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Covering Terrorism: Examining how major U.S. newspapers have reported on these incidents

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Covering Terrorism: Examining how U.S. newspapers have reported on these incidents

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ABSTRACT (100-200 WORDS): The Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States pushed the issue of terrorism into the forefront of the American consciousness. Since then, the American media has covered a wide variety of topics related to these attacks. But has the coverage been fair? One of the tenets of modern journalism is to be fair and accurate in all reporting. But terrorism is a very thorny issue to cover. As the famous adage goes, “One man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist.” Questions of bias are unavoidable when it
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comes to reporting the news. The issue becomes even thornier when terrorism on U.S. soil is considered. For this essay, I will examine how five different American newspapers have covered terrorist attacks at three important points during the post-Cold War era.
Covering terrorism

Examining how major U.S. newspapers have reported on these incidents

David Thomas
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INTRODUCTION

The Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States pushed the issue of terrorism into the forefront of the American consciousness. Since then, the American media has covered a wide variety of topics related to these attacks. Key among them has been the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Guantanamo Bay, domestic wiretapping, security at giant sporting events, etc. With this kind of scope, it is safe to assume that the issue of terrorism has been covered in a myriad of ways since Sept. 11, 2001 by the American media.

But has the coverage been fair? One of the tenets of modern journalism is to be fair and accurate in all reporting. But terrorism is a very thorny issue to cover. As the famous adage goes, “One man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist.” Questions of bias are unavoidable when it comes to reporting the news. The issue becomes even thornier when terrorism on U.S. soil is considered. The need to be accurate and unbiased in reporting is always present, but the fear of being seen as insensitive to victims of such attacks, or worse, sympathetic to the enemy, is always present when covering terrorist attacks that leave a number of Americans dead. For this essay, I will examine how five different American newspapers have covered terrorist attacks at three important points during the post-Cold War era.

WHY THESE NEWSPAPERS

The newspapers whose coverage I will are the Chicago Tribune, the Christian Science Monitor, the New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the Washington Post. I have chosen these five newspapers for a variety of reasons. There are literally hundreds of thousands of different media outlets in the United States, although they may use the same leads. Thus, it becomes necessary then to limit the sample size.
I chose these five particular newspapers, because all five of the newspapers are major players in their respective regional markets. The *Chicago Tribune* is the dominant newspaper in the Midwest market, with a circulation that reached 452,144 on weekdays and 794,351 on Sundays in 2010.\(^1\) The *New York Times* is one of the dominant newspapers on the East Coast; with its weekday circulation in 2010 reaching 950,000 subscribers (Sunday circulation: 1.4 million), it is only beaten by *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*.\(^2\) Originally, the plan was to review news articles from the *Los Angeles Times*, but this was changed because of the fact that the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times* are owned by the same parent company. My concern was that the editorial policies of the newspapers might be the same, so I decided to examine the coverage of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which had a daily circulation of 370,345 in 2008, but suffered 22.7 drop in weekday sales from 2009 to 2010.\(^3\) I chose the *Washington Post*, which ranks just above the *Chicago Tribune* in terms of circulation, because its primary readership is based in and around Washington, D.C. The final newspaper I selected was the *Christian Science Monitor*. It is unique among major American newspapers in that it is not regionally defined, yet its coverage deals with national and international issues, including terrorism.

To research this topic, I accessed the various databases of articles that are provided to students of Northern Illinois University free of charge. I did three searches for each newspaper at a particular timeframe. I used the keywords “terror,” “terrorist,” and “terrorism” because using words like “militant” or “attacker” might turn up numerous stories, but are not about terrorist

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attacks. I narrowed my results further by using only news articles, and not columns, editorials, or letters to the editor. The reason being is that I am more interested in how the newspapers report the news, rather than what their editors believe. In my experience with journalism, the editorial board is separate from news production. For example, the Chicago Tribune’s editorial board may have endorsed then-Sen. Barack Obama’s candidacy for president in 2008, but their coverage of the presidential race is generally regarded as fair and accurate to both candidates.

WHY THESE TERRORIST ATTACKS

The articles I have gathered and analyzed for this capstone were typically published (for the most part) within a month of a major terrorist attack that took place on U.S. soil: the World Trade Center bombing of 1993, the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the 2009 Fort Hood shootings. It should be noted that in some cases, looking for terrorism stories a month before an attack might only conjure up two stories; in the interest of having more data, I sometimes went beyond my one month parameter. In some cases, the news stories analyzed were published several months after the terrorist attack was reported on.

I previously mentioned the problem of bias when covering terrorism. Focusing on coverage of terrorist attacks that occurred on U.S. soil and killed Americans provides the ultimate test for a newspaper’s commitment to unbiased reporting. Another reason why I selected these particular attacks is that they occurred in different points in U.S. history. The 1993 World Trade Center bombing occurred during the first Clinton administration at the close of the Cold War. The Sept. 11 attacks occurred during the first Bush administration after years of American prosperity. The 2009 Fort Hood shootings occurred during the Obama administration, a time in which the country has been waging a “war on terror” (even if that name is no longer used, and in face, de-emphasized by the administration) for years. By analyzing these articles from these
particular articles, I hope to better understand how American newspapers report on terrorism. In particular, I want to assess the extent to which the coverage is consistent and unbiased.

DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

An obvious initial problem was the lack of a clear definition of terrorism. As any good political scientist will tell you, there is no universal definition of terrorism among scholars, government officials, or even among the supposed "terrorists" themselves. Bruce Hoffman, the director of the Center for Peace and Security Studies at Georgetown University's Walsh School, wrote about the definition problem in 1998. He wrote, "Like 'Internet'—another grossly overused term that has similarly become an indispensable part of the argot of the late twentieth century—most people have a vague idea or impression of what terrorism is, but lack a more precise, concrete and truly explanatory definition of the word." And even if the international community is galvanized by a particularly horrific incident, this does not translate into action, necessarily. Following the massacre of Israeli athletes and officials at the 1972 Summer Olympic Games in Berlin, the United Nations attempted to define terrorism, but countries disagreed on key principles. As outlined in the Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, as made available on the website of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, the points of contention that keeps the United Nations from making progress on this convention are: (1) the "legal definition of terrorism," (2) "the relationship between terrorism and anti-colonial and national liberation movements," and (3) "the activities of States' armed forces in armed conflicts and in exercise of their official duties." The U.S. State Department, however, does not seem to make these distinctions. Their definition of terrorism, as outlined in Title 22, Chapter 38 of the

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United States Code, is the “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.” As a student of journalism and political science, I have adopted the State Department’s definition of terrorism as my own. I believe it meets most of the situations that can be found in the real world.

When researching for this thesis, I sent correspondence to the five newspapers I would be analyzing. Only three of the five newspapers replied. Stu Werner, the current national/foreign copy desk chief for the *Chicago Tribune*, replied in an e-mail that the *Tribune* “does not have a written policy on the use of the terms terrorist or terrorism. For the most part, we do not make the characterization ourselves.” Werner elaborates on this, saying they use the term in the context of a source: If the Secretary of State or Amnesty International publish a report on terrorism, they’ll use the word. But for the most part, Werner says that the *Tribune* is “aware that in many cases whether an action amounts to terrorism is subject to debate; in other words, one man’s terrorist can be another man’s freedom fighter. If we feel there is a value judgment involved, we describe the activity with balanced context and leave it to readers to decide.” However, Werner said *Tribune* writers do use terrorism in a story, one definition they start with is Webster’s New World dictionary: “the use of force or threats to demoralize, intimidate and subjugate, especially such use as a political weapon or policy.” He added that in some cases, “there is no point in dancing around the word;” 9/11, he says, was a terrorist attack and they reported it as such. And while they do refer to the State Department’s list of terrorist organizations, Werner said “Even in many of those cases we will use the term militant or insurgent to describe actions or movements.” One example is the Irish Republican Army. To certain populations, it is a terrorist organization, but to others, it is not.

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7 Stu Werner, e-mail message to author, Nov. 17, 2010
When I contacted the *New York Times*, Joseph Burgess, assistant to the public editor, sent me a link to a blog on their website called Media Decoder: Behind the Scenes, Between the Lines. In a post called “Study of Waterboarding Coverage Prompts a Debate in the Press” published July 2, 2010, there is very little mention of the word “terrorism” in the post. However, there a couple of quotes from senior *New York Times* editors that might explain when they use politically charged words like torture and terrorism. Executive editor Bill Keller wrote, “When using a word amounts to taking sides in a political dispute, our general practice is to supply the readers with the information to decide for themselves.” Standards editor Phil Corbett wrote along the same lines: “In general, when writing about disputed, contentious and politically loaded topics, we try to be precise, accurate and as neutral as possible; factual descriptions are often between than shorthand labels.”

The final response came from Andrea Behr of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She sent me their definition of terrorism and jihad. According to their stylebook, “Terrorists are individuals or groups who use extreme acts of violence (such as bombings, kidnapping, hijackings, etc.) against civilian targets for political ends. Do not routinely use terrorist as a generic term for rebel or guerrilla groups. Reserve it for those involved in specific acts of terror.” Jihad, from their stylebook, is defined as: “Avoid using as a synonym for holy war unless quoting the individuals involved. The Arabic noun is used to refer to the Islamic concept of the struggle to do good. In particular situations, that can include holy war, the meaning extremist Muslims commonly use.”

**ANALYZING COVERAGE OF THE 1993 WORLD TRADE CENTER BOMBING**

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9 Andrea Behr, e-mail message to author, Nov. 1, 2010
For the first part of the analysis of news articles, I will examine the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing. On February 26, 1993, Ramzi Yousef and Eyad Ismoli drove a truck bomb into parking garage beneath the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. The bomb detonated shortly after they left the truck. At the end of the day, six people were dead and over 1,000 were injured. An FBI investigation, with the aid of the U.S. Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) and Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), lead to the arrest and imprisonment of six conspirators, funded by Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, the uncle of Yousef and the mastermind of the September 11 terrorist attacks, eight years later. For the purposes of this capstone, the event itself will be referred to as the 1993 WTC bombing.

ANALYZING PRE-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The first section of coverage I will examine will be news stories that were published one month before the 1993 WTC bombing, beginning with the Chicago Tribune. One story that has been mentioned in nearly all of the newspapers is the killing of two employees of the Central Intelligence Agency outside of the CIA complex in McLean, Va. In the Tribune story, “Gunman kills 2 CIA men at agency’s gate” (Jan. 26, 1993), by Michael Kiliann and Michael Tackett, the possibility of a terrorist attack is mentioned. However, one CIA official “dismissed the possibility...saying a terrorist would have sought publicity.”\(^\text{10}\) In addition, there seems to be no direct political motive involved as well, which is one of the basic definitions of terrorism.

But what about assassinations? This question is posed in the next article, “Soldier accused of trying to kill Yeltsin” (Jan. 31, 1993), which is credited to the Chicago Tribune’s wire service. An army major was arrested for attempting to kill then-Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin with two bombs, making it the “first reported assassination attempt

against Yeltsin since he was elected... in June 1991. The political motivations are mentioned in the article; the major accuses of lying about the results of the presidential election and taking power for himself. But the major is not accused of terrorism. It could be because of who he was; he was not reported as the member of some sort of militia, but as a military officer. I believe this incident might have been reported differently if the major were a Chechen rebel or sympathizer.

Perhaps one of the thorniest issues for terrorism is the Israeli-Palestinian/Arab conflict, which has been an issue since before the creation of the state of Israel. Many of the news stories examined in this capstone will touch upon this conflict. The first news story of this kind examined is "2 Chicagoans aided militants, Israelis say" (Feb. 1, 1993), by Tom Hundley of the Chicago Tribune. The Israeli secret police, Shin Bet, arrested two Palestinian-Americans from Chicago for aiding Hamas. Hamas is recognized by the U.S. Department of State as being a terrorist organization, and the Chicago Tribune seems to be taking the same line. The two Chicagoans are described as having distributed “more than $300,000 in cash to fund terrorist activities of the militant Islamic group Hamas.”

12 The use of the words “militant,” “fundamentalist,” “radical and “extremist” used to describe Hamas reflect what Werner wrote about the Chicago Tribune’s policy when writing about supposed terrorist attacks, and their perpetrators. The word terrorism is a pejorative term; militant or fundamentalist can have different connotations. So in an interest to be fair in their reporting, it would make sense for Chicago Tribune writers to use those words. In a way, militant becomes a synonym for terrorist, but the connotations are different. Militant can have some positive connotations that terrorism cannot have.

As an example of this, let's look at the story, **"Algeria troops kill 4 Muslim fundamentalist, wound 3"** (Feb. 1, 1993); from the *Chicago Tribune*'s wire service. The wire services report that four Muslim fundamentalists were killed in a battle with Algerian soldiers and military police. The suspected fundamentalists were believed to have been committing terrorist acts in Algeria. One point of interest in this article is how the police are quoted as calling the fundamentalists "terrorists."\(^{13}\) If an official was quoted as calling them terrorists or "agents of terror," was this a sign of approval or disapproval by the newspaper itself, or simply a matter of being accurate? There is no universal answer to this, but it is something to consider as other articles are examined.

The article, **"How Israel helped militants gain power"** (Feb. 2, 1993) by Tom Hundley, mentioned the word "terror" only once, and it was used to describe Hamas as a "multinational terror group."\(^{14}\) But that was it, because the story describes Israel as playing a vital role in the minimization of another major Palestinian group, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and as helping Hamas become the force it was then. It would perhaps sound bad if Israel was reported as helping set up a terrorist organization that is now targeting Israel. So I think there was a deliberate effort made here to use "terrorist" and its derivatives as minimal as possible in this story.

