

## **Foreign News Coverage. How American Journalists Report the World and How They Report Us**

**Dr. Richard Profozich**

The impression that Americans care little about what happens in other countries is widespread. The stories about American school children (and adults) who cannot find Europe on a map and do not know what continent Afghanistan is in are common. This is the result of American arrogance and self centeredness, say some. Others blame American ignorance stemming from a lack of information about the world, the fault, in part, of a parochial journalism profession that focuses on domestic news and entertainment and pays attention to the rest of the world only when happenings there effect America. But what is the reality? Are Americans really so unconcerned with the rest of the world? Is international news coverage really so poor? And, is the situation so different in other countries?

People in other countries do know more about the U.S. in general than Americans tend to know about them. Stephen Hess discusses the asymmetrical flow of international news. “The United States pays far less attention to other countries than other countries pay to the United States,” he reports (2005, p. 18). He cites several studies that show, for instance, that 50 percent of foreign news in Canada and Japan focuses on the U.S. A Mansfield Center for Public Affairs survey covering a seven-month period in 1992-93 counted 1,121 Japanese television reports about the United States and just 92 reports about Japan on American television (1996, p.10). Latin American newspapers carry twenty times the number of stories about the U.S. than American papers carry about Latin America (2005, p.18). And it isn’t just the amount of news that contributes to the

lopsided effect. Philip Seib, a professor of journalism at Marquette University, says that “much American news coverage is grounded in naivete’ that produces a solipsistic view of international affairs—an intellectual unilateralism that poorly serves the public” (2007, p. 27). And a survey of Asian and European university students studying in America shows that they felt that American news coverage of their countries is “inadequate, biased, and inaccurate” (Viswanath, 1998, p. 958). A Pew Research Center for the People & the Press survey of the top news interest stories of 2008 reports that the fourteen top stories all concerned domestic topics. Only the fifteenth rated story was international, followed closely by 35 percent of Americans, and it was the Beijing Olympic games, hardly a hard-hitting news topic.

“Foreign news is disappearing from many of America’s newspapers,” reports Peter Arnett, “and broadcast television has basically left the field. In the heyday of Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor and Frank Reynolds, at least 40 percent of television news was international. These days the figure is at best 12 percent and dropping as low as 7 percent” (1998). News magazines also carry little international news. It is widely known that when American news weeklies carry a foreign news item on their covers, sales fall from 20 to 25 percent. And Arnett indicates that it isn’t just the quantity of foreign news reporting that is suffering. “The trend also involves an overall reduction in the prominence of foreign news,” he continues, as well as its scope. “Today, a foreign story that doesn’t involve bombs, natural disasters, or financial calamity has little chance of entering the American consciousness” (1998). Hess supports this opinion, adding that virtually all foreign newspaper coverage in the US comes from seven groups whose combined average daily circulation accounts for less than 20 percent of American readers. The companies that control the other 80 percent make “almost no effort to produce sustained international reporting,” he finds (*International News*, p. 3). Most city newspapers actually ignore the coverage they get and pay for from the major wire services (AP, UPI, Reuters) because they don’t believe that their readers want foreign news and they don’t want to give up space for it. As far as television coverage goes, Hess says that virtually no country is explained or presented coherently; education, science, the arts are rarely discussed, and half the countries of the world are never mentioned, unless

some crisis develops there. As a result, television coverage makes the world look far more dangerous than it is because half of all TV foreign stories involve some kind of violence or disaster. The other half of network TV coverage is about US citizens abroad or about US government foreign policy.

The *Columbia Journalism Review* reaches the conclusion that there is a crisis in international news reporting in the US, in spite of a general increase in interest after 9/11 and the Iraq war. It says that “there is stagnation, and even shrinkage, in the number of international stories in the media and the number of correspondents in the field for most U.S. media outlets.” It attributes the decline to “an audience that expresses less and less interest in the international stories that do appear” (World News: Truth and Consequences, 2008, p. 4). Yet two reports from the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press show an increase in the international news audience in the U.S. In 2002, the center reported that 37 percent of Americans paid close attention to foreign news most of the time (Public’s News Habits, 2002). By 2004 the percentage grew to 52 percent. Harris and Yankelovich polls also show that half or more of American newspaper readers are interested in international news. But a Harris poll indicated that news executives believe that only 5 percent care (Arnett, 2007). The increase in American interest in international news is also shown in radio reporting. The audience for National Public Radio news broadcasts reached a record level in 2008, increasing 9 percent over the previous year to almost 21 million listeners a week. This constitutes an amazing 47 percent growth from 2000 to 2008 (Fahri, 2009). One of the major reasons for the large increase, according to Mark Jurkowitz, the associate director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism, a Washington think tank, is NPR’s “original foreign reporting, something that is now largely unavailable elsewhere on the radio. The organization maintains 18 foreign bureaus, more than any of the major broadcast TV networks”. He adds that many people in the U.S., including those born elsewhere, “see NPR as the one place to get news about parts of the world they care about” (qtd. in Farhi, 2009).

