

# Becoming media-savvy – a brief guide

to accompany the book *Peace Journalism* (Hawthorn Press 2005)

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Journalists reporting conflict need to draw on a broad range of sources if they are to present a reliable account of what is really going on. They include the familiar voices – those of governments, officials and military leaders - but also many others, such as independent experts, think-tanks, campaign groups, grassroots peace actors and dissident voices from within the ‘establishment’.

Journalists wishing to include them in stories sometimes find themselves wishing that such sources behaved in a more ‘media-friendly’ or perhaps ‘media-savvy’ way, delivering their messages in timely, digestible and effective form.

This guide will:

- Give some basic pointers on how to approach journalists with a story or perspective
- Introduce techniques such as writing press releases and holding news conferences
- Give tips for ‘trial by ordeal’ – surviving broadcast interviews
- Offer a note about the internet as a campaigning tool
- Trace the steps to campaign effectively *through* the media

We argue that the dominant discourse for conflict reporting, in most media in most places, is War Journalism<sup>1</sup>. However adroitly ‘alternative sources’ manage to slice and dice their message – in particular those committed to seeking non-violent responses to conflict - this industry inertia means the message may still not convert into much news coverage. What can be done?

This guide will also explore ways of campaigning *on* the media:

- How to offer Peace Journalism<sup>2</sup> to help news organisations meet their public obligations
- And media monitoring - how Peace Journalism could offer useful criteria to assess media output

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<sup>1</sup> First defined by Johan Galtung **War Journalism** as stories about conflict that are violence orientated; propaganda orientated; elite orientated and victory orientated. The reporting means violence seems to ‘make sense’ and often appears to be the only solution.

<sup>2</sup> **Peace Journalism** is when editors and reporters make choices about which stories to cover and how to cover them which create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict. For more visit [www.peacejournalism.org](http://www.peacejournalism.org)

## **Campaigning *through* the media**

A checklist for media campaigning, based on remarks to a workshop for peace activists, given by a senior PR executive, Colin Byrne - CEO of the transatlantic company, Weber Shandwick<sup>1</sup>:

- Who are you trying to influence?
- What are you trying to achieve?
- Set winnable outcomes
- Look at what motivates the people you are wanting to reach, look at public opinion surveys to help you
- Look at what media these people read and trust
- Then work backwards and look at what kinds of stories could be useful to journalists from those media organisations
- If this is a new field it could mean *monitoring* the media to get a feel of the kind of stories they could be looking for
- Do you need to conduct specific research to provide this sort of story?
- Look at the '*News Grid*' - what else is happening that could be competition for your issue, or could it provide a useful hook or peg?

### **What do journalists want?**

- A STORY – an idea they can 'sell' to the editor/producer
- BRIEF – can you explain it in a sentence?
- SO WHAT – 'And we care about this because...?'
- NEW – news tells us what has changed since last we heard. Ask why a journalist needs to tell people this story today?
- JAW-DROPPING – dramatic, unusual and makes you think
- TOPICAL – how does your story connect with other issues in the news today?
- RESEARCH – crunchy information, hard facts, evidence. Think at the outset – how can I set out to find, establish or prove something that would make a good story?
- UNEQUIVOCAL – a bold statement
- PICTURES – TV always needs something pictorial; always useful for newspapers though not essential.
- CELEBRITIES – a bit hackneyed but can sometimes work if the celebrity is prepared to be interviewed on the subject. If not – is it worth it? Probably not.
- 'REAL PEOPLE' – people at the sharp end of conflict are often hard for journalists to locate so they welcome contact with a real person on the ground. Often more useful than offering a spokesperson from your organisation.
- FAST RESPONSE – remember they are often working to deadlines most other people would consider ridiculously tight. So if something is

- happening today they need someone to speak within a few hours, at most, of their call.
- RELIABLE INFORMATION – which is why journalists are often suspicious of ‘advocates’. To avoid being dismissed, it is important to argue factually and show you can respond thoughtfully to other viewpoints.
  - EXCLUSIVES – Are you offering a story to one news organisation exclusively? Can sometimes be a useful way of selling the story but beware that you are not upsetting other news organisations.
  - THINK STORY. You need to ask yourself *at the outset* – what will the story be at the end of this?

## Event and process

An ‘event’ fits these criteria better than a process. ‘Something happens’ is news; ‘something continues to happen’ is not. But it is possible to turn a process into an event by providing something new, hard facts that can be summed up in a sentence and provide a reliable basis for a story.

