

The Anglo-American Newspapers' Reportage of the 1976 Entebbe Hostage-taking and Israel Raid

*Zaid Sekito**

What is dreadful is that during 'peace', these same media bombard the world with holier-than-thou sermons about objectivity, truth and fairness, whereas in war, they are the first to trample these principles underfoot (*Daily Nation*, Kenya, 1 April 2003).

Abstract

Several high-profile hijackings occurred in the 1970s and were covered by the media. One such hijacking was of the French Airbus A300 Flight 139 by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) on 27 June 1976. In this article, I examined the causes of the nature of newspaper reportage of the June/July 1976 hijacking and hostage-taking involving an African state under President Idi Amin whose actions in the affair drew international attention to Uganda. Drawing on archival data, the paper article analyses the four newspapers' portrayal of the Entebbe hostage-taking from 28 June to 3 July 1976 and the subsequent Israel Raid on 4 July 1976. The newspapers' focused on are, the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Times* (London) and the *Christian Science Monitor*. In this article, I argue that the four newspapers' reportage ranging from hostage-taking to the rescue depended on the political and social contexts under which they operated at the time, namely, the Cold War politics of the time. The newspapers focused covered more about on the rescue and its aftermath than the events leading to the hijacking and hostage-taking which obscured a clear understanding of the deeper causes of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that used Idi Amin and Uganda as a pawn.

Keywords: Hijacking, Hostage-taking, Media, Raid, Terrorism

* **Zaid Sekito** is a Gerda-Henkel Foundation PhD Fellow at Makerere University. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and Master of Arts in History both from Makerere University. He is currently teaches at Makerere University in the Department of History, Archaeology and Heritage Studies on a part-time basis as an Assistant Lecturer. He teaches contemporary history, with emphasis on conflict, violence, and terrorism that are in keeping with his research areas of interest. The central thesis of his research is that between 1976 and 2015, Uganda found itself entangled in an arena of international terrorism in which international terrorist actors exploited the plight of vulnerable groups, such as Muslims, and marginalised ethnic communities including the Bakonjo and the Acholi. He is also interested in how media has been involved in shaping historical discourses on the study of terrorism.



Introduction

Throughout the 1970s, media coverage of air-hijackings occupied a prominent position in mass media on the public agenda of many countries. Although newspapers often consider themselves dispassionate recorders of terrorist events, conveying objective and factual information about incidents, their roles in such events are seen quite differently by scholars, authorities, media critics, and the general public. This article examines the Anglo-American newspaper portrayals of the 1976 Entebbe raid, with through the nature of the media attention the media placed on the event they being associated with adverse effects including but not limited to increased racial and religious prejudices against Arabs and Muslims in general (Ahmed 2012; Bushman et al. 2009; Ogan, Willnat, Pennington & Bashir 2013; Ahmed 2012; Bushman et al. 2009) in the use of the label “terrorism”.

This form of Western media reporting has prompted some writers to argue that violent events involving Muslims and or “Arabs” are more likely to be labelled terrorists than their Western non-Muslim counterparts even if when their behaviours activities are not different (Paul 2015). Beyond these negative portrayals of the Western media bias against “Arabs” and Muslims, some writers have argued that the reportages about events involving Muslims, in general, are themselves biased. They receive considerable attention

in the western media and the label “terrorism/terrorist” is more readily applied to events involving Muslims and “Arabs”. Whatever endures as part of the living memory has to be continuously interrogated to glean new meaning, causes and conclusion. Thus, the focus of this article is to stretch back and investigate the possible motives and nature of the Western newspapers' reportage that occurred four decades ago on an event that involved “Arabs” (Palestinians), Muslims (Palestinians/Idi Amin), and non-Western non-Muslims.

The Rise of Idi Amin and the Advent of the 1976 Incident

In 1971, Idi Amin staged a coup d'état and overthrew President Apollo Milton Obote's government and took over as President of Uganda, an act which attracted international attention. The coup might have been masterminded by the capitalist Western powers, such as Britain, Israel, and the US under the simplistic illusion that Amin was going to be a stooge to them. The reaction of the White Hall and the British media, for example, seem to suggest illustrated that perhaps Britain had a hand in the coup as Amin's takeover of power prominently featured in leading headlines in British papers, such as *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Financial Times*. For example, in the week after the coup, Amin was voted “man of the week” by *The Financial Times*.

The editorial of the *Daily Telegraph* also stated: that “One good reason that might be advanced for holding commonwealth conferences more often was the number of undesirable rulers overthrown as a result of their temporary absence as has happened to Dr Obote of Uganda, would thereby be increased” (*The Daily Telegraph* 26 January 1971). Three days later, the same paper noted that, with Obote gone, Britain would be at an advantage of pursuing “the course of her strategic interests lightened on one Millstone” (*The Daily Telegraph* 29 January 1971).

The *Daily Telegraph* gave a clearer impression of the British about Amin. In one of its issues, it was put thus: “Amin provides a welcome contrast to those African leaders... who bring African rule to discredit in their own countries... Dr Obote, who violated Uganda’s independence constitution, and was justifiably ousted by Gen. Amin was in that category... Gen. Amin has been quick to express this in his country’s policy” (*Daily Telegraph* 12 July 1971). The British Prime Minister Edward Heath, who hosted Amin in July 1971 could not hide his sentiments when he coined what he termed as his “own ironic memories about the January coup, which came immediately after he had been sharply criticised by Obote in Singapore” (*Uganda Argus* 14 July 1971).

