

1-1-2005

Geopolitical Analysis of Terror in Selected U.S. Countries

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**GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS OF TERROR IN SELECTED U.S.
COUNTRIES**

**Thesis submitted to
The Graduate College of
Marshall University**

**In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Geography**

By

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04-15-2005

Abstract

Throughout the world media reports of airplanes crashing into the Twin Towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington D.C made the front page of every paper almost instantly after September 11, 2001. This unprecedented media event led to the generation of certain key questions in the ways in which the media reports on terrorism. This research is concerned with the ways in which the U.S media has responded to the 9-11 terrorist attacks through time and space. In examining how U.S based media responds to terrorist attacks we can begin to understand if this response is helpful or detrimental in adding to terrorism. The purpose of this research is to examine the change in the amount and spatial distribution of terror coverage in the United States.

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this work to my family for the support I received throughout my academic career.

Acknowledgements

I wish to recognize Dr. Hagen, Dr. Brinegar, Prof. Jarrett, and all other members of the Geography Department for their help throughout my studies.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Throughout the world media reports of airplanes crashing into the Twin Towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington D.C made the front page of every paper almost instantly after September 11, 2001. This unprecedented media event led to the generation of certain key questions in the ways in which the media reports on terrorism. Certain questions may be obvious such as: Are American media sources reporting accurately on the accounts of the terrorist attacks? Can the United States rely on foreign media sources to give truthful accounts of the terrorist attacks? Why would Saudi Arabian newspaper headlines be concerned with planes crashing into American skyscrapers? Or, Who in Tunis would want to start their morning by reading about planes flying off course in America? To many some of these questions may seem trivial and redundant; however their geopolitical implications are important in preventing terror in any part of the world. Every aspect of the September 11 attacks must be studied at great lengths due to the geopolitical importance of the event. This attack was more than a freak occurrence happening in an isolated area of the world, and possibly the U.S can find ways to deter future strikes if we examine every aspect of how we react to terrorism.

Almost immediately after the attack blame for the attacks were being directed at Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is a terrorist organization with fundamentalist Islamic ideals. They have made it clear that Al Qaeda is not solely against America they have problems with certain countries that are historically Islamic as well, for example the Saudi regime who has allowed American troops on its soil since the first Gulf War in 1991. Saudi Arabia is

considered Muslim holy ground especially the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina these should not be occupied by non-Muslims according to fundamentalist philosophy. Al Qaeda also disapproves of the Jewish state of Israel on what it considers to be another Muslim holy ground city of Jerusalem. These are just a few examples of problems that Al Qaeda has with certain key areas of the world (Israel, Saudi Arabia, and The United States). How often are the above mentioned concerns discussed in U.S media sources? These problems that go for the most part unnoticed in American culture lead to feelings of hatred and despair for the parties responsible. This deep rooted feeling of hatred has led to terrorist attacks against several of the nations who are responsible for their discontent.

Unfortunately, terrorist attacks are nothing new to the U.S. Terrorist attacks have occurred throughout the past one hundred years. Some of these attacks have been domestic; however, many have been conducted by foreign parties. This research is concerned with the ways in which the U.S media has responded to the 9-11 terrorist attacks through time and space. In examining how U.S based media responds to terrorist attacks we can begin to understand if this response is helpful or detrimental in adding to terrorism. The purpose of this research is to examine the change in the amount and spatial distribution of terror coverage in the United States.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Geopolitics and Media Coverage:

Many citizens from around the world would agree that the terrorist attacks on the United States of America on September 11, 2001 represent an almost unprecedented media and geopolitical event, perhaps only comparable to the fall of the Berlin wall nearly twenty years ago. Given its global geopolitical impact and unprecedented media coverage, 9-11 raises important questions in critical geopolitics as to how this global event altered the geography of media coverage, as the related coverage dissipates over time and space. To understand the true geopolitical impact of 9-11, one must understand the connections between media coverage and the idea of critical geopolitics. Critical geopolitics is mostly thought of as critique of the geopolitical practices dominating at the global level. According to O' Tuathail "critical geopolitics is a form of geopolitics in its self which seeks to deconstruct preponderant influences over others in geopolitical discourse and to question the relationships of power found in geopolitical practices of dominant states" (O'Tuathail, 2000, 166). In other words, discussion in the media has the ability to sway the emotions of the audiences who are the intended recipients of these communications about a particular event.

As stated by Dodds and Sidaway in *Locating Critical Geopolitics* research must focus on other sources other than the elites who are in charge of, or in positions to influence, the foreign policies. Attention must also be given to popular forms of geopolitics, for example, the media, schools, and architecture. Investigating these topics

as related to geopolitics has become increasingly important in critical research. (Dodds, Sidaway, 1994, 517)

Clearly, discussion or discourse in the media has the ability to sway public opinions and indeed even alter the course of international relations. This raises several interesting questions such as: Are there differences in the spatial distribution of this coverage over a period of time? How does this affect the public opinion about a particular space? Paul Routledge notes in his essay about the Zapatista insurgency in Mexico that "...it is important to note that, increasingly certain resistances are becoming regional and international in focus and organization, such as the recent protests against the World Bank for its 50th anniversary" (Routledge, 1998, 241)

Therefore, the perpetrators of 9-11 focused the attacks primarily on the largest media stage in the world, the United States. The engineers of the attacks however, were themselves in a region at the time not greatly focused on in the U.S. media. Through media related strategies one could argue that the terrorists who planned the 9-11 attacks used geopolitical strategies to further their cause in launching themselves from a low density media coverage market into one where the views and demands could be heard on a grander scale on a world wide stage. Has the U.S. media played into the hands of the terrorists and others who wish to disrupt U.S. society by using the media against us? O'Thuthail suggests that this may be the case: "We are all", he noted, "vulnerable to the reckless acts of rogue states and to an unholy axis of terrorists, drug traffickers, and international criminals. These twenty-first-century predators feed on the very free flow of information and ideas and people we cherish." (2000, 169)

One way in which the U.S. may have aided in support of terrorists motives with media is to air the messages sent by Bin Laden. Several news articles report that the government warned against airing taped messages from Bin Laden. One article reports the current secretary of state requesting media not air messages inferring that they may send messages to Al Qaeda operatives instructing them to perform more attacks.

Islam in the Media:

In a study conducted by Martin and Phelan about the representation of Islam after the September 11th attacks they found a strong cross-media collocation of 'Islamic' with repetition of definers as unfavorable words such as "terrorists", "militants", and "extremists". (Martin, Phelan, 2002, 267) The use of these negative qualifiers is not by any means solely linked to terrorist operating in the United States alone.

