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A DIVIDED AGENDA: AN ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE DURING THE 2011
LIBYAN INTERVENTION

A thesis submitted to Anglo-American University for the degree
of Bachelor in Journalism and Communications

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree, or qualification thereof, or for any other university or institute of learning.

I declare that this thesis is my independent work. All sources and literature are cited and included.

I also hereby acknowledge that my thesis will be made publicly available pursuant to Section 47b of Act No. 552/2005 Coll. and AAU's internal regulations.

Samuel Dempsey

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Samuel Dempsey', written in a cursive style.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank all of those at Anglo American University that helped me along the way during the last three years. Specifically, my thesis advisor Robert Warren has been imperative to my own growth as a student, and to the fine tuning of this thesis. I would also like to recognize Ted Turnau for being a teacher that really intends to make a difference at AAU. As well, I would like to thank my dog Rio for being a good boy and helping me take needed breaks during this writing process. Lastly, and most importantly, I want to thank my family who has supported me from the beginning. None of this would be possible without them.

ABSTRACT

A Divided Agenda: An Ethical Analysis of the American News Media Coverage

During the 2011 Libyan Intervention

Samuel C.S. Dempsey

The NATO Libyan intervention dominated the news media in the spring of 2011. NATO claimed its mission was humanitarian, manifested under the U.N.'s Responsibility to Protect, but quickly it was realized that the mission included regime change in removing Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. This paper analyses the role the American news media played in the Libyan revolution turned intervention. In approaching the question: did the American news media uphold the SPJ Code of Ethics in its coverage of the American led NATO intervention of Libya in 2011 by thoroughly seeking and reporting the truth, or was it predominantly swayed by the Obama administration's use of agenda setting, it is necessary to develop a sound understanding of the political context surrounding the U.S. news media coverage of military conflicts in the 21st century, and American foreign policy. Accordingly, this paper examines the SPJ Code of Ethics, the media in international relations theory, the agenda setting theory, the 2011 Libyan Intervention, and coverage of the intervention by various news media networks. In thoroughly examining the conflict and the coverage surrounding it, the picture becomes less homogenous than advertised or commonly understood. The American news media both did and did not uphold the SPJ Code of Ethics in its coverage of the NATO intervention of Libya in 2011; half of networks analysed were persuaded policy agenda setting and failed to thoroughly seek and report the truth, while the other half critically examined the intervention, acting as public watchdogs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context and Statement of Relevance

The 2011 Libyan Intervention was the first time the U.N.'s Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was put into action. How Libya became the focus for such action can only be explained by examining the news media's coverage of events leading up to and around the intervention. The aim by the West to intervene was advertised as humanitarian, but quickly became regime change in removing Colonel Muammar Gaddafi who had been in power for the previous 41 years. The media narrowed the frame and placed Libya at the top of the agenda, as from March 21-27, in the midst of the turmoil in Libyan conflict, 47% of the new coverage studied by the Pew Research Center was of Libya (Pew Research Center 2011). To understand such a focus, as to whether it was the media committing a "rally round-the-flag" in allowing patriotism to guide the news (Moore 35), or if it was independently chosen, following the media agenda setting theory. All aspects of the Libyan intervention — the government narrative, the media narrative, and the truth — must be sorted out.

_____The intervention's intentions were stated to bring about democracy and peace for the Libyan people; however, the country has been in chaos ever since. It has been divided in half in the midst of a civil war. Since 2012, there have been 4,349 foreign aerial strikes recorded in Libya, which has led to an estimated 333 to 467 civilian deaths. As well, at least 871 to 1,384 civilians have been wounded (Salyk-Virk 5). Consequently, the UN also estimates, at least 823,000 people are in need of various humanitarian aid (Salyk-Virk 13).

Prior to the intervention, Gaddafi and Libya had recently developed good relations with the West. Libya had lucrative energy and defense contracts with Italy and France, and the U.S. removed Libya from the state sponsored terrorist list in 2009 (Mueller 12). Highly debated and

highly perplexing is how positive diplomatic relations between the West and Gaddafi that were supported by the media turned to a full scale aerial intervention to oust Gaddafi who was depicted as a brutal dictator.

What is imperative is understanding the role the media played in order to learn from the mistakes and successes of the coverage, to ensure the fourth estate functions on behalf of the people for a healthy democracy. Libya will not be the last perplexing intervention, nor has it been the last American conflict in the Middle-East. In looking towards the future, Samantha Power who was a strong advocate for the Libyan intervention has advised President Biden to make quick and decisive foreign policy actions to restore confidence in American expertise and competence (Power 2020). As future conflicts and applications of the R2P develop, the American populous capability to trust and critically view the news media must come from understanding the patterns of the past.

1.2. Research Question and Thesis Statement

1. **Research Question:** Did the American news media uphold the SPJ Code of Ethics in its coverage of the American led NATO intervention of Libya in 2011 by thoroughly seeking and reporting the truth, or was it predominantly swayed by the Obama administration's use of agenda setting?
2. **Thesis Statement:** The American news media both did and did not uphold the SPJ Code of Ethics in its coverage of the NATO intervention of Libya in 2011; half of networks analysed were persuaded policy agenda setting and failed to thoroughly seek and report the truth, while the other half critically examined the conflict acting as public watchdogs.

1.3. Methodology and Chapter Forecast

In approaching the question: did the American news media uphold the SPJ Code of Ethics in its coverage of the American led NATO intervention of Libya in 2011 by thoroughly seeking and reporting the truth, or was it predominantly swayed by the Obama administration's use of agenda setting, it was necessary to develop a sound understanding of the political context

surrounding the U.S. news media coverage of military conflicts in the 21st century, and American foreign policy. Accordingly, examined were the SPJ Code of Ethics, the media in international relations theory, the agenda setting theory, the 2011 Libyan Intervention, and coverage of the intervention by various news media agencies.

Firstly, to examine the theoretical aspects of the question, primary and secondary sources were used to relate various media understandings to the context of Libya. To be able to isolate the question of the ethics of the news media coverage of the NATO led intervention, a well-rounded base depiction of the Libyan intervention outside of the media was imperative. The understanding of the Libyan intervention was achieved by qualitative research of academic, government, and military journals. Additionally, to narrow down the focus of the news media coverage, a content and discourse analysis was conducted of digital news media articles from various networks. Discourse analysis was ideal as the main method as it best analyses written and spoken language while not neglecting the use of language within a social context (Salkind 2010). Discourse analysis resides in the constructivism–structuralism traditions in its reference of language in either text or talk within the social environment (Salkind 2010). The use of discourse being examined is within the greater content analysis which is a systematic technique that determines the presence of certain language and concepts in any kind of recorded human discourse (Busch 4). Although, content analysis is criticized for neglecting the context (Busch 11). To prevent such neglect, the research included accessory research of the media coverage during the surrounding conflicts regarding the Arab Spring, and the Iraq and Afghan wars.

To further focus the analysis of the Libyan interventions coverage, this paper split the news media being observed into six different categories and separated by two different time periods: (2011 - 2013) -- for the purpose of understanding the immediate ethics of the reporting,

and secondly, from (2016 - 2021) -- to see the continuation of the narrative and retrospective view separate from the influence of the Obama administration. By separating various media groups over two periods of time, the discourse analysis of the texts was able to be compared and contrasted. A contrast analysis enhances the comparison of the content to allow for nuanced differences to present themselves, and allows for more precision in understanding the meaning of the specific cases (Allen 2017). The five different categories of the news media have been broken up as such: to display the “Al-Jazeera Effect” in contrast to “The CNN Effect” analysed is 1) The Middle-East (Al-Jazeera), and 2) mainstream multinational networks (CNN, NBC, ABC, and Fox News). Furthermore, to represent the digital and newspaper and magazine leaders of American journalism reviewed is 4) the newspaper (The New York Times and The Washington Post), and 5) the magazine (The Atlantic and The New Yorker); however, in hopes to not leave out the youth alternative opinion analysed is, 6) (Vox and Vice). Regarding all of the articles analysed within the networks, the top articles about Libya from each time period from their site were chosen.

1.4. The SPJ Code of Ethics

To analyse the ethics of the American news media coverage of Libya in 2011, the SPJ code of ethics was chosen as the ethical reference point. The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) was founded in 1909 to improve and protect journalism in the United States for the sake of ensuring a healthy democracy with an informed and free electorate. Since its formation, the SPJ code of ethics has been looked at as the standard of ethical journalism. In relation to this paper the aspects of the code that are being examined in the coverage of the 2011 Libyan Intervention are the following:

Journalists should:

- “Take responsibility for the accuracy of their work. Verify information before releasing it. Use original sources whenever possible.”
- “Provide context. Take special care not to misrepresent or oversimplify in promoting, previewing or summarizing a story.”
- “Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government. Seek to ensure that the public’s business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open to all.”
- “Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information. Clearly label illustrations and re-enactments.”

And lastly, most importantly, to “Act Independently.”

2. THEORY

2.1. The Media Within International Relations

Mohammed Elkish, the head of the international media unit of the NTC was quoted saying, “The success of this revolution I owe to two: First to God. Second to the journalist” (Foss V). Mohammed credited journalism for the success of the Libyan revolution because he understood, as Walter Lippman, a Pulitzer Prize winning American author and ‘founder of American media studies’ put it, that the media are the “window to the world.” To establish an understanding of the media power, and to understand who is behind the formation of this media window within international relations, multiple angles, interpretations, and theories must be applied. Mainly the media in international relations theory alongside Rogers and Dearing agenda setting theory must be examined. Rogers and Dearing understood three different forms of agenda setting: the public agenda setting: when the public determines the agenda for which stories are considered important, (although, this aspect will not be relevant in examining the Libyan

intervention as an agenda rising from the public would relate only to domestic movements or from movements from the Libyan public, which will not be the focus of this paper), the media agenda setting: when the media determines the agenda for which stories are considered important, and the policy agenda setting: when the policy makers influence the media and audience in order to achieve a political agenda.

