

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this thesis is that the *New York Times* were almost always heavily against Hamas, sometimes supporting Israel, while continuously having the same perspective as the United States government in the 2014 Gaza War. Through analysing the editorial content of the *Times*, it can be seen that through picking certain information and events that alleviates this view by means of information salience—or in other words, agenda-setting—the *Times* continuously deemed Hamas as an actor that hinder long-term peace in the area, with continuous terror and incursion lashed against the state and people of Israel. Nevertheless, the *Times* also time to time criticised the more ‘extreme’ part of Israel—as it criticises the ‘extreme’ part of Palestinian politics in favour of the ‘moderate’ Fatah and Mahmoud Abbas. Yet, the criticism directed toward Israel is nowhere near the same level or amount as condemnation toward Hamas.

Furthermore, the *Times* often if not always were aligned with the policy and the stance of the United States in the 2014 Gaza War. This was done by putting forward certain ‘important’ information of the war that supports or corroborates the US’ official stance and statements by officials themselves, such as statements from President Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry, and other governmental figures. For example, in their July 18th editorial, the *Times* are quick to include information of the United States’ support of the right of Israel to ‘defend themselves’ or how Israel cannot be expected to stand by while they were

attacked by Hamas' rockets and mortar shells. While this is not false or misleading by any reason, the *Times* also exclude any and every information that made the beginning of the war less clear. This includes the contentious kidnapper of Israeli teenagers, which Hamas denied involvement and there is no sufficient evidence to allege them, and the invasive police-action done by Israel in the West Bank afterward. The editorial also excludes how in their pre-war operation, Israel had already launched air attacks toward Gaza before Hamas fired rockets that triggered Israel's right to retaliate.

An editorial piece cannot be expected to contain all major information, nevertheless that is exactly why it is an important source to see the media's agenda-setting. Among many events and statistics to choose an angle from, the *Times* will deliberately choose several events and data that would be understood by the reader as important and integral toward understanding the 2014 Gaza War. While citizens who only read statements by the United Nations and its organisations would think that at the very least Israel has done too little to prevent civilian deaths, readers of the *Times* would first and foremost blame Hamas for the death of civilians—both Israeli and Palestinians.

With the deliberateness information-picking for editorial choice, the next event that the *Times* covered are interesting, mainly because it is focused on pro-Palestinian rally in one country, France. Although the *Times* clarifies that most of the pro-Palestinian protest were peaceful, the framing on their particular editorial piece was that there are anti-semitic, hateful elements on pro-Palestinian demonstrations, with evidence of riot in several city of France following the war

breakdown. The title of this editorial itself is *Fires of Hatred in France*. This narrative would continue in the subsequent editorial, with callbacks toward the increasing anti-semitic riots throughout Europe. Among many protests around the world both pro and against Israel, the *Times* chose this event in particular to gain salience.

In their next editorial, *Gaza's Mounting Death Toll*, the *Times* went forward with their narrative as increasing international pressure was directed against Israel after the clashes in Shuja'iyya and the attacks on UN-owned school buildings in Beit Hanoun. Nevertheless, in the event where the *Israel Defence Force* is highly perceived to be responsible for the attacks, the *Times* are quick to put forward clarifications and statements from Israeli officials that they have done their best to minimise civilian casualties. Not only that, the *Times* suggest to their reader that the death of Palestinian civilians in Palestinian land can be caused by Palestinian rockets or is the fault of Hamas for putting stashes of weapons in civilian buildings. In another word, Israel was given the benefit of doubt with their statement, giving the impression toward the reader that Israel might not be responsible after all, while Hamas were continuously criticised for their potentially war crime action of putting weapon arsenal near civilian buildings.

Nevertheless, again the *Times* echoes the stance of the Department of State in this piece of editorial, with calls for peace and the end of civilian deaths from both sides. For this the *Times* commended the shuttle diplomacy of John Kerry, and even in their regular report praised Obama for having to face so many international crises in a short time—this is around the time the Crimea crisis

started to become more serious. While it is apparent that restraint from both side, including from the *Israeli Defence Forces*, is needed to end the war, the *Times* at no point in their editorial pointed out that Hamas' aggressiveness and belligerence has caused a much more less casualties, both tangible and intangible, than the IDF who at this point has caused more than 2,000 Palestinian civilian deaths and destruction of local economies.

In their last editorial in the dusk of war, *Making Gaza Cease-Fire Last*, there is a change of pace with the *Times* questioning the extremity of Israel politics which hinders two-state solution and the lack of restraint in their military attacks. Nevertheless, from the start until the end the *Times'* editorial still disproportionately put the blame of the war toward Hamas more than the Israeli state. While the Israeli state needs to be more careful in their attacks—that they deserve to do as retaliation against Hamas' rockets—and to put more restraint in their military, Hamas needs to be thoroughly stopped, with a complete audit of international donor's money toward Palestine and the shift toward a more moderate politics.

If agenda-setting is how the media decides what their reader thinks about, then what is the implication of the angle of these editorial pieces? After reading these editorials, the reader would think that Hamas attacked first and then Israel would retaliate. Then, the death of Palestinian civilians can be caused by Hamas' belligerence of putting weapon stash in civilian areas, while Israel has put effort to make sure there are minimal civilian casualties. Furthermore, the United States was perceived to be working hard toward long-lasting peace in the area and

toward cease-fire agreement. Last, the reader would pick out the conclusion that for long-lasting peace, Palestinian politics needs to be more 'moderate' and certainly not handled by the 'terrorist' Hamas.

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