:ss</i>	<i>Vremya</i> <i>mm:ss</i>
Alan Johnston	06:10	00:50	01:33
Gilad Shalit	-	01:45	01:10

**Figure 45**      **Airtime dedicated to the Johnston and Shalit stories between 12-26/06/2007**

Coverage of the hostage-takings by the broadcasters differed not only in the total airtime (see Figure 45) but in that *News at Ten* focused solely on Johnson whilst *20 Heures* and *Vremya* also reported on Shalit. Viewers witness sensitive and complex coverage by the French and UK broadcasters who, rather than being onlookers on the action in the Palestinian territories which has been the case so far, now have to report on the plight of their own country’s citizens in the knowledge that their broadcasts may also be watched by the hostage-takers.<sup>37</sup> The inclusion of the kidnappers’ footage in the news programmes enables viewers to witness not only the suffering of these individuals, but also the distress of the extended family to this

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<sup>37</sup> The BBC guidelines on kidnappings, for example, place restrictions on *News at Ten’s* reporting (BBC 2013b). It must be ‘aware that anything we broadcast may be seen or heard [...] by the perpetrators both in the UK and overseas’. Thus, anything or any comments it broadcasts might affect the outcome.

footage. Shalit's relations are shown only in videos and photographs on *20 Heures* whilst Johnston's family and colleagues appear in live footage giving interviews and comment on *News at Ten*. The viewers are therefore united as they observe the hostages' human rights being clearly infringed, a situation which would be denounced by the international community of civility.

*News at Ten's* reporting appears to contain two aspects. The first focuses on a sentiment of care and compassion towards Johnston, and the second concentrates on the denunciation of his suffering and those involved in inflicting it. The first aspect may elicit empathy for Johnston by regularly broadcasting the viewpoints of his family, the BBC, the British Foreign Office and the UK. By gradually providing these separate groups with voices throughout the reports, the victim no longer remains anonymous and the audience views him as "ours". Johnston's family, for example, is often shown, speaking in interviews, wearing 'Free Alan' tee-shirts and releasing balloons. This unification behind Johnston continues when the video of him wearing an explosive belt is shown. He appears in a separate frame against a black background, with Arabic subtitles shown underneath and the kidnappers' symbol to the right. An evidently tense Johnston speaks directly to the camera with the clear warning regarding his explosive belt that 'the kidnappers say will be detonated if there is any attempt to storm this area'. The same footage of Johnston, issued by the kidnappers, is split into two and is sandwiched around calls for his release from BBC colleagues, on one hand, and archive images of the journalist, when healthy and free and filming a previous report from Gaza, on the other. The vocabulary used by Johnston in the first half of the kidnappers' video, for example 'death zone', 'by force' and 'threat' as he repeats his captors' intentions is contrasted with the many words of compassion ('love' and 'care') uttered by the BBC World News Editor as he supports the journalist. These are terms which express intimate emotions

as they can be expressed to, or about, individuals with whom close relations can be either understood as existing (by the viewers, for example, with regard to Johnston and his family and colleagues) or which do exist between the viewer and the individual being viewed. Such intimacy is absent in *News at Ten's* coverage of the Palestinian victims, marking a significant difference in the broadcaster's approach to victims. Instead 'their' 'hopelessness and despair' is repeated on 18/06/07 but the commentator's verbal account alone does not encourage viewers to empathise with the victim and it is only in combination with the images that compassion may possibly be elicited.

The juxtaposition of the images of Johnston also emphasises the apparent physical and mental strain he is under when in captivity. Such an ongoing, personal and detailed approach to Johnston's kidnapping questions *News at Ten's* commitment to impartiality as it deals with one of its own senior correspondents whose suffering is central to the story. Its Guidelines state that 'we must be fair and open-minded when examining the evidence and weighing material facts' and that 'our audiences should not be able to tell from BBC output the personal prejudices of our journalists or news and current affairs presenters [...] on "controversial subjects"' (BBC 2013a: 4), yet achieving this must be an unenviable task when the news item focuses on a close colleague. It dedicates significant airtime to Johnston over several days possibly to the detriment of other stories, yet this could equally be considered reasonable given the interest the story would hold for the BBC's viewers.

Whatever the guidelines on kidnappings, the full spectacle of horror contained in the images of Johnston wearing an explosive belt appear justified as they contribute to constructing a common identity amongst viewers who then support the hostage, again reinforcing a 'community of imagination' of the self, representing Western civility in opposition to the

hostage-taking other (Chouliaraki 2006; 2009). Having highlighted the empathy, or compassion, for Johnston and having established that he is “one of us”, *News at Ten* commences its theme of denunciation and the reports are re-directed so that the persecutor of Johnston’s unjust suffering becomes clear. There is a steady flow of reports focusing on Johnston and his family and colleagues, but when images associated with the kidnappers are shown they are framed to influence the audience’s emotional reactions to the captors. The broadcaster imposes its own interpretation on the material which has been supplied by the Army of Islam and exemplifies the power exerted by news providers over those they portray as terrorists: whilst they broadcast the kidnapper’s footage they ‘omit the propaganda message that terrorists would like to see accompanying reporting of their exploits’ (Martin 1985: 1). This approach not only significantly reduces the desired impact of the original videos but also ensures that there is no doubt amongst viewers who the abductors are and how they, and their actions, should be perceived.

Even though Johnston is a BBC employee (suggesting that *News at Ten* might broadcast pro-Johnston reports), the juxtaposition of the images – and ongoing technique of this broadcaster – seems to illustrate some elision between the broadcaster’s position and the government’s policy of non-negotiation with terrorists. For example, during the item which shows the Johnston video, *News at Ten* shows images of Abu Qatada, a Palestinian-born Islamic cleric, suspected of links to Al-Qaeda and held by the UK government as a threat to national security, which illustrates the domestic influence on the broadcaster’s foreign conflict reporting. The lengthy appeal process against Abu Qatada’s deportation to Jordan was well-publicised. Its inclusion here increases the cultural proximity of these reports and reveals not only the extent to which events in the UK can influence foreign conflict reporting but also the association between the Middle East and the UK. The negativity value of the

captors is clear in the Aljazeera video images of them as hooded masked gunmen brandishing AK-47s, images which support the religious association noted previously ('we will get closer to God by killing this journalist') and contribute to the portrayal which associates these individuals with terrorism. Yet there is no specific statement about the hostage-takers' demands. All the reports are framed from the viewpoint of Johnston and his supporters, illustrating how the kidnappers have only partially achieved their presumed publicity aims.

A similar approach prevails on *20 Heures* where there is a strong sentiment of empathy towards Shalit and to Johnston – albeit to a lesser extent regarding the latter – and the broadcaster, like *News at Ten*, is very clear about who the victim is. However, any potential emotional reaction amongst the audience towards Johnston is reduced as only a blurred still of this same video of him wearing an explosive belt – an image which displays considerable negativity value – is played. In contrast to *News at Ten* and despite using footage provided by the alleged terrorists, *20 Heures* offers little information about their demands. On 20/06/07, the anchor briefly says that Johnston's 'abductors [...] are calling for the liberation of several Muslims held in Great Britain' but there is no information at all about the demands from Shalit's hostage-takers as the focus is on the former and his family. It is apparent from just the visual images who the kidnappers are as the former are characteristic of many shown by *20 Heures* over the course of the comparison period in support of their ongoing anti-Islamism narrative. Yet in contrast with *News at Ten*, the news provider does not dwell on denouncing the abductors. Instead, the brief airtime allocated to its hostage reports, which are the shortest of all three broadcasters, is dedicated to the victims. It stresses a hierarchy between the reports of Johnston's video message and the taped audio message from Gilad Shalit (greater airtime is given to the Shalit item – one minute forty seconds rather than twenty-two seconds – presumably because of his dual French-Israeli nationality). *20 Heures* also

accentuates consonance and meaningfulness values in its Shalit coverage by providing accompanying flows of information about him, shown as photographs and videos, as a soldier, in a healthy state, prior to his capture (see Figure 39). In line with the rest of *20 Heures'* reporting, direct interviews are not held with members of Shalit's family – contrasting with *News at Ten's* approach where such interviews are in abundance. Despite this, the technique of showing family images assembled informally in domestic Western surroundings are used with the potential aim of uniting viewers behind Shalit as a fellow citizen.

The video of Johnston's physical and mental suffering is not shown on *20 Heures* with the vague disclaimer from the anchor that, 'we did not want to broadcast this live image of this disturbing video'. Yet this contradicts its Charter which states that it is not the function of France Télévisions to show a 'sterilised, and therefore erroneous representation of the world we live in' but 'simply banning the representation would culminate in misinforming the public' (France Télévisions 2010: section 2). This appears to be the case here but also contradicts the broadcast of many graphic images during the fighting, such as the aforementioned lynching of a Fatah leader by Hamas fighters, all of which highlights inconsistencies in *20 Heures'* reporting. Contradictions in reporting attitudes also emerge and although the UK is part of the Europe which *20 Heures* promotes, certain tensions between France and UK are apparent as *20 Heures* allocates little airtime to the British journalist's predicament. It does, however, grant him far greater attention than *News at Ten* does to Shalit, where the latter's abduction is not covered at all. During the broadcasts of the kidnappings and, whether the news providers cover both hostages or just one, they both make a clear distinction between Western victims and Palestinian ones. The latter have now faded completely into the background and have been replaced by the kidnappings.