Firstly, it is necessary to understand the media as the agenda setter, functioning as its own autonomous agent. Raymond Kuhn highlighted five political functions of the media: information provision, agenda setting, public watchdog, political mobilization and regime legitimating (Coban 4). Under these influences the media is responsible for naturalizing power relations. American political scientist Joseph Nye describes power relations today as a “three-dimensional chess game, comprising from the top down, the military board, the economic board and, at the bottom, the ‘soft power’ of information” (Coban 58). The news media holds the ‘soft power’ of information, and so it has the power in international relations to construct who are allies and enemies of the state. In effect, the news media has the ability to construct the reality of international politics (Coban 47). Later to be examined, the media coverage of Libya in 2011 used its power to delegitimize the Gaddafi regime that was previously backed for 40 years by the U.S. government. Although, what should bring more caution to the public is that the American media, which is predominantly reliant upon English to be informed can be stuck in ‘the international media echo’ where they repeat only what is reported in English from another country (Coban 46). Language barriers especially can inhibit the media's capabilities during war journalism, most of all when the war journalists on the ground are attracted only to the most gruesome attributes of the conflict. Tony Birtley, a war correspondent for Al-Jazeera who was reporting in Libya in 2011 illustrated such journalistic attraction, to such an extent that the

journalists put peoples lives at risk. He described that certain networks were reporting live on the front lines, and consequently, within minutes Gaddafi's army began shelling that exact place (Foss 44). When the journalists on the grounds are making it their mission to report only where the 'action' is, many larger networks will only be able to pick up these narratives and lead the greater audience to be more supportive of intervention and see a military solution as the only solution (Nijenhuis 4).

In the second camp of journalistic thought, polar to war journalism is Johan Galtung, one of the founders of peace studies. He proposes 'peace journalism' and 'peace frames' to correct the biases of war journalism to promote peace initiatives (Nijenhuis 4). Galtung takes the peace journalism stance under the acceptance of Walter Lippman's arguments in *Public Opinion* (1922), that public opinion is founded in a constructed "pseudo-environment" and taken advantage of by the news media to manufacture consent. However, peace journalism gets criticised for not being objective, and is called an activist approach. Although, in the eventual examinations of the war coverage in 2011 Libya, it is important to keep it in mind as an alternative to the standard way the intervention was covered.

Supplementary, the news media also holds a bias when approaching global news such as geographic agenda setting, in which the news has a center-periphery-prism where the only news from the global south that gets reported, is that which negatively relates to the country of the audience and shocks the viewer, or in which the region has a massive catastrophe (Grasland 2). The center-periphery-prism news paradigm is prime to over-report events such as international interventions into a dictatorship, like the 2011 Libyan Intervention.

2.1.1. CNN Effect and Al Jazeera Effect

Highlighting the power of the news media in international relations is known as the "CNN Effect" in which the government and the fourth estate share the discourse to manipulate public opinion and dictate foreign policy. "The CNN Effect" mainly focuses on media influence on international interventions, in that it can raise the concerns of danger and reinforce negative stereotypes. (Coban 54). Post- 9/11 "The CNN Effect" had been used by Western leaders to promote a pre-empt of possible threats, which rationalizes humanitarian based intervention (Coban 55). When the news media attracts public attention to conflicts, it in turn puts them at the top of the agenda. In which then, the audience will pressure and influence government policies from what they have viewed. The formation of public discourse is the media's use of agenda building in how it forms what the public can think about and what is to be prioritized (Coban 48).

In opposition to "The CNN Effect," a counter hegemony was born in the early 2000's called the "Al-Jazeera Effect," which focuses on empowering the silenced organizations, nations, and groups, especially in the Arab World regarding democratization and terrorism (Coban 47). The Al-Jazeera Effect in relation to Libya may have birthed the international outcry.

Secondly, is the policy agenda setting, in which separate from independent representation and interests, the news media also can be influenced by the government as to what the agenda should be. International media Professor at George Washington University Steven Livingston wrote, "We may speak of the CNN effect as 1) an accelerant to policy decision-making, 2) an impediment to the achievement of desired policy goals, and 3) a policy agenda-setting agent" (Livingston 2). "The CNN Effect" is explained as an accelerator by Former U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker, who says the one thing it does, "is to drive policymakers to have a policy position. I would have to articulate it very quickly. You are in a real-time mode. You don't have

time to reflect.” The news media may as well serve its own function in impeding policy goals in showing too gruesome of content resulting in an emotional response from the viewer like during the Vietnam War (Livingston 4). Yet, Livingston also saw the accelerator as an impeder in that it may rush policy making and compromise U.S. foreign policy. Number 3 in Livingston’s definition is where things get particularly muddy, because the media not only serves as its own agenda setting agent, but it may serve the agenda of the current administration. Influence of the agenda primarily from the federal government is the thinking of classical realism developed in the 1940’s, in which foreign policy is deemed only to be made by politicians separate from influence of domestic factors like the news media. Under these presumptions, the news media would only be regarded as a propaganda tool (Coban 46). Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman were champions of this view, seeing the American news media only as a reflection of U.S. foreign policy interest, meaning the news media is only a propaganda outlet designed to manufacture consent. Chomsky also recognizes the capitalist interests of the news media and the corporate power behind what narratives are chosen. The examination of the news media will test for such corporate influence. Contrary to the media as a propaganda tool, the news media can serve as a public watchdog to check the elite and empower the citizens (Coban 47). Some of the news media’s coverage of the Libyan intervention did act as a watchdog of NATO and the U.S.; nevertheless, most of the news agencies were acting within agenda setting.

2.2. Agenda Setting

The definition used in this paper for agenda setting is from John Kingdon who writes that the agenda comes from the executive administration and best forms when the three streams of movement in the federal government align: the problems, the policies, and the politics. (Kingdon 332). When the threat streams converge and the agenda is formed, the administration

will look to generate solutions first, and only after look for problems which fit their solutions (Kingdon 332). When these political conditions are right, the door for some lobbyists and advocates are wide open and accessible, but for others who don't fit the solutions created, their opportunity is impossible. How the agenda of the presidency is manifested is clarified by Professor of Public Service Paul Light who writes, "The President's agenda is perhaps best understood as a signal. It indicates what the President believes to be the most important issues facing his administration." What dictates importance however depends upon Kingdon's three streams. An aspect within the last stream, politics, that holds significant weight is presidential approval. Approval can affect the president's foreign policy in two different ways. The president with a declining approval may hope to divert the public's attention from domestic issues; or, a president with a high level of approval may prefer to engage in extensive foreign policy activity (Andrade and Young 554). The former fits the agenda of the Obama administration, as according to Gallup Polls, prior to the Libyan Intervention Obama had a declining approval rating of 38. Another relevant political factor is presidential influence in congress. Domestically the president's ability to enact policy is dependent upon congress, while the president's power in foreign policy as Kingdon puts it, is outstanding, "no other single actor in the political system has quite the capability of the president to set agendas in given policy areas for all who deal with those policies." Due to such efficient implementation of power, a president with low levels of congressional support (like Obama facing a majority Republican congress in 2011) will seek to get more done in regard to foreign policy (Andrade and Young 595). In an examination of the British Foreign Office in 1986, how this presidential agenda setting manifested in regard to "The CNN Effect" is clear. The British Foreign Office found that at the level of policy implementation, government departments and individual officials use mass media as a direct channel to enact

policy and communicate to foreign societies similar to the traditional use of diplomats. Further, CNN is now used by politicians as a direct agenda setting measure to foreign diplomats, an ability today which is stronger than ever before, which places aside a filter of the executive powers in regards to public opinion (Coban 52).

3. THE 2011 LIBYAN INTERVENTION

3.1. The Beginning of the Conflict

To understand the 2011 Libyan Intervention, it has to be understood how President Obama's response went from "gravely concerned" on February 21, 2011, to "We cannot stand idly by when a tyrant tells his people that there will be no mercy... where innocent men and women face brutality and death at the hands of their own government." on March 19, 2011 (Moore 6). Following the Arab Spring in Egypt and Tunisia ending on February 11 with Hosni Mubark and Ben Ali stepping down as president of Egypt and Tunisia respectively, a wave of protests began to sweep over Libya. Firstly, beginning in Benghazi on February 15th in response to the arrest of a well known human rights lawyer, Fethi Tarbel, who represented the families of victims of prison massacres (Davidson 1), but within four days protests spread through most of the country while rebel movements took entire cities. A few days into the revolt on February 18th, Gaddafi responded to the protests with brutal violence, using aircrafts to launch raids against civilians (Mueller 12), shelling his own citizens in Misrata (Green 1), all while, as reported by the United Nation Gaddafi deployed mercenary security forces which fired on a crowd of twenty thousand demonstrators in Benghazi and killed at least a hundred of them (Lizza 2011). Although the first of the holes presented in the Libyan narrative is that later, the International Crisis Group's North Africa project concluded that the strafing of protestors was false (Davidson 101). Additionally, Gaddafi detained a significant number of protesters and some

were reported to have been tortured, a claim supported by Human Rights Watch (Green 2). With such political unrest in Libya amplified by the news media to the world stage, the West began to take notice.

Briefly, the origins of Gaddafi are important to be mentioned in order to recognize the West's motivation in Libya. Gaddafi came to power in 1969 after overthrowing the Western backed and very internally unpopular King Idris al-Senussi. The U.S. and the British then tried to find a way to remove Gaddafi repeatedly for the next 40 years due to Libya refusing western oil companies access to their reserves (Davidson 100). Gaddafi was accused repeatedly by the states of backing terrorist groups and funding suicide bombings; although, it can only be confirmed that Gaddafi provided assistance for Palestinian terrorist organizations and to the Irish Republican Army, the Basque separatist group ETA, and Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (CFR 2005). In regards to anti U.S. attacks, Gaddafi cannot be sufficiently linked. After 9/11 Gaddafi called the attacks "horrifying" and advocated for Muslim charities to provide aid to the U.S. (CFR 2005). What Gaddafi did have a problem with was the influence of the ruling class and suppression of Africans. Gaddafi even tried to give \$1 billion to the Nation of Islam in the States (Gaiter 1996). As well, despite being an enemy of the U.S for the predominant part of his rule, in 2003 the U.S. and Britain instructed Gaddafi that diplomatic relations could open back up if he accepted responsibility for the Pan Am 103 Lockerbie bombing, and agreed to disarm his weapons of mass destruction. It is not verified if Gaddafi was behind the bombing, nor was the state of his weapons clear, but he agreed to follow a literal script given to him from the West. Gaddafi then became an ally, with lifted sanctions, and with diplomatic representation in the U.N. (Leverett 2004).

