The Impact of Middle East Pictures and Words

As conflict in the Middle East has intensified, scrutiny of the press coverage has likewise increased, with charges of biased reporting being made from all sides. Often such charges lead to internal reviews within news organizations; some examine not only the selection of words but also the choice of photographs that tell the story in ways words never could.

In our series of stories, a photojournalist, photo editor, reader representatives, and deputy managing editor describe the decision-making process that brings photographic images from the homes and streets of the Middle East to the pages of daily newspapers, and they speak to the reaction their selections have received from readers. **Courtney Kealy**, a photojournalist for Getty Images based in Beirut, explains what went wrong when her provocative photograph of a Palestinian child, dressed as a suicide bomber, ended up being used for an unintended political purpose, and she shares with us recent images of Palestinian girls who have volunteered to be suicide bombers.

Randy L. Rasmussen, assistant director of photography at The Oregonian, explores the ways in which reader reaction is factored into decisions made about which photographs to publish and where to place them. He offers insight into the key questions editors ask as decisions are being made. **Dick Rogers**, San Francisco Chronicle readers' representative, writes about the charges of editorial bias that photo selection engenders and tells us how he worked with a group of readers to inform his newspaper's response. What readers told him "reminded photo editors and senior editors that day-to-day news decisions have lasting impacts on how readers view the paper." Arizona Daily Star reader advocate, **Debbie Kornmiller**, developed a similar listening approach to analyzing her newspaper's pictorial Mideast coverage and, based on readers' suggestions, the paper made changes. **Michael Larkin**, deputy managing editor/news operations at The Boston Globe, explains how a particularly graphic photo of a dead child ended up on the paper's front page.

Joel Campagna, who overseas the Middle East at the Committee to Protect Journalists, describes the dangers associated with covering the Intifada. "The situation, where the rules of engagement can change daily, poses increasing risks for those seeking proximity to the action—cameramen, camera crews, photographers and stringers in particular," he writes. Former Boston Phoenix media critic **Dan Kennedy** writes about the Phoenix's decision to link its Web site to the propaganda video of Wall Street Journal reporter Danny Pearl's execution and to publish two photos from the video on its editorial page.

Beverly Wall, director of the Allan K. Smith Center for Writing and Rhetoric at Trinity College, works her way through "the minefield of language" that makes news coverage of the Middle East so difficult. And **Rami G. Khouri**, a Jordanian-Palestinian syndicated political columnist, explains why he doesn't think that U. S. policy in the region is affected by the journalists' selection of words and pictures. ■

Photographic Images Can Be Misunderstood

'I had hoped people would view this boy from Ain el-Helweh as I had seen him, a tiny tragic figure.'

By Courtney Kealy

I knew not to ask their names and concentrated on the girlishness belied by their suicide belts and kalashnikovs. Subtle feminine clues appeared. They whispered to each other behind cupped hands in front of their covered faces. A small delicate wristband, purple platform sandals, or long-lashed wide eyes peeked out from their militant attire and offered up contradictions.

It's often a simple gesture or small symbols in a larger political context that gives a photo its strength and offers some universal humanness. But after covering breaking news in the Middle East for four years, I fully realize the political repercussions of stories like this and sadly know both sides often cannot see each other as human.

It took four months of preparation consulting with a writer to arrive at this meeting of female suicide bombers with the al-Aqsa Brigades, training for future operations inside Israel in a small Palestinian camp in Northern Lebanon. I own all rights to these possibly contentious photos of female suicide bombers. After their first publication in a Sunday supplement to a Scottish newspaper, The Herald, I will make sure they do not get published alongside text that offers some sort of biased argument for one side or the other. My hope still is that photographs such as these can prompt people to ask why people do the things they do. But I have learned how difficult it is to work in this region, where tempers simmer beneath a thin veneer of calm, and those on all sides constantly accuse journalists of bias.

Four years ago, as a photojournalist, I brought myself to the Middle East and settled in Beirut. The 10-year ban on Americans traveling to the country had been lifted 14 months earlier, and the city had become one of the largest reconstruction sites in the world. Yet editors I visited before my move told me they didn't have much need for stories from this region.

Often my introduction to the culture was lightly amusing. On a Hezbollah press tour, one of the first of

These unidentified girls from the Beddawi Palestinian camp in Tripoli, Lebanon, have volunteered to be suicide bombers for the al-Aqsa Brigades in future operations inside Israel. As Kealy writes, "My hope still is that photographs such as these can prompt people to ask why people do the things they do. But I have learned how difficult it is to work in this region, where tempers simmer beneath a thin veneer of calm, and those on all sides constantly accuse journalists of bias."

Photos by Courtney Kealy.

its kind, an overexcited assistant press officer kept trying to tell me that Hezbollah suffered from its stereotype as a terrorist organization. "It's a stereotype, they think we are the terrorist!" he said. I raised an eyebrow ironically and asked rhetorically that maybe I, too—an American woman in the Middle East—could understand what it meant to be a stereotype? "Yes, yes," he exclaimed, "It is true, it is true, they think we are the terrorists and you are the sex machine!"

But after the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon, the death of Syrian President Hafez el-Assad, and the start of the Palestinian Intifada in 2000, things changed considerably. Then the events of September 11 sparked an almost hysterical demand for news from the Arab world. As an American and native New Yorker, the political became intensely personal.

On a Sunday in mid-December 2001, I was on assignment in Ain el-Helweh. More than 70,000 Palestinians live there, making it the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist group, organized a rally to commemorate their 14th anniversary. My purpose was to merely cover this small event inside the camp to show the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon supporting Hamas's actions inside Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Although the organization had taken responsibility that weekend for suicide bombings that killed more than 25 people in Israel, leaders from Hamas have stated that they do not conduct military training or operations from inside Lebanon.

Children in the Palestinian refugee camps often trail alongside me repeating in high pitched voices "saurini, saurini, saurini," which in Arabic means, "take my photo, take my photo, take my photo." They love to pose for photos when a photojournalist arrives. I used to view it as a distraction to my concentration, but realizing how it amuses them I now take the time to snap my shutter when they ask. By the end of the march of Hamas supporters through the camp that day, I felt relaxed and very aware of the multitudes of children darting through the crowds. Girls shyly followed me around, a curious female presence, no headscarf, clearly foreign, and doing what is thought of as a man's job.

As some adults listened to a Hamas spokesman's speech, others readied themselves for the requisite end-of-the-rally burning of the Israeli and American flags. I walked through the red dirt soccer field to where small boys dressed in camouflage with pint-size plastic machine guns and teenage boys dressed as suicide bombers covered head to toe in white sheets and fake belts of explosives, waited on the sidelines.

I knelt down on the ground, eye-to-eye with a small boy about three years old, a Hamas headband wrapped around his forehead. A young teenager suddenly approached, untied his fake suicide belt and tied it around the waist of the little boy. I didn't say a word, waiting to see what would happen. He secured it around the little boy's waist as he lifted his arms and smiled shyly. Then the boys straightened up, pulled their hoods over their faces and fell into a chilling tableau. The boys clearly didn't understand the significance of their gestures, but they had already absorbed the message of the roles they were expected to embrace.

The little Palestinian boy was about the same size and age as my nephew, Harrison, who was in love with the firemen in New York City before he could talk. In my wallet I carried a photo of Harrison dressed as a fireman on his second birthday, smiling widely.

I had hoped people would view this boy from Ain el-Helweh as I had seen him, a tiny tragic figure.

Within a few days the photo was being published worldwide by my agency, Getty Images. I had worked on a $225 day rate and received no other royalties for the publication of this photo, yet I felt incredibly compensated by seeing it in print and hearing that it had been discussed on morning radio shows in New York City. But in March, an unwitting salesperson at Getty Images made an unfortunate mistake by selling the photo for an advertisement published by the American Jewish Committee on the opinion page of the Sunday New York Times

Ain el-Helweh, Lebanon: Palestinian children dressed as suicide bombers put fake explosives on a small child after marching in commemoration of the 14th anniversary of the Palestinian militant group, Hamas, in Ain el-Helweh, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, on December 9, 2001. The camp is home to more than 40,000 Palestinian refugees and is surrounded by Lebanese Army checkpoints. ***Photo by Courtney Kealy.***

Nabatieh, South Lebanon: Ashoura, the annual religious holiday in which Shiite Muslims sacrifice their blood to commemorate the death of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed, who died in battle in 680 AD in Kerbala, now modern day Iraq. The battle marks the schism between Sunnis and Shiites. The practice was banned in Iran in 1994; members of Hezbollah in Lebanon also denounce it, although it still occurs annually in other countries, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. *Photo by Courtney Kealy.*

with the headline "Some are born hating, others are taught how to hate."

I feel that this child is not emblematic of what needs to be fought against but rather serves as a symbol of a people whose desperation needs to be addressed. The ad only causes more rifts and hatred by using the image of this small child. To portray a three-year-old as a symbol of hate and evil buried the humanitarian intent of the photo.

I worried that the mistaken use of this photo would lead to problems for me in Lebanon. It is offensive to me that a spokesman for the American Jewish Committee expressed concern about my safety in an article addressing the misuse of my photograph. While it would be nice to see this as an expression of genuine concern, unfortunately I see it as serving a more insidious political agenda: I regard it as trying to reinforce an image of the Arab world as populated only with extremists and teeming with terrorists.

Breaking news footage on September 11 had already done a lot of damage in this respect. Before anyone knew the scale of events that would unfold, some local stringers rushed into Ain el-Helweh for reaction photos. A few Palestinians danced and cheered for the cameras. After this initial display the streets were quiet and darkness fell a few hours later. Time and Newsweek published these pictures as indicative of widespread jubilation among Palestinians at the September 11 tragedy and U.S. TV news stations ran images like these in continuous replays.

However, there was never any genuine street reaction to photograph in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon or elsewhere that day. When my brother called to reassure me that my family in Manhattan was alright, he asked, clearly shocked, "Why is everyone celebrating over there?" I explained the news footage portrayed a few small crowds as a collective whole: There had been a small crowd early in the day in a Palestinian camp in Lebanon, a small group of kids handing out candy in East Jerusalem, and a large demonstration in Nablus, a West Bank town. This irresponsible use of the same footage over and over in a rush to offer something from the Middle East and Arab world demonized the Palestinians.