Israel supported Amin hoping that he would perpetually pursue his cosmetic anti-Arab policy (Kokole 1989:20). Between 1969 and 1971,

the Arab-Israel rivalry had reached its peak. While on the one hand, Obote was trying to construct his anti-Zionist stance by supporting Egypt, Amin, on the other hand, was conniving with Israel in supporting the Anya-Nya rebels against the Arabo-Muslim government in Sudan. Ironically, Amin was neither a staunch practicing Muslim nor a Muslim fanatic. It appears, therefore, that his tilt towards promoting Israel interests against Arabo-Muslim government of Sudan was a consequence of his entanglement in a quest for political, and personal survival. In doing this, Amin was not only jeopardizing the Uganda-Arab relationship but was also undoing Obote’s policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of a neighbouring state.

President Obote’s regime was, therefore, viewed as socialist, anti-Zionist and anti-British especially concerning its former colonial master’s policy in South Africa. Thus, the rise of Idi Amin to the Ugandan Presidency had much to do with the dynamics of Cold War politics. However, the capitalist powers which had originally welcomed President Amin’s coup with enthusiasm lost the fervour. The loss of fervour began with Amin’s adoption of a pro-Arab policy and turning against the west starting in 1972. This was followed by the expulsion of foreigners many of whom ended up in Britain and USA, and impulsively allowing a hijacked plane to land at Entebbe airport on 28 June 1976. The former

act fundamentally contradicted a key aspect of the country's foreign policy with Britain and the USA: countries that are committed to the sacredness of the Jewish State of Israel. The question, however, is: Did Idi Amin's foreign policy shift in a way to influence the nature of the reportage in USA and Britain in 1976 or the reportage was dependent upon the social contexts under which the four newspapers operated?

The 1976 hostage-taking at Entebbe led the capitalist powers to lose the fervour passion to unreservedly support for Amin due to what was perceived as Uganda's involvement in the hostage-taking. The event received worldwide press attention; press reports, editorials, a "60 Minutes" television show in America, and Barbet Schroder's film *Idi Amin Dada*, all of which kept people around the world aware of events in Uganda. The hostage-taking and raid at Entebbe revolved around the hijacked Air France Airbus A300 on 27 June 1976, on its way from Tel Aviv (Israel) to France, which was diverted and forced to land at Entebbe on 28 June 1976. The hijackers were said to have been a branch of the PLO and subsequently, hostage-taking from 28 June to 4 July 1976, at Entebbe (Uganda), marking it popularly known as the Entebbe-Air France hostage crisis.

The illegal diversion and attempts to divert aircrafts from their scheduled routes by armed persons using force or threat of force were

familiar occurrences in the world throughout the 1970s and were often described using different terms, such as "air piracy", or "skyjacking", "aerial hijacking" or "aircraft hijacking." (Arey 1972; Clyne 1973; Hubbard 1971; Knebel 1971; Minor 1975; Phillips 1973; Rich 1972; Turner 1969; Whelton 1972). However, the hijacking that shocked the world, and attracted media narratives involved the hijacking of the above said airbus under Captain Michel Bacos on a flight from Tel Aviv to Paris on 27 June 1976, (Boers 2012). This historical event of international hostage-taking was the first of its kind in the East African region and Uganda in particular, and it formed the benchmark of the historiography of terrorism in Uganda.

The hijacking and hostage-taking thrust Uganda into the world press; with the aftermath of the daring Israeli raid to rescue the hostages at Entebbe airport, leading to the deaths of a sizeable number of people and the disappearance of Mrs Dora Bloch, an Israeli-British citizen. The hijacking and hostage-taking are historically important in helping to understand the roots of global terror and terrorism as well as international perception and media framing of issues involving Africans.

This article, therefore, endeavours to make an account for the nature of reportage as expressed in the four newspapers on the 1976 Entebbe incident in which Idi Amin seemed to take centre stage. Because the impact

of the newspapers' coverage of Idi Amin on public opinion is difficult to assess (Gallup 1989), the article is not about newspaper influence on public opinion; it is about why and how the newspapers reported on an event that involved a man – Idi Amin – the capitalist powers, such as Britain, France, USA and Israel were jittered with. The selected newspapers under analysis are; the *New York Times* (New York), *the Guardian* (Britain), *The Times*, London and the *Christian Science Monitor* (USA). These newspapers were surveyed in terms of their coverage for twenty days; covering seven days during which the hostages were held at Entebbe and thirteen after the Israeli raid. The central question that the article seeks to answer is: What motivated these newspapers' coverages of this hostage-taking and raid at Entebbe? Was their information filtered according to the preferences of the political spaces to which they belonged or the audience they served?

Brief Literature

Studies on news media have produced evidence that news content is not an objective entity, independent of political, social, ideological or socio-psychological influences (see, Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Graber 1997; Herman and Chomsky 1988; Gans 1979). Gerbner (1964) for example, pointed out there is 'no fundamentally non-ideological, apolitical, non-partisan news gathering and reporting system'.

