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The Terrorists' Best Ally:

The FLQ Crisis

I. Introduction

In the 19th Century, a terrorist attack in Washington D.C. would have become known to the people of Tennessee only after a few days. The evolution of mass communication dramatically changed the scene of terrorism and the way terrorists conduct their affairs. Today's terrorists are well aware of the power of the media and manipulate them to their own advantage and need. By giving unusual events extensive coverage, the mass media evoked the notion that "you cannot be revolutionary without a color TV: it's as necessary as a gun".[1]

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1. David C. Rapoport, "The International World as Some Terrorists Have Seen It: A Look at a Century of Memoirs," in David C. Rapoport (ed.), *Inside Terrorist Organizations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 33. See also Gabriel Weimann and Conrad Winn, *The Theater of Terror* (New York: Longman, 1994), pp. 58-64; Bonnie Cordes, "When Terrorists Do the Talking: Reflections on Terrorist Literature," in David C. Rapoport (ed.), *Inside Terrorist Organizations*, pp. 150-171.

The present study does not purport to delve into discussion on the distinction between terrorists and freedom fighters.[2] It constricts its assumptions to terrorism only in liberal democracies, not to terrorism as such. Terrorism is defined here as the threat or employment of violence against citizens for political, religious, or ideological purposes by individuals or groups who are willing to justify all means to achieve their goals. The underlying assumption is that a zero sum game exists between terrorism and democracy, *i.e.*, a win for the one constitutes a loss for the other. Democracy needs to provide ample alternatives for citizens to voice their satisfaction as well as their grievances with regard to governmental policies. Political groups and association have legal avenues to explore in order to achieve their aims. Terrorism is conceived as inhuman, insensitive to human life, cruel and arbitrary. To remain morally neutral and objective toward terrorism and to sympathize with terrorist acts is to betray ethics and morality.[3] Terrorists should be explicitly condemned for their deeds by all who care about the underlying values of democracy: not harming

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[2]. On this issue, see Geoffrey Jackson, "Terrorism and the News Media," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Winter 1990), pp. 521-528; Michael Stohl, "Demystifying Terrorism: The Myths and Realities of Contemporary Political Terrorism," in Michael Stohl (ed.), *The Politics of Terrorism* (N.Y. and Basel: Marcel Dekker, 1988), pp. 1-28; Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Labeling Terrorism in the Israeli Press," *Political Communication and Persuasion*, Vol. 2 (1985): 433-445.

[3]. See R. Cohen-Almagor, "Objective Reporting in the Media: Phantom Rather than Panacea," in R. Cohen-Almagor, *Speech, Media, and Ethics: The Limits of Free Expression* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2001), chapter 4.

others, and granting respect to others.[4] Terrorism, by definition, runs counter to these underlying values. The media should, of course, report acts of terror, but when they report on terrorists, they do not have to view themselves as detached observers; they should not only transmit a truthful account of "what's out there."[5] Instead, they should feel free to make moral judgements. It is an objective matter - a matter of how things really are - that terrorism in democracies is wrong. That is another way of emphasizing that terrorism in democracies is inherently wicked, not wicked only because people think it is.[6]

There is a delicate relationship between terrorists and the media. Free speech and free media – the basic instruments (many would say values) of every democracy - provide terrorists the publicity they need to inform the public about their operations and goals. Indeed, democracy is the best arena for those who wish to reach their ends by violent means. Violent movements and individuals recognize the "democratic catch" and exploit the available liberal instruments to find "golden paths" (from their point of view) to further their ends without holding themselves to the rules of law and order. Those movements and

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4. See Ronald M. Dworkin, "Liberalism," in *A Matter of Principle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985): 181-204; *idem*, *Taking Rights Seriously* (London: Duckworth, 1977); R. Cohen-Almagor, *The Boundaries of Liberty and Tolerance* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994).

5 . Stephen D. Reese, "The News Paradigm and the Ideology of Objectivity: A Socialist at the Wall Street Journal," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 7 (1990): 390-409, at 394.

6 . Ronald Dworkin, "Objectivity and Truth: You'd Better Believe It," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 25 (1996): 87-139, at 92-98.

individuals would be crushed immediately were they to employ similar tactics in autocratic systems.[7]

The media have been accused of being the terrorist's best friend. Walter Laqueur explains that if terrorism is propaganda by deed, the success of a terrorist campaign depends decisively on the amount of publicity it receives. The terrorist's act by itself is nothing; publicity is all.[8] Dowling goes as far as arguing that terrorists owe their existence to the media in liberal societies.[9] The media are helping terrorists orchestrate a theatre of terror in which the terrorists and their victims are the main actors, creating a spectacle of tension and agony. At the heart of the theatre metaphor is the audience. The media personnel are a bit like drama critics who convey information to the public. Furthermore, like good drama critics, the media also interpret the event. The slant they give by deciding what to report and how to report it can create a climate of public support, apathy

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7. For further deliberation, see R. Cohen-Almagor, "Ethical Boundaries to Media Coverage," *Australian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (1999): 11-34.

8. Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1987), p. 121; *idem*, *Terrorism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1977); *idem*, "The Futility of Terrorism," *Harper's* (March 1976). See also Alex P. Schmid, "Editors' Perspectives," in David L. Paletz and Alex P. Schmid (eds.), *Terrorism and the Media* (Newbury Park, CA.: Sage, 1992): 122-123.

9. Ralph E. Dowling, "Terrorism and the Media: A Rhetorical Genre," *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1986), p. 22.

or anger.[10] By their theatrics, the insurgent terrorists serve the audience-attracting needs of the mass media, and since the media care primarily about holding the attention audience, this symbiosis is beneficial for both.[11]

Terrorists, news people and media experts share the view that those whose names make the headlines have power -- that getting one's name on the front page and being included in prime time electronic news constitute a major political achievement. Modern terrorists seek access to the media by committing acts that closely fit news agencies' definitions of news: being timely and unique, involving adventure or having entertainment value, and affecting the lives of those being informed.[12] Gerbner and Gross argued that representation in the media gives an idea, a cause, and a sense of public identity, importance, and relevance. No movement can get going without some visibility.[13] This is especially true when the movement is weak. Then media access might be its major, sometimes sole significant asset.

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[10]. Jeffrey Z. Rubin and Nehemia Friedland, "Theater of Terror," *Psychology Today* (March 1986), p. 24. See also W.R. Catton Jr., "Militants and the Media: Partners in Terrorism," *Indiana Law Journal,* Vol. 53 (1978): 703-715.

[11]. Brian Jenkins, *International Terrorism* (Los Angeles, CA: Crescent Pub, 1975); Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication* (London and Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), p. 72.

[12]. Ralph E. Dowling, "Terrorism and the Media: A Rhetorical Genre," *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[13]. G. Gerbner and L. Gross, "Living with Television: The Violence Profile," in H. Newcomb (ed.), *Television: The Critical View* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 368.

During the past forty years there have been many instances in which media coverage of terrorist events was problematic and irresponsible, evoking public criticism and antagonizing the authorities. This essay sheds light on a number of irresponsible actions of some organs of the media in crisis situations. The essay opens by mentioning some of the most troubling episodes, and then discusses incidents that took place in Canada, a country not normally plagued by terrorism. Subsequently, the essay offers close analysis of the *le Front de liberation de Quebec* (FLQ) crisis in October 1970, arguably the most problematic event of all. Here some organs of the French media (most notably two radio stations and some newspapers) cooperated with the terrorists because they felt sympathy with the *raison d'être* of the FLQ and did not really perceive its members as terrorists. It is emphasized that here it was not a case of "kidnapping" or coercing the media. As explained in *Chapter 2*, voluntariness excludes any notion of coercion. The crisis escalated rapidly to the extent that Canada declared a state of national emergency and brought troops to the streets of Quebec. Some organs of the French media played a significant role in provoking the authorities to such a dramatic action.[14]

The present research benefited from a review of previously undisclosed 1970 Cabinet records concerning the FLQ and the kidnapping of James Cross

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[14]. According to the Davey Report, over eight in ten Canadians fifteen years of age and over claim to look at and/or listen to TV, radio, and newspapers each day. 89% listen to the radio, and 88% read newspapers. 81% of Quebec French receive at least one newspaper daily. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Good, Bad or Simply Inevitable?* (Ottawa, 1970),

and Pierre Laporte. This information was made public only recently. In certain instances, information has been removed in accordance with various sections of the *Access to Information Act* (*e.g.*, section 14, information that would be injurious to the conduct of federal-provincial affairs), but I was allowed to look at more than 200 pages of relevant records showing the sense of urgency the government felt during and immediately after the October crisis.[15] The major bulk of deliberations dealt with questions of law and order, means to combat terrorism, police powers and responsibilities, mobilization of troops into Quebec and their withdrawal, intelligence resources, and ways to deal with separatism. The files show there was a real fear that things might go out of control to the point of insurrection. For three weeks, the government had been forced to concentrate on virtually nothing but the FLQ. The files also show that members of the government were very dissatisfied with the media's role in the crisis and sought ways to regulate the media. The Prime Minister and his cabinet were aware of the media's power and of the need to publicize their own views in order to mobilize public support for their decisions.

The new data shed interesting light on how the government perceived the role of the CBC. The data provide insight on the deliberations revolving around whether or not to broadcast the FLQ manifesto. The documents also present direct quotes from Prime Minister Trudeau's views on the role of the media

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Vol. III, pp. 11, 12.

[15]. I am most grateful to Ciuineas Boyle, Coordinator, Access to Information and Privacy, for the valuable assistance.

during the crisis as well as quotes of other senior public officials. There are illuminating discussions on censorship, media regulation, and suggestions to amend the existing laws to promote the integration of Canada. The documents also testify about the efforts that were made to calm the heads of the media organizations after the invocation of the War Measure Act on October 16, 1970.

