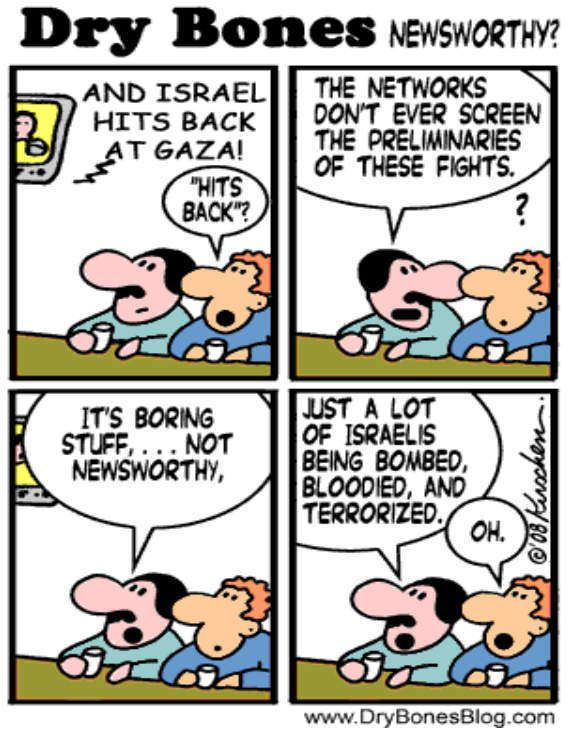


Cartoon #1



Cartoon #2



Cartoon #3



Cartoon #4



What to Look At

Headlines

What does this headline have to do with this image?

Images (Photos or Video Clips)

Is this image appropriate for this article?

Content

Is the content of this article accurate, balanced and unbiased?

Bus explodes in Jerusalem, people taken away on stretchers

Bus explodes in Jerusalem

ASSOCIATED PRESS | 58 minutes ago in World

Share 9 0 tweet email share

A bus has exploded in Jerusalem, and people are being taken away on stretchers.

Article continues below



(1 of 7) < Prev | Next > Slideshow

Palestinians carry a man, killed during an Israeli airstrike east of Gaza City, to the morgue of Shifa hospital in Gaza City, Tuesday, March 22, 2011. On Tuesday evening, an Israeli airstrike targeted... (Associated Press)

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What to Look For

Accuracy?

Objectivity?

Omissions?

*No peace deal seems likely
without addressing their fate.*

Israeli settlers a key question in West Bank

By Michael Matza
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

HEBRON, West Bank — Steam rises from a pot of chicken soup inside Sarah Marzel's kitchen, filling her trailer home with a delicious aroma.

But jagged bullet holes pierce her windows and cupboards, laying to rest any comfortable stereotypes about Jewish comfort food. Israeli soldiers in battle gear man nearby watchtowers. Armored personnel carriers mounted with machine guns sit yards from her door.

Under fire since its founding in 1984.

Balance?

Context?

Language?

Advocacy?

Accuracy

When examining U.S. news accounts, ask, “Are the facts **correct**?”

- Are spokespersons credible?
 - EXAMPLE: Palestinian negotiator Sa’eb Erekat continued to be a quoted source despite a record of uttering false statements.
- Are quotations reworded to include language the speaker would not have used? Are they paraphrased in ways that change their meaning?
 - EXAMPLE: When an Israeli spokesperson says “terrorist,” does the report substitute the word “militant”?
- Is the historical record referred to correctly?
 - EXAMPLE: Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount in 2000 is said to be the “spark” of the “Second Intifada” when Palestinian leaders themselves have declared the visit was a pretext for, not the cause of, the ensuing violence.
- Is the Palestinian view of an event presented as a fact while the Israeli view is phrased more ambiguously?
 - EXAMPLE: “Two senior militants and three bystanders were killed in the Israeli attack. Israeli spokesmen **claim** that all victims were involved in terrorist activity.”

Accuracy (cont'd)

When examining U.S. news accounts, ask, “Are the facts **correct**?”

- Are photographs accurate or staged?
 - **EXAMPLE:** During the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, a number of purported news photographs were found to have been manipulated by digital software or to have been staged to generate a particular viewer response.
- Do photographs and captions accurately reflect the accompanying story?
 - **EXAMPLE:** A story about a terror attack against Israel is paired with the photo of an Arab child playing near a wrecked automobile.

Omissions

When examining U.S. news accounts, ask, “Is crucial information or context **missing**?”

- Are aspects of the conflict that appear in the Israeli press missing in U.S. coverage? Examine the U.S. news source thoroughly; sometimes relevant information omitted from one report appears in another article within the same news source (or in other American news media).
 - EXAMPLE: Does the media source report on Israeli incursions into Palestinian areas but omit attacks (successful or foiled) on Israelis?
- Are Israeli actions reported without any context to show what might have led to the decisions to act? If the context is provided, is it placed at the front of the report where more readers will notice it, or at the end?
 - EXAMPLE: Does the report lead with or emphasize Israeli response to a terrorist action but omit or “bury” what triggered the response?
- Are all the relevant facts presented?
 - EXAMPLE: When death tallies are presented, does the report note precisely whether the casualties were combatants or non-combatants, whether Israeli or Palestinian?
 - EXAMPLE: Is Palestinian violence attributed to Israeli “aggression” or “occupation” with no mention of anti-Jewish incitement and indoctrination or Arab rejection of Israeli peace offers as a potential cause of the violence?
 - EXAMPLE: Is compliance (or non-compliance) with signed agreements by both sides reported?

Balance

When examining U.S. news accounts, ask, “Is there balance in the reporting?”