Several researchers have identified many factors that influence the selection and production of news. For example, Edelman (1993:232) asserts the news frame is 'driven by ideology and prejudice rather than by rigorous analysis or the aspiration to solve social problems. Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (2000) found that the dominant ideology of a nation was a major source of the frame in their analysis of US press coverage of the Fourth UN Conference and the NGO Forum in Beijing. Reta (2000) reached the same conclusion in his analysis of the 1994 South Africa elections in US media. Ideology here concerns a person's, an organization's or a nation's value or belief system. Since foreign policies usually guide the direction of news items texts (Chang 1989; Dickson et al. 1995; Kim 2000; Chang 1989) then, the question is: Was this the case with newspaper reportage of the 1976 incident?

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) summarise the influences of media content ranging from the general and indirect to the direct and specific: ideological and other macro-system factors, media organisational constraints, and the micro-characteristics of individual media workers. According to the above two writers, a combination of these influences make a significant contribution to the final product of news and eventually defines the landscape of media content. Scheufele (1999) proposed that at least five factors that potentially

influence how journalists frame a given issue: (i) social norms and values; (ii) organisational pressures and constraints; (iii), the pressure of interest groups, (iv) journalistic routines; and (v) ideological or political orientations of journalists.

Yang (2003) pointed out that national interest is a potential variable that influences the framing process, especially in the international news-framing process. According to his earlier study, national interest, as the primary source of foreign policies, play a central role in influencing news coverage (Lee and Yang 1995). Brands (1999:239) noted that national interest is a 'conception of an overriding common good transcending the specific interests of parties, factions, and other entities smaller than the nation as a whole'. Nye (1999:25) on the other hand observes that 'national interests are the fundamental building blocks in any discussion of foreign policy.' He goes on to define national interest in a democracy as 'a set of shared priorities regarding relationships with the rest of the world'.

Henry (1981) noted that ultimately journalism is patriotism and reporters all become nationalists in the time of crisis. Therefore, in the process of producing international news, journalists select, prioritise and structure the narrative flow of events by identifying with their own countries. They frame news accounts based on their own country's ultimate interest. For example, research on

indexing focus of international events suggests that the positions of key governmental leaders tend to influence, or "index," the perspective employed by most media when they report the news (Althaus et al. 1996; Bennett 1990, 1994; Mermin 1996). Thus, their News coverage sometimes involves reliance on governmental sources, which makes "the indexing effects most powerful" (Mermin 1996:191).

The preceding explanation and arguments point to the nexus between, ideology, organisational, national interest on the one hand and foreign policy considerations on the other in international affairs' news coverage and reporting. It is pertinent to examine which of the stated factors motivated the four papers to frame the news emanating from the Entebbe event the way they did.

The Choice of the Four Newspapers and the Guiding Theoretical Framework

For an analysis of the 1976 hostage-taking and raid at Entebbe, four newspapers, (*The Christian Science Monitor* (USA), *The Times* of London, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*, UK) newspapers were chosen. The four newspapers were chosen because of their prominence and influence, especially regarding their coverage of international political news (Kim 2000). For example, the *New York Times*, which is generally considered to be the 'paper of record', was

chosen because it provides extensive coverage of international news and influences the content of other mass media (Gitlin 1980).

In 1989 it was also described in the following terms: “for better or for worse because of its reputation as a quality newspaper, there is a common feeling in the US that if something is printed in the *New York Times*, then it is credible” (Goulden 1989:15). Its circulation peaked at over 1.1 million (Kurtz 1993). *The Times* (London) described the *New York Times* in 1977 as the finest newspaper in the world and the second largest after the *Wall Street Journal* with a daily circulation of 854,000 copies in the United States. (*The Times* 1977:73). It was also described as “the platinum bar by which editors across the US judge and measure their newspapers” (ibid:172).

The Times of London, has also been described as “a newspaper of record that is read by influential opinion-makers of government, nobility, the ruling class and of business and financial circles (Merrill and Fisher 1980:320). *The Times* of London, was further called the standard-bearer that “embodied the highest standards of newspaper journalism and earned the respect of opinion makers, financiers and statesmen in Britain and around the world” (Welke 1982:925).

On its analysis of issues, the *Christian Science Monitor* was described as “more interested in presenting in-depth, a selection of the significant news which shapes its readers’ lives, than providing a daily surface-

depth record of the events. It is both professionally excellent and a respected moral force.” (Merrill and Fisher 1980:10). In 1982, its credibility was described as “not merely a newspaper but also an institution and a moral force in its own right with the 3rd wisest readership” (Kurian 1982:959). The *Guardian* was characterised as, “the spokesman of progressive liberal thinking and social reforms” Welke (1982:926) and an “analytical, careful, serious, honest and truthful newspaper” (Merrill and Fisher 1980:184).

The presumed quality and reputation of the four newspapers provide ground for the analysis of their coverage of the June/July 1976 Entebbe hostage-taking and raid, historically significant revelation of the terror, terrorism and struggle against terrorism on the international and national scenes. These newspapers had a wider readership and above all had sufficient coverage to merit content analysis. All four newspapers are also among the top national newspapers in their respective countries.

