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Introduction

They have had lamb chops with Pope John Paul II, tea with Osama bin Laden's bodyguard, pizza with Fidel Castro, and canned tuna with Zapatista fighters. The world's most and least powerful have alternately tried to cajole and evade them. They have been bombed, kidnapped, held at gunpoint, and have come under all kinds of fire from Beirut to Khost, Afghanistan, to Tamaulipas, Mexico. They have filed all continents' major stories – from U.S. warships, on keyboards shaking during record earthquakes, and by thrusting film and papers at random passengers in airports' international departure lounges whom they deemed trustworthy enough to become "pigeons."

Anybody who has followed foreign news in U.S. media over the past eight decades is certain to have read their stories – and most likely not to know their names, or anything else about them. These global news agenda-setters are the foreign correspondents of The Associated Press, the most significant unknown shapers of Americans' worldview. How they have brought the world to America from the 1940s to today is the core of this book – providing not only an entirely new firsthand history of the major sociopolitical junctures of the 20th and 21st centuries, but shedding new light on the connection between journalism and international affairs at a time of turmoil for both.

With the end of the Cold War paradigm, the splintering of the "war on terror," and profound, insularity-inducing economic trouble, American foreign policy in the mid-2010s appears to be struggling to define its priorities and direction in a world bursting with violence. U.S. news media – facing a crisis that, far from being simply a failure of traditional business models and platforms, is threatening the very existence of a mediated public sphere – are increasingly disengaging from international coverage. Assuming that foreign correspondence helps frame the box within which ordinary Americans and policymakers alike think of the world, and therefore delimits the range of possible foreign policy options, today's disengagement is both paradoxical and dangerous.

It also highlights the growing importance of the news organization that provides the bulk of foreign news to the American public (and beyond) – The Associated Press. Neglected by scholars but practically dominant, since the early 20th century the New York–based news cooperative has gathered and brought world news not only to the nation's leading media, but also to the remotest weeklies in the U.S. countryside. For every celebrated journalist in the spotlight, dozens of AP reporters have toiled, often anonymously, to bring the world to millions of readers. The organization, founded in 1846, estimates that today half the world's population sees AP news every day: In 2013, AP published 2,000 stories a day and a million photos a year, and served 1,400 newspapers and thousands of broadcasting outlets in the United States, plus thousands more in more than 100 other countries.

As one historian of foreign news put it, "No one expected the *New York Times* [or any other newspaper] to have a correspondent everywhere a coup might break out, but they did expect the AP to have someone there" (Hamilton 2009, 278). And yet, aside from an internal history that devotes one chapter to its foreign correspondents (Reporters of The Associated Press 2007; Heinzerling 2007), the story of these global storytellers has not been told – until this book. Based primarily on new oral history interviews with 61 correspondents who covered virtually every continent from 1944 to today, the book's central aim is to document the evolution of foreign correspondence practices at AP in eight decades of U.S. dominance in global affairs, and therefore it focuses on the U.S. connection, even though AP's audience is far wider. The emphasis here is on practices: The book is neither hagiography nor satire, as many biographies, autobiographies, and spoofs of foreign correspondents are, nor a snapshot of a particular time or place, as are ethnographies of the correspondents as a "tribe" (such as Pedelty's 1995 study of the press corps in El Salvador and Hannerz's 2004 one of reporters in Jerusalem, Johannesburg, and Tokyo).

The extended interviews – conducted almost exclusively in person in locales ranging from the Pakistani countryside to the Washington AP bureau – reveal, in all but a couple of cases for the first time publicly, *why* the stories that brought the world home to America were written the way they were. Thus, the book not only creates a document of untold history and gives new eyewitness insights into major events ranging from the Japanese surrender in 1945 to the 2010s Syrian civil war, but it also advances scholarship both on a severely threatened journalistic profession and on the evolving relationship between news media and U.S. policymaking over time. As will be elaborated in the next section, the underlying assumption is that, to understand news content's impact on international affairs, we must discover the journalistic practices that made content what it is (and is not).[1]

[1] A point made by some correspondents themselves – e.g., Rosenblum (2010), 9.