While terror was used in this next story, it was used in a different context. In **"Somalia troops walking a dangerous beat"** (Feb. 3, 1993) by Howard Witt, U.S. Marines and Army units were in a no-win situation as they patrolled Mogadishu, Somalia. Their attackers are not described as terrorists or even fundamentalists. They are described in very generic terms, like

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"gunmen" or "Somali snipers," which does nothing to give the reader an idea as to which group is attacking U.S. soldiers in Mogadishu.15

Hamas was the focus of the next article. In "FBI steps up inquiries of Muslim groups in U.S." (Feb. 4, 1993), credited to the New York Times news service, Hamas was being investigated for its terrorist activities by the FBI. The real issue of contention was between the U.S. governments and the Israeli government, and the debate between them is an issue for newspapers as well. Hamas not only carries out attacks on civilians; it also performs welfare services to impoverished Palestinians living in the territories. Israel insisted (and still insists) that all wings of Hamas are terrorist organizations, but the U.S. Department of State stated that "government specialists have concluded there is a clear distinction between Hamas’ welfare and military wings." The article stated that officials of the Clinton administration said "they believe the supporters of Hamas in the U.S. are raising money only for political, welfare and religious activities." But Israel believed this is still supporting terrorism. If the Clinton administration believed there is a distinction between the different parts of Hamas, it stands to reason that there are reporters and newspapers who believe the same thing.

The issue of state-sponsored terrorism is at the forefront of the article, "Turkey says terror suspects trained in Iran" (Feb. 5, 1993) from the Associated Press. While The Turkish foreign minister did not accuse the Iranian government of aiding the members of Islamic Action, he stated that the members "‘received military training . . . especially to assassinate people, at a heavily guarded compound between Tehran and Qom.’"16 This article prompts the question: What is considered government support of terrorism? And does it constitute as state-sponsored terrorism if elements of the government are supporting those groups, but not as part of the

overall grand strategy or policy? Even though the Iranian government flatly rejects the accusation, this article offers only a brief glimpse into what happens when these kinds of accusations are made.

The debate over whether organizations can carry out welfare services and terrorist attacks is not limited to Hamas. Hezbollah, which is based in Lebanon and also carries out similar attacks on Israel, is a part of it too. In the article, "Hezbollah shifts focus to compassion—for now" (Feb. 16, 1993) by Tom Hundley, Hezbollah was described as being "out of the car-bomb business and into health care." In contrast to Hamas, however, Hezbollah is portrayed in a more favorable light. No Israeli or American officials are quoted as not believing the change in Hezbollah. The only passages that would provoke concern for an American audience was that the militia did not give up its weapons and that, if they chose to, they can restart their terrorist/resistance tactics again.

A couple of weeks after Turkey accused a local terrorist organization of receiving training in Iran, the government of Iraq joined in. In the article, "Iraq raises alarm over restless Iran" (Feb. 21, 1993) by James Yuenger, then-Iraqi President Saddam Hussein accused the government of Iran for planning and supporting terrorist attacks in the country. The two countries were engaged in what Yuenger describes as a "war of words," but Yuenger said the relations have not deteriorated to the point where they would go to war, similar to the Iraq-Iran war, which left 1 million dead.

ANALYZING PRE-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE CSM

With the CSM, I've had to expand the dates of search because of the nature of its reporting. The first story from the CSM concerns a terrorist group well-known in policymaking

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17 Tom Hundley, "Hezbollah shifts focus to compassion—for now," Chicago Tribune, February 16, 1993, 1.
and academic circles: Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA; English translation: Basque Homeland and Freedom). In the story, "Spain Tackles Terrorist Threat By Basques to Olympics, Expo" (April 1, 1992) by Juan I. Senor, Spanish government officials were concerned that terrorist attacks by ETA will disrupt the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona and the Seville Expo Fair. Senor quoted a Basque scholar, who wrote several books on the terrorist group, as to why ETA was stepping up its terror campaign. He said, "The leaders of ETA will do anything to obtain their separatist...goals. The Expo and the Olympics are so important to Spain’s reputation that they are threatening to disrupt the events to obtain concessions from the government."  

ETA is a separatist group; their main goal is to see the region of Basque secede from Spain. But judging how the CSM has covered the group, ETA seems to be regarded not as a national liberation movement, but as a terrorist organization.

In “South Africans Protest Violence on Trains” (May 1, 1992), John Battersby described the violence that was being inflicted on train passengers as terrorist attacks. From January 1992 to May 1, 1992, more 130 commuters were killed and 235 were injured. The group supposedly coordinating these attacks, which “usually occur before and after major turns in the multiracial negotiating process for political reforms”, was the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. The IFP was one of the larger political parties in South Africa. But Battersby did describe them as a terrorist organization; those perpetrating the attacks were simply called “attackers.” As a result, it is unclear whether the IFP is this “more sinister ‘third force’” that has been attacking commuters in their campaign of terror.  

Battersby described another South African group as being a terrorist organization in his next story, “S. African Terror Campaign Draws ANC, Government Closer to Political

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 Accord” (Dec. 9, 1992). The “terror campaign” waged by the Azanian People’s Liberation Army (APLA), which is the military wing of the Pan-Africanist Congress, brought the national government and the African National Congress (a competing political party), together to stop the violence. Unlike the IFP in the previous story, there seemed to be no doubt that the APLA is committing terrorist attacks. According to Battersby, their attacks seemed to be politically-timed and politically-motivated.21

ANALYZING PRE-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE NEW YORK TIMES

Unlike the CSM, it was not necessary to expand the time constraints of one month to find articles about terrorism. In its coverage before the 1993 WTC bombing, the New York Times used the words terror and terrorists in a wide variety of articles. The first two articles are “Israel’s Highest Court Upholds The Deportations of Palestinians” (Jan. 29, 1993) and “2 Israeli Soldiers Ambushed in Gaza” (Jan. 31, 1993), both by Clyde Haberman. In the articles, Hamas was described as a terrorist organization by an Israeli official.2223 This is important to note, as Haberman never described Hamas a terrorist organization, but as a fundamentalist group or that the perpetrators were members of the armed wing of the organization.

One issue these articles raise is whether there are multiple forms of terrorism and how each can be categorized. The next article, “3 Bombs Explode in Colombia Cities” (Feb. 1, 1993) (Note: No byline was given for this story, other than “special to the New York Times”) concerns the topic of narco-terrorism. Twenty people, including five children, were killed by a series of car bombs in Bogota. The Colombian government blamed the “terrorist apparatus” of Pablo Escobar, a powerful drug lord. While the word narco-terrorism was not used in the article,

Escobar seemed to operate as a terrorist by using violence as a political tool. One example was an announcement he made in January 1993, in which “a new campaign of violence to pressure the Government into granting immunity to drug traffickers.”24 Despite this, the writer (who is unaccredited) felt that the better description for Escobar was drug lord or cocaine kingpin, even though Escobar’s activities seemed to fit the description of terrorism.

This was the case in a news story published 13 days later, which detailed more of Escobar’s attacks. In the story, “Colombia Hardens Line In Hunt for Drug Lord” (Feb. 14, 1993) (Note: No byline was given for this story other than “special to the New York Times”), the use of the words terror, terrorism, and terrorist was more frequent. Escobar seems to have ratcheted up the violence in Colombia. He targeted “suspected traitors inside his own organization.” As a result, groups splintered off from his cartel and declare their own war on Escobar. The government, however, viewed both these groups as terrorists. Colombian President César Gaviria is quoted, “We are going to combat them with the same severity with which we combat Escobar because they are resorting to terrorism and we cannot fight terrorism with terrorism.”25 The only people interviewed in the article are government officials and one political scientist. While the reasoning for the vigilante groups was known, it should be noted that the only sources in the story were the ones talking about how the groups’ actions were terrorism, and not justice.

Defining terrorism is a matter of perspective, and a new perspective is presented in the story “Constants of a Youth’s Life in Gaza: A Stone and a Soldier to Throw At” (Feb. 7, 1993) by Clyde Haberman. Haberman interviewed Wael Abd al-Jawad, a 17-year-old Palestinian youth living in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip. He is described as living a life with no dreams,

no ambitions because of the Israeli occupation. When told from the perspective of this young man, it is not hard to empathize with him. The issue of terrorism is presented in this article as well. Haberman wrote of how Wael and his friend Mahmoud discuss this aspect; Mahmoud “does not like it when Israelis call him a terrorist for attacking soldiers with rocks.” Wael disputed this point, asking Mahmoud about why he should care about what the enemy labels him as. For Mahmoud, it’s the principle of the thing: They throw stones at soldiers. Wael’s responded: “The terrorist is one who kills civilians. By this definition, Israelis are the terrorists. They’re the one who kill civilians.”26 This kind of terrorism, state terrorism, is a particularly controversial label, because labeling a government that way suggests that the regime is illegitimate. This is probably why newspapers like the New York Times do not label the government as terrorist entities.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the focus of the next two news stories examined. In the Associated Press article, “U.S. Protests to Israelis on 3 Jailed Americans” (Feb. 8, 1993), the U.S. protested the treatment of three Palestinian Americans that were detained by Israel for allegedly supporting Hamas. Hamas was described as a terrorist organization by the article author.27 In the second article, “One Israeli Slain, One Hurt By Gunmen in the Gaza Strip” (Feb. 10, 1993), there were very few details as to who killed an Israeli merchant and wounded another when they went into an area of the Gaza Strip that was declared off-limits by the Israeli army. The only description of the attackers was “Palestinian militants,” which could describe any number of groups, not just Hamas.28

The story, "Jet Diverted to Kennedy by Hijacker" (Feb. 12, 1993) by Robert D. McFadden, provides an interesting point of comparison between the coverage of a plane hijacking by the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune, which published a similar story on the event. In this story, McFadden did not refer to "Jack," which was how the hostage negotiators referred to the hijacker, as a terrorist or a militant. He was simply called the hijacker. The possible political motivations were mentioned as well, although McFadden’s writing cast doubt on that conclusion. McFadden wrote how U.S. and German officials said that the hijacker “spoke of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and of his displeasure with United Nations decisions and his desire to see the United States intervene to end the ethnic fighting.” However, the article called this into question, stating that “Captain Goebel said he was with the hijacker throughout the ocean crossing and heard no such references.” So while there was an attempt to link the hijacking with a political motive (thus making it a terrorist incident), I believe it is safe to say that this particular hijacking does not fall meet the definition of terrorism. However, the fact that no one was killed during the hijacking does provokes different aspect to consider as well. Had “Jack” killed someone to demonstrate the seriousness of his request, would he be regarded as a terrorist or the incident is regarded as an act of terrorism? It is something to consider.

The issue of what is a terrorist attack is not clear in the next news story either. In the story, “Man Sought in Killings at C.I.A. May Have Vanished in Pakistan” (Feb. 12, 1993) by Douglas Jehl, the hunt for the man who allegedly killed two CIA employees outside of their headquarters has led to Pakistan. The issue of whether the suspect, Mir Amin Kansi, was a terrorist did not appear until the end of the article. Jehl wrote, “Academic experts on Pakistan...said they were skeptical that the attack might have been some kind of organized

retribution. Some complained that the mere fact that a Pakistani was the suspect had been unfairly seized upon some people as evidence that the shootings were a terrorist attack.” In other words, some of the experts were alleging that the only reason why Kansi was being called a terrorist was because he was from Pakistan; had he been from a Western nation, it stands to reason, he may have been simply regarded as unstable. As As’ad Abu Khalil, a scholar with the Middle East Institute in Washington said to Jehl, “Why aren’t we Muslims entitled to our own share of kooks and crazies?” The article mentioned the political motives Kansi might have had, but because he was still at large, Jehl and the authorities could only speculate on his motives.

In a previous news story by the CSM, it was established that both CSM and the Spanish government regarded the group as a terrorist organization. However, in “Uruguay Weighs Ousting Basques” (Feb. 14, 1993) by Nathaniel C. Nash, there seemed to be a line drawn between Uruguay and Spain on this issue. A number of ETA members were arrested in Uruguay, a country that “has a long tradition of welcoming immigration and offering asylum to political outcasts and those fleeing persecution.” Despite this tradition, the Uruguayan government seemed to agree with the Spanish government, and the ETA members were to be extradited because “they are accused of terrorist crimes that are generally not considered political.” I find this to be an odd statement, as I have always understood terrorism was defined in a political context

Religion is also used as a context for terrorism, at least that’s according to Salman Rushdie, the author of The Satanic Verses. Rushdie’s book heavily criticized Islam, which resulted in the Iranian government issuing a fatwa or “death edict” for Rushdie. It is an issue that reverberated in the news story, “Britain and Iran Harden Positions on Rushdie” (Feb. 15,

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1993) by William E. Schmidt. A “war of words” had erupted between the Iranian government, the British government, and Rushdie. Rushdie himself described the Iranian government’s fatwa as “a straightforward terrorist threat.” The issue of terrorism is interesting for theocratic governments like Iran; when religion is intertwined directly within political power. It can be argued that actions committed by organizations that use violence to achieve political and religious goals are terrorist groups. But supposing someone does kill Rushdie, would it be possible to hold the Iranian government responsible? This is one of the issues involving state-sponsored terrorism. At what point is there a separation between terrorist and state in such instances? At this point, it does seem that the New York Times recognizes the Iranian government as being a terrorist entity.

In the next article, “Israel Says That a Prisoner’s Tale Links Arabs in the U.S. to Terrorism” (Feb. 17, 1993) by Judith Miller, the issue again is whether the terrorist group Hamas is operating inside the United States. Israel maintains it does, while the United States “remained deeply skeptical that agents in the United States were somehow assisting Hamas terrorism. But it did not repeat their earlier insistence that no such operations were taking place.” This article showcases how difficult it can be for governments (even ones that are considered to be close allies) to cooperate in combating terrorism.

The next article illustrates how loose these policies can be. In “Nobelists Urge U.N. Sanctions Against Myanmar” (Feb. 20, 1993) by Philip Shenon, the government of Myanmar has called a group of Burmese refugees that have spoken against their brutal practices and have met with Nobel Peace Prize winners as “terrorists.” The notion seems to fly in the face of

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reason, especially when considering the atrocities of the Myanmar government. But it does prove the old adage of “One man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist.” It is difficult reconcile these differences between governments, and this news story shows that every government, including the tyrannical ones, has their own definition.