I am very aware that most Americans cannot distinguish between Arabs of different nationalities, religion and loyalties in this region. I do cover breaking news, which often involves militant extremist groups, and so I document their speeches, parades and anniversaries, whether it be the Shiite group Hezbollah, the Palestinian Sunni group Hamas, or others. The images do carry a particular weight, but to many uninformed viewers they represent the whole as opposed to the fringe groups that they are.

In my work I concentrate on small segments of society. When photojournalists focus on aspects of European and North American culture, most viewers of the images understand that the photo essay or long-term body of work represents specific problems, social and political, and the consequences of these difficulties. The groups whose images I capture represent certain political, social and cultural issues in this region, but in no way do they reflect the 2000 years of diverse civilizations that have formed today's complex "Arab world."

In spite of the mistaken sale of my photo of that little boy from Ain el-Helweh, I feel I can trust my agency completely, and this is crucial. In this day of digital, light-speed photojournalism, I must move images from my camera through e-mail to editors instantly with a detached objectivity. And there is no time for mistakes. This can be a difficult balance to strike, emotionally and physically wearing, but it is vital to maintaining the integrity of these images. ■

Courtney Kealy, a photojournalist for Getty Images, is based in Beirut, Lebanon. Her work has appeared worldwide in such publications as The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, US News & World Report, Time and Newsweek. She also freelances as a local producer for ABC News.

courtney@kealy.com

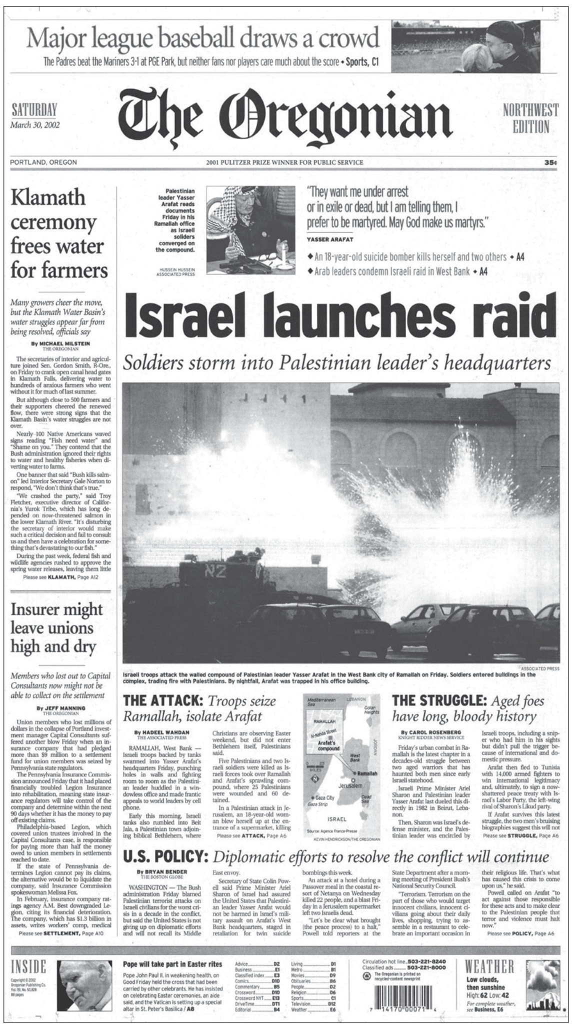
Arriving at Judgments in Selecting Photos

At The Oregonian, key questions help to frame decisions about images of Mideast violence.

By Randy L. Rasmussen

An explosion at a Jerusalem market, triggered by a suicide bomber, leaves the street littered with debris and body parts. Among the wounded, a rescuer assists a man whose clothes are shredded and charred from the blast. In Ramallah, a Palestinian soldier sprints across a street and, in public view, is shot by an Israeli sniper.

On The Oregonian's front page, we run a photo of this market victim, picked up by The Associated Press, as the main picture. It shows little blood or gore, but it's a powerful image, graphic in its depiction of the trauma and terror. From the West Bank, two AP photographers record a sequence of the Palestinian's death as it happens, and we decide to publish a single image taken at the moment the man takes a fatal hit. This photograph runs black and white and toward the bottom of a page, inside the paper. It's a haunting photo but not particularly graphic or as unsettling as it would have been had we run the entire shooting sequence in color on the front page.


Major league baseball draws a crowd
The Padres beat the Mariners 3-1 at PGE Park, but neither fans nor players care much about the score • Sports, C1

SATURDAY March 30, 2002 — The Oregonian — NORTHWEST EDITION
PORTLAND, OREGON — 2001 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE — 35¢

Klamath ceremony frees water for farmers
Many growers cheer the move, but the Klamath Water Basin's water struggles appear far from being resolved, officials say
By MICHAEL MILSTEIN, THE OREGONIAN

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat reads documents Friday in his Ramallah office as Israeli soldiers converged on the compound. HUSSEIN HUSSEIN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

"They want me under arrest or in exile or dead, but I am telling them, I prefer to be martyred. May God make us martyrs." YASSER ARAFAT
• An 18-year-old suicide bomber kills herself and two others • A4
• Arab leaders condemn Israeli raid in West Bank • A4

Israel launches raid
Soldiers storm into Palestinian leader's headquarters

Insurer might leave unions high and dry
THE ATTACK: *Troops seize Ramallah, isolate Arafat*
THE STRUGGLE: *Aged foes have long, bloody history*
U.S. POLICY: *Diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict will continue*
INSIDE — Pope will take part in Easter rites — WEATHER


A4 — THE OREGONIAN • SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2002
SHOWDOWN IN RAMALLAH

THE WEST BANK

Israel gears up for a long campaign
The military looses its might and the government sets up a large media center to deal with an influx of reporters
By JOHN KIFNER, NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Europeans voice alarm on Mideast
By WARREN HOGE, NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Suicide bomber described as quiet girl

Arabs denounce Israeli incursion

Deadly fighting

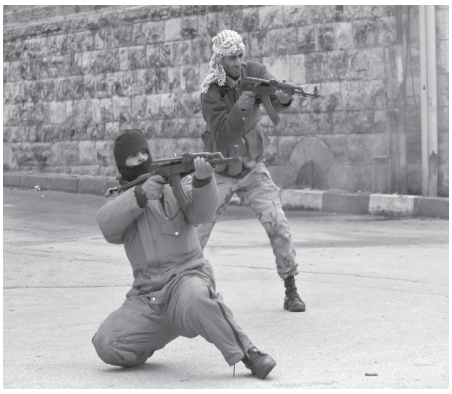
Front page, left, of The Oregonian on Saturday, March 30, 2002, and Page A4, right, of the same day's paper showing our Mideast coverage, including the photo of a Palestinian gunman killed by an Israeli sniper. [See page 68 box.] —R.R.

News reporting on the conflict between Israelis and Palestinian draws reader comment like few other topics. Add to that the fact that images of violence set phones ringing immediately and know that the response to our front-page image was rapid and vigorous. (We rarely hear from readers about photographs that appear on inside pages.) About the market victim photo, we received comments such as: "I can't handle it." "It is more than I need to see." Another caller complains: "I'm tired of seeing blood and guts."

I've heard many comments about photographs that we've published during this resurgence of violence in the Middle East. And I have developed a pretty good sense of what aspects of our work tend to draw the most reader reaction. They include:

- **Where the photo is played.** Photos played on the front page, in full color, receive the most attention and generally the most reaction. Inside photos seldom evoke the same kind of commentary.
- **How it is played.** Again, the most prominent pictures on the page get the most reaction. Color is also a factor.
- **Depiction of violence.** Peak action, depicting violence and captured in a still photograph, gets the most reader comment, followed very closely by scenes showing dead bodies.
- **Evidence of violence.** Body bags, pools of blood, or other graphic remains often are viewed as traumatic.
- **Intrusion into scenes perceived as private.** This could be anything from reaction at a suicide bombing to a grieving family member at a funeral, scenes where strong and candid emotions are laid bare.
- **Perception that one side is favored over the other in coverage.** The Oregonian's public editor, Dan Hortsch, who often first receives reader phone calls, likens the Mideast conflict to the 2000 Gore-Bush election, in which each side strongly believed its candidate was being slighted in the coverage.

Portrait of a Death



The Oregonian considered a sequence of three photos showing a Palestinian gunman being shot dead by an Israeli sniper in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Friday, March 29, 2002.

We debated using this entire sequence and further debated the context of its use on a day when Israeli troops attacked Yasser Arafat's compound and a suicide bomber, an 18-year-old woman, killed herself and two others and injured 25 at a public market.

All of these factors led us to put the second picture alone on an inside page [see page 67], when on another day it might have played much more prominently. It is a haunting, unsettling image recording the moment of death from a proximity seldom seen. Its power is amplified when viewed in the context of photos taken just before and after. —R.R.

Photos courtesy of The Associated Press. Top two photos by Nasser Nasser; bottom photo by Jerome Delay.

Each of these factors contributes to difficult decisions for editors who must decide how to document a news story that is often best portrayed by pictures of violence, even though they know these images will evoke strong emotions.

At The Oregonian, where I work as a photo editor, we rely on questioning and discussion when confronted with pictures that contain bodies or gore or might be viewed as intrusive. Our general directive is to not run these photographs. However, each picture must be talked about in the context of its news value and its merits understood. These discussions take place first among those in the photo department, then move outward to include the senior editor for visuals, our design director, and the managing editor for news.

What follows are some of the questions we try to answer to determine if we should publish particular photographs and how we might use them:

- Are these images storytelling, documentary photojournalism? We want spontaneous photography that reveals the news quickly and truthfully.
- Are the photographs well executed? We look for well-composed photos that reflect sophisticated use of lenses, angle and lighting.
- Are they powerful and dramatic without being gratuitous in their depiction of violence?
- How do they relate specifically to the news of the day or define the event in a way that gives greater understanding to the long-running story?
- What are the possible consequences of running the photos? What reactions might they provoke? And what will be the good that can come from publishing them?
- What is the day's competition? Other news events might push a strong photo downpage or inside, as sometimes we make difficult decisions on where to place a photograph. (The photograph of the man killed by the sniper was taken on the same day that Israeli troops razed Arafat's compound, and a suicide bomber—only the second woman to do this—killed herself and two others. That day, story and photo competition was quite stiff.)

These questions define what I call an invisible "bar," one that dictates whether a photo will make the front page, an inside page, or be rejected.