Theoretically, this article is anchored in the Social Identity Theory and Galtung-Ruge Theory of International news. According to this theory, people have social, group-based identities as well as personal, individual identities, national and are motivated to see their groups in a positive light (Considine 2015). Consequently, people tend to judge members of their groups more

positively than members of other groups. For example, one experiment found that White mock jurors judged Black defendants as guiltier, more violent and more aggressive than White defendants, (Sommers & Ellsworth 2000). Another study found that participants ascribed more negative motives to politicians' behaviours when those politicians did not agree with the participants' political views (Reeder, Pryor, Wohl, & Griswell 2005). Similarly, both Palestinian and Jewish Israelis are less likely to judge their in-group's behaviour as terrorism, and more likely to judge the others' behaviours as such, (Shamir and Shikaki 2002).

According to Galtung and Ruge, 'if an event has direct or indirect consequences to the audience, if it impacts audiences' lives or is at least relevant to their experiences, it is more likely to become news'. This usually means that a story needs certain geographical or political proximity (Schulz 1976) or temporal proximity (Herbert 2000) and cultural proximity ('the event-scanner will pay particular attention to the familiar, to the culturally similar, and the culturally distant will be passed by more easily' (Galtung and Ruge 1965:67), geographical or political proximity (Schulz 1976) or temporal proximity (Herbert 2000). Thus, Galtung and Ruge's idea of political, geographical or cultural similarities are, thus, reinforced by the ideas of writers, such as Shamir, Rosengren and Shikaki. The use of

the terrorism label is primarily based on social identity concerns, and a more negative judgment will always be passed on to the opposite group. According to this theory, therefore, it looks like reportage is based on group identity. This re-affirms the idea of critical terrorism theorists that claims that terrorism is a social construct.

Methodology

To examine how the four newspapers covered the 1976 hostage-taking and raid on Entebbe, I analyse whether or not a newspaper published the story daily, on the front page. A newspaper's front page represents a scarce resource used to publish stories that the newspaper believes most interest its readers. Stories on the front page are more likely to be read than those buried in the paper's website or back pages. Also, their presence on the front page provides a clue to the reader that the newspaper believes the story to be very important. I purposively chose four newspapers from a list of over 100 major newspapers in the US and Britain, a listing of newspapers comparable to those chosen as representative of the Entebbe hostage-taking and raid reportage. Given the emphasis of these major newspapers on international news, they make for a more challenging control group than having to go to all newspapers randomly chosen.

To examine the motives behind the nature of reportage by the newspapers of the hostage-taking and raid at Entebbe, I analysed the way stories

were framed. This took the forms of aggregate, daily, and content analysis, each of which required a different analytical method. In the aggregate analysis, I counted how many times the Entebbe related story appeared in each of the four newspapers' pages during the entire period chosen for this study.

In the daily analysis, for each day of the paper studied, I did a daily analysis, examine examining whether or not a story about the Entebbe hostage-taking and raid appeared on the newspaper's front page and the framing of its headlines. As the most important index for a news story, the headline is the first place to skim in newspaper reading. Pan and Kosicki (1993:59) pointed out that "a headline is the most salient cue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers' minds; it is thus the most powerful framing device of syntactical structure." Finally, I did a qualitative content analysis of 120 of Entebbe-related stories published in the four newspapers.

In conducting content analysis, I utilised Bennett's referential symbols and condensational symbolism to identify how the newspapers appealed to their audience's feelings.

'Referential symbols are economical, concrete, and not prone to attract emotional baggage. They are made in specific and precise terms. Condensational symbols, on the other hand, appear in abstract contexts that are often ambiguous or have powerful emotional concerns for the audience' (Bennett 1980:256).

For example, headlines, such as "Seeking Solutions to terrorism" "Uganda events conflicting, sensitive for the UN debate", "UN Security Council ducks Entebbe issues: Sovereignty supporters vs opponents of hijacking cancel each other out. Britain's Move Uganda's Plight", "Woes Pile Up on Uganda's Amin," "Israelis jubilant as Amin Laments", "The Cavalry Pounds in Pat on Cue", "Entebbe Raid: 'Subject for Song and Legend'", "Breaking with a Dictator", and "Uganda might have been part of the Plan".

All these headlines state the facts in concrete language and therefore employs referential symbols. On the other hand, an example of condensational symbols in the reportage was, 'Israel attack on Uganda was a right to self-defence, unlawful but tolerable' because of the usage of ambiguous terms of 'lawful' and 'intervention', 'tolerable'. 'Tolerable' also indicates the tendency of the paper to appeal to the audience's feelings and understanding. Other condensational symbols were in headlines, such as "Amin is a Tyrant but Without Admirers", "Amin is 'Finished with Terrorists'."

Analysis of the Four Newspapers' Coverage of the Entebbe Hostage Situation and raid

The four papers were sympathetic to Israel and its actions and as such, they ran articles and editorials that praised its actions and response. For example,

the *New York Times* described the raid as “a daring night-time raid on Entebbe airport in which the hostages were freed and terrorists killed in the skirmish” (Terence Smith, *New York Times* 4 July 1976:1 & 10). The paper added that the decision to undertake a raid was taken when it became clear that the hijackers would not relent in their demands.

On 5 July 1976, the paper described the raid as the “audacious airborne rescue”. The editorial went on to assert that the Israelis top officials had made the plan to raid Entebbe to rescue the hostages from the beginning of the hostage-taking (*New York Times* 5 July 1976:2). The *Christian Science Monitor* (USA) described the raid as a “bold, meticulously organized and an exceptional feat of daring” but with ramifications that eventually led to were to raise a lot of questions. It also considered the Israel raid on Entebbe to have “soared Israeli’s morale” in many respects while it dispelled any hopes of Arab victory against the Jewish state.

