

KEY FINDINGS

This study consists of a statistical examination of the *San Francisco Chronicle's* news coverage of the first six months of the current Palestinian uprising: Sept. 29, 2000 through March 31, 2001. The categories examined were coverage of deaths and injuries in general; children's deaths; and the U.S. connection to this conflict, U.S. aid to Israel/Palestine.

Our findings indicate significantly inaccurate coverage by the *San Francisco Chronicle* of these topics. We found a vast disparity in the likelihood of a death receiving coverage based on the ethnicity of the person killed. For the first six months of the current uprising, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on 111% of Israeli deaths and only 38% of Palestinian deaths in the headlines and/or the first paragraphs of the 251 articles on the topic.

This discrepancy was even more exaggerated in the *Chronicle's* coverage of the killing of children. During the six-month study period, Palestinian children were being killed at a far higher rate than Israeli children - 27% of Palestinians killed were under 18 (93 children), while only 6% of Israelis killed were minors (4 children). Yet *Chronicle* headlines and/or first paragraphs reported the killing of only 5 Palestinian children, while headlines and/or first paragraphs reported 6 Israeli children killed (one Israeli teenager's death was reported three times).

In other words, the *Chronicle* covered 150% of Israeli children's deaths and only 5% of Palestinian children's deaths, giving readers the impression that approximately equal numbers of youths had been killed on both sides. Thus, while the death of an Israeli child was prioritized above the killing of an adult, the killing of a Palestinian child was de-prioritized, despite the abnormally high percentage Palestinian children made up of the casualties. One would expect the fact that Palestinian children constituted such a high percentage of deaths to have been considered newsworthy in itself, not the reverse.

Coverage of the U.S. Connection. Out of the 251 articles the *Chronicle* published on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during this six-month period, only 3 mentioned U.S. financial aid to Israel and the Palestinians. Never was full, accurate information on U.S. aid provided to *Chronicle* readers.



Regarding *Chronicle* coverage of cumulative totals, information that would have at least somewhat ameliorated the above misimpressions, we found that only 12 stories (or 4.8%) of 251 news stories on this topic contained cumulative totals of deaths on both sides somewhere in the article. There was not a single report on the total number injured.

Finally, only 1.2% of stories about Israel/Palestine contained information about U.S. aid to Israel and the Palestinians, despite the fact that such aid is an integral factor in the current conflict, and that aid to Israel accounts for approximately 30% of total U.S. international aid expenditures.

We are providing our findings to the *San Francisco Chronicle* in the hope that it will help them to fulfill their goal of accurately reporting the news. We are also providing this study to readers to help them evaluate the *Chronicle* as a source for understanding the Israel/Palestine conflict in all of its complexities.

If Americans Knew

Mission Statement

In a democracy, the ultimate responsibility for a nation's actions rests with its citizens. The top rung of government - the entity with the ultimate power of governance - is the asserted will of the people. Therefore, in any democracy, it is essential that its citizens be fully and accurately informed.

In the United States, currently the most powerful nation on earth, it is even more essential that its citizens receive complete and undistorted information on topics of importance, so that they may wield their extraordinary power with wisdom and intelligence.

Unfortunately, such information is not always forthcoming.

The mission of If Americans Knew is to inform and educate the American public on issues of major significance that are unreported, under-reported, or misrepresented in the American media.

It is our belief that when Americans know the facts on a subject, they will, in the final analysis, act in accordance with morality, justice, and the best interests of their nation, and of the world. With insufficient information, or distorted information, they may do the precise opposite.

It is the mission of If Americans Knew to ensure that this does not happen - that the information on which Americans base their actions is complete, accurate, and undistorted by conscious or unconscious bias, by lies of either commission or omission, or by pressures exerted by powerful special interest groups. It is our goal to supply the information essential to those responsible for the actions of the strongest nation on earth - the American people.

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For the entire report visit our website or contact us.