Beavers lose home opener

The Memphis Redbirds defeat Portland 8-3 in front of 10,383 at PGE Park • Sports, E1

BLAZERS END SLIDE

Bonzi Wells scores 29 points, including the game-winning basket with 18 seconds left, in Houston • Sports, E1

SATURDAY April 13, 2002

The Oregonian

SUNRISE EDITION

PORTLAND, OREGON — 2001 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE — 35¢

Oregon jobless rate drops, for a change

March unemployment dips to 7.9 percent, the first decline in more than a year, but state economists are hardly cheering

By GAIL KINSEY HILL, THE OREGONIAN

Oregon's jobless rate fell two-tenths of a percentage point to 7.9 percent in March, the first monthly decline in more than a year.

Despite the drop, state economists said Oregon's employment picture remains among the gloomiest in the nation and likely won't brighten appreciably for months.

"It's still a very high unemployment rate," Art Ayre, labor economist with the Oregon Employment Department, said Friday with the release of the March data.

In recent months, Oregon tallied the highest unemployment rate in the country, and it is expected to hold on to the top spot when other states report their March rates next week.

Employment numbers reinforced the state's economic weakness. Nonfarm employment fell in March for the 16th consecutive month to register at 1,576,200. That's 1,400 below the February tally and 35,000, or 2.2 percent, below the year-ago level.

The unemployment rate and the job numbers are adjusted to reflect seasonal variations.

Although the nation shows signs of recovering from a recession that began last March, Oregon has yet to shake the doldrums. Economists attribute the state's laggard performance to an industry mix that relies heavily on manufacturing

Please see JOBS, Page A9

JOBLESS RATE INCHES DOWN

Oregon's unemployment rate trimmed two-tenths of a percentage point in March, the first decrease since late 2000.

9% SEASONALLY ADJUSTED 8 7 6 5 4 — 7.9% — O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M — 2000 2001 2002

Source: Oregon Employment Department — TED MITCHNER/THE OREGONIAN

Candidate for schools chief pulls out of race

Portland's teachers union pushes the schools chief from Kansas but a superintendent in Connecticut is also in the running

By CLIFTON R. CHESTNUT, THE OREGONIAN

In a surprise move, Eric Smith dropped out of Portland's superintendent sweepstakes Friday, the second finalist to withdraw from the search for the next chief of Oregon's largest school district.

Smith's departure leaves educators Anthony Amato of Connecticut and Winston Brooks of Kansas as finalists. The Portland teachers union stepped up its endorsement of Brooks, the superintendent of Wichita schools. Brooks wrapped up public interviews and met behind closed doors with the Portland School Board on Friday night.

SMITH — *Says his heart is in North Carolina*

After the meeting, school board members wouldn't discuss the search.

Ann Nice, the incoming president of the 3,600-member Portland Association of Teachers, said earlier in the day that the school board's choice should be easy.

Please see SCHOOLS, Page A9

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Secretary of State Colin Powell meet for talks Friday at Sharon's Jerusalem residence — REINHARD KRAUSE REUTERS

U.S. demands Arafat reject terror tactics

Washington insists on a strong statement from the Palestinian leader, and Colin Powell postpones a meeting with him

By SERGE SCHMEMANN, NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

JERUSALEM — A suicide attack has moved Secretary of State Colin Powell to postpone a meeting with Yasser Arafat that was scheduled for today.

A Palestinian woman blew herself up outside a Jerusalem market Friday, killing six people and wounding scores of others.

Immediately after the attack, the White House demanded that Arafat denounce the attack. The Palestinian leader has been sealed up in his offices in Ramallah by Israeli tanks and soldiers for two weeks.

"The president was very troubled by what happened this morning, and the president expects Yasser Arafat to denounce this morning's attack, to step up and show leadership," said Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman.

Arafat made no such statement. Asked whether a meeting was possible on Sunday, Richard Boucher, a spokesman for Powell, said, "We'll see."

"The secretary condemns in the strongest possible terms today's terrorist attack and expects Chairman Arafat to do so as well," Boucher said.

"It is important that Chairman Arafat not miss this opportunity to take a clear stand against violence that harms the Palestinian cause."

There was no immediate comment from Arafat's camp. But in anticipation of Powell's visit, the Palestinians have insisted Israel must withdraw from areas under their control before they will discuss a cease-fire.

The attack and the postponement added a serious complication to a mission that already seemed in trouble.

On Friday, the first day of Powell's visit, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon met alone with him for 2½ hours.

They failed to reach agreement on a timetable for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, and Sharon reiterated afterward he would not stop the military operation as President Bush has demanded.

Please see MIDEAST, Page A8

INSIDE

◆ As fighting tapers off in Jenin, no one can say for certain how many people died/A6

◆ Israel presents evidence it says shows Yasser Arafat's support for terrorism, but Palestinians reject the claim/A8

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A paramedic tends to a victim Friday after a suicide bombing in a crowded Jerusalem market. A young woman blew herself up at a bus stop, killing six people, wounding dozens and further complicating peace efforts.

Blast hits crowded Jerusalem market

A suicide bombing at a maze of shops, just before the Sabbath, kills six and marks the sixth time the site has been attacked

By JASON KEYSER, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert was buying bread. Secretary of State Colin Powell was at a nearby helipad. And Awadallah Hussein had just pulled up in front of Jerusalem's main market when the thunderous blast of a suicide bomber sent fire into the front of his bus.

Olmert ran through the crowds to help. Powell flew overhead. And Hussein went to the hospital with dozens more injured in the attack, which left six Israelis and the female bomber dead.

Friday was the sixth time the Mahane Yehuda market had been hit.

It's known to Israelis as the "shuk," a decades-old outdoor maze of stalls, where shoppers bump shoulders and rough, stubble-faced hawkers lean over crates of tomatoes, spices and fish, shouting the best prices.

The winding lanes and dark tunnels packed into a few blocks draw religious Jews who turn over loaves of bread in search of tags certifying strict kosher observance, hip young Israelis searching for vegetarian specialties, middle-class office workers and elderly pensioners.

Over the years, it has also drawn Palestinian suicide bombers, who blend into the anonymity of the crowd before detonating explosives.

Friday afternoon, just before the start of the Jewish Sabbath, a female suicide bomber stepped into the crowd, blowing herself up near the heavily guarded mar-

Please see ATTACK, Page A6

Beaverton schools chief puts board in tough spot

Some members see difficulty in defending Yvonne Katz's request for $87,000 more a year; others cite her nine-year track record

By PAIGE PARKER, THE OREGONIAN

BEAVERTON — The superintendent of the Beaverton School District wants a raise that not only would make her the highest-paid superintendent in Oregon but also would put her salary ahead of superintendents in Miami, Atlanta and San Francisco.

Yvonne Katz, 58, says she will consider remaining at the helm of Oregon's third-largest school district if the school board agrees to pay her $241,300 — an $87,000 increase from her current salary — in some combination of salary and benefits.

KATZ — *Considers offer from Houston suburb*

Katz made the request after Spring Branch Independent School District near Houston named her the sole finalist to lead its 41 schools and 32,400 students. Katz told the Beaverton board she had been offered $268,750. She also could draw $25,000 a year from her state

Please see KATZ, Page A9

INSIDE

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Venezuelan leader draws support

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has been ousted by the military and replaced by a businessman, but the attorney general says Chavez, whose leftist politics roiled the oil-rich country for three years, is still president/A4

Advice	C2	Living	C1
Business	B1	Metro	D1
Classified index	D9	Movies	C9
Comics	C10	Obituaries	D8
Commentary	D7	People	C2
Crossword	C10	Religion	C5
Crossword NYT	D19	Sports	E1
Drivetime	DT1	Television	C12
Editorial	D6	Weather	B6

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WEATHER

Partly cloudy, some showers

High: 66 Low: 50

For complete weather, see Business, B6

Front page (left) of The Oregonian on Saturday, April 13, 2002, showing our Mideast coverage of the aftermath of a suicide bombing.

This is a dramatic photo showing the horror and destruction of a suicide bombing without specifically showing the dead or the gore of the scene. In it, a paramedic tends to a wounded person at the scene of a suicide bombing at a Jerusalem market Friday, April 12, 2002. Pushing the picture into a prominent A1 position was not only the power of the image but also a convergence of Mideast news: It happened on the day that U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell arrived in Israel and one day before he was to meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. —R.R.

Photo courtesy of Zoom 77/The Associated Press.

Often, even after all of these questions have been raised and discussion has led us to think hard about many considerations, readers will still react negatively to our decision. But knowing this reaction might come should not dissuade us from publishing images that we think offer readers a vital newsworthy perspective on this long-running conflict.

The newspaper has a long history of not running photos of the bodies of dead people. John Harvey, a senior editor who heads the national/international news team and a veteran of 40 years at the newspaper, remembers that one publisher, seeing a photograph of Marilyn Monroe's draped body in an early edition of the paper, had the picture pulled from later editions. The Oregonian did, however, run the haunting photo by George Wedding of a dead child's body in the back of a pickup truck after the eruption of Mount St. Helens. "I handled 500 calls the next day," Harvey remembers.

During my earlier years at the newspaper, decisions about whether to publish pictures of violence often felt as though they were made randomly. Even the factors that went into the decision-making did not seem well understood by the staff. That changed with the arrival of Sandy Rowe as editor of The Oregonian in 1993. Rowe created a systematic structure in the newsroom that changed the way editors looked at story play and picture selection. Rowe orchestrated the creation of an open meeting room called the "Well," a space specifically designed to encourage discussions about what the newspaper is doing and how it has done. Each day's papers are posted on walls that can be opened, and etched-steel panels remind the staff of the newspaper's mission statement.

Each weekday morning, editors gather in the Well. Here the next day's stories are discussed, but editors and others also offer reaction to the morning's edition. If a particular picture or story has evoked reaction, it might result in spirited conversations. Occasionally we show photographs that were not published and talk about whether that was the "right" decision. As Rowe puts it: "We try to walk around our decisions and view them through different prisms. We want to hear different views and be challenged."

This is an example of a photo from the Mideast conflict that we considered and rejected for publication. It shows Palestinians gathering at the morgue in Gaza City to identify friends and relatives killed after an incursion by Israeli troops into Jabalya and the northern Gaza Strip, Tuesday, March 12, 2002. As The Associated Press warned in its caption, the picture has graphic content. It depicts death in a way that we did not feel was necessary to publish. We couldn't find the news justification necessary to outweigh the negative reader reaction we would certainly get. —R.R.
Photo courtesy of Charles Dharapak/The Associated Press.