Getting Back to 2011, what is important to mention is that at this time it was not a black and white picture of “people vs. regime,” many do not account for the political variety within the country. The Institute of the Study of War found that “the stark contrast between the strength of the rebellion in Cyrenaica (the eastern region of Libya) and the relative degree of loyalty to the regime across much of Tripolitania (the northwestern region of Libya) and Fezzan (the southwestern region of Libya) reveal the underlying political dynamics that shaped the revolution in Libya” (Foss 17). Such political dynamics are the product of a tribalistic society that was forced into a nation state by Italy in the late 40’s. Diversification of agendas and governing structures within Libya was normal before Gaddafi took power by a coup in the 70’s and after. What also complicated the landscape of the rebels, was the possibility that al Qaeda was linked to the Libyan Islamist Fighting Group (LIFG) who was active in east Libya (Mueller 16). Further, information was moving quickly and unverified. One of the most complicating issues in understanding the Libyan Intervention, is that as reported by the The New York Times, “the rebels feel no loyalty to the truth in shaping their propaganda,” they described that the rebels were “claiming non-existent battlefield victories, asserting they were still fighting in a key city days after it fell to Qadhafi's forces, and making vastly inflated claims of his barbaric behavior.” (Davidson 101). When asked if there was evidence that Gaddafi actually fired on his own people from the air, U.S. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates replied, “We’ve seen the press reports but have no confirmation of that”, with Admiral Mullen adding “that’s correct. We’ve seen no confirmation whatsoever” (Green 2). Following the protests, Gadhafi’s son threatened “rivers of blood” if the people continued to revolt, and on February 22, Gadhafi addressed the world on TV where he described protesters as “rats” and “cockroaches,” referenced the Tiananmen Square massacre, and threatened to “cleanse Libya house-to-house” (Mueller12). These statements were

echoed by the news media throughout the intervention and sounded the alarms for many who had heard similar echos of dehumanization rhetoric from the Hutu radio broadcasts against the Tutsis in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide (Moore 3.) Although initially, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton advocated for the U.S. refrain from action because “the safety and well-being of Americans [was] our highest priority” (Moore 8). At this moment the French President Nicolas Sarkozy was the leading voice for military intervention, and in the states, only a small policy circle within Congress and outside the government supported military action (Mueller 14). However, the conflict and surrounding politics developed rapidly.

On February 26th, UN Security Council Resolution 1970 called for an arms embargo, a travel ban, and asset freeze on Gaddafi’s family and affiliates (Salyk-Virk 18), and referred Gaddafi to the International Criminal Court. Two days later, the U.S., led by Clinton and Samantha Power, lobbied for the removal of Libya from the U.N. Human Rights Council. All of these responses were directly pulled from the guidelines in Power’s book, “A Problem from Hell” (Lizza 2011). By March 10th, the rebels were clearly losing, consequently; the calls for a no-fly zone over Libya intensified, and the U.S. found itself under pressure to take military action, despite previously that week in Brussels, the U.S. declared it would only support a humanitarian role for the Alliance, opposing French and British pressure for action (Mueller 15,17). Contradictory, reports at this time suggest the CIA was already present in Libya investigating the rebels (Mueller 15). To further confuse matters, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen declared the Alliance had “no intention to intervene in Libya (Mueller 17). When the defense ministers were finally summoned in Brussels the British proposed three preconditions for military intervention that sped up the equation for action drastically: (1) demonstrable need, (2) a sound legal basis, and (3) strong regional support (Mueller 17). Shortly

after, the Arab League endorsed the no-fly zone strategy for Libya, and Hillary Clinton met with leaders from the UAE who were prepared to provide military forces for an intervention (Mueller 17). Many Arab leaders despised Gaddafi due to his alleged assassination attempt against the Saudi crown prince in 2004. Yet, support in the region in combination to the efforts of the Libyan rebel media organizations and those who assisted outside of Libya in calling for intervention, the reported evidence of Gaddafi shelling his own citizens, and most importantly the legal support from the 2005 U.N. Responsibility to Protect (R2P), gave the international community the basis needed to move forward with military action. The two key principles founded in the R2P that gave such legal basies were, firstly, that “each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.” Secondly, if governments were unable to honor those responsibilities, the U.N. member states are obliged to “encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility” by ideally peaceful means, but if necessary, through collective, and military actions (Mueller 73). The convergence of all necessary factors for military intervention forced President Obama, on March 15, to meet with his National Security Council to discuss U.S. options (Mueller 18). In that room leading the way in advocating for action was “The Humanitarian Vulcans” as called by American journalist Michael Hastings: Samantha Power, Susan Rice - U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and Anne-Marie Slaughter, the former director of policy planning at the Department of State. Slaughter in “Fiddling While Libya Burns” wrote, “The international community cannot stand by and watch the massacre of Libyan protesters. In Rwanda we watched. In Kosovo we acted.” (Moore 11). Rice similarly, was motivated by her experience with Rwanda as a White House official in the first Clinton administration, in which the massacre left her determined to prevent such atrocities (Mueller 19). Quickly after, the U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 1973

(March 17) to protect civilians in grave danger commencing the U.S. military operations Odyssey Dawn and Unified Protector (Salyk-Virk 18). With full U.N. support the U.S. determined that NATO was its preferred structure for intervention (Mueller 42). Subsequently, NATO then launched Operation Unified Protector (OUP), with the purpose of ‘enforcing an arms embargo, maintaining a no-fly zone and protecting civilians and civilian populated areas from attack or the threat of attack,’ and so began the 2011 Libyan Intervention (Green 1). There was no official call for regime change or the ousting of Gaddafi, yet Obama, Cameron, and French President Nicolas Sarkozy all declared: “It is unthinkable that someone who has tried to massacre his own people can play a part in their future government.” (Mueller 75). This statement directly went against the resolution and the Defense Secretary’s warning order that the objective of the military operation was civilian protection (Mueller 41).

What the military intervention may have overlooked, or simply did not see as a significant long term ramification was the complications of aid distribution during and after the conflict. Libya is heavily reliant on imports in order to have enough food to feed its population of over 6.6 million. An estimated 75% of the 110,000 metric tons of food required each month to feed the Libyan people is imported. Due to this drastic assistance was needed during the conflict (Africa Research Bulletin 2). The U.N.’s World Food Programme (WFP) started distributing aid, but with a majority of its staff stationed in Benghazi to stay safe from the war zone, it was significantly challenging to distribute food around the country (Africa Research Bulletin 2). Tragically, many in Libya faced intense food shortages during the intervention that have continued since and lead to the starvation of many. Such neglect calls into question the humanitarian aims of the intervention, as well such neglect or focus by the media gives some ethical perspective on the coverage.

3.2. The Beginning of the Intervention

Once the military intervention began, the political drama and complications continued. Moscow complained about NATO's interpretation of UNSCR 1973 for the duration of the operation, arguing along with China, Brazil, and India, that NATO was stretching the civilian-protection mandate to include regime change (Mueller 20). As well, who was leading the intervention was unclear. The French military insisted that the partners were equally unified, while AFRICOM claimed that it was at the lead. Other allies had already transferred command of their forces to the U.S. 17th Air Force under AFRICOM, as Denmark did on March 19 (Mueller 22). By March 25th, the world saw the international backing of the intervention, as Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates all joined the operation (Mueller 23). Eventually, 18 countries total engaged in the NATO intervention of Libya. Despite many joining under the assumption it was an American lead intervention, Vice Admiral Gortney explained on March 28, the "U.S. military participation in this operation is, as we have said all along, changing to one primarily of support." (Mueller 41). Where contradiction becomes more evident and more worrisome is during Obama's address to the nation the same where he said, "The task that I assigned our forces [is] to protect the Libyan people from immediate danger and to establish a no-fly zone.... Broadening our military mission to include regime change would be a mistake." (Zenko 2016). Some suspect this to be a lack of transparency of the administration, but others suspect it was simply lazy planning that they themselves were unsure of where the conflict ends (Mueller 41). Although it is hard to determine if Obama was truly at the lead, as he was late to the game in joining the Libyan resolution seeking process and OUP was composed of the same countries participating in

Odyssey Dawn and Unified Protector; however, a major change was the operational role of the United States (Mueller 44).

3.3. Examining the Intervention

Logistically examining the intervention, the 2011 Libyan Intervention has been classified by many as an “aerial intervention” (Mueller 6). A NATO report in the BBC stated that France, the United States, and the United Kingdom predominantly led the air campaign against the Libyan government and since the beginning of the NATO operation a total of 26,323 sorties, including 9,658 strike sorties, were conducted. More than 1000 tanks and armored vehicles were destroyed, along with Gaddafi's command and control network. NATO averaged 150 air strikes per day and killed hundreds if not thousands of people (Green 3). Although, not since World War II was there a war involving the United States in which non-U.S. airpower carried as much weight in airpower as in Libya (Mueller 6). Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, ridiculed NATO for their lack of interest in investigating civilian casualties, they identified at least 75 civilians killed in eight airstrikes, although this significantly lower than most documentations (Mueller 379).