The final New York Times story examines the definition of terrorism. In the news story, “For U.S., Aid To Terrorists is Hard to Define” (Feb. 21, 1993) by Douglas Jehl, there were many questions on what was considered aid to terrorists. U.S. law tried to define it; Jehl wrote, “It is not enough to show that an individual supports or is affiliated with the group; the Constitution protects First Amendment rights to free speech and association. To win prosecution, authorities must prove a link between a suspect and an act of terrorist crime.”35 It was these distinctions that have frustrated allied governments, and it was only until after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks there has been an increase in crackdowns on U.S.-based fundraisers of terrorism.

ANALYZING PRE-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE SF CHRONICLE

The first news story from the San Francisco Chronicle contains a different aspect of the costs of terrorism: financial. In particular, how private companies deal with the costs of terrorist attacks. In the story, “Special Anti-Terrorist Insurance Policies; Lloyd’s of London is offering the unprecedented contract” (March 25, 1991) by Michael Taylor, the insurance company Lloyd’s of London was offering new policies to help companies recover financially from terrorist attacks. The policies would “cover such ‘fixed assets’ as office buildings, airline ticket offices, offshore oil platforms and other installations leased or owned by big companies around the world.” The spokesperson for Lloyd’s admitted there will be some difficulties, such

as finding “a premium rate against a virtual unknown.” It should be noted that the article did not mention how Lloyd’s will consider which violent actions are considered to be terrorist acts, or acts of war.

The next news story from the San Francisco Chronicle also dealt with the financial risks companies take when doing business overseas. This time, the focus is on U.S. firms. In the story, “U.S. Firms Risk Lives To Find Oil; Potential abroad is bigger, but so are the dangers” (Dec. 31, 1992) by Jeff Pelline, terrorists like FLEC (Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda), a group of rebel guerrillas operating in Angola, have targeted U.S. businessmen and employees abroad. Unlike previous articles, the reader was left with a better picture of who attacked American workers and companies abroad. The attackers were not named, just described as “leftist rebels” or “leftist guerrilla groups.” The use of the word leftist described their politics, so a political motivation is implied, thus enabling the SFC to label them as terrorists, which they do so in the article.

ANALYZING PRE-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE WASHINGTON POST

The first two Washington Post stories take us to Iraq, only a year after the Persian Gulf War and more than a decade before the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In the stories, “1991 Increase in Terrorism Reported; State Department Attributes 22% Rise to the Persian Gulf War” (May 1, 1992) by Bill McAllister, and “U.S. Aware Of Iraqi Terrorism; Documents Undercut U.S. Prewar Stance On Baghdad’s Record” (June 6, 1992) by R. Jeffrey Smith, Iraq-based terrorism were the subjects of the story. McAllister reported that state-sponsored

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37 Jeff Pelline, “U.S. Firms Risk Lives To Find Oil; Potential abroad is bigger, but so are the dangers,” San Francisco Chronicle, December 31, 1992, B1.
terrorism is down after the allied invasion of Iraq, although it was still a concern for the U.S.\textsuperscript{38} In Smith's story, the conflict of identifying—and subsequently acting against—terrorism was brought to light when it was revealed that the U.S. government knew of the terrorist activities in Iraq during the 1980s. In 1982, the Reagan administration removed Iraq from its list of state sponsors of terrorism because the Abu Nidal organization had been kicked out, but both the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations "subsequently took note of Iraq's extensive and continuing terrorist ties and sent several secret demarches to Baghdad but opposed congressional calls to put Iraq back on the list of countries supporting terrorist acts."\textsuperscript{39} These organizations included Abu Nabal, Abul Abbas and May 15. Although it was not mentioned in the story, the Iran-Iraq war was being waged during this period. It was known that the U.S. supported Iraq in the war that left 1 million people dead. Removing them from the list, even though they had not seriously halted their activities of supporting terrorism, allowed the Reagan administration better political cover in supporting Iraq.

The next story concerns possible state terrorism committed by the Bolsheviks in 1920s Russia. The news story, "From Russia, With Terror; From Lenin to Gorbachev, the Bolshevik Past Goes on the Record" (June 28, 1992) by Jeffrey A. Frank discussed the "terror" waged by Vladimir Lenin, "as someone inclined to use 'terror as a pedagogic tool.'\textsuperscript{40} While Lenin and the rest of his ideological brethren were not described as terrorists, the only word really used to describe the way they cemented their power was terror.

\textsuperscript{38} Bill McAllister, "1991 Increase in Terrorism Reported; State Department Attributes 22% Rise to the Persian Gulf War," \textit{Washington Post}, May 1, 1992, A24.
\textsuperscript{40} Jeffrey A. Frank, "From Russia, With Terror; From Lenin to Gorbachev, the Bolshevik Past Goes on the Record," \textit{Washington Post}, June 28, 1992, C5.
In the last story for the Washington Post, "Bombs Rip Bogota; Cartel Chief Blamed; Terrorism Wave Hurting Anti-Drug Plan" (Feb. 16, 1993) by Douglas Farah, the same wave of violence described earlier in a New York Times article is labeled narco-terrorism by Farah and the Post. While Escobar himself was not directly described as a terrorist, the “fugitive cocaine boss” likes to use his “trademark terror tool” to force the government to grant him more generous terms of surrender. While newspapers do their best to report the news without bias, it is very hard to portray Escobar as not being a terrorist.

ANALYZING THE COMBINED 1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE

In examining at the coverage of the five different newspapers, the initial news stories call the incident as just an explosion. The bombing was later called a terrorist attack once the FBI investigated the incident thoroughly. For example, in the news story, “FBI viewing tape taken before N.Y. blast” (March 2, 1993), written by Lisa Anderson and Michael Tackett of the Chicago Tribune, it was mentioned that the “bombing officially has not yet been declared to be a terrorist act.”

ANALYZING POST-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The first story from the Chicago Tribune revisits Saddam Hussein, who is in the middle of another “terror campaign,” this time against the Shiite population in his country. In “Hussein again terrorizing Shiites, paper reports” (March 1, 1993), gathered from Tribune news wires, the prospect of state terrorism in Iraq appears again. There are certainly grounds for calling Hussein’s regime a terrorist entity, but it is not directly called one in the Tribune story. The same does not apply for the Associated Press story “UN rights panel blasts actions of Sudan,

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Iraq” (March 11, 1993). Sudan and Iraq were denounced by the UN Human Rights Commission for “widespread executions and terror.” Given the fact that both Iraq and Sudan are accused of ordering these atrocities in order to secure their political reign in the country, it is not a stretch then to view them as being terrorist entities. However, both the Tribune and the Associated Press do not label them as such. Instead, they present the information and leave the decision of how to regard Iraq and Sudan up to the reader.

The two Chicago men who were arrested for allegedly helping Hamas take center stage in the next Associated Press story, “Israel weighs charges against Chicagoan” (March 5, 1993). In this story, the issue of labeling is present. In earlier stories, Hamas has been regarded as a terrorist organization by different news and governmental organizations, and that terrorist seems to be used in conjunction with “fundamentalist group.” But from what can be gathered by the by the story, the U.S. Congress had not recognized Hamas as a terrorist organization. The story mentions that two members of Congress are sponsoring a bill that would declare Hamas a terrorist organization and prohibit its members from entering the United States. This would have allow the government a better pretext to crack down Hamas’s “extensive support network in the United States” that allowed the “murderous terrorist organization” to continue its offense against Israel. The story did not specify how this designation by Congress would work with the U.S. State Department’s list.

In the next news story from the Chicago Tribune, “In bombing’s wake, Muslims fight suspicion” (March 8, 1993) by Stephen Franklin and Michael McGuire, the reader is forced to consider how Muslim Americans, who have no connection to the perpetrators of the 1993 WTC

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bombing, are reacting to the news of the attack. Ahmet Moustafa, an Egyptian-born businessman, opened the article with his fears that people would use the attacks as a pretext to lash out violently against Muslims in the United States, and he believed that was already occurring: “We just want to be treated fairly. The news media just wants to show that Moslem people are bad people who want to destroy the United States.”46 This story is particularly noteworthy because it shows another side of terrorism coverage that is often not mentioned. In stories about terrorism, the appropriate authorities are interviewed (a.k.a. the police, the military, the policymakers and politicians, etc.), the terrorist apparatus might be interviewed (as in a spokesperson for Hezbollah or Hamas, for example), and the victims and/or witnesses might be interviewed. But rarely mentioned are the indirect victims, like the American Muslims who are viewed with suspicion because attacks were committed by other Muslims. This suspicion has escalated into violence before. According to the Arab American Institute, a Lebanese American man was shot to death four days after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.47 They are the focus of this story, and the objections raised in this article do serve as lessons for the media to consider when they are covering terrorist attacks.

One such lesson includes labeling. If a terrorist did attack a target, how should the news media describe him or her? Labeling becomes an issue in the aptly-named news story “Religious labels—and violence” (March 12, 1993) by Michael Hirsley. One noteworthy item is a quote from Mohammed Kaiseruddin, the chairman of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago. He said, in the case of the 1993 WTC bombing, “Muslim fundamentalism has been clearly equated with Muslim terrorism.” There is some truth to this statement, I believe. As

stated earlier, it seems that newspapers use terms like fundamentalist, extremist, and militant when describing terrorist organizations like Hamas or Hezbollah, and the terms themselves are interchangeable. But Kaiseruddin raised a very good point about how Muslims who faithfully adhere to the Koran would be considered fundamentalists. Kaiseruddin also raised a double standard: If a Muslim commits an act of terrorism, his religion often becomes an identifier. But the Pensacola, Fla. man who killed an abortion doctor is only identified as an “anti-abortion activist,” even though “it was reported that he had prayed in a church that the doctor ‘give his life to Christ,’” was not identified as a Christian extremist or fundamentalist. So what is the litmus test for identifying terrorists? This will be discussed later in the paper.

In the news story, “India fears 300 died in 13 bombings” (March 14, 1993), compiled from the Chicago Tribune wire services, the word “terrorist attack” was only used once. This is likely because no one has stepped forward to claim credit for the attack in Bombay. Without identifying the assailant, it is harder to discern the motives for the attack. This is also true for the attack in Calcutta that would occur a week later. In “Calcutta bomb blast toll hits 60; 2 suspects held” (March 17, 1993), also compiled from the Chicago Tribune wire services, the use of the word “terror” described the general feeling in the wake of the bombings. But with no assailants identified, it would have been difficult to classify the bombings as a terrorist act.

The next news story also lacked attribution. In the story, “Link to terror group may elude bomb probe” (March 16, 1993) by Stephen Franklin, anti-terrorism experts said while they feel confident in that the perpetrators of the 1993 WTC bombing will be identified as Arab/Muslim terrorists, they might not be a part of any established group. This raises an

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important question to consider. How can the WTC bombers be called terrorists if their identities and motivations were still unknown at the time?

ANALYZING POST-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY CSM

The first news story from CSM provides coverage of the 1993 WTC bombing. In the story, "Officials Aim To Assure Public After N.Y. Blast" (March 1, 1993) by Ron Scherer, the bombing was described as "may be the first major act of terrorism in year inside the United States." CSM quoted a number of counterterrorism experts and scholars who discussed what could be the possible impact of the terrorist attack, and who could have perpetrated it. One expert, a political science professor at George Washington University, was worried that the bombings could embolden other terrorist organizations to carry out their own attacks. Scherer’s article had a lot of historical background in it, and the main sources for articles like these are law enforcement officials, academics, or experts working at some sort of non-governmental organization. What a journalist interviews for a story could indicate a bias in his or her reporting. But how much credibility would the story gain or lose if a leader of Hamas or Hezbollah were to discuss the history of Islamic terrorism?

The fallout of the 1993 WTC bombing is felt in “Terrorist Incidents in the US Raise Immigration Concerns” (March 19, 1993) by John Dillin. The article opened with this question: “Political refugee? Or political terrorist?” In the wake of the bombing and the killing of two CIA employees outside their headquarters (which CSM refers to as a terrorist attack), some people have begun talking about putting more restrictions on so-called political refugees. How the system would be reformed was not discussed in detail, but it did pose an interesting question for policymakers: Under what circumstances are people considered to be political

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refugees? Dillin did a nice job balancing between those who want to keep the U.S.'s reputation as a political refuge intact, and those who believe a stronger security apparatus needs to be in place.

The next news story did not use the word terrorist to describe the non-state actors that are in conflict with each other. In “South Africans Seek Peace in Troubled Natal” (March 23, 1993) by John Battersby, the story describes how then-ANC president Nelson Mandela launched a peace initiative in response to “a wave of urban terror attacks against white civilians by black extremists.” But Battersby mostly described them as “gunmen,” not as terrorists, even though the conflict between the ANC, the IFP, the PAC and its military wing, the APLA, could be best described as politically-motivated violence. None of these organizations are described as terrorist organizations, but there is one particular sentence that bears mentioning. “The PAC, which joined multiparty negotiations earlier this month, has not admitted responsibility for the attacks. Some PAC leaders have condemned the shootings while others have said that the PAC will continue to negotiate while APLA continues with its revolutionary ‘armed struggle.’” I find it interesting Battersby used quotation marks around “armed struggle.” In writing, it’s common to use quotations are words as to express doubt in regards to the sincerity of the word or phrase. In this case, Battersby and the CSM seem to doubt the sincerity of PAC when they state that they are participating in an “armed struggle.”

CSM did not use the word terrorist to describe the Shining Path. In “Reign of Terror’ Over in Seat of Peru’s Maoist Revolution” (April 29, 1993) by Sally Bowen, the Shining Path is mostly described as a guerilla group that waged a “reign of terror” over the Peruvian

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What the difference is between that and a terrorist organization is not made readily clear. Thus far, however, it seems there is a difference in the portrayal of words like fundamentalist versus guerilla. Describing a group as being fundamentalist might say something about their views, whereas guerilla describes their tactics (also known as asymmetrical warfare). It does not seem derogatory to say Al Qaeda as waging a guerilla campaign against the United States. This means that the terms guerilla and terrorist/fundamentalist/extremist are not mutually exclusive. Shining Path may be initially described as a guerilla movement, but it can wage terror campaigns.