A group of activists in Bathurst, a small town in rural New South Wales – with a reputation for being generally conservative – took a local opinion poll on the then proposed invasion of Iraq, in early 2003.

It suggested a large majority of people were anti-war, with a further finding that many were sceptical of the stated motive – claims by the US, UK and Australian governments about the menace from Iraq’s ‘weapons of mass destruction’. Instead, the biggest single group of respondents believed it was really all about oil.

This won plentiful media coverage. One of the organisers recalls:

‘This strategy was quite successful as it provided the empirical ‘facts’ and local relevance the media needed to run the issue locally. The results were controversial as they showed strong opposition to the Government line so we had a good deal of coverage for our alternative viewpoint on this international issue.

‘In line with the need to analyse the causes of conflict I added this question to the survey, to discover what the general public believed were the main reason for the conflict. This had not been asked in city polls and we had what I believed was an astounding result given the strong emphasis the media has placed on the issues of Weapons of Mass Destruction usually under a banner of the War on Terrorism. Nevertheless the largest proportion of respondents selected oil as the key factor in the conflict’<sup>2</sup>.

## **'Think story'**

Many difficulties are avoided if you *'think story'* from the beginning. One of the main concerns of the security-sector NGO, BASIC (British-American Security Information Council) is the hidden public subsidy to the arms industry.

In 2004, after attending the Becoming Media-Savvy workshop, they decided to carry out fresh research to back up their arguments. But they thought, first, how it might make a story. What kind of answers would be newsworthy and how could they set up the research in such a way as to ask questions that would deliver them?

They decided to try to quantify:

- The extent of debts owed by purchasing countries to Britain for arms deals, and covered by the taxpayer, in the shape of the Export Credit Guarantee Department
- The share of overall exports accounted for by arms contracts
- The number of jobs that could be provided in bona fide public sector activities such as hospitals and schools, with the same money

*Channel Four News* ran a substantial report using BASIC's findings that the ECGD was sitting on bad debts totalling £9 billion, including £1 billion from the deposed regime of Saddam Hussein, with no realistic prospect of recovery – making it, in fact, a hidden subsidy, as the government admitted, for the first time, to the programme's reporter, Faisal Islam.

The UK Treasury was carrying out a review, raising the prospect that the ECGD may be privatised to remove it from the balance sheet of public finances; and a major political party, the Liberal Democrats, called for it to be scrapped.

In interview, BASIC's Paul Ingram told the programme:

'Money that would otherwise go to schools and hospitals and other beneficial activities is going instead to subsidise the arms trade'.

From BASIC's press release:

### **REPORT DEBUNKS GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION FOR SUBSIDIES TO UK ARMS EXPORTS**

'A report published today by three leading UK security policy think tanks, the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), the Oxford Research Group and Saferworld, counters the economic myths that the UK Government uses to justify its support for arms exports. *Escaping the Subsidy Trap: why arms*

*exports are bad for Britain* - estimates that Government subsidies to arms exports cost the taxpayer at least £450m and possibly up to £930m a year...

The report concludes:

\* Employment dependent on arms exports constitutes only 0.25 percent of the national labour force and that far from providing jobs. It diverts skilled workers and investment away from more effective job-creating activity in the civil economy.

\* Any defence jobs lost could easily be accommodated within the overall job market, especially as the skilled manufacturing sector is currently facing shortages.

\* Defence exports' share of total UK exports has consistently reduced over recent years; to the point where in 2002, the gross UK arms exports revenue amounted to only 1.5 percent (£4,120m) of total UK exports.

\* A number of leading academics and MoD's own economists have concluded that the economic benefits of arms exports are insignificant and that the 'balance of argument about defence exports should depend mainly on non-economic considerations'.

## **Real People**

Conflict issues are often keenly debated in the news. Newspapers and programmes already have access to a wide range of opinions. What is often at more of a premium is 'real people' – those who can speak from personal experience about how the issue affects them personally.

For better or worse, many media regard first-hand *testimony*, from, say, the women of Rwanda, the families of '9/11' or a doctor at an Iraqi hospital, as being more authentic and more valuable than someone else, commentating or drawing conclusions.

