

Journalism Quarterly

*DEVOTED TO RESEARCH IN JOURNALISM
AND MASS COMMUNICATION*

VOLUME 38

AMS REPRINT COMPANY
New York

Press Perspectives in World Communication: a Pilot Study

BY GEORGE GERBNER*

In autumn, 1960, the New York Times and Hungary's leading Communist daily gave top play to the U.N. Assembly. Analysis of headlines discloses major differences in the extent to which the two papers emphasized procedural vs. "bread and butter" issues and in the attention given to conflict and to agreement.

THIS IS THE REPORT OF A COMPARATIVE examination of major headline content and news emphasis in the New York Times and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' (Communist) party central daily, *Népszabadság*, dealing with the U.N. General Assembly session in the fall of 1960.

The purpose was *not* to compare a giant of world journalism, as such, with a tabloid-size 12-to-14-page party organ of a small Eastern European country. It was to test certain hypotheses about dimensions of analysis and about bases of cross-national communication in today's clash of world perspectives.

The two papers were chosen because of the comparisons and contrasts they offer. The *Times* is one of the few "national" U.S. dailies with a large international circulation. Its selection makes the comparison a conservative one with respect to most American papers' handling of potential cold-war issues. *Népszabadság* is the authoritative national organ of a ruling Communist party, and the only one with substantial outside circulation. Its circulation (650,000) is comparable to that of the New York *Times*. Many of its U.N. stories were distributed by Tass, the Soviet

news agency. It is believed to have handled the events of the Assembly in a way not atypical of most Eastern European dailies.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Mass media are cultural arms of industrial systems. In many areas of the world today, media of competing systems play increasingly important roles. Through selection, treatment, emphasis and tone, mass media (1) help define their own set of significant realities, (2) structure the agenda of public (and, increasingly, of private) discourse and (3) make available dominant perspectives from which realities, priorities, actions and policies might be viewed.

As instruments of *world* communication, national media represent authoritative voices of their society. They can establish common ground for communication with other people to the extent that their definition of realities seems tenable, their priorities reasonable and their perspectives acceptable in the light of competing or conflicting assumptions available. ◦

A growing number of "world news-readers" are able to follow the same events in authoritative organs of both East and West. Recent experiences in

*The author is associate professor of journalism at the University of Illinois.

cross-cultural mass communication research impressed me with the limitations which our own theories of the press and standards of journalism impose upon a realistic appraisal of the actual roles competing national media play in world communications.

The distinctive communication roles of national media are often only by-products of their social system's characteristic conditions for industrial investment and popular support. Patterns of institutional decision-making develop in response to needs of stockholders, advertisers, parties, governments or other sources of support for large-scale mass production in the communications field. Theories and standards emerge—each with its own conception of "freedom," "objectivity," "news values," etc.—to codify, rationalize and perpetuate these patterns of decision-making. When measured by categories of analysis based on a nation's own theories of the press and conventions of journalism, that nation's media usually come out on top in any comparison. But self-justifying standards, reflecting internal needs and pressures, are hardly adequate yardsticks of relative communication roles outside their own systems.

In this pilot study we propose to use two contrasting approaches to today's world scene as major categories of analysis. Each has its own conception of standards and definition of realities, priorities and perspectives. The two dimensions are felt to be relevant to crucial differences in press performance and sensitive to differential bases of communication around the world.

The first approach is along the dimension of the power-contest. From this point of view, strategy and counter-strategy, threats and counter-threats, yardage gained or lost, and keeping the scoreboard up to date become the most significant aspects of newsworthy events. What the game is *about* is assumed to be known. The important items on the agenda concern matters of *technique* and of *procedure*: how gains already

made can be defended, on what or whom losses can be blamed, how rules can be kept to maximize gains and minimize losses, how new points might be scored. The perspective is that of a contest. We call this dimension *procedural* and *conflict-oriented*.