Still, many editors and television executives believe that readers and viewers don't want foreign news. This has led to the ascendance of local news and the attitude that any international news story must have a local connection. "There is a temptation to be local to a fault," says Ted Daniels, managing editor for the Indianapolis News. "International stories have to meet a higher threshold just to get into the paper, much less be awarded prominence" (qtd. in Arnett, 2007). Newspapers of any size set aside a certain amount of space for sports reporting or financial news. But very few set aside minimums of international news, says Arnett. Bill Felber, Executive Editor of the Manhattan, Kansas, Mercury, explains, "It's a zero-sum game. You put in one story and that means another is kept out. The local makes it, the others don't" (qtd. in Arnett, 2007). Susan Douglas, Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Michigan, documents the decline and what she terms the "turn within" in American journalism. She reports that "between 1971 and 1982, foreign news in newspapers dropped from 10.2 percent to 6 percent of what journalists call the newshole. In 1989, only 2.6 percent of the nonadvertising space in ten leading U.S. newspapers was devoted to international news" (2006, p. 628). The same situation is occurring in television news. In fact, Douglas says that "the decline seems even more precipitous in TV news. The time there devoted to international news has...dropped from 45 percent in the 1970s to 13.5 percent by 1995, or a whopping 70 percent fall off" (2006, p. 629).

The attitude of editors and news executives isn't completely irrational or done in spite of the surveys that show reader interest in foreign news. It is bolstered by other academic studies that support the opposite point of view. For instance, Wang refers to a Sears and Freedman study that concluded that the "greater the perceived utility of the information, the greater will be the desire to be exposed to it" (1977, p. 791). Wang also tested the hypothesis that utility affects newspaper readership. She defines "information utility value" as that which can reduce extrinsic uncertainty and help individuals to respond to everyday stimuli. In her own research of newspaper readers she concludes that "in general, information utility seems to be a good indicator of newspaper readership" (1977, p. 794). In her study, international news ranked eighth out of ten news categories in reader interest and utility, behind such categories as obituaries, local news, and grocery

ads. Fahmy agrees with this assessment, saying that “local news is generally held to be more important than foreign news,” and that American news audiences, “who know little of foreign lands...in general perceive foreign news as having little influence on their everyday lives” (2007). Therefore, although surveys show both an increase in audience interest in foreign news, especially after 9/11 and the Iraq war, and an increase in the volume of foreign news, Fahmy concludes that its breadth and quality have diminished. A recent Pew study shows that audience interest is broader, but not deeper. It concludes that “international stories that are perceived to have little direct impact on American lives and security attract scant interest from the public” (News Audience Increasingly Politicized, 2004). The presumption that audiences are disinterested in news that doesn’t directly affect them “leads the media to oversimplify international news events” and results in international news items that report foreign news in a one-dimensional, less complex manner so to gain audience appeal. “The relative expense of covering international stories and the ratings-driven push for ‘news you can use’ have exacerbated ethnocentrism and parochialism in the news” says Douglas (2006, p. 621). The result is a framing of international news by American media which chooses some stories, based on perceived audience interest and utility, and ignores others. This framing directly influences the public’s perception of international events and the countries in which they occur. “The U.S. media have traditionally only paid attention to foreign countries in the case of war or natural disaster...[and] have eliminated most events and issues that are not directly related to the United States’ says Douglas (2006, p. 627), which produces a consistent, distorted, and limited view of the world outside U.S. borders.