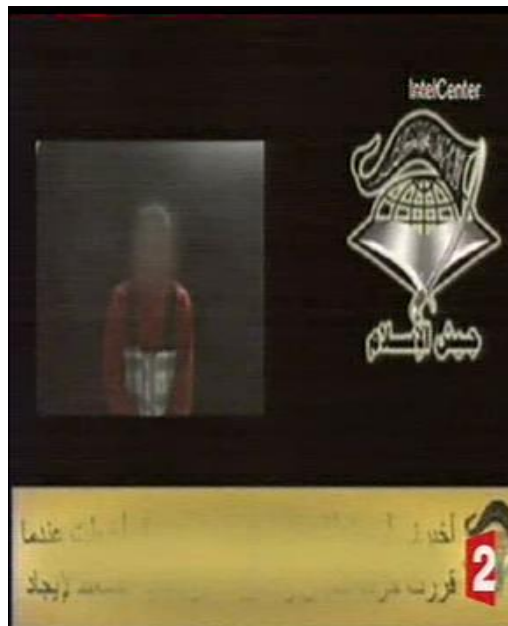


Figure 46 Images on 20 Heures highlighting difference in negativity values between Shalit visuals and obscured Johnston visuals

*Vremya*, like *20 Heures*, reports both events but it does not reveal any particular stance towards the UK or France (Shalit is, however, described as an Israeli and not a French citizen). Details relating to the kidnappings comprise photographs of the two men prior to their capture and also the full Johnston videotape and Shalit audiotape. Although it broadcasts similar images to the other two news providers, *Vremya* offers no additional background



about the hostages. There is also little information about who the kidnappers are and the consonance/meaningfulness value for the hostages, which prevail on the other two broadcasters, is considerably less noticeable. Because there is no direct association between Russia and the two hostages, there is no useful purpose in *Vremya* eliciting any feelings of care towards them and instead it can divert this airtime to narratives which it considers important.

Denunciation of those responsible for the hostage-takings is a dominant theme threading through *Vremya's* reporting as it continues its condemnation of both terrorists and Israel. The denunciation of unjust suffering is described in depth by Boltanski as a means of drawing on additional emotions to unite a community (of viewers) behind victims (1999). On one hand, they can identify with the victims themselves through compassion and on the other, they can come together to express a further emotion: that of anger. A sentiment of potential anger against the actions of the hostage-takers could be elicited through the use of many archive images of hooded armed fighters and unrelated, random Palestinian demonstrations being shown, all of which enables *Vremya* to pursue its anti-terrorist narrative. As the kidnappers' demands for the release of several hundred prisoners from Israeli prisons in return for the hostages are reported in the narrator's text, the footage includes images, which have already been shown on previous days, of street violence, snipers and shootings which, for once, concur with *Vremya's* ongoing description of the kidnappers as "terrorists".

*Vremya* does not direct the viewers' assumed anger just against those it perceives to be terrorists but also focuses on disparaging Israel and emphasising the latter's untrustworthiness by attaching some of the blame to it for the hostage-takings. The anchor states that despite an agreement being reached regarding the release of prisoners in Israel,

the Israelis have reneged on it. Moreover, the reporter comments on rumours that a large-scale Israeli incursion into Gaza is imminent. *Vremya* is quick to disassociate itself from this statement and from the fact that the Israelis may know where the hostages are being held, stating that this information is ‘according to Israeli television and its own sources’ (25/06/07). This highlights *Vremya*’s ongoing theme concerning Israel’s lack of reliability, associating it with the US-led West, and also protecting itself should the contrary prove to be the case. As noted in previous chapters, there is general discordance between the anchor’s and reporter’s texts and the images. The main information is supplied verbally and the associated footage is not explained to the viewer nor are there any apparent links between one segment of images and another. During sceptical reports about the Israelis, the visuals include a stream of unconnected images which move from mass demonstrations of Palestinians, to several soldiers of unknown affiliation on a truck, to poster-sized photos being burned in the street, all shown without any description or explanation. Yet, the important message which prevails, is that Israel appears equally responsible for the hostage situation and, if compassion is not to be directly elicited from viewers for the hostages given that they are not directly related with Russia, then another emotion, here anger, must be kindled for a purpose of interest to the broadcaster.

All the broadcasters, therefore, covered the hostage-takings, albeit to differing degrees, yet different representations emerge and the coverage, on all three, completely replaced that of the humanitarian crisis. Both *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* dedicated significant airtime to raising concern for the kidnapped citizens of their reporting countries. Hierarchies appeared on both broadcasters’ reports as the plight of their “own” citizens was prioritised over that of the other country to the extent that *News at Ten* did not report on Shalit at all. Although the negativity of the kidnappers’ footage and the overall concept of broadcasting footage of

hostage victims is sufficiently newsworthy to merit being aired, the hostages' plight itself is not useful to *Vremya*. This contrasts with coverage of the Russian-speaking expats who were caught up in the Gaza fighting, when a different attitude emerged in the reports. Here, compassion as a news value was not apparent and instead the broadcaster used the airtime for its ongoing narratives against terrorism and also to disparage the Israeli state. The news providers' framing of the footage also illustrates that although the kidnappers themselves chose this opportunity to reiterate their demands and to publish these video and audiotapes via the mass media, they have no influence over how they are finally broadcast. The terrorists' position is thus compromised because the media are interested in the newsworthiness 'of the violence, but are hardly interested in the long communiqué that goes with it, explaining the reason why' (Kelly and Mitchell 1981).

### **7.3 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to examine the broadcasters' coverage of victims caught up in the Middle East conflict and the differing approaches found in their reports depending on the type of victim. It continued analysing the case study of the Hamas-Fatah fighting in June 2007, which proved useful as it contained reports about the emerging humanitarian crisis in Gaza and also two hostage-takings. This enabled two very different groups of victims, and their coverage by the broadcasters, to be assessed. The victims could be distinguished by being, on one hand, those representing the "foreign" or "other" – the Palestinian civilians – and those representing "us" on the other – the two Western hostages. To achieve its aim, the chapter addressed specific research questions. It initially asked who were perceived as victims by the broadcasters, whether the broadcasters viewed them similarly and whether hierarchies amongst them emerged. A further question asked whether the news providers focused on the suffering or whether they foregrounded other aspects or other narratives. Finally the

chapter examined whether the broadcasters' representations suggested who might be accountable for the suffering and also who could provide the necessary relief. In order to address these questions, compassion as a news value was analysed in particular.

Significant differences between the broadcasters and their values emerged as the humanitarian crisis worsened and their principal themes, or meta-narratives, promoted throughout the comparison period, were reinforced. *News at Ten* returned to its prevailing "futility of war" narrative in which humanitarian coverage is paramount and the impact of conflict on the victims is portrayed as more important than the fighting itself. The correspondent continued to play a large role in on-the-ground reporting and his personalised reporting emphasised compassion as a value. This stance contrasted with that of *20 Heures* which, where possible, avoided focusing on the unpleasantness of human suffering, remaining detached, and concentrated on Hamas's creation of an Islamic republic. *Vremya* again reverted to its prevailing theme of promoting Russia as it switched abruptly from the emerging humanitarian crisis in Gaza to the evacuation of Russian-speaking expats. The news values attached to the victims differed amongst the broadcasters with compassion, meaningfulness and consonance values dominating. The natural newsworthiness of the various aspects of the reports was interrupted by the coverage of the two hostage-takings and by video and audiotapes being released for broadcast by the kidnappers. This demonstrated the interrelatedness of the media – which appear compelled to air sensational messages from those it portrays as terrorists – and the kidnappers who rely on the mass media for publicity yet, because the broadcasters portrayed the event from the viewpoint of the hostage, the kidnappers did not necessarily succeed in transmitting their message. Each broadcaster clearly illustrated their own perceptions of who the victims were. Although they initially agreed that the Palestinian civilians should be prioritised, the former were

quickly displaced on *Vremya* when Russian-speaking expats required the urgent assistance of the Russian state for their evacuation. The emphasis therefore shifted from the Palestinian civilians, to the Russian expats and then to Russia as the sole provider of aid. A hierarchy also appeared on *20 Heures* and *News at Ten* during the hostage coverage when they both prioritised their own country's citizens over each other's and also over the Palestinian civilians.