II. Troubling Episodes

A Rand Corporation review of 63 terrorist incidents between 1968 and 1974 showed that terrorists achieved one hundred percent probability of gaining major publicity.[16] Media coverage of some of these episodes was ethically problematic, helping terrorism or contributing to the prolongation of the violent episodes. Laqueur mentions two incidents in this regard: the Bogota siege of 1977, which lasted sixty days, and the 444 days' detention of the American

16. J.B. Bell, "Terrorist Scripts and Live-Action Spectaculars," *Columbia Journalism Review* (May-June 1978), p. 49.

diplomats in Tehran two years later. Only after the captors had squeezed the last drop of publicity out were the hostages released.[17]

The media failed to adequately consider the consequences of their reporting in an incident that took place in 1974, when terrorists took over part of the courthouse in the District of Columbia. The hostages were kept in a room separated by a two-way mirror from another room, which allowed the police to watch them closely. This advantage was removed when the media disclosed the fact, whereupon the terrorists ordered the hostages to tape the mirror with newspapers.[18]

Other problematic episodes concerned the most extensive media coverage of the kidnapping of Patricia Hearst in February 1974, and the hijacking of TWA 847 to Beirut in 1985. Hearst was kidnapped by a small terrorist organization

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[17]. Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism, op. cit*., p. 124. See also David L. Altheide, "Impact of Format and Ideology on TV News Coverage of Iran," *Journalism Quarterly,* Vol. 62, Nos. 1-2 (1985): 346-351; *idem*, "Three-in-One News: Network Coverage of Iran," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 59 (1982): 482-486; James F. Larson, "Television and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Case of the Iran Hostage Crisis," *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Autumn 1986): 108-127; Milan D. Meeske and Mohamad Hamid Javaheri, "Network Television Coverage of the Iranian Hostage Crisis," *Journalism Quarterly,* Vol. 59 (1982): 641-645; P. Schlesinger, "Terrorism, the Media, and the Liberal-Democratic State: A Critique of Orthodoxy," *Social Research,* Vol. 48 (Spring 1981): 74-99; Gary Sick, "Taking Vows: The Domestication of Policy-Making in Hostage Incidents," in Walter Reich (ed.), *Origins of Terrorism* (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center and Cambridge University Press, 1990): 230-244.

[18]. Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication, op. cit*., p. 102.

called the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA). The terrorists demanded that the media carry their messages in full and the media agreed; they magnified the case out of proportion and provided sensational mass entertainment that served the publicity needs of the ephemeral organization. Yonah Alexander argued that the most disturbing aspect of this case was that the media gave a small group of criminal misfits a Robin Hood image and transformed it into an internationally known movement possessing power and posing an insurmountable problem to the authorities.[19]

As for the TWA hijacking, some of the hostages bitterly resented the activities of the American media networks, referring to ABC as the "Amal Broadcasting Corporation" and NBC as "Nabih Berri Corporation." One American hostage stated, "Maybe ABC had us hijacked to improve their ratings."[20] There are rumors that reporters paid the terrorists for granting them

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19. Yonah Alexander, "The Media and Terrorism," in David Carlton and Carlo Schaerf (eds.), *Contemporary Terror* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), p. 53.

20. William J. Brown, "The Persuasive Appeal of Mediated Terrorism: The Case of the TWA Flight 847 Hijacking," *Western J. Speech Communication,* Vol. 54 (1990), p. 228; Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism, op. cit*., p. 125. See also Tony Atwater, "Network Evening News Coverage of the TWA Hostage Crisis," in A. Odasuo Alali et al (eds.), *Media Coverage of Terrorism* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1991): 63-72; Gabriel Weimann and Conrad Winn, *The Theater of Terror, op. cit.,* pp. 1-4, 95-103; A.P. Schmid, "Terrorism and the Media: The Ethics of Publicity," *Terrorism and Political Violence,* Vol. 1, No. 4 (October 1989): 539-565; Gabriel Weimann, "Media Events: The Case of International Terrorism," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media,* Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter 1987): 21-39.

interviews. The media reported much of the Shi'ite leader Nabih Berri's version of the TWA story, portraying the person who orchestrated the ordeal as a peacemaker. Berri made an appeal through the media, urging Americans to write to the president supporting the release of 700 Shi'ite prisoners in Israel. The news media helped Berri's attempt to equate the fate of the innocent American hostages with the fate of the Shi'ite terrorists imprisoned in Israel. ABC news, as well as the other media, broadcast pictures of the hostages of the TWA jet and the Shi'ite prisoners, equating in the minds of the public these two very different groups. *Good Morning America* featured the families of the imprisoned terrorists, drawing an analogy between them and the families of the hostages. In addition, ABC's David Hartman took upon himself the role of a mediator when he concluded a live interview with a spokesman for the Amal militia by asking: "Any final words to President Reagan this morning?,"[21] as if the president of the United States and the terrorist spokesman are equal and legitimate partners in a dialogue, and as if it is part of the media's role to serve as mediator. David Hartman is a capable broadcaster, but his qualifications as mediator in such a tenuous situation are questionable. This delicate role, involving human life, should be left to those who have the proper expertise.

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[21]. *Good Morning America* (28 June 1985); Thomas Raynor, *Terrorism: Past, Present, Future* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1987), pp. 150-151.

The Hanafi Muslim takeover of three buildings at the heart of Washington D.C. in March 1977 also became a major media event.[22] The conduct of the media was ethically reckless and ran counter to the best interests of the hostages. The media furnished the terrorists with direct intelligence information by continuing on-site television coverage and depicted them as kind and merciful. Some members of the media made direct telephone calls to interview the terrorists and thereby tied up communication between the police negotiators and the terrorists. One TV report showed a basket lifted up by rope to the fifth floor where some people who had evaded the terrorists' round-up had barricaded themselves. Their presence was unknown until then to the terrorists who were holding their prisoners on the eighth floor. Fellow Hanafis who were monitoring the news outside the captured buildings informed the terrorists of the TV report. Another reporter speculated that boxes of ammunition were taken into the building in preparation for a police assault when, in fact, they were boxes of food for the hostages. There were a number of other incidents of reporters endangering lives, such as when the Hanafi leader Khaalis was asked if he intended to give an ultimatum, when none had been stated earlier. The security experts thought that the absence of a deadline was an encouraging sign; luckily Khaalis was too engrossed in his own rhetoric to pay adequate attention to this thoughtless question. One radio reporter prompted Khaalis to mark ten hostages for execution after suggesting to the Hanafi leader that the police were trying to

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22. On the concept of media events see Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, *Media Events* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

trick him. To calm him down, the police withdrew sharpshooters from nearby buildings. Evidently, the journalists decided to increase the tension for their audience, as if the tension for those under duress was not enough. Among the terrorists' demands was to stop the screening of a film called *Mohammad, Messenger of God,* which the Hanafis regarded as blasphemous. The Washington TV station WTTG showed a brief clip of the film, which might have satisfied the curiosity of the audience, but could have been dangerous for the hostages. Furthermore, when the police negotiators tried to build their credibility with the terrorists, one talk show journalist asked the Hanafis: "How can you believe the police?." Moreover, one of Khaalis's demands was that the convicted murderers of his family and their accomplices be delivered to him. The negotiator stalled by pleading ignorance of the accomplices' location when a reporter unwittingly leaked that one of these people was in Washington at that time. This information not only enhanced Khaalis's position in the negotiation process, but also undermined the relationship the negotiator was trying to build. And as if this were not enough, Khaalis was outraged when a misinformed reporter called him "Black Muslim," not knowing that the Hanafis were bitter rivals of the Black Muslim sect and that members of Khaalis' family were murdered by Black Muslims. Khaalis stormed into the hostages' room and threatened to kill one of them in retaliation for the reporter's words. Only after the newscaster issued an apology did Khaalis back down from his threat.[23]

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[23]. Yonah Alexander, "The Media and Terrorism," *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57; Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication, op. cit.,* pp. 76-78, 101, 105, 115; Linda N. Deitch, "Breaking

It is inappropriate for journalists to interview members of groups taking part in terrorist acts while such acts are under way. This type of interview has occurred many times during the course of hijacking, building sieges, kidnapping and other prolonged acts of terror.[24] Interviews under such conditions are a direct reward for the specific act of terrorism underway, and can interfere with efforts to resolve the crisis. In addition, such interviews all too often increase the spectacle of the event, spread fear, and provide a contrived platform for the views of the groups involved.[25]

In the Hanafi episode, fortunately no hostage was killed due to the irresponsible behaviour of the media.[26] There have been cases in which hostages were killed because of the urge for journalistic scoops. For instance, the killing of a German businessman in November 1974 in a British Airways plane on its way

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News: Proposing a Pooling Requirement for Media Coverage of Live Hostage Situations," *UCLA L. Rev.*, Vol. 47 (1999), p. 253. After their surrender, Khaalis and his men complained that the media attention they received interfered with their right to fair trial. See *Khaalis v. United States*, 408 A.2d 313 (D.C. 1979).

[24]. For problematic episodes concerning Irish terrorism in Britain, see Richard Clutterbuck, *The Media and Political Violence* (London: Macmillan, 1983), esp. pp. 109-123. For further disturbing episodes see Linda N. Deitch, "Breaking News: Proposing a Pooling Requirement for Media Coverage of Live Hostage Situations," *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 244-255.

[25]. Robert G. Picard, "News Coverage as the Contagion of Terrorism," in A. Odasuo Alali and Kenoye Kelvin Eke (eds.), *Media Coverage of Terrorism, op. cit.*, p. 59.

[26]. During the takeover of the District Building, the Hanafis shot and killed Maurice Williams, a reporter, and shot and maimed three other people, one of them (Robert Pierce) was a hostage.

from Dubai to Libya, and the murder of Jurgen Schumann, the captain of a Lufthansa jet in Mogadishu (October 13, 1977). In both cases the hijackers had learned from the media that their demands had not been fulfilled and the authorities were just playing for time to prepare a rescue mission. In the case of the German captain, he had passed on information via the plane's radio. The media broadcast the information he had transmitted; the terrorists heard the broadcast and killed him.[27]

The Israeli television coverage of the hijacked Lufthansa aeroplane to Mogadishu was also problematic. A special German anti-terror unit, established after the massacre of eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympic games, freed the passengers from the plane in a daring military act on the night of October 18, 1977. The ethical problem arose when Michael Gordus, the Kol Israel's radio expert, managed to locate the German attack force's frequency while they were preparing to take over the plane. In the evening edition of the news on the national TV, the Channel One anchorman, Haim Yavin, decided to broadcast the item, disregarding Mr. Gordus' pleas to wait until after the take-over of the plane. The item was reported about five hours before the manoeuvre, at nine p.m., when the take-over was scheduled for two a.m. Mr. Yavin insisted that the broadcast take place. It seems that he did not consider the potentially dangerous consequences of his action: the possibility that the hijackers would

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[27]. Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism, op. cit.,* p. 126; Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication, op. cit.,* pp. 102-103.

discover the rescue plan before the rescuers could take over, further jeopardising the hostages and causing difficulties for the German force.[28]

In another incident, a reporter phoned a hostage-taker and asked why he wanted only $10,000 in ransom. The thug took the suggestion and increased his demand.[29] Here too, the reporter was not satisfied with the existing tension and wished to raise its level.

The media should not cooperate with the staging of events. A notorious case was that of Carrickmore in 1979, when a production team of the BBC received an anonymous phone call, saying that they would see something interesting in this small village. On reaching Carrickmore, the IRA staged an event especially for the camera, showing that they control the village. A few armed men in balaclavas stopped four or five cars, checking their driving licenses. The IRA stayed in control of Carrickmore for three hours and pulled out after the *Panorama* film crew said that they had enough footage. The BBC was subsequently accused of arranging for IRA gunmen to take over an Ulster village for an afternoon of stunt, and of treasonable activity. The Opposition

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[28]. The details of this episode were confirmed in separate private conversations I had with Mr. Miki Gordus and Mr. Haim Yavin in June 1996. Mr. Yavin publicly confessed that when he appeared on Yair Lapid's talk show in February 1998 (Channel 3, Israel Cable TV), this was the most serious error of judgment he had ever made in thirty years of broadcasting. This event did not prevent Mr. Yavin - Israel's "Mr. Television" - from winning the Israel Prize for Journalism, the highest prize Israel awards its leaders in their respective fields.