On 7 July 1976, an editorial by David Anable, did not only describe the raid as “the daring Israeli rescue mission and an actual blow to international terrorists”, but he also demarcated defined Uganda as one of the ‘sanctuaries of terrorism’” (*Christian Science Monitor*, 7 July 1976:4). On 6 July 1976, the *New York Times* Editor, Terence Smith, in another editorial, described the success of the raid as a “substance of the long hours of confusing and

often contradictory negotiations with the hijackers, mounting tension over the willingness of the hijackers to extend their initial deadline and the central role of General Idi Amin” (*New York Times*).

On 9 July 1976, the same editor continued to reveal how the raid was planned. The description of the raid, he wrote went as follows, “Israelis staged raid rehearsal before Uganda hijack rescue” (ibid.:41) and on 12 July, he reported Amin telling Israel of his disillusionment with pro-Palestinian terrorism. Israel, however, through their Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, denounced him, saying, “for years he (Amin) had given refuge, training, assistance and support of all kinds to the Palestinian terror organisations that worked against Israel” (*New York Times* 12 July 1976:39).

Such reportage suggests that the four Anglo-American newspapers were in support of Israel’s actions. The reason for this could have been that given Britain and USA’s role in the creation and consolidation of Israel, and the Jewish populations in both states, on the social context demanded that they had to report the way they did. It is as though they feared to look unpatriotic in a time of crisis. For example, the *Christian Science Monitor* broke stories about how Israel had violated state sovereignty (Uganda), and how the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was political in the matter.

The paper went ahead to advocate for “some better formula

for preventing hijackings and better means of responding to hijacking than sheer force” (*Christian Science Monitor* 6 July 1976:32). On what it called a scarcely overlooked side, the paper described the raid as

... an action involving the violation of the sovereignty of an independent state without permission or notice, justified on grounds of expediency, or criticized on grounds of impropriety (ibid.:39).

On 9 July 1976, the same paper informed the international community of the upcoming UNSC debate over the Israeli raid. Envisioning a challenge of preventing the discussion from bogging down into a verbal war of invective between critics and proponents of the raid, Anable identified two conflicting and deeply emotional emotive issues that were to come ahead of the UNSC meeting. (*Christian Science Monitor* 9 July 1976:4 & 28). The paper also envisioned that Israelis would try to prove the complicity of President Idi Amin, and the Western countries would reject any “unbalanced” resolution that attacked Israel but failed to condemn terrorism.

The two prophecies came to pass when on 16 July 1976, true to the paper’s postulations, it followed up UNSC failure to resolve the two issues when one of its editors Anable aptly put it as follows:

By failing to condemn either terrorist hijacking or the Israeli rescue raid, the UN Security Council has managed to duck

taking any decisions at all on two important legal and moral issues of the day: international terrorism and national sovereignty. (*Christian Science Monitor* 16 July 1976).

The answer to the failure of the UNSC to resolve the issues can be found in Piero Vinci’s submission to the Security Council 1943rd Meeting. He argued that “there seemed to have been little ground for agreement on the issues international terrorism and national sovereignty, also because the UNSC was essentially a political body and not an appropriate forum for settling such delicate issues.” (UNSC 1943rd Meeting, 14 July 1976).

Thus, The *Christian Science Monitor* was to some extent journalistically value-embedded on what took place at Entebbe during hostage-taking and after the raid. However, while its stories would have stimulated journalistic values of scepticism and inquiry, they were instead overridden by values of patriotism and unity with Israelis. The *New York Times*, *The Times*, and *The Guardian* blacked out such stories entirely.

In their defence, the three newspapers went on to praise the Israelis’ raid. For example, on 5 July 1976, *The Guardian* (UK), in one of its editorials, argued that although the action was “a moral and diplomatic nullity”, it was a “tactically brilliant overnight raid” and above all a “practical triumph” (MacManus & Eric, 5 July 1976:2). In a congratulatory manner, it added that “for 36 minutes on a hot airfield in the Middle of Africa, they saw a tin pot dictator and

a terrorist gang brutally humiliated ... and condemnation (from OAU) seems somehow irrelevant ... they got what they asked for" (*The Guardian* 5 July 1976:10).

While Amin had never been designated a terrorist, the paper labelled him so. On 5 July 1976, *The Times* published Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's message to the Israeli Parliament (Knesset). In his address to the parliament, he described the Entebbe Operation as "a remarkable manifestation of Jewish fraternity and valour" (*The Times* 5 July 1976:4). The glorification of the successes of Israel, a proxy state whose creation and sustenance was a substance of Anglo-American efforts might have been aimed at appeasing the Anglo-American Jewish community some of whom were already jittered jittery about with Amin.