Many NGOs enlist the help of celebrities but a word of caution. The market research company Mintel found that three out of five adults are 'bored with celebrities' and a further one in five are 'celebrity resistant'.<sup>3</sup>

When the Oxford Research Group organised a major event, 'Transforming September 11' on the first anniversary of the attack, the centrepiece was a performance featuring celebrities giving recitals. There were many famous names, but little or no media interest.

The main publicity came from articles about the 'real people' who were also involved:

- A double page spread on a former Northern Ireland paramilitary who is now a peace worker

- Interviews with the father of a woman killed in the Oklahoma bombing
- Many stories about Jo Berry, who lost her father in the Brighton bomb, in 1984, and subsequently befriended one of the men who'd planted it.

## Becoming a source

If you prove your ability to supply useful information on a regular basis, calibrated to journalists' needs, as BASIC did, then you can become a valued source. Some tips:

- Provide timely and reliable information and analysis
- Provide information in moderate doses
- Don't send lengthy emails or articles
- Offer yourself or a colleague for interview as issues appear in the news that day
- Create something out of nothing – look at ways of linking a message or activity of your organisation to an issue already in the news, that you could comment on
- Weber Shandwick, the UK's leading PR company, work with two useful concepts – the '*issues platform*' and '*thought leaders*'<sup>4</sup>
- An issues platform is a story already in the news, or about to come into the news. An *opportunity* for you to pitch your message as a further development of the same story.

Example - Weber developed an issues platform around on-line fraud and how to guard against it, taking advantage of a number of related developments:

- The Government had just launched its e-fraud team
- A new parliamentary bill – piece of draft legislation - raised the profile of data privacy and access to consumer data
- There was a sharp increase in the number of journalists specialising in e-commerce issues and needing stories

This in turn created the opportunity for Weber clients, working and innovating in this field, to emerge as Thought Leaders – sources of interesting information and opinions for journalists. It highlights a PR truism - constantly ask yourself:

'How can we harness the news agenda to our advantage?'

## The Press Release

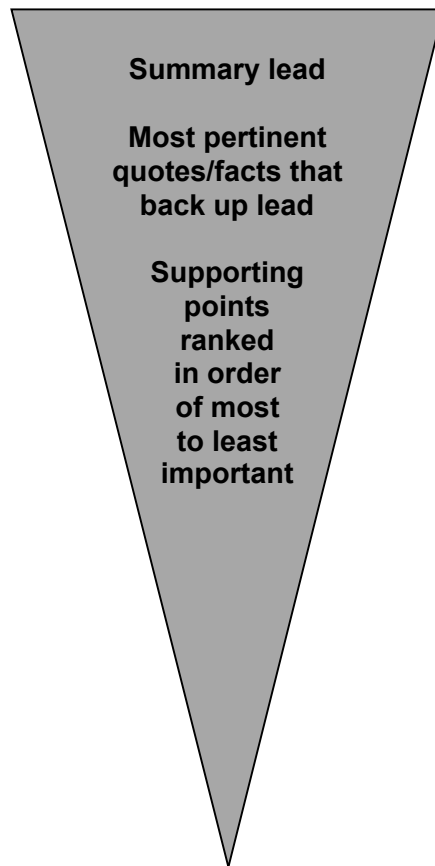
What is a story, and what is not? Non-stories:

- 'Dog bites man'
- 'Cat has fleas'
- 'New report published about war on terror'

Stories:

- 'Man bites dog'
- 'Fleas learn to dance lambada'
- 'We are losing the war on terror, says new report'

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### The inverted Pyramid

Grew out of US civil war when journalists began sending their battlefield dispatches via the telegraph. Telegraph lines were often unreliable. Reporters started putting the most important information first, so even when they got cut off, their paper still would be able to report the gist of the story.

### Checklist of what to include:

5 W's and H – the basic WHO; WHAT; WHEN; WHERE; WHY and HOW of news

EMBARGO – publication of report; date speaker is available; date of event. Put clearly at the top of the release. Usually given in the form, 'Embargo 00:01 Tuesday March 9' ie one minute after midnight for that morning's papers or programmes.

Sticking to the embargo. It is a news protocol that journalists will not publish a story before this date but some will ask if they can cover an aspect in advance as a 'preview' story.

SPEAKER - Will the speaker and/or contact person be available by phone the day before embargo date & time for interviews, so they can be interviewed in advance for piece to be published on day of embargo?

And of course – make sure you are easily available any time on the day!