[29]. Nick Russell, *Morals and the Media* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995), p. 83.

Leader, James Callaghan, said that "it is not the duty of the media to stage manage news, but to report it."[30] Finally, the BBC decided not to show the film.

Another similar incident took place the same year when the American embassy in Tehran was taken by the Iranians. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation filmed a mob demonstration. As soon as the cameras were on, the demonstrators began shouting "Death to Carter" and burned American flags. After two minutes, the cameramen signaled the end of the "take." Then the same episode was done once more for the French-speaking Canadians, with the crowd shouting "Mort a Carter."[31] Gideon Ezra, former deputy head of the Israeli Shabac (Internal Security Forces) said that during the Palestinian *Intifada* of 1987-1993, foreign reporters offered Palestinians money to initiate violence against Israeli forces: the tariff was $50 for stone-throwing; $100 for Molotov cocktails.[32]

When people are coerced into alarming situations, the media should accept the instructions of the authorities. Experienced personnel can be an important factor. In sensitive circumstances it is better to have senior reporters on the scene than eager, less experienced reporters who may act without adequate judgment as, for example, in the Hanafi crisis, where young highly motivated and ambitious reporters were involved, as described *supra.* Another incident of

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[30]. Richard Clutterbuck, *The Media and Political Violence* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 118.

[31]. A.P. Schmid, "Terrorism and the Media: The Ethics of Publicity," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (October 1989), p. 559.

[32]. Gideon Ezra's talk in Forum on Terror and the Media, Department of Communication,

immature and irresponsible behaviour involved a reporter during the Turkish embassy siege in Ottawa in 1985, who asked the Armenians occupying the embassy if they had any demands other than the vague ones announced to the media.[33] This half-witted question could have pushed the kidnappers to more violent acts and increased the drama in this highly tense crisis.[34] In this context it is important to note that The Radio and Television News Directors Association of Canada's Code of Ethics holds:

> Reporting of criminal activities, such as hostage takings, will be done in a fashion that does not knowingly endanger lives, hamper attempts by authorities to conclude the event, offer comfort and support or provide information to the perpetrator(s). RTNDA members will not contact either the victim(s) or the perpetrator(s) of a criminal activity during the course of the event, with the purpose of conducting an interview for broadcast.

University of Haifa (April 30, 1996).

33. See Ronald D. Crelinsten, "Victims' Perspectives," in David L. Paletz and Alex P. Schmid (eds.), *Terrorism and the Media* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992), p. 233.

34. For further deliberation and examples of irresponsible behaviour by the media, see Joseph Eliot Magnet, "Freedom of the Press and Terrorism," in R. Cohen-Almagor (ed.), *Liberal Democracy and the Limits of Tolerance* (Ann Arbour, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000): 200-214.

The Code maintains that "Broadcast journalists will always display respect for the dignity, privacy and well-being of everyone with whom they deal."[35]

In turn, Section IV (A) 9.2 of the CBC *Journalistic Standards and Practices* (1993) says:

> CBC journalists must ensure that any action they take will not further endanger the lives of the hostages or interfere with efforts of authorities to secure the hostages' release. They must guard against being used or manipulated by the terrorists / hostage takers.[36]

In the FLQ crisis, the irresponsible behaviour of some organs of the French media (especially the part played by two local radio stations) not only endangered the life of the two hostages but also contributed, to a certain extent, to the killing of one of them. The two French radio stations, CKLM and CKAC,

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35. The Radio Television News Directors Association of Canada Code of Ethics, revised in 1986. Nick Russell, *Morals and the Media*, o*p. cit.*, at 200; http: / / www.crtc.gc.ca, http: / / www.screen.com / mnet / eng / issues / violence / LEGISLAT / code1.htm and http: / / www.cbsc.ca

36. CBC *Journalistic Standards and Practices* (1993) p. 62. See also Article Ten of the Radio Television News Directors Association of Canada Code of Ethics, which holds: Reporting of criminal activities, such as hostage-takings, will be done in a fashion that does not knowingly endanger lives, hamper attempts by authorities to conclude the event, offer comfort, and support or provide vital information, to the perpetrator(s). Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) members will not contact either victim(s) or perpetrator(s) of a criminal activity during the course of the event, with the purpose of conducting an interview. See http: / / www.crtc.gc.ca and http: / / www.cbsc.ca

played a significant role because at that period of time Canadians tended to prefer radio in an emergency news crisis. They felt that a radio broadcast was easier to cut into with a news flash than in a TV programme. One of the findings of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media was that radio "is generally 'background' in most homes, it is more likely that a bulletin on radio would be received than if it were televised."[37]

Furthermore, as the recently released documents of the Canadian government reveal, the Quebec French media did not adequately reflect the views of the Ottawa government but presented the terrorists' views in a sympathetic, cooperative manner. It will be argued that while the English-language newspapers perceived Canadian unity as a major objective in evaluating the developments during the crisis, some organs of the French media helped the FLQ terrorists by supporting their separatist inclinations. Furthermore, the French papers on the whole were concerned in the main with the impact of the crisis on Quebec without giving much consideration to the ethical aspects involved in dealing with a terrorist incident.

III. The FLQ Crisis of October 1970

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[37]. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Good, Bad or Simply Inevitable?* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. III, p. 43. See also W. Brian Stewart, "The Canadian Social System and the Canadian Broadcasting Audience," in Benjamin D. Singer (ed.), *Communications in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pub., 1975), pp. esp. pp. 56-64, 66-70.

Philip Schlesinger has noted that the media generally reflect their government's perspectives when covering terrorism, and that perspectives that conflict with the government's views are rarely carried.[38] Robert Picard argues that journalists also amplify the rhetoric of government officials and leaders of other institutions targeted in or responding to political violence.[39] However, the FLQ crisis exhibits a totally different pattern of behaviour on the part of the media. Unlike other media events that reported acts of terror, some organs of the Quebec French media did not aim to reinforce the existing order in the face of the FLQ challenge. Instead of amplifying the government's argumentation, they served the interests of the terrorists. Their activities outraged the Canadian government and did not help to mitigate the tension. On the contrary: the behaviour of some organs of the French media exacerbated the crisis and forced the government to contemplate possible procedures for monitoring the media. There was a genuine feeling that large segments of the Quebec French media helped mobilize public support for the terrorists' ends. Indeed, it could be argued that their conduct in this affair was arguably a model for teaching us how the media should **not** behave during a time of crisis.

To better understand the behaviour of the media, some introductory contextualization of the crisis is useful. French Canadians (Quebecois)

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[38]. Quoted in Robert G. Picard, "News Coverage as the Contagion of Terrorism," in A. Odasuo Alali and Kenoye Kelvin Eke (eds.), *Media Coverage of Terrorism*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[39]. Robert G. Picard, "The Journalist's Role in Coverage of Terrorist Events," in A. Odasuo Alali and Kenoye Kelvin Eke (eds.), *Media Coverage of Terrorism*, p. 43.

constituted 28 percent of Canada's population, but 80 percent of Quebec's. The Quebecois have had a provincial government, roughly comparable to a state government in the U.S., since 1867. They have had the classical characteristics of a nation: sharing a common language, common culture, common history, and a geographical entity that is their homeland. The Quebecois have considered themselves a nation, and have had a well-developed national consciousness.[40]

The national struggle in Quebec has a very long history. Nationalist sentiment has constituted the core ideology of French Canadians for at least two centuries.[41] Since the late fifties, Canada like the rest of North America had been in the throes of a serious economic recession, and Quebec was particularly hard hit by its effects. Unemployment at that period affected as many as fifty percent of households in some small communities in the rural areas, compared to 18

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[40]. Arthur Young, *Quebec Nationalism: Its Roots and Meaning* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971), p. 4.

[41]. See Herbert F. Quinn, *The Union Nationale: A Study in Quebec Nationalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), esp. pp. 3-47; Dominique Clift, *Quebec Nationalism in Crisis* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982): 51-68; A. A. Barreto, *Language, Elites, and the State* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998): 97-101; Ramsay Cook, *Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), pp. 48-59; Rene Levesque, "Quebec Independence," and Peter Alexis Gourevitch, "Quebec Separatism in Comparative Perspective," both in Elliot J. Feldman and Neil Nevitte (eds.), *The Future of North America: Canada, the United States, and Quebec Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass., and Montreal: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, and Institute for Research on Public Policy, Montreal, 1979), pp. 61-70, 237-251. See also Malcolm Reid, *The Shouting Signpainters: A Literary and Political Account of Quebec Revolutionary Nationalism* (New York: Malcolm Reid, 1972).

percent in the metropolitan areas. The time was propitious for the appearance of a protest movement.[42] In the 1960s, there was a growing nationalist struggle that was combined with tendencies towards socialism, on the one hand, and separatism, on the other. During that period, independent organizations of the Quebecois working class were developing. In their own province, French Canadians as a group occupied the lower rungs of the economic ladder. Their average incomes were lower, and unemployment remained a serious problem, with a much higher rate than that of the Anglo-Canadians, who controlled approximately 80 percent of Quebec industry. There were very few French-speaking people heading large corporations. The Quebecois tended to blame their economic and social ills on the Anglo-Canadians, and many saw separation from English Canada and independence for Quebec as the solution to their problems.[43]

Many Quebecois saw the language policy in their province during the 1960s as a profound form of discrimination and oppression. All offices functioned in English. Citizens had to speak English in order to be served in

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42. Maurice Pinard, *The Rise of a Third Party: A Study in Crisis Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 5, 102.

43. Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970*, A report prepared for Department of State and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (Santa Monica, CA.: Rand, February 1977), p. 1. See also Maurice Pinard, "The Dramatic Reemergence of the Quebec Independence Movement," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Winter 1992): 471-497; Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), esp. pp. 30-51.

many of the stores. The federal government conducted all its meetings and functions in English only. Even to be a policeman in Quebec, one had to speak English. It was more advantageous in terms of economic opportunity to be a unilingual anglophone than to be a bilingual francophone, and many francophones could not use French in the ordinary course of their work.[44] Yet, at the same period of time, a quiet revolution was taking place in an attempt to change the norms and to shape history in a way that would better represent the French interests in Quebec. At the ideological level, this revolution constituted the long-avoided reconciliation with social and economic development. Traditionalism was abandoned. Social and economic development was openly welcomed. The spirit of independence and enquiry that was frozen for over a century reappeared, making the Quebecois realize that they possessed the power to change their society.[45] At a practical level, the government in Quebec had assumed many, if not most, of the powers associated with an independent state. While it lacked actual independence, the government had the capacity for it. For the first time, a strong government had emerged, concentrating within itself the expectations of the French-speaking population and subsequently assuming the

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44. Joseph H. Carens, "Immigration, Political Community, and the Transformation of Identity: Quebec's Immigration Policies in Critical Perspective," in J.H. Carens (ed.), *Is Quebec Nationalism Just? Perspectives from Anglophone Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), p. 44; Arthur Young, *Quebec Nationalism: Its Roots and Meaning, op. cit.*, p. 10.

45. Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988, 3rd ed.), pp. 129-130.

task of inspiring and promoting nationalist sentiment. This was a highly significant development.[46]

Of all the attempts made to bring Quebec outside the main stream of North America, the most problematic and violent was that of *le Front de liberation de Quebec* (FLQ). The FLQ was a small revolutionary organization that aimed to separate Quebec from Canada through violence and terror. Its members were influenced by the writings of Carlos Marighella and, in particular, by his book *Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla.*[47] Marighella recommended the formation of groups consisting of no more than four or five persons in order to reduce to a minimum the risks of penetration and betrayal. The FLQ organized its ranks accordingly.[48]

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[46]. Dominique Clift, *Quebec Nationalism in Crisis, op. cit.,* pp. 18-34, 88. For further reading on the Quiet Revolution see A. A. Barreto, *Language, Elites, and the State, op. cit.,* pp. 101-105; Michael D. Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-nationalism, 1945-1960* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985); Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis, op. cit.,* pp. 131-143, 209-211; Ramsay Cook, *Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism, op. cit.,* pp. 60-86; David R. Cameron, *Nationalism, Self-Determination and the Quebec Question* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 115-120, 132-141.

[47]. Carlos Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla* (Havana: Tricontinental, 1970).

[48]. Special Committee of the Security Panel, R.C.M.P. submission re Police Strategy in Relation to the FLQ (November 20, 1970), p. 3 (classified "Secret"). For further details about the FLQ, its founders, structure, history, objectives, and terrorist activities see Gerard Pelletier, *The October Crisis* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), pp. 53-59, 197-247, and Gustave Morf, *Terror in Quebec* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1970), pp. 1-151.

During the 1960s, the FLQ concentrated on bombings, holdups, and thefts of arms, with few victims and little property damage. While public opinion was vocal in its condemnation of violence, it nevertheless rejoiced in the political effect it seemed to have on the use of the French language in business and industry, and on the sharing of power and responsibilities between Quebec and Ottawa.[49] However, the shape of events took a dramatic twist in October 1970. The FLQ crisis, known also as the Cross-Laporte affair, was the most serious terrorist crisis in the second half of the 20th century in Canada.

The crisis began on Monday, October 5, 1970, when James Cross, the British consul in Montreal, was kidnapped by a group of seven individuals who called themselves the Liberation Cell of the FLQ. Within a matter of a few hours, the kidnappers, in an anonymous call to radio station CKAC in Montreal,[50] claimed credit for the abduction and subsequently issued a Communiqué that enumerated seven specific demands and was accompanied by a political manifesto of several pages. The demands were: (1) the cessation of all police

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[49]. Dominique Clift, *Quebec Nationalism in Crisis, op. cit.,* p. 94.

[50]. CKAC, part of the Telemedia (Quebec) Ltd. Group, historically has had a large French audience. It received a larger audience during the crisis time. According to the Davey Report, its audience was more than 264,000 people. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Words, Music and Dollars* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. II, pp. 109, 512. Also E-mail correspondence with Professor Conrad Winn, Chairman, "Compas," and Department of Political Science, Carleton University (December 11, 1999), and with Mr. Ronald Cohen, National Chair, Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (December 10, 1999), as well as a phone conversation with Mr. Michel Roy, President, Conseil de Press du Quebec (December 13, 1999).

activities; (2) the publication of the FLQ manifesto in Quebec newspapers and its broadcast on national radio and television; (3) the liberation of 23 individuals described as "political prisoners"; (4) their transport to Cuba or Algeria; (5) the reintegration in the ranks of the Canadian Postal Service of the strikers; (6) a "voluntary" income tax of $500,000 to be paid to the prisoners; (7) the name and picture of the individual who had recently helped the police apprehend members of another FLQ cell. A time limit of 48 hours was specified to meet these demands.[51]

Hostage taking is one of the most spectacular terrorist phenomena. It has been called smart terrorism because the terrorists involved maintain control over the situation, gain media attention for their cause over a sustained period of time, and force the government to recognize them in the course of negotiations to free the hostage person/s. In effect, argue Margaret Hermann and Charles Hermann, the leadership of the terrorist group taking the hostages becomes the puppet master, pulling the strings of the concerned government. The aims of the terrorist organization are to gain maximum press and television coverage for

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[51]. Daniel LaTouche, "Mass Media and Communication in a Canadian Political Crisis," in Benjamin D. Singer (ed.), *Communications in Canadian Society* (Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley Publishers, 1983), pp. 197-198. See also Hall Winter, Paul Waters and Eddie Collister: "U.K. envoy's life hangs on seven FLQ demands," *Montreal Gazette* (October 6, 1970), by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ]. Http://members.xoom.com/_XMCM/history_1/his951/docs/october/index.htm

their cause and themselves and to increase their bargaining power for the next round.[52]

On October 6, the Liberation Cell issued two further Communiqués. A letter from James Cross to his wife was delivered through radio station CKAC, calling upon the media to make all Communiqués public and to break "the wall of silence that the fascist police have erected around the liberation operation."[53] Robert Lemieux, a Montreal lawyer who was sympathetic to the FLQ and who represented many of the FLQ members, complained to the press that the authorities were not allowing him to see some of his jailed clients who were on the list of 23 prisoners to be freed.[54]

The following day the newspapers printed texts of the kidnappers' Communiqués. This signaled a flood of Communiqués containing specific demands, political objectives and ideological propaganda. On the same day, radio station CKAC broadcast the complete text of the manifesto live. Secretary of State Pelletier expressed the opinion in a closed Cabinet meeting that publication of the manifesto in itself would do little harm. The document was of an extreme nature, a fact that would be quite evident to listeners. However, there remained the question of the direction to be given the CBC in this regard, as this

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52. Margaret G. Hermann and Charles F. Hermann, "Hostage Taking, the Presidency, and Stress," in Walter Reich (ed.), *Origins of Terrorism, op. cit.*, 211.

53. John Saywell, *Quebec 70* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 38; Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970, op. cit.*, p. 9.

54. *Ibid.* See also "Lawyer polls clients, trial delayed again," *Montreal Gazette* (October 8, 1970), by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ].

was clearly a matter for government decision.[55] Prime Minister Trudeau said that the language of the manifesto was of a highly scurrilous nature, raising the question whether the government should stop its publication. He thought it was better to defer any decision on the matter until the situation could be assessed more fully.[56] Later in the afternoon, the Cabinet agreed that the government itself must be responsible for the decision on whether or not to broadcast the FLQ manifesto, and that the CBC should be informed that "the matter was an element of a situation which should be regarded as a national emergency," with the consequence that the CBC should take no action with regard to broadcasting the manifesto unless and until directed by the government to do so.

The FLQ manifesto stated that "The Front de Liberation du Quebec wants the total independence of Quebeckers, united in a free society, purged forever of the clique of voracious sharks, the patronizing 'big bosses' and their henchmen who have made Quebec their hunting preserve for 'cheap labor' and unscrupulous exploitation". It maintained, "We are terrorized by the closed circles of science and culture which are the universities and by their monkey directors," calling upon "production workers, miners, foresters, teachers, students and unemployed workers" to "take what belongs to you: your jobs, your determination and your liberty."[57]

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[55]. Cabinet Minutes (October 7, 1970), p. 3 (classified "Secret") (No. 58-70).

[56]. *Ibid.*

[57]. Ron Haggart and Aubrey E. Golden, *Rumours of War* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1979), Appendix A, pp. 277-281. Alternatively, Gerard Pelletier, *The October Crisis, op. cit.,* pp. 59-67.

Some of the newspapers in Quebec saw no difficulty identifying with these goals. *Quebec-Presse* was a weekly, leftist paper, located in Montreal and supported by the major trade unions in the province of Quebec. It did not enjoy large circulation among the French Canadians but was well read by students, intellectuals and leftists. Mr. Michel Roy, President of Conseil de Press du Quebec, estimates that its circulation was around 30-40,000 copies, maybe more, during the time of the crisis.[58] The *Quebec-Presse*'s declaration of principles holds the paper as the people's response to "the domination of the press by cultural, political or economic dictatorship or by the private interests that support such a dictatorship." It maintained that the paper is entirely independent of "the capitalist forces dominating society, and it intends to act in concert with the aspirations of the people and their organizations."[59]

Quebec-Presse published the manifesto of the FLQ several months before the outbreak of the October crisis, in June 1970. In October 1970, it gave editorial support to the FLQ's analysis, adding that *Quebec-Presse* saw itself as carrying out the same struggle - for the liberation of Quebec - but by other means, namely through information. In a special editorial, the *Quebec-Presse* wrote:

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[58]. Phone conversation with Mr. Michel Roy (December 13, 1999). Professor Marc Raboy, Department de Communication, Universite de Montreal, estimated its circulation was about 30,000 (personal communication on January 18, 2000). Guy Caron, assistant-coordinator of the Réseau Éducation-Médias / Media Awareness Network, informed me that *Quebec-Presse* died in the second half of the 1970's. Personal communication on January 12, 2000.

[59]. Marc Raboy, *Movements and Messages* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1984), p. 59.

> The same authorities denounced by the FLQ took it upon themselves to speak for the majority and condemn this week's terrorist acts. That doesn't mean much in itself... The only argument that counts is the one the people make. The FLQ knew how to speak to them as never before. The FLQ's actions have been a kind of crash course in politicization by total immersion... The FLQ reached its main goal: to speak to the world in its own words. And to make the Quebecois aware of their own situation.[60]

The Montreal daily, *Le Devoir,* an elite newspaper for intellectuals that was described as "the best written newspaper in Canada,"[61] soon became a key protagonist in the crisis, suggesting that the government negotiate "in good faith" with the FLQ to ensure the safe release of the hostages. It should be noted that although *Le Devoir* has had a small circulation (Michel Roy estimates that its daily circulation was between 38-42,000 copies, and that the circulation went up by a few thousand during the October crisis),[62] its influence was always far greater than its numbers because political and media leaders always read it. The French intellectuals who supported the separatist movement primarily read this

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[60]. Marc Raboy, *Movements and Messages, Ibid.*, p. 67.

[61]. W.H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 94.