An understood partner in this decision process is the reader. Since Rowe came to the newspaper, we have opened ourselves up to the reader. Now on the first page of every section a phone number is published for the editor responsible for that section. Stories end with e-mail and phone information so readers can reach the writer and, often, the photographer. We have created the position of a public editor, a direct liaison between the public and the newspaper.

The Mideast conflict, Rowe observes, involves events of unquestioned significance and events over which people vigorously disagree. Readers whose sympathies fall to one side or the other see things quite differently. The Oregonian often becomes the focus for their reactions, as we report and display photos they perceive as unfair or too emotionally disturbing.

In selecting pictures from the Middle East, we are sensitive to issue of fairness and our overall goal is to achieve an accurate historical perspective. In this process, editors try to emphasize news over emotion, to edify rather than enrage. At the same time, Rowe reminds us that with the ongoing violence, we need to be careful not to sanitize the situation at the risk of not showing reality. Rowe cautions editors to remember: "Our job is to add light, not heat." ■

Randy L. Rasmussen is assistant director of photography at The Oregonian.

randyr@news.oregonian.com

Expanding the Lens on Coverage of the Middle East

By judging a newspaper's visual coverage over a long period of time, bias becomes less apparent.

By Dick Rogers

The Palestinian child stares emptily from the foot of a blood-stained staircase, a half-eaten sandwich in his left hand, his right hand resting on a step leading to his house. Hours before, the boy's father and grandfather had been shot to death amid yet another spasm of Middle East violence.

To the San Francisco Chronicle editors who had to decide which photograph would occupy the middle of the front page the next day, this was a searing image that conveyed emotion and the complexities of a conflict without end.

Many readers saw something else: proof of the paper's anti-Israel bias. They called and wrote angrily, demanding to know why the paper persists in showing sympathetic images of Palestinian boys and girls while depicting only Israeli tanks and bulldozers. Where are the photographs showing the anguish of young Israelis as their friends and relatives are wantonly killed by suicide bombers? Where is the balance?

The questions, which come in varying form from competing sides of the Mideast controversy, defy easy answers, in part because newspapers rarely take the time to step back and take a longer view of the impact of their coverage. Editors focus on the immediate decisions. What's the best picture for tomorrow's cover? Which six stories do we put on the front page? What's our lead story?

Did this particular photo evoke sympathy for Palestinians, or at least for the Palestinian boy? No doubt. More importantly, did the decision to put the picture on Page One betray a pattern of bias on the paper's part?

In my role as the Chronicle's ombudsman, I needed to respond to these questions and concerns. But rather than decide for myself, I invited five readers to examine our Mideast photo coverage during a three-month period, from December 23, 2001 until March 15, 2002. Each reader looked at copies of the same 79 photos and judged whether the images were sympathetic toward Palestinians or Israel or neutral. The package of photos included captions, the page and section in which the pictures ran, photo credits, and publication dates.

The readers were selected by Heidi Swillinger, a copyeditor who developed our "Two Cents" program, a database of roughly 1,100 readers who agreed to offer comment or expertise

Caption: A Palestinian boy sits on a staircase stained with blood at a house in the Jabalya refugee camp March 12, 2002. Family members said that the boy's father, Waled Izz el-Din, and grandfather, Abdel Rahman, were killed by gunfire as the violence, which has claimed the lives of at least 37 Palestinians and Israelis in the region over the past 24 hours, continued unabated.

Photo Credit: Reuters

Publication Date: 3/13/2002

Each member of the readers' panel was also told the page and section in which this photo was published in color. The panel saw the photo in black and white.

In their responses, four readers considered this photo to be pro-Palestinian, one thought it neutral. ***Photo courtesy of Ahmed Jadallah/Reuters.***

on a wide range of subjects, usually involving reactions to breaking news. The only criteria were that our volunteers could spare several hours and that they were not activists in Mideast affairs.

Before the judging, we asked them to tell us a little about themselves and their views of the Mideast situation:

1. A 49-year-old architect and San Francisco resident. He was "both sympathetic and critical of both sides in this conflict." He added that Palestinians have been "treated brutally by Israel and that they have been provoked into equally brutal reactions."
2. A 66-year-old Berkeley resident and retired registered nurse. "I feel that anti-Semitism is like the Hydra," she said. "The more of its heads are cut off, the more grow back." She said she believes Arab states have "refused to provide aid to Palestinians to foment anti-Israeli sentiment."
3. A 79-year-old retired man, living in Redwood City. He doubted that the Mideast situation would be resolved in our lifetimes. "I have always felt that Israel was given a parcel of land that did not originally belong to them," he said. "I'm now inclined to agree with the Saudi proposal of reverting to the 1967 land division."
4. A 45-year-old community service volunteer from San Francisco. She, too, said she believed the situation defied resolution. While Israel must take some responsibility, she said, "it is hard for me to find complete sympathy (empathy) for the Palestinians. How do you accept suicide bombers?" she asked. "How do you accept bombings on High Holy Days? How do you reconcile Barak's peace plan being utterly refused by Arafat?"
5. A 50-year-old San Francisco insurance consultant. He concluded that factions on both sides in the Middle East prevent an everlasting peace, and he viewed the motives of both sides skeptically. "I believe Israel would like an all-out war to settle the issue for the most part before the Arabs get a nuclear weapon," he said. "I believe the Palestinians want an all-out war to foster unity among all non-Jewish-supported countries."

Caption: A priest prays while children light candles at the Grotto, believed to be the birthplace of Jesus Christ, in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, Sunday, December 23, 2001. The Mideast fighting has dealt a crushing blow to Bethlehem, where the 30,000 Palestinian residents are roughly half-Muslim and half-Christian. The town, just south of Jerusalem, is heavily dependent on Christian tourists from around the world.

Photo Credit: AP Photo/Karel Prinsloo

Publication Date: 12/24/2002

Each member of the readers' panel was also told the page and section in which this black-and-white photo was published.

In their responses, all five readers thought this image was neutral. ***Photo courtesy of Karel Prinsloo/The Associated Press.***

Each member of the panel separated the photos into three categories: sympathetic to Palestinians, sympathetic to Israel, and neutral.

Here is what they saw:

Reader	Pro-Palestinian	Neutral	Pro-Israel
#1	21	10	48
#2	32	22	25
#3	35	15	29
#4	24	47	8
#5	18	45	16

After they'd made these judgments, we asked the panel members for their impressions.

The San Francisco architect, who felt that Palestinians had been provoked into brutality because of brutal treatment by Israel, found that similar photographs could be interpreted very differently, partly because of the way the conflict has been framed in the media. "Israelis with guns are soldiers defending their people," he said, "while Palestinians with guns are terrorists." He added that "very few Palestinian men [were] photographed sympathetically."

The retired nurse, who described herself as "firmly pro-Zionist," said, "after seeing the pictures I feel your coverage is actually fairly balanced. The pictures I considered pro-Palestinian seemed to pull far more emotional response than the pro-Israeli ones, but that's largely an artifact of the fact that

the Israelis have more equipment and infrastructure, and … are more able to supervise and protect their children [from photographers]."

The retired Redwood city resident who advocates a pullback to the 1967 borders said, "it appears that the majority of these pictures are sympathetic toward the Palestinians in a sense—although a number of Palestinian bomb attacks are depicted, it seems that in these pictures the Israelis have created the most deaths."

The San Francisco community service volunteer was "totally surprised by this 'test.' At the beginning I felt the S.F. Chronicle was biased toward the Palestinians. Then, as I went through more and more, I wrote 'neutral' more than I thought I would. Did I get desensitized? It feels that way, quite honestly. My final thought is a bit of a contrast—while I certainly indicated 'neutral' more than the other two categories, I also came away with a feeling that the Chronicle leans toward a sympathetic view of the Palestinians. Interesting how a group of photos can alter your perspective versus viewing a single photo."

Context means a lot, this reader told us. "I found that I read the captions more closely today than when I read the paper at home," he said. "The wording of the captions influenced me in determining whether there was a bias. Had I just seen the photos without captions, I would have found less bias."

From five readers, we received five different reactions, but when looked at together, the responses yield an interesting result—their findings were almost equally distributed.

	Pro-Palestinian	Neutral	Pro-Israel
5 Readers	130	139	126

There's nothing scientific in what we did and nothing that would hold up in court—or even in a debate with an avidly pro-Palestinian or pro-Israel reader. But the experiment had value to the newspaper. For one thing, we stepped back and took the time to look at one aspect of our work as it appeared over time. It reminded photo editors and senior editors that day-to-day news decisions have lasting impacts on how readers view the paper. And it prompted at least one photo editor to think more deeply about her choices as she waded through hundreds of Mideast photos each day.

"We always look for photos that are compelling and elicit an emotional response," said Elizabeth Mangelsdorf, acting director of photography. "But the readers' response to our Mideast photo coverage has reminded us that we have to look hard at why and how we run photos. We need to show both sides of a conflict. But individual events can appear more sympathetic to one side or the other in the coverage of a long-term conflict. Because of this, it's important that, over time, we seek balance in the photos we choose."

The experiment showed something else: If the Chronicle was trying to espouse a particular viewpoint through photo selections, it wasn't doing a very good job. ■

Caption: Palestinian gunmen march during the funeral procession of Palestinian police officers Omar Wahdan, 20, and Hussein Zbidi, 35, who were shot dead by Israeli forces while participating in a gunfight Monday, in the West Bank town of Ramallah Tuesday, January 22, 2002.

Photo Credit: AP

Publication Date: 1/23/2002

Each member of the readers' panel was also told the page and section in which this black-and-white photo was published.

In their responses, reactions were mixed. One reader thought this photo was pro-Palestinian; two readers thought it was pro-Israel, and two readers thought it was neutral. ***Photo courtesy of Zoom77/The Associated Press.***

Dick Rogers is the San Francisco Chronicle's readers' representative and a 28-year newspaper veteran. Since his department was created last October, he has fielded comment from more than 4,000 readers on issues ranging from the quality of the paper's comics page to the effectiveness of prostate cancer screening, the debate over allowing unleashed dogs in urban parks, and coverage of the Middle East.