LENGTH – short version = less than a page (check what can fit on one screen of an email). Have a longer version with all the facts and a few quotes and sufficient for journalists to write a 500 word news story from.

CONTACT DETAILS – name and mobile number of a person and speaker.

Do you need to give a mobile number on your answerphone greeting for out of hours contact?

### **'Selling' your idea**

In an 'attention economy', it is always necessary to 'sell' your idea in a press release - the question, as ever, is how far do you go?

Example – from an Oxford Research Group report by Professor Paul Rogers:

'[Al Qaeda] and its associates have managed to plan, and often undertake, a remarkable range of activities, with these collectively showing a capability that exceeds that existing before the 11 September attacks. On that basis alone, it is difficult to accept any claim that the war on terror is being won'.

This was 'buried' on page 9 of the report. The press release, which helped to secure blanket coverage in newspapers and on television and radio programmes alike, was headlined, simply:

**'WE ARE LOSING THE WAR ON TERROR'.**

This was the line that hooked journalists, caught their attention and created a platform for the report's arguments to be heard.

### **Be positive, be specific**

Stories that reiterate problems we already know about are difficult to sell. Stories that seem to hold the prospect of change can be easier to sell.

Stories that call for specific things can be easier to sell than those which merely 'raise concerns'.

### **Example:**

Fokus, a coalition of some 60 women's groups in Norway, ran a campaign on women's sexual health.

The press release was headed 'Half a million of the world's women die every year from sexual health related causes – and no-one cares'.

Journalists tended to take the view – 'Er, yes, very sad, but what's the story?'

Suggestions for improvement:

- The basic message of the press release could be re-formulated as 'We care – do you?'
- There could be 'badges of caring' – signing a petition, wearing coloured ribbons etc
- Also it could call for specific things
- One example - for the Norwegian government to lobby for, and contribute to, a restoration of remittances to the UN Population Fund which had been cut by the Bush Administration in the US
- Then the breadth of the coalition involved could be seen as a strength – the question could become, can the Norwegian government afford to ignore so many women?

WHEN – is the best time to send it out?

Usually 3-5 days before the embargo date.

FOLLOW-UP – always follow-up with phone calls. Journalists are bombarded with press releases.

### **A News Conference**

News conferences are held to announce big plans, tout achievements or release latest information about high profile situations that have caught the public interest.

PROS useful if you expect a large number of journalists

CONS very few turn up and it looks like nobody is interested

### **Ideas**

- Organise it a pictorial location or event

- Launch a report with several speakers perhaps a 'real person', a celebrity or high profile speaker?
- Announce research findings.

DATE – does it clash with anything else big in the news calendar? Like political party conferences? State opening of parliament?

TIME – late morning best to hit lunchtime news bulletins and to give the newspapers plenty of time to gain responses and write a piece for the next day. Late afternoon too late.

WHEN - Send out the release no more than 3 weeks in advance.

CALL – those journalists who you think will be interested a few days before.

Two successful examples:

### **Small arms**

In 2003, a report by Amnesty International, Oxfam and the International Action Network on Small Arms gave an estimate that the proliferation of small arms is now responsible for one death every minute.

It made a positive, specific call for change – a legally binding international arms trade treaty by 2006. Coverage was further enhanced by large newspaper pictures of Trafalgar Square, full of gravestones, each bearing the words 'One person every minute killed by arms'.

The presence of British military veterans, in full dress uniform, among the gravestones, added to the visual appeal.

### **Iraq meeting**

A meeting took place in London for British-based businesses to get more information about reconstruction contracts and investment opportunities in Iraq, after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

The concern of campaigners was that the country was now being, effectively, sold off to international corporations. A point they made visually by holding a mock auction outside the meeting – complete with auctioneer's rostrum, and 'bidders' holding up placards adorned with the logos of companies such as Halliburton and Texaco.

The stunt made good pictures for the BBC's *Newsnight* programme, which included them in its report along with an interview clip of one of the campaigners,

making their point, that Iraq was effectively being auctioned off to favoured bidders.

## **Contacting journalists**

The best way to send out a press release is to start with a phone-call and send the email to back-up what you have said on the phone.

Who do you call?

Start with who you know personally, ask their advice.

- Who makes the decisions?
- Yes it's the editor but the editor of which section? Which programme?  
Usually you need to speak to someone lower down the food chain, sell the story idea to them, they will know how to sell it to the editor.