[62]. According to the Davey Report, *Le Devoir*'s circulation was 39,916. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Words, Music and Dollars* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. II, p. 511. See also John Porter, "The Ideological System: The Mass Media," in Benjamin D. Singer (ed.), *Communications in Canadian Society, op. cit.*, pp. 167-168.

newspaper and also contributed to it.[63] The editor-in-chief and publisher of *Le Devoir,* Claude Ryan, organized and led a movement in support of a negotiated settlement.[64] Later, after he left the paper, Ryan became leader of the Quebec Liberal Party.

The members of the Liberation Cell were well aware of the power of the media and of the political views of the senior people who ran the affairs. They used the media, releasing Communiqués once to CKAC, another time to the rival radio station, CKLM[65]; both were happy to receive the messages and to broadcast them. Both stations were eager to participate in this game and quite happy to provide the terrorists open channels of communication. The fourth Communiqué, issued on October 7, was addressed to CKLM reporter Pierre

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[63]. E-mail correspondence with Mr. Ronald Cohen (December 10, 1999); Professor Conrad Winn (December 11, 1999); Professor Bob Rupert, Department of Communication, Carleton University (December 12, 1999), as well as a phone conversation with Mr. Michel Roy (December 13, 1999).

[64]. Daniel LaTouche, "Mass Media and Communication in a Canadian Political Crisis," *op. cit.,* p. 201; Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," in Marc Raboy and Bernard Dagenais (eds.), *Media, Crisis and Democracy* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 126.

[65]. CKLM, like CKAC, was a Montreal based private radio station, owned by the Quebec City media company Tele-Capitale, that appealed to French audience. According to the Davey Report, its audience was more than 151,000 people. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Words, Music and Dollars* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. II, p. 512. Because it was well informed about the happenings, the station received a larger audience during the crisis time. E-mail correspondence with Professor Conrad Winn (December 11, 1999) and Professor Mike Gasher, Dept. of Journalism, Concordia University (January 18, 2000), as well as a phone conversation with Mr. Michel Roy (December 13, 1999).

Pascau. The reporters were cooperative to the extent that when the terrorists released their sixth Communiqué in which they set down their detailed demands, they also named two reporters, one working for CKLM, the other for CKAC, as observers to assure that everything would go smoothly.[66] The two radio stations had become active agents of the news. Reporters became the trustees of terrorists, taking part in the negotiation process.

Crelinsten argues that the Liberation Cell won the battle over the means of communication in which the authorities blocked publication of the FLQ Communiqués by sending duplicates to the media. After two and a half days of futile attempts, the government tried to stall and, instead of suppressing Communiqués as they had done previously, officials tried to draw the kidnappers away from their use of the media and towards direct and secret negotiations. At the same time, federal officials tried to delay broadcast or publication of the manifesto as long as possible, even to the point of phoning newspaper publishers directly to request that they refrain from publishing the text. However, the redundancy created by the terrorists' provision of multiple copies to the media ultimately undermined these attempts.[67]

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66. R.D. Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning: Terrorism as a Struggle over Access to the Communication Structure," in Paul Wilkinson and Alasdair M. Stewart (eds.), *Contemporary Research on Terrorism* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989): 424-429.

67. See Ronald D. Crelinsten, "The Internal Dynamics of the FLQ During the October Crisis of 1970," in David C. Rapoport (ed.), *Inside Terrorist Organizations, op. cit.*, p. 79.

On Thursday, October 8, the CBC decided to accept the FLQ's demand to broadcast its manifesto "for humanitarian reasons."[68] Even so, the CBC was careful to ensure that the broadcast was presented in an appropriate format and issued instructions that the FLQ manifesto should be read as a "communication" rather than as a news item. It was to be read by an announcer rather than by a CBC reporter or commentator.[69] Over Radio-Canada, announcer Gaetan Montreuil sat in front of a TV camera and for 13 minutes read in a dull, flat monotone voice the manifesto of the Front de Liberation du Quebec. Because the broadcast was carried in French and few English-language newspapers carried the full text, it was argued that not many English-speaking Canadians appreciated the enormity of the government's concession.[70] Mitchell Sharp, who as external affairs minister was responsible for the safety of Cross, approved the CBC broadcast without requesting the permission of Prime Minister Trudeau, who was outraged, thinking that what the CBC did was giving way to blackmail.[71]

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[68]. Gustave Morf, *Terror in Quebec, op. cit.,* p. 165.

[69]. "CBC, government made decision," *Montreal Gazette* (October 9, 1970) p. 10, by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ].

[70]. John Saywell, *Quebec 70 , op. cit.,* p. 46; Ron Haggart and Aubrey E. Golden, *Rumours of War, op. cit.,* p. 11.

[71]. Minutes of the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence (October 9, 1970), p. 1 (classified as "secret"). See also Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), p. 397.

The public reaction to hearing the manifesto on Radio-Canada was remarkably sympathetic. Although most people condemned the kidnapping, more than fifty percent of callers to the radio stations talk shows were in favour of the spirit of the manifesto.[72]

On October 9, the FLQ manifesto was published in the newspapers. One paper devoted its entire front page to the text, and several papers introduced the text with warnings about its contents, dissociating the paper from the message or justifying its publication as a humanitarian gesture aimed at saving the life of Mr. Cross. In addition, the practice of publishing the Communiqués continued, and the full text of the fifth Communiqué appeared in all the papers.[73] A *Le Devoir* editorial, signed by Claude Ryan, said a number of jailed terrorists might be released to save Mr. Cross' life.[74] Communiqué No. 6, addressed to Pierre Pascau of CKLM went astray and was sent again at 6 p.m., along with a later

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[72]. R.D. Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning: Terrorism as a Struggle over Access to the Communication Structure," *op. cit.,* p. 429. Indeed, the public expressed positive sentiments to the FLQ throughout the crisis. . See also Ann Charney, "Kidnappers won emotional support," *Toronto Star* (October 17, 1970), p. 9, by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ].

[73]. R.D. Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning: Terrorism as a Struggle over Access to the Communication Structure," *op. cit.,* p. 428.

[74]. Arthur Siegel, *Canadian Newspaper Coverage of the F.L.Q. Crisis: A Study on the Impact of the Press on Politics*, Doctoral Thesis, McGill University (1974), p. 259.

message (No. 7), accusing the authorities of trying to gain time by not releasing the earlier Communiqué.[75]

The crisis escalated on October 10, when Pierre Laporte, Quebec Minister of Labour and Immigration and Deputy Premier, was kidnapped by four people who identified themselves as members of the Chenier Cell whose ends were very similar to those of the Liberation Cell.[76] The media were bombarded with Communiqués issued by both Cells and reported them. The role of the French media, which persisted in disseminating rumours, and which published the terrorists' Communiqués before handing them over to the police, troubled the government in Ottawa. Crelinsten reports that government officials were particularly angered over the role played by CKLM and CKAC in providing easy access and free publicity to the terrorists. The officials also felt that the French radio stations impeded the establishment of direct negotiations between the government and the kidnappers.[77] It seemed that the radio reporters were happy to take upon themselves a very subjective political role.

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[75]. John Saywell, *Quebec 70, op. cit.,* p. 52; Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970, op. cit.,* p. 12. See also Paul Waters, "Cross reprieve to 6 P.M., letter proves he's alive," *Montreal Gazette* (October 10, 1970), p. 1, by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ].

[76]. Laporte was a French-Canadian, but apparently he was seen as a representative of the Francophone dominant class whose interests were perceived as significantly different from those of the French working class people. See Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis, op. cit.*, p. 200.

[77]. R.D. Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning: Terrorism as a Struggle over Access to the

From its first Communiqué, the FLQ specified that it wanted the media to be associated with its action. Without the media their act would become an isolated episode of an insignificant gang. They instructed that their political manifesto must appear in its entirety on the front page of all major Quebec newspapers. They also specified that upon their release from prison, the political prisoners be accompanied by at least two political columnists from two of Quebec's French-language dailies. They made the kidnapping a prolonged media event that lasted for weeks and months. Indeed, hostage situations are full of suspense because human life hangs in the balance and the whole society, sometimes the world, is watching and praying for a peaceful resolution. The journalists were accused of manipulating information to further a cause that they approved.[78]

Early on Sunday, October 11, Daniel McGinnis of CKAC was informed of an envelope near a subway station. This was Communiqué No. 1 from the Chenier Cell, accompanied by Laporte's National Assembly identification card, demanding that all seven demands of the Liberation Cell be met in full. Later in the afternoon, CKAC received Communiqué No. 2, claiming to be its last, from the Chenier Cell. However, four hours later, CKAC had another Communiqué

Communication Structure," *op. cit.*, p. 432.

[78]. Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," *op. cit.*, p. 124. See also Yvon Laplante, "Le rire d'Octobre: le discours des caricaturistes sur les evenements d'Octobre 1970," *Conflicts contemporains et medias* (Montreal, XYZ editeur, 1997): 113-121; Bernard Dagenais, *La crise d'octobre et les medias: le miroir a dix faces* (Montreal: VLB editeur, 1990).

from the Chenier Cell containing Laporte's credit cards and a letter from Laporte to Premier Bourassa. At 9:55 p.m., five minutes before the deadline set by Laporte's abductors, Bourassa broadcast an appeal to the FLQ for negotiation mechanisms and for some assurance that the release of political prisoners would result in the release of the hostages. A few hours after the Premier's address, the kidnappers sent another note this time to CKLM reiterating their demands and suggesting Robert Lemieux as intermediary between the two cells and the authorities.[79]

The same day, October 11, *Quebec-Presse* published a pertinent editorial. Some of the striking paragraphs deserve to be quoted at length:

> To our way of thinking the shattering diagnosis attributed to the sickness in Quebec by the Front de liberation du Quebec (FLQ) is well-founded and correct… Clandestine action is chosen for tactical reasons: when and in what circumstances is terrorist action justified? This much is certain, it is not up to those in power to pass judgment. The winners of the last election… are not in a position to teach anyone any moral, political or social lessons. The fact that the spokesmen of an establishment, which has been denounced by the FLQ, take it upon themselves to speak on behalf of the majority and to condemn terrorist action this week proves nothing… The only valid judgment possible can come from the people. In one week the FLQ has

[79]. Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970, op. cit.,* pp. 14-15.

> succeeded in talking to the people as never before. The FLQ's action has been a little like a course in political instruction by total immersion. A kind of political Berlitz. So the FLQ has achieved one main aim: namely, to speak in its own words to the world. And to keep the minds of the people of Quebec on their own situation. As far as we are concerned – agreeing as we do with the FLQ's aims without approving the methods – we reckon that the struggle for the liberation of Quebec is a basic requirement. This aim is incorporated in *Quebec-Presse*'s declaration of principles.[80]

Monday, October 12, the papers were full of FLQ Communiqués. Communiqué No. 8 of the Cross-kidnappers was received by CKLM. The Chenier Cell informed CKAC of a letter sent by Laporte. Later that afternoon, the Chenier Cell summarized the situation in a communiqué and sent it to Pierre Pascau of CKLM.[81] Two parliamentary correspondents reported that Ottawa was troubled by the lack of public outrage over both the kidnapping and the role played by the French media. While the people in Quebec spoke of the need for dialogue, the government in Ottawa distanced itself from the discussions and resorted to a display of military strength.[82]

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[80]. Editorial, "Le FLQ et nous," *Quebec-Presse* (October 11, 1970), quoted in John Saywell, *Quebec 70, op. cit.,* pp. 61-62.