The other dimension cuts the pie differently. The *substance* and *promise* of specific issues occupy the center of the stage. The "power game" with its rules, scores, gains and losses has a secondary place on the agenda, except as it affects the possibility of agreement on the substantive ends to be achieved. These ends are issues with direct significance in everyday reality. Coexistence, disarmament, colonial liquidation, nuclear test ban, etc., are seen not mainly as aspects of big-power strategy or even only of ultimate survival. They are portrayed as bread and butter for tomorrow's table, a school for the children, appliances in the store, a freer and more secure life for everyone *now*. From this perspective, conflict is seen as delaying, agreement as hastening, the realization of all that really matters. We call this dimension *substantive* and *agreement-oriented*.

General observation led us to expect that the first dimension would be most prominent in United States press coverage, while the second—possibly dominant in the "neutral" countries—would be found more widely held in Western Europe than in the U.S., and prevalent in the press of Eastern Europe. To the extent this analysis, using only two papers, bore upon the hypothesis, and to the extent the underlying assumptions are valid, the implications for broadly-based international communication are evident.

THE ANALYSIS

Aside from foregone conclusions about newspaper size, richness of content, extent of coverage, etc., can our analytical categories define and differentiate East-West press communication roles performed through selection, treat-

ment and emphasis? What are such characteristics in the two papers as measured by their respective highlighting of ostensibly the same series of events, considered by both to be of top news significance? How does one paper treat those aspects which the other selects for major play?

These questions were explored in two ways. The first part of the study compared emphases through analysis of major relevant headlines in the two papers. The second part examined broader aspects of the general context of selection and emphasis.

Method of Headline Analysis

The "major" *Times* headline was defined as over the right-hand column or columns on top of the front page (excluding decks), and of course included all banner headlines. In *Népszabadság* the five-column front page was usually divided into a three-column and a two-column section, with the major headline over the leading story getting the three-column play. On three of the days studied this happened to fall on the left-hand side of the page. Otherwise the criteria were the same as those applied to the *Times*. There was never any doubt about which was the top headline or lead story in either paper.

During the 26-day period covered (Sept. 18-Oct. 14, 1960), 23 days were selected for comparison because *Népszabadság* does not publish on Mondays. The *New York Times* gave the top position to a U.N. story and headline on 20 of the 23 days; *Népszabadság* on 21.

The line was the unit of analysis. Each line of every major relevant headline was classified in two ways. First, we asked whether the line was "procedural" or "substantive." Secondly, we had to decide whether the direction of the line was "agreement," "neutral" or "conflict."

Substantive was the term assigned to lines which focused upon the substance of issues pending before the Assembly. Such lines as "EISENHOWER CALLS

FOR PEACE" or "SOLVE GENERAL DISARMAMENT" were considered "substantive" in emphasis.

Procedural was the term given to emphases pointing to U.N. organization, Assembly procedure, agenda strategy, parliamentary moves, contacts among the powers and circumstances surrounding the meetings.

Agreement direction was defined as emphasis on matters (either "substantive" or "procedural") generally accepted or desired (at least in principle) by most of those who would agree with the basic purposes of the United Nations. Peace, freedom, disarmament, summit meeting, independence of colonial countries fall into the "agreement" category.

Neutral denotes the direction of statements which are non-controversial or do not raise any cold-war issues. Simple statements of who met whom, "U.N. ASSEMBLY BEGINS," and the like, were classified "neutral."

Conflict was defined as either "substantive" or "procedural" emphasis upon matters which indicate, imply, or record the existence of a power struggle, report disapproval or support for either side, focus upon outstanding divisive issues in the cold war or point up threats or warnings of conflict.

The following are examples of the five actual headline classifications used (the sixth, substantive-neutral, never occurred):

"TITO URGES IMMEDIATE STEPS TO CUT ARMS" (substantive-agreement from the *Times*).

"LEADERS EXPOSE COLONIALISM" (substantive-conflict from *Népszabadság*).

"NEUTRALS ASK U.S.-SOVIET TALK" (procedural-agreement from the *Times*).

"BALTIKA ARRIVES IN NEW YORK" (procedural-neutral from *Népszabadság*).

"U.N. REBUFFS KHRUSHCHEV 54 to 13" (procedural-conflict from the *Times*).