Remember – they are very busy and under pressure, make it brief, sound positive

Be PERSISTENT – call back till you speak to a person, journalists rarely reply to messages.

DON'T BE PUT OFF if you get a response that is rude or offhand – it's nothing personal, it comes with the territory!

## **Broadcast interviews**

There is a basic PR dilemma with broadcast interviews – you want to use it as a platform for your message, but, once it starts, you are not in control of the agenda.

Above all, YOU must decide what YOU want to say, in advance – there are then various means at your disposal to

- a) say it, in spite of attempts to 'blow you off course'
- b) be more convincing and engaging to the viewer or listener.'

Here are some excerpts from the BBC manual *The Reporter's Friend* by Vin Ray (BBC Journalism College, Director). These are for correspondents doing 'two-ways' but many of the same principles apply in any TV interview you do:

'Whenever you can, discuss the questions beforehand with the presenter. In the studio give them your suggested questions on paper. But be prepared. Expect the presenter to wrong-foot you. Remember they're dealing with many other things at the same time.'

Try not to leave pauses which might have the presenter believe you've finished your answer. If you both start talking at the same time you should stop immediately and let the presenter continue.

And it may seem rude, but don't say hello and don't say goodbye. 'Good morning' and 'Goodbyes' tend to get mangled up with what the presenter then goes on to say. It's fine to use the presenter's name once, but don't keep on using it – it sounds contrived and has the effect of excluding the viewer. Also it may prevent your contribution being clipped for use later in the day on different outlets.

A famous piece of research carried out by a professor in the United States broke down how viewers receive messages:

- 55% of the messages come from the body language
- 38% of the messages come from tone and attitude
- 7% come from the words

So how you look and 'perform' on screen is crucial....

If you are going to wear a tie, then make sure you look smart. Keep it neat and simple and subdue any accessories. If viewers are worrying about your tie or your earrings they'll be missing the story. Try to focus attention on your face – not your clothes. And you should always keep your hair neat and tidy. It's always worth keeping some spare clothes at the office in case of emergencies.'

So much for the establishment view – there is also much wisdom in the following tips from the *Activist's Media Toolkit*, by the UK-based campaigning and video activism group, undercurrents:

'Be informed – this is the golden rule. Remember, this is an information war, and the best warriors are those with the best information. Don't go into a studio unless you're confident you know your subject matter better than the person you're up against'.

'Be calm. Generally the calmest person is the one the audience sees as 'the winner'. This doesn't mean you can't be passionate and enthusiastic, but your passion and enthusiasm must be tightly controlled and mustn't spill over into anger or hostility. If necessary, take a deep breath before answering the question'.

'Don't necessarily answer the question directly. Deal with it as briefly as possible, then get to the point you want to make'.

'Turn hostile questions to good account. There are at least two ways of doing this:

- Deal with the question quickly, then move on to what you want to talk about. A good way is to agree with part of the question, then show it's not the whole story. 'Yes, of course human welfare is critically important, but that doesn't mean we should neglect animal welfare. At the moment, x percent of dairy cows die before they're six years old, because of the terrible conditions they're kept in. That doesn't do them any good or us any good.'
- Undermining the factual content of the question. Eg Q: 'But, given the number of people who work in defence industries, what you're really doing is putting your principles before their jobs'. A: 'In fact you're wrong to suggest that supporting the arms industry is a good way to secure jobs. By spending the same money on hospitals and schools many more jobs could be created...'

## The Internet

Most journalists now use the internet as their first port of call for research. So if you have a good website make sure your press release is there first.

With the advent of broadband there is an explosion of internet material but most people still turn to the mainstream media for reliable information.

A recent global survey showed that national TV is the most trusted and most important news source overall (trusted by 82%, with 16% not trusting it) - followed by national/regional newspapers (75% vs 19%), local newspapers (69% vs 23%), public radio (67% vs 18%), and international satellite TV (56% vs 19%). Internet blogs were the least trusted source (25% vs 23%) – with one in two unable to say whether they trusted them<sup>6</sup>.

**Blogs** (weblogs) while they are the least trusted source of news blogs can attract a lot of attention. Rachel from North London who was caught up in the 7/7 bombings ([www.rachelnorthlondon.blogspot.com/](http://www.rachelnorthlondon.blogspot.com/)) gets 50,000 hits a day because the BBC linked to her site after the bombings. Although she began by writing her personal experience of terrorism, Rachel now writes on politics and the media. Academic Juan Cole [www.juancole.com](http://www.juancole.com) writing about Iraq is read by journalists making blogging another way of becoming a media source.