Dissimilar attitudes towards the two groups of victims emerged in the broadcasters' coverage as could be expected given their differences. *News at Ten's* portrayals appeared to represent the Palestinian masses as part of a common humanity particularly through the use of the correspondent and his close contact with the civilians and appeared to want to encourage an emotional reaction from the viewer. However, these attempts were undermined during the coverage of Johnston when the reports only served to reinforce the self/other divide by emphasising the distinction between Johnston as "ours" and the kidnappers who were being denounced as terrorists. *20 Heures* was reluctant at any point to try to bridge a gap between the viewer and the Palestinian other and this was reinforced during the hostage coverage as it pursued its anti-Islamism narrative. *Vremya*, like *News at Ten* and using similar techniques, endeavoured to elicit compassion initially for the Palestinian victims but quickly abandoned this when the plight of the Russian-speaking expats became apparent. However much all three broadcasters appeared to want to highlight the suffering of the other, they, unsurprisingly, replaced this coverage instantly with reports of victims from their own nations. This can be explained on one hand by the relevance, or meaningfulness value, of reporting their own victims: as Galtung and Ruge said and as stated in the previous chapter, 'there has to be cultural proximity. That is, the [viewer] will pay particular attention to the familiar, to the culturally similar' (1965: 67). On the other, the fact that the kidnappings are

one-off events rather than just another episode in a familiar and drawn-out war must also increase their newsworthiness, supporting Galtung and Ruge's criteria that, 'what is regular and institutionalized, continuing and repetitive at regular and short intervals does not attract nearly so much attention, *ceteris paribus*, as the unexpected and ad hoc' (1965: 67).

All three adopted a policy of denouncing those responsible for the suffering, whether this concerned the Palestinian civilians or the hostages. Again, this differed between the broadcasters with *News at Ten* providing specific details and examples of the kidnapers, whilst *20 Heures* and *Vremya* broadened their denunciation to concur with their ongoing anti-terrorism narrative. *Vremya* went a step further by also condemning Israel and continuing its pervasive criticism of this US-ally.

The chapter therefore illustrates that despite significant efforts by some to portray victims as part of a single common humanity, it is 'precisely by appealing to "our" essential commonality that practices of mediation fail to recognize the radical plurality of [...] cultures and ultimately exclude those who do not fit [our] cultural norms (Chouliaraki and Orgad 2011: 345). The two broadcasters – *News at Ten* and *Vremya* – whose reports do attempt to elicit a relationship with the victim quickly replace the newsworthiness generated by compassion news value with that produced by reports on external agents (the former) and the expats' evacuation (the latter). This could be perceived as a reflection of the constant stream of human suffering continually available for viewing in the media and the fact that the emotional and physical distance between the sufferer and the observer widens as a result. It is as though the broadcasters' coverage of the victims is little more than an acknowledgement of their plight: there is an intrinsic value in showing suffering but this has its place and, given a possible and even increasing desensitisation of viewers, this value is quickly replaced by new and different

themes, which might prove more newsworthy. However important this group of Palestinian individuals is when discussing foreign conflict reporting, and however much they must not be overlooked being an integral part of conflict, it would appear that they remain distanced from the viewer and that unequal power relations remain between the viewer and victim. The Middle East conflict, used as the main case study in the thesis, is a long and drawn-out affair and, although it is of major global interest, its reporting could almost be classed as predictable. Coverage of the victims seems to have become such routine components of news items that their inclusion is guaranteed, yet after a suitable period of time, they are swiftly cast aside and replaced with a potentially more newsworthy theme which might also be more in line with the overarching narrative.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter now returns to the initial objectives of the thesis and its associated research questions, which were analysed via case studies in each chapter using news values and agenda-setting. The chapter firstly discusses how the objective of the thesis has been addressed and then examines each research question, followed by the contributions of the study and possible areas for future research which have been established during the analysis.

### 8.1 Central Argument

This study demonstrates that the hierarchy in news values is never arbitrary but can be explained, in part, by the structure of the broadcasters and by events occurring within, or associated with, the reporting country. This became apparent in the meta-narratives which permeated the coverage and which were supported by the use of particular values. *News at Ten* pursued a “futility of war” narrative, and human interest and compassion aspects of the conflict were foregrounded. This was linked, on one hand, to the Middle East editor’s opinions on war reporting and, because his editorialising role was significant, he was able to guide the items accordingly. It was also associated with the then wars in Afghanistan and Iraq which were noticeable throughout the whole schedule. *20 Heures* focused on associations with terrorism and the creation of an Islamic republic in the Middle East and emphasised, primarily, the negativity value of the events. Its news reports rarely reflected the compassion values associated with the human aspect of war. *Vremya* maintained its narrative of endorsing the actions of Russia and its people and “imposed” news values emerged. This all suggests that it is unlikely for a unique system of news values, as devised by Galtung and Ruge, to be applicable to all news providers. It even indicates that a more fluid set of news



values could be devised encompassing news values which are country – or even regime – specific.

## **8.2 Reconsidering the Objectives of the Thesis**

Using the Middle East conflict (2006-2008) as a specific case study, the thesis investigated a combination of three elements: first, foreign conflict reporting; second, the provision of this reporting by public sector – rather than private – television broadcasting; and, finally, the effect, or influence, of the new international environment marked by the post-Cold War and post-9/11 period on this reporting by the broadcasters. This was achieved by examining the news values and agenda-setting practices of certain news providers.

The Introduction in Chapter 1 outlined the wealth of scholarship on foreign conflict reporting. It emphasised the amount of research that has been conducted in this area concerning American reporting and also the print media. This highlighted the need for further research into television foreign conflict reporting from Europe and other parts of the world. It also discussed the importance of comparative analyses. Accordingly, three public sector broadcasters were selected so that a comparative study could be conducted which would contribute to research in this area by representing a spectrum of European television news providers. These public sector broadcasters were from the UK, France and Russia and they could be distinguished by the level of state involvement in their operations, ranging from the BBC, which is nominally independent of the government, to France 2 from a system with a long history of state involvement, to Russia's Channel 1, which is state-aligned. These characteristics are important when contrasting public service broadcasters. Rather than using channels which would be so similar that a comparison would be unproductive, selecting these three allowed the marked divergences in their structure and approach to be taken into

account when addressing the objective of the thesis, whilst still being able to pursue an analysis of public sector broadcasters with similar overarching remits and responsibilities.

A case study also had to be selected for the analysis. The choice of conflicts was vast, yet on closer examination, the Middle East proved obvious both regarding the objective of the thesis and the three broadcasters. Firstly, from a foreign conflict reporting viewpoint, this conflict is pertinent because it is ongoing with origins pre-dating the change in East-West relations and the events of 9/11. The coverage includes both violent flashpoints and everyday life and also the political and diplomatic involvement of international communities. This enabled a broader range of news items to be analysed than had a conflict of short duration, such as the Iraq war, been selected. Secondly, regarding the broadcasters' reporting countries, their connections with the conflict were similar in that none of them were militarily involved yet they all had similar imperial links to the region and displayed complex relations with other nations as they endeavoured to create a new post-imperial diplomatic role. Domestically, the reporting countries also suffered from rising Islamophobia and anti-Semitism and all three supported the war on terror. For the analysis, the conflict included Israel, the Palestinian territories and Lebanon. The former two would be included in most definitions of the Middle East. The latter – Lebanon – was incorporated because the effects of, and responses to, the Israel-Lebanon war of July 2006, immediately prior to the comparison period, continued to be reported for many months by all the broadcasters, particularly the French news provider, and represented an integral part of many reports on Israel and on the Palestinian territories.

The Introduction presented news values and agenda-setting as the conceptual framework to be used to address the objective of the thesis and its research questions. The news values were adapted from the list devised by Galtung and Ruge (1965). These tools highlighted the

trends and practices of the broadcasters, leading to certain aspects of news items being prioritised (for example, negativity, elite nations, power elite and human interest). The quantitative analysis in Chapter 3 revealed fundamental differences in the broadcasters' approach to international, foreign conflict and Middle East reporting. *News at Ten* attached most importance to both foreign conflict and Middle East reporting demonstrated by the lengthy airspace devoted to these areas and their high running orders. It also emphasised conflict reporting to the exclusion of coverage of everyday events reflecting a dominant "futility of war" narrative apparent throughout the BBC schedule. In contrast, *20 Heures* provided broader coverage, including more detailed information about events in Lebanon and France's associated diplomatic role and also about everyday life in Israel and various religious events and celebrations. Information covering Israeli victims was provided during the actual conflict reporting and priority was also given to stories with any link to France, its leaders or its citizens. *Vremya* provided an even broader scope in its reporting by including many non-conflict related stories, particularly covering Israel. Again, the Middle East was not purely a site of conflict, as in the *News at Ten* reports, and *Vremya* used the overall conflict narrative as an opportunity to emphasise close connections between Russia and the Russian-speaking diaspora in Israel.

Chapters 4 to 7 showed how the conflict in the Middle East was not reported in isolation but reflected the domestic policies and discourses of the broadcasters' reporting countries. The first case study, in Chapter 4, analysed the Annapolis peace conference and investigated state-channel relations in this new geopolitical environment. As the event occurred within the international arena, it highlighted coverage of relations with other countries and how the reporting country was situated globally by its broadcaster. The conflict itself was discussed, questioning whether it was considered to be discrete or connected with an overall war on

terror narrative and whether there was a balanced portrayal of those involved in the peace process.

The same questions were applied to the case study in Chapter 5 in which the analysis shifted from the global arena to coverage of events in Beit Hanoun. This case study was selected because it involved Israeli-Palestinian fighting and could illustrate any differences between the coverage of foreign conflict at the peace talks and that on-the-ground. It examined coverage of the warring parties and also portrayals of authorities, at the site of the conflict and those of the reporting country. By analysing coverage of the fighting on-the-ground, it was also possible to determine how the news providers covered aspects of life in the region, such as religion, freedom of speech and equality, and whether these reflected similar aspects within the reporting country.