It is common for U.S. media sources to label people acting in their own countries as well. As Molavi reports in his article "Letter from Iran": The "vigilantes," as they are commonly called by the Western media, are affiliated, paid for and organized by hard-liners in Iran's government, which makes them more accurately "thugs for hire." Members of the group, known as Ansar-e Hezbollah, have committed some of the most violent acts against student protesters in the past four years. In one instance, they entered a student dormitory brandishing clubs and lashing students with chains. In another, they threw a student out a window to his death. They have also been linked to the killings of some eighty dissidents and writers, dating back to 1988. (Molavi, 2003, 211) A vigilante would be a citizen, who takes the law into his own hands. Is this an accurate portrayal in western media? Yes, from this author's account of student rebellion in Tehran it appears

that the case is to label Muslim culture as that of a lawless society and reflect that in western society's media.

In fact, recently, a movie has been filmed about the negative portrayal of Arabs that the U.S. media seems to use. If ever we needed a book countering stereotypes of Arabs, now is the time. Negative images of Arabs in American culture are of course nothing new. Throughout this century, American portrayals of Arabs have ranged from problematic to downright racist. The pressure brought by Arab-American groups on the media in recent decades arguably had some effect in ameliorating stereotypes. Since September 11, however, and following the war in Iraq, it seems clear that negative perceptions of Arabs are alive and well. When even the melodic sound of the Muslim call to prayer can be characterized on national television as "ominous" (as it was by Connie Chung on March 19, 2003) something is terribly wrong. (Majaj, 2003, 38)

This unfortunate portrayal of Arabs seems to focus on the negative aspects of their society's culture. Even in Australia, which has not been under the same scrutiny for Islamic fundamentalist are portraying Muslims differently in the media. Abood, a Muslim author, living in Australia at the time shortly following the September 11th attacks wrote in detail of the hate directed toward women of color in that country. This account shows that media depictions of the attacks had affected the social order as far away as Australia. (Abbas, 2003, 252)

Especially, after the September 11th attacks, racial tensions, fueled by the media, have marginalized women of color, making them the usual targets of abuse and assault. Women and girls have been spat and set upon, dragged across the street by their scarves, and menaced verbally, physically, and sexually. Many women have resisted the violence

in both creative and practical ways. Muslim women especially were forced to rely on escorts as a protected measure when entering public spaces like shopping centers or when on buses. Some took up self-defense classes. Many kept their children home from school. In short, the very rights to freedom of movement and freedom of dress have been denied to women and girls with little outrage from so-called progressives hiding out in “democratic” Australia. (Abbas, 2003, 255)

Clearly the negative portrayal of Islam is recorded in the media throughout the world. This can be attributed to the focus by Islamic extremists to exploit this perceived weakness in western society to launch a grandiose saga portraying the effects of terrorist attacks in society.

Media Used as Weapon:

More geopolitical debate must focus on whether or not western media has played into the hands of the terrorists by focusing attention on regions of the world that may be thought by some as underrepresented in media attention negative or positive. One of the main ideas of geopolitics is representation in the media. Hegemonic powers such as the U.S. can pick and choose who and where and to some degree the quantity of media coverage that a particular area receives. This is realized by many citizens across the globe including those who wish to conduct terrorist activities. By launching great attacks against the U.S. at the heart of media focus terrorists have found a weapon in one of the instruments of free society. Jean Baudrillard in the article *L'Esprit du Terroisme* writes that “they”, the terrorists, “also appropriated for themselves the very weapons of other dominant power – money, stock market speculation, computer and aeronautics technologies, the specular dimensions and media networks. They have assimilated all of

these from modernity and globalization without deviating from their goal, which is to destroy them. (2002, 409) Benjamin Barber addressed related issues in his work *Mcworld vs. Jihad*. He correlates the economic hegemony of America to the under representation of developing societies. Barber describes capitalism used as a weapon in Americanizing societies who may be socialist, communist, or under a religious leadership. Barber also points out that before 9-11 much of what was shown about terrorism only played out as light melodrama depicted in the media. This has changed after 9-11 according to Barber. American media sources now have vilified societies who may conduct business in different ways, thus leading to hatred on both sides of the spectrum. (Barber, 2002)

By using the media as a weapon the U.S has played into the hands of those who wish to do the most harm by attacking the most basic foundations of western society. Again, certain questions are raised by the notion of how western society covers the terrorist attacks in the U.S media. Would the 9-11 attacks have taken place at all if terrorists thought that little to no change in terror coverage would have occurred? If little to no attention was placed on terror coverage would a different attack have been executed? By changing the amount of media attention and the spatial distribution of where the American media focuses its terror coverage has western society used the media against itself? Would Americans feel differently about terror if the media did not change focus on where the perpetrators were operating from?

These questions are answered by Baudrillard in the above mentioned essay. “The terrorist would be forgiven for any kind of violence, if this violence was not broadcast by the media (Terrorism would be nothing without the media.) But all this illusory, there is

no good use of the media: the media is a part of the event itself, part of the terror, and its role plays in both directions". (2002, 414)

However, other questions, not addressed by Baudrillard, about the amount of coverage and where the focus of terror coverage has shifted are not addressed. These questions are important in answering how America and Western society have aided in the promotion of terrorism by use of the media. For America the media is a source of political control over the developing world. For the people who wish to harm or change Western society the American media can be used as weapon in their fight. These questions are answered in the results and discussion portion of this essay. All of these questions are relevant points when discussing the critical geopolitics of how media focus changes and the affects on the world as a whole. (2002, 415)

CHAPTER III

Methods

The purpose of this research is to examine the change in media coverage pertaining to quantity and a spatial distribution of terror coverage in a region of the world, content analysis method was employed for tabulation of the frequency and spatial distribution of selected variables.

Methodological Approach and Philosophy:

The positive theory is applied to this research for the use of empirical data. Positivism as developed by August Comte generally claims that observable phenomena are the only true form of scientific research. The data are in the form of written texts. Quantitative research will be used to deduce meaning from the results of comparing the data gathering phases. Deductive reasoning will allow for the researcher to derive a truth from a general topic. Deduction is the selected method of reasoning when testing empirical data such as in a content analysis.