What kind of international news story does make it into American newspapers, news magazines, and television news programs? Generally, what the American public gets in foreign news is either a very brief impression of strange places and violent events, punctuated with intense images of mayhem and destruction, or glamorous settings with presidents and diplomats shaking hands, posing for photo ops, and signing official documents. Coverage is very similar on all the television network or cable stations, as they tend to cover the same stories in the same way, with the main difference in the amount of time they are on the air, as cable news is a 24 hour news cycle. Hess suggests

that the similarity in network news is because “the networks have similar resources, and the same constraints of time, money, and personnel,” and they “have to compete for the same audience, and they have the same notions of what that audience likes and does not like” (International News, 1996, p. 30). CNN and other cable news stations have not created a new journalism, he says, as most of their success has been technological, not journalistic. CNN reports from almost twice as many countries as the networks and has many more live overseas broadcasts, but their style of coverage is basically the same. Studies show, according to Fahmy, that “much foreign news is sensationalist...and not really vital knowledge. Media scholars agree that [it] is geared toward infotainment, as it tends to be highly dramatic and emotional” (2007, p. 11). It also lacks context and tends to be episodic and skewed toward dramatic events.

Most countries are rarely seen on American television. Studies show that from 1988 to 1992, twenty-one countries made up 79 percent of foreign stories (Hess, 1996, p. 31). Foreign stories accounted for 14 percent of television news stories during the time period, and over half concerned some form of violence, of natural or of human origin (Hess, 1996, p.34). Coverage of regions expands or contracts depending on where people are shooting at each other, and the farther away from home the location is, the more likely the foreign news subject is related to violence. Reporters are called “parachutists” who are sent temporarily to regional hot spots, aided by such improved technology as faster air travel, more and cheaper satellite ground stations, and lightweight video equipment. When the violence is over, the reporters move on. As Noah Adams, of National Public Radio, explains, “When the shooting stops, it’s time to go, otherwise you’ll have to stay around and do the economic stories” (qtd. in Hess, 1996, p. 59). The result of all this sensationalism is more indifference than outrage. TV makes the world look like a dangerous place, but the steady stream of violence and lack of context tends to deaden sensitivities.

Most U. S. daily newspapers rely on the wire services for international news. The exceptions are the few large circulation newspapers: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. The Associate Press (AP)

services 97 percent of the 1,600 daily newspapers in the U. S. (Hess, 1996, p.91). But most dailies outside of the major metropolitan centers, “hometown papers,” carry little foreign news. “As more and more people told pollsters they relied primarily on TV for national and international news, mainstream newspapers opted increasingly for what networks [and then cable] could not cover—local news and sports” (Arnett, 2007). These local gatekeepers view foreign news largely as filler to be fit in between local stories. They feel that the purpose of domestic news, the need to know, justifies its emphasis, while there is less compelling justification for foreign news. Therefore, most of the foreign news that newspapers pay for from the wire services is ignored. As Hess explains, “high-quality foreign dateline stories flow into every newsroom and most are never used” (Hess, 1996, p.99).

When they are not focused on violence or calamity, television and newspaper stories involving foreign lands generally deal with the doings of heads of state, politicians, diplomats and generals. Hess reports that three-quarters of international newspaper coverage is government oriented (Hess, 1996, p. 101). And although domestic news stories affected by the “turn within” that Douglas referred to focus more and more on personality, celebrity, and titillation, “...the basic government character of international news remains remarkably consistent and unchanging. Summits and barricades are where journalists want to be” (Hess, 1996, p. 46). What gets covered, then, is the actions of governments, especially when they involve combat (a return to the violence theme). What has been additionally disturbing about American foreign news reporting is that this coverage often follows the official government line. Fahmy explains that “undeniably, the literature strongly suggests the media are often expected to frame international news from a patriotic framework in an effort to meet the people’s and the U.S. government’s expectations—especially when the lives of citizens are at stake” (2007, p.16). The government’s views on international issues, involving war or not, is what is most often reported. The other exception to the focus on violence is news about business and finance. Globalism, an increased interest in international trade and investment, the supply and cost of oil, and the rise of the newly developing economies of countries like India and China have led to an exploding volume of international business

and financial news. This trend can especially be seen in the expanded range of the Wall Street Journal and in the mushroom growth of Bloomberg News. But all the wire services, including AP, Reuters, and Bridge News (formerly Knight Rider Financial News), now deploy hundreds of people around the world who focus entirely on issues of business and finance, often aimed at very specialized audiences.