In the few cases of doubt, that category was chosen which would tend to contradict rather than confirm the hypothesis.¹

Findings of Headline Analysis

The findings of the headline analysis are summarized in Table 1. The tabulation shows percentages of the 60 lines of major *Times* headlines and of the 56 lines of major *Népszabadság* headlines in each of the categories.

The near mirror-image of the two papers' emphases is reflected in the comparison between the combined categories of opposite value in terms of the analytical dimensions discussed above. As shown in the italicized categories in Table 1, substantive emphasis and agreement direction was characteristic of one out of every twenty lines in the *Times*, but almost one out of every three in *Népszabadság*. Conversely, procedural emphasis and conflict direction characterized one in every twenty lines in *Népszabadság*, but 45% of the lines in the *Times*. Comparing emphasis and direction separately, we found that substantive lines were one-fourth of procedural in the *Times* but three times the percentage of procedural lines in *Népszabadság*; agreement direction was outweighed by conflict four to one in the *Times*, but predominated over conflict seven to one in *Népszabadság*. Over a third of the lines in the *Times* and over a half of the lines in *Népszabadság* were neutral.

The headwriting styles reflected in these findings play a part in directing as well as in expressing emphases. With a verb in nearly every line, the New York *Times*—noted for its subdued headlines—pinpointed strategy with "admits," "meets," "joins," "confer," etc. It emphasized tension between antagonists with such verbs as "quit," "wins," "snub," "insists," "rebuffs," "defies," "charges," "bars" (used twice) and

"warns" (used three times). Dynamic terms such as "buffer bloc," "arms impasse," "war peril" and "rocket power" were used to add punch to the lines. Modifiers "coldly," "noisy" and "angry" (always applied to an "opponent") supplied color to the drama of highly personalized encounter and clash (36 names in 60 lines).

With only one verb in every three lines, *Népszabadság* heads were short on what we would consider "hard news" content and long on declarations of intent. Their procedural verbs such as "arrives," "begins," "belongs," "debates," "continues," focused on progress toward aims. Two out of the four tension verbs used—"expose," and "hate"—pointed at imperialism and war; only two—"reject" and "demand"—dealt with people. "Greet," "solve" and "live" (used three times) denoted mutuality; "peace," "freedom," "independence" and "disarmament" (used seven times) denoted the aims. Only three major headlines (one line in eight) named individuals.²

Comparison of Treatment and Emphasis

In the second part of the study we followed the course of the Assembly as highlighted in the two papers. The following are examples of characteristic differences in the selection and treatment of events one or both papers chose to emphasize.

The *Baltika* was still on the high seas when the Security Council received a strong Soviet protest over the role of the Secretary-General as commander-in-chief of the U.N. army in the Congo. The *Times* kept the spotlight on embattled Hammarskjöld. Its first major headline for the period (September 18) was "U.N. CHIEF WARNS/HE MAY QUIT POST/OVER CONGO ROLE." This was followed by the reassuring top line the next day (when

¹A complete list of headlines and headline classifications had to be omitted for reasons of space. The list may be obtained from the author.

²I am indebted to my colleague, Professor Howard Maclay, for pointing out some possibilities of linguistic analysis—more than space would allow—in such a comparative study.

TABLE I
New York "Times" and "Nepszabadsag" Headlines in Each Category

Classification of Lines	New York Times N = 60	Népszabadság N = 56
Substantive = agreement	5%	30%
Substantive = neutral	—	—
Substantive = conflict	7	2
Procedural = agreement	7	9
Procedural = neutral	36	54
Procedural = conflict	45	5
Total	100%	100%
Substantive	12	32
Procedural	88	68
Total	100%	100%
Agreement	12	39
Neutral	36	54
Conflict	52	7
Total	100%	100%

Népszabadság did not publish) that "ASIAN-AFRICAN BLOC AIDS U.N. CHIEF." Companion front-page headlines asked for "restraint" in Khrushchev's TV coverage and related the State Department hope the Assembly "will not become propaganda platform."