It is very easy to start a blog from sites created to set one up for you like [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com). All you have to do is set up an account for free and you're away.

## Campaigning *on* the media

Consider these words from John Lloyd, a senior editor at London's *Financial Times*, speaking at our Reporting the World conference:

'Power has to be interpreted, power has to be interrogated. One could say that's our mission, our mission statement as journalists. But we *are* now the power to some extent... because the media corporations control access, to communications, to fantasy, and information, they control real power.

'We need to take our power, media power, seriously. And we need to unpick what we are doing to the world because we are *constructing* the world, through advertising, through the new media, the e-media, through media corporations themselves, through television, radio, through to newspapers and magazines.'<sup>7</sup>

If power needs to be 'interrogated', to use his word – and if media, too, have power - then that must include interrogating media representations of conflict and *holding them to account*. The area where this concept is traditionally most highly developed is in broadcast media. Radio and television stations each have a portion of public goods – the broadcasting or digital spectrum, or the geo-stationary orbit – set aside for their exclusive use, and protected by the state.

In return, almost all of them have to make certain undertakings about their reporting, and to abide by them – but do they? In some ways, the guidelines and codes under which they operate should provide for more Peace Journalism. But their provisions often find themselves at odds with reporting conventions – a reason to call for the conventions to be set aside and replaced, or at least supplemented, with a different approach.

This is one important opening for campaigning, not just *through* the media, as above, but also *on* the media.

### Examples

From the **BBC Producer Guidelines**:

- 'No significant perspective should go unreported or under-represented on the BBC'
- 'There are usually more than two sides to any issue'

From the supplementary *War Guidelines*, issued to journalists in January, 2003, for coverage of the debate over a possible invasion of Iraq:

- 'We must ensure that the arguments are heard and tested'
- 'All views should be reflected to mirror the depth and spread of opinion'

From the Ofcom *Programme Code*, for commercial UK broadcasters including news providers **ITN** and **Sky**:

'In dealing with major matters of controversy, licensees must ensure that justice is done to a full range of significant views and perspectives'.

From the **Canadian Broadcasting Corporation** code, *Journalistic Standards & Practices*:

'To achieve balance and fairness, the widest possible range of views should be expressed'

'There must also be depth, the capturing of dimensions and nuances. Without these elements, the programming becomes too simplistic to permit adequate comprehension'.

From the **Australian Broadcasting Corporation's** *Editorial Policies*:

'Balance' should be achieved by presenting 'a wide range of perspectives'

'In serving the public's right to know, editorial staff will be enterprising in perceiving, pursuing and presenting issues which affect society and the individual'.

'Pursuing impartiality should not mean endorsing the status quo. The Corporation is also required to be innovative... The ABC seeks to be a pace-setter in community discussion'.

Television in America is less overtly regulated, but the First Amendment to the US Constitution protects freedom of expression. In a famous ruling in 1969, the **Supreme Court** said that should mean

'an uninhibited marketplace of ideas... It is the right of the public to receive suitable access to social, political, and other ideas which is crucial'.

These are just the ones from English-speaking countries. They all emphasise the need to remit diverse views into the public sphere, offering us a potentially useful campaigning tool to broaden the range of perspectives represented in or on the news.

Consider, for instance, the following facts about UK public opinion:

- Polls before the 2003 invasion of Iraq suggested that 44% of Britons – and large majorities in many other countries - thought the real US motive was to do with oil, not 'weapons of mass destruction'<sup>8</sup>
- A huge global polling exercise, commissioned by the BBC in conjunction with national broadcasters in ten other countries, showed more people disagree than agree with US policy on weapons proliferation – in every country except the US itself (in Britain 39% to 36%)<sup>9</sup>

- The number of people who believe the US is a greater threat to world peace than, say, Iran or North Korea is either a majority, or a substantial minority, in many countries, according to the same poll

These are issues where the perspectives typically offered by, say, peace campaigners or security think-tanks, are very much in tune with public opinion, and yet seldom heard or explored in the media. The obligations typically found in public service broadcasting agreements mean they should be.