✉ drogers@sfchronicle.com

Images Lead to Varying Perceptions

'In photographs in which we, as journalists, saw danger, some readers saw deception.'

By Debbie Kornmiller

Seeing photos through readers' eyes reveals images and responses that journalists sometimes overlook.

In photographs in which we, as journalists, saw danger, some readers saw deception. To an image depicting young Palestinian protesters running from fire, we heard reactions such as "Aren't they too young to organize?" Where we saw truth, readers suspected a setup. When we published a picture of a colorful protest, readers wondered about the manipulation involved in getting this message out. When we saw sorrow, readers saw joy. Is the mother of a suicide bomber grieving? Or is she joyous that her son is now a martyr?

As this gulf in perceptions became apparent—through a handful of letters and calls that I received each week—I set out to evaluate the Arizona Daily Star's Mideast photographic coverage. As the newspaper's reader advocate, I would present my findings to readers and then create a forum so that the Star's decision-makers could hear directly from readers. To fully open my eyes to the bias that some of our readers were seeing, I looked at more than 160 Associated Press photos.

Of the 900,000 people who live in metropolitan Tucson, about three percent are Jewish, and just under one percent is Muslim. The Star sells an average of 101,000 papers each day and 171,000 on Sundays. There were no organized advertising boycotts about our Mideast coverage, nor orchestrated circulation cancellations, as there have been in other communities. And for the most part, the complaints I received were courteous, friendly and constructive.

These reader complaints were enough to convince the paper's top editors that it was time for a "gut-check" to look for ways that we could improve our coverage. Every newspaper can cover an issue better—whether by devoting more space, diversifying news sources, or presenting the news more effectively. To do so, however, requires a willingness to recognize what isn't working. In 2001, the Star examined its gun coverage as part of the Associated Press Managing Editors' National Credibility Roundtables Project, designed to bring news organizations and readers together to talk about credibility issues. Managing Editor Bobbie Jo Buel promised readers that the Star would examine its Mideast coverage next.

Israelis hold signs with pictures of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Osama bin Laden with a written legend that reads "the twins" as they wave Israeli flags during a rally in Jerusalem Monday, October 22, 2001. Thousands of Israelis filled the central square of Jerusalem demanding tough action against the Palestinians. *Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Dalziel/The Associated Press.*

In 2001, we used wire photos from The Associated Press to convey to Star readers the war's realities. We depend on these photographers to depict what is happening and to describe it in caption form. In my assessment of the photos of the Mideast that ran in the Star in 2001, I judged them on specific criteria. For example, did the photograph show the news of the day? And did it show Israelis or Palestinians in a positive, neutral or negative light?

Over the course of the year, the Star's choice of photographs showed Israelis and Palestinians in a positive or neutral light at about the same rate, about 40 percent of the time. Of the 57 photos that showed either side in a negative light, 37, or 23 percent, showed Israelis in a negative light, and 20, or 13 percent, showed Palestinians in a negative light.

From this analysis we selected 15 images to form the springboard for

interviews with the eight readers—suggested to us by others in the community—who agreed to take part in a two-hour roundtable discussion. I sent each participant the same packet of images and, before we met as a group, I heard impressions from each in an individual 90-minute meeting.

One of the photos I included was one from October 2001 that showed Israeli protesters holding signs with pictures of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Osama bin Laden, captioned in English "the twins." [See photo on page 74.] This photograph ran in color on the front page. A reader had called asking, "If it were a Palestinian protest depicting Sharon as a twin with bin Laden, would that have been an 8" x 6" color picture on the front page?" Soon after, Newsweek reported that the Israeli government had spearheaded a move to ingrain this Arafat-bin Laden comparison. Another was a December 16 photo of Palestinian children, identified as protesters, running for cover as Israeli troops fire their weapons during a Gaza clash. However, there was no sign of a demonstration in the photo.

Subhiah al-Ghoul, left, surrounded by pictures of her son Muhammed al-Ghoul, 22, is comforted by her daughter as she cries at her home at the al-Faraa refugee camp near the West Bank city of Nablus on Tuesday, June 18, 2002. The Islamic militant group Hamas claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing in Jerusalem, saying Muhammed al-Ghoul carried out the attack, detonating nail-studded explosives on a Jerusalem city bus crowded with high school students and office workers, killing himself and 19 passengers in the deadliest suicide attack in the hard-hit city in six years. *Photo courtesy of Nasser Ishtayeh/The Associated Press.*

The week before the roundtable, I showed the same examples to the Star's decision-makers—photo and news editors, Page One editors, and Editor and Publisher Jane Amari—and explained why each was included and what readers had said about them.

During the roundtable in April, my colleagues were asked to talk as little as possible. They were there to listen, not to voice their views. Readers talked about the impact of images of protest and of the massive destruction they saw when they looked at these photos. Over and over, readers said, "Show us the human side of the conflict." As the discussion ended, the photo director asked that the Mideast photos we were considering that day be assembled so the readers could view the next day's options. They seemed overwhelmed by the number of images we had to sort through. After viewing about a dozen images, they remarked upon how hard it must be to make our choices each night.

The Star's promise from the start was to examine its coverage and listen to readers. Any change that might be instituted would be conveyed to them personally in writing and to the public in the Sunday reader advocate column.

Based on readers' suggestions, the Star:

- Instituted trials of Christian Science Monitor and Reuters news services to broaden the possibilities for our news and visual coverage.
- Promised to publish photos that add a human dimension to the day's events.
- Promised that every photo considered will be viewed by at least two sets of eyes and the different approaches to the day's news discussed.

More than a dozen people not involved in the roundtable sent notes of appreciation or called to thank the Star for its efforts.

The roundtable heightened efforts to ensure fairness and accuracy and created a road map for us to use. Judgment based on that road map still can result in second-guessing. However, in the three months after the roundtable, the Star has received complaints only once about its photo selection. On June 19, more than 20 readers called to voice their outrage and dismay over a front page photo of Subhiah al-Ghoul grieving over her son, a suicide bomber who killed 19 people,

including children, and wounded 55 others the previous morning in Jerusalem. A second photo of similar size was adjacent and showed a grieving Prime Minister Ariel Sharon with the bombed bus in the background.

Readers called the photo selection unbalanced and said that it looked as if the Star was glorifying the bomber's actions. In their words: "That woman is only sad for her loss; she's happy inside that all those kids died." From another: "When I saw Wednesday's front page, I thought you were saying 'Screw the Jews; Hurrah for the murderers.'" A lone caller grasped that the two photos were chosen to show two sides grieving.

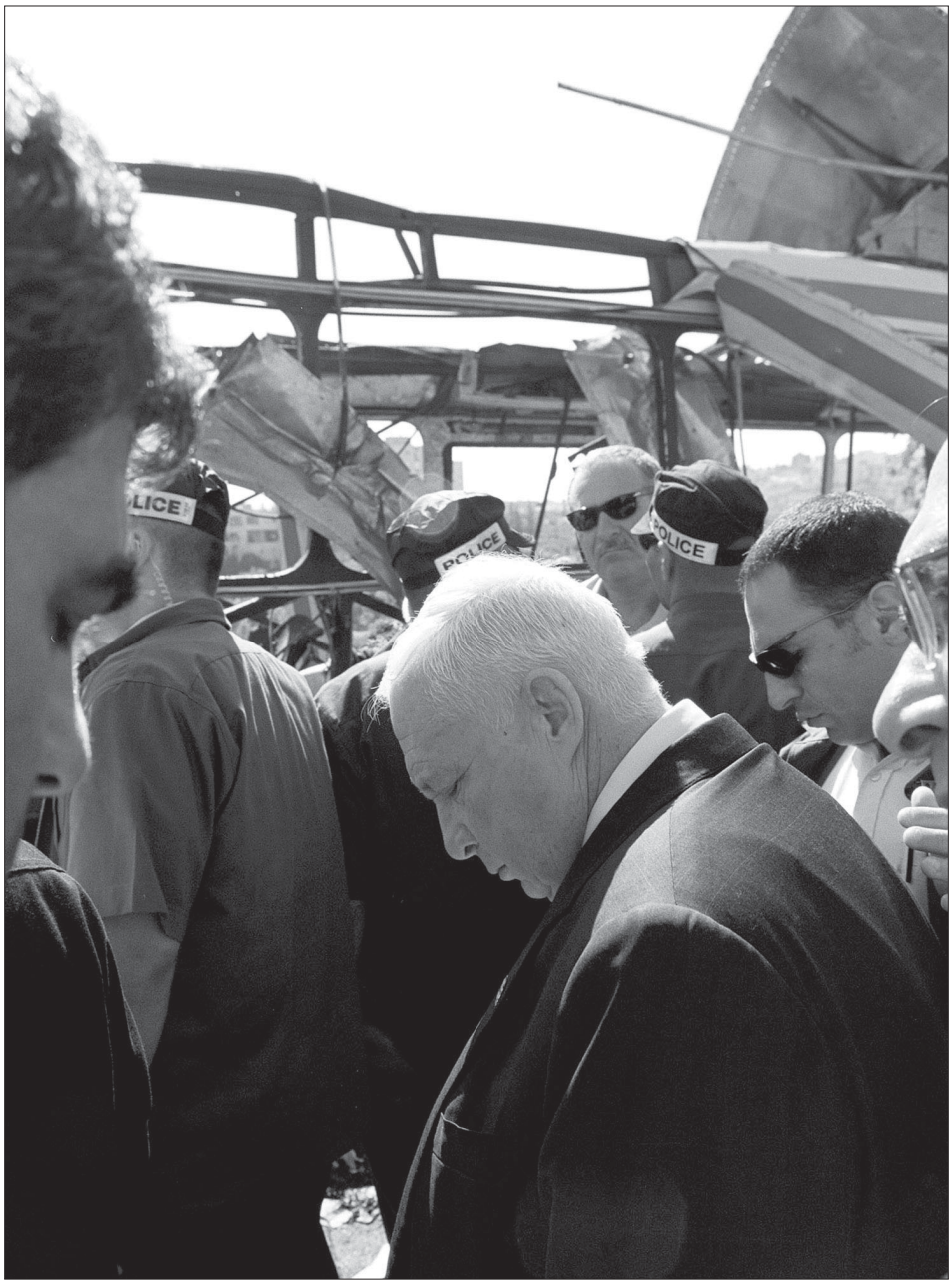
Teri Hayt, assistant managing editor for photography, design and graphics, oversees photo selection. In my June 23 column, she explained our decision in publishing these photographs: "There were several images of grieving relatives on both sides of the issue; most of the photos of the scene were too graphic to publish.