The procedural aspects of the conflict spotlighted in the *New York Times* cast a partial shadow on the back pages of *Népszabadság*. Front-page emphasis, however, was on peace, hope and good wishes. "MAY SUCCESS FOLLOW YOUR WORK!"—the two-column headline cited one of reportedly "hundreds of telegrams" pouring in from "workers, peasants, intelligentsia" to the passengers of the *Baltika* on their way to New York. The major three-column spread was headlined "REPRESENTING PEACE." It was a long editorial sounding the keynote of the coverage for days to come. "Representing peace" were the socialist delegations soon to arrive at the world forum to battle for the overriding concern of all humanity, declared the editorial, and to engage in (what the *Times* warned

about on its front page) propaganda for disarmament. Key passages from the lengthy piece, paraphrased below, are helpful to an understanding of the communist press perspective:

The West has defeated 40 disarmament proposals advanced by the socialist camp in the last 15 years. It has opposed, then scuttled the Summit. But the diplomacy of imperialism has suffered a setback: disarmament is on the Assembly agenda. . . . The world must listen now not only to our proposals but also to concrete unilateral steps that have been taken. In five years the Soviet Union reduced its armed forces from 5,763,000 to 2,423,000, and the Warsaw pact countries followed suit. . . .

And what does all this mean to mankind? Every single day a hundred million people spend almost a billion hours not to build houses, not to produce clothes and food and drugs and school implements but means of destruction!

Obviously, the success of disarmament cannot depend on those who profit from armaments. They are afraid; they say all our talk is propaganda. So be it; it is propaganda in the interest of humanity and of life itself!

On September 20 an elated *Népszabadság* devoted most of the front page to Khrushchev's arrival message. "WE MUST AGREE ON STRICTLY CONTROLLED DISARMAMENT" said the headline, alongside a smiling picture of the Soviet Premier surrounded by friendly faces, captioned "Warm Reception." The message itself sounded some of the key motifs: "All thoughts turn to peace . . . We must agree on the strictest international controls for disarmament . . . Unfortunately, those who pay lip-service to strengthening the U.N. actually oppose its work for disarmament . . . They call our proposals propaganda . . . I am proud to conduct such propaganda until the last ounce of my strength."

The major *Times* headline of the same day was "U.N. CHIEF WINS 70-0 CONGO VOTE; / KHRUSHCHEV RECEIVED COLDLY / ANGRY CASTRO SWITCHES HOTELS." The lead of the arrival story set a somber mood, noting that "The red carpet . . . was soggy, and rain streamed through the leaky roof of dilapidated Pier 73 . . ." The picture showed, according to the caption, "a well isolated Soviet Premier" stepping off the gangplank with head bowed.

On September 23 the *Times* devoted its banner headline to matters of substance and of common ends. "EISENHOWER CALLS FOR PEACE THROUGH U.N." was the top line. The lead stressed the President's support of Hammarskjöld.

As paraphrased by Fass on the front page of *Népszabadság* under the non-committal headline "U.N. ASSEMBLY BEGINS / GENERAL POLITICAL DEBATE," the key paragraph of the speech story stated:

The American President spoke in vague generalities about the desirability of disarmament in some distant, unspecified future. But again he placed the emphasis not upon disarmament but upon armaments inspection. . . . With this he returned to the same old pro-

posals which are designed—as has often been proven—not to secure the peace but to legalize espionage.

The next day (September 24) was *Népszabadság's* turn to run its largest type across the front page: "FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE / TO ALL COLONIAL PEOPLES! / SOLVE GENERAL DISARMAMENT!" The first six pages were devoted to what the deck declared was "Significant Speech of Comrade Khrushchev on Burning Problems of Our Age." The account was dotted with such ecstatic subheads as "All the Beauty of the World Could Flower" and "The Exalted Tasks of the U.N." Khrushchev's proposal for reforming the Secretariat came at the end of the long speech in which he argued that if the world was to disarm, the international force should not be under the command of any one man attached to any one power bloc.

