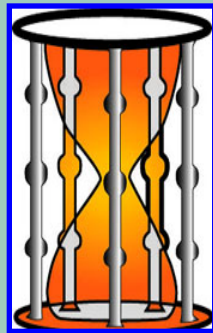


# *AMERICAN REPORTING AS A GLOBAL WATCHDOG*

*To Stir the Pot or Calm the Temper?*  
*BLOG: Traveling Beyond the Headlines*

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TIMELINE

FROM NORTH CAROLINA: "NEW BERN BEGINS CIVIL WAR'S END"

**Frederic A. Moritz**

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**How, when, and why American have media exposed global human rights abuses?**

**[Frederic A. Moritz](#), writer, teacher, and former Asia correspondent of [The Christian Science Monitor](#) has designed and maintains this site as an academic course supplement, a stimulus to research and, and a guide to what is available on the web.**

**This is not an "advocacy site" but an effort to "bridge" a variety of perspectives.**

**The case studies may be used on line or downloaded in .pdf format for use as "e-books" viewable with [Acrobat Reader](#). Email the author to purchase at nominal price a periodically updated cd rom of the entire website.**

**This writing has grown from the author's work as a correspondent covering Chinese domestic and foreign policy -- and from more than twenty years of teaching and research on the interplay of journalism and politics. It seeks to:**

**\*Develop an overall framework for better understanding the economic, cultural and technological conditions under**

**which American media spotlight overseas abuses in a way which impacts American attitudes, politics, and policies.**

**\*Spotlight the sometimes fine line between distorted sensationalism producing stereotypes and propaganda about overseas events -- and insightful exposure of overseas brutality in a way which encourages constructive action by governments and peoples in America and elsewhere.**

**\*Explore the inherent selectivity of American human rights journalism -- as shaped by technology, politics, culture, and the logic of history.**

**\*Explore the way in which American human rights reporting can act as a "gateway" to produce or justify war.**

**\*Illuminate the circumstances under which American journalists have ignored or papered over massive abuse -- such as in the cases of Hitler and Stalin.**

**\*Examine the impact of changing technology of global human rights reporting in media such as television and the Internet. New technologies have cut information barriers, helped human rights advocates gain media attention, and visually dramatized bloody**

government crackdowns and emaciating famines.

### [TO STIR THE POT; OR CALM THE TEMPER?](#)

Born of Victorian tastes, two "outsiders," Joseph Pulitzer and Mary Baker Eddy, took opposite approaches to journalism reform. Pulitzer's "[Yellow Journalism](#)" helped set the stage for modern human rights reporting. But the reform movements pioneered by [The New York Times](#) and [The Christian Science Monitor](#) have complemented and restrained the journalistic excesses inherited by today's media from "the yellows." [Download "e-book" in .pdf.](#)

### [BEYOND BELIEF: IS THIS A "NAZI KIND OF THING?"](#)

Is Saddam Hussein "Hitler Revisited?" How events of the 1930's created an atrocity "archetype" which, even today, triggers journalistic investigation of "Nazi kind of things." With hindsight it seems almost incredible that American media so thoroughly failed in their coverage of repression by Hitler and Stalin. The prevailing media failings of the 1930's can be seen as a lesson against which progress in human rights coverage can be measured. Take a tour of a time when journalists seemed to "sleep" and explore some simple reasons why the "holocaust" of German concentration camps seemed ignored until after World War II. [Download "e-book" in .pdf.](#)

### [THIS JOURNALIST AS A SPY: REPORTING WAR PLANS; 9/11](#)

This essay analyzes the pitfalls of intelligence gathering -- and the role of the journalist as "intelligence analyst." It explores issues of "surprise attack" by tracing the impact of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor right up to the "Second Bush Administration" and the attack on the World Trade Center. Intelligence can be compromised by the "fog" of reality, by failure to communicate, or by political blinders

at "the top." Based in part on this writer's personal experience in reporting Deng Xiaoping's secret decision to invade Vietnam on February 17, 1979. Deng would prove once again, as in China's decision to launch human wave assaults on American troops in Korea some 30 years before, that a once humiliated China would risk a wider war to "stand up." [Download "e-book" in .pdf](#)

## [WHAT THE CAMERA CATCHES: OVERSEAS CRIME BEAT](#)

An examination of the changing conditions under which human rights issues become defined as "news" -- and when patriotism (as in the Afghan and Iraq wars) seems to shape it to patriotic purposes or make it off-limits. An historical overview of how communications and technology help American international human rights journalism provide the sexy "blood and gore" for overseas reporting. Supported by the technology of TV with its vivid emphasis on violence and suffering, human rights reporting has become our overseas crime reporting, a way of "humanizing" the abstractions of distant peoples. Coverage is greatest when there is clearly "blood on the shovel." [Download "e-book" in .pdf](#)