On 4 July 1976, the UN Secretary-General Mr Kurt Waldheim described Israeli's raid as "flagrant aggression against the sovereignty of a member state of UN". However, none of the four Anglo-American newspapers heeded to his voice. Instead, on 6 July 1976, *The Times*, for example, responded in defence of Israeli's action by stating that Israel had the right to defend her citizens against terrorists. The paper went on to argue that since Uganda seemed to have been defending the terrorists rather than their state image, it was, therefore seen and treated as a terrorist. (*The Times* 6 July 1976:13). This reportage in defence of Israeli actions shows

how the paper blacked out the role of Amin in the negotiations leading to the release of over 100 passengers who were on the plane. They also forgot that it was the French Ambassador who requested Amin to grant the plane permission to land as French Representative to the UNSC Meeting put it:

The French authorities, when informed of this hijacking, alerted some of their embassies, including that in Kampala, asking them to take steps for the plane to be permitted to land since it was soon going to run out of fuel... We (French authorities), therefore, asked the plane to be allowed to land when it seemed that it would be able to fly for only another 15 minutes (UNSC Proceedings of the 1939th Meeting, 9 July 1976 par.182).

The aforementioned fact was ignored and what was emphasised was Amin's hand in the affair but appearing to forget that he acted on the French government request. For example, *The Times* in one of its editorials stated that "Entebbe was the first instance of the government of a 'country of refuge' participating in the terrorism that followed the hijacking. The Ugandan government authorities, for example, are said to have provided guards for the hostages while the hijackers were asleep and perhaps even in its preparatory stages" (*The Times*, 13 July, 1976). For either ideological, social or institutional reasons, the four papers ignored a discussion on why a country the French Ambassador diplomatically requested for landing

permission in a time of crisis turned against the hostages.

The papers also tended to gravitate towards the visually dramatic stories, not the one behind-the-scenes ones. For example, *The Guardian* described the scenes of rejoicing on the streets of Tel Aviv as unparalleled in Israel since the Six-Day War of 1967. *The Times* also gave a wide coverage on the operation and described the dancing and jubilation that went on in the streets of Israel in celebration of the success of the Entebbe raid (*The Times* 5 July 1976:1).

By focusing on military achievements, showing heroic images of the troops and downplaying the casualties and the humanitarian crisis, little or no incentive for analysis or in-depth coverage was done. Thus, the era of investigative journalism was beginning to come to the end, especially when it related to parts of the world thought to be distant. This view was later emphasised by Tim Allen (1999) when he said, “rapid-fire, bullet-point summaries of events, combined with images that are heart-rending but sanitized, ‘real-time’ but manipulated have become the dominant model of reportage.” This form of reportage left little scope for a more detailed examination of the event, its history and its possible causes.

The fact that these newspapers portrayed the raid as remarkable, heroic stunning, daring, audacious, tactical brilliance and embarrassment to Amin; this type of reportage

reflected two things; ideological inclination to capitalism in favour of a proxy state and communication of what Anglo-American masses wanted to read. Quick profiling of the four newspapers reveal that Anglo-American newspapers sympathetic to the Jewish cause and could not afford to be objective on any Jewish issue, as a matter of national policy. For example, *The Guardian* may have deemed it impractical to be objective on the Jewish matter: Charles Prestwich Scott, one of the most revered editors of *The Guardian*, was an ardent Zionist and helped in the realization of the 1947 Balfour Declaration. (Robert Philpot 2019).

Conclusion

Historically, it might be very difficult to provide a clear - cut objective behind the nature of the four newspapers’ reportage of the 1976 hostage-taking and raid at Entebbe. However, given the bilateral relations between Israel and the two countries (USA and Britain) and Israel, it is difficult to ignore the Cold War ideological factor entirely. Both Britain and USA were pro-Israel because the creation of the Jewish state of Israel dating as far back as 1917 was a matter of British foreign policy in action intended to win the American Jewish community to the allied side during World War I. The promise and fulfilment of the creation of the state in 1948 was, therefore, a strategic gain for Britain. To the Americans, they believed in the creation of the state of Israel but were more concerned with the

sustenance of the Judeo-Christian tradition as the hallmark of the American civilizational experiment and experience. While the Judeo-Christian idea was not American, its operationalization was.

During the Cold War politics, therefore, the US elevated the idea to the level of a political imperative. Thus, any actor that was seen or even imagined to undermine the sacredness of the Jewish state of Israel was assumed to be directly undermining the foundations of the US. Such an actor was to the US, a terrorist. By supporting Palestine against Israel, Amin was projected through these lenses. This casts the Cold War factor in the 1976 Entebbe incident(s) reportages. As cited above in the literature, the ideological or political orientations of both journalists and states, and the national interests of their countries is a key factor in the way newspapers report on international crises.

It could not also be possible for the four newspapers to provide unbiased reportage given the audiences they were serving. In both the U.S and Britain, a sizeable number of people still had memories of the expulsion of foreigners by Idi Amin from Uganda. US and Britain were also still unhappy with Idi Amin's defection to the Arab side, a communist wing and considered closer to socialism than to capitalism. It was, therefore, logical for the newspapers to focus on the Israeli military achievements and not on the casualties of the raid especially

on the Ugandan side. Publishing only the sanitized version of the hostage-taking and raid on Entebbe, showing only the heroic images of the Israeli troops and the jubilations in Tel Aviv was expected. This was because, given that the Uganda government had censored the press, it was uncommon for a foreign journalist to be on the ground in Uganda. They were either fed by their home governments or the Uganda media.

