

**כיסוי תקשורת של אירועי טרור:
אירועים שנויים במחלוקת והצעה להנחיות**

רפי כהן-אלמגור

ראש המרכז לחקר הדמוקרטיה

אוניברסיטת חיפה

Glorifying Terrorists: SLA

- Portraying the Symbionese Liberation Army as Robin Hood caring for the poor.

Glorifying Terrorists: TWA 847

The media as Mouthpiece of terrorists

- ABC - “Amal Broadcasting Corporation”



- NBC - “Nabih Berri Corporation.”



Between September 2000 and May 2005,
the Palestinian organizations perpetrated
139 Suicide Attacks, killing 508 and
injuring 3291.

Journalism Coverage Contd

Dedicating 20 of 25 pages of news to ●
yesterday's attack.

live pictures from the scene, when ●
reporters only rehash what they said some
minutes earlier and perhaps, in
desperation, might relay the latest
unchecked rumor

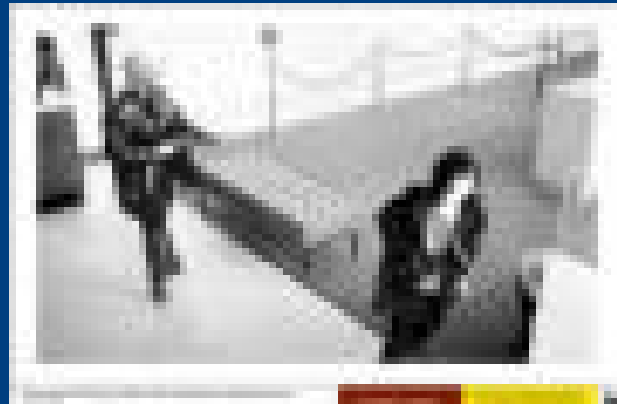
11, 2001



Media that exploited the suffering of the people trapped and soon died inside the truck towers, playing again and again the emotional mayhem of people who were trying to cope amidst overwhelming horror, disbelief, fear and terror.

Irresponsible Terminology

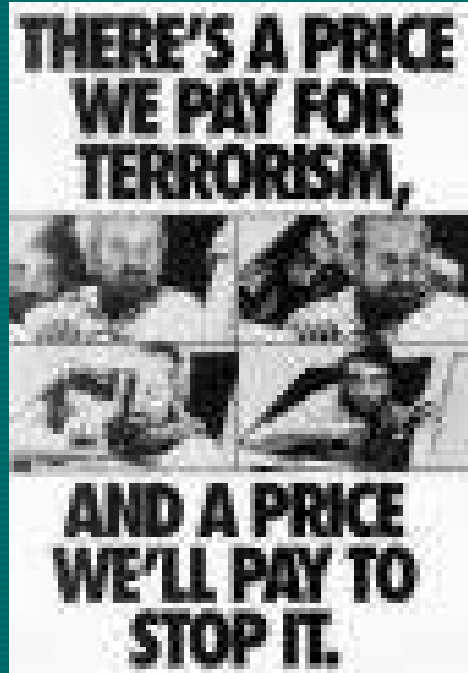
- SLA - 12 people are not an “army”
- their "operations" in the name of protecting the rights of "the people"



Irresponsible Terminology



- People who kidnap and murder randomly whomever happens to be in the wrong place are not "students" or "saints" or "soldiers" or "freedom fighters," even if they portray themselves in such way.



TWA 847 - Allegations that ABC paid Berri interviews.

ABC denied this allegation.

Irresponsible Mediation



- TWA847 - ABC's David Hartman took upon himself the role of a mediator when he concluded a live interview with a spokesman for the Amal militia by asking:
- “Mr. Berri, any final words to President Reagan this morning?”



Irresponsible Mediation

- The networks were also interviewing the hostages as if they were official U.S. emissaries perfectly free of coercion to speak their minds, serving the terrorists' interests in pressurizing the government.