The same kind of use of the word guerrilla is found in the next story: “Guerrillas Put Cambodians’ Focus On Violence Instead of Elections” (May 14, 1993) by Kathy Chenault. She used the word “terror” only twice throughout the article. Both times it was used in the context of a “terror campaign” being waged by the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge falls into the same category as the Shining Path. It was described as a guerilla movement, but their actions made it difficult to not label them a terrorist organization as well.

The next CSM article returns to the subject of state-sponsored terrorism. In the news story, “Agents Step Up Efforts Against New Extremists” (June 28, 1993) by Ron Scherer, at one least terrorism expert from the RAND Corporation said that the terrorists that bombed the World Trade Center could “have some indirect ties with a foreign entity such as Iran,” which prompted him to ask: “If it is Iran, is it the Iranian government or a rival clerical faction?” This situation poses a problem for both journalists and policymakers; should terrorism sponsored by the state be interpreted as an act of war by other states. While these questions do pose problems

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for policymakers, they also pose challenges for journalists covering the particular news item. How you refer to a particular event can influence public opinion: calling the WTC bombing an act of war may provoke a different public reaction than if you refer to as a terrorist attack.

ANALYZING POST-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE NEW YORK TIMES

The first story from the New York Times concerns the bombing that occurred the previous day. In “A Tool of Foreign Terror, Little Known in the U.S.” (Feb. 27, 1993) by Douglas Jehl, there might be the first reference to the bombing as being a terrorist attack, even though nothing’s been officially confirmed yet. This article focuses on the car bomb, and how it has been used by terrorist organizations over time. Comparisons between previous car bombs and the one that exploded beneath the World Trade Center are mentioned as well.58

This kind of speculation was present in the next New York Times article that will be discussed. In “A Long List of Possible Suspects, as Inquiry Into the Bombings Begins” (Feb. 28, 1993) by Douglas Jehl, different terrorist organizations, nationalist groups, etc. were listed as possible perpetrators of the WTC bombing. Hezbollah ranked first on the list. Their “claim to fame” was their bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983, which killed 241 Americans. Other primary users of the car bomb include the Irish Republican Army (IRA), various drug cartels, and Puerto Rican nationalists, who have attacked the U.S. before. While the article had some good information on the history of the car bomb, it was for the most part speculation because nothing has been confirmed yet by official sources.59 And the lack of official sources could be in seen in a similar article published the same day. In “With Talk of a Bomb, Security Tightens” (Feb. 28, 1993) by Catherine S. Manegold, the possibility of the bombing being a terrorist attack was presented by a couple of terrorism experts, rather than just the

author’s speculation. One thing that should be noted after these past couple of stories is how they do not consider other possibilities, like the bombing being the product of a crazed individual or an act of war by another state.60

The next news story concerned the financial situation companies and government agencies. The financial situation presented in the news story, "Complex Insurance Issues in Aftermath of Explosion" (March 2, 1993) by Jon Nordheimer, was similar to an earlier news story of how Lloyd’s of London was offering insurance policies to cover terrorist attacks. Financial issues like these showcase why it was important to consider the impact of terrorism on the world-at-large. It should be noted that in this story, the incident is referred to as a bombing.61

In the analysis of one of the previous news stories, I’ve discussed how newspapers labeled terrorists as fundamentalists and militants. My hypothesis seemed to be partially undermined by the next article: “Algeria Police Report Killing 9 Muslim Fundamentalists” (March 3, 1993), credited to Reuters. The men the Algerian Police killed were described as fundamentalists but Reuters, but called terrorists by the authorities.62 So there seemed to be some sort of operational difference between fundamentalists and terrorists; that they are not synonymous terms. However, it bears pointing out that this might not be the New York Times’ doing; since the reporting was done by Reuters, it is possible that they see a difference between fundamentalists and terrorists enough so that they are not synonymous. Whereas the New York Times is a U.S.-based media outlet, Reuters is a news service based in London. They do have completely different editorial policies. For example, the five U.S. newspapers would describe the Sept. 11 attacks as being terrorist acts; Reuters, on the other hand, would not describe it as a

terrorist attack, much to the criticism of U.S. editors. In a letter sent to “editors of certain U.S. newspapers,” Reuters states that while they sympathize with their American compatriots, their policy is “avoid the use of emotional terms and not make value judgments concerning the facts we attempt to report accurately and fairly.”

The news story shifted from the subject of labeling terrorists to narco-terrorism. In “Old Drug Allies Terrorizing Escobar” (March 4, 1993) by James Brooke, it seemed Pablo Escobar was getting a taste of his own medicine: “a powerful faction of the Medellín cocaine cartel has turned on its godfather and vowed its destruction.” The same tactics that made Escobar a “veteran practitioner of terrorism” was being waged against him. But Brooke and the government viewed Escobar’s new enemies as terrorists. Brooke described them as a “paramilitary Medellín terrorist group known as Pepes” while the Colombian defense minister described their struggle as “a dirty war.” So while the government and Pepes might have had similar goals, the government viewed Pepes in the same light as Escobar. It is noteworthy that Brooke described Pepes as a terrorist organization, too. Describing them as vigilantes would have been accurate as well, and the word “vigilante” is less pejorative than terrorist.

In the last story from the New York Times, the focus shifts to Islamic terror. In “Throughout Arab World, 20 Years Of Growth of Islamic Terror Groups” (March 6, 1993) by Youssef M. Ibrahim, a number of organizations were described as having roots in Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. The Party of God (Hezbollah) and Hamas were mentioned, but the focus of the article is on the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. Although the group has reformed and did not advocate violent change, other groups were inspired to begin the Islamic

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63 http://homepage.mac.com/bkerstetter/writersblock/reutersexplanation.html
transformation in their own countries. This political motivation is one of the reasons why Hezbollah and Hamas can be defined as terrorist organizations.65

ANALYZING POST-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE SF CHRONICLE

The first SFC story focused on the terrorist stereotype of Muslims worldwide. In “American Muslims Meet in Solidarity” (Sept. 7, 1993) by Don Lattin, nearly 7,000 American Muslims gathered in Kansas City, Missouri and denounced what they saw as, in the words of one Islamic scholar, “a new demon being created by the media.” That demon, according to Islamic scholar Jamal Badawi, was this threat of Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic terrorism. This story was noteworthy because it showcased another side that might not be considered when covering terrorism. Usually, the appropriate authorities are interviewed, the terrorist apparatus might be interviewed, and the victims and/or witnesses might be interviewed. But there’s another side; the “indirect victims.” They are the American Muslims who are viewed with suspicion because of Muslim terrorists. They were the focus of this story, and the objections mentioned in this article can serve as lessons for the media when covering terrorist attacks. One Muslim leader from New York, Iman Siraj Wahhaj said, “Muslims are portrayed as terrorists to cover up the real terrorists. They call Muslims terrorists, but we are being terrorized all over the world—in Palestine and in Bosnia.”66 Wahhaj seemed to be referring to state terrorism. Wahhaj’s and Badawi’s statements in this article show how groups of people can feel alienated or offended when terrorists are described as being Muslim or Islamic; indeed, it produces the question of what kind of descriptors should be used when writing about terrorism. Is it necessary to include the supposed terrorist’s religion, race, political affiliation, and/or ethnicity?

The next article introduces the “lone wolf” terrorist. In "Serial Bomber Described as Perfectionist, Misfit" (Dec. 14, 1994) by Michael Taylor and Rob Haeseler, law enforcement officials “freely admit” that they have no idea who is the UNABOM killer. On Dec. 3, 1994, the Unabomber might have struck again, killing a New York City advertising executive when the executive in question attempted to open a package in his home. The Unabomber was not described as a terrorist or militant; indeed, in the words of one FBI agent who commented on the case, “His motive for the bombings is revenge, although this may not be apparent to any of the victims. The time span between the precipitating incident and the act of revenge may be quite lengthy.” In other words, law enforcement officials had no idea why the bombs are being mailed to their particular places. When the Unabomber was arrested in 1996, his political motivations would become clear. However, Taylor and Haeseler had only their interviews with law enforcement officials to go off of for their story.67

In the last article from the SFC, the prospect of a nuclear detonation by terrorists becomes the focus. In “Lab Chief Warns of Nuclear Terrorism” (March 23, 1994) by David Perlman, the chief of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory told Congress of how serious the threat of terrorists gaining a nuclear weapon in the aftermath of the 1993 WTC bombing. Specific terrorists are not mentioned, but the consequences of nuclear terrorism are listed, which includes the collapse of “the democratic nation-state” and the international economy.68

ANALYZING POST-1993 WTC BOMBING COVERAGE BY THE WASHINGTON POST

The first news story from the Washington Post focuses on domestic terrorism, obviously a hot topic in the aftermath of the WTC bombing. The story, “Domestic Terrorism Unusual in Recent Years, Authorities Say” (March 5, 1993) by R. Jeffrey Smith, discussed how domestic

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terrorism had become a rarity in recent years. The story started off with the sentence, "If the World Trade Center bombing turns out to have been a terrorist attack," because at this point, no motive had been determined yet. Smith wrote, "No official FBI determination has been made that the massive explosion was motivated by or meant to influence political events," and he even mentioned that the attack occurred on the "second anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait by U.S. and allied forces in the Persian Gulf War." Smith then delved into the history of domestic terrorism and how incidents dropped off. Interspersed throughout the article were definitions worth mentioning. According to Smith, the FBI defined a terrorist act as being a "violent act...against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian populations or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." This definition, however, did not include the bombing of abortion clinics. The article did not explain why abortion clinic attacks were not considered terrorist attacks, but a terrorism expert was quoted, "Our domestic violence tends to be caused by personal quarrels, not political causes...because the U.S. political systems tends to be co-optive." If I understand this correctly, it means the FBI considers abortion clinic attacks to be personally-motivated than politically-motivated. This seemed to be a useless distinction, as political ideology can become "personal," unless the FBI has determined that the attackers of abortion clinics are not doing so because of ideology, but for "personal quarrels."

The next Washington Post story about terrorism took an international view; Specifically, it concerned "terrorism associated with Islamic fundamentalism." The news story, "Experts: Islamic Extremists Pose an Aggressive Threat" (March 17, 1993) by R. Jeffrey Smith, seemed to be the "sequel" to his previous story on domestic terrorism. The tone and writing style of both stories were very similar. But while the sources in Smith's domestic terrorism were named, they

were anonymous in this story. Two organizations were named as terrorist organizations:
Hezbollah, which was called "Iran’s chief surrogate organization for terrorist acts," and Islamic
Jihad, "a fundamentalist Muslim group linked to Hezbollah in Lebanon." Other countries were
identified as state sponsors of terrorism. Iran was prominently named, but Syria was described as
trying to use legitimate means to resolve its conflicts (it does not mention if it is with Lebanon or
Israel), but "it might revert to supporting terrorism if the peace talks falter."70

The next news story goes back to narco-terrorism. But this story took place in Italy, not
Colombia. In the news story, "Revival of Terrorism in Italy Intensifies Aversions to Mafia,
State" (June 6, 1993) by Daniel Williams, numerous bombings across Italy killed many, and
people blamed the Mafia. The Mafia has been the target of a government crackdown, and these
bombs were believed to be acts of reprisal. But Williams wrote of how some people viewed the
government as responsible for the bombings. Specifically, he wrote that "each rally was tinged
not only with anti-Mafia but anti-government rage. Among the signs was ‘Down with State
Terror’ and ‘No to the Mafia.’" He added, "Charges that renegade secret police and
conspiratorial politicians and businessmen are responsible for the car bombs fill newspapers and
television papers."71 The protesters in this story remind me of the 9/11 Truth movement, which
contends that the U.S. government lied about and/or committed the 9/11 terrorist attacks
themselves.

In a news story that seems to reverberate with today’s headlines, staff writer Thomas W.
Lippman asked an important question that can be summed in the headline: "Is the World More
Violent, or Does It Just Seem That Way?" (July 1, 1993). With the WTC bombing still fresh
in people’s minds, and ethnic conflicts that seemed to be popping up all over the world, Lippman

71 Daniel Williams, "Revival of Terrorism in Italy Intensifies Aversions to Mafia, State," Washington Post, June 6,
1993, A30.
tried to address Americans’ worries that the world seems to be spiraling out of control. Lippman wrote that the end of the Cold War removed the “restraining influence” on rival ethnic groups. This violence would result terrorism, although Lippman noted that the violence is more global, but not necessarily occurring more.\textsuperscript{72} This story showcased how problems like terrorism can exist for decades.

The lasting impact of terrorism was brought up in the news story, \textit{“Pakistan Avoids U.S. Listing as Nation Supporting Terrorism”} (July 15, 1993) by R. Jeffrey Smith and Thomas W. Lippman. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Pakistan made serious efforts in curtailing terrorist activity occurring within the country’s borders, and has thus far stayed off the U.S. State Department’s list of state sponsors of terrorism. But the \textit{Post} reported that U.S. officials were accusing elements within the Pakistan government of allowing “Islamic fundamentalists who had been involved in the Afghanistan conflict to engage in terrorist activities in other nations from sanctuary in Pakistan.” Pakistan was also described as helpful in aiding the U.S.’s efforts to track down the Pakistani man who killed a couple of CIA employees outside of their headquarters.\textsuperscript{73} This story provided a helpful illustration of how entrenched terrorism can be within a country, even existing decades later.

The Haitian army was accused of being “engaged in massive terrorism” in the news story \textit{“Macabre Terrorism Targets Haitians; Aristide Backers Become Mutilated Corpses, Rights Workers Say”} (April 16, 1994) by Douglas Farah. The Haitian military, which overthrew democratically-elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was accused committing atrocities as part of a campaign of terror that was targeting Aristide’s supporters. For example,

the "systematic rape of women" would be inflicted on the "wives or relatives of men sought because they support Aristide." These attacks seemed to fit the definition of terrorism, given the political motivations.

THE SEPT. 11, 2001 TERRORIST ATTACKS

To say the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks of 2001 were a watershed moment in American history is an understatement. The attacks were this generation's "Kennedy assassination" or "attack on Pearl Harbor" moment; every American over five years old likely remembers where they were when they heard/saw the images from that day.