- Are Israelis allowed to rebut specific allegations made against them in the report?
- Do Palestinian allegations appear at the beginning of a report but Israeli responses appear only much later in the story? Is a military act by Israel highlighted early in a report while the rationale for the measure is only noted at the end?
 - Many readers scan the beginning of an article and rarely go much deeper than the first few paragraphs. Journalists are not responsible for superficial readers or viewers, but balanced news reporting emphasizes what is important, and puts it in context.
- Does the story give adequate time or space to both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides of the story?
 - EXAMPLE: How often are representatives from both sides quoted? How many words or sentences, or how much air time is afforded to opposing viewpoints?
- Are opposing points of view treated with approximate balance?
 - EXAMPLE: Are both sides quoted directly or given sufficient opportunity to speak or respond? Does the report summarize or paraphrase one position while allowing the other to be expressed directly?
- When Israeli voices are included, are they mainstream or government officials or are they fringe elements or political opponents critical of the government?
 - EXAMPLE: A report on Israeli security measures quotes three Palestinian Arabs critical of the actions “balanced” by two Israelis, who are also critical of the government’s decisions.

Balance (cont'd)

When examining U.S. news accounts, ask, “Is there balance in the reporting?”

- Are there double standards? Is one side singled out for more criticism or sympathy, or held to a higher or lower standard than the other?
 - **EXAMPLE:** Are Israeli actions in which civilians are inadvertently harmed highlighted but intentional Arab targeting of noncombatants ignored or downplayed?
- Does a headline, photo or news clip focus on Israel's response rather than on the act that provoked the military action? That is, does it confuse cause and effect, action and reaction?
 - **EXAMPLE:** If there was an Arab attack against Israel and a response from Israel, are there only or primarily images of the damage to Palestinian areas?
- Is the suffering of, or inconvenience to, Arabs underscored without any similar mention of what Israelis endure?
 - **EXAMPLE:** An article may call attention to roadblocks that hinder Palestinian movement but never mention Israeli reluctance to take public transportation for fear of a bombing or the traffic snarls and delays Israelis experience when there is a terror alert.

Balance (cont'd)

- Are the images used to accompany a report really balanced?
 - **EXAMPLE:** A report might be accompanied by two photographs, one a black-and-white headshot of the Israeli prime minister and one a larger, color picture of an injured Palestinian child. Is the difference in the resulting emotional impact of the images supported by the facts of the event being reported?

Language

When examining U.S. news accounts, ask, “Does the language chosen seem to be slanted?”

- Is emotional or negative language used for one side in the conflict but neutral or less emotional language used for another?
 - EXAMPLE: Is the word “youth” used to refer to a 16-year old Palestinian fire-bomb thrower but the word “child” omitted when an Israeli mother and her children are murdered?
- Does the report use language that reflects a particular viewpoint?
 - EXAMPLE: “Occupied Arab lands”; “Arab East Jerusalem”; “hardline Israeli leaders”
- Does the report use passive verbs when Israelis are victims but active verbs when the victims are Palestinian Arabs? Are Israelis clearly identified as being responsible for aggressive actions but Palestinian Arabs are unidentified?
 - EXAMPLE: Compare “3 Die in Tel Aviv” to “Israelis Kill 9 Palestinians.”
- Does the report label terrorists as “terrorists” or use less precise words such as “activist”, “operative” or “militant”? “Terrorism,” defined as the threat or use of force against non-combatants to influence a wider audience and advance political, religious, economic or other goals, is a crime under U.S. and international law.

Language (cont'd)

When examining U.S. news accounts, ask, “Does the language chosen seem to be slanted?”

- Are there double standards in language?
 - EXAMPLE: People who kill civilians in a London subway are called “terrorists,” but people who kill Israelis at bus-stops are termed “militants” by the same news outlet.
- Does the report use Arab terms for sites in the news while the Jewish connection is omitted?
 - EXAMPLE: Jerusalem’s Temple Mount is simply called “Haram al Sharif.”

Advocacy

When examining U.S. news accounts, ask, “Do reports seem to be promoting one side in the conflict?”

- Does the reporter push an opinion within a news story?
 - EXAMPLE: Arab violence is said to result from Israeli “occupation” or Palestinian “frustration,” but other possible explanations for the attack such as anti-Jewish, anti-Israeli incitement or Islamist supremacism are omitted.
- Are statements properly attributed to a source or do they reflect personal opinion?
 - EXAMPLE: Israel’s West Bank security barrier is referred to as “separation barrier” or even “apartheid wall.”
 - EXAMPLE: The Gaza Strip is referred to as “occupied territory,” even though Israel completely withdrew from Gaza in 2005.
 - EXAMPLE: Hamas is described as “fighting for an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza” without mentioning that the group’s charter calls for Israel’s destruction.
- Does a report quote “experts” as neutrals when they represent advocacy organizations or promote specific policies?
 - EXAMPLE: An Israeli security action is “explained” by B’Tselem, an organization highly critical of the Israeli government, with no other Israeli source cited.
- Does the report promote a moral equivalence?
 - EXAMPLE: Compare a headline such as "4 Palestinians, 3 Israelis Killed," with "Palestinians Kill 3 Israelis in Attack on Home; Israeli Response Kills 4 Hamas Members."

Advocacy (cont'd)

- Do the images printed reflect more sympathetically on one side than the other?
 - EXAMPLE: A Palestinian leader is depicted smiling while an Israeli leader is shown frowning.
 - EXAMPLE: Images of a Palestinian funeral and Israeli security forces on duty are paired to illustrate an article about U.S. Middle East diplomacy.
 - EXAMPLE: Pictures for an article about Arab-Israeli water use shows Israelis around a swimming pool, Arabs using an old-fashioned well. The article does not contrast Israeli water conservation and recycling with Palestinian waste and insufficient infrastructure investment.