"In the end, I felt that we needed to show the grief and despair this war has created on both sides. Thus the side-by-side display of the mother whose son blew himself up and Sharon viewing the carnage visited upon his people again. [See photographs on this and previous page, with original captions.]

"Was this the right call? I thought so at the time. I knew regardless of how we displayed these images there would be strong reaction from both sides. Honestly, it doesn't matter what images run, someone will be offended.

"They say hindsight is 20/20 so that morning after looking at our front I opened my copy of The New York Times and saw that they had a photo of the remnants of the bus. The image did not have any bodies visible, nothing really compelling about the image, but it did show the damage. And I thought that if I had to make the call over again I would have gone with a single photo of Sharon standing over the body bags with the bus in the background. That was the news of the day, another large loss of life the result of another suicide bomber. The war continues.

"We are not going to solve this conflict. I believe that we are being much more sensitive to both sides of the issue, but the fact remains that each side has suffered. Our job is to report this war and that means photos that are hard to look at. War is offensive to look at. I would hope that our readers trust we are making thoughtful decisions, not just putting the first photo we come across in the paper. I worry that we are being so sensitive to both sides that we are not covering the news story of the day." ■



Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon pauses near a bombed bus as he visits the site of a suicide bombing in Jerusalem Tuesday, June 18, 2002. A Palestinian man detonated nail-studded explosives on a Jerusalem city bus crowded with high school students and office workers Tuesday, killing himself and 19 passengers in the deadliest suicide attack in the hard-hit city in six years. Fifty-five people were injured. *Photo courtesy of Avi Ohayoun/Israeli Government Press/The Associated Press.*

Debbie Kornmiller is the reader advocate for the Arizona Daily Star in Tucson, Arizona.

advocate@azstarnet.com

Deciding on an Emotion-Laden Photograph For Page One

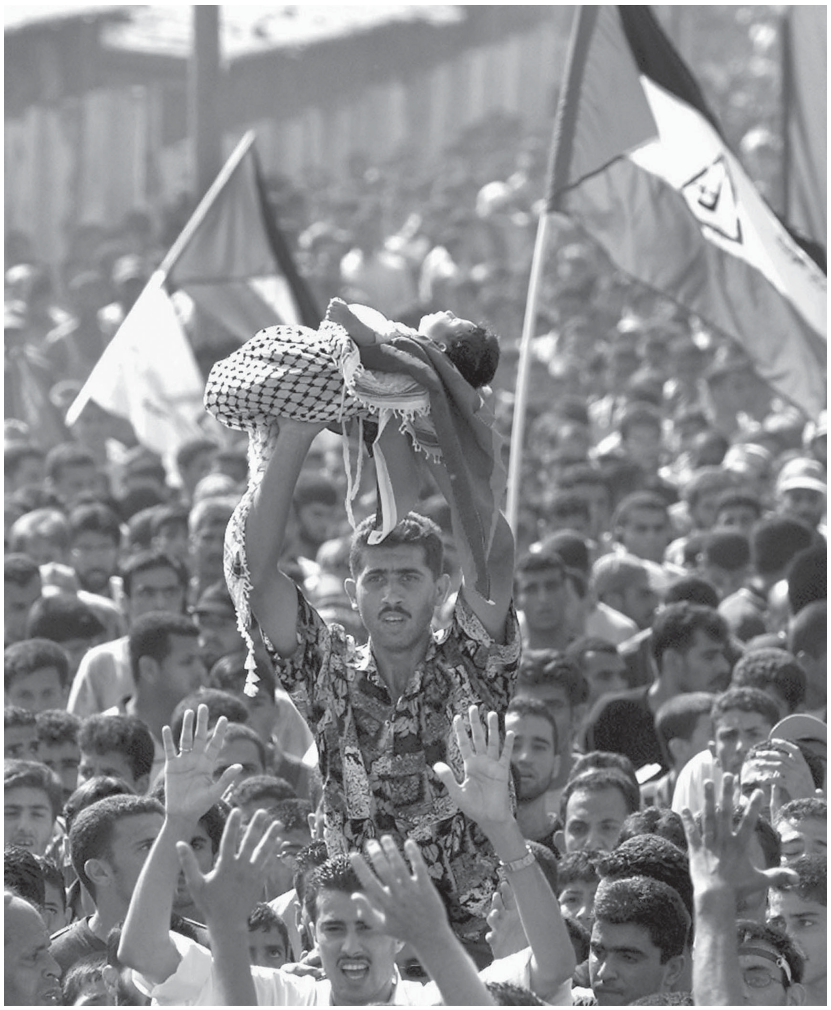
When an image reflects 'a crucial moment in a course of events,' editors make the decision to publish it.

By Michael Larkin

At The Boston Globe, we never run photos of dead people without some discussion of the impact they are likely to have on our readers. This is particularly true of those appearing on Page One, where they are more likely to be seen by many members of a household, including children. And, of course, color adds to a photograph's impact. This is a well-established editorial practice, which has evolved over years of readers responding to what we deliver in the morning: They've told us that they don't want to be surprised by seeing such images during breakfast. They've said how disturbed their young children are when they see such pictures. And many readers complain that we are trying to take sides in some dispute by portraying a particular side as killers.

Yet, as editors, we know that certain images—because of their import and composition—belong in the newspaper, either on Page One or an inside page, because they reflect a crucial moment in a course of events. The picture of the screaming girl running from a napalm attack in Vietnam and the one of the firefighter carrying a dead baby in Oklahoma City come immediately to mind. And there are numerous others; the annual Pulitzer Prize-winning news photos comprise virtually an album of human tragedy.

This photograph—of an infant being carried in Gaza—is not only visually striking but also illustrates to our readers that something significant happened. In this case, Israeli forces had targeted a Hamas leader and killed him by sending a rocket into a residential area. This represented either a major shift in tactics or a serious lapse in military intelligence. And the result was that nine children died, a tragic consequence the Israelis have literally taken pains to avoid in the past.



The body of an infant killed in the July 23, 2002 Israeli attack being held aloft during a procession in Gaza. ***Photo courtesy of Reuters.***

Our decision to publish this photograph in color on Page One received little reader response. The picture is not gory, but the politics around it are troubling. Even within Israel, the attack prompted debate about whether it was the right thing to do. In our minds, this photograph clearly represented the deep emotions arising from this violent struggle in the Middle East and, for that reason, we decided to use it as the main art with the day's lead news story. ■

Michael Larkin is deputy managing editor/news operations at The Boston Globe.

m_larkin@globe.com

Covering the Intifada: A Hazardous Beat

Photographers and journalists come under gunfire while reporting on the conflict.

By Joel Campagna

On July 12, 35-year-old Palestinian freelance photographer Imad Abu Zahra died in a hospital a day after he was wounded by machine-gun fire in the West Bank town of Jenin. Abu Zahra and another Palestinian photographer were taking shots of an Israeli armored personnel carrier that had crashed into an electricity pole on Faisal Street, when a nearby Israel Defense Forces (IDF) tank gunner opened fire. A high-caliber round struck him in the thigh, causing severe blood loss that eventually killed him.

Abu Zahra was the third journalist and second photographer killed covering the Palestinian Intifada, which began in September 2000. Dozens more have been wounded by live gunfire and rubber bullets or bullied by hostile troops and gunmen while working the frontlines of an increasingly volatile conflict.

"Just about everyone now has an armored car and wears a bulletproof vest," said one veteran U.S. newspaper reporter, who covered the first Intifada and asked that his name not be used. "In my opinion, if you're not in an armored car you shouldn't be there in the first place."

For those reporting it from the ground in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the current Intifada is a different and more perilous conflict than its namesake predecessor (1987-1993). Both Israelis and Palestinians are armed, and the violence has moved away from localized protests to a low-intensity conflict replete with gunfire exchanges, bombings and large-scale military operations. The situation, where the rules of engagement can change daily, poses increasing risks for those seeking proximity to the action—cameramen, camera crews, photographers and stringers in particular.

"You can take all kinds of precautions, but if you roam even a little bit you can get in all kinds of trouble here," said another Jerusalem-based journalist working with a Western news agency, speaking about the West Bank. "Palestinians can fire on your armored car or you can get hit by [Israeli] tank fire. We've experienced many types of cases."

Journalists Under Fire

While both sides have harassed, restricted and endangered journalists during the past 22 months, the greatest risk to those in the field has come from IDF gunfire. Photographers, cameramen and camera crews have most frequently been in the line of fire. Between September 2000 and June 2001, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) documented 14 cases in which journalists were wounded by live rounds or rubber-coated steel bullets fired by Israeli troops (in two other cases, the source of the fire was unclear, though suspected to be from Israeli troops). Eleven of those 14 incidents involved photojournalists injured covering the initial explosion of protests that took place during the first two months of the conflict. The actual number of journalist casualties during that time frame appeared to be far greater; the Paris-based press freedom organization Reporters Sans Frontières reported more than 40 such cases during roughly the same time.

While crossfire accounts for some of those casualties, circumstantial evidence suggests that in some cases Israeli forces may have deliberately targeted journalists or at least acted recklessly. Sometimes, journalists were shot in the legs, head, or even hands as they held cameras. In one case, a bullet hit a journalist's camera lens. In many cases, reporters hit by gunfire were far removed from clashes and easily recognizable as journalists because of their conspicuous camera equipment or flak jackets marked "Press." The IDF and government officials vehemently deny any suggestion that their troops have intentionally fired at journalists.

Injuries to journalists during this Intifada have tended to correspond with the intensity of conflict on the ground. Prior to March 2002, the greatest concentration of shootings, for example, took place in the initial months when protests were many and press interest was high. By late March 2002, when Israel launched its large-scale military operation in the West Bank in response to a string of Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel, an increasing number of journalists in the field faced an even more chaotic and unpredictable work environment. Journalists were increasingly working amidst the conflict and not only photojournalists were at risk.

Journalists and 'Closed Military Areas'

During the initial days of Operation Defensive Shield, the IDF declared nearly all of the West Bank's main cities "closed military areas" and therefore off limits to the press. Journalists who attempted to cover the story did so with great difficulty and were at risk of getting caught in the crossfire.