The situation in other countries is very similar. Perhaps not too surprising, they tend to report foreign news in much the same way as American journalists do, just filtered through their own lenses. Fahmy suggests that while scholars continue to criticize U.S. media as inept and biased, the phenomenon is not unique to American journalism. Framing and gate keeping vary from culture to culture, but the same practices occur, with journalists choosing and offering content that often fits predetermined stereotypes of the country being reported and audience expectations about it. Several studies examining the agenda-setting effect of international news suggest that it “is reported according to the interpretation of the events in a politically and culturally advantageous manner” (Fahmy, 2007). Journalists, from any country, “become information gatherers who...figure out how to give people the information they want, packaged the way they want it” (Kimbrough-Robinson, 2007, p. 37). And the United States, being a country with a lot of influence in the world, gets a lot of coverage and a lot of stereotyped reporting. “There’s a lot of attention...in Europe because the U.S. is the most powerful country in the world,” acknowledges Kris Van Hamme, a correspondent for Belgian and Netherland newspapers. “We pay a lot of attention [to America]...and there is necessarily an element...of being a foreign correspondent that involves reinforcing the home country’s prejudices,” says Olivier Knox of Agence-France-Presse (qtd. in Hess, *Through Their Eyes*, 2005, p. 58). Lauren Chambliss, a reporter for the London *Evening Standard* explains that stereotypes of Americans include the descriptors “crass,” “driven,” and “uncultured,” adding, “I do stories that reinforce the stereotypes” (qtd. in Hess, 2005, p. 58-59). Several other correspondents describe less than objective motives behind the framing of stories about the U.S.

A wire service reporter said that her ‘home office often wants stories confirming stereotypes about the U.S.’ A TV reporter said that his editors



call for stories that ‘are more stereotypical’ than he wants to write. A newspaper correspondent said that her editors ‘tend to like stories that show the extremes of American society—violence, political correctness, antiabortion movement, etc.’ (Hess, 2005, p.78)

John Parker, a Washington, D.C. bureau chief for the *Economist*, while saying that he believes his publication to be objective and to trust the judgment of its correspondents, explains that his “impression from talking to my colleagues is that every day they’re asked to write stories they might not otherwise have done’ (qtd in Hess, 2005, p.79). Technology also contributes to the extent of coverage of the U.S. Swedish T.V. reporter Lars Moberg says that “whatever happens, you get footage, which makes the coverage of events in [America] overrepresented in our news” (qtd in Hess, 2005, p. 80).

A recent article about the Qatar based Al Jazeera news operation also demonstrates the point about biased coverage in general and of the U.S. in particular. Dave Marash, a veteran reporter for ABC’s *Nightline*, took a job for Al Jazeera English in February, 2006. In April, 2008, he resigned, citing what he considered to be the channel’s bias, and especially its anti-American bias. Commenting of the organizations general style of reporting, Marash says:

I think that AL Jazeera English is a very competent, very professional news organization that does a particularly great job south of the equator, but tends to report almost everything from the point of view of either the Arabic-speaking world or at the very least what you might call the post-colonial world. And since I’m not authentically those things, I don’t belong there (qtd in Cunningham, 2008).

Commenting on a series of stories on poverty in America as an example of the particular approach to U. S. news, Marash explains that the framing of the stories presented a narrow, limited point of view, “reporting nothing beyond the stereotype.” Explaining further, he adds:

And you don’t see that in Africa, in Latin America, in the Middle East, in Asia, on Al Jazeera. You see state-of-the-art reporting, world-class reporting, and south of the equator I don’t think anyone will give you much of an argument that Al Jazeera has become the most authoritative news

channel on earth. And so, I took it amiss...that their standard for journalism on Al Jazeera in the United States didn't seem consistently to be as good as there standards elsewhere" (qtd. in Cunningham, 2008).