This gives campaigners on the media something to *call for*, something that would mean an expansion of Peace Journalism, whether it is helpful, in a particular context, to use the name; or not.

## **Media monitoring**

Many organisations around the world carry out media monitoring, for various purposes. Once you can measure Peace Journalism, you can compare the extent of it in different media – the basis for awards to ‘raise through praise’. It’s given rise to media peace awards such as:

- The Media Peace prize run by Australia’s United Nations Association, now 25 yrs old
- Media Watch in Surabaya, Indonesia, ran an award scheme based explicitly on Peace Journalism – devised by its director, Sirikit Syah (below)

The four-point ethical checklist set out below was devised as a set of monitoring criteria for UK media, specifically to measure War Journalism and Peace Journalism<sup>10</sup>:

### **\* How is violence explained?**

- How does the explanation arise from the way violence is reported?
- Does it offer a classic ‘blow-by-blow’ account?
- Or does it cover the workings of structural and cultural violence on the lives of people involved?
- Does it illuminate the intelligible, if dysfunctional processes which may be reproducing the violence?
- What are we led or left to infer about what should, or is likely to happen next?

### **\* What is the shape of the conflict?**

- Is the conflict framed as ‘tug-of-war’ – a zero-sum game of two parties contesting a single goal?

- Or as ‘cat’s-cradle’ – a pattern of many interdependent parties, with needs and interests which may overlap, or provide scope for integrated solutions?

**\* Is there any news of any efforts or ideas to resolve the conflict?**

- Is there anything in the report about peace plans, or any image of a solution?
- Must these aspects of a story wait until leaders cut a ‘deal’?
- Do the reports of any ‘deal’ equip us to assess whether it is likely to tackle the causes of violence?
- Do we see any news of anyone else working to resolve or transform the conflict?

**\* What is the role of Britain; ‘the West’; the ‘international community’ in this story?**

- Are ‘our’ stated goals of intervention the same as our real goals? Do we get any exploration of what the unstated goals might be?
- Is there anything about interventions already underway, albeit perhaps undeclared?
- Is there any examination of the influence of previous or prospective interventions on people’s behaviour?
- Does it equip us to assess whether more, or less intervention might represent a solution, or to discriminate between different kinds?

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<sup>1</sup> Speaking at Becoming Media-Savvy, a one-day training workshop for security sector NGO staff, London, November 4, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Tracy Carpenter, former student, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney, in personal communication with the authors

<sup>3</sup> Charlie Lee-Potter, ‘Can celebrity endorsement save the planet?’ *News Statesman*, 28 February 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Based on comments by Colin Byrne to Becoming Media-Savvy, London, November 4, 2003

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from diagram p128 Getting the Whole Story – Reporting and Writing the News by Cheryl Gibbs and Tom Warhover published Guilford 2002

<sup>6</sup> Globescan UK survey March-April 2006 results at [http://www.globescan.com/news\\_archives/bbcreut.html](http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/bbcreut.html)

<sup>7</sup> Speaking at Reporting the World conference, Taplow Court, Bucks, July 2001

<sup>8</sup> *Not such a super power after all*, Peter Preston, *Observer*, 12 September 2002

<sup>9</sup> What the world thinks of America, polling May-June 2003 by:

*Australia - Roy Morgan Research; Brazil – LPM Research F2F; Canada - Leger Marketing; France – IPSOS Opinion; Indonesia – Synovate; Israel – PORI; Jordan – IPSOS Stat; Korea – ORC International Russia – Russian Research & F2F; UK – ICM; USA – IPSOS Reid*

Details at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/programmes/wtwt/poll/html/default.stm>

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from *Reporting the World – a practical checklist for the ethical reporting of conflicts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Conflict and Peace Forums, Jake Lynch, Taplow, UK, 2002

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**FEEDBACK FORM 6 June 2006**

Please let us know what you thought of today's training and how it could be improved.

Please circle your answer:

1. How would you rate the training?

Very useful

Quite useful

Not very useful

2. Can you explain why?

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.....

3. What was the most useful part of the day?

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.....

4. How would you rate the input from the trainers?

Very useful

Quite useful

Not very useful

5. Would you recommend this as a regular event?

Yes

No

6. Would it be useful to develop media training and media campaigning beyond a one day event?

Yes

No

7. Please say how you think this could be done most effectively.

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8. If you would like to, please say a few words on how you think the training could be improved for the future.

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