The last case study, analysed in Chapters 6 and 7, moved the focus from Israeli-Palestinian fighting to intra-Palestinian fighting between Hamas and Fatah. It continued to address earlier research questions such as the portrayal of the warring parties but also questioned how the Middle East was situated globally by the broadcasters and whether it was viewed as a potential threat to the West. These events allowed portrayals of the victims to be analysed again in detail.

All the chapters contributed to addressing the main research questions, each of which is now discussed in turn.

### **8.3 Revisiting the Research Questions**

The overarching objective of the thesis generated five principal research questions, shown below. In combination they answered a more general question concerning differences between the broadcasters.

#### **8.3.1 Research Question 1**

The first research question addressed relations between the state and broadcaster and whether the latter aligned itself with any prevailing policy of its country's government. It also investigated the extent to which the news providers endorsed their own reporting country's relations with other nations, potentially reflecting national interests. This is an obvious question given that the principal area of enquiry of the thesis is coverage provided by public broadcasters, the purpose of which, despite potentially being closely associated with the state through financing and licence fees, is to serve the interests of the public and represent the many groups within society, whilst maintaining independence from the state. This question is also relevant as it addressed the news providers' coverage of their reporting country within the framework of the changing international environment.

The quantitative framework (Chapter 3) demonstrated that, despite reporting the same events in the same region of the world, the broadcasters displayed differences in their representations, challenging possible expectations of potential similarities between the French and UK broadcasters based on their geographical proximity and their EU membership and, therefore, challenging what many viewers might expect regarding differences between them and *Vremya*. Yet, it was *News at Ten* which stood out, in this instance, by prioritising coverage from within the Palestinian territories and emphasising conflict coverage and humanitarian issues rather than general interest news stories. Indeed, the Middle East

conflict had been selected as the case study because of the very fact that it did not just include violent displays of fighting but also the daily lives of those in the region, something which is largely ignored by *News at Ten*. Both *20 Heures* and *Vremya* aired many non-conflict related stories, particularly covering Israel, and the Middle East was not purely a site of conflict. They both used the region to highlight the roles of their reporting countries and visiting officials, emphasising close state-channel relations and marking a contrast with *News at Ten* which rarely commented on the actions of UK government or other officials. *Vremya's* news values were most clearly influenced by the state with imposed news values emerging. Domestic-related items gained top priority replacing others and putting the role of Russians, Russian leaders, services and institutions at the top of the subject hierarchy. This situation reflects one of the various patterns of news structures outlined by Galtung and Ruge in 1965. Yet then, although the situation they were describing appears astonishingly similar to that of contemporary news provision by *Vremya*, they were describing the 'big-power thinking' news structure of the Soviet Union whereby elite-centred, structure-centred and positive-centred news provision was key (Galtung and Ruge 1965: 70).

The quantitative chapter also revealed attitudes to religion. All three reported on various Jewish and Christian religious festivals, at points associating them with national interest stories. But none covered Islamic religious festivals and instead conflated Islam as a religion with Islamism thus promoting confused and inaccurate messages.

Chapter 4's analysis of *News at Ten's* coverage demonstrated how the broadcaster displayed a clear attitude towards the UK's relations with the US. It also highlighted the importance of the role of Jeremy Bowen, the Middle East editor, who used his editorials to speculate about a shift away from the pro-war stance of the government and the UK-US special relationship.

This chapter showed how *20 Heures'* reporting of the peace process reflected France's desire for the EU to increase its role globally and for France to be a major player within it. The broadcaster displayed a non-critical attitude to the conference and rarely referred to America as its hosts, suggesting that it preferred to stress the importance of the EU globally than the US. *Vremya's* coverage of these events illustrated its role as state-aligned broadcaster as it sought opportunities to promote Russia whilst also disparaging the US through the reporter's commentary. Any involvement by Russia was foregrounded.

Chapter 5 revealed much about the lives of Beit Hanoun's inhabitants, the relevance of which to the viewer was developed through the use of meaningfulness and consonance news values. Several aspects were particularly newsworthy, such as the treatment of women, religion, freedom of speech and general good governance. The coverage of women was particularly salient on *20 Heures* as their treatment was presented as contradicting France's policies of equality. This was also apparent on *News at Ten* where the unexpected gendered nature of certain events in which women were the main protagonists was newsworthy because of the dissonance value of the events. This challenged the passivity of Muslim women in the Middle East found in stereotypes of dominant Western ideologies.

Chapter 6 reinforced earlier findings and reflected a certain alignment between broadcaster and state. On *20 Heures*, the prevailing message was that the fighting had resulted in the creation of an Islamic state. Its coverage of religion was significant as this new regime went against the established concept of *laïcité* of the state in France. As in the quantitative chapter, secularism was portrayed by all three broadcasters as a positive attribute. They failed to differentiate between Islam and Islamism, which was represented negatively, associated throughout with violence and used to characterise Hamas. Rather than talking of Islam, *News*

*at Ten's* correspondents, particularly Bowen, would emphasise the role of Islamism in the conflict, associating religion with politics – notably in reports on Hamas. As previously, there was little doubt that the news providers, particularly *20 Heures*, conflated Islam with terrorism and violence and used these portrayals to mark a divide between the secular practices of the reporting countries. Reflections of state policies also pervaded *Vremya's* news items but not as subtly as on the other two news providers. The chapter highlighted differences between public service broadcasters and state-aligned broadcasters demonstrating that *Vremya* promoted Russia, its officials and citizens over the fighting which resulted in the conflict and its Palestinian victims being sidelined, both here and in the Annapolis coverage, to focus on various aspects involving Russia.

### **8.3.2 Research Question 2**

To address the second research question, I examined how the broadcasters situated their reporting countries in relation to other nations and also the extent to which the broadcasters' foreign conflict reporting revealed any new geopolitical allegiances in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods.

Despite recent changes which have occurred in the international environment, the quantitative data in Chapter 3 demonstrated how all three broadcasters' coverage was shaped by a dominance of items associated with their reporting countries' historical pasts. By analysing all their international news items, and their foreign conflict and Middle East items during the comparison period, it was determined that a major share of *Vremya's* international reporting was on former Soviet and Eastern bloc countries. Similarly, a large proportion of *20 Heures'* foreign reports was on Africa and Lebanon and *News at Ten* focused on former colonial interests and also on Iraq and Afghanistan.



A consensus in the broadcasters' coverage emerged regarding principal power blocs, one being US-led and another led generally by countries in the broader Middle East. The US-led bloc was clearly emphasised in Chapter 4 on Annapolis. Power elite and elite nation news values were analysed here although negativity and human interest values were also apparent. *News at Ten's* and *Vremya's* reporting was similar in that anti-US sentiments were in abundance. Although the former's reports placed great emphasis on covering the war on terror, particularly through their composition news value, they also appeared to foreground events framed to coincide with the repositioning of the US/UK special relations. The news provider was consistently cynical about the global diplomatic role of the US. It was scathing about Bush's role in the peace negotiations and appeared keen to detach the UK, in its reports, from the potential failure of the Annapolis conference. *News at Ten* provided no reference to other countries, suggesting that however much its coverage suggested a shifting attitude away from the US, it still recognised the latter as an enduring major power bloc. A similar anti-US approach prevailed on *Vremya* as its reporter endeavoured to simultaneously belittle the organisation of the Conference whilst grasping any opportunity to promote Russia's involvement in the events.

*20 Heures*, in contrast, and despite the Conference being held in Annapolis, barely commented on the US and, instead, stressed the part played by the EU and France's role within the EU. Its reports portrayed Palestinians as terrorists, and particularly Hamas, and it therefore aligned itself with France's pro-Israeli stance, emphasising the need for the latter's improved security in the Middle East. This terrorist image not only reflected France's desire to be recognised as part of the international community's war on terror, but it also echoed the similar struggle it faced against domestic radicalisation and extremism. *News at Ten* offered few references to other countries other than the US, providing no counterbalance to the

global prominence of the latter. Through the use of omissions and simplifications, the UK broadcaster consolidated various named Arab nations into one group. This contributed to an unclear definition of the Middle East region, a shortcoming which had been identified in the BBC Trust Report (2006) on coverage prior to the comparison period yet had not, in subsequent news stories, been consistently addressed.

Chapter 6 demonstrated how the broadcasters' coverage of the intra-Palestinian fighting revealed specific stances, which, in turn, influenced their portrayals of other countries: *Vremya* continued to promote Russia and denigrate the US; on *News at Ten*, clear geo-political alliances emerged replacing former East-West blocs; and *20 Heures'* references to the international community were brief and limited preferring instead to emphasise any allegiance to the EU. Again, main power blocs were apparent in the coverage, replicating the Annapolis coverage, a particular one being US-led and another being led by, or centred in, the broader Middle East. Similarities appear in *News at Ten's* and *Vremya's* reports as they were both unwilling to acknowledge the US's global status. They instead disparaged its involvement in the fighting through the editorialising of the Middle East editor on *News at Ten* and by the provision of voice-overs and additional context on *Vremya*.