In contrast to this jubilant mood and emphasis on disarmament hopes, the *Times* banner headline was "KHRUSHCHEV ASKS HAMMARSKJÖLD OUSTER; / WOULD SUBSTITUTE A 3-BLOC DIRECTORATE; / HERTER SEES 'DECLARATION OF WAR' ON U.N." The decks, on two sides of the speech photo, drew a neat balance of intransigence: "PREMIER IS HARSH" and "AMERICAN IS ANGRY."

The next day, September 25, the Soviet Premier said that in the light of Herter's remarks he wished to clarify his U.N. reform proposal. In an impromptu press conference in the driveway of the Soviet's Glen Cove mansion, Khrushchev repeated the reasons given for his plan, and said that while Marshal Malinovsky is a great leader, the Soviets would not insist on his heading a world police force if they really wanted general disarmament. The *Times* headlined its top news story of the informal press conference "KHRUSHCHEV INSISTS U.N. REVISION MUST PRECEDE DISARMAMENT PLAN." *Népszabadság*

noted the remarks in a roundup story on page four, and again interpreted them as moves to strengthen a more democratic U.N. for the tasks of the future.

While in the *Times*' major headline Khrushchev put U.N. procedure before disarmament, *Népszabadság*'s banner headline of the same day insisted that "DISARMAMENT IS THE / CENTRAL ISSUE OF OUR AGE / FOUNDATION OF SECURE PEACE." The Hungarian paper's first three and one-half pages were devoted to the Soviet disarmament proposal submitted along with the Khrushchev speech the day before. The account included such large front-page subheads as "One Year's Military Costs Could Pay for Africa's Complete Technical and Economic Reconstruction;" "Life Itself Demands Discussion of Disarmament" and "Another Year Lost Because of Behavior of the West." The *Times* did not carry the disarmament proposal.

On Monday and Tuesday, September 26-27, the *Times* was still dwelling upon the dangers of the U.N. reform plan, partly on the basis of further "clarifications" from Glen Cove over the weekend. *Népszabadság* headlined its Tass roundup of the weekend press conferences "MUST LIVE TOGETHER / CAN LIVE TOGETHER." It also gave the front-page banner headline "SOVIET PLAN ON COLONIAL FREEDOM" and two inside pages to a colonial declaration submitted along with the disarmament proposal. The *Times* gave news of the colonial declaration in five inside paragraphs noting that it was "tough" and dealing mostly with reactions to it.

While top-level talks held the limelight, a front-page story in the *Times* on September 29 announced "SOVIET SET BACK / ON ARMS DEBATE." The steering committee defeated a move to send the disarmament proposal to the Assembly and, according to the lead, "to provide Premier Khrushchev

with a General Assembly forum for his disarmament proposals."

Népszabadság relegated news of the "setback" the next day to a roundup story on page two headlined "STEERING COMMITTEE PROPOSES COLD WAR ISSUES / INSTEAD OF MOST VITAL PROBLEMS / FOR U.N. PLENARY SESSION AGENDA." The story asserted that through the use of its "mechanical majority" the U.S. was able to prevent floor discussion of disarmament. The major front-page headline, however, insisted that "STILL IN FOREFRONT: / QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT / AND OF COLONIES."

September 30 produced a request for an Eisenhower-Khrushchev meeting, as noted in the major headline of the *Times*, and next day of *Népszabadság*. The bid did not rate the top headline spot again in the *Times* until President Eisenhower rejected it on October 3. *Népszabadság* gave it exclusive emphasis on October 2, and dropped it to page six upon rejection.

Khrushchev spoke again on October 2. He got top billing in the *Times*. "KHRUSHCHEV WARNS / U.N. OF WAR PERIL / OVER CHINA ISSUE," was the head. The lower deck cited Wadsworth, the chief American delegate, as "'a Bit Shocked' at Outburst, Says it Dims Prospect of Peace Talk." (According to a front-page story 10 days before to the effect that Secretary Herter "saw no prospect of any private meeting between President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev at the United Nations," those prospects had been dim from the outset.)