"I got into Ramallah," said The Toronto Star's Sandro Contenta, a Jerusalem-based correspondent for the last three-and-a-half years. "The question is, how do you do your job in a place that's a closed military area, particularly when there's shooting going

on? Not all of us had armored cars. I didn't. So we made convoys of cars. We were flashing our lights and honking our horns. It was very dangerous. At times you had to negotiate yourself through tanks."

Some, like France 2's veteran correspondent Charles Enderlin, maintain that barring the press access further jeopardizes the safety of reporters, forcing them to take more dangerous, alternate routes across orchards or dirt paths. "It is endangering lives of journalists," he said. "Colleagues are trying to get into places by foot. They go in without armored cars, flak jackets, and escorts."

An already tense situation was exacerbated by the IDF, which adopted a hard line against journalists attempting to defy the "closed military zones." Throughout the six-week incursion, CPJ documented numerous instances in which troops fired on or in the direction of journalists clearly marked as press. Others were detained, threatened, or had their press credentials and film confiscated. In a case that drew widespread international media coverage, IDF troops hurled stun grenades and fired rubber bullets at reporters and camera crews waiting outside the besieged Ramallah compound of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Journalists said they had never witnessed such harsh treatment from the IDF, which many attributed to a growing hostility against the press that stemmed from a perception that Israel was getting unfair treatment in the media.

"It's clear that the army was, to put it mildly, gratuitously shooting at journalists during the March/April invasion," said the Star's Contenta. "There is no doubt in my mind. Most journalists were clearly identified as press. I think the IDF has a lot to answer for and why they didn't give clear instructions to soldiers not to shoot at journalists."

In at least one case in mid-March, Palestinian gunmen fired on an Associated Press armored car in Ramallah. And in three others incidents during Operation Defensive Shield in which journalists were hurt by bullets, the source of gunfire was unclear. However, in two of them the journalists believed Israeli forces fired since they took place in areas under the army's control.

One of the most troubling incidents occurred on April 1, when NBC News correspondent Dana Lewis and his two-person camera crew came under IDF fire in Ramallah at dusk while driving in an armored car that was clearly identified as a press vehicle. After an initial burst of gunfire hit the car, a lone IDF soldier opened fire with a second burst from a range of about 50 to 100 feet. The journalists then stopped the car, turned on an interior light to make themselves visible, and placed their hands on the windshield. After 15 to 20 seconds, the soldier fired a third burst, hitting the windshield. The NBC crew escaped by driving away in reverse.

For many correspondents, Operation Defensive Shield demonstrated the extent to which field reporting had changed since September 2000, when the main challenge was often navigating army checkpoints, negotiating with soldiers for passage, and avoiding firefights. "Here, the risks in the beginning were getting hit by a stray bullet at a demonstration. The other was being mistaken as a Jew and shot by [Palestinian] gunmen," noted Tim Palmer, a Jerusalem correspondent for Australia's ABC News television. "This year that changed."

Risks Photojournalists and Others Take

The IDF's behavior during Operation Defensive Shield aside, some journalists acknowledge that it is often their own actions that determine the level of risk they face. In a news story the magnitude of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, competition often pushes reporters to their limits and can sometimes lead to dangerous situations.

"The people at most risk are the still photographers," says Palmer. "They're under pressure to operate at risk for their livelihood, more so than others who don't have to take risks. They carry what can be mistaken for a small arm and are under pressure to get the best shot."

Neil MacDonald, the Jerusalem-based Middle East correspondent for Canada's CBC-TV, is critical of many journalists who he says unnecessarily put themselves in danger. "Here you can assert a lot of control over your environment," he said, while expressing his shock at a recent incident where he saw a Belgian photographer saunter down a street amid a firefight wearing only a white T-shirt and no flak jacket. "There are some people who exert idiotic control. I've seen all types of situations. Some of it's idiocy, panic or bravado. Some is sheer stupidity."

Several Western print correspondents privately confess that they would not have taken the risk that Italian freelance photographer Raffaele Ciriello did when he was tragically killed by Israeli tank fire in Ramallah in March. Ciriello, on assignment for the daily Corriere della Sera, had stepped from a building off an alleyway into the street to film an Israeli tank that had entered the street about 150 to 200 yards away when he was hit by several rounds from the tank's gunner. There was at least one Palestinian gunman in his vicinity at the time of the shooting, and Ciriello and a colleague had been trailing several gunmen before the shooting.

"That same day I had debated for a whole day about whether to move from one building to the next in Ramallah," one print reporter recalled of the tenuous situation on the ground in the city that day.

While acknowledging cases of journalists fired upon by IDF and the other inherent dangers of the conflict, some journalists try to put shooting incidents in perspective. "Neither side here shoots at journalists with reckless abandon," said a news agency journalist. "Neither side is recklessly barbarian in this regard. I'm sure Yugoslavia and Afghanistan were more dangerous." In those places you had people "actually seeking to kill you. Life there had become cheap," he remarked.

Still, journalists take no comfort when they come under fire, especially when they take precautions. "If I get closer to a firefight, then I know I'm putting my life in danger," said Sandro

Contenta, speaking of cases in which the army opened fire at journalists. "I don't expect anything from the IDF, but don't shoot at me." For some it is a command-and-control issue with the army failing to rein in such behavior of troops.

For Imad Abu Zahra, he was in a risky situation, but his colleagues say there was no excuse for anyone to open fire on him. Abu Zahra's colleague Said Dahleh said that at the time of the incident both journalists were alone in the street, which had emptied shortly after the tanks entered the area. Both men were holding cameras, and Dahleh wore a flak jacket clearly marked "Press."

An army spokesperson said that soldiers opened fire after a mob attacked the armored personnel carrier (APC) with Molotov cocktails and rocks, and people in the crowd fired on the tanks. Jenin residents said that people attacked the tanks only after the two journalists were shot and that they pelted the tanks only with pieces of fruit and not with rocks and Molotov cocktails. Photos of the stranded APC taken by Dahleh before the shooting show no signs of clashes or hostile actions near the APC. ■

Joel Campagna is program coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa at the Committee to Protect Journalists.

jcampagna@cpj.org

The Daniel Pearl Video

A journalist explains why its horrific images should be treated as news.

By Dan Kennedy

True martyrs—unlike the twisted souls who fly jets into buildings or blow themselves up at pizzerias—are inevitably reluctant. Whether it's Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesus or Gandhi, the anonymous Jews of Nazi-occupied Europe or the anonymous Muslims of Kosovo and Bosnia, people want to live their lives, not become symbols.

So I have little doubt what Daniel Pearl would have thought of the Boston Phoenix's decision to provide a link on its Web site to the propaganda video of his execution and to publish a photo of his severed head being held aloft. He would have been horrified that his last, terrible moments were made so public.

As his father, Judea Pearl, recounted in an eloquent op-ed piece for The New York Times, his son had sent him an e-mail from Pakistan two months before his abduction saying, "It looks pretty dicey from here—at least your papers don't run front-page photos of the corpses of journalists." Judea Pearl then wrote: "To preserve the dignity of our champions, we should remove all terrorist-produced murder scenes from our Web sites and agree to suppress such scenes in the future."

I respectfully disagree. Daniel Pearl didn't seek martyrdom, but martyrdom found him. The three-and-a-half-minute video shows us the true face of evil, an evil that manifested itself unambiguously last September 11.

Over and over, Pearl is forced to talk about his Jewish heritage while the screen is splashed with scenes of Palestinian suffering. He also talks about the alleged sins of the United States in supporting Israel. He seems relaxed, as though he expects to be released in return for his play-acting. Then, after a quick fadeout, we see Pearl's apparently dead body lying on a floor as someone hacks off his head with a large knife. Finally, a hand holds up Pearl's head, and the anti-Israel propaganda continues to roll.

We turn away from such evil at our peril. As Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen wrote in response to Judea Pearl's essay, "You will sense the presence of the enemy—an unseen but keenly felt evil. You will appreciate the nature of this war and the enormous cultural gap that leads to the production of a video that sickens us and yet thrills others."

I had an inadvertent hand in all this. I learned the video was on the Web in late May, when I read a news article about FBI attempts to force a Web site to remove it. It took me fewer than five minutes of searching to find it. Horrified by what I'd seen, I e-mailed the link to a few colleagues, including my former boss, Peter Kadzis, the editor of the Phoenix. He, in turn, passed it along to the publisher, Stephen Mindich—who decided, along with Kadzis, to put the link on the Phoenix's Web site. "This is the single most gruesome, horrible, despicable, and horrifying thing I've ever seen," Mindich wrote in an online note headlined "Thoughts on Political Pornography," which accompanied the link. A week later, the Phoenix upped the ante by publishing two small black-and-white photos from the video on its editorial page—one of Pearl talking, the other of his severed head.

My first reaction was that Mindich and Kadzis had made the wrong decision. Yet I slowly changed my mind and wrote about it in a long essay for the Phoenix. I concluded that the reason for publishing the photographs—to witness the evil with which we must contend—outweighed the reasons for not publishing.

Perhaps the most nonsensical argu-

ment I encountered was that the Phoenix's actions had caused pain to Daniel Pearl's family. For example, the Poynter Institute's Bob Steele wrote in an online commentary, "Any journalistic purpose in publishing the photos of his death is considerably outweighed by the emotional harm to Pearl's widow and family. At the least, publishing these photos is insensitive and disrespectful. It may be cruel." Yet there are few businesses less sensitive to family considerations than the media. News is often about bad things happening to good people, and families frequently object to the way loved ones are portrayed. Just ask any photographer who's been assigned to cover the funeral of a teenager who died while drinking behind the wheel. Steele—and he was hardly alone—argued for a consideration that we journalists routinely deny to others, and I suspect it was because Pearl was a fellow journalist.

Nor was there anything unusually grotesque about the images when seen in the context of other horrifying news photos, some of them Pulitzer Prize-winners. From the Holocaust to the Vietnam War to the body of a dead American soldier being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, news photographers have shown us death and destruction in the rawest form imaginable. The fact that the Daniel Pearl video was produced by terrorists rather than journalists is a mere detail. After all, it depicts what happened, which is the most elemental definition of news.