The findings again challenged what viewers might expect about the coverage as – rather than *News at Ten's* and *20 Heures'* reports being similar (purely on the basis that they are both EU members) – here it was *Vremya* and *News at Ten* which were comparable especially in their anti-US stance. In fact, particularly with regard to *News at Ten*, the influence of events in the US on the news schedule was significant and highlighted the broadcaster's ongoing attachment to portrayals of the US, however framed.

The quantitative and analytical chapters showed how public sector broadcasters (*News at Ten, 20 Heures*) and state-aligned broadcasters (*Vremya*) presented differing viewpoints regarding international relations which influenced their portrayals of new alliances or global power blocs, or in other words, how they perceived certain countries in the world in relation to others. This difference was contingent upon events happening in, or relating to, the reporting countries. For *News at Ten*, this was additionally shaped by the news item's compositional value and its resultant position in the schedule and running order. Each news provider drew on different news values, ranging from power elite and elite nation values, to meaningfulness and consonance values and also to negativity values. New and former geopolitical alliances played an important role in the shaping the news items, demonstrating the difficulty faced by the broadcasters, knowingly or not, to provide foreign conflict reports which are not influenced by other international events of consequence to their reporting country.

### **8.3.3 Research Question 3**

For the third research question, and in association with Research Question 2, I investigated how the broadcasters mapped the world and specifically the Middle East region.

In Chapter 4 on Annapolis, the broadcasters clearly recognised the Middle East to be a new international power bloc but their definitions of this region varied. *Vremya* reflected a pro-Arab stance reflecting Russia's need, in this post-9/11 period, to reinforce existing alliances with the Arab and Muslim world – thus breaking with the international fight in the war on terror which it appeared to support. This was reinforced by the fact that, here, it did not associate the Middle East with the war on terror, unlike the other two broadcasters, reinforcing Putin's declaration that Hamas should not be viewed as a terrorist organisation.

The chapter also demonstrated that countries in the Middle East were viewed as an emerging international force. *News at Ten* provided a blurred definition of the region and all aspects of the fighting were associated with achieving a peace deal. *20 Heures* portrayed the Palestinian territories in isolation from other neighbouring countries such as Egypt, Jordan and Israel, which it viewed as allies thus, unlike *News at Ten*, it did not portray the broader Middle East within a war on terror framework. *Vremya* provided a dual approach to the Middle East. On one hand, it promoted Israel as a home for its large diaspora whilst simultaneously disparaging the Israeli authorities because of their associations with the US. On the other, it presented the Palestinian territories, generally portrayed through the use of negativity values and associated with terrorism, as separate from the broader Middle East with whom Russia had close relations.

These findings were reinforced by the analysis of the intra-Palestinian fighting in Chapter 6. The fighting was localised, without obvious international ramifications. It nonetheless revealed much about the Middle East itself and also about the global significance of events in that region, as perceived by the broadcasters. *News at Ten's* coverage raised fears that the fighting would lead to a rise in international instability whilst *20 Heures'* reports conveyed a resigned acceptance that an Islamic republic was being created in Gaza. This latter stance was restricted to Gaza and did not extend to the broader region which was presented as including other Arab world nations with which France had close ties. *Vremya* used the fighting to continue its ongoing disparagement of America and promotion of Russia.

This chapter helped determine how the broadcasters perceived the West. Russia, via *Vremya*, fluctuated from being against the West, to supporting the Arab world, to supporting the West, when convenient, to promote its own image. *20 Heures* was also cautious about a US-

led West, preferring an EU allegiance. These two broadcasters also had similar stances concerning their definitions of the Middle East and neighbouring countries as both dissociated other nations in the Arab world from the fighting thus acknowledging existing ties between them and the reporting countries.

#### **8.3.4 Research Question 4**

The fourth research question asked how the news providers represented the warring parties and whether one party was portrayed to the detriment of others. It also asked whether the Palestinians were perceived as a single entity, or as individual groups. This research question could be addressed clearly because each case study in the qualitative analysis had been selected because different warring parties were involved in each of the events.

Chapter 4 demonstrated how the broadcasters represented the warring parties when the conflict was discussed remotely at a peace conference, rather than at the site of the conflict, and how a hierarchy in their news values emerged. This chapter contained two levels of coverage: the conference and the conflict itself. *Vremya* barely discussed the conflict itself in its coverage and instead concentrated on the power elite values associated with the conference. This was viewed as being such an important opportunity to denigrate the US and simultaneously promote Russia that no airtime was left to discuss the conflict creating little impression of the warring parties. Negativity value permeated the large conflict-related section of *20 Heures'* conference coverage and the broadcaster placed the emphasis on all the Palestinian fighters regardless of affiliation, whom it visually associated with brandishing guns, fighting or launching rockets. *20 Heures* was unequivocal in its negative promotion of Hamas despite the latter being democratically elected by those in Gaza. It omitted Israel from the coverage and therefore it was not presented as a participant in the conflict, resulting in an

unbalanced portrayal of the warring parties. In line with its impartiality remit, *News at Ten* endeavoured to present both sides of the argument, using alternating coverage of Palestinians and Israelis. It stressed the human interest news value of those on both sides of the conflict yet visually and verbally, the Palestinians, particularly Hamas, were represented negatively and as being the more provocative party.

In Chapter 5 on Beit Hanoun, I demonstrated how the news providers represented the warring parties in an Israeli-Palestinian flashpoint. I established that *20 Heures* was also bound by impartiality guidelines yet, despite reporting on both the Israelis and the Palestinians, its use of context resulted in a negative portrayal of the latter and in their actions being interpreted as those of terrorists and its use of juxtaposition was used to justify Israeli actions against Beit Hanoun. Negative news values were again prioritised on both *20 Heures* and *Vremya* through the graphic nature of the visuals. *Vremya*, however, separated the Palestinian fighters and the Palestinian civilians reflecting the significance of the Arab world to Russia. This chapter also illustrated how the use of compositional news value on *News at Ten* associated the conflict with other stories in the schedule which were connected broadly with the war on terror and terrorism. The news item was then already categorised even before its contents could be viewed.

Chapter 6 was useful when addressing this question as, rather than analysing Israeli-Palestinian fighting, it concerned intra-Palestinian fighting which enabled any distinctions in the coverage of the Palestinian fighters to be determined. It demonstrated how all three broadcasters initially provided a generalised picture of the Palestinian fighters at the start of the intra-Palestinian fighting but that, gradually, Hamas was portrayed as the aggressor with Fatah being presented as the secular party in the Middle East with whom Western

governments could negotiate and possible peace talks could be held. Threshold (and negativity) values were evident on *Vremya* and *20 Heures* as graphic images of victims' injuries were broadcast, all associated with fighters involved in aggressive acts. Hamas's lack of good governance was also foregrounded by all three but in varying ways using different news values: whilst *Vremya* and *20 Heures* emphasised the physical actions of Hamas's fighters, pursuing their extensive use of negative values, *News at Ten* focused on the human nature and compassion aspects of the events and provided coverage of the emerging humanitarian crisis. Again, the positioning of the journalist at the scene demonstrated the central role played by correspondents and editors on *News at Ten*.

The analysis illustrated a comparable approach used by all three broadcasters according to which the Palestinians fighters were broadly associated with terrorism. Political divisions amongst the Palestinian fighters were, however, made very clear and there was little doubt about which party the reporting countries supported. Although *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* appeared to cover all sides in the fighting, responding to their impartiality remit, the manner in which they used their images and commentaries and included or omitted context resulted in an ongoing portrayal of the Palestinians as aggressors and the Israelis as part of the West. This reflected the findings of existing scholarship, at least regarding the BBC, for example, Philo and Berry's work on BBC coverage of Israel (2004; 2011). This does not mean that their portrayals were identical. In fact, because their news values differed, the events on *News at Ten* were viewed from the angle of the victims of the fighting whilst still being clear which party has inflicted the suffering. This allowed the broadcaster to pursue its ongoing "futility of war" narrative. *20 Heures* and *Vremya* prioritised negativity values and had high threshold values, in comparison with *News at Ten*, allowing lurid images to be broadcast. The influence of domestic concerns continued to play a role and the representations of the warring parties

was influenced by attitudes to the war on terror. This questions the impartiality of foreign conflict reporting in the future and asks whether, if reported within a war on terror framework – which according to the analysis appears to be the case for Middle East reporting – future conflicts, wherever they may occur globally, will also be viewed through the same prism.

### **8.3.5 Research Question 5**

This research question examined the broadcasters' portrayals of victims and what this revealed about the news providers themselves.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that although *Vremya* and *20 Heures* did not reflect human interest and compassion news values to the same extent as *News at Ten*, they still did cover human or personal interest stories. These were included in the general interest items, for example, on the everyday life of those in Israel and Palestinian territories. On *20 Heures*, these human interest stories focused on French citizens – French Jews who had moved to Israel to start a new life – and not on Israelis or Palestinians in the region, thus emphasising the broadcaster's ongoing practice of promoting stories associated with France and its people. A similar dominance of items on Israelis in human interest reports on *Vremya* was noted, focusing on Russian-speaking expats in the region and illustrating the significance attached to this diaspora by the state. This also supports the finding that *20 Heures* and *Vremya* provided broad coverage whereas *News at Ten* perceived the region to be a site of conflict, focusing chiefly on the fighting in Gaza.