The topics about America that are covered by foreign correspondents differ quite a bit from what American journalists report about other countries. Hess notes that fewer stories (35 percent) are about the U.S. government (Hess, 2005, p. 116), and about 25 percent are about American culture, with one-quarter of those on the movie industry (2005, p. 110). Many foreign countries have "an insatiable appetite for Hollywood stories" and celebrity news (2005, p. 50), he says. About 20 percent of coverage about America concerns human interest, with the same percentage focused on business and the economy, and 5 percent on science or medicine. Generally, therefore, the scope of issues covered by foreign correspondents is wider, but much of it is "borrowed" news gleaned from domestic sources, with the *New York Times* being the number one source of information for foreign journalists (2005, p. 81). Cable news, with its instantaneous, around the clock news cycle also contributes to a "second hand journalism" about the U.S. And the Internet, with its virtually limitless supply of information, and misinformation, effects foreign reporting about the U.S. in that it has seriously "inflated the number of rumors and bits of false information that make their way into the [foreign] news" (2005, p. 82). State and local news is almost invisible in foreign coverage (56 percent of foreign correspondents are stationed in Washington. D.C., 34 percent in New York City, and 8 percent in California (2005, p. 33), and most stories, no matter what the topic, focus on a "home angle" for the folks back home (2005, p. 117).

International news reporting in the United Kingdom seems to follow the same patterns that characterize American coverage of other countries, and other countries' coverage of America. A study conducted by the Media Group at Glasgow University focused on British news content and public understanding of the developing world. Greg Philo, director of the study, explains that in Britain, similar to the United States, there is a widespread belief in broadcasting that audiences are not interested in foreign news programming, especially about the developing world, because these stories don't have a local connection. He also says that commercial criteria are the main consideration for

programmer decisions about what stories to air on news broadcasts. The result has been a 50 percent drop in stories about developing countries since 1989 and a high portion of coverage that relates to war, conflict, terrorism, and disasters (2002, p. 175), topics that broadcasters think will attract audience attention. News stories, therefore, tend to be limited in scope and focus on stereotypical beliefs and attitudes toward the countries, what Philo calls “neocolonial beliefs” (2002, p. 172). Audiences tend to be misinformed about developing countries because of the lack of explanation and context given in coverage about them, and audience images about the countries tend to be overwhelmingly negative. One of the key findings in the study was that people “had a very low level of understanding about events in the developing world and there was widespread confusion over what was happening there. People...simply did not understand the news and thought that the external world was not being properly explained to them” (2002, p. 177). In discussing the state of international news reporting in Britain, Philo concludes that the low level of audience understanding of the developing world “is in part the result of television coverage that tends to focus on dramatic, violent and tragic images while giving very little context or explanation.” He goes on to say that “the development of television organized around crude notions of audience ratings is likely to make this situation worse” (2002, p. 185).

International news reporting around the world, then, seems to share the same problems and deal with the same issues. Another major factor in reporting news about other countries that also impacts journalists around the world is the Internet. Nordenson comments on a 2007 study conducted by the Associated Press (AP) on news consumption around the world. One of the major findings of the study was that many consumers wanted more in-depth news coverage but were unable or unwilling to get it. Two reasons for this situation, according to Nordenson (2008), are the “tyranny of choice” offered by the Internet and people’s “tendency to become passive in the face of too much information.” While digital technologies have made it far easier to access and report news, they have also made it easier to avoid serious content, or just get lost in the overwhelming amount of it. The Internet, says Nordenson (2008), “is a veritable minefield of distractions,” and “a flood of unrelated snippets” that make for information

overload and an unsatisfying news experience. “The information age is defined by output: we produce far more information than we can possibly manage, let alone absorb.” And so news consumers become passive in the face of too much information, especially information that lacks context, depth, and connections to people’s everyday lives. The results are “news fatigue” and a “learned helplessness.” Rather than increasing audience understanding of the world and the desire to learn more, the Internet often has the opposite effect. Another study by the Northwestern University Media Management Center found that despite their interest, online news audiences often avoid serious news “because they feel too much information is coming at them all at once” and so they “want the site design to signal to them what’s really important” (qtd. in Nordenson, 2008). News organizations compete for space and attention online at the expense of depth and analysis, following the traditional beliefs from broadcast and newspaper editors about what attracts audience attention. Therefore, explains Nordenson (2008), internet news runs the risk of “self-asphyxiation,” of smothering the audience with too much unrelated content. A further problem stemming from the information age is “the massive increase in information production and the negligible cost of distributing and storing information online have caused it to lose value.” Audiences become less willing to put effort into accessing the additional information that they need, and which is available, to add the depth that is usually missing from traditional reporting. Therefore, they are more willing to accept the limited reporting they receive.