With extensive quotations that allow the interviewees' own voices to freshly and clearly emerge, the book reveals and analyzes the major themes in foreign correspondence processes from the first story idea to reactions to the published copy – or to put it in journalistic terms, how correspondents have figured out what the story was, how they got the story, and how they got it onto the wire. At the story's inception, themes revolve around the preparatory work (including needed skills such as language and the original interest in journalism) and the story selection and news judgment processes. At the reporting level – arguably the most critical – the central themes are the development, maintenance, and ethical protection of sources; the fundamental act of reporting from the scene and the related, disturbingly universal exposure to dangers, violence, and trauma; the overseas perception of journalists; and the team and competition dynamics with fellow journalists both within and outside AP.

Once correspondents are back in the office (or wherever a writing device with some connectivity for filing has been available), the analysis focuses on their standards, including objectivity; the potential impacts on content of their relationship with foreign governments (and opposition groups), ranging from access to censorship, as well as with the U.S. government, including its military; and the filing of copy, especially through gigantic changes in communication technologies. Story production also involves the interaction with editors at AP headquarters (including any clashes over news values, selection, and salience of coverage), and ultimately the reactions from audiences, and, last but perhaps most crucial, the impact on the U.S. public, reflecting the correspondents' beliefs in the purpose and influence of their profession.

The development over time of each of these themes is also analyzed, since interviews span eight decades – the oldest interviewee, or narrator, turned 101 in November 2014 – elucidating the evolving professional and public understandings of foreign correspondence as well as changes in the ethical, institutional, political, and technological constraints on journalistic practices. Professional practices will be evidenced by the discussion of news judgment (the evaluation of what to cover) as well as of the actual coverage, while the explanation of how correspondents dealt with their editors will illuminate institutional constraints. Ethical and political constraints are spotlighted in both reporting practices and the interaction with U.S. and foreign governments. The changing technological constraints represent an underlying thread throughout the book that emerges vividly in filing routines.

Covering most major international events from World War II to today, the correspondents candidly describe counting bodies in Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon, the killing fields in Cambodia, and Japan's tsunami-devastated provinces; fighting censorship and surveillance in the Soviet Union, China, and Brazil; challenging Washington's storylines from Sarajevo, Baghdad, and Pyongyang; and agonizing over public responses from South Africa to Afghanistan. Professional storytellers all, they vividly portray their core responsibility across the years – getting to the right sources at the scene, from

Mao Zedong, Salvador Allende, and Margaret Thatcher to Vietnamese widows, Polish resistance fighters, Syrian rebels, and North Korean children. Before turning to the selection of the correspondents as well as the use of interviews as a methodology for both oral history and political science, the next section provides the underlying theoretical assumptions about journalism and international affairs as well as a brief overview of the history of foreign correspondence.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Bringing a long-term historical perspective to the study of the connection between journalism and international affairs is sorely needed to better understand the evolution of this dynamic. Communication history has seen an increased interest in foreign reporting and international media developments (e.g., Hamilton 2009; Chapman 2005). Journalism historians, however, have hardly engaged the significant body of literature, in the fields of both communication and political science, that explores the role of the news media in shaping foreign policy and international relations either directly, in what some critics see as Western news media's "neo-imperialism" (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen 2004, 32), or through their influence on public opinion. Those studies of media and foreign policy, on the other hand, are rarely historical or even interdisciplinary, so that theories drawn from international relations and communication hardly ever interact productively, and the field has struggled to determine causality or even directionality of influence between alternatively watchdog and lapdog journalism and policymaking (for a review of this literature, see Miller 2007; Baum and Potter 2008).