[81]. John Saywell, *Quebec 70,* pp. 65-68.

[82]. See Ronald D. Crelinsten, "The Internal Dynamics of the FLQ During the October Crisis of 1970," in David C. Rapoport (ed.), *Inside Terrorist Organizations, op. cit.,* p. 63; R.D. Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning: Terrorism as a Struggle over Access to the Communication Structure," *op.*

On October 13, all the papers focused their front-page coverage of the FLQ crisis on the beginning of negotiations between the Quebec government and the kidnappers' representative, Robert Lemieux. In Ottawa, Prime Minister Trudeau took advantage of Question Period in the House of Commons to attack the media for giving the FLQ the very publicity that it was seeking. He further argued that it was a mistake to encourage the use of the term "political prisoners" for men who are bandits.[83]

On October 14, the two cells of the FLQ issued a joint Communiqué through Pierre Pascau of CKLM.[84] In the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence convened that day, Prime Minister Trudeau expressed worries that the crisis might result in the creation of a separatist popular movement. To prevent such a development, he thought it would be necessary for the government to act quickly, and that such action "might have to include rigid control of the mass media and strong counter-propaganda action by the

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cit., pp. 432-433.

83. *Debates of the House of Commons*, 3rd Session, 28th Parliament (1970), Vol. I, p. 52; "PM Urges Press 'Show Restraint'," *Ottawa Journal, Ont.* (October 13, 1970), by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ]. See also Trudeau's interview on October 13, 1970 at http://members.xoom.com/_XMCM/history_1/his951/docs/october/watchme.htm

84. Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970, op. cit.*, p. 17; John Saywell, *Quebec 70 , op. cit.*, p. 75.

government".[85] Minister of Justice Turner spoke of the need for voluntary cooperation of station owners to ensure that broadcasters would act in a more responsible manner than they had thus far. Turner maintained that if Quebec could demonstrate the need for unusual short-term police action, this cooperation would be forthcoming from the media, provided it stopped short of the suspension of fair comment. Turner said, "it was of the utmost importance that the government retain public support."[86] The Committee spoke of the need to secure the cooperation of press media in publicizing the Prime Minister's statements, and in ensuring responsible reporting of events.[87]

The police went public to deplore the attitude of the press in this affair (*Le Devoir,* October 14, 1970), stating that by publishing all sorts of rumours without verifying their authenticity and harassing headquarters with questions, the journalists were doing considerable harm to the police efforts. The police called upon the press to show a greater concern for accuracy.

Besides broadcasting the messages before the police were even aware of them, and meddling with the hard copy Communiqués to the point of blurring all significant fingerprints, the reporters were accused of frequently broadcasting news that led only to confusion and sensational competition.[88] G. Constantineau,

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[85]. Minutes, Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence (October 14, 1970, Morning Meeting), p. 3 (classified "secret").

[86]. *Ibid.*

[87]. *Ibid.,* p. 6.

[88]. *Le Journal de Montreal* (October 14, 1970), quoted in Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," *op. cit.,* pp. 127-128.

commentator for *Le Devoir,* wrote that the radio stations, particularly the "FLQ mailboxes" CKLM and CKAC, had become involuntary participants in the affair and that journalism had become an active agent of the news instead of its passive purveyor.[89]

In his editorial of October 14, 1970, Roger Bruneau of *L'Action*[90] wrote:

> In our opinion, many news items were communicated a little too rapidly on the weekend by radio and television throughout the province. Several of these news items, some more sensational than others, were later proven to be either false, incomplete, or premature. The rapidity with which they were communicated, the context in which they were communicated... created quite a troubling atmosphere under the circumstances and contributed to increasing the state of excitement into which the population felt it was plunged.[91]

That same day, the editor-in-chief and publisher of *Le Devoir,* Claude Ryan, together with a group of respected Quebec citizens including the leader of the separatist Parti Quebecois Rene Levesque, signed a statement urging the government to comply with the demands of the FLQ.[92] The government in

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89. *Le Devoir* (October 14, 1970), p. 2, quoted in R.D. Crelinsten, "Power and Meaning: Terrorism as a Struggle over Access to the Communication Structure," *op. cit.,* p. 435.

90. A small Quebec paper with circulation of 30,000 copies. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Words, Music and Dollars* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. II, p. 513.

91. Quoted in Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," *op. cit.,* pp. 128-129.

92. *Le Devoir* (October 15, 1970), p. 1.

Ottawa met again on October 14 and discussed at length the media's role in the crisis. Mr. J. Davey, Program Secretary to the Prime Minister, reviewed a memorandum dealing with the role of communications. He said that Communiqués from and speculation about the FLQ had dominated the media and there was a need to ensure adequate provision of information from well-briefed ministers and from senior authorized personnel. Planning for communications was also aimed at obtaining from the media a degree of self-discipline in their reporting during the crisis.[93]

Marc Lalonde, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, noted that the press in Montreal appeared not to want to raise the pressure for further manifestations.[94] Prime Minister Trudeau said that the actions of the media generally had been "quite irresponsible," and had contributed significantly to an escalation of the crisis by giving the FLQ the status of a parallel government. It was therefore incumbent upon the government to consider what action might be taken to foster a more responsible attitude.[95] In turn, Minister of Justice Turner said that the government should avoid threatening the mass media in any way.

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93. Minutes, Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence (October 14, 1970, Evening Meeting), p. 8 (classified "secret"). On media speculation see, for instance, Richard Jackson, "'Nobody's Informed Me' – Trudeau. PM, Bourassa, Drapeau Marked for Assassination?," *Ottawa Journal* (October 7, 1970), by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ].

94. Minutes, Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence (October 14, 1970, Evening Meeting), p. 8 (classified "secret").

95. *Ibid.*

If the government were to introduce restrictive legislation, it would be essential to have the support of the media as well as that of the public. He suggested trying to obtain the media's agreement to exercise voluntary restraint in their reporting of news relating to the crisis.[96]

The terrorists did not exploit the media, but rather used them to gain public attention to their ends and popular support in Quebec for separatism. The term "exploitation" is inappropriate to describe the behaviour of media organs that willingly accepted the terrorists terms and demands, and seemed quite happy to cooperate. The FLQ created a situation saturated with anxieties that was favourable for their strategic aims. The kidnapping demonstrated that the authorities were not in control and exacerbated the ongoing social conflict, polarized the groups in tension, and probably also sought to pull political militants across the threshold of using violence. This is a well-known strategy of terrorism around the world.[97] Some organs of the French media were happy to be used to the point that later they were accused of cooperating with the terrorists. The editor of the popular (daily circulation of more than 200,000 copies)[98] Montreal weekly *Le Petit Journal* wrote: "I believe that the unrestrained freedom of the press led little by little to the death of a Quebec minister"

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96. *Ibid.*

97. See Robin P.J.M. Gerrits, "Terrorists' Perspectives: Memoirs," in David L. Paletz and Alex P. Schmid (eds.), *Terrorism and the Media, op. cit.*, p. 42.

98. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Words, Music and Dollars* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. II, p. 83; Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Good, Bad or Simply Inevitable?* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. III, p. 240.

(October 25, 1970).[99] A great number of attacks were made on the press after the crisis, suggesting that the media were irresponsible in the way they amplified rumours during a time of severe threat.[100]

The French papers had about 40 percent more picture space coverage than the English dailies, aiming to sensationalize the story. The French press editorial space coverage was far more extensive in comparison to the English press editorials, tending to put virtually all stories dealing with the FLQ negotiations on page one. In the editorial columns, negotiation was the most strongly pressed matter and the main thrust, especially of *Le Devoir*. In comparison with the English press, the French press had more stories related to the FLQ's communiqués. This policy was designed to pressure the government towards a compromise approach to resolving the crisis.[101] The French media thought that their sympathetic viewpoint represented the view of large sectors of Quebec. An opinion was heard that "journalists agree that 50 per cent of the people of Quebec sympathize with the aims of the FLQ."[102] Indeed, while the public condemned the kidnapping, many identified with their goals. As the crisis

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[99]. Quoted in Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," *op. cit.,* p. 129. *Le Petit Journal* does no longer exist.

[100]. Daniel LaTouche, "Mass Media and Communication in a Canadian Political Crisis," in Benjamin D. Singer (ed.), *Communications in Canadian Society, op. cit.,* p. 202.

[101]. Arthur Siegel, *Canadian Newspaper Coverage of the F.L.Q. Crisis: A Study on the Impact of the Press on Politics , op. cit.,* pp. 73-77, 84, 169.

[102]. Ron Haggart and Aubrey E. Golden, *Rumours of War, op. cit.,* p. 32.

continued, public support for the FLQ's cause continued to grow. Ottawa feared that things were going out of control.

On October 15, the Cabinet gathered; it agreed that in view of the existing situation, the government had no alternative but to declare an emergency, to give the abductors an ultimatum for the release of Cross and Laporte, to begin arresting FLQ members, and to invite the media privately to meet with the Secretary of State, who would order them to refrain from giving publicity to those advocating violence in Quebec.[103]

At four o'clock in the morning of October 16, 1970, the government invoked the War Measures Act. Immediately afterwards a massive arrest operation began. The following day, his kidnappers killed Pierre Laporte apparently after he tried to escape.[104] Only then did the media suddenly become very cautious, and the issue of censorship became a focus of intense debate in the ensuing weeks. Bernard Dagenais, a communications professor at Laval University and a specialist on the October crisis, said that the French media

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[103]. Record of Cabinet decision, The F.L.Q. situation (Meeting of October 15, 1970, 2:30 p.m.) (classified "Confidential"); Cabinet Minutes of the meeting on October 15, 1970, p. 9 (classified "secret") (No. 61-70).