TWA 847

קטע וידאו •



Dangerous Speculations

During the Hanafi Muslim takeover on
reporter speculated that **boxes of
ammunition** were taken into the
building in preparation for a police
assault when, in fact, they were
boxes of food for the hostages.

Dangerous Operations

One radio reporter prompted Khaalis to mark ten hostages for execution after suggesting to the Hanafi leader that the police were trying to trick him.

Lack of Homework

- Khaalis was outraged when a misinformed reporter, Jim Bohannon of WTOP radio, called him “Black Muslim”

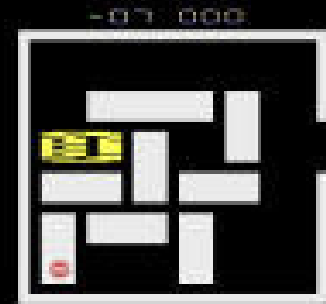


Interviews are a direct reward for the specific act of terrorism underway, and can interfere with efforts to resolve the crisis.

Such interviews all too often increase the spectacle of the event, spread fear, impede the negotiations between terrorists and authorities, and provide a contrived platform for the terrorists' views.

Live Interviews during Crisis

Khaalis gave so many interviews that the lines were jammed and the authorities found it difficult to reach him.



TWA 847, interview with John Testrake



TWA flight 847 pilot John Testrake is held hostage, 6/1985

Live Coverage

- Photo of a dead man sitting inside the blasted No. 5 bus on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv (October 19, 1994).
- Family consideration



Live Coverage: Iranian Embassy, London

- BBC and ITN, went live from the scene only after SAS had stormed the building and rescued the hostages.

מינכן 1972

עדות שוטר שהיה אמור להשתתף בכוח הפריצה
לבנייני האתלטים החטופים.



Staging Events

During the Palestinian *Intifada* of 1987-1993, foreign reporters offered Palestinians money to initiate violence against Israeli forces: the tariff was \$50 for stone-throwing; \$100 for Molotov cocktails

Carrickmore, 1979

- BBC doing a piece on the Provisional IRA
- Received anonymous telephone call - something interesting in Carrickmore
- Hooded men, stopping cars



Staging Events: Carrickmore



This study shows the need for developing a set of guidelines for the media when covering terrorism. The guidelines should include the following:



Guidelines

- The media need to be accountable for the consequences of their coverage.
- The media should never jeopardize human life.

Guidelines

The media are advised to **cooperate with the government** when human lives are at stake in order to bring a peaceful end to the terrorist episode.

The media **should not glorify** acts of terror.

Guidelines

- The media should refrain from sensational and panicky headlines, from inflammatory catchwords, and from needless repetition of photos from bloody scenes, compromising quality of reporting and replacing it with quantity.

Terrorism should be explicitly condemned for its brutality and violent, indiscriminate nature.

The media must not pay for covering terrorist incidents.

The media **should not** take upon themselves to **mediate** between the terrorists and the government. **Special qualifications** are required before one assumes such a responsibility upon oneself. Journalists are there to cover the event, not to become part of it.

The media are expected to **refrain from** making **dangerous speculations** about the terrorists' plans, government response, hostages' messages and other concerns. Speculations might hinder crisis management.

Media professionals are required to have **background information** about the terrorists they cover. They should prepare **homework** prior coverage.

The media are advised **not to broadcast** live terrorist incidents. This is not to say that the media should not cover such incidents. Rather, there should be a **delay of a few minutes** during which an experienced editor inspects the coverage and authorizes what should be on air and

Guidelines

- The media are advised not to interview terrorists while the incident is still in motion. Lines of communications between the authorities and the terrorists should be left open. The media should not impede the negotiations process.
- The media are advised not to cooperate with terrorists who stage events.

The media are required to show ■ **sensitivity to the victims** and to their loved ones. This critical guideline should be observed during terrorist incidents and, no less importantly, also after their conclusion.

The media are expected not to report details that might harm victims'

Guidelines

- The area in which the terrorist incident takes place better not be open for anybody who testifies that he or she is a journalist. Only senior and experienced reporters should be allowed in.



Thank you