An irony is that, in America at least, there is a significant increase in audiences who seek international news. The Pew Research Center found that from 2004 to 2007, the core international news audience in America grew from 14 percent to 24 percent of the public (Fahmy, 2007). A related Pew study shows that the Internet has overtaken newspapers as a primary news source. A 2008 study found that “the Internet, which emerged this year as a leading source for campaign news, has now surpassed all other media except television as an outlet for national and international news”(Internet Overtakes Newspapers, 2008). “In 2000, the number of U. S. households online outnumbered those subscribing to daily newspapers” (Dimitrova and Neznanski, 2006, p. 250). Other Pew surveys find that 13 percent of the U.S. public are net news users,

whose primary news source is online, while a significant portion are identified as integrators, 23 percent of the public who get news from both traditional sources and the Internet. And online news use is growing and starting to challenge both broadcast and cable news sources. While 39 percent of the American public regularly (at least three times a week) watch cable news, 37 percent get news online at least three times a week, and “substantially more people regularly get news online than regularly watch one of the nightly network news broadcasts, 37 percent versus 29 percent.” However, another key finding in 2008 indicates that the believability of online news sources is lower than for major print, cable, and broadcast sources (Key News Audiences, 2008). As far as the traditional news sources are concerned, most Americans are pleased with the amount and quality of the international news they receive. Seventy percent of the American public think that news organizations provide the right amount of foreign news, and 63 percent say the media does a good or excellent job in covering international issues. The exception is the core international news audience, those with an especially keen interest. Of the core audience, only 55 percent say U.S. media do a good or excellent job, while 43 percent say coverage is fair or poor (Public’s News Habits, 2002).

The complete picture of international news coverage in the United States (and in the rest of the world) is obviously quite complex. Susan Douglas, professor and chair of the University of Michigan Communication Studies Department, adds a further dimension to the American picture. She examines two large issues. The first involves broad ideological practices and attitudes. She explains that the American focus on entertainment programming, reality TV, celebrity culture, obsessive consumerism, and profit helps to create a new isolationism, a crisis in American journalism, and a decline in international news reporting. So “international news was replaced by less expensive entertainment news, mayhem news, lifestyle and other human-interest stories, celebrity journalism, and news about health and fitness “ (2006, p. 627). The second involves the development and use of new technologies. New communication technologies (television, satellite links, the Internet, video cameras, cell phones), she argues, “at least in the United States...have not created a global village but have, ironically led to a fusion of ethnocentrism and narcissism, best cast as a ‘turn within’” (2006, p. 620). She calls the

situation “soft determinism” where “technologies are...not...the prime movers, but...have some agency in the mix of how individuals, institutions, and political-economic systems respond to and shape technological change” (2006, p. 623). Agreeing partially with McLuhan that technology (the medium) “permits...how it is used” (2006, p. 626), Douglas says that “portability, miniaturization, low cost, the proliferation of media outlets, the speed of transmission” (2006, p. 625) instead of producing deeper international news coverage, “worked in opposition to depth, and thus in opposition to global awareness and empathy” (2006, p. 627). This is true in part because both situations support the traditional notions that news audiences want news they can use, and that otherwise “newsworthiness is defined first and foremost by conflict or disaster” (2006, p. 627). This has produced a style of storytelling where “most international stories lead to people in foreign countries being represented in highly conventional, often stereotypical ways that make them seem not at all like ‘us,’ but, as...’other’” (2006, p. 630-631). The situation in Britain, as presented earlier by Philo, seems to follow the same pattern, perhaps for some of the same reasons that Douglas presents.

One can conclude that international news reporting in the United States deserves the criticism it receives. It is limited in scope, lacks depth and context, presents stereotypes, focuses on conflict and disaster, and poorly serves the public. But, the circumstances in the rest of the world seem not to be much better. The state of foreign news coverage, whether from the U.S., focused on the U.S. from abroad, or from the U.K. focused on countries other than the U.S., is consistently poor. America may be unique in its self centeredness and focus on entertainment and celebrity. Other countries pay more attention to it than it pays to them. But the kind of attention that any country pays to those outside its borders is remarkably consistent. Each country wants a local angle to international coverage, frames stories to fit predetermined biases and audience expectations, oversimplifies international news events, and filters coverage through its own lens. The Internet (and other technologies) exacerbates the situation, especially in the United States, but also around the world. It presents information overload, a nonstop news cycle, as well as a host of misinformation that leads to news fatigue and a learned helplessness on the part of audiences, and a decrease in the value and reliability of news.