[104]. Minutes of Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence (October 30, 1970), p. 2 (classified "secret"); Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970*, *op. cit.*, p. 32. See also Edward Cowan, "Quebec police find house where Laporte was held," *N. Y. Times* (October 20, 1970). The killing of Laporte was the second political murder in the history of Canada, the only one since a Fenian shot down Thomas D'Arcy McGee on the streets of Ottawa in the first year of Canadian nationhood, 102 years before.

sided with the FLQ until Laporte's murder, whereas the English language media were less interested. Dagenais maintained that Laporte's murder was a cold shower for the media, and from that point they started to support the government. The media went from being a leader in the crisis to following the government line.[105]

Several members of the Quebec national assembly and government ministers criticized the media sharply. The Liberal Party whip, Louis-Philippe Lacroix, accused the journalists of being responsible for the death of Pierre Laporte; he labeled them the gravediggers of democracy. Legislative member Henri Coiteux called reporters "a gang of parasites, failures, pseudo-intellectuals."[106] Cultural Affairs Minister Francois Cloutier stated that there had clearly been abuse of freedom of the press. For him, the FLQ's use of the radio stations exceeded the normal rules of liberty in a democracy. Premier Bourassa said there was a need to examine, after the event, the limitless freedom of expression that Quebec enjoyed.[107]

The Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence met on the evening of October 16. Secretary of State Pelletier said he had discussed the desirability of exercising voluntary restraint in reporting events related to the crisis with most of the owners of broadcast networks. They had been very cooperative but unable to establish firm and consistent control within their own networks.

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[105]. Chris Cobb, "Looking back at the FLQ crisis," *Ottawa Citizen* (October 7, 1995), p. B4.

[106]. *Ibid.*

[107]. Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," *op. cit.*, p. 128.

Several owners of the media had expressed the fear that, without further legal sanctions, any restraints would result in a series of strikes by broadcast employees whose unions were Separatist-oriented. Mr. Pelletier said he had discussed ways of achieving restraint regulation with the Chairman of the Canadian Radio Television Commission (CRTC). However, both concluded that such action would lead to accusations of censorship and should not be attempted.[108]

Several ministers expressed concern at the apparent readiness of persons in authority in the networks to make their facilities available to Separatists and FLQ supporters. Some suggested that the Broadcast Act might be amended to give the government power of direction in cases where it believed the mass media were being used to promote the disintegration of Canada and report its actions to Parliament. Prime Minister Trudeau suggested that the Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning might consider this in the context of the of National Unity priority problem.[109]

After the invocation of the War Measures Act by the federal cabinet, the police arrested 456 Quebec citizens. All but a handful were released without any

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[108]. Minutes of the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence (October 16, 1970), p. 2 (classified “secret”).

[109]. *Ibid.* For further deliberation on laws and regulations governing broadcasting see E.S. Hallman, *Broadcasting in Canada* (London: Routledge, 1977): 35-39.

charges being made.[110] This suggests that the police reaction was panicky rather than carefully calculated. The media operations, as described above, had a considerable role in creating this panic. CBC news reporters in Ottawa received a directive that they were to broadcast only stories that could be attributed to an identifiable source. Although on the surface this could be defended as an attempt to keep rumours off the air, its effect was to confine CBC news to official reports from the government or to the restrained comments the opposition parties were willing to make. CBC reporters were reminded in another directive that they were not to allow their names to be identified with political statements.[111]

On Saturday, October 17, the Liberation Cell sent out its tenth Communiqué along with a letter from Cross to his wife. The Chenier Cell contacted CKAC to announce that Pierre Laporte had been executed and directed the reporters to the location of his body.[112]

The English-Canadian press gave cautious approval to the invocation of the War Measures Act. Most editorial writers were concerned about the suspension of civil liberties. The Toronto *Telegram* (October 16) saw it as "a

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[110]. RCMP Strategy for Dealing with the FLQ and Similar Movements, Memorandum for the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence (Ottawa: Privy Council Office, December 16, 1970), Appendix B (classified "Top Secret"). See also John Starnes, *Closely Guarded: A Life in Canadian Security and Intelligence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998): 158-163, 220-235.

[111]. Ron Haggart and Aubrey E. Golden, *Rumours of War, op. cit.,* p. 110.

[112]. Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970, op. cit.,* pp. 21-22; John Saywell, *Quebec 70 , op. cit.,* p. 101.

drastic but necessary action." The *Winnipeg Free Press* (October 17) as a "desperate cure," an unhappy choice "between anarchy and a period of repressive government." The popular newspaper in English in Quebec, read also by French Canadians, the Montreal *Gazette* (October 17) saw it as "the only course to take, however distasteful it may appear, if society is to be freed of the threat of continued terrorism."[113] The Ottawa *Citizen* (October 17) concluded that there was a need to "give the government full support… The cause is nothing less than making sure that the people we have elected by democratic process will run this country, and that a band of anonymous criminals will not." The *Globe and Mail* asserted (October 17): "Only if we can believe that the Government has evidence that the FLQ is strong enough and sufficiently armed to escalate the violence that it has spawned for seven years now, only if we can believe that it is virulent enough to infect other areas of society, only then can the Government's assumption of incredible powers be tolerated." And the Vancouver *Sun* (October 16) applauded the decision to "fight fire with fire and match ruthlessness with ruthlessness". All English-Canadian newspapers denounced the murder of Pierre Laporte.[114]

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[113]. The Montreal *Gazette* was, and still is, a conservative newspaper that has gained an enviable reputation as an excellent newspaper of record. Its daily circulation exceeded 130,000 copies. See Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Words, Music and Dollars* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. II, pp. 103, 511; W.H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada, op. cit.*, p. 91. Current website: www.montrealgazette.com

[114]. All quotes are taken from John Saywell, *Quebec 70, op. cit.,* pp. 94-95, 105-107. See also "250 held in drive on Quebec front," *N.Y. Times* (October 17, 1970), p. 12; William Johnson, "New

In French Canada, the two large and popular newspaper *La Presse* (based in Montreal) and *Le Soleil* (based in Quebec City) supported the use of the act.[115] *Le Devoir* (October 17) did not, arguing that Quebec had been taken over by Ottawa.[116] The editors of *Quebec-Presse* (October 18) went as far as calling for passive resistance, saying, "we must resist the repression which is striking everywhere in Quebec," and calling upon popular movements, citizens committees, all associations and the unions to organize the resistance in a common, concerted effort. Most Quebec papers deplored Laporte's murder. *Quebec-Presse*, on the other hand, held a supportive view of the FLQ. One separatist writer said (October 25): "It is too easy to say that Pierre Laporte was

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tenants occupy scenes of FLQ crisis," *Globe and Mail* (October 5, 1971).

115. *La Presse* of the Desmarais chain was Quebec's dominant mainstream French-language newspaper. Its circulation was more than 220,000 copies a day. *Le Soleil* was in Quebec City what *La Presse* was in Montreal: a popular newspaper with estimated daily circulation of 162,000 copies. Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Words, Music and Dollars* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. II, pp. 83, 511, 513; Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *Good, Bad or Simply Inevitable?* (Ottawa, 1970), Vol. III, p. 146. See also John Porter, "The Ideological System: The Mass Media," *op. cit.*, p. 167. Current website of *La Presse*: http://www.lapresse.infinit.net/ and *Le Soleil*: http://www.lesoleil.com/

116. The 1970 Davey Report held that *La Presse* and *Le Devoir* "enjoy an influence and prestige within their community that perhaps no English-language newspaper can match." Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media, *The Uncertain Mirror* (Ottawa, December 1970), Vol. I, p. 96.

killed by a handful of terrorists. A handful of terrorists with their finger on the trigger. But who put the gun into their hands?… I refuse to pass judgment."[117]

On October 18, some radio and television stations broadcast erroneous news that the body of Mr. Cross had also been found.[118] That same day the Cabinet contemplated posting policemen in radio and TV stations to prevent information coming from the FLQ or any other sources from being mishandled by the press. This measure would also have permitted the police to have it instantly and to act on it. In the end it was decided that the Secretary of State should see that the public and private sectors of the media abide by the government decisions. Specifically, it was decided not to release any letters or other documents coming from Mr. Cross or his abductors.[119]

The following day, October 19, the *Ottawa Journal* reported that the CBC was served notice to refrain from editorial comment on the terrorist situation and that it was also hoped that the CTV network and all private stations would toe this policy line until the crisis is over. Sandy Gardiner voiced the opinion that the broadcasters should have been put in their place right from the outset, and that the two networks must shoulder some of the blame for adding fuel to the fire. Gardiner added that viewers are entitled to the facts with analysis, if

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[117]. John Saywell, *Quebec 70 , op. cit.,* pp. 96-99.

[118]. Arthur Siegel, *Canadian Newspaper Coverage of the F.L.Q. Crisis: A Study on the Impact of the Press on Politics, op. cit.,* p. 264.

[119]. Cabinet Minutes of a meeting held on October 18, 1970, pp. 3-4 (classified "secret") (No. 62-70).

pertinent, but speculation should have been outlawed: “Speculation, especially at a time when lives are at stake, is irresponsible journalism.”[120]

On October 22, 1970, the government met to discuss its strategy for dealing with the FLQ. Secretary of State Pelletier said the media heads needed reassuring: “They had got themselves into a difficult situation and had lost control.”[121] Minister of Transport Jamieson felt that the Prime Minister should meet with the heads of the media to explain to them what the problems were.[122] Two weeks later, Mr. J. Davey, Program Secretary to the Prime Minister, thought that the government should concentrate attention on four areas of interest, one of them the necessity for the Strategic Operations Centre to continue monitoring the media from week to week.[123]

On November 6, police raided the Montreal apartment where the four Laporte kidnappers had been hiding since the murder; one of the suspects was captured, but the other three eluded the police. Later, they sent their last Communiqué, describing their escape and mocking the police. The Liberation Cell sent their last Communiqué on November 21 to the *Quebec-Presse*, enclosing

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120. Sandy Gardiner, Between the Lines, “Give Viewers Facts Without Speculation,” *Ottawa Journal* (October 19, 1970), by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ].

121. A Strategy for Dealing With the FLQ, The Government’s Posture (October 22, 1970), p. 4 (classified “secret”).

122. Cabinet Minutes of a meeting held on October 22, 1970, p. 4 (No. 63-70).

123. Minutes of the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence (November 6, 1970), p. 11 (classified “secret”).

a letter from Mr. Cross. The communiqué complained of government torture, searches, arrests, and censorship, and called on the U.N. to mediate with the government to release the political prisoners.[124]

A final note should be made regarding the differences between the French-language and English-language dailies. Previous research showed that English-speaking journalists saw their principal function as straight news reporting while French-language journalists were much more inclined to perceive their journalistic function to include interpreting the news.[125] During the FLQ crisis, their interpretation of events coincided with the terrorists' aims. Arthur Siegel, who conducted a multidimensional content analysis of Canadian newspaper coverage from the kidnapping of James Cross until the funeral of Pierre Laporte seventeen days later, found tendency to homogeneity of content among the French dailies. The French-language papers stressed the search for a peaceful solution and the negotiation aspect of the situation; they were interested in the international reaction to the crisis, especially from Europe and *la Francophonie.* They also focused more on personalities and on civil rights issues. The English-language press, by contrast, focused attention on the manhunt for the terrorists, largely dealing with police activities connected with apprehending

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[124]. Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970, op. cit.,* p. 24.