According to a variety of U.S. government agencies and reports (including the final report from the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States), 19 individuals took control of four airplanes during the morning of Sept. 11. At 8:46 a.m., American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, followed by United Airlines Flight 175 into the South Tower at 9:03 a.m. About a half hour later at 9:37 a.m., American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, and at 10:03 a.m., United Airlines Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville, Penn. A 2006 news story from CBS News put the final death toll for the terrorist attacks at 2,973.

The initial aftermath of the largest terrorist attack on U.S. soil since Pearl Harbor may have also produced the largest U.S. law enforcement investigation. Dubbed "PENTTBOM"

(a.k.a. Pentagon/Trade Towers Bombing Investigation), the FBI mobilized 7,000 of its 11,000 special agents within hours of the attacks to find who was responsible for the attacks. By the FBI’s own account, they had identified 19 hijackers using “flight, credit card, banking, and other records,” including handwritten letters in Arabic in three separate locations that “indicate an alarming willingness to die”. Within hours of the attack itself, the U.S. government had already accused Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden of orchestrating the attacks, which Bin Laden did admit in 2004.

The shockwaves of the Sept. 11 attacks would profound for American journalism. But before we can look at that, let’s examine the coverage of the five newspapers in the weeks leading up to it.

ANALYZING PRE-9/11 COVERAGE BY THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The first story from the Chicago Tribune from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is “19 Palestinians wounded in West Bank, Gaza battles; Sides attempting to set peace talks despite violence” (Sept. 1, 2001) by Karen Laub of the Associated Press. The word “terror” is only used once, in a quote from Israel’s defense minister. The Palestinian attackers were described as militants and then as gunmen. It was unknown which organization the militants were a part of, but it stands to reason that if their affiliation, it would have been published in the article.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad are probably some of the more well-known terrorist organizations operating in the Palestinian territories. But neither of those groups injured 12

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Israelis in a suicide bombing. In the story, "Suicide bomb injures 12 Rush-hour blast follows day of terror in Israel" (Sept. 4, 2001) by Hugh Dellios, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed credit for the attack through its military wing: The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigade. This story seemed to be straight forward, but I wonder if there was an assumption as to who committed the terrorist attack. Would Dellios have initially expected it to be Hamas because they are the bigwigs in this particular conflict?

For the first time in this capstone, the terrorism coverage focuses on Ireland, which has been simmering with conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants, the Irish and the British/Northern Irish, for hundreds of years. In the story, "Protestant bombing terrorizes schoolgirls" (Sept. 6, 2001) by Liz Sly, the word "terrorist" was only used once, in a quote from the protester. But that's it. The Red Hand was described as "a shadowy group of loyalist extremists," even after they detonated a bomb near a crowd of schoolgirls. But Irish groups may not be labeled terrorist organizations because of the newspaper's audience. Chicago has a large Irish population, and they might have sympathies with the IRA or their cause. As a result, the media in this area has to be careful how certain groups abroad are referred to.

The next news story covers a ceremony honoring the sailors of the USS Cole for their actions on Oct. 12, 2000 in Norfolk, Virginia. On that day, a bomb was detonated near the ship, killing 17 American sailors and wounding 37. In "Sailors saluted for USS Cole bravery after Yemen bombing" (Sept. 6, 2001), credited to Chicago Tribune news services, the bombing (which would be later credited to Al Qaeda) was referred to as a terrorist attack.

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83 Hugh Dellios, "Suicide bomb injures 12; Rush-hour blast follows day of terror in Israel," Chicago Tribune, September 4, 2001, 3.
85 Chicago Tribune news services, "Sailors saluted for USS Cole bravery after Yemen bombing,"
The next news story shifts back to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In “Arafat, Peres set talks; Announcement comes amid more Mideast violence” (Sept. 7, 2001) by Hugh Dellios, every kind of synonym for terrorism seemed to be used. The men who shot and killed a number of Israelis were not referred to as terrorists, but in other ways. Some were described as gunmen, while one prominent Fatah leader was referred to as a militia leader and “hit-squad commander.” I’ve stated earlier that I believe terms like fundamentalists and militants are used as synonyms to describe terrorists (without using that pejorative term), but terms like gunmen, militia leader and “hit-squad commander” pose a problem. They are very neutral terms, and while this can work for the newspaper, it is also very vague. There are several qualifiers for someone to be considered a terrorist or a fundamentalist; the only thing one needs to be considered a gunman is a gun. But this could also be the case of a journalist trying to use different words in an effort to keep their story from being redundant. In international relations, the terms nation, country and state all have very different meanings. Journalists, on the other hands, will use the three interchangeably. So it is possible that, in this case, Dellios used terms like gunmen and militia leader as a way to keep his story sounding interesting.

The last news story from the Chicago Tribune goes back to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in “Israeli Arab suspected in suicide blast; Day of Mideast violence kills 8, jeopardizes talks” (Sept. 10, 2001) by Hugh Dellios. In this story, the three Palestinians who were killed as part of the day’s violence were described as terrorists and militants, and the attacks themselves were referred to as terrorist attacks.

ANALYZING PRE-9/11 COVERAGE BY CSM

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The first CSM story showcased a common conundrum that plagues many efforts to combat terrorism. In “Terrorist trials: Missing someone?” (Feb. 8, 2001) by Peter Grier, that conundrum was holding the terrorist masterminds accountable for their actions. Grier wrote, “To some experts, locking up small fry does not much help [the fight against terrorism]. Bin Laden can always find another willing bomber.” In addition to Osama bin Laden, Grier listed Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi for his role in the Pan Am bombings of the 1980s. I found this to be particularly noteworthy because it directly implicates a head of state in a terrorist attack; even with the criticisms of Iran for being a state sponsor of terrorism, you do not hear Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or Ayatollah Khamenei being accused directly. The debate over how effective legal proceedings have been was ongoing throughout the article, but Grier noted that this approach has “helped contribute to a decline in state-sponsored terrorism,” with Iran being mentioned prominently.88

But bringing terrorists to justice can be close to impossible if the group cannot be found. Such was the case with the next news story: “Demands for a terrorist crackdown irk Greece” (March 29, 2001) by Andrew Marshall. In the story, one particular group stood out: the Revolutionary Organization November 17. Marshall described the political motivations of the group as being unfocused. The group’s name took inspiration from a past student uprising against the military junta. And each of November 17’s attacks have been “accompanied by a rambling justification based on a struggle against imperialism.” And while 23 people have been killed in the past 26 years, none of the organization’s members have been brought to justice, and as the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens get closer, a lot more people were starting to talk loudly about this lack of enforcement on the part of the Greek government.89

The next news story goes back to the Balkan conflict. In “Anger at Western truce may tip Macedonia balance” (June 27, 2001) by Arie Farnam, the principal organization involved was the National Liberation Army. They were first described as “ethnic-Albanian rebels” by Farnham. The refugees called them terrorist. But NLA was not described as terrorists, however, but as rebels, guerrillas and fighters at different points. It is hard to tell whether Farnham is using these words as synonyms for terrorist, but given from what we know about this conflict and how journalists try to use different words to describe the same thing in an effort to give some variety in their writing, it is possible Farnham was trying to show the “different sides” of the NLA through his use of words like rebels, guerrillas and fighters.

The next CSM story showcased a different kind of terrorism: eco-terrorism. Eco-terrorists can use the same kind of tactics as their Islamic fundamentalist counterparts, but instead of attacking political targets, they would attack targets that would affect the environment more directly. In the news story, “Eco-vandals put a match to ‘progress’” (July 5, 2001) by Laurent Belsie, the Earth Liberation Front took center stage. They have committed arson and vandalism against commercial property, like a biotech lab and a McDonald’s. Even though the political motivations of attacks like these were not overtly apparent, it could be argued that terrorism can also be defined as using violence to bring about societal change, which could include the political, religious, and environmental aspects as well. And in the long run, ELF would be seeking political change because aspects like legislation would ensure the permanent stoppage of the work of these bio firms.

The final CSM story focuses on how labeling certain groups as practitioners of terrorism can affect public policy. The story, “In Mideast, one weapon of choice is a loaded word” (July

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31, 2001) by Cameron W. Barr, started off with showing how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had become synonymous with the word terrorism: “After 10 months of strife, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is increasingly defined by ‘terrorism’ – both the act and the epithet.” Barr wrote, “In the West and particularly in the U.S., it is used to describe political groups that stoop to barbarism to advance their agenda.” But Arabs and Muslims felt that the causes they engaged in were unfairly described as being terrorism, as they believe it was simply a matter of “One’s man freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist.” Along these lines, they argued that colonial rebels of the American Revolutionary War would have been regarded as terrorists by the British. But the reason why the West has praised the American Revolution and not its Palestinian counterpart was the fact that the West did not agree with the latter. The word terrorism is “used to smear legitimate movements of resistance and national liberation whose interests do not mesh with the West’s.” Both Palestinians and Israelis accused each other of terrorism, and justified their own actions as self-defense. All in all, Barr’s article showcased the difficulties of defining terrorism, and how the “fallout” of these difficulties could translate to public policy.92

ANALYZING PRE-9/11 COVERAGE BY THE NEW YORK TIMES

The first New York Times article is similar to the last CSM story in that the labeling of the Palestinians as terrorists was the issue. In the story, “Israelis Grieve, And Strike Back” (Aug. 11, 2001) by Clyde Haberman, the Israeli civilians who were killed only hours before security forces took over Palestinian offices in Jerusalem were described as “victims of terrorism.” The Palestinian who committed the attack was described as a “terrorist” too, not fundamentalist or militant.93

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92 Cameron W. Barr, “In Mideast, one weapon of choice is a loaded word,” Christian Science Monitor, July 31, 2001, 1.
But labels are not so readily applied in other stories. In the next news story, “Shadowy Rebel Assures Macedonia That He Seeks Peace” (Aug. 17, 2001) by Ian Fisher, the National Liberation Army was at first described by NATO as being “terrorists” and “murderous thugs.” But since they were becoming more instrumental to the peace process, kinder labels have been used. For example, the leader was described as a “shadowy guerrilla leader, a pale graying dissident…” which, while maybe not the best description, is still better than being called a terrorist. Indeed, the NLA was only described as a guerrilla group and not a terrorist organization, even though it seems to fit all of the requirements of one.

The word “terror” was also used sparingly in the next news story. The attack chronicled in the Associated Press story, “West Bank Driver Killed by Rock; Palestinians Accuse Israelis” (Aug. 17, 2001), was not described as a terrorist attack, even though it was a “calculated attack.” The Palestinians interviewed said that Israelis drove up next to the driver of a car and threw a rock at his head, causing him to crash his car and die as a result. The attack was not labeled as terrorism, as it was unknown who threw the rock. As it has been stated earlier, it is hard to label an attack as an act of terrorism if the perpetrators are unknown.

There seemed to be no doubt in regards to identity in the next news story. In the Reuters story, “Militants Vow More Bombings to Avenge Deaths in Gaza” (Aug. 21, 2001), Hamas vowed revenge after the Israelis attacked some of their members. The word “terror” was used only in quotes from the foreign ministers of Israel and Germany. Hamas was described as militants, and their loudspeaker messages were quoted as well. But in the next news story, “Palestinians Reclaim Their Town After Israelis Withdraw” (Aug. 31, 2001) by Clyde

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Haberman, the Palestinians who were shooting at Israeli soldiers were described simply as gunmen, not militants or fundamentalists. Compared to militants and fundamentalists, gunmen are a politically-neutral term.

Yet as demonstrated in the last couple of news stories, and here as well, the Israelis do not mince words in regards to describing their enemies. They referred to the Palestinians who attack them as terrorists. In "Sharon Doubtful Talks Can Bring Truce in Mideast" (Sept. 8, 2001), the prime minister described the Palestinian Authority under Yassir Arafat as being a "kingdom of terror;" a very serious charge, especially since it was coming from the highest public official in the Israeli state, and the organization he was accusing was probably the most legitimate actor in that region. But Sharon was unapologetic in his tone, as it can be read throughout the article. There was also really no chance for the Palestinians to rebuff these remarks, as the article mainly focuses on Sharon and his political fortunes as a result of the conflict.98

ANALYZING PRE-9/11 COVERAGE BY THE SF CHRONICLE

The first SFC news story addresses the topic of symbolism in terrorism. There was a reason why Al Qaeda struck the targets they did five months after this story was published. In the story, "Date of infamy; From Lexington and Concord to Warsaw Ghetto, Oklahoma City" (April 19, 2001) by Suzanne Herel, the date "April 19" was examined because of its symbolism in relation to historical events. The battles that kick started the American Revolutionary War, Lexington and Concord, occurred on April 19, 1775; the Nazis began rounding up the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto on April 19, 1943; the U.S. government raided the Branch Davidian

compound in Waco on April 19, 1943; and Timothy McVeigh listed it as his birth date on the fake license he used to rent the truck that was used to bomb Oklahoma City. April 20 also has important historical symbolism. Not only is it Hitler’s birthday, but it’s also the date of the Columbine shootings. So there is a reason why government officials and security experts worry whenever a particular date comes around.

And one aspect that can be affected by terrorism was tourism. The headline of the story, “Youth give up trips to Israel; Bay Area parents say they’re worried about safety” (June 14, 2001) by Nanette Asimov and Don Lattin, summed it up pretty well. American parents were worried about having their children travel to Israel with the violence occurring there. But politics was inexorably pulled into the discussion, as the parents of the children did not wish their children to send “political messages” by having their children travel to the Holy Land. Rebuffing them were conservative rabbis, who insisted on traveling to the region despite the violence. This story is important when considering terrorism because of how divisive the issue can be for a population that’s facing it. As we’ve seen in our own country following the Sept. 11 attacks, there can be serious questions as to what kind of lifestyle changes that need to occur in response to terrorism. And then of course, there’s the question of whether the changes are overreactions or necessary for survival.