Népszabadság's October 2 front-page featured the five-power "peace talk" proposal. The Khrushchev speech story, below the fold, carried the headline: CANNOT CONDUCT / SUCCESSFUL DISARMAMENT TALKS WITHOUT CHINA / —SAYS COMRADE KHRUSHCHEV. The last paragraph of that story referred to Wadsworth's "groundless distortion of the

On September 20 an elated *Népszabadság* devoted most of the front page to Khrushchev's arrival message. "WE MUST AGREE ON STRICTLY CONTROLLED DISARMAMENT" said the headline, alongside a smiling picture of the Soviet Premier surrounded by friendly faces, captioned "Warm Reception." The message itself sounded some of the key motifs: "All thoughts turn to peace . . . We must agree on the strictest international controls for disarmament . . . Unfortunately, those who pay lip-service to strengthening the U.N. actually oppose its work for disarmament . . . They call our proposals propaganda . . . I am proud to conduct such propaganda until the last ounce of my strength."

The major *Times* headline of the same day was "U.N. CHIEF WINS 70-0 CONGO VOTE; / KHRUSHCHEV RECEIVED COLDLY / ANGRY CASTRO SWITCHES HOTELS." The lead of the arrival story set a somber mood, noting that "The red carpet . . . was soggy, and rain streamed through the leaky roof of dilapidated Pier 73 . . ." The picture showed, according to the caption, "a well isolated Soviet Premier" stepping off the gangplank with head bowed.

On September 23 the *Times* devoted its banner headline to matters of substance and of common ends. "EISENHOWER CALLS FOR PEACE THROUGH U.N." was the top line. The lead stressed the President's support of Hammarskjöld.

As paraphrased by Tass on the front page of *Népszabadság* under the non-committal headline "U.N. ASSEMBLY BEGINS / GENERAL POLITICAL DEBATE," the key paragraph of the speech story stated:

The American President spoke in vague generalities about the desirability of disarmament in some distant, unspecified future. But again he placed the emphasis not upon disarmament but upon armaments inspection. . . . With this he returned to the same old pro-

posals which are designed—as has often been proven—not to secure the peace but to legalize espionage.

The next day (September 24) was *Népszabadság's* turn to run its largest type across the front page: "FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE / TO ALL COLONIAL PEOPLES! / SOLVE GENERAL DISARMAMENT!" The first six pages were devoted to what the deck declared was "Significant Speech of Comrade Khrushchev on Burning Problems of Our Age." The account was dotted with such ecstatic subheads as "All the Beauty of the World Could Flower" and "The Exalted Tasks of the U.N." Khrushchev's proposal for reforming the Secretariat came at the end of the long speech in which he argued that if the world was to disarm, the international force should not be under the command of any one man attached to any one power bloc.

In contrast to this jubilant mood and emphasis on disarmament hopes, the *Times* banner headline was "KHRUSHCHEV ASKS HAMMARSKJÖLD OUSTER; / WOULD SUBSTITUTE A 3-BLOC DIRECTORATE; / HERTER SEES 'DECLARATION OF WAR' ON U.N." The decks, on two sides of the speech photo, drew a neat balance of intransigence: "PREMIER IS HARSH" and "AMERICAN IS ANGRY."

The next day, September 25, the Soviet Premier said that in the light of Herter's remarks he wished to clarify his U.N. reform proposal. In an impromptu press conference in the driveway of the Soviet's Glen Cove mansion, Khrushchev repeated the reasons given for his plan, and said that while Marshal Malinovsky is a great leader, the Soviets would not insist on his heading a world police force if they really wanted general disarmament. The *Times* headlined its top news story of the informal press conference "KHRUSHCHEV INSISTS U.N. REVISION / MUST PRECEDE DISARMAMENT PLAN." *Népszabadság*

noted the remarks in a roundup story on page four, and again interpreted them as moves to strengthen a more democratic U.N. for the tasks of the future.