Content Analysis:

“One use of content analysis is the generation of culture indicators, which point to the state of beliefs, values, ideologies, or other cultural systems.” (Weber, 1984, 127)

The first phase of analysis examined the differences in the amount of terror coverage in selected countries. Newspaper articles were sampled from two major media sources (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*) using Lexis-Nexis searchable database. *The Times* and *The Post* were chosen due to their proximity to the terror attacks, but also because their distribution covers both local and national audiences in the United States. The above mentioned media outlets were not chosen to allow for generalizations to be

made concerning all newspapers content; however, given this particular terror occurrence and time frame in which it occurred, it is expected that the news stories in which these articles were taken will give some indication as to how a majority of American newspapers covered the events. (Cho, et al, 2003)

The sample was constructed by choosing a time frame of ten years before 9-11 (September 10, 1991 to September 10, 2001). This time frame allowed a quantifiable data set as to the amount and spatial distribution of terror coverage before 9-11. Searches in this time frame using Lexis-Nexis electronic news database were gathered and articles containing the name of a country were returned. Only articles consisting of greater than one page were used in the data collection. Articles were then read to verify that the content in the article was related directly to terrorism for political or religious motives. Countries were chosen with regards to previous knowledge of terror support and that countries prior record of exportation of terror. Concentration on the Middle East is important in current research due to the high level of fundamental religious and politically motivated terrorism that comes directly from that region. After a search for the country name in Lexis-Nexis was conducted the results were again searched for the word "terror" in the headlines of the articles. This process was repeated for the three separate years following 9-11, (September 2001 through 2004) to compare in the change of quantity and spatial distribution in terror coverage for the given time frame.

After collecting data for each country in each time frame, the results were entered into Microsoft excel spread sheets. Entering the data into a workable spreadsheet allowed for interpretation of the data. Graphs, especially those of the pie variety, were utilized for the visual display and clarity of examining the data. From the categorized

data, maps could be made using geographic information systems. ESRI ArcGIS was used to develop 3 maps in which the amount of terror coverage could be compared and contrasted over time and space. Maps were constructed to show differences in the amount of terror coverage from the earliest time frame (ten years before 9-11) to the next time frame (one year after 9-11). The difference in the amount of terror coverage was then qualified into four categories: A: Significant Decrease, B: No Change, C: Significant Increase, D: Great Increase. A color scheme was then chosen to represent change in amount of terror coverage over time dependent on the selected country. This process was repeated for the following time frames. This process allowed for convenient comparison in gauging how the data changed from the earlier time frame to the next. Now, with cartographic display of terror coverage change of time and space analysis can be made of how the United States of America has shifted focus in terror coverage before and after 9-11.

Chapter IV

Results/Discussion

The results of this study reflect the change, if any, in two major U.S. news publications before and after September 11, 2001 (9-11). This study also reflects the shift of geographical focus concerning terror coverage in selected countries in the Middle East and Africa after 9-11. The first portion of the results/discussion will show the amount of change experienced both individually and as a whole for the selected countries. The second portion of results will display the spatial change over several different periods of time.

Of course, it was never intended for this paper to be an exhaustive examination into the problems associated with the United States media outlets. Nevertheless, I assert that it is likely to stimulate thought and discussion into the critical geopolitics associated with media attention. Especially, in an area of the world during a particular time when many would agree that media focus could be used to further political or economic agendas that may be seen by some as unfavorable. As many would agree geopolitics is the study of ways in which dominant countries assert influence on less powerful nations, examinations into the tools and underlying motivations of the dominant countries should be critically examined in scholarly works.

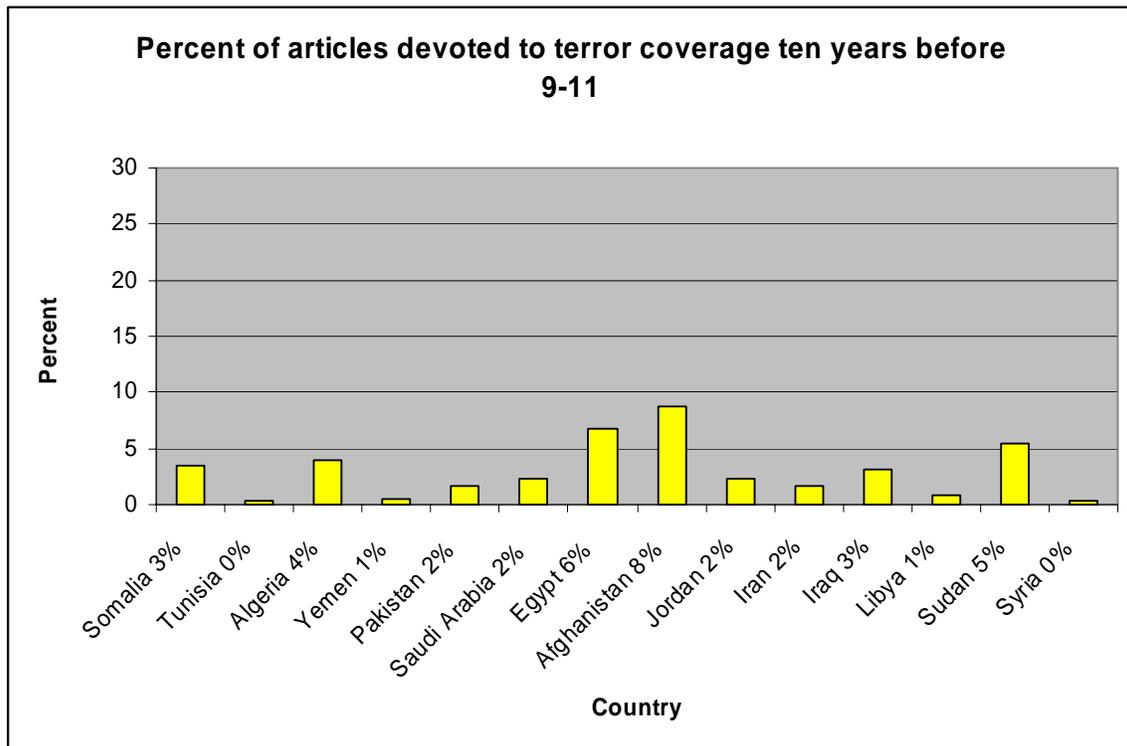
Change in Amount of Terror Coverage before and After 9-11:

For the purpose of the first portion of study the change in coverage occurred over a specified time period from 1991 through 2004. The years used for data collection were broken up before and after 9-11. Before 9-11 is September 10, 1991 through September 10, 2001. After 9-11 is September 11, 2001 through September 11, 2002. This time

frame allowed for a plethora of significant articles about terrorism in the selected media outlets. The total number of articles devoted solely to terrorism with regards to political or religious motives was 352. The ten years prior to 9-11 saw many terrorist attacks that certainly made headlines over the world. For example: The first bombing of the World Trade Center in February of 1993, Truck bombs which hit embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in August of 1998, and October 2000 attack of the U.S.S Cole Near Yemen. All of these terror incidents and many others occurred in the ten years prior to 9-11.