The reportage was, therefore, intended to appease the social groups (home audiences) they identified with. This obscured the detailed analysis of the event, its history and the possible causes of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in which Idi Amin and Uganda were used as a pawn. Consequently, as a result of their reportage, Uganda came to be seen as a terrorist state or an accomplice of terrorism. Awareness of such biases in reportage should encourage a certain amount of caution when reading newspapers and describing their reporters one or the other as objective or subjective reporters. The roots of anti-terrorism and or counterterrorism in the region can historically be seen to have first manifested rooted in this event. This study provides a first step in establishing the newspapers as a critical link between war and international politics.

References

- African Research Bulletin (1976). Vol.13(7):4102-4103.
- Akhavan-Majid, R. and J. Ramaprasad (2000). 'Framing Beijing: Dominant Ideological Influences on the American Press Coverage of the Fourth UN Conference on Women and the NGO Forum'. *Gazette*, 62(1): 45-59.
- Allen, T., & Seaton, J. (eds) (1999). *The Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence*. Zed Books.
- Althaus, S. L., Edy, J., Entman, R. M. & Phalen, P. (1996). Revising the Indexing Hypothesis: Officials, Media and the Libya Crisis. *Political Communication*, 13, 407-421.
- Arey, J. A. (1973). *The Sky Pirates*. Ian Allan.
- Avirgan, T., & Honey, M. (1983). *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin*. Tanzania Publishing House.
- Ben Doherty et al. (2014). "Sydney Siege: How a Day and Night of Terror Unfolded at the Lindt Cafe", *The Guardian*, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/dec/20/sydney-siege-timelinehow-a-day-and-night-of-terror-unfolded-at-the-lindt-cafe>.
- Bennett, W. L. (1990). "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States". *Journal of Communications*, 40: 130-125.
- Bennett, W. L. (1994). "The News about Foreign Policy". In W. L. Bennett & D. L. Paletz (eds), *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (pp. 12-40). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bird G.L. and Merwin, F.E. (1942). *The Newspaper and Society: A Book of Readings*, New York: Prentice-Hall. Inc.
- Brands, H.W. (1999). "The Idea of the National Interest". *Diplomatic History*, 23(2): 239-61.
- Chang, W.H. (1989). *Mass Media in China: The History and the Future*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Clyne, P. (1973). *An Anatomy of Skyjacking*. Abelard-Schuman.
- Considine, C. (2015). "Why White Men Are 'Gunmen' and Muslim Men Are 'Terrorists'". *The Huffington Post*, 2015: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/craig-considine/why-white-men-are-gunmen-_b_8704740.html.
- David, S. (2015). *Operation Thunderbolt: The Entebbe Raid—The Most Audacious Hostage Rescue Mission in History*. Hachette UK.
- Desmond, R. W. (1978). *The Information Process: World News Reporting to the Twentieth Century* (Vol. 1). University of Iowa Press.
- Dickson, S.H., C.L. Hill and C.M. Pilson (1995). 'A Forum for Debate: *New York Times's* Coverage of Two Foreign Crises'. *International Communication Bulletin*, 30(3-4): 14-18.
- Dunstan, S. (2012). *Israel's Lightning Strike: The Raid on Entebbe 1976*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Edelman, M. (1993). 'Contestable Categories and Public Opinion'. *Political Communication* 10: 231-42.
- Eleanor Steafel et al. (2015). "Paris Terror Attack: Everything we know on Saturday Afternoon", *The Telegraph*. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11995246/Paris-shooting-We-know-so-far.html>.
- Enny Das D., Brad J. Bushman, B. J., Marieke D. Bezemer, M. D., Peter Kerkhof, P., and Ivar E. Vermeulen, I. E. (2009). "How Terrorism News Reports Increase Prejudice Against Outgroups: A Terror Management Account", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 45: 453-459.
- Evans, A.E. (1969). "Aircraft Hijacking: Its Causes and Cure", *American Journal of International Law*, 63: 695-710.
- Eyal Boers B. (2012). "To Live or Die in Entebbe" Documentary.
- Gallup, G.H. (1989). *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1972-1988, Annual Vols*, Wilmington, Delaware, Scholarly Resources.
- Galtung, J and Ruge, H.M. (1965). "The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba, and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers", *Journal of Peace Research*, 2(1):64-90. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200104> accessed 01/04/2020
- Gans, H. J. (1979). *Deciding What's News*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Harding, L. (2015). "Charlie Hebdo Timeline: How Events Have Unfolded", *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/09/sp-charlie-hebdo-timeline-events>
- Gerbner, G. (1964). 'Ideological Perspective and Political Tendencies in News Reporting', *Journalism Quarterly*, 41: 495-508.