ANALYZING PRE-9/11 COVERAGE BY THE WASHINGTON POST

Looking at the Washington Post’s coverage of terrorism and terrorist-related activities, there were not a lot of stories that occurred within a couple of months before the Sept. 11 attacks. The State Department’s list of countries that sponsor terrorism was the subject of the first story,

100 Nanette Asimov and Don Lattin, “Youth give up trips to Israel; Bay Area parents say they’re worried about safety,” San Francisco Chronicle, June 14, 2001, C2.
“Sudan, N. Korea Cited For Gains on Terrorism” (May 1, 2001) by Alan Sipress. The aforementioned countries cooperated with the U.S., but not enough to get them removed from the list. Both Sudan and North Korea have harbored terrorists; Al Qaeda has taken sanctuary in Sudan, while North Korea has sheltered the Japanese Communist League-Red Army Faction. The article did not go into detail on what it takes to get on the list, or what countries have to do to get off it. Sipress did not mention what kind of support, other than sanctuary, the two countries might have given their respective terrorist organizations.101

The next news story, “Future Dim for Iran-U.S. Relations; Two Sides Unable to Overcome Decades of Mistrust and Charges of Terrorism” (June 21, 2001) by Molly Moore, seemed to have themes that reverberate today. One major obstacle in restarting relations between the U.S. and Iran was terrorism. Iran argued it has done no such thing, although Moore included this very interesting line: “Most international observers say that any international terrorism committed by Iran was authorized by the conservative religious side of the state, which controls the Revolutionary Guards and other security services.”102 This was worth mentioning because of an earlier-mentioned news story that connected terrorism with religious fundamentalism; if we were to accept this as a commonality, then it would make sense for the religious establishment of Iran to be responsible for such attacks, or at least be the “inspiration” for it. It should also bear mentioning that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards were later deemed a terrorist organization by the U.S. in 2007.

The next trilogy of news stories related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in some way. In “Bush and Sharon Spar Over Mideast; President Sees ‘Progress’; Israelis Say Palestinians Must End Attacks” (June 27, 2001) by Mike Allen, the difficulty of governments cooperating

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on fighting terrorism is showcased. Here, the U.S. and Israel disagreed on how the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians must proceed. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Israel will not negotiate under the threat of terror that was presented by Palestinian militants. It should be noted that, in this story, the word terror was only used in quotes attributed to Sharon. Although violence between the Israelis and Palestinians was mentioned as the reason for stopping the peace talks, there was only one mention of militant Palestinians. The focus of the story was on the disagreement between the U.S. and Israel.103

The next news story was more violence-focused. In “An Unlikely Gunman Sprays Israeli Crowd” (Aug. 6, 2001) by Lee Hockstader, we’re introduced to Ali Joulani, a seemingly-regular Palestinian resident of Journalism who opened fire on a crowd of soldiers and civilians, hurting 10. Joulani died later from his injuries sustained in a gunfight and car chase. While the story mentioned Hamas a lot towards the end of the story, Joulani was depicted as not having ties to any militant/terrorist organization. While the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the background of the attack, neither Joulani nor his incident was directly described as a terrorist attack.104 A better analogy I believe can be found in the movie Falling Down; like Michael Douglas’s character in the 1993 movie, it seems that Joulani decided one day that enough was enough and went on a shooting spree.

In the next news story, “Palestinians Protests Seizure Of Jerusalem Headquarters” (Aug. 12, 2001) by Daniel Williams, the Palestinians were rebuffed by Israeli police from entering their political headquarters in Jerusalem. This occurred as they tried “to answer uncomfortable questions about the role of terror in their struggle.” The word terror was only mentioned twice in the article, but the uncomfortable questions about how the Palestinians used

terror to protest their political and humanitarian conditions were present, and remain unanswered by the end of the article.105

ANALYZING DAY OF AND POST-9/11 COVERAGE – ALL

The best way to describe the American news coverage of the Sept. 11 attacks comes from Stu Werner, the Chicago Tribune's national/foreign copy desk chief. In his e-mail to me on the use of the word “terrorism” in Chicago Tribune articles, Werner wrote this in regards to how the Tribune defines it: “A starting point is the Webster's New World Dictionary, which defines terrorism as the ‘use of force or threats to demoralize, intimidate and subjugate, especially such use as a political weapon or policy.’ The final clause of that definition bears the most weight for us. It is clear, for example, that al-Qaeda’s use of violence against civilians is a political weapon; there is no point in dancing around the word ‘terrorism’ in cases such as 9/11.” Indeed, this seemed to be the case with all of the newspapers examined in this thesis. Not only were the attacks regarded as terrorism, but the words terror, terrorist, and terrorism become the subject of an extremely large amount of news stories. Using the Chicago Tribune as an example, a ProQuest Newspaper search using the words terror, terrorist, and terrorism in news stories published between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 18, 2001 generates 174 news stories. Because of the sheer volume of stories, and the realization that they would all say the same thing in regard to the 9/11 attacks, an analysis of news stories from this particular time period will not be done.

THE 2009 FORT HOOD SHOOTINGS

On Nov. 5, 2009, a gunman killed 13 people and wounded 30 others at Fort Hood, located outside of Killeen, Texas. U.S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan is the sole suspect, and he has been charged with at least 13 counts of murder. Hasan served as an army psychiatrist, and

as subsequent news stories will show later, he has been associated with radical Islam, going so far as to contact a radical cleric for guidance on his situation of being a Muslim in a military that, in his point of view, seems to be targeting Muslims.

ANALYZING PRE-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

In the first story from the Chicago Tribune, President Obama was weighing the options for continuing the war in Afghanistan with the news story, "Afghan war: 8 years and vexing; Obama mulls options on anniversary, meets advisers on Pakistan" (Oct. 10, 2008) by Christi Parsons. Terrorism was mentioned as a motive for the war, and the presence of Al Qaeda in the country was mentioned by Obama as being one of the reasons why he wants American forces in Afghanistan. The issue of terrorism in Afghanistan is further elaborated on in the next story, "Militants are killed in Afghan gun battle; Forces storm compound used by al-Qaida leader" (Oct. 12, 2009) by Rahim Faiez and Heidi Vogt. In this story, coalition forces raided mountainside compound that was being used by Al Qaeda. The 12 dead Al Qaeda members were described as "militants" and "insurgents." It's interesting that terrorist was synonymous with insurgent in this article, because I was under the impression that the majority of political scientists and even military officials saw a difference between fighting terrorism and fighting an insurgency. News reporting might not see the difference.

The next story brings us back to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the Associated Press story, "Palestinians demand U.N. action; Debate on Gaza war report to reopen over Israeli protest" (Oct. 15, 2009). In this story, the Israeli government denounced the Goldstone report, which accused both Israeli forces and Palestinian militants of war crimes, as being "favor[ing]..."
and legitimizing terrorism.”108 Indeed, this story seemed to deal with the adage “one man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist.” Both the Israelis and the Palestinians claim they are fighting for a legitimate cause, and even though the report criticizes both sides, it should be no surprise that the Israelis viewed the report in this light.

The trial of a Bradley University graduate named Ali al-Marri, who was accused of aiding Al Qaeda in researching chemical weapons, is the focus of the story, “Al-Qaida conspirator near sentencing; Man attended college in Peoria and terrorist camps in Pakistan” (Oct. 26, 2009) by Joel Hood. Al-Marri was not referred to as a terrorist; instead, he was usually referred to by his last name or as an “Al Qaeda conspirator.” But the more important issue in the case was whether a U.S. citizen could be declared an “enemy combatant” and be held indefinitely. Later, when al-Marri was sentenced to 8 ½ years, he is described as an “al-Qaida sleeper agent,” which is pretty synonymous with terrorist.

The same kind of storytelling occurs in a couple of other news stories as well. In “2nd Chicago man held in terror plot; FBI takes suspect into custody before flight from O’Hare” (Oct. 27, 2009) by Hal Dardick and Jeff Coen, the two Chicago men who have been arrested for their alleged role in a future terrorist attack were not directly described as terrorists.109 Their motive was clarified in a later news story, “Terror plot suspect seeks bail; Attorney sees little proof client planned newspaper attack” (Oct. 29, 2009) by Jeff Coen. The two men, Tahawwur Hussain Rana and David Coleman Headley, were allegedly conspiring to murder an editor and a cartoonist in retaliation for the Muhammad cartoons that were published a couple of

109 Hal Dardick and Jeff Coen, “2nd Chicago man held in terror plot; FBI takes suspect into custody before flight from O’Hare,” Chicago Tribune, October 27, 2009, 8.
years ago.\textsuperscript{110} A news story from the \textit{Chicago Tribune} published two days later did a larger profile of Headley, painting him as a terrorist mastermind of sorts. In the story, \textbf{"In alleged terror plot, a troubling twist; Experts surprised by charges of American trying Denmark attack"} by Sebastian Rotella, Headley was portrayed as possibly having connections with a wide variety of terrorist/extremist organizations and traveling to other countries using his occupation as an immigration consultant.\textsuperscript{111} Jumping ahead to coverage after the 2009 Fort Hood shootings, in the story \textbf{"2 arrested in Chicago eyed for Mumbai links"} (Nov. 19, 2009) by Emily Wax, both Rana and Headley were charged with terrorism. The Indian government was also investigating to whether they had connections to the Mumbai terrorist attacks.\textsuperscript{112} While it seems that everyone but the newspaper itself is calling them terrorists, newspapers would be careful not to do so until they have been convicted by a court, so they are not sued for libel.

The next story from the \textit{Chicago Tribune} shifts to Baghdad. In the story, \textbf{"Bombings kill 147 in Baghdad; 2 suicide blasts may be linked to upcoming vote"} (Oct. 26, 2009), which is not credited to any reporter, terrorism was not used to describe a pair of suicide bombings that killed 147 people in downtown Baghdad. But the story noted that the bombings "appeared to be the latest attempt to undermine Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s government at a time of rising political tensions over crucial national elections due to be held in January." Al-Maliki accused "remnants of Saddam Hussein’s Baathist regime and the militant group in al-Qaida in Iraq" for this politically-fueled attack, but the attackers themselves were not referenced in the story.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{110} Jeff Coen, "Terror plot suspect seeks bail; Attorney sees little proof client planned newspaper attack," \textit{Chicago Tribune}, October 29, 2009, 13.
\textsuperscript{111} Sebastian Rotella, "In alleged terror plot, a troubling twist; Experts surprised by charges of American trying Denmark attack," \textit{Chicago Tribune}, October 31, 2009, 7.
\textsuperscript{113} Unknown, "Bombings kill 147 in Baghdad; 2 suicide blasts may be linked to upcoming vote," \textit{Chicago Tribune}, October 26, 2009, 11.
However, it is reasonable to assume that Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Saddam loyalists are considered to be terrorists.

The word terrorism was also absent in the coverage of a Taliban attack that left five U.N. humanitarian workers dead. The story, "Attack on U.N. staff imperils Afghan aid effort; Workers on lockdown, American among dead after Taliban raid kills 8" (Oct. 29, 2009) by Alexandra Zavis, was still filed under “terrorism,” however. There was a clear political motivation, according to a Taliban spokesperson: They “targeted U.N. employees because of their assistance with the Nov. 7 runoff election between President Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah.” It does not make sense why terrorism would be absent in the story, unless it has something to do with who perpetrated it. Had Al Qaeda perpetrated the attack, it might have been called an act of terrorism.

Words were not minced in the next news story though. The titular blast in the story, "Women kids bear bomb’s brunt; Blast in Pakistan kills 100, injures 200 at market" (Oct. 29, 2009) by Alex Rodriguez, was described as being one of the worst terrorist strikes in the city’s history. A direct political motivation was not mentioned, but the attack “overshadowed the first day of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton’ three-day visit to Pakistan to discuss the ongoing fight against militants and to counter growing anti-American sentiment here.” The attacks were also done in accordance with asymmetrical warfare principles, including suicide bombings and “commando-style attacks.” By the end of the story, the reader is left with very little doubt that there are terrorist attacks occurring in Pakistan.

ANALYZING PRE-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY CSM

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115 Alex Rodriguez, “Women kids bear bomb’s brunt; Blast in Pakistan kills 100, injures 200 at market,” Chicago Tribune, October 29, 2009, 14.
State-sponsored terrorism is the focus of the story, “Geithner: Be vigilant of terror financing risk from Iran banks” (Oct. 6, 2009) by Kristen Chick. U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner accused Iranian financial institutions of being involved with money laundering for and financing terrorist groups. As such, he warned that members of the international community need to be careful when dealing with them. While it’s nothing new for the U.S. and Iran to accuse each other of sabotage and terrorism, it was significant that the head of the U.S.’s financial system is leveling the charge against his counterparts. Whereas in the past U.S. government officials have talked about the rogue elements of the Iranian government that supporting terrorism, asserting that the entire system is to be suspected implies that the support of terrorism in Iran is deep and endemic.

One of Barack Obama’s first acts as president was ordering the closing of Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. But the legal issues presented by the prison seem to live on elsewhere, as chronicled in “Obama’s Guantanamo, counterterror policies similar to Bush’s?; Afghanistan’s Bagram is becoming the new Guantanamo, one legal scholar said at a gathering of the American Constitution Society” (Oct. 16, 2009) by Warren Richey. Here, the supposed terrorists were referred to as detainees, perhaps because there were questions as to whether those residing in Guantanamo Bay and Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan were guilty of what they have been accused of.

The next story was like many other news stories about American citizens/residents who have been accused of terrorism. The portrayal of Tarek Mehanna in the story, “FBI outlines case against Tarek Mehanna in terror plot; Massachusetts resident Tarek Mehanna,

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117 Warren Richey, “Obama’s Guantanamo, counterterror policies similar to Bush’s?; Afghanistan’s Bagram is becoming the Guantanamo, one legal scholar said at a gathering of the American Constitution Society,” Christian Science Monitor, October 16, 2009, N/A.
arrested Wednesday, plotted to attack Americans at a shopping mall, FBI says. Failing
that, he tried cyberattacks” (Oct. 22, 2009) by Mark Clayton, was less than flattering. Clayton
depicted him as a “terrorist wannabe,” trying in earnest be like them but always failing. What’s
notably different about this story compared to others is that, at the end of this story, there’s no
room for reasonable doubt. Even though Mehanna was not convicted yet, Clayton’s writing left
the reader with the impression that he was a terrorist—or tried to be one.118

The portrayal of Mehanna was markedly different than CSM’s depiction of Rana and
Headley, the two Chicago men accused of terrorism. In “FBI arrests two Chicago men for
Danish terror plot” (Oct. 27, 2009) by Warren Richey, the portrayal of Rana and Headley was a
lot more “positive.” In Mehanna’s story, not a lot of sources were used in the narrative. How
Richey wrote his story on Rana and Headley was different. He relied on his sources more, which
gave him credibility. But he was also relating the government’s side of the story, which might be
the only source in a story like this. The government can be wrong, and Richey seemed to keep
this in mind more so than Clayton.