While in the *Times*' major headline Khrushchev put U.N. procedure before disarmament, *Népszabadság*'s banner headline of the same day insisted that "DISARMAMENT IS THE / CENTRAL ISSUE OF OUR AGE / FOUNDATION OF SECURE PEACE." The Hungarian paper's first three and one-half pages were devoted to the Soviet disarmament proposal submitted along with the Khrushchev speech the day before. The account included such large front-page subheads as "One Year's Military Costs Could Pay for Africa's Complete Technical and Economic Reconstruction;" "Life Itself Demands Discussion of Disarmament" and "Another Year Lost Because of Behavior of the West." The *Times* did not carry the disarmament proposal.

On Monday and Tuesday, September 26-27, the *Times* was still dwelling upon the dangers of the U.N. reform plan, partly on the basis of further "clarifications" from Glen Cove over the weekend. *Népszabadság* headlined its Tass roundup of the weekend press conferences "MUST LIVE TOGETHER / CAN LIVE TOGETHER." It also gave the front-page banner headline "SOVIET PLAN ON COLONIAL FREEDOM" and two inside pages to a colonial declaration submitted along with the disarmament proposal. The *Times* gave news of the colonial declaration in five inside paragraphs noting that it was "tough" and dealing mostly with reactions to it.

While top-level talks held the limelight, a front-page story in the *Times* on September 29 announced "SOVIET SET BACK / ON ARMS DEBATE." The steering committee defeated a move to send the disarmament proposal to the Assembly and, according to the lead, "to provide Premier Khrushchev

with a General Assembly forum for his disarmament proposals."

Népszabadság relegated news of the "setback" the next day to a roundup story on page two headlined "STEERING COMMITTEE PROPOSES COLD WAR ISSUES / INSTEAD OF MOST VITAL PROBLEMS / FOR U.N. PLENARY SESSION AGENDA." The story asserted that through the use of its "mechanical majority" the U.S. was able to prevent floor discussion of disarmament. The major front-page headline, however, insisted that "STILL IN FOREFRONT: / QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT / AND OF COLONIES."

September 30 produced a request for an Eisenhower-Khrushchev meeting, as noted in the major headline of the *Times*, and next day of *Népszabadság*. The bid did not rate the top headline spot again in the *Times* until President Eisenhower rejected it on October 3. *Népszabadság* gave it exclusive emphasis on October 2, and dropped it to page six upon rejection.

Khrushchev spoke again on October 2. He got top billing in the *Times*. "KHRUSHCHEV WARNS / U.N. OF WAR PERIL / OVER CHINA ISSUE," was the head. The lower deck cited Wadsworth, the chief American delegate, as "'a Bit Shocked' at Outburst, Says it Dims Prospect of Peace Talk." (According to a front-page story 10 days before to the effect that Secretary Herter "saw no prospect of any private meeting between President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev at the United Nations," those prospects had been dim from the outset.)

Népszabadság's October 2 front-page featured the five-power "peace talk" proposal. The Khrushchev speech story, below the fold, carried the headline: "CANNOT CONDUCT / SUCCESSFUL DISARMAMENT TALKS WITHOUT CHINA / —SAYS COMRADE KHRUSHCHEV. The last paragraph of that story referred to Wadsworth's "groundless distortion of the

meaning of that speech as implying that there could be no serious peace talks at the U.N."

Three Issues

With defeat of the Soviet U.N. reform proposal never in doubt, three key issues remained to be settled. They were (1) the five-power neutral move for a summit, (2) the disarmament proposal and (3) the colonial resolution.

1. *Neutral move for summit.* It was on October 6 that five neutral powers finally gave up their attempt to bring the Big Two face-to-face. "NEUTRALS IN U.N. ABANDON / MOVE FOR BIG TWO TALKS / AS KEY POINT IS REJECTED," said the top *Times* headline. The debacle came after a simple majority voted to include Eisenhower and Khrushchev by name in the "peace talk" resolution, but Irish Assembly President Boland invoked the two-thirds rule. The rule was upheld, according to the New York *Times*' lead story, "after a procedural wrangle of an hour and a half"; whereupon the sponsors withdrew the resolution as pointless.