- Goulden, J. C. (1988). *Fit to Print: A.M. Rosenthal and His Times*. L. Stuart.
- Graber, A.D. (1997) *Mass Media and American Politics*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly.
- Henry, W.A., III (1981). 'News as Entertainment: The Search for Dramatic Unity', pp. 133-58 in E. Abel (ed.) *What's News: The Media in American Society*. San Francisco, CA: Institute for Contemporary Studies.
- Herbert, J. (2000). *Journalism in the Digital Age: Theory and Practice for Broadcast, Print and On-line Media*. Oxford: Focal Press.
- Herman, E.S. and N. Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Holden, R. T. (1986). "The Contagiousness of Aircraft Hijacking". *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(4): 874-904.
- Hubbard, D. G. (1971). *The Skyjacker: His Flights of Fantasy*.
- Joffe, R., and Puttnam, D. and Iain Smith, I. (1984). *The Killing Fields*, (1984), International Film Investor
- Knebel, F. (19 February 1971). "The Skyjacker." *Look*, 35:23-26.
- Kim, S.T. (2000). "Making a Difference: US Press Coverage of the Kwangju and Tiananmen Pro-Democracy Movements", *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77(1):22-36.
- Kurian, G. T. (ed.) (1982). *World Press Encyclopedia* (Vol. 2). New York: Facts on File.
- Lee, C.-C. and J. Yang, J. (1995). "Foreign News and National Interest: Comparing U.S. and Japanese Coverage of a Chinese Student Movement", *Gazette*, 56: 1-18.
- Luke Harding (2015). "Charlie Hebdo Timeline: How Events Have Unfolded", *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/09/-sp-charlie-hebdo-timeline-events>
- Marsden, E. (1976). "Dancing in the streets of Tel Aviv as Troops Fly-in with the Rescued", *London Times*, 5 July 1976, Column 3.
- Mermin, J. (1996). "Conflict in the Sphere of Consensus? Critical Reporting on the Panama Invasion and the Gulf War". *Political Communication*, 13, 181-194.
- Merrill, J. C. & Fisher, H. A. (1980). *The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers*. Hastings House Book Publishers.
- Minor, W. W. (1975). Skyjacking Crime Control Models. *J. Crim. L. & Criminology*, 66, 94.
- Moghal, M. (2010). *Idi Amin: Lion of Africa*. Central Milton Keynes: Author House.
- Nsubuga, E. and Okile, Ebokorait E. M., (September 2006). 'War on Terror is War on Islam' *The Weekly Message*, 5(008): 12-18.
- Nye, J.S. Jr (1999). 'Redefining the National Interest', *Foreign Affairs*, 78(4): 22-35.
- OAU Summit, Opening Remarks, 13th Assembly, 2 July 1976.
- Ochieng, P. (1998). "Stigmatising Terrorism Circumvents Real Issues". *The East African*, 17-23 August.
- Ogan, C., L. Willnat, L., R. Pennington, R. and M. Bashir, M. (2013). "The Rise of Anti-Muslim Prejudice: Media and Islamophobia in Europe and the United States", *International Communication Gazette*, Vol. 76: 27-46.
- Paul, D. (2015). "Why Robert Lewis Dear Is Terrifying But Not a Terrorist", *The Huffington Post*: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-paul/robert-lewis-dear-is-terr_b_8697202.html
- Phillips, D. (1973). *Skyjack: The Story of Air Piracy*. Harrop.
- Philpot, R. (1976). *When the Guardian was a Zionist Newspaper*, 24 July 2019.
- Radio Uganda, *7 am News Broadcast*, 5 July 1976.
- Reeder, G.D. J.B. Pryor, J.B., Michael, J. A. Wohl, A., and Micael, L. G. (2005). "On Attributing Negative Motives to Others Who Disagree with Our Opinions", *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 31:1498-1510.
- Reta, M.C. (2000). "US Media Coverage of the 1994 Elections in South Africa", *Gazette*, 62(6): 523-36.
- Rich, E. (1972). *Flying Scared*. New York.
- Saïffuddin, A. (2012). "Media Portrayals of Muslims and Islam and Their Influence on Adolescent Attitude: An Empirical Study from India", *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, Vol. 5: 279-306.
- Scheufele, D.A. (1999). 'Framing as a Theory of Media Effects', *Journal of Communication*, 49(1):102-22.
- Shaheen, K. (2015). "ISIS is Systematically Destroying Palmyra, Top Antiquities Official Says", *The Guardian*: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/01/isis-systematically-destroying-palmyra-top-antiquities-official-says>
- Shamir, J. and Shikaki, K. (2002). "Self-serving Perceptions of Terrorism among Israelis and Palestinians", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 23: 537-557.
- Shoemaker, P.J. and S.D. Reese, S.D. (1996). *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

- Sommers, S.R. and Ellsworth, P.C. (2000). "Race in the Courtroom: Perceptions of Guilt and Dispositional Attributions", *Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 26: 1367-1379.
- Turner, J. S. (1969). "Piracy in the Air". *Naval War College Review*, 22(1): 86-116.
- The *Christian Science Monitor*, 4-30 July 1976.
- The *Daily Nation*, Kenya, July 1976 and April 2003
- The *Guardian* (UK), 4-30 July 1976.
- The *New York Times*, 4-30 July 1976.
- The *Guardian* (UK), "Editorial: The Cavalry Pounds in Pat on Cue" (5 July 1976): Column 1, p.10.
- The *Times*, London, 4-30 July 1976.
- Turi, R.T., M Friel, M., R.B. Sheldon, R.B. and J.P. Matthews, J.P. (1972). *Descriptive Study of Aircraft Hijacking*. Huntsville, Texas: Sam Houston State University.
- UNSC Proceedings, 9 July 1976, par 27 and 79.
- Voice of Uganda*, Monday, 5 July and Wednesday 7 July 1976.
- Whelton, C. (1972). *Sejjack*. New York.
- Yang, L. (2003). "Framing the NATO Air Strikes on Kosovo Across Countries: Comparison of Chinese and US Newspaper Coverage." *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies*. Sage Publications London: Thousand Oaks & New Delhi, Vol. 65(3): 231-249.