As the intervention neared its end, debates of what that entitled began. As the conflict stalled and no clear winner or exit was clear for either side, the terms escalated and the rebels and NATO pushed for more aggressive action to remove Gaddafi (Mueller 33). Subsequently, U.S. officials argued that if progress was to be achieved, eventually Gaddafi would have to be removed (Mueller 34). At the same time, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy was being persuaded by his adviser Bernard-Henri Lévy that with gaddafi gone, it could open up a rich new market for both energy and the defence industry (Pedde 96). To worsen matters, Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, declared himself leader of the “provisional government” while cutting a deal

between Gaddafi and the west. Hillary Clinton emails later revealed that French intelligence at this time already had “cultivated ... particular clients amongst the rebels,” and had held secret meetings with Abdel-Jalil where he would receive “weapons and guidance,” and the official French recognition for his government following Gaddafi’s departure, only if Abdel-Jalil was to ensure the “favoring of French firms and national interests, particularly regarding the oil industry” (Davidson 1). The challenge on the surface of the political front and of NATO however, was finding the confidence in the de facto government of the National Transitional Council (NTC). Nevertheless, by July the U.S felt they fit the requirements needed and began to recognize the NTC as the formal government of Libya, many countries followed in their lead (Mueller 35). Withal, the African Union proposed a five-point plan to resolve the conflict that included an immediate ceasefire, negotiation between the two sides, and an end to NATO air support. Gaddafi embraced the initiative, but the National Transitional Council rejected the plan. A ceasefire would have the potential to open communication and pave a peaceful way for civilians, yet NATO already had their mind made up about where the conflict ends and so they did not support the ceasefire. Hillary Clinton stated in response to the ceasefire offer, “We believe, too, that there needs to be a transition that reflects the will of the Libyan people and the departure of Gaddafi from power and from Libya” (Green 3). By August 20, with support from the air, and key defection of the Benghazi- based Special Forces, the “Sa’iqa” or Lightning Brigade under General Abdel Fatah Younis, the rebels advanced on Benghazi, overrun Qaddafi’s compound, and in turn Gaddafi fled for his life (Mueller 39). Yet it still was not enough, the British argued, as long as civilians could be threatened, the mission should continue, meaning as long as Gaddafi was at large, there was a threat (Mueller 40). France and the United States coordinated surveillance in a joint operation to locate Gaddafi. They found him attempting

to escape the city of Sirte on October 21, 2011. A French fighter and a Predator struck his convoy, Gaddafi sought cover in a drainpipe, but rebel troops found him and killed him; thereafter, parading his body around the streets (Salyk-Virk 18). Following Gaddafi's death, the U.N. voted to end the international intervention on October 31, leaving Libya on its own (Salyk-Virk 18).

3.4. The End of the Libyan Intervention

Following the NATO intervention, The NTC became the acting government in Libya, led by Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril (Salyk-Virk 18). It seemed to be the beginning of democratic process as, on July 7, 2012, the first parliamentary elections took place since 1969. These elections created the General National Congress (GNC), a government projected to oversee the country for 18 months to ensure a democratic stable process while a new constitution would be written (Salyk-Virk 18). However, despite the GNC being set to end its term in February 2014, it extended the date against the wishes of the public (Salyk-Virk 19). As the intervention was at a close and the domestic problems of Libya continued, Hillary Clinton's former policy planning director Ms. Slaughter told the New York Times, that "we did not try to protect civilians on Gaddafi's side." This statement and view of the political disarray in the aftermath questions the humanitarian motivation declared by NATO in line with the Responsibility to Protect (Green 2). What is also deeply troubling and muddies the water depicted by the media and NATO are the stories like that of a Turkish construction worker who told the BBC, on February 26, "We had 70 to 80 people from Chad working for our company. They were massacred with pruning shears and axes, accused by the attackers of being Qadhafi's troops (by the rebels)." He also stated, "The Sudanese people were massacred. We saw it for ourselves" (Davidson 102). In closing the recap of the Libyan intervention, it can be established that the narrative surrounding the unfolding

events of the conflict is not black and white not, and surely at the time was even more unclear, which brings skepticism to the U.S. government's narrative of massacre prevention and military urgency.

4. LIBYA THROUGH THE EYES OF THE MEDIA

4.1. Media Coverage in 2011- 2013

4.1.1. The Middle-East (Al-Jazeera)

The Qatari news network Al Jazeera was one of the first in 2011 to begin broadcasting images of violence, destruction, and death in Libya. The result of this was much of the western public being convinced of the fears of Gaddafi committing a massacre (Pedde 95). For example, when polled 50 percent of the population in Great Britain supported military action in Libya, as did 55 percent of the U.S. populous, 63 percent in France, and a mere 40 percent in Italy. Although, when the same people were asked about the removal of Gaddafi, the support was more apparent, 63 percent of the British, 71 percent of the Americans, 67 percent of the French, and 76 percent of the Italian's favored Gaddafi's removal by force (Ipsos polling 2011). Further, the impact of Al Jazeera was significant domestically in Libya. It can be argued the network itself was more legitimate than the ruling regime, as nearly two million people, about 55 percent of the total adult population, followed Al Jazeera in Libya (Morris 2013). In examining Al-Jazeera, their goal to "voice the voiceless," has led to challenging western hegemony in producing news centered around the global south (Satti 2). As well, Al Jazeera English's target audience is different from the rest of its network; although, a demographic breakdown of their audience is unknown. Still, Al-Jazeera English is common for middle easterners living in the west (Brown, Guskin, and Mitchell 2012). Al-Jazeera's demographics and corporate ownership is murky, but its focus as a counter-hegemony is clear.

To examine the early coverage from Al Jazeera eight articles were chosen from March 2011, to the end of August. The first article, “The drawbacks of intervention in Libya” was written prior to the UNSC Resolution 1973. They described the threats to unarmed civilians and Gaddafi’s shoot to kill policies. As well, they expressed a deep caution for the coming no-fly-zone, as they reference Iraq as a previous instance in which such measures resulted “in the deaths of hundreds of civilians.” A major stress from Al-Jazeera was the “mixed motives” of the humanitarian intervention. They were not aiming to discredit some of the intentions but to shine a light that in most cases the interveners reap economic rewards, while the people on the ground face “disastrous consequences.” Continually, they highlighted the overall unclarity of things on the ground; specifically, that claims of threats from the regime's airpower may have been unfounded. In the end, they saw such unclarity as a reason to suspect a future backfire. Overall such mixed interests they believed to be a core reason why the do-no-harm principle could not be insured. What they suggested was having a clear exit strategy for Gaddafi, which when seen retrospectively, did not happen. They closed the article addressing the exact thing that should have been from the beginning, the essential need of food and clean water on the ground.

On the same day, Al-Jazeera released another article, “Gaddafi denounces foreign intervention,” which displayed the regime's agenda. Gaddafi was quoted in the article saying, “We will fight and we will target any traitor who is cooperating with the Americans or with the Christian Crusade.” Following this recap, Al-Jazeera gave a compelling account of four of their Arabic journalists who were detained by the regime for several days.

On March 22, Al-Jazeera published an article called “Libya intervention threatens the Arab spring.” The core message of this article was calling into question the legitimacy vs. the legality of the intervention. Al-Jazeera saw it that the legitimacy of the west's military action

began dwindling fast once the intervention commenced. As well, the article thought the overall message of the intervention was failing. The message the intervention intended was to the Arab dictators to not overextend their brutal violence, but the message became that if the dictators use enough military power they can ensure their position. This was evident given the crackdown of other Arab regimes on democratic movements. Al-Jazeera pointed fingers at the U.S. for not intervening in Yemen for the same reasons they stated for Libya, as well as the fact the U.S. made it clear they needed support from the Arab League, yet they lost that support fast once the bombing started. As for the rhetoric of Al-Jazeera, they chose to refer to Gaddafi as that of a dictator, which attaches connotations of strict brutality. Adding to the lists of U.S. failures, the article also identifies that the States needed clear support from the African Union which they lost as well. The article ended declaring that the U.S. is clearly pushing forward for regime change.

The next article, "Libya: Politics of humanitarian intervention" was far more direct and critical of the intervention saying, "the UN resolution on Libya was a poorly executed farce with no long-term foresight." Farce, an interesting word choice which leads the readers to see the intervention as a nonsensical show, a drama, to a comedic extent. Which is interesting considering Al-Jazeera were the early advocates in Libya for the rebels and for international support. Al-Jazeera also points out that the only African support for the resolution, South Africa and Nigeria did not have in mind the military scale that occurred. Boldly, Al-Jazeera made the claim the international legitimization was all for show and that since the U.S. holds all of the assets of the Gaddafi regime, they then are strictly running the show. This claim directly goes against the transcripts of the intervention which show France as the main leader and country with the greatest financial interests in oil. These false claims by Al-Jazeera already violate the SPJ Code of Ethics to not "misinform" and "distort facts." A legitimate and necessary factor the

article points out as well, is that much of the rebel movement is split between radical Islamists, royalists, tribalists, and the secular middle class activists; and that of those, the only that is battle ready is radical Islamists linked to Al Qaeda. What this and another brief article, “NATO’s intervention in Libya” makes very clear, is that the operation is American led.

On March 29, Obama addressed the nation about the Libyan intervention. Al-Jazeera transparently displayed his speech in the article, “Obama defends military intervention in Libya,” highlighting Obama's remarks that “the world will be better off with Gaddafi out of power, but removing him by force would be a mistake.” However, the article finished with pointing out Obama’s contradictions. Obama asks to be supported when intervening but also he tries to make it clear the U.S. will not be the world police. Also, they point out that Obama did not announce where the conflict is aimed to end.

Addressing the later articles, in August, two Al-Jazeera pieces are highlighted, a summary of the intervention, “Battle for Libya: Key moments,” and an update in the article, “NATO nations set to reap spoils of Libya war.” The summary started on the 15th of February when the protests began, to the 23rd of August with the Battle for Tripoli. They depicted Gaddafi’s forces as brutal, firing on crowds of protesters, a narrative in line with Al-Jazeera original provoking coverage. Although, they also focused on massive errors in NATO air strikes that killed rebel fighters, which was confirmed later by the RAND Corporation. The second article voiced the concerns over the “open secret” that NATO countries intelligence agents were operating on the ground, also confirmed by RAND and that NATO countries were making a clear move to regime change to receive high quality crude oil after the intervention (Mueller 72).