In previous research (Dell'Orto 2008 and 2013), I brought together history, mass communication, and international relations to focus the scholarly discussion (and its professional implications) on a new model of media effects on international systems: the functioning (and malfunctioning) of the news media, particularly foreign correspondence, as the public arena where literally foreign concepts become understandable realities, which in turn serve as the basis for policy. My conclusion (Dell'Orto 2013) stressed three major points: First, while discourse A should not be understood to lead directly to foreign policy B, the more simplistic, stereotypical, and detached discourses about the world are, the less public debate can occur over policies and the more restricted is the range of policymaking options – making it imperative to study what are the practice constraints on those discourses, as this book does. If we assume, as I and others do (see especially Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Williams and Delli Carpini 2011; Bollinger 2010; Baum and Potter 2015), that a democracy needs some level of informed citizenry, and that the news media are one of the essential sources of information as well as a space of negotiation over meaning, then the second point is that the news media must engage foreign affairs as a pivotal responsibility. Third, the news media serve, for better or

worse, as "irreplaceable mediators" between the world and Americans, especially those who have little direct experience of it, by creating select images of nations' identities – and AP correspondents, almost invisible in the historical record, have borne a large share of this mediating role. Finally, normatively, the implication is that foreign correspondence is a necessary investment for news media, even – perhaps especially – today, in the age of social media and user-generated content.

Both scholars and news organizations are increasingly positioning professional journalists in the role of expert fact-checker, interviewer, eyewitness, and analyst amid the onslaught of global online information – finally heeding Walter Lippmann's call, as one proponent of "knowledge-based journalism" put it (Patterson 2013; also Terzis 2015). Another proponent of "wisdom journalism" argues for conceptualizing most journalists as analysts and interpreters, leaving reporting, including foreign reporting, to others – from locals to wire services such as AP that, being "fast, dogged, and reasonably reliable" "can get an initial, workmanlike, accurate summary up within an hour of a news event ... a condensed, clear news story" (Stephens 2014, xviii, 65). AP itself appears to be both reinforcing its reputation as "the definitive source" of "the fastest, most accurate reporting from every corner of the globe," and adding something akin to knowledge and wisdom journalism, which it called "impact," as discussed in the next chapters.

AP's 2012 annual report, for example, highlighted as one of the agency's crucial services "authenticating user-generated content," particularly from the world's most dangerous hot spot for journalists, civil war-torn Syria. Its 2013 report traced the company's continuing efforts to protect its content from "misappropriation" online, including getting revenue from aggregators. A 2013 report on the impact of digital technologies on news found that "trusted news brands" are the preferred sources for 82 percent of Americans (Newman and Levy 2013, 13) – which might be reassuring given that another study showed that distrust in institutional news media pushes people, paradoxically, toward more partisan sources, producing "an overall information loss for the citizenry" (Ladd 2012, 138). The whole reason for having foreign correspondents – and for that matter, any professional journalist – reporting from the front lines is that they can provide unique perspectives unlike those proffered by local media, the various actors, and U.S. policymakers. Analyzing foreign correspondence by AP and major U.S. newspapers from 1848 to 2008 (Dell'Orto 2013), I found a highly suggestive connection between oversimplified, U.S.-centric, reductive stories about locales as different as Japan and Israel and stalemated (or worse) policies toward those countries, as well as between perceptive writing grounded in local realities and realistic assessments enabling effective leadership.

If we accept those premises, it becomes imperative to understand the evolution of the institutional, professional, ethical, and technological practices of foreign correspondents – in other words, what exactly makes foreign

correspondence what it is – which is the purpose of this project. It is also an urgent task. Foreign correspondence is widely considered one of the most endangered forms of newsgathering today, both in the United States and in other Western countries, and both in print and broadcasting (Paterson and Sreberny 2004; Perlmutter and Hamilton 2007; Sambrook 2010; Willnat and Martin 2012; Wu and Hamilton 2004).

Because of the news industry's faltering business model, the multimillion-dollar cost of foreign bureaus is a glaring temptation for a cut, and most U.S. news organizations have vastly retrenched their foreign service in the post-Cold War era, though some digital-only, entertainment-oriented organizations such as Vice Media and BuzzFeed are expanding overseas (State of the News Media, 2014, 5). Because of news managers' increased attention to audience responses, the proven, wide gap between journalists' preferences for news in the public interest and the public's actual interest in entirely less weighty matters (Boczkowski and Mitchelstein 2013) means that conflict in the Central African Republic pales into insignificance next to a starlet's indiscretion that lights up Twitterdom. Intriguingly, a 2013 survey of audience interest in types of news found a respectable 56 percent of Americans saying "international news" was important to them, while a meager 14 percent chose "entertainment and celebrity news" (Newman and Levy 2013, 31) – raising the question of whether our good intentions, or perhaps our socially conscious survey answers, are later betrayed by our actual clicks.