Accuracy in Israel/Palestine Reporting

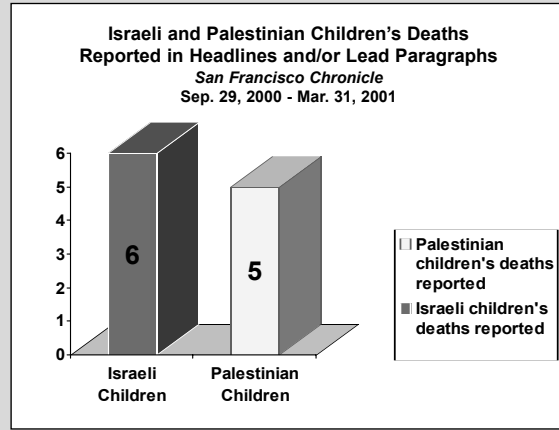


San Francisco Chronicle

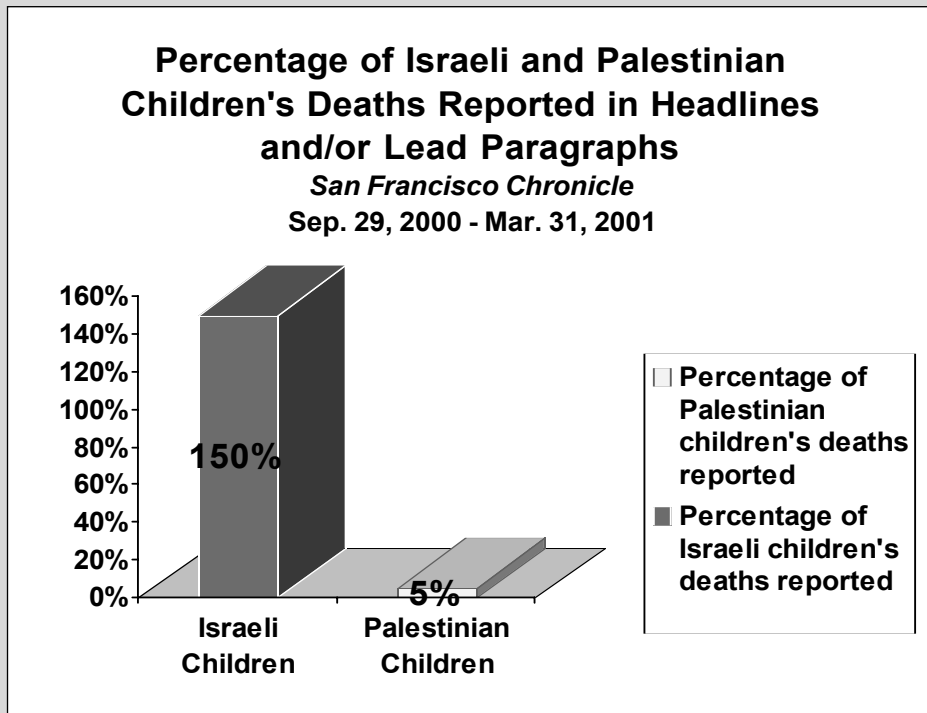
**First six months of current uprising:
Sep. 29, 2000 - Mar. 31, 2001**

For the entire report, including appendices, visit our website: www.ifamericansknew.org or call us at 202.631.4060

Coverage of Children Killed. From Sep. 29, 2000 through Mar. 31, 2001, 6 Israeli children's deaths and 5 Palestinian children's deaths were reported in *San Francisco Chronicle* headlines and/or lead paragraphs. During this time, there were actually only 4 Israeli children killed and 93 Palestinian children killed (see B'Tselem, Israel's leading Human Rights organization, www.btselem.org).



In other words, while 150% of Israeli children's deaths were reported in headlines and/or lead paragraphs, only 5% of Palestinian children's deaths were.



Accuracy in Israel/Palestine Reporting *San Francisco Chronicle* Sep. 29, 2000 - Mar. 31, 2001

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, If Americans Knew began issuing a report card to major media across the country on their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These findings are from our six-month study of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Given that the media have a desire and responsibility to cover this topic accurately, we provide these reports in the hope that our analyses can assist them in this goal.

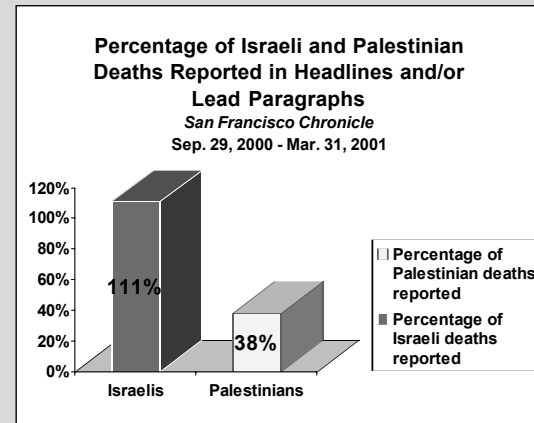
In addition, we are making these reports public, as a way to help readers evaluate for themselves the reliability of their sources of information on this issue.

We recognize that reporting on Israel/Palestine has been an exceptionally controversial topic. The fact that the media have been criticized by partisans on both sides of the issue has made it difficult for the largely non-aligned public to evaluate the quality of reporting they are receiving on this issue.

For this reason, we chose criteria for measuring accuracy that would be universally acknowledged as highly significant, could not be construed as at all subjective, and could be independently verified:

- coverage of deaths
- coverage of the US connection to the conflict

Coverage of All Deaths. During the first six months of the current uprising, 65 Israelis and 384 Palestinians were killed. During this time the *Chronicle* reported 72 Israeli deaths and 129 Palestinian deaths in headlines and/or first paragraphs. In other words, they reported 111% of Israeli deaths and only 38% of Palestinian Deaths.



Coverage of Cumulative Casualty Totals. In the 251 articles the *Chronicle* published on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during this six-month period only 12 contained cumulative totals of the Palestinians and Israelis killed. None of these numerous articles contained the total number of injuries.