4.1.2. Mainstream Multinational Networks (CNN, NBC News, ABC News, and Fox News)

CNN

The first international journalist to enter the rebel-held eastern front of Libya was CNN's Ben Wedeman. Wedeman said on air, "I almost feel that I am not up to the task of conveying the significance of what we are seeing here," as behind him, thousands of Libyans shouted together: "CNN! CNN!" (Foss 1). With the arrival of CNN came a spotlight on Libya for the rest of the world. Yet, the focus of CNN's coverage was from a domestic politics angle. CNN is known for being the center left voice of the news media, as their target audience is primarily the center left who prefers neutral news. Their average viewer is most likely a college-educated woman between the ages of 25 and 54, who cares mostly about national news as opposed to international and local news (Hashmi, Humphries, LaForge, Song 2). To analyse the spotlight CNN presented, four articles from the month of March have been reviewed.

The first article in review is "Why Libya 2011 is not Iraq 2003." CNN precedes to compare Gaddafi to Hussein writing, they are both "ruthless and erratic dictators" who brutalize their own people. Already they are sparking significant connotations in the reader of a depiction of the state of Libya's leadership. CNN then too discusses the importance of the Arab League's endorsement of the no-fly-zone. The rest of the article predominantly compares the U.N. resolution to that of President George H.W. Bush in November 1990 which gave Iraq six weeks to withdraw from Kuwait. That resolution too said it could be accomplished by "all necessary means." Lastly, CNN drew attention to the fact that much of the world has been drawn into Libya due to Al-Jazeera reporting that Gaddafi was going to massacre his own citizens.

In the second article, "The White House defends Libya response" CNN displays the common rhetoric coming out of the White House that they are there to "support and assist." In other words, that the U.S. does not have an ulterior agenda nor is it leading events. Although, CNN points to the reality that the Obama administration has been clear its objective is to remove

Gaddafi. CNN describes that when questioned about the motives of the intervention White House Press Secretary Jay Carney dodges the questions and accuses critics of being “perhaps driven by politics.” CNN calls attention to the fact that the Libyan intervention is not clear on the partisan spectrum, they write that many liberal Democrats have been very uneasy about Libya and the possibility of another open-ended conflict. Where the article chooses to end is with a quote from Max Boot, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations who expresses a real concern for the aftermath of Gaddafi's removal. There is a “real danger of chaos” he said, that may leave an opening for Al Qaeda to exploit the situation.

In the third article by CNN, “House conflicted on Libya campaign,” they focus on the House of Representative agenda in the conflict. The main issue they bring forward from congress is that they are dissatisfied with the military engagement because Obama did not consult with congress prior. Defense Secretary Robert Gates though was quoted as saying, "Based on everything we see (in Libya), the government gets shakier by the day," ... "His forces have been significantly diminished. The opposition is expanding the areas under their control." All were true statements at that time.

The final article reviewed from CNN, “Obama and Libya: Tell Us How This Ends,” CNN questions how the conflict can close with a positive outcome. They reiterate the point of regime change, and then quote Richard Haass, the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, who criticises the intervention that it was not well planned and the Obama administration bought into the false idea that multilateralism equates to a positive decision. The article closes raising the question of what is the exit strategy and who will be there to clean up the mess. In turn, who are the rebels? This article like all of the CNN articles, raises some fair questions, but does not aim to inform the reader of the context of the situation. They mostly debate the logistics and fail to

debate the necessity of the intervention, and the situation on the ground, falling directly into the policy administration agenda setting.

NBC News

NBC is a New York based network owned by the Comcast Corporation, a top 50 Fortune 500 corporation, with a moderate center political voice. Its main audience is people in their late middle ages (50-64), and despite having a balanced viewer ship, their average viewer is likely to be a white woman who graduated high school on the center left of the political spectrum (Grieco 2020). Compared to CNN, it did far better at giving a balanced coverage between the U.S. domestic perspective, and that of those on the ground in Libya.

The first of the four chosen articles in review is, "Obama, Libya and the authorization conflict." NBC like CNN addressed the congressional approval problem and compared it to the summer of 2002 under George W. Bush's attempt to topple Hussein. They did however in referring to the current situation in 2011 say that Obama consulted with congress. In choosing the word consult they are painting a different picture than the other networks, one that does not show Obama as completely disregarding Congress, but simply that he was playing fast and loose with the necessary procedure. They also write that Obama said he gave Congress notice under the 1973 War Powers Act, which paints a very different picture, as that would only be necessary when someone attacks the U.S., and it's a bit of a procedural straggler as well, as NBC points out that every president since Nixon sees it as an unconstitutional infringement on the president's powers. NBC spends the rest of the article comparing previous presidents conducts, but also raising the same questions everyone has been pointing to which is where does this conflict end.

The second NBC article, "Gaddafi compound hit by NATO; 3 reportedly dead," focuses more on the political conflict internationally surrounding the intervention and gives a more

human depiction. NBC, like the rest of the networks, highlights the agenda of the intervention is regime change. They then discuss that Washington took more of a backseat after NATO took over but that it still wants more from its allies in air support. They also describe a story of an 8-year-old boy who was killed by mortar in Misrata while sleeping in his home. This thus far was the most human approach in depicting the intervention, which NBC continues very well in the next two articles.

In the two articles, “Unrest in Libya” and “Chris Hondros images from Libya,” NBC chose to tell the story of the intervention through images. An approach to journalism that compared to the traditional written form sparks far more emotional reactions and empathy. What was ideal as well was that the images they displayed were from every aspect of the war. Be it rebel fighters finding dead children in a car, migrants cramming into trucks to flee Libya, wounded soldiers from every side of the conflict, images of humanitarian aid from the French, a 10-year-old boy working as a traffic cop, a baby getting shrapnel removed in a hospital, or pro-Gaddafi supporters rallying in the streets. NBC showed it all in real time, with full transparency upholding the SPJ Code of Ethics in giving the context and not falling into the Obama administration's agenda of winning over the American people in support of the conflict.

ABC News

ABC, or the American Broadcasting Company is owned by Walt Disney Corporation, with a centrist target audience split between Democrats and Republicans in their late middle ages (Grieco 2020). Their average viewer would be a white woman with some college education (Grieco 2020). Regarding Libya, ABC chose to focus on the domestic aspects of the issue like CNN.

In the first article, “Libya Speech: Obama Makes His Case for Intervention,” they recap the intentions of the White House with a very straightforward account of the events, similar to the way CNN did. In the second article, “Cost of Libya Intervention \$600 Million for First Week, Pentagon Says,” the focus was predominantly on the cost to the taxpayers of the missiles, bombs, and crashed jet planes in Libya. As well, they compare the operation to Operation Iraqi Freedom, pointing to the more than 5,800 American military members that died. A comparison that was not unethical but definitely premature in its forewarning.

The last article, “President Obama's Libya Intervention Hits 60-Day Legal Limit,” displays nothing dissimilar than the previous articles from the networks examined thus far. ABC does however discuss that this may have been the first time a president violated the War Powers resolution. They then point to the same narrative of budget costs of at least \$750 million, and imply Obama is a hypocrite in doing exactly what he condemned George W. Bush for. ABC focused predominantly on domestic political factors and failed to properly inform people of the situation.

Fox News

Fox News is on the opposite partisan spectrum of the other networks and of the Obama administration, with a viewership of 93% Republican (Grieco 2020). As well, the average viewer of Fox is an older white woman who graduated highschool (Grieco 2020). Fox News is owned by another Fortune 500 company, the Fox Corporation which is predominantly owned by the Murdoch Family. However, predominantly, despite its broadcast rhetoric surrounding the issue calling for propaganda influences from the state, Fox was very similar in its reporting with some slight exceptions.

The articles, “Libya at Risk of Civil War as International Community Aims to Isolate Muammar al-Qaddafi,” “Polling Mixed on U.S. Intervention in Libya,” and “Obama Defends Military Mission in Libya, Says U.S. Acted to 'Prevent a Massacre,’” were all very standard to the narrative of all major networks at the time. They discussed a recap of the beginning of the intervention with standard, legitimate, informative military logistics, the Obama doctrine, and the U.S. role after the intervention. Yet, they still had some variations. Fox focused on partisan differences amongst the American populations supporting the conflict and Obama, and took that a step further in the opinion piece, “Libya -- The Un-Humanitarian Intervention.” The article claimed Obama chose the wrong war to set a precedent, that it laid the groundwork better for not intervening than to intervene. It then compared Libya to Iraq, yet it also did point out legitimate concerns like: bad post war planning, and the limited knowledge of the local people and terrain. All the actions of the news media as a public watchdog. It did though make the false assumption and claim that Libya could be a vacuum for American troops, although based on the previous military conflicts, it's not so far fetched. The article also did accurately predict post intervention Libya would be in chaos. As for the rhetoric of Fox, when referring to the Gaddafi regime, Fox called them a “gangland family” which leads the reader to view them with vast levels of corruption. However, it wouldn't be a false narrative. The article closed with calling out the false claims that its a humanitarian mission and not a regime change mission, finishing back to the partisan point that liberals all of a sudden are “cold-blooded” and want war.

4.1.3. Newspaper (The New York Times and The Washington Post)

The New York Times

The New York Times target audience differs greatly from the previous examined networks with a 91% Democrat viewership. The average NYT viewer is a white college graduate

man in his early middle ages (30-49) (Grieco 2020). With a voice that leans slightly left, The New York Times played a huge part in creating the international narrative of the Libyan intervention. Between February 15, 2011, and March 20, 2011, The New York Times published 324 articles on Libya (Moore 39). Amongst the 324, four specific articles have been analysed.

Firstly, the article “U.S. Weighs Options, on Air and Sea,” focuses on the early decisions surrounding the conflict. To start, they write that rebel commanders were “begging” for American strikes. This description paints the picture of a losing rebel movement in desperation that strikes sympathy, a depiction that neglects much of the greater picture. As well, the NYT focuses less on Obama's independence in decision making of the issue, but stresses some of the senate were pressing for enforcement of a no-fly-zone alongside arming and training the rebels. The NYT does though make it clear there doesn't have to be only firepower assistance, they suggest assistance similar to that given after the Haitian earthquake or Pakistani floods. They do not however leave out the question of troops on the ground. They suggest a small Spec Ops team could assist the rebels like what was done in Afghanistan. The article leaves with a quote from Senator McConnell who actually raises a legitimate question that the U.S. should be cautious of “who (the rebels) we're dealing with.”

