

## CONCLUSIONS

### NEWS ARTICLES

The result of our three (3) month study reveals a heavy leaning of "Pro-Palestinian" news articles; headlines; photo selection, location, and size. Although a number of "neutral" articles and photos exceeds individual "Pro" categories, comparing "Pro-Palestinian" with "Pro-Israel" ratios shows a significant disparity.

- **Headlines . . . . . 77% Pro-Palestinian  
23% Pro-Israel**
- **Text of news articles . . . . . 58% Pro-Palestinian  
42% Pro-Israel**
- **Front page article location . . . . . 43% Pro-Palestinian  
57% Pro-Israel**
- **Inside page article location. . . . . 64% Pro-Palestinian  
36% Pro-Israel**
- **Large news articles . . . . . 64% Pro-Palestinian  
36% Pro-Israel**
- **Photo selection . . . . . 73% Pro-Palestinian  
27% Pro-Israel**
- **Front page photo location. . . . . 62% Pro-Palestinian  
38% Pro-Israel**
- **Inside page photo location. . . . . 77% Pro-Palestinian  
23% Pro-Israel**
- **Large photos. . . . . 75% Pro-Palestinian  
25% Pro-Israel**
- **Medium and small photos. . . . . 71% Pro-Palestinian  
29% Pro-Israel**

**In summary, the three month study period revealed a significant imbalance favoring Palestinians over Israel in news articles, headlines, and photo selections, size, and location. Headlines and photos that "speak louder than words" have a major impact on the reader, particularly those who just scan an article.**

### **Text of news articles**

**Foreign news articles published in the Courant are selected from a large resource of wire and foreign news services. The Courant has the authority to delete any segment of these articles and combine portions of wire services. However, the size and placement of news articles, headlines, selection of photos, including size and placement, are developed and determined by the Courant's staff.**

### **Photos**

**On July 6, 2002, a large news article appeared on page A1, reporting on Israel's entry into Ramallah and Arafat's compound following a car suicide bombing that blew up a bus, killing sixteen (16) Israelis. Rather than display a large photo on the front page showing horrors and carnage of innocent people whose bodies had been torn apart, a large colored photo of a U.S. soccer fan celebrating the U.S. victory over Portugal appeared on the front page instead. The continuation of the article on page A3 shows a photo of the destroyed empty bus. Missing are photos of human suffering.**

### **Headlines**

**An interesting study approach to headline bias can be found on pages 11 - 13. Seventeen (17) Courant headlines were selected and then slightly modified and shown in the "Comments" column of the table. The original Courant version of the headline can then be compared with the modified version. If the modified version would have been used, seventeen "Pro-Palestinian" headlines would have been re-categorized as "Neutral."**

## **News items not reported**

**On June 26, 2002 the Courant published three (3) news articles on Israel (see APPENDIX A). However, there were significant news articles not reported by the Courant that day. One such item was the disclosure that Arafat financed the terrorist group who claimed responsibility for a recent bus stop bombing. The second, the stormy relationship that Arafat had with Arab leaders, that may tempt them to embrace President Bush's call for a new Palestinian leadership.**

**On July 12, 2002, the Courant failed to publish a newsworthy Associated Press article that appeared in the Boston Globe on that day, titled, "Rights Group Denounces Palestinian Suicide Raids." The article reads, "Amnesty International yesterday condemned Palestinian suicide bombings against Israelis, calling them crimes against humanity and declaring that no Israeli military action justified the killing of civilians ... and that attacks against civilians by Palestinian armed groups are widespread, systematic and in pursuit of an explicit policy to attack civilians. They constitute crimes against humanity ... They may also constitute war crimes." This condemnation of Palestinian terrorism by Amnesty International" is a rarity and certainly newsworthy, particularly since the Associated press is a prime wire service source for the Courant. The omission of this major "Pro-Israel" article is deeply troubling.**

**In any organization, whether work is performed directly by staff employees or contracted to other companies, the responsibility for proper performance is indisputably that of the hiring organization. "The buck stops here" rings true today as it did during former President Truman's time. Clearly, the responsibility for reporting news fairly and objectively from wire and foreign news services rests squarely with the Courant.**

### **De-emphasis via news article location**

The location of an article on the inside pages can de-emphasize the importance of the article. One such example took place on May 6, 2002, when a news article appeared on page A7 titled, "Sharon's Goal In U.S: Dislodge Arafat." It reported that Israel has information that demonstrates Arafat and the Palestinian Authority leadership are behind terrorism. Why wasn't this major issue located on the front page of the *Courant*? Contrast this with a May 13, 2002 article, "Sharon, Likud Split on Statehood", that represented a relatively minor internal issue placed on the front page. The article reported that Prime Minister Sharon and some of his Likud party members were not in agreement over the creation of a Palestinian state – not unusual in a democratically elected government. Another instance of such reporting occurred when a medium size article that exonerated Israel from conducting a massacre in Jenin was placed on page A15. Thus this important information was "buried" and de-emphasized. Yet Palestinian allegations of a Jenin massacre were previously high visibility news stories for days.

### **OPINION PAGES**

Combing Editorials, Op-Eds/Commentary, and Political Cartoons reveals an approximate balance between "Pro-Palestinian" and Pro-Israel" published positions –a positive conclusion. However, opinion page articles should not necessarily be weighted equally. Editorials for example generally generate more reader interest than other segments of the opinion pages. This factor should give Editorials additional weight.

Letters to the Editor were excluded from the combined study, since it reflects response to both news articles and opinion pages. It's in a category of its own. Although there is a 60% to 40% ratio of letters favorable to Israel, the imbalance is partially due to a heavy leaning of "Pro-Palestinian" news articles, photos, and headlines. There is also the probability that motivation for reader's response to Editorials is greater than other opinion page articles and all Editorials were "Pro-Palestinian." When taking both factors into consideration there would probably be a closer balance between Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestinian positions.

### **In summary**

**Our concerns with media reporting are not limited to the content of individual articles, but to a repetitive theme over a period of time. PRIMER selected a three-month time frame to review each article, not only to determine whether the major content of the article was "Pro-Palestinian," "Pro-Israel," or "Neutral," but to include a rare study of headlines, photos, and size/location of articles and photos. These components play a crucial role in developing reader perception of news events that can reinforce or distort the truth.**

**Truth, objectivity, headlines, and photographs are features of our study. The "Code of Ethics" developed by the Society of Professional Journalists emphasizes the importance of these features. Excerpts from the "Code of Ethics":**

- **"Truth is our ultimate goal. Objectivity in reporting the news is another goal."**
- **"Newspaper headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles they accompany. Photographs should give an accurate picture of an event and not highlight an incident out of context."**