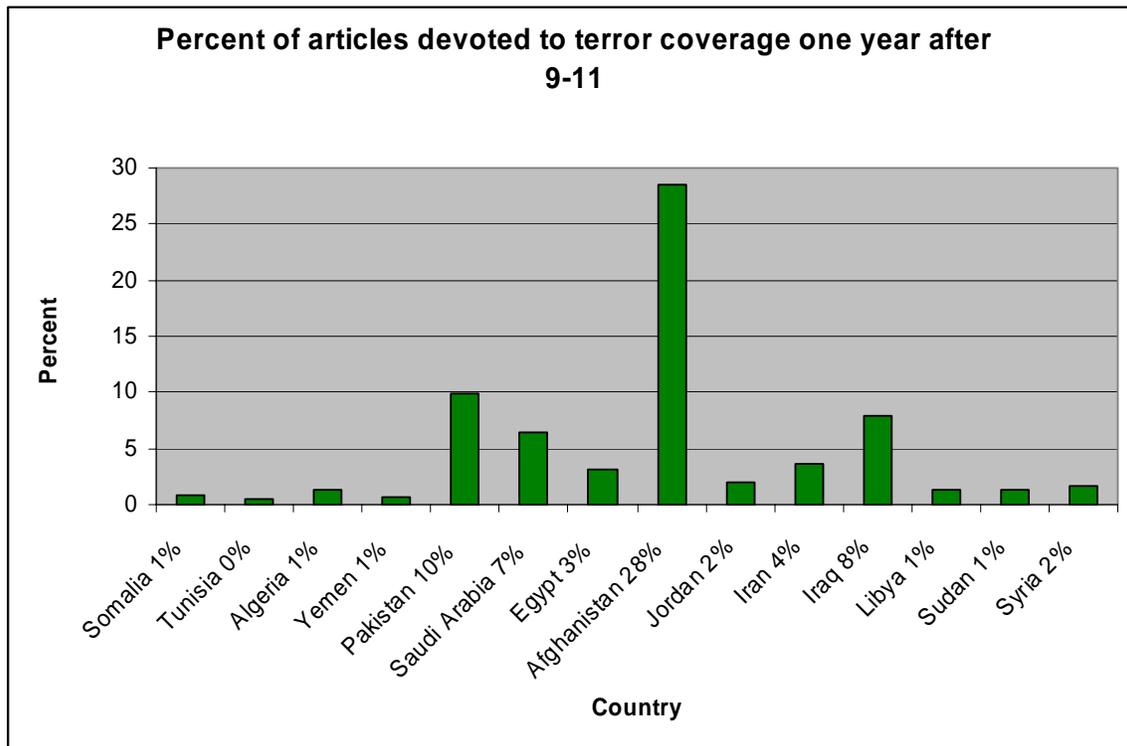
However, the amount of coverage directed towards certain countries in the Middle East and Africa, that many would agree to sponsor if not serve as a training ground for terrorism, remained relatively low. The percentages shown below are out of the results for terror coverage of the world as whole over the given time period. As Shown in Graph (A) Afghanistan commands the largest portion of terror coverage out of the selected countries. This is more than likely due to Afghanistan's allowance of Al Qaeda to operate freely under the rule of the religious fundamentalist Taliban regime. Tunisia and Syria have the lowest percentages of terror coverage in the selected countries. Many would agree that Tunisia is not surprising as having a low percentage of terror coverage due to its westernized views of politics and religion and little to zero civil or social problems directly associated with terrorism in this time period.

Graph A:



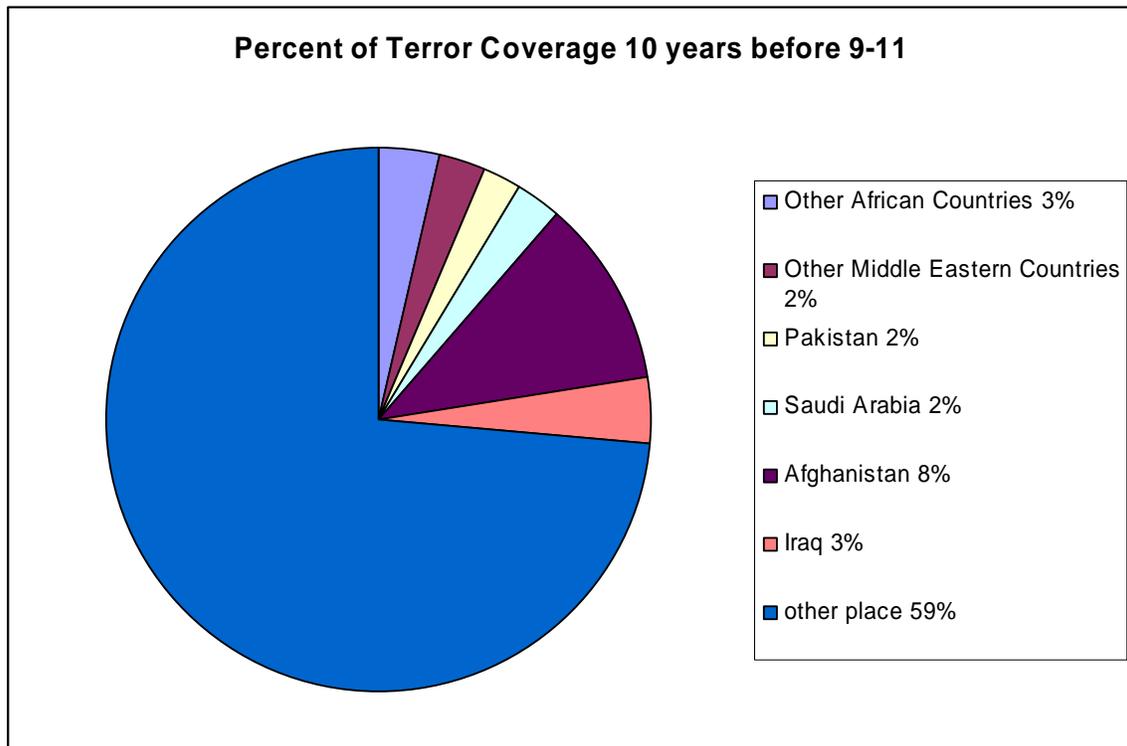
How has the amount of terror coverage changed after 9-11? Have certain countries experienced a growth or decrease in terror coverage after 9-11? Yes and no, certain countries have experienced growths in terror coverage while others have seen a decline. Also, the total number of articles devoted to terrorism increased in the one year following 9-11. The ten years before 9-11 total number of articles devoted to terrorism was 352, in the one year following 9-11 total articles devoted to terrorism jumped to 692. The results were not surprising in light of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Afghanistan still led the way, although leaping from eight percent of the terror coverage to twenty eight percent. Also, certain countries experienced a decrease in terror coverage for example: Algeria and Somalia. Many would agree that this change in the percent of terror coverage is not at all surprising due to the location of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda after the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