The second article, “Should the U.S Intervene in Libya?” expresses the same contradictory uncertainty of much of the media at the time. In one tone they say NATO insisting on UN authorization may place politics as more important than people dying for seeking freedom, and in another moment they warn that many humanitarian interventions are really a discussion for countries to gather strategic resources like oil. As confused as the article is, in one moment painting the picture as a humanitarian necessity and the next calling it a political drama, is very accurate for the speed in which the story was developing at the time.

The third article, “As U.N. Backs Military Action in Libya, U.S. Role Is Unclear,” the NYT follows much of the same narrative of the government's massacre prevention rhetoric, falling directly under the policy agenda setting. They give quotes from the rebel council in Benghazi of people “embracing each other” with a “euphoric” feeling after they heard the news of the resolution being passed. They enforce the overall image of necessity by including quotes from Hillary Clinton who said Gaddafi would do “terrible things” to Libya, as it is just “in his nature.” Although, the NYT did include the uncertainty still surrounding what would be necessary from the American assistance, be it aircraft, gunships, or boots on the ground.

The fourth and final article, “U.S. Tactics in Libya May Be a Model for Other Efforts,” looked upon favorably of the Libyan intervention. The NYT did say it may be premature but that it could be time for the administration to claim victory of the Obama doctrine. They outlined the two aspects of the doctrine, firstly, when a genocide is looming, the U.S. has a responsibility to intervene, but secondly when Americans are not threatened the U.S. cannot act alone. The rest of the article then ponders over if this doctrine could be applied to the situation in Syria. Overall, the ethical intentions are good, but the story neglects to validate the causes for intervention in Libya.

The Washington Post

The Washington Post is a D.C based paper with a readership and voice that leans to the left. During the intervention the paper was owned by the Graham family who have a network of \$1.8 billion, but in 2013 the paper was purchased by Jeff Bezos. Alike The New York Times, The Washington Post contributed a massive amount of content between February 15, 2011, and March 20, 2011, a total of 254 articles (Moore 39). Of the 254 articles published two will be under focus in this analysis with two other articles from the following summer.

The articles published in March, “An allied intervention in Libya,” and “Obama's shift toward military action in Libya,” take two different stances: the first of support for the U.S. role and the second of strong skepticism. The first article was content with the U.S. following from behind, calling it a “good thing.” The Washington Post saw optimistically that Obama was really looking to turn the page in the Arab world, even if he appeared weak. With the change of tone of from the government to become more engaged in the conflict, the second article criticized Obama for what they saw as going against what he spent the previous half of his term doing, mending Americas relationship with Islam. The rest of the article then debates whether it is right to engage or not, but they do recognize the pressing sense of urgency. This article displayed the tough decision making of the time in seeing through the agendas two debate for the truth.

Getting to the articles of the summer, the tone and narrative changed a lot. The first article, “Hillary’s war: How conviction replaced skepticism in Libya intervention,” depicts Hillary Clinton as the figure running the show of not just the American side of the intervention but the entire mission. When France ticked off Italy by starting the air support early and the entire operation was almost shut down, Hillary diplomatically brought everyone back together. The article depicts Hillary as a driving force in U.S. foreign policy who went from a skeptic to an advocate through learning of Gaddafi’s threats of “slaughter” when talking in Paris with Mahmoud Jibril, the leader of the NTC. Despite all of this, The Washington Post still makes it clear the hero's welcome is not happening in the U.S. for Obama nor Hillary as it is for Cameron and Sarkozy in France. This depiction was a well investigated legitimate depiction of the events in Libya.

The fourth and final article, “The lesson of Libya: Limited intervention can work,” looks highly on the intervention. The entire piece is an interview with Geradl Knaus, an Austrian

Social Scientist who believed the key takeaway from the intervention is that there is a middle between doing nothing and a full scale invasion. He sees Libya as a depiction of what a successful intervention can look like, but he makes clear the battle is just starting for those on the ground in the country. The Washington Post understands the intervention on a strategic level and makes valid and factual points, but does not push into the question of if the intervention was substantially founded.

4.1.4. Magazine (The Atlantic and The New Yorker)

The Atlantic

The Atlantic is a Boston based, slightly left leaning magazine owned by David G. Bradley who rebuilt the magazine to be for “serious national readers” and “thought leaders.” The average reader of The Atlantic is a 50 year old college educated man (Zhang 2019). Subsequently, the content and writing from The Atlantic’s coverage of Libya is long form and layered.

In August 2011, The Atlantic published, “Lessons of the Libya Intervention,” which at the close of the intervention viewed it as extremely successful. The article voiced the rhetoric of critics that the intervention was, “a mistake, quagmire, dangerous, and an Iraq repeat,” but felt that such claims were ridiculous as the goals of the intervention were clearly to oust Gaddafi and help the rebels achieve victory, all of which were accomplished. The Atlantic saw the debate during the intervention not of about if it would be successful, but when it would be. As well, the article states that without the intervention there would have “almost certainly” been a “bloody and tragic massacre in Benghazi.” The second half of the article debates the morality and necessity of the R2P and argues that many have proclaimed Obamas “leading from behind” has been vindicated. However, the article responds to such claims that Obama could have saved

more lives if he had been more aggressive in response time for declaring the intervention. The article ends supporting the overall intervention, that now “revolutionaries facing their own daunting struggles,” will have “more hope.”

The second article from The Atlantic published in September of 2011, “How Obama Ignored Congress, and Misled America, on War in Libya,” discusses the inconsistencies of the explanations surrounding the intervention. For example, the narrative surrounding the effectiveness of the no-fly-zone. At first the Obama administration thought it would not be effective as Gaddafi was mostly using artillery force in the streets, but once other countries began aiming for a no-fly-zone, the tone changed and the U.S. became strong advocates for it. The Atlantic does however write that such inconsistencies do not compare to George W. Bush who claimed weapons of mass destruction before the Iraq war. Following the inconsistencies, the article points to the administration's “zero regard for congressional approval.” The Atlantic claimed this was an easy move for the president because he felt the American public was indifferent to Libya. Although, The Atlantic does point out the struggles the administration was under, quoting a White House staffer who described that one day the media was crying out for the U.S. to help Libya and the next day it was asking “What have you gotten us into?” The White House staffer claims this is because “the controversy machine is bigger than the reality machine,” in the sake of the news media coverage of Libya, he/she may have been right.

The New Yorker

_____The New Yorker is a center left weekly magazine owned by the mass media company Conde Nast. They claim their readership is predominantly from young adults (18-34), but their content reflects an older maturity (Abbruzzese 2015).

The first article from The New Yorker, “Libya: All Necessary Measures?,” gives a recap of their take on the American aspect of the intervention. The article describes Gaddafi's forces approaching the rebels with “relentless force” but that even with an acceptance of that situation it was probably best for the U.S. to not intervene given the bad historical precedent. The New Yorker sees it that the U.S. joined the intervention knowing they didn't want to and shouldn't have, because of the international pressure coming from the Arab League and the European allies. As well, the article addresses and responds to the advocates of intervening in Libya who compare it to Rwanda in 1994, that regarding the comparison, “the differences are far greater and more significant than the parallels.” The article ends with a clear understanding that the motivation of the intervention despite its humanitarian legitimacy is regime change.

The second article, “Did Bernard-Henri Lévy Take NATO to War?,” discusses the active role French writer Bernard-Henri Lévy took in getting France to intervene, thus getting NATO to intervene. The New Yorker writes that in a March 10th article in Le Monde, Lévy wrote about the breaking of French diplomatic ties with Gaddafi after Lévy himself was present in a meeting with Sarkozy and representatives from the NTC. This entire meeting was a product of Lévy's creation, while in Libya with the NTC Lévy heard the rebels desires and called the French president to ask if he would meet with leaders of the NTC. The president agreed, listened, and told Lévy he would intervene.

The third article, “Who Are the Rebels?,” gives an overview of the demographics and leadership of the rebels in Libya. The article gives the depiction from Gaddafi that they are “Al-Qaeda extremists, and from Obama that they are, “people who are seeking a better way of life.” What The New Yorker does do is make it clear the makeup of the rebels are very diverse, some are university students, some are veterans of the Iraq war from jihadist groups, and some

are even Libyan-Americans who returned to Libya simply to remove Gaddafi from power. What the article does highlight is that the rebels are fractured, untrained, and have no clear leadership.

The fourth article, "Libya: Don't Arm the Rebels," makes a clear point that arming the rebels can lead to more harm than good and give more power to a group that's motives are undefined. The New Yorker writes of the humanitarian motives of the intervention, and thus that human rights must be protected, which can be threatened if the rebels are armed and unmotivated or uninformed to follow international human rights norms. The article does understand that given Gaddafi's history the fears the rebels and West have of him are very realistic, but that if armed there is now way to hold the rebels accountable. Arming them would turn the intervention into a proxy war for regime change with an armed group that could have the aims to take power of a country loaded with oil. The New Yorker closes that arming the rebels would not be illegal but highly "unnecessary" and "self defeating."

The final article from the New Yorker, "The Consequentialist," was published in the summer of 2011, recapping the lead up to the intervention with an interesting debate over the core philosophy of the U.S. The article discusses that the U.S. even before its greater fracture with the invasion of Iraq has always been odd amongst itself between idealism and realism. Following the Iraq invasion, The New Yorker sees it that many liberals have begun to see foreign action as to be guided by "national interests" and "moral imperatives." The article articulates Obama's shift from the man who in 2007 who said he would not leave troops on the ground in Afghanistan even if it would prevent a massacre, to supporting the intervention in Libya for those exact reasons. The New Yorker declares that it is because he has become a "consequentialist." The article then moves to depicting Obama shift during the revolutions in Egypt. His tone began in quiet support of the regime and then moved to supporting the youth in

the streets. This change in tone opened up room for similar conversations, and as things began to erupt in Libya, The New Yorker describes that his advisors Robert Gates and Hillary Clinton began to persuade Obama that action was needed in Libya. What that action meant, they all disagreed on. The article then writes that the pressure on Obama to take action increased, as Susan Rice and France became very vocal advocates for U.S. support. Thus, the U.S. intervened and the foreign policy of the States became, “leading from behind.”