News organizations around the world need to change. They need to provide audiences with deeper, more analytical content, provide more context and consider the significance of international events they cover. They need to help people convert information into the knowledge they need to understand the world. But cultural and ideological circumstances will always make this difficult. American media are not alone in looking at the world and interpreting what happens there from a skewed point of view. Governments all over the world want their official stands on world events supported. Audiences like to have their expectations reinforced. Ratings and profits are important everywhere. When countries and news organizations learn to operate outside of their own self interests, perhaps international news around the globe will improve.

### References

- Arnett, P. (1998, November). Goodbye, World. American Journalism Review. Retrieved November 22, 2007, from <<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.umuc.edu/itxprintdoc.do?contentsS>>.
- Cunningham, B. ( 2008, April 24) Dave Marash: Why I Quit. Columbia Journalism Review, The Water Cooler. Retrieved January 30, 2009 from <[http://www.cjr.org/the\\_water\\_cooler/Dave\\_marash\\_why\\_i\\_quit.php?p](http://www.cjr.org/the_water_cooler/Dave_marash_why_i_quit.php?p)>.
- Dimitrova, D., & Nezanaki, M. (2006). Online Journalism and the War in Cyberspace: A Comparison Between U.S. and International Newspapers. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 12: 248-263.
- Douglas, S. J. (2006). The Turn Within: The Irony of Technology in a Globalized World. American Quarterly, 58(3), 619-638.
- Fahmy, S.(2007). How Could So Much Produce So Little? Foreign Affairs Reporting In the Wake of 9/11. Paper delivered at International Communication Association Annual Meeting, 2007. Retrieved November 21, 2007 from <<http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.umuc.edu/ehost/delivery?vid=6&h>>.

- Farhi, P. (2009, March 24). Consider This: NPR Achieves Record Ratings. Washington Post. Retrieved January 29, 2009 from <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/23>>.
- Hess, S. (1996). International News & Foreign Correspondents. Washington, D.C. The Brookings Institution.
- Hess, S. (2005). Through Their Eyes: Foreign Correspondents in the United States. Washington, D.C. The Brookings Institution.
- Internet Overtakes Newspapers as News Outlet. (2008, December 23). The Pew Center for the People & the Press. Retrieved January 30, 2009, from <<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1066/internet-overtakes-newspapers-as-news-outlet/>>.
- Kimbrough-Robinson, C. (2009, August 17). News Groups Must Innovate or Die. Quill 95.3: 37.
- Key News Audiences Now Blend Online and Traditional Sources. (2008, August 17). The Pew Center for the People & the Press. Retrieved February 25, 2009, from <<http://people-press.org/report/444/news-media/>>.
- News Audiences Increasingly Politicized. (2004, June 8). The Pew Center for the People & the Press. Retrieved February 25, 2009, from <<http://people-press.org/report/?pageid+836>>.
- Nordenson, B. (2008, November/December). Overload! Journalism's Battle for Relevance in an Age of Too Much Information. Columbia Journalism Review. Retrieved January 30, 2009, from <[http://www.cjr.org.feature/overload\\_1.php?page=all&print=true](http://www.cjr.org.feature/overload_1.php?page=all&print=true)>.
- Philo, G. (2007). Television News and Audience Understanding of War, Conflict and Disaster. Journalism Studies 3.2: 4. Retrieved December 13, 2009, from <<http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.umuc.edu/ehost.delivery?vid=36&hid=7&sid=0c9>>.
- Public's News Habits Little Changed by September 11. (2002, June 9). The Pew Center for the People & the Press. Retrieved February 25, 2009, from <<http://peoplepress.org/report/?pageid=615>>.
- Seib, P. (2004). A Broader World View Can Narrow Journalism's Shortcomings.



Quill 92.8: 27.

The Changing Newsroom: Gains and Losses in Today's Papers. (2008, July 21). Pew Center for the People & the Press. Retrieved January 30, 2009, from <<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/904/changing-newsroom>>.

Viswanath, K. (1998). International News in U.S. Media: Perceptions of Foreign Students. Journalism Quarterly 65.4: 952-959.

Wang, G. (1977). Information Utility as a Predictor of Newspaper Readership. Journalism Quarterly 54.4: 791-794.

World News: Truth and Consequences. (2008). Columbia Journalism Review 33.5: 4.