Graph B:



This information may also be presented in pie graph which shows the selected countries as a fraction out of the entire amount of terror coverage in ten years prior to 9-11. This representation allows for one to infer that majority of terror coverage in the world was not focused on any of the selected countries. The selected countries have been placed into regions Somalia, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Sudan comprise the “Other African Countries. Yemen, Jordan, Iran, Syria, and Egypt comprise of the “Other Middle Eastern Countries. Other regions in the world where terror coverage may have focused were Northern Ireland, Central America, and South East Asia just to name a few possible terrorism hot spots in the ten years prior to 9-11 attacks.

Graph C:

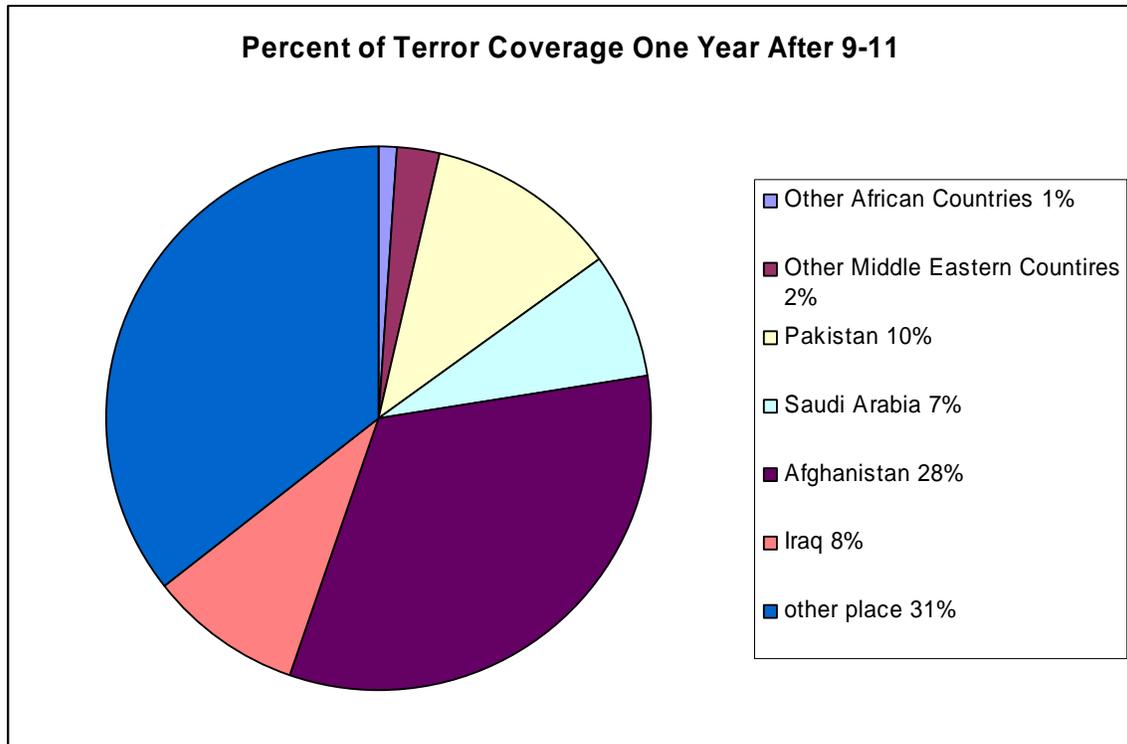


The majority (59%) of terror coverage was focused on other parts of the world outside of the countries used for this study. Out of the countries selected for this portion of the study Afghanistan received the largest percent (8%) of terror coverage. If we compare this to the amount of terror coverage one year after 9-11, Graph D, we see a change in the global distribution of terror coverage. Other places still had greater amounts of terror coverage however they dropped to 31%, while many of the countries selected in this study increased in terror coverage. A pie chart was constructed to show terror coverage one year after 9-11.

Has the U.S. played into the hand of terrorists by changing our focus on terror coverage? Has the media, in increasing the percent of terror coverage from one region of the world to another, completed a goal of terrorism by drawing attention to the perpetrators of these attacks? If the terrorists are using American media against itself

then the answer is yes. As documented earlier in the review of related literature, research has shown that terrorism uses the weapons of its enemies against itself, especially those weapons in which it feels works against their underlying goals. This pattern continues throughout the remaining time frames of this research.

Graph D:

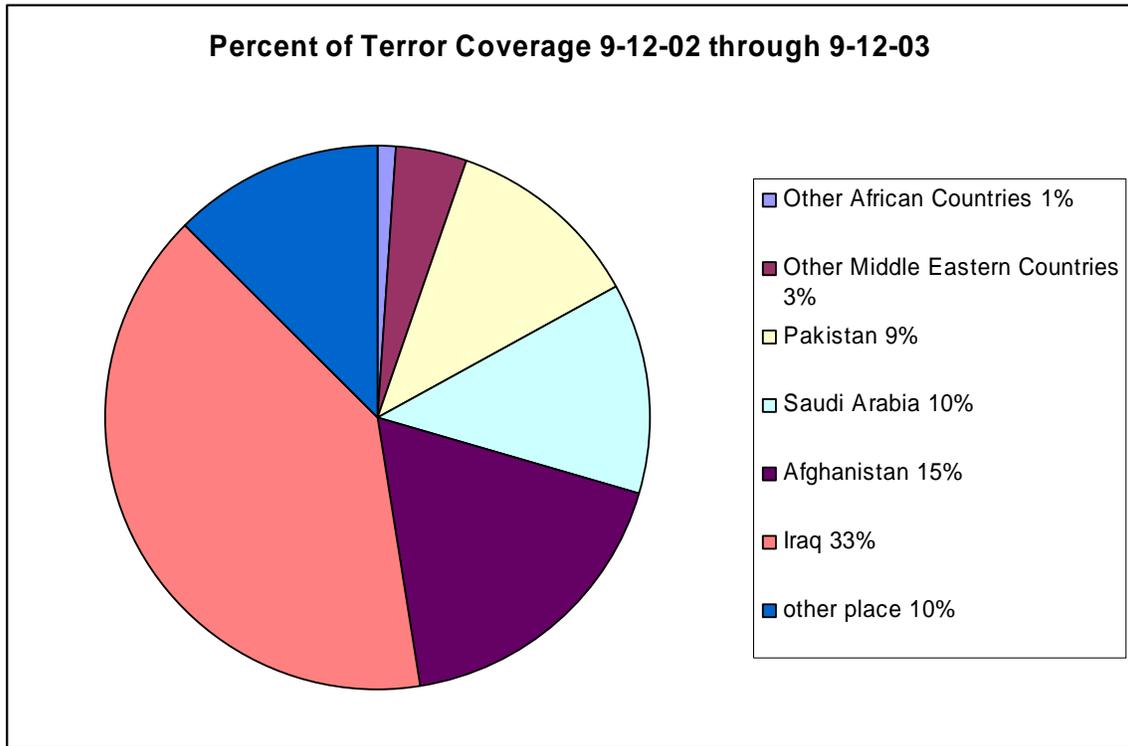


Most of the increase in where terror coverage was focused occurred in Afghanistan and Pakistan one year after 9-11. The opposite occurred in Africa where Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia experienced a significant decrease in terror coverage. This can be attributed to the immediate effects of 9-11 and the role the media played in covering terror aimed at certain areas of the world. With such a large increase in terror coverage for one area of the world and significant decrease in coverage for a different area of the world, the question must be asked why was there a dramatic shift? The

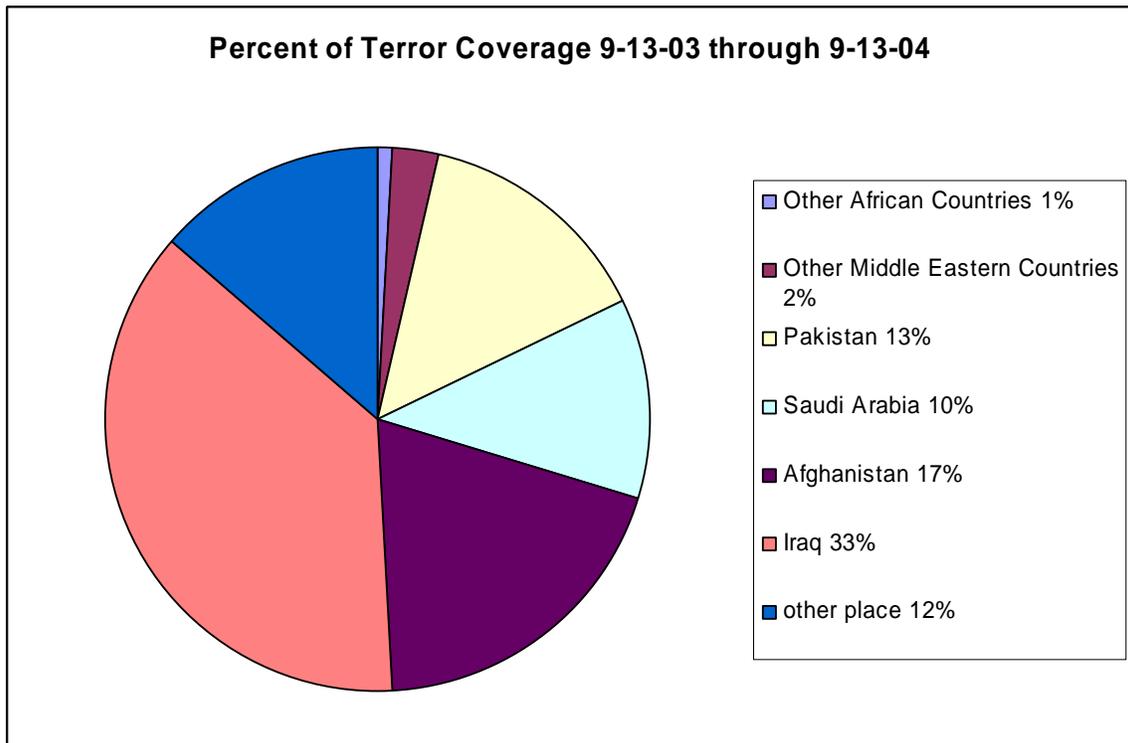
obvious answer is that the home base of operations for the persons responsible for orchestrating the attacks was in the region with large increase. Many would agree that this shift in the focus of terror coverage has aided in certain goals of the terrorists.

Between 2002 and 2003 reduction of terror coverage occurred in other parts of the world while the countries selected for this research saw an increase in the amount of terror coverage in U.S media sources. A great increase in terror coverage was seen in Iraq and Saudi Arabia as well as some other areas. Much of the terror coverage being reported on in Iraq is primarily due to domestic terrorism aimed at the New Iraqi government. This domestic terrorism being reported in U.S media newspapers still has the ability to emotionalize the struggles of a region in a negative or positive way. Many readers may be influenced to feel that America has acted humane by invading Iraq. However, after daily bombardment of terror coverage in the media about Iraq public positions may change. Incidents of kidnappings followed by videotaped pleas for rescue or release and in some incidents taped beheadings and executions are all making it to the headlines in major newspapers in the U.S. This negative portrayal of certain countries in newspapers will undoubtedly have significant emotional impacts of citizen's views of these countries. A pie chart (Graph E) illustrated the amount of terror coverage for the year September 2002 to September 2003.

Graph E:



Graph F:



Interestingly, the percent change in the amount of terror coverage only moderately changed between September 2002 and September 2004. More than likely this is due to a status quo experienced in terrorist attacks involving countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. If this pattern persists over a substantial amount of time and terrorists feel that their concerns are not being reflected in the United States media outlets this may prompt them to perform more terrorist attacks. Also, the question must be posed: Does the degree of severity of the attack directly relate to the amount of terror coverage reported in U.S newspapers? This question relates to one of the original questions posed in this research. Has the U.S. media helped in aiding terrorism by increasing/decreasing or changing the spatial distribution of terror coverage? For the first year after 9-11, it is safe to agree that by changing focus from one area of the world to another and increasing or decreasing the amount of terror coverage corresponding to wherever the terrorists may lead our attention at that particular moment by conducting attacks, media has allowed for terror coverage to act as weapon in aiding terrorism.