Many argue that, in quantity, there has never been more foreign news available to anyone interested enough to seek it, thanks to the plethora of online sources – from obscure bloggers to small local media to the massive foreign services of non-U.S.-based professional organizations such as the BBC or Al Jazeera. "Yes, but" – as the *New York Times* former executive editor (and former foreign correspondent) put it – the thinning of the ranks of professional correspondents has meant increasing, often appalling, risks for stringers and freelancers, and again the majority of the uninterested public is left with a cacophony of voices and little authority to tell apart competing claims to the truth.[2] Furthermore, the online news environment is highly imitative – original sources of content are few, and those snippets reverberate through infinite variations with few substantial new facts or analyses. A collection of essays by some of journalism's most prominent scholars is tellingly entitled *Will the Last Reporter Please Turn Out the Lights* (McChesney and Pickard 2011) – before the lights do go out, it is vital that the history and practices of America's foreign correspondents be recorded and analyzed, but with rare exceptions, they are absent from existing literature.

In journalism history scholarship, as well as in memoirs, foreign correspondence is generally treated only as war correspondence – tracing the steps of such notable reporters as Ernie Pyle and Khmer Rouge survivor Sydney

[2] Bill Keller, "It's the Golden Age of News," *New York Times*, November 3, 2013.

Schanberg (Knightley 2004; Schanberg 2010; Sweeney 2006; Patton 2014) – to the extent that a recent study of UK and U.S. television coverage of wars from Vietnam onward argued that the lack of a "peace correspondent" reveals "a news obsessiveness with conflicts between dominant extremes [that] tends to reinforce rather than challenge the path to violent conflict" (Spencer 2005, 1). The only two historical surveys of U.S. and other Western foreign correspondence and foreign correspondents highlight compelling stories of distinguished and notorious reporters, but they are not systematic analyses of professional practices (Hamilton 2009; Hohenberg 1995). Although many correspondents for the best-known organizations have written about their experiences abroad, those books tend to either be analyses of the foreign countries and events (such as Robert Fisk's thousand-page tomes on the Middle East, 2002, 2005) or "war stories" memoirs. As one of the correspondents I interviewed put it, those accounts should be balanced with older spoofs of the profession where bumbling, hard-drinking, entirely unprepared journalists stumble through the news, such as William Boot in Africa (Waugh 1938) or the "IP" wire reporter in Paris who is the protagonist of *Kansas City Milkman* (Packard 1950). Satire aimed at foreign correspondence continues today: The online magazine *Slate* ran an article on the eve of the 2013 U.S. government shutdown "using the tropes and tone normally employed by the American media to describe events in other countries" that even quoted that most anathema of sources, the cab driver.[3]

Contemporary studies of foreign correspondents tend to focus on who they are (through demographic data obtained from surveys; e.g., Hess 1996) and, less prominently, on their work routines (Terzis 2015; Willnat and Martin 2012; Gross and Kopper 2011; Hahn and Lönnendonker 2009). U.S. foreign correspondents, estimated to number around 200 to 300 throughout most of the 20th century, were predominantly white and male (women reached a peak of about one-third of the total in the 1980s, which has remained unchanged, while minorities inched up but still hovered around less than 20%, even including foreign nationals), highly educated (more than 90% had a college degree), and had a stronger presence in Europe than anywhere else. A 2001 survey of 354 foreign correspondents found that those traits continued at the dawn of the 21st century, with a new pessimism about the lack of audience interest in serious foreign news and more interest on the part of correspondents in trends rather than breaking news (Wu and Hamilton 2004).