Chapter 5 demonstrated how human interest and personalisation values were central in shaping *News at Ten's* reports. It emphasised the intransigence of Israeli and Palestinian



civilians as they struggled to live alongside each other on disputed land, and omitted discussions about those involved in the fighting. In contrast, *20 Heures* excluded any reporting of victims preferring, instead, to focus on the fighting and discussions of Hamas and Fatah aggression.

Given the number of fatalities and injuries involved in the Beit Hanoun events, Chapter 5 provided the opportunity to cover victims of fighting. However, *20 Heures* is characterised by its distanced coverage in which the correspondent rarely provided on-the-spot reporting. In fact, on many occasions, its main correspondents reported from Jerusalem, located far from the fighting in Gaza. Rather than highlighting the suffering of victims through personalisation or compassion news values, it stressed the negativity and threshold values of high impact visuals of bloody scenes and the wounded. *News at Ten's* emphasis on the humanitarian framing of its coverage emerged in the personalised reporting by the correspondents who interviewed and filmed victims and presented them in such a way to encourage viewers to feel that the victims were the only party with any significance in the conflict. *Vremya* tried to replicate this style of reporting when it embedded its reporter amongst Palestinian fighters and also when it provided coverage of the victims. However, although he reported in close proximity to the victims, *Vremya's* reporter did not provide the same emotive coverage as the *News at Ten* correspondent, reflecting differences between these two broadcasters.

In Chapter 7, *News at Ten* continued to provide the most humanitarian coverage with the correspondent again personalising the reports, following the victims and drawing them into the reports, reflecting the compassion values and emphasising the consequences of war rather than war itself. The victims were also shown in *20 Heures'* reports yet they primarily draw on threshold values and highlight the horror of fighting. In this respect, *News at Ten*

presented victims indistinguishably regardless of the side of the fighting they belonged to. *Vremya* initially focused on the developing humanitarian crisis, replicating *News at Ten*'s approach but a hierarchy in victims emerged. *Vremya* shifted the emphasis to Russian expats caught up in the fighting and demonstrated its role as state-aligned broadcaster as it proceeded to sideline Palestinian victims and instead, through heavily accentuated meaningfulness values, emphasised the role of Russia in the rescue and the gratitude of the expats.

The analysis demonstrates the contested nature of certain terms such the Middle East, the West and war on terror. *News at Ten*, for example, was constructing its specific representation of terrorism and the war on terror when a shift in discourse was already underway within the UK from a war frame to a humanitarian frame, raising the question, therefore, of whether the comparison period represents a turning point in the broadcaster's attitude. Differences between the news providers were noticeable with *Vremya*, at one extreme, instantly abandoning its prevailing theme concerning the Palestinian victims to focus on Russian expats and the opportunity to promote Russia. At the other, *News at Ten* pursued its own course which was independent of the government. But the differing levels of editorialising by the news providers formed an important feature which distinguished one from another. This is a prominent finding as it challenged potential initial assumptions regarding the news providers and their varying structures. It could have been anticipated that *Vremya*, as a state-aligned news provider with high levels of self-censorship, might have provided broadcasts in which impartiality would be most problematic. However, it is on *News at Ten* that additional opinions of the reporters and editors abound, questioning the impartiality role of this public sector broadcaster. Its news items were systematically divided into sections with the anchor presenting facts initially, then background or on-the-ground

reporting would be shown, followed by a concluding piece by the reporter or editor, speculating on future developments in the conflict which, at the time of the report, would be unknown quantities. This editorialising is however sanctioned and actually promoted by the BBC Charter and responds to the recommendations in the BBC Trust report (2006). Indeed, the Middle East Editor was specifically appointed to provide additional information and clarification in order to facilitate the viewers' understanding of a complex conflict. Yet, it questions whose opinion the viewer is receiving (the broadcaster's or the correspondent's) and the limits that should be placed on such conjecture.

#### **8.4 Contributions of the Study**

This study contributes to several fields of academic inquiry: media studies generally, and more particularly, French, Russian and UK media studies; and also foreign conflict reporting, including Middle East reporting.

##### **8.4.1 Media studies**

The thesis advances knowledge in media studies, on several levels, having produced an in-depth analysis of public sector broadcasting in the domain of television news provision and, particularly, foreign conflict reporting. It illustrates the advantages of comparative studies, as explained by Hallin and Mancini (2004), by examining European broadcasters from the UK, France and Russia. This is an interesting grouping as it excludes research into American news reporting which has been examined extensively. The selection of these broadcasters contributes to existing research into this combination and to scholarship on the media in these specific reporting countries. By examining the foreign conflict reporting of each news provider and by using the conceptual framework of news values and agenda-setting, the

study has proposed original ways of analysing conflict reporting and has helped explain differences in representations between broadcasters. Because the selected news providers are public sector broadcasters (*20 Heures* and *News at Ten*) or state-aligned (*Vremya*), rather than private broadcasters, the study contributes to comparisons of news provision by entities whose primary purpose – in the case of *News at Ten* and *20 Heures* – is public service. It illustrates responses to their individual remits and leads, in turn, to further research about audience expectations of public service broadcasters.

Yet it is not only the combination of the three broadcasters and foreign conflict reporting and news values which makes this research such a valuable contribution to scholarship. Although this is indeed original in itself, the individual aspects which have been examined are also of note. The thesis makes a positive contribution to research into Russian television news provision, an important field given the manner in which the latter is now broadly used as a mouthpiece for the government. The research is also significant as it contributes to the very little scholarship which exists on French television news provision in any subject area. Despite the fact that much research has been conducted into the BBC, examining its foreign conflict news provision from a news value viewpoint is certainly unique and essential if the messages conveyed by the broadcaster are to be better understood.

#### **8.4.2 Foreign conflict reporting**

This project also contributes to foreign conflict reporting studies on which a wealth of scholarship can be found and helps address the fundamental question about why conflict is portrayed so differently throughout the world. Analysing an ongoing conflict, represented by the Middle East, over a two-year period provided information about how the newsworthiness of such a conflict was maintained by the broadcasters. The quantitative and qualitative nature

of the research has enabled many aspects of life in such a conflict situation to be analysed and for these findings to be reinforced over a lengthy period of time. This can only complement findings on conflicts of short duration – where their brevity raises the newsworthiness – and scholarship on conflict coverage where the reporting country is militarily involved, possibly resulting in partisan reporting.

### **8.5 Further research**

The study raises the possibility of further wide-ranging research in many areas. The thesis case study concentrated on the period 2006-2008 since which time there have been significant developments both geo-politically in the broader Middle East region following the Arab Spring of 2011 and also technologically, notably in the field of social media and networks, representing factors which may challenge the news providing role of traditional media. The potential impact of both of these on Middle East reporting, as defined by the thesis, would open up many avenues of research, the results of which may reinforce the findings.

A further area of research concerns the influence of the US especially on UK news. Although noticeable on *Vremya*, the US represented the main elite nation in the news items on *News at Ten*, questioning the influence and dominance of reports dedicated to the US on the BBC news schedule generally and illustrating the allegiance that remains between the UK and America. This potential US influence on foreign conflict reporting within the BBC schedule merits further research. In connection with this and by examining an ongoing conflict such as the Middle East, it became clear that the focus of the coverage was not just the conflict but also the national allegiances and domestic policies which emerged and exerted a significant influence on representations of the fighting. Given how much differing portrayals such as

these reveal about the reporting country, audience surveys are required to determine viewers' perceptions of a conflict. These surveys would also examine audience responses to the role of editors and correspondents in foreign conflict reporting to determine the extent to which speculative and prescriptive editorialising influences the viewers' understanding of a conflict. Based on analyses of similarly structured broadcasters, the research could examine which approach, involving differing levels of reporter involvement, proves to have most influence on the audience.