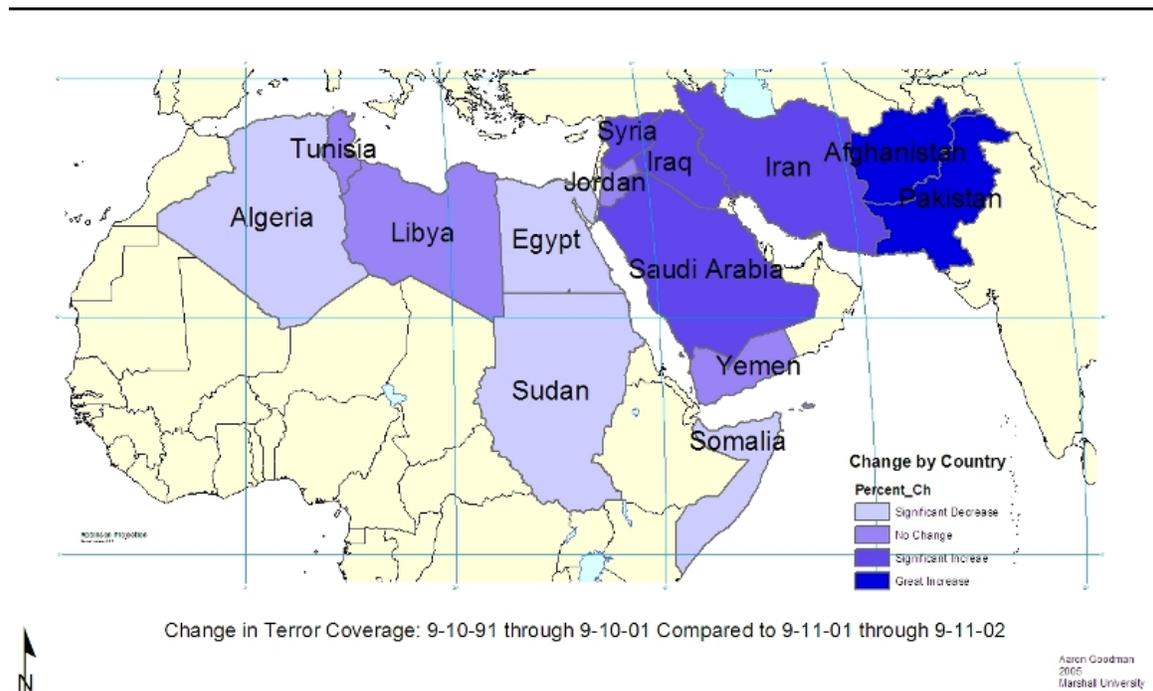
To further support the evidence that, at least at some level, terror coverage has changed I collected articles written by an author before and after 9-11. The articles were opinion/editorial in nature and reveal much about how one author's own views about the war on terror in the Middle East were changed. Freidman, a columnist for the *New York Times*, in an article written before 9-11, discusses the importance of removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Freidman goes on state that "The world becomes a dangerous place not only when Saddam acts up, but when so few allies are ready to act against him" (Freidman, 1997)

In an article written after 9-11, Freidman is posing an opposite opinion in addressing why the U.S. government allowed itself to undertake such a disastrous mission in Iraq. Freidman states, “Unfortunately, the same administration that had the audacity to undertake this revolutionary project in Iraq did not prepare either itself or the U.S. public for such a vast undertaking. I worry that the U.S. will not have the time, money, or people to finish this job right” (Freidman, 2003).

Spatial Distribution of Terror Coverage Before and After 9-11:

By using the data in the graphs above maps were constructed to show geographically where terror coverage was focused comparing one time period to another. This was used to examine the change in spatial distribution of terror coverage by comparing one time frame to another. The earliest time period (ten years before 9-11) was compared to the following time period (one year after 9-11) and so on with a final map comparing the two years 2003 through 2004.

Map A:



Map (A) shows that the spatial distribution of terror coverage increased greatly in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This change was expected due to the location of Al Qaeda leaders and the war in Afghanistan immediately following the attacks on 9-11. A significant decrease or little change in the amount of terror coverage was seen in African countries. This is interesting because in the ten years leading up to 9-11 Sudan, Somalia, and Egypt all were receiving relatively large shares of the U.S. terror coverage. The main reason for the geographic shift in terror coverage was due to 9-11 in which the U.S was attacked on its own soil for the first time since the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor at the beginning of World War Two. This is different from the terror coverage experienced by Sudan and Somalia. The terror coverage in those countries was primarily domestic terrorism or against U.S. military forces operating in those countries. In Sudan civil war has led to violence mainly in the Darfur region where many Sudanese have died at the

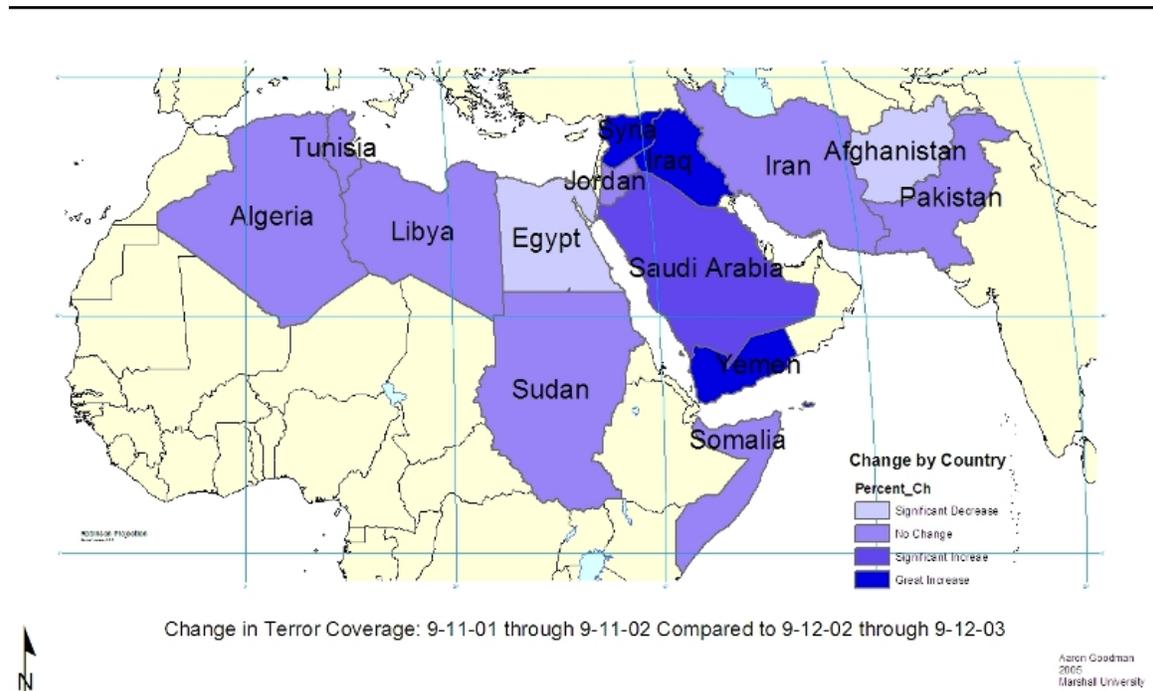
hands of the Janjaweed militia forces. In Somalia war lords have clashed with U.S. military personnel leading up to the slaying of U.S. service men in Mogadishu. These two primary events would demand a significant portion of U.S. media coverage. However, many would agree that terrorism experienced on U.S. soil would certainly change the geographic distribution of terror coverage in U.S. media sources. This research shows that immediately following the 9-11 attacks U.S. based terror coverage changed. The geographic focus changed from a significant portion of terror coverage related to African countries experiencing mainly internal conflicts to Middle and Near Eastern countries which were suspected of harboring Al Qaeda leaders responsible for the 9-11 attacks.