Overall, The New Yorker was the most adequate at upholding the SPJ Code of Ethics. They acted independently, pursued multiple angles of the story to tell the layers of truth, did not oversimplify, in the slightest, and mostly acted as a watchdog separate from the U.S. or NATO agenda.

4.1.5. Alternative Opinion (Vice)

Vice News

_____ Vice is a liberal leftist Canadian-American magazine that was founded in 1994 as an alternative punk outlet to channel the voice of the youth. Their primary audience is made up of young men from either the millennial generation or generation Z (Wiedeman 2018). In targeting the younger generation, the voice of Vice is often casual, anti-establishment, and rebellious.

The first article from Vice, “The Rebels of Libya,” described empathetic stories of heroic rebels. The article begins in open opposition to the Gaddafi regime, as the journalist writing it claims he was arrested a year before in Libya while reporting and accused of being a spy. Vice makes it clear the revolution is a “push for freedom against one of recent history’s most tyrannical dictators,” and the journalist reporting writes of it with overwhelming admiration. Calling it the “most inspiring moment” of his life and referring to the war around him as “wonderful chaos.” Vice focuses the story on how young and fearless the rebels are, that they are not just risking their lives for freedom, but the concept of freedom. The article writes that Gaddafi sponsored almost every terrorist organization on the planet over the last four decades and that

Libya has had more anti-American propaganda than any other place on earth in the last 40 years. Both, questionable claims that were not sourced. The article closes in a motivational tone saying that in watching Libya it can be seen that “we can indeed change our future,” alongside glorified photos of young rebels.

The second article from Vice written in 2014, “Libya: A Broken State,” has a different tone but from the same perspective of the rebels. The article describes the chaos that Libya has been in post intervention, that the intervention created a power vacuum. The article comes alongside a video shot in Libya of a journalist following along with different rebel groups who have a clear message that they are rebels and not terrorists, and that they are still fighting the remnants of the Gaddafi regime. Vice in its contradictory and charged storytelling was very lazy in searching for the truth and giving context. In doing so, they gave more into their own media agenda setting which led to more misinformed people and total harm.

4.2. Media Coverage Today (2016 - 2021)

In analysing the more current articles, this aspect of the review will not be broken into a specific breakdown of each article, but grouped by network, only highlighting the changes from the previous narrative or briefly confirming a continuation.

4.2.1. The Middle-East (Al-Jazeera)

The articles reviewed from Al-Jazeera are the following:

- “Battle for Libya: Key moments”
- “In Libya, Britain’s ignorance triumphed over caution”
- “Libya: Gaddafi left behind a long, damaging legacy”

Al-Jazeera kept much of the same anti-intervention narrative that they developed once the intervention started, which again was vastly different from their original tone. The only shifts or changes are the specific new information that arise from the amount of time removed from the conflict. Al-Jazeera mentioned that in the summer of 2011 shipments of oil were sent to Italy

from Libya. They called the intervention a “strategic catastrophe” that boosted terrorism and led to a growth in ISIL. The articles attribute this to poor planning from NATO, like not having international peacekeepers prepared for the aftermath, which was all a product of NATO’s “erroneous assumptions.” Al-Jazeera takes it as far as to, in light of Obama describing the intervention as his “worst mistake,” debate whether the military intervention was even justified and the right policy, despite the network's original advocacy to the international stage. Al-Jazeera's retrospective reporting does a far better job at finding the truth, which sheds greater light on their irresponsible reporting to begin with. This could be attributed to the fact that in sticking with their corporate media agenda to deliver a counter hegemony, it makes sense to be pro-intervention when no one is, and then opposed when it actually happens.

4.2.2. Mainstream multinational networks (CNN, NBC, ABC, and Fox News)

CNN

The articles reviewed from CNN are the following:

- “How Obama’s team lost its innocence”
- “Seven years after Obama's 'worst mistake,' Libya killing is rampant’
- “Britain's Libya Intervention Based on Slippery Intel, Inquiry Find.”

CNN’s narrative on the Libyan intervention changed from more supportive and skeptical in the beginning to later predominantly negative. The articles see Libya in 2011 as an example of a significant disconnect between how the world is vs. how the world should be. CNN like most major networks repeat the words of Obama that it was his “worst mistake.” However, the narrative of the fears of Gaddafi committing genocide was still maintained. CNN brings to attention a British Foreign Affairs Committee report that found that the Cameron-led government "failed to identify that the threat to civilians was overstated and that the rebels included a significant Islamist element." The committee found that the U.K. was motivated by regime

change, and because of these decisions the country was left prime for militant groups like ISIS to take over. Similar to Al-Jazeera, CNN was far more accurate in its later reports, but due to the opposite reason in that CNN gave in to the agenda of the White House to begin with, and learned quickly after the developing chaos that they were steered in the wrong direction.

NBC News

The articles reviewed from NBC are the following:

- Libya plagued by war decade after U.S.-backed forces toppled Gadhafi
- U.S. military interventions loom large 10 years after Obama attacked Libya

NBC, just as its previous articles, did a good job of balancing the aspects of the story in the U.S., in Libya, and on the international stage. NBC post war felt the situation in Libya became a proxy war with a quote from Mohamed Eljarh, a Libyan affairs specialist, that "This conflict is less and less about Libyans." NBC continues to give an empathetic stance to those living in Libya and dealing with the chaos and uncertainty. They tell a story about a woman who is a doctor in Libya who everyday drives to work surrounded by war. NBC also makes cautions for the future that with the unsuccess of this intervention, the next will probably end the same. Although, while depicting the intervention was led by the U.S. at the head of the coalition, they do take the stance that the interest to intervene in Libya was purely humanitarian quoting Robert Gates that Gaddafi was not a threat to the States, but to his own people. NBC even takes the stance that the intervention may have even hurt U.S. foreign policy long term since they reversed stances on Gaddafi after Bush was able to disarm the regime of its nuclear program. NBC closes similar to the rest of networks, that Libya did not turn out in the ideal way everyone intended for, quoting Obama from an interview with The Atlantic where he said Libya was "a shit show."

4.2.3. Newspaper (The New York Times and The Washington Post)

The New York Times

The articles reviewed from The New York Times are the following:

- “British Lawmakers Condemn 2011 Intervention in Libya”
- “Hillary Clinton, ‘Smart Power’ and a Dictator’s Fall”

The NYT in its later articles reversed its original stance from pro-intervention, to seeing it as a failure rushed to action by Hillary Clinton. The articles describe the chaos and power vacuum the intervention created that led to ISIL. Although, the NYT does point out that this was a different type of failure than Iraq since Britain and France took the lead. What the articles suggest after reviewed evidence from the U.K, is that there was no sufficient assessment of the nature of the Libyan rebellion, nor the threat to civilians. The NYT also highlights the role of Hilliary Clinton who they depict as the head of the American intervention agenda. They write that after Clinton heard what she needed from the rebels and the NTC about wanting democracy and freedom, she was all in and bypassed diplomatic options due to not seeing the Gaddafi regime as negotiable. The rest of the article makes clear that the humanitarian efforts have left Libya in chaos and that the intervention efforts did not protect civilians on Gaddafi's side.

The Washington Post

The articles reviewed from The Washington Post are the following:

- “Libya’s war could be a snapshot of the 21st century’s new normal”
- “Opinion: Obama admits that his handling of the Libya war was his worst mistake – but not that it was unconstitutional”

The Washington Post despites its mixed supportive and opposed representation of the intervention gave a negative account of the intervention in its later articles. The articles like the other networks, highlight the turmoil Libya is in, but most of all makes the stance that Obama’s acceptance of failure is not enough, that he needs to admit the intervention was illegal in violating the Constitution and the 1973 War Powers Act.

4.2.4. Magazine (The Atlantic and The New Yorker)

The Atlantic

The articles reviewed from The Atlantic are the following:

- “The Legacy of Obama’s ‘Worst Mistake’”
- “The Slipperiest Slope of Them All”

The Atlantic gives two very different retrospective opinions about the Libyan intervention that swing to the opposite side from their coverage in 2011. Despite their differences, the two articles are not contradictory. The first article highlights that the failures of Libya are not singular to Libya but singular to the overall way America does war. They compare Libya to Afghanistan in 2001, in which the Taliban was completely toppled yet the country was not stabilized. The problem the U.S. does war is summed up in a quote The Atlantic chose from Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, who argued Washington “should not allow concerns about stability to paralyze U.S. efforts to oust the Taliban leadership. ... **Nation-building is *not* our key strategic goal.**” The article articulates that this mindset is the same thing that led to such failure in Libya, as despite the original humanitarian aim of the mission, it soon became regime change. The Atlantic feels the States of two ideals of war, “good wars: campaigns to overthrow a despot, with the model being World War II,” and “bad wars: nation-building missions to stabilize a foreign country, including peacekeeping and counterinsurgency.” The article traces this mindset all the way to the U.S. civil war in which the north did not care to rebuild the south after. The article closes on the fact that this is strict to the U.S., that Europeans, Canadians, Japanese, and Australian all see peacekeeping as a “core military task.”

The second article takes a different stance, one in understanding of Obama, that he failed in Libya because he was cautious to not give in to past mistakes and misrepresent the interest of his electorate, but that he was wrong to engage in the first place. The article highlights that

Obama was trying to withdraw at the time from Iraq, which attributed to the rise in ISIS, and that Obama in his stance of withdrawal from the Middle-East was contradictory to intervene in Libya and right to see it as a failure.