Keep in mind, too, the video was already available, on a Web site that publishes gross-out photos of accidents, autopsies and the like for the viewing pleasure of its perverse audience. The Phoenix did not so much make the video available as it put it in its proper context.

Nearly 60 years ago a Dutch-Jewish dwarf named Alexander Katan was murdered at the Nazi concentration camp of Mauthausen, in Austria, so that a camp physician could display his skeleton. Not much is known about Katan—in part, according to United States Holocaust Memorial Museum historian Patricia Heberer, because his family has wanted as little attention drawn to him and his fate as possible, even going so far as to request that a photo of him stripped naked be removed from Web sites and exhibition halls. A European Web site shows photos of Katan in prison garb and of his skeleton; but family sensitivities prevent us from fully experiencing this unimaginable crime.

I don't blame the Katans. But there are times when the importance of bearing witness to evil overrides personal considerations. Alexander Katan belongs to the ages. He belongs to us, if we're capable of understanding what he's trying to tell us.

So does Daniel Pearl. ■

Dan Kennedy is a freelance journalist and the former media critic for the Boston Phoenix. He is the winner of the National Press Club's 2001 Arthur Rowse Award for Press Criticism. Parts of this article were previously published in the Phoenix.

dan@dankennedy.net

The Minefield of Language in Middle East Coverage

Journalists rarely have the time or space to navigate through the war of words.

By Beverly Wall

In an April 2002 interview with Alicia Mundy in Editor & Publisher, Thomas L. Friedman, a columnist with The New York Times, described himself as "disoriented" and "speechless" in terms of how to write about the current situation in the Middle East. "Friedman agreed," according to Mundy, "that the language and nomenclature right now is a minefield, just waiting for errant editors and deadline-deadened reporters."

The emotional and potentially explosive nature of language, to use the minefield metaphor, is an ancient challenge for all writers, and the problems of choosing words carefully are certainly nothing new for journalists. But the language dilemma is perhaps exacerbated in the current coverage of the Middle East by the polarized intensity of emotion and the extended complexity of the situation. Added to these factors are the new dynamics of global media, in which journalists' words are immediately juxtaposed with dramatic images and an array of "pundits" willing to offer instantaneous spins on events and their coverage.

In Middle East coverage, especially loaded words and problematic phrases are fairly easy to identify. But it can be extremely difficult to figure out how and when to use them or to avoid them. Are certain areas "occupied" or "in dispute?" Should specific actions be described as "acts of terrorism" or "acts of resistance?" What qualifies as a "protest" or "retaliation," an "incursion" or "invasion?" What constitutes a "massacre?" Who should be labeled a "terrorist" and who a "freedom fighter?" Who are "gunmen," and how are they similar to or different from terrorists or freedom fighters? Who are "separatists" or "rebels?" Are certain people best described as "suicide bombers" or "homicide bombers?"

Such word choices have been extensively debated in the media. Earlier this year, the public focused on the issue of how to refer to Palestinians who use their own bodies as weapons of murder. Should they be called "suicide bombers"—the description the media had used for years—or changed to "homicide bombers?" Fox News and the White House decided to switch to using "homicide bombers." Fox executives reportedly believed that to use the word suicide "somehow glorifies the person committing the act."

In a press briefing President Bush's spokesman, Ari Fleisher, explained the White House shift to using "homicide bomber" this way: "The reason I started to use that term is because it's a more accurate description. These are not suicide bombings. These are not people who just kill themselves. These are people who deliberately go to murder others, with no regard to the values of their own life. These are murderers. The President has said that in the Rose Garden, and I think that it's just a more accurate description of what these people are doing. It's not suicide; it's murder." Bush heightened this distinction when he said that the bombers were "not martyrs" but "murderers."

There was not, however, a rush to conversion by other news organizations. At CNN, for example, spokeswoman Christa Robinson contended that the term "homicide bomber" indicates only that "you have killed other people—like putting a bomb in a trash can which kills people—but it doesn't reflect that you also killed yourself. We feel that 'suicide bomber' is much more descriptive and accurate." Supporters on each side of such word choices have emphasized that their concern is for accuracy and clear description. But media critics and talk-show pundits have been quick to charge bias either way: The use of "suicide bomber" is said to indicate a pro-Palestinian sympathy; "homicide bomber" is said to show a slant towards Israel.

While an individual speaker or writer might not be consciously or deliberately intending to use slanted language, the "accuracy" of such phrases is embedded in their rhetorical context. In their role as interpreters, listeners and readers instinctively ask the classic questions of rhetoric: Who is saying what to whom? On what occasion? In what manner? For what purpose? And with what attitude?

As constructs of the English language, "suicide bomber" and "homicide bomber" are awkward since they each involve Latin-derived nouns used as adjectives and an ambiguous shorthand that captures only part of a complex reality. If we put the two terms together, and give extended attention to the details of specific cases, then we might at least approach some sense of a full and fair treatment of the story. For example, a reporter might begin by referring simply to "bombers" and clarify in the details that they took their own lives in the process of killing others. The shorthand is lost, but something of greater value might be gained.

Because journalists seldom have enough time or space for this kind of treatment, this vision sadly remains only an ideal. It should serve, however, as a constant reminder of how journalists must strive harder to navigate the minefield of language. ■

Beverly Wall is an associate professor and director of the Allan K. Smith Center for Writing and Rhetoric at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. She is founder of the Intercollegiate E-Democracy Project and has been a commentator on political rhetoric and the media for C-SPAN's "Washington Journal," Reuters, BBC Radio London, and National Public Radio's "The Connection."

✉ beverly.wall@trincoll.edu

Do Words and Pictures From the Middle East Matter?

A journalist from the region argues that U.S. policy is not affected by the way news is reported.

By Rami G. Khouri

As an Arab and an American who has worked for U.S. and Middle Eastern media in the Middle East for most of my 33-year career, I feel that there is a clear pro-Israeli bias in the American mass media as a whole, with some exceptions. But I also believe that this media bias has no particular impact on either U.S. foreign policy or conditions in the Middle East.

On both professional and moral grounds, I'd like the bias to be corrected. More accurate and comprehensive coverage by journalists helps to promote more constructive and satisfying relations between the peoples of the United States and the Middle East. But better, more balanced coverage of Middle East events would have no impact on political trends and policy decisions, since I believe that the forces that define this policy are not directly related to or affected by the media.

I find the pro-Israeli bias in U.S.

media reflected in several ways, though it is the overall biased context that defines most news reporting and commentary that I will discuss. During the past two years, this context begins with the following presumption: Security in Israel should be the primary goal of any peacemaking process. Thus, all forms of legitimate (or illegitimate) Palestinian resistance to occupation must cease before progress can be made on achieving a permanent peace accord between Israelis and Palestinians. As a consequence of how this story is framed, we witness bizarre episodes in the story's coverage, such as an otherwise competent CNN chief foreign correspondent interviewing the Palestinian leader in his Ramallah office, which is surrounded and being shelled by Israeli tanks, and the correspondent asks Yasser Arafat if he is willing and able to stop the violence against Israel.

A more apt context would be the mutual and simultaneous goal of security for both Israel and the Palestinians and recognized statehood for Palestine. In coverage of current events, this would require seeing the Israeli occupation and attacks against Palestinians, and Palestinian attacks against Israelis, as two dimensions of a single conflict.

Yet, because of the current policy perspective, presumption of Palestinian culpability and Israeli innocence permeates and defines most of the U.S. coverage. What this means is that Israeli violence is either ignored or depicted broadly as legitimate because it is a means of self-defense. At the same time, Palestinian violence against Israel is depicted as illegitimate because it is seen as a root cause of a conflict that reduces the chances for a negotiated peace. Of course, there are exceptions to this general practice, with some in the U.S. media offering a balanced view of events. Some American journalists even report news, at times, in a manner that appears more sympathetic to the Palestinians than the Israelis.

Interestingly, the broad pro-Israeli tilt of the U.S. media is found virtually nowhere else in the world. This suggests that U.S. press coverage of the Middle East is the anomaly in a world that otherwise takes a more balanced view of the rights and the misdeeds of both Israelis and Palestinians.

The reasons for this pro-Israeli tilt in the U.S. media are multiple, complex and debatable, and cannot be treated in the limited space I have for this discussion. Instead, I'd like to explain why I feel that the U.S. media's broad pro-Israeli bias has little impact on U.S. policy or conditions in the Middle East. The main reason is that American voters' perceptions of events in the Middle East do not determine how they vote in congressional or presidential elections. The exception is some Jewish Americans who do vote on this issue when they feel that Israel is threatened. However, at such a time, virtually all candidates routinely express strong support for Israel. Otherwise, even Jewish Americans tend to vote primarily on the basis of domestic issues and ideology, not on the basis of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

… better, more balanced coverage of Middle East events would have no impact on political trends and policy decisions, since I believe that the forces that define this policy are not directly related to or affected by the media.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the American mass media were broadly pro-Palestinian in their reporting, analysis and comments, and that a majority of Americans felt more sympathetic to Palestinians than to Israelis. What would be the consequence? None, I suggest, because Americans' widespread sympathies for Palestinians would not translate into voting for candidates who share such views, and thus would not result in changed American government policies.

Americans who feel strongly about Middle Eastern issues do so because of some personal connection, whether it is religious, ethnic, professional or ideological. Their views will not be swayed, either, by media coverage; their firmly held views are formed by factors much stronger than media imagery. Others might be swayed by such media coverage; they will become sympathetic to Palestinians when they see images of their children shot by Israeli soldiers and sympathetic to Israelis when they see images of civilians killed by terror bombings.

By and large, such sentiments are politically irrelevant. The perceptions and sympathies of this large segment of Americans are almost totally detached from the forces of policymaking in Washington, D.C. This is not dissimilar from opposition to child labor in Asia, for example, when sympathies don't get translated into significant political action (voting, donating to parties or candidates, or lobbying), and thus have no impact on U.S. foreign policy. This disjunction between perceptions formed by media coverage and action in the political arena makes media bias an important professional issue, but not a political one. ■

Rami G. Khouri, a 2002 Nieman Fellow, is a Jordanian-Palestinian syndicated political columnist and book author, based in Amman, Jordan, and works half-time as a senior analyst for the International Crisis Group's Middle East Program. He is also chief umpire for Amman Little League baseball. He has a BA and Master's degree in journalism/political science and mass communications from Syracuse University.

✉ rgskhouri@hotmail.com