If one of Al Qaeda's goals was to change the amount and spatial distribution of terror coverage that they were directly receiving than they accomplished it. After 9-11 terror coverage shifted from mainly African countries to mainly Middle and Near Eastern countries. One may argue that this is to be expected and only proper for such a monumental event in American history. However, it should be realized that without this monumental attack the views of the terrorists may not have been so vividly recorded in American newspapers. Thus, U.S. media aided the terrorists by transforming into a geopolitical stage from which to demonstrate their convictions to global change.

If this pattern is true for all terrorist organizations who feel threatened by U.S. policies than will America allow themselves to be subjected to another attack this time by a group who may have fallen out of the headlines since 9-11? Does this pattern of terror coverage change in the following years? If so, how will this affect terrorists' views of getting their messages through to the American public? Map (B) compares the changes

in terror coverage between years (01-02) through (02-03). In this map major increases in terror coverage are apparent in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

Map B:



Increased terror coverage is not surprising in Iraq and Syria. The United States went to war with Iraq during this time. Syria is not surprising due to the large number of illegal combatants entering Iraq through the border with Syria. Terror coverage in this time frame seemed to either level off or decrease opposed to the previous section much of the terror coverage was increasing. Afghanistan experienced a significant decrease and Pakistan saw little to no change in the amount of terror coverage. Most would agree this is due to the war in Iraq although U.S. troops were still fighting in Afghanistan. Yemen during this time experienced one significant terror attack directed at an oil tanker docked

off the coast. This attack which killed one and spilled tens of thousands of barrels of oil into the Gulf of Aden probably led to a spike in the percent of terror coverage in Yemen.

A third and final map (C) was created to examine the difference in change of terror coverage between (02-03) time frame and (03-04). Interestingly, none of the countries experienced great increases in the amount of terror coverage from (02-03) to (03-04). However, Iran, Somalia, and Yemen experienced significant decreases in amount of change in terror coverage. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Libya all experienced significant increases. More than likely this is due to major events concerning the U.S led war on terror in these countries. For example in March of 2003 Khalid Sheik Mohammad, a top Al Qaeda operative was captured by Pakistani and American officials in Pakistan.

Map C:



Change in Terror Coverage: 9-12-02 through 9-12-03 Compared to 9-13-03 through 9-13-04



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Chapter V

Conclusion

In conclusion, several key questions posed earlier in this paper require further explanation as to the findings in this study. First, has there been a significant increase/decrease in the amount of terror coverage in the United States? Mainly no, the change in the amount of terror coverage immediately after 9-11 was not significant. However some countries experienced moderate changes, and two countries did experience significant increases in terror coverage. The two countries, not surprisingly, were Afghanistan and Pakistan. What is surprising, in this study, is that many of the countries sampled only showed mild changes in the amount of terror coverage focused on them one year after 9-11. The media's quickness to focus directly on Afghanistan and Pakistan one year after the war is due to the American government's ability to pinpoint the attackers location almost immediately following the attacks. Why lack in the increase of media coverage might be surprising to some could be explained by the typical media swarm that can be associated with major media events such as natural disasters, school shootings, and political or celebrity scandals. The data clearly indicates that the amount of terror coverage did change immediately following the 9-11 attacks; however the level of change was not significant in comparison to the amount of terror coverage focused on other areas of the world before 9-11.

Second, has there been a shift in the spatial distribution of terror coverage since the 9-11 terrorist attacks? Yes, the spatial distribution of terror coverage can be correlated to significant terror attacks or findings. Countries who may be associated with

acts of terrorism, domestic or international, demand the spotlight of U.S media sources. As America began its attack of Iraq the country soon after became plagued by terrorist attacks. This drew the attention of U.S. media as shown in map (B). In map (B) one can also note that as attention was more highly focused on Iraq in that time frame, Afghanistan experienced a significant decrease in the amount of terror coverage as compared to the year before. This is interesting due to time period in which map (B) examines 2001-2003. During this time Afghanistan experiences a time of relative peace with U.N security forces in place and the election of President Karzai. As opposed to Iraq which is at war with the United States. Iraq is experiencing not only bombing from the U.S. but internal clashes between different ethnic/religious groups. This internal terrorism and U.S. involvement has shifted focus of terror coverage away from the Near Eastern countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and spotlighted Middle Eastern countries of Iraq and Syria. Syria has gained in the amount of terror coverage due to reports of enemy combatants entering Iraq illegally through the border of Syria.

Third and final question, have changes in media coverage (increase/decrease in amount and spatial distribution) helped or hindered terrorism? Many people may agree that if one desires to be heard on one of the largest media stages in the world, that being the United States, and the only attention that certain areas of the world receive from the U.S. is negative than it makes sense to conduct terrorism as a method of drawing even more attention to oneself. By attacking the United States the terrorists responsible made international news. This is evident throughout this essay. In my opinion, the terrorists not only counted on this for the immediate effects, they relied on it to spark similar attacks throughout the world. Many would agree that the terrorists knew that they could

not defeat us by all out war, however if they conducted a strike that was so impressive it would change the way in which the enemies of the terrorists think and react to them. One way in which I feel that future research on this topic could be interesting to allow for similar examination using different countries media as the primary data sources. This would give further insight as to the severity of terror coverage that was commanded by the terrorist immediately following 9-11.

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