As to work routines, studies based on surveys, interviews, or observation have focused on news selection, producing evidence of who correspondents are and what they think of what they do (Willnat and Martin 2012, 502–503) and, in the ethnographic studies, touching upon practice concerns that are essential to this book – the relationship between editors and correspondents and the

[3] Joshua Keating, "If It Happened There .... The Government Shutdown," *Slate*, September 30, 2013. Interviewing the taxi driver as a "well-placed source" is a recurrent joke in journalistic circles; several of the correspondents mentioned it – as worth a shot as a "well-tuned" local voice, but certainly not the only or even a prominent source (Belkind, 7).

latter's autonomy (Hannerz 2004, 149; Pedelty 1995, 24, 91); the importance of language skills in gaining access to sources (Hannerz 2004, 88–89); the trauma-coping mechanisms (Pedelty 1995, 2, 58); and the struggles with objectivity (Pedelty 1995, 178). But those observations are limited to interviews with sets of journalists who happen to be there when the anthropologists do their fieldwork. The actual practices throughout the news process are not extrapolated from coverage of actual events during eight decades, an analysis that forms the core of this book. That is the crucial missing link in the connection between practice and content – explored as it happened across time and around the world.

Paradoxically, the most neglected area of study, historical or otherwise, is that of reporters for The Associated Press, whose bylines AP members and clients often do not even publish and whose organization does not carry the cachet of the *New York Times* or the BBC – even the autobiography of one of AP's most consequential leaders, Kent Cooper, starts with a self-deprecating anecdote about the utter lack of AP name recognition, and it was Cooper who first recognized by name an AP international correspondent in the preface to his 1925 reporting from the Arctic (Cooper 1959, 3, 109). But AP stories often serve as the agenda setters for more visible correspondents and constitute the entire diet of original foreign reporting for an increasing number of media outlets worldwide, dominating, albeit "inconspicuously," even the apparently free-for-all online news world (Paterson 2005, 145; Boyd-Barrett 1980; Hohenberg 1995).

By virtue of their more pervasive presence, larger numbers, and the far wider public distribution of their stories, AP correspondents have helped shape Americans' understanding of the world even more profoundly than far better-known colleagues. Given the retrenchment elsewhere, and its new ability to reach audiences directly through the app AP Mobile, AP's role in foreign newsgathering seems destined to only grow larger, despite the industry-wide financial challenges. In 2007, Rick Hall, the managing editor of Salt Lake City's *Deseret Morning News*, an AP member, had this to offer on AP's extensive coverage of the war in Iraq: "Nobody mentioned the costs, but it was clear the extent AP was going through to cover the story. It's horribly expensive, and bless AP for being there. . . . We don't use as much international as we did 20 years ago, but I'm not so sure it's a bad thing that we help pay for that" (Ricchiardi 2008). In fact, in the 2010s, AP has continued what some call its Marine Corps tradition – first in, last out – by becoming the first international news organization to open permanent, full-time, multimedia bureaus in Pyongyang, North Korea (in January 2012), and in Yangon, Myanmar (in March 2013).

AP's very roots as a not-for-profit news cooperative are in international newsgathering. In the 1840s, a group of New York editors pooled their resources to get faster news transmission from the Mexican war front as well as from Europe (via Canada, because transatlantic ships with European

newspapers docked in Nova Scotia before coming down the shore to U.S. ports). Until the early 20th century, however, AP foreign newsgathering was almost exclusively through a cartel arrangement with other news agencies, such as Reuters, rather than original reporting (Heinzerling 2007, 262), though the agency made a profound mark on U.S. journalism by institutionalizing the "inverted pyramid" style of leading with the most important information, most succinctly put. In the early 20th century, after expansion in the major European capitals, bureaus were opened around the world, and AP started distributing its wires to numerous international clients (Cooper 1959, 67, 263–270; Morris 1957, 177), breaking the "cartel" dominated by European agencies. In addition to a 1960s peak of 12 foreign-language wires, through most of the 20th century, two central foreign news editing desks existed in New York, one charged with editing copy from abroad for American media, the other with filing stories for international outlets. (In the 2000s, both desks were decentralized, and "regional" hubs were established in London, Mexico City, Cairo, Bangkok, and Johannesburg.)

