

COMTRAX SOLUTIONS

CNN'S COVERAGE OF THE LEBANESE MAY 2008 EVENTS

MEDIA SNAPSHOT ANALYSIS



Comtrax Solutions

Analysis Period:

May 8th, 2008 till May 12th, 2008

8 Reports Analyzed:

- "Gun battles break out in Beirut", May 8th, 92 seconds
- "Dramatic events in Beirut", May 9th, 147 seconds
- "Hezbollah gaining ground", May 9th, 170 seconds
- "Fighting between Hezbollah and pro-government backers", May 9th
- "Tentative calm in Beirut", May 10th, 89 seconds
- "A Shift in Lebanon fighting", May 11th, 172 seconds
- "Hezbollah-led forces take revolt to mountains above Beirut", May 12th
- "CNN Blog; In The Field"

Reporters & images:

CNN's urgent reporting May 8th was mostly carried out by phone by Beirut correspondent Brent Sadler. Starting May 9th, special correspondent Cal Perry took over, providing most of the special reports.



Images were either that of CNN's crew or that of the Associated Press (mostly). Some Arab sources were used, especially LBC and Arabiya.



Topics Priority:

CNN's editorial choice was to place the Lebanese events second after the Myanmar floods. When the Sudanese crisis broke out (May 10th), Lebanon moved to become the third subject.

On May 12th, most of CNN's coverage was dedicated to the Chinese earthquake.

Leaders Covered:

Reports rarely focused on any of the Lebanese political leaders. Walid Joumblatt was the most quoted leader, followed by Fouad Seniora and Hassan Nassrallah. Saad Hariri was the least visible leader (reflecting his "silence"); he was very rarely mentioned even in the context of the Beirut events, Walid Joumblatt was always put forward.

Perception of Events:

- Sectarian conflict
 - o Utilization of labels such as "Druze mountains", "Sunnite Beirut" etc...
- Death of a country
 - o "Country brought to its knees"
 - o "People (focus on Iraqis) are fleeing Lebanon"
 - o "Government decisions cannot be applied in Lebanon"
- Hezbollah clear winner
 - o "Hezbollah has corned the government, the latter must make a deal"
 - o "Hezbollah, one of the biggest armies in the Middle East"

- Roots of the conflict
 - o Governmental decisions

- International Links
 - o "Government is US backed"
 - o "March 14th heavily supported by the US"
 - o "Iran attacks the US administration and Israel as responsible for troubles in Lebanon"
 - o "March 14th appeal to the Arabs..."

- Role of the Army
 - o Images of the Lebanese Army standing clear from Hezbollah fighters
 - o "Army gives Hezbollah what it wanted"
 - o The Army has been going into pro-government forces buildings persuading them to give up

- Other comments
 - o "Saad Hariri most influential Muslim in this country"
 - o Images of people being caught in the middle of the fighting (not seen on Lebanese TV channels)
 - o Focus on the death toll