The New Yorker

The articles reviewed from The New Yorker are the following:

- “The Moral Logic of Humanitarian Intervention”
- “Witnessing the Obama Presidency, from Start to Finish”

The New Yorker unfavorably looked back on the 2011 Libyan Intervention from two analytical perspectives, one in analysing the intentions and recollection from Samantha Power, and the other from Ben Rhodes. Not much new information was provided nor any change in narrative, only that Power was forceful in action, and that the result of the Libyan intervention moving from humanitarian to regime change is the consequence of “mission creep,” in which as the conflict unfolds the demands increase. As well, The New Yorker highlights that the intervention became a “cautionary tale” for the Kremlin. As similar to NBC pointed out the States reversed its stance on Gaddafi after in 2003 the U.S. solidified him as an ally in which he agreed to not obtain weapons of mass destruction, make a payment of \$2.7 billion to the families of a plane bombing, and provide the C.I.A. with intelligence about Islamist militants. Putin saw the intervention as a tale that the U.S. functions better when you are their enemy than when you are their ally. Lastly, The New Yorker writes that Ben Rhodes made it clear the U.S. has no plans for after the intervention. Again, The New Yorker adequately digs for the deeper truth through in depth research and sourcing.

4.2.5. Youth alternative (Vox and Vice)

Vox

Vox was created after the Libyan intervention in 2014, as a source for explainer journalism. Like Vice, they are a leftist organizations that target audience is young men (18-34) that our from higher education and income households (Sluis 2014)

The articles reviewed from Vox are the following:

- “Obama and Clinton learned very different lessons from the Libya war”
- “Everyone says the Libya intervention was a failure. They’re wrong.”

Vox points out where the intervention went wrong and what lessons were learned, but over all sees the intervention as a success when comparing it to Syria. Firstly, Vox points out that Obama and Clinton agree that they were unprepared for the aftermath of Libya, but they differ on how they could have done better. Obama’s lesson was that U.S. power is limited, while Clinton felt inaction was the problem. Vox stands by the claims that the goal was to protect civilians and prevent a massacre, reiterating Gaddafi’s statements that protesters were “cockroaches.” What Vox makes the point of is that when comparing the deaths in Libya vs. in Syria, the intervention must have saved lives and been the right decision, in that it achieved the goals of humanitarian protection and regime change. Vox recognizes the chaos and disorder in the current state of Libya but says just because it is this way post intervention does not mean it happened because of the intervention. It is an interesting argument that wasn’t apparent in any other networks, but it also is hard to defend or refute.

Vice News

The articles reviewed from Vice are the following:

- “Libyan Oil, Gold, and Qaddafi: The Strange Email Sidney Blumenthal Sent Hillary Clinton In 2011”
- “Inside Libya’s failed revolution”

Vice's tone shifts in a complete 180 in its later coverage, unsurprising as Vice is normally the opposition rebel media group, that currently is covering Afghanistan the exact same way. First vice said 'why is the U.S. still in Afghanistan,' and now Vice is saying 'here is the reality of the U.S. withdrawing troops.' This is the exact pattern of their coverage of Libya. Despite first being optimistic almost glorifying the intervention these later articles now condemn and question it.

The first article questions the integrity of the French aims in intervening, bringing up the Clinton emails that may have said France was making oil deals with Libyan opposition, as well as that made the motivation was to stop Gaddafi from creating a Pan-African currency, although this timeline is fuzzy. Vice also highlights that Gaddafi when visiting France and Italy received a pitched tent in their gardens by his request. However, despite the entire article loosely supporting these claims, Vice closed with the fact that France has reaped less reward from Libyan oil post intervention than it did pre intervention, that if anyone profited it would be the Chinese or the Russians.

The second article depicts the rebels as opposed to the NATO intervention, that if they could go back in time, they would have fought for Gaddafi. This is the complete opposite narrative of the articles surrounding the conflict in 2011, but their tactics are the same. The rest of the article is only various photos of rebels, refugees headed for Italy, and migrants caught in the chaos. Vice still despite changing stances, chose the same tactic of representing the underdog in an empathetic way.

5. CONCLUSION

The American news media coverage during and after the 2011 Libyan Intervention was mixed in its aims and approaches of framing the narrative of the conflict. Mostly because despite many "experts" giving their opinions on what was happening and what happened in Libya,

nobody actually had the full picture, so the way to best deliver the picture was to deliver one that was incomplete. Still, such diversity in depiction and such contradiction in real time and in retrospective view, has led to great criticisms. Amnesty International accused the Western media of presenting “a very one-sided view of the logic of events, portraying the protest movement as entirely peaceful and repeatedly suggesting that the regime’s security forces were unaccountably massacring unarmed demonstrators who presented no security challenge,” (Nijenhuis 5). After analysing the events around the intervention and the way in which CNN, The New York Times, and Vice reported the conflict. Those networks did in fact present a one sided view, ignoring, or simply underrepresenting the aspects of the story that did not confirm their narrative. They failed to provide adequate context, failed to validate the opinions of their sources, and oversimplified a very complex situation. Much of the blame for such reporting can be put on the cons of war journalism, as due to the risk of reporting on the ground in Libya, many journalists chose to work embedded with rebel groups, even staying in their hotels reporting only what they were told in English (Nijenhuis 5). As for those that went to the frontline as seen with Vice, they ended up glorifying and being attracted to the energy of battle, distorting the reality too. As well, in all of the articles analysed the West was portrayed as the heroes and champions of human rights leading a humanitarian intervention, not only ignoring Gaddafi's conflicting origins, but ignoring the part the West played in Gaddafi's human rights violations. According to Human Rights Watch, the C.I.A. assisted Gaddafi in rounding up his exiled opponents and torturing them (Human Rights Watch 2012). Not once in the review of any of the top articles from these networks was this information presented.

Furthermore, all of the networks in regards to Libya in 2011 gave in to the center-periphery-prism by only reporting on Libya in negative relation to the U.S., which leads to

why the attention of the media was brought to Libya. The sole reason for such international attention was the tenacity Al-Jazeera had in their depiction of the Libyan revolution. Al-Jazeera using the “Al-Jazeera Effect” actually ended up ushering in the “CNN Effect” and establishment they hoped to not represent, which is why their coverage at first went from pro-rebel and calling for intervention and assistance, to anti-intervention. Al-Jazeera English centered its coverage around the revolution in the early days, calling for the world to pay attention, and once they did, and CNN arrived, what came with it was the Western agenda. Vice followed the same suit exactly, but to a less impactful and more irresponsible extent. Both Al-Jazeera and Vice used the media agenda setting power. It could be argued it was the public agenda setting power, as they were ‘representing the interest of the Libyan people’ but after further depiction and understanding of the motivations on the ground, that is highly unclear, as there was not a unified voice of the Libyan people. Vice more so than any other network was emotional in its coverage of the rebels and unclear and unverified in its blanket statements about Gaddafi, that they eventually reversed stance on completely. What Al-Jazeera and Vice maybe did not plan for was the prime condition the international community was in to actually intervene.

In addition to France, Great Britain, and Italy having their oil and regional stability interests, the Obama administration was in prime place to set an agenda as Libya hit all three streams of Kingdon's policy agenda setting. Obama had a high approval rating, a policy desire to show a new way the U.S. does war, and the political pressure from within his cabinet, the senate, and the international community. The American interests became focused on Libya, and Hillary Clinton began manufacturing the narrative as she saw fit.

This was worsened by “The CNN Effect,” as information was moving so quickly and unverified that decisions had to be made fast and recklessly. The planning and foresight by

NATO was not prioritized, however an agenda was made clear. CNN and The New York Times in its coverage of the intervention participated in this policy agenda setting, in reiterating the government narrative and interviewing predominley government sources, but CNN alone, did not commit as much fault as did The New York Times and Vice. CNN still had some public watchdog behaviors in questioning the end outcome and the necessity and legality of regime change, but it did not provide adequate context outside of the Western politics of the situation, and thus did not fulfill the SPJ Code of Ethics.

The networks that upheld the SPJ Code of Ethics and behaved as public watchdogs in the 2011 Libyan Intervention were Fox News, The New Yorker, NBC News and The Washington Post. Fox was critical and questioning of the planning and intentions behind the intervention. The New Yorker indepthly did the same but from all aspects of the NATO countries, and of the rebels and citizens on the ground in Libya. NBC gave context and balanced coverage to every side of the conflict and did not leave out the human aspect of the story to not compel readers into only seeing the intervention as a story or policy display, but the actual life of a country and its people. Lastly, The Washington Post gave the administration's image of events and the critical point of view, and in the end called out its legality.

Ultimately, the coverage was a split between ethical and unethical, with a few not landing clearly in either camp (ABC, The Atlantic, and Vox). The news media coverage of the Libyan intervention is a prime example that fact checking, sourcing, and digging deeper are necessary to ethical reporting, because if there is a failure to do so, a country may be thrown into further chaos for the next ten years. Nothing about the intervention nor the revolution was very clear. That is because when dealing with a dictator and a regime, rebellious people, a corporate-influenced media, and a mixed-motivated West, everyone is telling a different story

under various interconnected agendas, and there's no institution to check the facts. Much of the Libyan intervention was based on legitimate concerns, much of it was covered with facts, but facts nonetheless can leave out the necessary contextual information that gives the greater picture. As well, much of the early narrative was assumptive and voiced as if it was guaranteed, and sadly Gaddafi explained it best, "How can the Security Council and the United Nations make a resolution based on news that is 100 percent false?" (Nijenhuis 4). It might not have been 100 percent false but 50/50 should still draw strong speculation and caution -- caution which was not afforded by most of the news media in its approach to the intervention. The news media not only fell victim to the fog of war, but they contributed to it by trying to piece together a complete picture that was not there. That is why those that were able to uphold the SPJ Code of Ethics -- The New Yorker, NBC News, Fox News, and The Washington Post -- were able to do so because they questioned those that were painting the picture as clear and complete. They questioned the agenda of NATO and the White House, and they questioned the various narratives coming from the ground in Libya, only reporting the pieces of the story that were clear and confirmed, even if that meant their readers left not knowing exactly what to think. As Chris Hedges argues in *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*,

"I learned early on that war forms its own culture. The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug, one I ingested for many years. It is peddled by mythmakers- historians, war correspondents, filmmakers, novelists, and the state- all of whom endow it with qualities it often does possess: excitement, exoticism, power, chances to rise above our small stations in life, and a bizarre and fantastic universe that has a grotesque and dark beauty" (Hedges 57).

With such potent influences and active agendas at play, what really happened in Libya in 2011 remains unknown.

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