This conclusion suggests that the application of news values to examining foreign conflict reporting could contribute to a new awareness of the diverse understandings of war throughout the world. Not only do hierarchies emerge in the broadcasters' news values but it is evident that, in this case, all three news providers draw on specific values which shape their reports. It could be expected that certain of these would be evident in foreign conflict reporting (negativity, threshold, for example) but this investigation of the Middle East conflict has highlighted the evolving nature of news values as they respond to, and reflect, changes in opinion with regard to war. This was clearly apparent as the broadcasters increasingly drew on compassion values – particularly *News at Ten* and, to a lesser extent, *Vremya* – a contemporary news value which reflects recent attitudes to war where coverage of humanitarian suffering is becoming ever more newsworthy. Since foreign conflict reporting comprises many aspects ranging from peace negotiations, fighting and humanitarian suffering to everyday life, each with particular significance and relevance to an audience, using news values as an approach will continue to expose and determine differences in importance attached to conflict and clarify different representations of these conflicts throughout the world.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Items in *News at Ten* running order - Annapolis conference coverage

(Foreign Items highlighted in grey, Conference also in red)

	24/11/2007	25/11/2007	26/11/2007	27/11/2007
1	Australian elections	Richard Branson: Northern Rock	Labour resignation over funding	Labour funding crisis
2	Missing child database disks	Sharif returns to Pakistan	Oxford debate over BNP	Annapolis Conference
3	Wild fire in California	Fire at oil platform	Riots in Paris	Paediatrician accuses mother
4	Rescued cruise passengers: Antarctica	Labour: funding scandal	Northern Rock	Riots in France
5	Suicide bombers in Pakistan	Annapolis Conference	Teddy Bear Mohammed	Postal workers pay deal
6	Queen in Uganda	World Cup draw	Annapolis Conference	Laptops for developing world
7		Implications of World Cup draw	Brown: workers' obligations	Ohuruogu wins appeal
8			Immigrants and schools	Football
9			Diana's death inquest	Golden Compass controversy
10			Shopping in USA	
11			London underground voiceover artist	

Appendix 2 Items in 20 Heures running order - Annapolis conference coverage

(Foreign Items highlighted in grey, Conference also in red) (International sport/cinema items not highlighted)

	24/11/2007	25/11/2007	26/11/2007	27/11/2007	28/11/07
1	Purchasing power	Nicolas Sarkozy in China	Villiers-de-Bel riots	Villiers-le-Bel: riot scenes	Fragile calm in Villiers-le-Bel after riots
2	Strategy of department stores at Christmas	Fake Eldorado in China	Difficult relations between youths and police	Events started as night fell	Sarkozy visits injured police and victims
3	Demonstration about violence vs. women	Villiers-le-Bel : riots	Sex attack on train	François Fillon condemns criminals who shoot at police	Immediate trials of rioters
4	Russia: Garry Kasparov arrested	Creil :young woman knifed on train	China: major contracts for France	Live report from Villiers-le-Bel	Villiers-le-Bel enquiry
5	Fires in California	Purchasing power to be top political story next week	Financial penalties for sexual discrimination	Report on two teenagers killed in accident	Villiers-le-Bel : evidence of owner of destroyed garage owner
6	Rescued cruise passengers: Antarctic	Cheapest way to shop	RATP: negotiations resume	And now, the enquiry	Town politics since 2005 riots
7	Beirut: political crisis	Russia : opposition arrests in lead-up to elections	Brittany: collision between local train and lorry	Guest: Michèle Alliot-Marie	Mulhouse: arrest of alleged serial killer
8	Rome: 23 new cardinals	Russians seem happy with Putin's iron rule	Yvan Colonna trial	Political debate on problematic estates	Colonna trial
9	French Socialists in Avignon	Fires in Malibu	Repression in Russia: European concerns	Annapolis Conference opens	Purchasing power; prices going up or not?
10	Vendee: rabies	Bangladesh : week after the cyclone	Annapolis peace conference	Clashes between universities	Higher fish prices to help fishing community
11	Strasbourg: Christmas markets open	Olmert and Abbas arrive in Annapolis	Prize for "Bagdad: Guerre Sans Fin"	Scholarships at Paris high school	Tighter MOTs from January
12	Letters to Santa	Aveyron: school pupils' lives threatened	Jean-Marie Cavada abandons François Bayrou	Nicolas Sarkozy must declare measures on purchasing power	Special pension scheme for MPs
13	Craze for spa treatments	Darwin's theory questioned by religious students	Students: vote in Toulouse and Rennes	"Freegans"	Pakistan's president Musharraf quits as army chief
14	Football	Football	Paris: lighting up the city	AIDS seems to be losing steam in France	Israeli-Palestinian summit in Annapolis ends
15	China: riches discovered in	Italian football resumes	Historian Pierre Miquel dies	Weather	Algeria: anti-Semitic

Appendix 2 continued

	tombs	following death of supporter			comments against Sarkozy
16	Cinema	Sport	Bill T Jones, dancer, in Paris	Cinema	Portrait of Putin
17		German cinema		Maurice Béjart's funeral	French doctors to help out French campaigns
18		Cinema			Rush to buy i-Phone
19					Sport: When to starting training future champions?
20					Fred Chichin, singer, dies

**Appendix 3 Items in *Vremya* running order - Annapolis conference coverage**

(Foreign Items highlighted in grey, Conference also in red)

	<b>25/11/2007</b>	<b>26/11/2007</b>	<b>27/11/2007</b>
1	Putin's address to supporters in Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium is main event of the week	Putin visits new housing estate near St Petersburg	Events in Paris suburbs resemble "real military action"
2	A week until the Duma elections	Poll of Russians reveals that Putin's One Russia will win two-thirds of vote in Duma elections. Moscow news conference on ethnic conflicts	Famous animal trainer and actress, Natalya Durova, dies
3	Luzhkov, "I will vote for One Russia and Putin"	Riots in Paris suburb after a fatal accident involving motorcycle and police car	5m illegal campaign items confiscated in lead-up to elections
4	Political situation before the Duma election	Norwegian coastguard arrests Russian ship for illegal fishing	Poland decides against confrontation with Russia
5	Ivanov states oil revenues no longer crucial for Russian economy. He will vote for One Russia. US missile defence plan putting Russia at a disadvantage	Dagestan Public Chamber member and wife shot dead	Agriculture Minister Gordeyev reports to Putin on agricultural sector
6	Russian football fans flock to Croatian embassy in Moscow to thank their team for defeating England	22 apply to run in Georgian presidential elections	Putin meets Fradkov, the new Foreign Intelligence Service Head,
7		Middle East Conference opens shortly in Annapolis, USA	Major Middle East Conference is taking place in Annapolis
8		Talks on Kosovo status start in Austria	Opponents of dialogue demonstrate in Palestinian territories and Israel
9		TV programme-making competition for children	Stavropol Mayor and 'A Just Russia' candidate faces criminal charges for abuse of office
10			PM Viktor Zubkov meets Finnish counterpart
11			Medvedev calls for more accessible housing
12			Ivanov visits new housing estate for soldiers
13			Report on son of Russian soldier who lives in Germany. His father returns to Russia.
14			Trailer for film on Vitalii Kaloyev, who recently returned to Russia

Appendix 4 Items in News at Ten running order - Beit Hanoun coverage

(Foreign Items highlighted in grey, Beit Hanoun items in red, Lebanon in blue, days not including Beit Hanoun items in light grey)

	01/11/2006	02/11/2006	03/11/2006	04/11/2006	05/11/2006	06/11/2006	07/11/2006	08/11/2006	09/11/2006
1	British Teenagers	Fishing Warning	Sectarian violence in Iraq	Saddam Verdict	Saddam sentenced	Serious Offenders	Al-Qaeda Terrorist Jailed	Rumsfeld Resigns	Rates Rise
2	Arsonist Jailed	Daughter Murder	Manslaughter Charges	Midterm Elections	Man killed at fireworks celebration	Terror Trial	Probation Criticism	Loans Inquiry	Terror Threat [facing Britain]
3	Fire Deaths	Labour Leadership	Protest Charges	Climate change campaigners rally	C of E Asian bishop	Rwanda Investigation	US midterm elections	Repercussions of Rumsfeld resignation for Blair	US Elections
4	Speaker Ruling	Cameron: Tough love policy	Mosque Siege	Fox Hunting	Murder of schoolgirl	Embryo Research	Hezbollah Resurgence	Racist Murder	Iraq Policy
5	Protests against changes in the NHS	Migration Figures	Midterm Elections	Army Recruits [Muslims]	Sport	Cost of staging London Olympics	Food miles	Israeli Attack	Labour party leadership
6	Police officers disciplined	Iraq Troops	British Airways Terror alert	Paul McCartney divorce		53-year old man charged with murder	Saddam Sentence	Childhood Depression	Internet Paedophile
7	Heavy gun battles in Gaza	Iran test fire	Debt Figures	Sports		Saddam Sentence	Bond scheme for vaccines	Interest Rates	Immigration Policy
8	Lebanon threat	Britain sleep walked into surveillance society	Marine's Mission			Resignation Calls	Threat to Britain's wildlife		Technical failure by Israeli artillery
9	Plot to blow up transatlantic airliners	Police shooting				Healthy eating			Racial Hatred
10	Mortgage Lending	Sinking of HMS Sheffield							Merger bid for ITV
11	Banned Cricketer	Climate changing us							Field of remembrance
12	Champions League Football	Investiture ceremonies at Buckingham Palace							Nomadic way of life under threat
13	Madonna adoption								
14	Best of Podcasts								



## Appendix 5 Items in 20 Heures running order - Beit Hanoun coverage

(Foreign Items highlighted in dark grey, Israel/Palestine items in red, other items concerning Israel and Lebanon in blue, days not including Beit Hanoun items in light grey)