## [GATEWAY TO WAR: MY LAI, MEDIA, AND IRAQ](#)

In the war with Iraq American "on-team" media help integrate many classic American themes -- from lofty idealistic human rights crusades, to ruthless Indian fighting to crafty "realpolitik." This study traces developments in American journalism which foreshadow the current emphasis on human rights issues in overseas reporting. Traces the roots of modern human rights journalism in the 19th century, especially "yellow journalism;" surveys early examples, summarizes the impact of World War II and the holocaust. Explores American journalism's record of sometimes ["taking on"](#) American atrocities. It also explores the explosion of human rights reporting and awards boosted by the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal and the human

rights policies of the Carter years. [Download "e-book" in .pdf](#)

### MARGARET FULLER: THE "MOTHER" WHO LED THE WAY

This New England intellectual - also a poet and an essayist - was perhaps the first great pioneer to make of journalism a watchdog for alerting American readers to human rights issues abroad. A decade before the Civil War, as Europe erupted in the revolutions of 1848, Margaret Fuller, the "mother" of human rights journalism, became a foreign correspondent as the last stage in a personal voyage of intense intellectual and emotional growth. She was an intellectual who became a foreign correspondent - rather than a journalist by trade. [Download "e-book" in .pdf](#)

### OVERVIEW IN "YELLOW": THE "FATHER" WHO LED THE WAY

How "[yellow journalists](#)" of the Hearst and Pulitzer chains became human rights pioneers. An examination of "yellow journalism" at home and abroad -- and of the deep roots of today's "watchdog" human rights reporting in the Victorian moralism of a century ago. An introduction to how James Creelman, the "father" of human rights journalism, exposed the Japanese massacre of Chinese civilians during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1995, then joined other American reporters to open the way for the Spanish American war by exposing and sensationalizing Spanish brutalities in Cuba. [Download "e-book" in .pdf](#)

### CREELMAN AT PORT ARTHUR: FORGOTTEN SEEDS OF PROPHECY

A case study of how "yellow journalist" James Creelman helped launch American journalism as a power on the world stage. He caused an international scandal by exposing Japanese atrocities during the Sino-Japanese

**War of 1894-1895. Although an admirer of Japan, Creelman's reporting forced an apology from Japan and prophetically exposed the roots of Japan's later WWII atrocities. His reporting provided deep, but quickly forgotten, insights into Japan's modernization and expansion. This essay compares early and contemporary human rights reporting and examines the delicate balance between watchdog and propagandist. [Download "e-book" in .pdf](#)**

### **CREELMAN IN CUBA: "YELLOW" SEEDS OF WAR**

**A case study of how "yellow journalists" exposed the brutalities of the pacification campaign conducted by Spain in the 1890's. The coverage led to America's war with Spain after the sinking of the battleship Maine in Havana harbor. Spanish abuses helped justify American empire in Cuba and the Philippines. Atrocities in Cuba foreshadowed a coming century of guerrilla war - and how journalists would cover it. America's war with Philippine guerrilla insurgents, Britain's war against the Boers in southern Africa, partisan wars in World War II, and America's war against Vietnamese communists all too often made academic the niceties of the Geneva Conventions. [Download "e-book" in .pdf](#)**

### **SPANISH LEGACY: THE IMPACT OF SANTO DOMINGO**

**Just what was going on in Cuba in the 1890's when "yellow journalists" filed sometimes sensational reports on Spanish atrocities against Cubans during a rebellion for independence? Guest essayist Jaime GARCIA-RODRIGUEZ compares the tactics used by Spain's General Valeriano Weyler at the time of his mandate in Cuba (1896-97) with those later used by the British Army during the Boer War (1899-1902) and by the French Army during the Algerian war (1954-61). Weyler brought to Cuba the brutal violent experience of prolonged war in Santo Domingo. [Download "e-book" in .pdf](#)**

## EUROPEAN MEDIA "WATCHDOG" UNITED STATES

Has the U.S. legal system, as practiced in Jefferson County, Colorado, violated civilized standards of human rights in relation to the treatment of children? That is the question posed by a case in late October 1999 which was little reported in the United States but sparked outrage in some countries of Europe. News media there raised public concern for pressure on the American government in the case of an 11 year old Swiss-American boy arrested and imprisoned on charges of sexual abuse related to [incest](#).

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