The AP foreign service came of age in the World Wars era that, with the early Cold War period, is considered "a golden age for foreign correspondence" (Cole and Hamilton 2009, 174), with news from overseas occupying a growing, even dominant place among an American public whose opinion was closely studied by policymakers. AP competed with another U.S. wire agency, United Press (later UPI), for breaking news, even as both newspapers and, later, broadcasters expanded their foreign newsgathering. The Vietnam War served as a turning point in the relationship between the media, the public, and the government: Many in Washington blamed correspondents for turning the public against the war, and the backlash resulted in increasingly adversarial positioning both between journalists and government officials, who sought more and more to bar access, as well as, paradoxically, between media and a public disenchanted with "the establishment." In the 1990s, the sudden collapse of bipolar world politics and the digital revolution – combined with an existing shift in media companies' priorities from public service to consolidated corporate bottom line – altered correspondence, and journalism overall, in dramatic ways still playing out 20 years later.

Professional foreign correspondence by all but a handful of U.S. outlets disappeared, while social media became a crucial aspect of fragmented global power dynamics. All eyeballs seemed to focus on the dizzying rise of new communication technologies, creating among the public and many scholars the dangerously complacent illusion that newsgathering might be left to anyone with a smartphone, a wireless signal, and a Twitter account. On the distinctly positive side, digital technologies did make the flow of news across the world unprecedentedly instantaneous and cost-effective, as this brief timeline illustrates: AP's service began with the Pony Express and, three decades later, its first leased telegraph wire enabled it to transmit stories without competition. A major breakthrough came in 1933, with the first teletype circuit transmitting

60 words per minute – a punched-tape relay that endured overseas for half a century. In the mid-1970s, satellite started to allow text to move at 1,200 words per minute, and computerized advances quickly followed, culminating in the 2008 launch of the AP Mobile app.[4]

AP'S FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS

Already before World War II, AP foreign correspondents began to earn a reputation for popping up everywhere, trying even Gandhi's patience. Finding an AP reporter waiting for him as he was released from prison in the middle of the night in the 1930s, the Mahatma reportedly shook his head and professed that he would likely run into AP even at heaven's door (Heinzerling 2007, 266) – and some 15 years later, Max Desfor, one of the interviewees in this book, was on hand to photograph Gandhi's history-making 1946 meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru. In one measure of the particular importance of international news, as of 2015, 30 of AP's 51 Pulitzer Prizes were won on foreign assignments (both reporting and photography – since the 1990s, AP has also had a video news service). AP correspondents repeatedly paid the highest price for this global presence: From the Spanish-American War in 1898 to conflict in the Gaza Strip in 2014, 33 died while on duty overseas – five in the span of a year, 1993–1994, and three as this book was written in 2014.[5] Many more were expelled from various countries, though AP was usually the first to restore its bureaus as political conditions changed – forced to close its Shanghai bureau in 1949, it reopened one in Beijing in early 1979 as soon as China and the United States began diplomatic relations. Similarly, AP's correspondent was the last American resident reporter booted out of Cuba in 1969, and Fidel Castro did not allow the agency to reopen in Havana until 1998, joining CNN as the only other U.S.-based news organization with a permanent presence on the island.[6] Africa, as for most agencies, was the weakest link – the first bureau there did not open until 1957 (in South Africa). In addition, a handful of roving correspondents reported from hundreds of countries, specializing in "trend" stories, from lighter features to global problems such as climate

[4] AP Technology, 1846–2013, unpublished reference guide, The Associated Press Corporate Archives, New York.

[5] The list was provided by AP archivist Francesca Pitaro in February 2014, and it includes staff correspondents as well as local hires and stringers on assignment for AP overseas. (For 1994, see Nicholas K. Geranios, "Foreign correspondents discuss dangers," The Associated Press, April 25, 1994.) The three AP staffers killed in 2014 are: in April, 48-year-old Anja Niedringhaus, when an Afghan police officer – supposed to be protecting the convoy she and AP reporter Kathy Gannon were traveling in to cover Afghanistan's national elections – turned his AK-47 on them; in August, 35-year-old Simone Camilli in an ordnance explosion while covering the war in the Gaza Strip; in November, 39-year-old Franklin Reyes Marrero in a car crash while returning from an assignment in Cuba.

[6] Anita Snow, "Cuban government approves re-opening of AP Havana bureau," The Associated Press, November 13, 1998.