	03/11/2006	04/11/2006	05/11/2006	06/11/2006	07/11/2006	08/11/2006	09/11/2006	10/11/206	11/11/2006	12/11/2006
1	Redon, the mother of David to be investigated	Redon, the mother of David imprisoned	Iraq: Saddam Hussein sentenced to death	Clear plastic bags for plane travel	Mont Sainte-Odile crash ruling	US: democrat victory	Bush forced into coalition democrats	Cécillon: awaiting the verdict	Remembrance Day commemorations	Rugby: France loses to New Zealand
2	Marseilles, 6 <sup>th</sup> questioning today	Airports: new security measures	Images of Zacharias Moussaoui in prison	Cécillon trial	SNCF strikes	Donald Rumsfeld resigns	Iraq: daily attacks	Stéphane Audibert acquitted	90 years since Battle of Verdun	Tennis: Mauresmo beaten in final in Madrid
3	Fraud by AA employee	Murder in Toulouse	Electricity cuts in Europe	Tabaco: demonstrations	Fedex cancels 10 Airbus A380 order	Alain de Chalvron from Washington	De Gaulle: 36 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death	Freedom for trader who killed burglar	Arcachon: oysters exonerated	UDF: National Council
4	Day of action in Charleville Mézières	José Bové in custody after demonstration	José Bové in extended custody	Scented cigarettes	New boss for PSA	USA: two women facing Bush, Clinton and Pelosi	Globalisation: speech by Sarkozy in Saint-Etienne	Babies buried: investigations	Stéphane Audibert spends 1 <sup>st</sup> day of freedom after 3 years in prison	Front National
5	Nathalie Gettliffe decides to plead guilty	Dax: rare case of tuberculosis	Rokia Delmas, boat rescued near l'île de Ré	SNCF strikes forecast for 8 November	Bus drivers: retirement rights	Race for the White House starts	Controversy: Sarkozy takes stance in legal matter	Dead babies	Front National	Front National: speech by Jean-Marie Le Pen
6	Hillary Clinton on the election campaign	Mama Galledou's health improved	Marc Cécillon trial opens tomorrow	Ile de Ré	Marc Cécillon trial	USA: Keith Ellison, first Muslim elected to Congress	Loir-et-Cher: 3 <sup>rd</sup> baby's body discovered in garden	Grenoble court: the verdict	American wounded in Germany	Election of socialist candidate
7	Tensions in Gaza Strip	Stains: anniversary of fatal assault	Climate: Bangladesh threatened by floods	Environment: Nairobi conference	Self-defence drama in Vendée	Gaza: blunder in Beit Hanoun condemned unanimously	Forgeries: 2006 is record year	Clearstream: Michèle Alliot-Marie is heard	11 November: shops open in Alsace	PS: the internal campaign
8	Oceans with no fish by 2050?	US elections: Utah	Jerusalem: Gay Pride causes unrest	Global warming visible by satellite	Plan to create nursery places	SNCF: strikes	Drug trafficking	Toulouse: last meeting of PS candidates	Update on fair trading	PC: Marie-George Buffet named candidate
9	Netherlands: horses threatened by rising water levels	Gaza: Israeli attacks continue	US elections: employment	Iraq as part of US campaign	Portrait of France: parental authority in crisis	Roads: fewer deaths in October	GMO demos	Ségolène Royal answers by internet video	A380 tests in Iceland	Work sites in the Atlantic departments: 2000 jobs created
10	50 euro notes disintegrate	11 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rabin's death	Aubade employees threatened by social plan	Nicaragua: Ortega should win first round	Mid-term election in US	Relaxing penalty points	Renault in India: success of the Logan	UMP: Sarkozy in Saint-Etienne	National Service in London	Rhine: symbolic passageway

Appendix 5 continued

11	Computer boom	Sino-African summit in Beijing	Homework clubs for "4pm orphans"	Le Mans: meeting of anti-liberals	<b>Beit Hanoun: Israeli army leaves town devastated</b>	Bordeaux: restrictions on taxis without licences	Road safety: speed limiters	Villepin and signatures for the Le Pen candidate	China: unique dog	National Education
12	Apprenticeships at 14	Scallop fishing in Charente-Maritime	Chalons-sur-Saône wants to control energy	Ségolène Royal: today's guest	Zidane in Bangladesh with Nobel peace prize	Marseilles: bus conductor honoured	Enquiry into isolation amongst the elderly	Great Britain – terrorism threat	Le Guide Vert celebrates 80 years	Iraq: particularly bloody Sunday in Bagdad
13	Cycling and doping	Marjolaine: bio- network develops	Cofidis trial opens	Goncourt prize goes to Jonathan Littell	Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber dies	Divorce becomes commonplace even amongst the elderly	<b>Gaza: funerals of victims from Beit Hanoun raid</b>	Internet in school lessons	Ardèche: the gorges	<b>UN: US veto of draft Arab resolution condemning Israel</b>
14	Route du Rhum: Lionel Lemonchois leads	Climate change demos in London	New York marathon	Renaudot prize goes to the Congolese Alain Mabankou	Guy Degrenne dies	Consumers to unite for disputes	<b>Lebanon: Franco-Israeli incident</b>	Maurienne: destruction because of poor concrete	Freelancers to repair chateaus	Renewable energies
15	Fashion in the colours of the Orient	Chili: lake under threat	Route du Rhum	Lemonchois wins the route du Rhum	Last debate between PS candidates	Ile de Ré: what to do with the Rokia Delmas cargo?	France tests new missile	Portrait of René Riffaud, 107 year-old WW1 veteran	Cinema	Special needs: integration of adult with Downs syndrome
16	Basel: 260 works on love and love games	New signal box in Strasbourg	Images of the largest cargo in the world		Today's guest: Nicolas Hulot	Climate Conference: Kilimanjaro	Sark changes status	Stade de France: France v New Zealand		White truffles
17	A new kind of disco	Controversy over mass in Latin	Cinema		Le Havre: arrival of waster from Ivory Coast	Philippe de Gaulle remembers his father in a book	Floods in Spain	Sarlat cinema festival		Gambling: are French addicts?
18		Route du Rhum			GPS for rambblers	Abd Al Malik: rapper	Tunisia: 4* tourism in the desert	Rose soldier		Marine park in Brittany: public enquiry
19		Football: Rennes-Lyon			Cinema:	Rugby: members of French squad	Sicily: Etna awakes			Camargue: traditional releasing the bulls
20		Exhibition: Thracian gold in Paris					Indonesia: Orang-utans must be saved			Cinema
21		Cinema					Football: portrait of Gonzalo Higuain, Franco-argentine prodigy			Monica Belluci: today's guest

Appendix 5 continued

22		Bernard Frank dies					Tennis: Mauresmo loses No 1 slot			
23							Rugby: 2007 world cup tickets			
							Clapton and JJ Cale reunited			
							Crazy collapse in plastic ball			

Appendix 6 Items in *Vremya* running order - Beit Hanoun coverage

(Foreign Items highlighted in dark grey, Israel/Palestine items in red, days not including Beit Hanoun items in light grey)

	03/11/2006	04/11/2006	05/11/2006	06/11/2006	07/11/2006	08/11/2006
1	Kaliningrad: snow	People's unity day celebrated in Moscow	Saddam sentenced to death	People's unity day throughout Russia	Kyrgyzstan: continued unrest	Visit to intelligence HQ by Putin
2	Unrest continuing in Kyrgyzstan	Putin: decree on citizenship	Power outage in western Europe	Poland's Unity Day	Telephone conversation with Kirgizia (Putin and Bakiyev)	Putin discusses socioeconomic situation in the country
3	Lavrov: concern with the situation in Kyrgyzstan	People's unity day throughout Russia	Arms cache found in Nalchik	Hussein's trial	Terrorists and sabotage	Kirgizia: new constitution
4	Lavrov: situation in Georgia and South Ossetia	Kazan Virgin icon celebration	More rallies are expected in Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan: opposition protests	Interview with Bill Gates and development of Russian education infrastructures	Report from Gaza
5	Duma: state cadastre, pension and Cuban delegation	Yaroslav region: the young performing good deeds	Victory in fire-fighting context by Russians in Iran	Kyrgyzstan: emergency meeting of parliament	65 years since parades in Moscow	US Elections
6	Lebedev and Putin: changes in the judicial system	Bishkek: protests continue	Female led Cossack community	Alcoholism	Cooperation between Russia (Putin) and Slovakia	Dresden: criminal escapes
7	Putin met border guard Pronichev	Four Russians injured in Iraq are out of danger	Swan in Germany		Putin congratulates president of Tadjikistan on victory	Duma: car insurance and support for foster parents
8	New ambulances for Nizhniy Novgorod	Moscow vote for UN resolution in Iraq			US elections	Chechnya: militants' identities established
9	Gaza report	Paul Mauriart died			Using the death sentence (Hussein) during elections	South Ossetia: attempts to prevent elections
10	Medvedev awarded school teachers	Aerobatic show in Japan			Israeli and Palestine: training radical groups in Gaza	Support for families of killed police officers
11	Chechnya: comedy show becomes popular among the young	Hermitage: imperial jewels exhibition			Investigation into murder in Primorye (of candidate mayor)	Plisetskaya and Shchedrin archives transferred)
12	Preparation for people's unity day	Ice skating show follows			Defence Minister: army procurements	Anniversary of KVN
13	Two men jumped out Moscow state university building				Anniversary of October revolution	
14					Travels of a pensioner through Europe	
15					Spivakov – world artist	