ANALYZING PRE-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY THE NEW YORK TIMES

The first New York Times story focused on American citizens/residents being arrested and
charged for terrorism. In “Officials Focus on New Suspects in Terror Case” (Oct. 9, 2009) by
William K. Rashbaum and David Johnston, airport shuttle bus driver Najibullah Zazi was
described as a suspect, rather than a terrorist. They’re also sure to note that they had not been

118 Mark Clayton, “FBI outlines case against Tarek Mehanna in terror plot; Massachusetts resident Tarek Mehanna,
arrested Wednesday, plotted to attack Americans at a shopping mall, FBI says. Failing that, he tried cyberattacks,”
Christian Science Monitor, October 22, 2009, N/A.
charged yet. Like the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Times* seemed to take extra precautions when writing about Americans who were charged with or suspected of terrorism.

In a news story still playing out today, the U.S. was pressuring Pakistan to crack down on the terrorists operating inside its borders. In “Pressure From U.S. Strains Ties With Pakistan” (Oct. 26, 2009) by Jane Perlez, the word “terrorist” was equated with “guerrillas” and “militants.” However, it should be noted that while “militants” is used to describe members of Al Qaeda, the term guerrilla was used to describe both the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and some scholars would argue there is a big difference between the two groups.

The next news story from the *New York Times* asks what the guidelines for domestic law enforcement are when it comes to guarding against terrorism. The story, “Loosening of F.B.I. Rules Stirs Privacy Concerns” (Oct. 28, 2009) by Charlie Savage, began by mentioning the suicide bombing committed by a Somalian teen from Minneapolis, which is a reference to a previous *Chicago Tribune* story of how a section of Minneapolis has been nicknamed “Little Mogadishu.” With such a heightened concern for terrorism, the FBI implemented a number of rules internally that tried to balance between the needs for security and liberty. The rest of the story read like a debate, with the FBI, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the group Muslim Advocates chimed in with its two cents as to how to fight terrorism. The FBI has a little more leeway on terrorism than perhaps would be given to other crimes. This should be noted because if the government has easier restrictions on how terrorism is investigated and prosecuted, this will affect how newspapers will report the relevant news items.

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The last news story from the *New York Times* concerned the aftermath of the Goldstone report, which criticized both the Israelis and Hamas for their recent war in the Gaza Strip. In the story, “U.N. Set to Endorse Inquiry Into Possible War Crimes in Gaza” (Nov. 4, 2009) by Neil MacFarquhar, there was a particular sentence that should be highlighted. MacFarquhar writes, “Israel said its actions were determined by the need to defend itself against rockets fired by Hamas into Israeli cities, which it called terrorist attacks.” Using this kind of phrasing indicated that the *New York Times* did not consider Hamas’s rocket attacks to be terrorist attacks, or was trying to be unbiased in their reporting. Other than this, and the following quote from the Israeli ambassador to the U.N., there were no other references to terrorism in the story.122

**ANALYZING PRE-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY THE *SF CHRONICLE***

While the *SFC* covered terrorism and the different facets of it, there was not much in the way of identifying certain persons or organizations as terrorist entities. In the first *SFC* installment, eco-terrorism and how to define it was the focus of the story: “*Free speech or animal-rights terrorism?*” (March 20, 2009) by Henry K. Lee. The animals rights activists on trial for allegedly intimidating a researcher at her home were arguing that the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, which was supposed to protect researchers and their operations from violence or threats, was an infringement of their First Amendment rights. The question becomes a matter of definition then: At what point does free speech become action, and should that action be regarded as terrorism? One concern with this law is that it could have a chilling effect on the right to peacefully protest. The husband of the researcher was allegedly struck by an object, but that has not been reported as definitive. The activists were reported as having flyers with the message: “Animal abusers everywhere beware we know where you live.” That can be an

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intimidating message, but is it terrorism? I believe the threshold should be harmful action. Protesting outside of someone’s home is one thing, but as long as it is not seen as intimidating. And even if a court calls it intimidating, they should not be charged as terrorists.

Fighting terrorism in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks allowed the U.S. government a lot of leeway, which was the subject of the news story “Judge hears Bush wiretapping case” (Sept. 24, 2009) by Bob Egelko. The Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, which was labeled a terrorist organization by the government in 2004, was over this question: How much power does the U.S. government have when it comes to fighting terrorism? It should be noted that the foundation was first referred to as “defunct Islamic charity” and that it denied being a terrorist outfit. The foundation maintained that the government used illegal wiretapping in shutting down their operations. The style and tone of the story was similar to an earlier story by Bob Egelko: “Ashcroft can be sued over jailing ‘witness’” (Sept. 5, 2009). While some of the details were different, the news story raised similar questions: How much power does the U.S. government have when it comes to fighting terrorism, and do groups and individuals have any recourse if they are falsely accused of terrorism? In 2003, the FBI arrested Abdullah al-Kidd, a U.S. citizen, as he was deemed a material witness in another case against Sami Omar Al-Hussayen, “the alleged computer Webmaster of a radical Islamic organization.” FBI Director Robert Mueller described al-Kidd’s arrest as “one of the bureau’s ‘major successes’ in ‘identifying and dismantling terrorist networks.’” But Al-Hussayen was acquitted, and al-Kidd sued because, in a way, his life has been ruined: He lost his job and hasn’t found steady work since, and he is separated from his wife. This was an instance where the government declared for sure that it arrested a terrorist, and then months later, the charges were dropped. Newspapers do play a role

in this, as they’ll certainly report the fact that the government has arrested someone for terrorism. It is hard to take that back once that kind of information is out there.

ANALYZING PRE-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY THE WASHINGTON POST

The first piece from the Washington Post used several nouns to describe terrorism. In fact, the story, “Obama's Battle Against Terrorism To Go Beyond Bombs and Bullets” (Aug. 6, 2009) by Spencer S. Hsu and Joby Warrick, was about how the Obama administration was trying to frame its efforts to combat terrorism without using the phrase “war on terror.” Terrorists like Al Qaeda were described as violent extremists, while areas like the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, Yemen, and Somalia were described as “terrorist havens.” The unmanned drone attacks the U.S. conducted in Pakistan were described as hitting terrorist training facilities, killing a number of people. Unfortunately, the story did not mention who the 360 people killed were, but it’s safe to assume that number includes terrorists and innocent civilians as well.126

The next story from the Washington Post concerns the Bush administration’s use of “enhanced interrogation techniques” on “suspected terrorists.” The most notable part of the story, “Cheney: Interrogations Probe Is a ‘Political Act’” (Aug. 31, 2009) by Alexi Mostrous, was the phrase “Sept. 11 terror suspects.”127 The reason why was because it seemed out of place with the rest of the articles that have been reviewed already. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed has been described as the alleged mastermind of 9/11; using “suspects” is a much more neutral term.

There was a certain irony in analyzing the next news story as to who’s considered to be a terrorist. Presumably, all identified terrorists were kept from flying because of the government’s “no-fly list.” But who was on the list was being kept from the public by the government, as

126 Spencer S. Hsu and Joby Warrick, “Obama’s Battle Against Terrorism To Go Beyond Bombs and Bullets,” Washington Post, August 6, 2009, A03
chronicled in the story, "Administration Seeks to Keep Terror Watch-List Data Secret" (Sept. 6, 2009) by Ellen Nakashima. As discussed in previous stories, the government could be wrong in its identification of terrorists. This possibility of error has certainly extended to the no-fly list. Nakashima wrote, "in one instance, an individual remained on the list nearly five years after the underlying terrorism case had been closed, the [Justice Department] report found.”

According to the Terrorist Screening Center, which compiles and keeps the list, a person is on the list if he or she is “known or appropriately suspected to be or have been engaged in conduct constituting, in preparation for, in aid of, or related to terrorism.” Over 1.1 million possible names are on the list, but they only correspond to about 400,000 individuals, meaning there is bound to be room for error.128 But there are security reasons for it. If terrorists and other extremist knew they were on the list, they would avoid airports entirely.

The next news story from the Washington Post deals with Najibullah Zazi, the shuttle bus driver who was mentioned as a suspect in a previous New York Times story. In the Associated Press story “Details Emerge in Terror Probe; Handwriting Links Man to Notes on Making Bomb, Records Say” (Sept. 21, 2009), Zazi was also described as a suspect who’s been implicated in a terror plot. Like the previous New York Times story, he mostly referred to by his last name and not “accused terrorist” or anything of the like.129

ANALYZING 2009 FORT HOOD SHOOTINGS COVERAGE – ALL

In the following articles, there is considerable debate as to whether the actions of Hasan should be regarded as simple acts of murder, or motivated by his apparent radical ideology.

Because he was serving in the U.S. Army at the time of the shooting, there seems to be a

hesitation to label the shooting as a terrorist attack. I wonder if the description would be different if Hasan was not a soldier, but a civilian.

ANALYZING POST-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The first news story from the *Chicago Tribune* that will be examined following the 2009 Fort Hood shooting concerns the aforementioned attack. In the story, “Suspect was trained in treating stress disorders; Relatives say war stories turned him against military” (Nov. 6, 2009) by Julian E. Barnes and Andrew Zajac, the shooting was not labeled as a terrorist act, and Nidal Malik Hasan is first described as a “suspect in a murderous shooting spree.” An unnamed senior U.S. counterterrorism official was saying that federal law enforcement had been watching Hasan because “in part due to inflammatory e-mails he sent.” But at this point, why Hasan was being monitored was not mentioned.130 It was not until a couple of days later when a possible link between Hasan and Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S. scholar living in Yemen who was being described as a radical Islamist, was reported in the *Chicago Tribune*. The story, “Suspect, imam link alleged; Hasan reportedly admired radical linked to Sept. 11 hijackers” (Nov. 9, 2009) by Barry Shlachter, did not directly refer to Hasan as a terrorist, but the tone was starting to change. A connection, if tenuous, was being made between him and the 9/11 hijackers, and Sen. Joe Lieberman called the shooting an act of “Islamic extremism.”131

The coverage of terrorism shifted to the White House in the next story from the *Chicago Tribune*. In the story, “Obama narrowing Afghanistan options; 4 basic plans for troop increases reviewed as he meets top advisers” (Nov. 11, 2009) by Christi Parsons and Julian E. Barnes, President Obama was weighing plans for Afghanistan that will offer an adequate

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130 Julian E. Barnes and Andrew Zajac, “Suspect was trained in treating stress disorders; Relatives say war stories turned him against military,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 6, 2009, 16.

response to the country’s terrorist and insurgency problem, although no specifics were mentioned.\textsuperscript{132}

Shifting back to the 2009 Fort Hood shootings, it became further unclear as to whether Hasan was a murderer or a terrorist when the court charges him. As it can be inferred from the headline, \textit{“Fort Hood suspect charged 13 counts of murder”} (Nov. 13, 2009), which is not credited to anyone, Hasan was charged with murder, not terrorism. FBI officials were later quoted saying, “it appears Hasan acted alone and was not involved in terrorist activities when a terrorism task force crossed paths with him last year.” However, more charges might be brought up.\textsuperscript{133} At the same, in the unaccredited story, \textit{“President sets Hasan intel probe”} (Nov. 13, 2009), the government was also looking to how they missed the signs that Hasan had “apparent sympathies for jihadists.” Counterterrorism officials were investigating the matter, so while the government was sure that Hasan’s crimes were simple murder, the personnel they’re using to investigate says otherwise.\textsuperscript{134}

Similar to the saga of the two Chicago men who were being tried for terrorism, this next news story focused on American citizens/residents who have also been charged for terrorism. Although the focus of \textit{“Eyes on ‘Little Mogadishu’; Terrorism probe centers on Somali area of Minneapolis”} (Nov. 25, 2009) by Bob Drogin, was on the elements of the town itself, the men who were mentioned as having been arrested for terrorism were not described as terrorists yet because they, like Rana and Headley, had not been convicted yet.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{132} Christi Parsons and Julian E. Barnes, “Obama narrowing Afghanistan options; 4 basic plans for troop increases reviewed as he meets top advisers,” \textit{Chicago Tribune}, November 11, 2009, 14.
\textsuperscript{133} Unknown, “Fort Hood suspect charged with 13 counts of murder,” \textit{Chicago Tribune}, November 13, 2009, 12.
The next story was published when the controversy over whether the Thomson Prison in Illinois should become, as critics would call it, the “next Guantanamo Bay.” The story, “Where terrorists are their neighbors; Florence, Colo., prison hasn’t had the security problems some fear with Thomson facility” (Nov. 25, 2009) by Kristen Schorsch, was more useful in learning who the government and the Chicago Tribune considered to be terrorists. The list included Zacarias Moussaoui (who is sometimes called the “20th hijacker” of 9/11), Richard Reid (the infamous “Shoe Bomber”), Ramzi Yousef (described as the mastermind of the 1993 WTC bombing), Ted Kaczynski (the Unabomber), and Jose Padilla (the former Chicago gang member who was allegedly trying to detonate a dirty bomb in the city).  

Identification was an issue in the next story, “Russia: Bomb caused deadly train derailment” (Nov. 29, 2009) by Sergei L. Loiko. The Russian government seemed to be jumping the gun in calling a bombing an act of terrorism even though no one has been identified yet.  