[125]. See research reports of the Royal commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: F. Chartrand-McKenzie, "Les Journalistes Anglo et Franco-Canadiens: Leurs Opinions et leurs Comportements vis-à-vis de la Coexistance des deux Cultures"; H. Black, "French and English Canadian Political Journalists: A Comparative Study". Both quoted in Arthur Siegel, *Politics and the Media in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1983), p. 209.

the kidnappers and freeing the hostages. They also reported on political institutions, on the economic cost of the crisis, and showed a greater interest in the national and American reaction to the crisis. The French papers were not nearly as interested as the English papers in bringing up the economic implications of the crisis, nor were they interested in the legalistic elements of the situation. Siegel explains this restrictive coverage of the crisis by saying that this was designed to lead to the emergence of a sharper, more easily defined picture.[126]

In addition, English-speaking editorials were more hostile to terrorism generally and the FLQ specifically. They expressed strong support for both the Ottawa and Quebec governments, enthusiastically endorsed the invocation of the War Measures Act, and stressed their support and concern for Canadian unity. The French-speaking editorials had a different perspective. Their editorial emphasis was on the implications of the crisis for Quebec society. Social and economic injustices, which were almost always associated with French Canadians, were often discussed. These editorials generally did not relate separatism to terrorism, tending to differentiate between legitimate separatism and "bad", terrorist separatism, and warning against the deterioration of civil rights. While the English dailies tended to stress the legislative branch of government, the Ottawa parliament that was asked to approve the War Measures Act, and emphasizing the importance of Canadian unity, the French

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126. Arthur Siegel, *Canadian Newspaper Coverage of the F.L.Q. Crisis: A Study on the Impact of the Press on Politics , op. cit.,* p. 79.

dailies emphasized the positions of the political executives, i.e., the federal and Quebec governments. Canadian unity ranked low in the French papers' editorials and so was the level of support for unity. On the whole, the picture that emerged from the French newspapers suggested far more popular opposition to the authorities than one would have envisaged from reading the English dailies.[127]

IV. Conclusion

Throughout the roughly two weeks of peak crisis, some influential organs of the French media depicted the FLQ as an equal partner in a political dialogue with the government, as if we speak of symmetrically powerful rivals, with legitimate concerns and deeds (as discussed *supra*, this pattern was followed during the TWA crisis of 1985). Furthermore, in the rush for news under time constraints, some organs of the media were tempted to report first and make the proper inquiry and verification later. During the FLQ crisis a woman in Hull, Quebec, was allegedly tortured by the dissidents, who released her with a message that topped the Saturday *Vancouver Sun*: **New FLQ Warning: 'Women and Children**

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127. Arthur Siegel, *Canadian Newspaper Coverage of the F.L.Q. Crisis: A Study on the Impact of the Press on Politics, op. cit.,* pp. 79, 84, 95-96, 163-164; Siegel, *Politics and the Media in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1996), 2nd edition, p. 225. For further discussion on the effects of the crisis on public opinion see Richard M. Sorrentino and Neil Vidmar, "Impact of Events: Short vs. Long-Term Effects of a Crisis," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* Vol. 38 (1974): 271-279.

Next' Hull Torture Message to PM.[128] It was a fearful development at a time of high tension. But it was a hoax. Several days later, a tiny story well inside the paper said the torture marks were apparently self-inflicted. No wonder that Jean-Paul Desbiens, editorialist for *La Presse,* wrote on October 24, 1970, "there would be a lot to say about the lack of intellectual rigour on the part of the written and spoken press".[129]

The French media took upon themselves to play an active role as mediators. On Friday, October 9, through Pierre Pascau of CKLM, Quebec Justice Minister Choquette asked the kidnappers to supply proof that Mr. Cross was still alive. In reply through CKLM to Mr. Choquette, the kidnappers wrote back giving a fifth and final deadline for 6 p.m. Saturday October 10th.[130] In addition, the role that Claude Ryan assumed upon himself on his own initiative was already described *supra.* As said in section II, this delicate role of mediation should be left to professional negotiators who have the expertise to deal with kidnappers and potential murderers.

Like in the Hanafi episode, some journalists during the FLQ crisis did not hesitate to make irresponsible speculations designed to introduce a fresh new

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128. "Women and Children Next," *Vancouver Sun* (October 17, 1970). See also Nick Russell, *Morals and the Media, op. cit.,* p. 90; Claude Lemieux, "FLQ Carved on Hull Woman's Stomach," *Ottawa Journal* (October 19, 1970), by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ].

129. Quoted in Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," *op. cit.,* pp. 128-129.

130. Ron Haggart and Aubrey E. Golden, *Rumours of War, op. cit.,* pp. 231-232.

dimension to the story, as if it was not dramatic enough. During the second week, Cross felt the hostility of his kidnappers increase as news speculation that he was sending coded messages appeared in the papers. In making this speculation, some journalists mentioned that Cross had worked previously for British military intelligence. His letters to his wife had been rewritten on the direction of his guards to prevent a code. When finally released on December 4, 1970, Mr. Cross reported that his treatment had deteriorated significantly during the second week, until he could convince his captors that the speculations were false: "There's been a lot of talk about journalistic responsibility. But people have responsibility to the kidnapped, to the chap in there, he's the loneliest man in the world. And speculation about what he's trying to do may cost him his life."[131] Cross was further quoted saying: "The news media were either thoughtless, ruthless, or stupid... It should have been obvious that the speculation that (my) letters possibly carried a coded message, could create a dangerous situation for (me), or prevent (me) from sending any further messages."[132]

Shortly after James Cross was freed and his kidnappers had departed for Cuba, *Quebec-Presse* (December 13, 1970) published the transcript of an audio tape recorded by the kidnappers prior to their capture. On this tape, the kidnappers confirmed having deliberately pitted two private radio stations

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131. Ron Haggart and Aubrey E. Golden, *Rumours of War,* p. 234; Ronald D. Crelinsten, "Victims' Perspectives," *op. cit.,* p. 233.

132. *Globe and Mail* (December 15, 1970), quoted in Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," *op. cit.,* p. 129.

against each other so as to have more coverage.[133] In fact, information was and remained uncontrolled until the imposition of the War Measures Act which set up an official state of censorship that was never applied, but was sustained by a real self-censorship, and by the death of minister Laporte, which made any support for the assassins impossible.[134] On the tape, the kidnappers also observed smugly that the forced broadcast of their manifesto had elicited considerable sympathy: "For the first time, patriots of the Front managed to express themselves by entering every home, through Radio Canada... by making them read our manifesto."[135]

A month after the crisis, Premier Bourassa said in a Quebec National Assembly debate, "the government's leaders were treated like dogs by the newspapers," suggesting reexamination of the inherent dangers of verbal violence.[136] It is one thing to criticize the government for what might be

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[133]. The transcript of the tape was: "(We) deliberately pitted two private radio stations against each other so as to have more coverage by counting on the vice of this type of enterprise: competition and profit. We used the great capitalist press, we used radio stations to make our ideas known in order to reveal, to show, that we are in agreement with the demands of the Quebecois." Chris Cobb, "Looking back at the FLQ crisis," *Ottawa Citizen* (October 7, 1995), p. B4.

[134]. Bernard Dagenais, "Media in Crisis: Observers, Actors or Scapegoats?," *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125.

[135]. Gabriel Weimann and Conrad Winn, *The Theater of Terror*, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

[136]. Eleanor S. Wainstein, *The Cross and Laporte Kidnappings, Montreal, October 1970*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49. For further critical analysis of the role of the media in the crisis see Richard Nielsen, "The Media: Must We Serve as Tools for Terrorists?," in Benjamin D. Singer (ed.), *Communications in Canadian Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-389. Reprinted from the *Toronto Star* (March 18, 1971); Terence

conceived as an inappropriate handling of a crisis, and quite another to serve the interests of terrorists, readily playing into their hands, assuming responsibilities that are outside the scope of journalism, and conducting their affairs in a way that might risk the lives of hostages.

May I conclude with some personal words: I have studied the relationships between terrorism and the media for many years and cannot think of a better example of irresponsible media behaviour. Influential segments of the French media served the interests of the terrorists and ignored the interests of the victims, as well as the interests of Canada as a free, democratic society. Journalists broke almost every ethical norm that is accepted during hostage taking episodes; they did not hesitate to sensationalize and to dramatize the event, stirring up emotions in a way that hindered governmental operations. Influential segments of the French media wanted to exert more pressure on the government by expressing concern for the fate of Cross and Laporte, thereby hoping to push the government to succumb to the terrorists' demands. They gladly offered their services as mediators and messengers of the terrorists, disregarding their obligation to accurate reporting, and broadcast the terrorists' Communiqués without the consent of the authorities. Through their extensive sympathetic coverage, French journalists not only provided a grand platform for the terrorists, but also legitimized their demands and actions. Some of the editors also offered ways to resolve the situation, ways the government felt were

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Moore, "Kidnap crisis has hidden dimensions," *Montreal Star* (December 19, 1970), by Maclean-Hunter Microfilm Service [Canadian press clipping service, microfilm series: FLQ].

damaging to the interests of Canada. With their sensational speculations about Cross's coded letters, the reporters endangered his life. They forgot that their story was Cross's real life drama.

The FLQ crisis raises a loud and frightening alarm regarding the cost of irresponsible expression, signaling us to be aware of the media's lack of concern for human life if the terrorists' political ends are to their liking. The public's "right to know" becomes a cover-up for the most insensitive and irresponsible behaviour. This type of media coverage, which does not consider the consequences of its actions, is unprofessional and immoral -- and this is especially true during a time of crisis.

The study of the FLQ crisis as well as of other troubling episodes described at the outset shows the need for developing a set of guidelines for the media when covering terrorism. The guidelines should include the following:

- The media should cooperate with the government when human lives are at stake in order to bring a peaceful end to the terrorist episode.
- The media should not take upon themselves to mediate between the terrorists and the government. Special qualifications are required before one assumes such a responsibility upon oneself.
- The media should not broadcast live terrorist incidents. This is not to say that the media should not cover such incidents. Rather, there should be a delay of a few seconds during which an experienced editor inspects the coverage and authorize what should be on air and what should not.
- The media should refrain from sensational and panicky headlines.

- The media should not cooperate with terrorists who stage events.
- The media should not pay for covering terrorist incidents.
- The media should not interview terrorists while the incident is still in motion.
- The media are required to show sensitivity to the victims and to their loved ones.
- Media professionals are required to have background information about the terrorists they are required to cover. They should prepare homework prior coverage.
- The area in which the terrorist incident takes place should not be open for anybody who testifies that he or she is a journalist. Only senior and experienced reporters should be allowed in.
- The media should never jeopardize human life.
- The media should not report details that might harm victims' families.
- The media should be accountable for the consequences of their coverage.
- Terrorism should be explicitly condemned for its brutality and violent, indiscriminate nature.