ANALYZING POST-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY CSM

The first CSM story focused on whether Hasan’s actions were murder or an act of terrorism. In the story, “Fort Hood: How Nidal Malik Hasan’s path more radical” (Nov. 17, 2009) by Patrik Jonsson, Hasan’s “self radicalization” was mentioned, as well as his recommendations that Muslim soldiers should be granted conscientious objector status. But in Jonsson’s follow up story, “Fort Hood Senate hearings risk politicizing Hasan investigation” (Nov. 19, 2009), he wrote that a number of U.S. Senators could use the hearings to criticize President Obama’s initiatives to reach out to the Muslim world. Jonsson wrote how the

136 Kristen Schorsch, “Where terrorists are their neighbors; Florence, Colo., prison hasn’t had the security problems some fear with Thomson facility,” Chicago Tribune, November 25, 2009, 1.
administration was careful to not use the words "war on terror" or "jihad" in discussions of terrorism, as they believed it "risks giving these murderers the religious legitimacy they desperately seek but in no way deserve." That did not stop Sens. Joe Lieberman and John McCain from asking whether the Fort Hood shooting was a terrorist incident, as can be read in Jonsson’s other story, "Senators say Fort Hood shooting was terrorism" (Nov. 19, 2009). The main reason behind the probe was this question: Why did Hasan do it? Was he motivated by ideology, or did he crack and lash out in an extreme way? Perhaps the question was better answered in another article from Jonsson: “Fort Hood suspect: Portrait of a terrorist?” (Nov. 9, 2009). Jonsson quoted security expert Bruce Hoffman, who said terrorism is "violence designed to register some protest and/or to change the outcome of some political issue. Certainly this type of leaderless terrorism is not an organic phenomenon. Terrorist organizations are actively encouraging people – through the Internet and other means – to engage in violence of their own." By this standard, and knowing Hasan’s misgivings about American soldiers fighting in what he sees as a war on Islam, it is quite possible that Hasan’s shooting was a terrorist incident.

As more details became known, I believe that the Fort Hood shootings can be accurately described as a terrorist attack. It met all of the prerequisites for it. But whether the shootings were a terrorist attack or not was irrelevant to one group of people: Muslim Americans. In “Fort Hood shootings: US Muslims feel new heat” (Nov. 22, 2009) by Michael B. Farrell, leaders of different U.S. Muslim groups talked about how incidents like these “are coloring perceptions

about Muslims." Muslim groups have since tried to improve relations between the Muslim community and law enforcement, but the voice of moderates tend to get drowned out by the likes of radicals like Anwar al-Awlaki.\footnote{Michael B. Farrell, "Fort Hood shootings: US Muslims feel new heat," \textit{Christian Science Monitor}, November 22, 2009, 21.}

Taking a break from the Hasan coverage, the next \textit{CSM} story was a listing of all the terrorism trials that have occurred in New York City. The number of trials earned the city the nickname that also serves as the headline of the story: "\textbf{New York, terror trial capital of the US}" (Nov. 19, 2009) by Leigh Montgomery and Elizabeth Ryan. Outside of the trials for the culprits of the 1993 WTC bombing, other terrorists that went on trial for their actions (or attempted actions) include "Blind Cleric" Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman (the "Day of Terror" trial), Ramzi Yousef (the "Manila Air" plot), the 22 terrorists behind the East African embassy bombings, among others. This story provided a good index of who the government considered to be terrorists.\footnote{Leigh Montgomery and Elizabeth Ryan, "New York, terror trial capital of the US," \textit{Christian Science Monitor}, November 19, 2009, 2}

In the next installment, two "Pakistani nationals" were named by Italian authorities as being involved with the Mumbai attacks in India. The news story, "\textbf{Italy arrests four men accused of funding Mumbai terror attacks}" (Nov. 23, 2009) by Anna Momigliano, portrayed the two Pakistanis in question in a better light than suspects in other stories. In particular, an Italian strategic studies professor talked of how his own country devalued international terrorism because it has such pressing problems with organized crime and domestic terrorism (like the Red Brigades).\footnote{Anna Momigliano, "Italy arrests four men accused of funding Mumbai terror attacks," \textit{Christian Science Monitor}, November 23, 2009, 6.}
The *New York Times* also had its own series of Hasan/Fort Hood coverage. In the story, “Little Evidence of Terror Plot in Base Killings” (Nov. 7, 2009) by David Johnston and Eric Schmitt, investigators said they had “tentatively concluded” that Hasan was not carrying out “an extremist’s suicide mission,” but they were not sure entirely.145 In the next story, “Fort Hood Gunman Gave Signals Before His Rampage” (Nov. 8, 2009) by James C. McKinley Jr. and James Dao, Hasan’s shooting was described as a massacre, not a terrorist attack.146 The question of whether Hasan was a terrorist or simply deranged was the subject of another story, “Tangle of Clues About Suspect At Fort Hood” (Nov. 15, 2009) by Scott Shane and James Dao. They asked: “Was Major Hasan a terrorist, driven by religious extremism to attack fellow soldiers he had come to see as the enemy? Was he a troubled loner, a misfit who cracked when ordered sent to a war zone whose gruesome casualties he had spent the six years caring for? Or was he both?” Based on Shane and Dao’s reporting, Hasan seemed to fit the profile of someone who simply snapped and took his aggression out on his comrades. But it was hard to ignore his changing views on violence in regards to Islam, and his correspondence to a radical cleric in Yemen. One terrorism expert speculated that Hasan might be an example of “self-radicalization”; someone who becomes inspired by what’s online and starts to operate independently of the established terrorist networks.147 And finally, there was the story that was printed a couple of days later: “Born in U.S., a Radical Cleric Inspires Terror” (Nov. 18, 2009) by Scott Shane. The lead of the story mentioned how a number of recent terrorism cases have some sort of connection to

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"Anwar al-Awlaki, an eloquent Muslim cleric who has turned the Web into a tool for extremist indoctrination." Hasan seemed to be an example of this, and he became a prime fixture of the story later on down the paragraphs.  

But one person that the *New York Times* and the United States government believed to be a terrorist is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. In the story, "How New York May Tighten Security Vise" (Nov. 13, 2009) by Cara Buckley and Benjamin Weiser, Mohammed was compared to other terrorists who were put on trial for their attacks (or attempted attacks) on the United States. But whereas in other stories we've seen a reluctance of the *New York Times* to call the accused terrorists, there seemed to be something different with Mohammed as he was referred to as a "high-profile terrorist." It is probably because there seems to be no doubt that Mohammed was involved with the attacks at this point.  

The last installment from the *New York Times* showcased words that are synonymous with "terrorist." In the story "U.S. Asks More From Pakistan In Terror War" (Nov. 16, 2009) by Eric Schmitt and David E. Sanger, the word "terror" was not used, but the Taliban and Al Qaeda forces that were fighting American and Pakistani militaries in the AFPAK region were described as "militants" and "extremists," but the relatively neutral term of "fighters" was also used at one point to describe the Taliban.  

**ANALYZING POST-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY THE SF CHRONICLE**

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The first and last SFC story can serve as a reminder as to why newspapers and public officials need to be careful in regards to who is considered to be a terrorist. In the story “Chief’s remark about terrorism offends Arabs” (March 26, 2010) by Heather Knight, the titular chief talked of how certain buildings were considered to be targets for terrorists from Afghanistan and Yemen. He elaborated, “There was no need to single out the two countries, and I recognize that, but it’s not because it was not accurate. The reality is this is the area where we’re seeing most of the international terrorism coming from… I think certainly in this case, people are reading too much into it.”151 The resulting uproar in San Francisco’s Arab American community highlighted how people in positions of power, including informal ones in the community, like newspapers, need to be responsible for their comments, no matter how “off the cuff” they were.

ANALYZING POST-2009 FORT HOOD COVERAGE BY THE WASHINGTON POST

The first news story from the Washington Post concerned Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Nigerian man accused of trying to blow up an airliner as it landed in Detroit on Christmas Day 2009. In the story, “Fixing errors after the Christmas Day near miss” (Jan. 12, 2010) by Walter Pincus, Abdulmutallab was not directly called a terrorist. But Pincus does write of how the 23-year-old slipped through the cracks of several counterterrorism and anti-terrorism agencies, councils, and databases. He was not called a terrorist by the Washington Post, but it seems a lot of other groups are looking back.152

In previous stories, I’ve mentioned how groups and people have sued the U.S. government over their “misdesignation” as a terrorist entity. In “Terrorist group swears it’s changed its ways. Scouts’ honor.” (Jan. 13, 2010) by Dana Milbank, the group known as the People’s Mujaheddin sued the U.S. government to be removed from the State Department’s list

of international terrorist organizations. As Milbank made very clear, this was not a case of mistaken identity. The People's Mujaheddin assassinated leaders, planted bombs, and even killed U.S. troops. But the group insisted that, based on the fact the organization has not committed an attack in eight years, they should be removed from the list. While the story raises some very interesting questions, it seems that Milbank did not take the People’s Mujaheddin’s claims of being reformed seriously. The headline alone trivializes their sincerity. Consider the following passage:

“Today’s PMOI is unique among foreign terrorist organizations,” the lawyer told a three-judge appellate panel. “The organization has foresworn violence. We walk the walk. There have been no terrorist acts by PMOI for eight years.”

But couldn’t the attacks resume? “The fact that terrorist activities are bad if they happen could be said of the Girl Scouts,” Frey reasoned.

The People’s Mujaheddin as Girl Scouts. Only in America.

While I grant how ridiculous the comparison the People’s Mujaheddin to the Girl Scouts sound, the inclusion of the sentence “Only in America” completes the supposedly insane picture Milbank is trying to paint with her story. But it’s hard to pinpoint why Milbank is writing like this. It’s certain that she finds something amiss here: Either the fact that this particular group is trying to get off the list, or that they are suing to do so.\(^{153}\)

The next news story addressed bio-terrorism, an aspect that has not been mentioned a lot in this capstone. In “Officials fear lethal use for faux Botox labs; Overseas black market catering to bargain-hunters could also supply terrorists” (Jan. 25, 2010) by Joby Warrick, there were some groups who were identified by the U.S. as a terrorist organization. Both Hezbollah and Al Qaeda were listed as terrorist organizations, and so was Aum Shinrikyo, which

was also described as a “Japanese doomsday cult.” For the most part, the Washington Post seemed to be pretty consistent in terms of which organizations are terrorists and which aren’t.

In the final news story from the Washington Post, the reader got another glimpse as to who the government considered to be terrorists. While the controversy presented in the news story, “Holder to take hot seat at hearing on the Hill; Republicans on Senate Judiciary Committee expected to confront AG” (April 13, 2010) by Anne E. Komblut, was not of particular interest to this thesis, the story did mention of how the Obama administration considered Jose Padilla and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Nigerian who attempted to blow up a plane in Detroit on Dec. 25, 2009, to be terrorists.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When I first began reviewing the articles, I initially suspected that words like “militant,” “fundamentalist,” or “extremist” would be used as synonyms for the word “terrorist.” And indeed, this sometimes seems to be the case. Over the course of my research, I found groups like Hamas and Al Qaeda to be described with a wide variety of descriptors. But the editorial policies of the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times on shying away from the word “terrorist” in news articles are apparent in these news stories.

So is this a good thing? With the evidence I have seen thus far, I do believe these policies are adequate in ensuring that the reporting apparatus of the newspaper is largely unbiased and accurate. It is not the job of reporters to people how to think and feel, and using words like terrorist will prejudice them in how they feel about a particular topic. The adage of “one man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist” really comes into play in terms of coverage, and

155 Anne E. Komblut, “Holder to take hot seat at hearing on the Hill; Republicans on Senate Judiciary Committee to confront AG,” Washington Post, April 13, 2010, A15.
therefore, it becomes necessary then to use descriptors like militant and fundamentalist then in
news articles to describe what groups like Hamas and Hezbollah are.

One trend I was surprised by, however, was how the U.S. newspapers would cover and
define terrorism, and how it would often match the State Department’s definition of terrorism.
Specifically, the State Department does not recognize state terrorism, and generally neither do
newspapers. At no point did I find passages referring to how Iran or Iraq was guilty of
committing terrorism, although there were stories about how they support it.

Another interesting trend I observed is how there seems to be a difference between
terrorism at home versus terrorism abroad. When referring to domestic terrorism or terrorists
arrested in the United States, the newspapers were almost always careful in mentioning that they
were charged with terrorism. This is because they have not been convicted by a court yet, and if
the newspapers were to report someone like David Coleman Headley as being a terrorist, but he
was found not guilty, Headley would be able to sue those newspapers for libel. At the same time,
the newspapers covering international incidents of terrorism are a little more inclined to take the
government’s word for it. The one example that comes to mind is the train bombing in Russia in
2009. Even though no suspects were named (and therefore, no definite motive can be discerned),
it was reported as an act of terrorism.

Covering terrorism is not easy. Aside from the dangerous conditions the reporters might
face in their research and interviews, there seems to be no easy way to write about terrorism. To
an American audience, groups like Hamas and Al Qaeda seem to deserve the label of “terrorist.”
But in a global information age where it is very easy to see what others are publishing online,
newspaper have to keep in mind other readers. And while it is true that a newspaper could
develop a policy that would define certain groups as terrorist organizations, it does not change
the fact that terrorist is a pejorative term. This is not the only time that newspapers have used neutral terms to describe politically-sensitive issues. For example, the Associated Press Stylebook advises writers to use the terms “anti-abortion” and “pro-abortion,” instead of “pro-life” and “pro-choice.” It would still be descriptive of the particular groups and individuals in the story, but the newspaper would not be using politically-safe words (or politically-charged words).

For this capstone, I've read and analyzed hundreds of news articles to see how certain U.S. newspapers address the issue of terrorism in their coverage. And from what I have determined, they have attempted to report those news items without bias. When writing about certain groups like Hamas or Hezbollah, they will use the term militant or fundamentalist. And whenever the word “terrorism” or its deviations (terror, terrorist, etc.) are used, it is usually attributed to someone else. There were some exceptions, like the Washington Post’s coverage of the People’s Mujaheddin. But overall, I find that U.S. newspapers do try to be fair, accurate, and unbiased when reporting on terrorism at home and abroad, even with the 1993 WTC bombing, the Sept. 11 attacks, and the 2009 Fort Hood shootings in mind.
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