Népszabadság carried news of the defeat October 7, below the fold on page one. The story focused upon what the *Times* termed a "procedural wrangle." The headline said "WESTERN VOTING MANEUVERS / BLOCK EFFECTIVE WORK BY U.N." A deck explained that "BOLAND'S PROCEDURAL MANIPULATION CAUSES FIVE POWERS TO WITHDRAW PROPOSAL." A two-column subhead quoted the Ukrainian delegate as saying "It is Time to Prevent Use of U.N. as Tool of Western Bloc." The story asserted that the neutralist resolution was accepted and supported by the Soviet delegation as "a sincere effort . . . to end the cold war and to relax tensions." However, the story went on, the Western powers resorted to "desperate and unprecedented procedural tactics" to avoid having to discuss peace and disarmament.

2. *Disarmament.* Defeat of the disarmament proposal was recorded, along with the score and a threat, in the *Times*' top headline of October 11: "U.N. REBUFFS KHRUSHCHEV 54 TO 13; / BARS ASSEMBLY ARMS DEBATE NOW; / PREMIER WARNS OF ROCKET POWER." On the same day, *Népszabadság*'s major headline insisted that "THE QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT / BELONGS TO PLENARY SESSION / OF U.N. ASSEMBLY." The deck cited Khrushchev declaring that "If Present Session is Unable to Discuss Disarmament / Call Special Session in Spring with Heads of State." The vote itself was noted at the end of the long story. The rocket "threat" was part of the verbatim account on page two, under the three-column head "WE INSIST ON PRIORITY FOR DISARMAMENT" and the subhead "You Cannot Scare the Soviet People."

The major theme of unceasing effort on behalf of disarmament in the face of obstruction and provocation returned to *Népszabadság*'s front page on October 13. "WE SHALL NOT SLACKEN OUR EFFORTS / IN THE STRUGGLE FOR DISARMAMENT" declared the top headline based on a Khrushchev press conference. A long front-page editorial shared the spotlight with the lead story. It began in a sarcastic vein:

We can safely say that in the recent history of imperialism there has rarely been a more dubious 'victory' than that won by the Western bloc on disarmament. . . . Consider what has been achieved! American history books will now be able to say: 'Thanks to the firm stand of our government, we were able to keep the major question of disarmament off the Assembly floor and thus gain time for the arms race, hated by all peoples!'

The New York *Times*' major headline on October 13 was "NOISY U.N. SESSION / CUT SHORT TO END / HECKLING BY REDS." The colonial

resolution had reached the Assembly floor.

3. *The colonial resolution.* While *Népszabadság* kept the spotlight on "the struggle for disarmament," the *New York Times* featured a memorable scene. The resolution on "speedy and unconditional" colonial liberation was on the agenda. That was the day when the shaky decorum of Assembly procedure was shattered by table-pounding, shoe-banging communist delegates. *Népszabadság* carried the story of the meeting on page five, under a three-column headline: "SERIES OF WESTERN PROVOCATIONS / MARK WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION." The "provocations" reported consisted mostly of the Assembly President's interruptions of various speakers urging passage of the colonial resolution. As the vote was about to be taken, related the story, the American delegate rose to inject irrelevant and slanderous remarks directed against the people of Eastern Europe. The Rumanian delegate objected to this delaying tactic but could not complete his remarks; in a "provocative maneuver" the Assembly President unexpectedly adjourned the meeting. (According to the *Times*, he also broke his gavel in the process.)

The next day the colonial resolution passed by acclamation. The United States, according to the *Times'* account, "withdrew its opposition . . . with a brief statement by Francis W. Wilcox, Assistant Secretary of State, that the debate yesterday had shown 'the intensity of feeling among nations around the world on the question of national independence and human freedom everywhere.'"

Népszabadság headlined the action, gave it most of page one, and termed it "Defeat of Colonialists." The *Times*, which had given precedence to the U.N. over the presidential election campaign throughout the Assembly session, now switched positions. The U.N. story headline was "KHRUSHCHEV GOES

HOME / AFTER A THREAT IN U.N. / TO BOYCOTT ARMS TALKS." "Premier Khrushchev," stated the lead, "bade an angry farewell to the General Assembly today after threatening to walk out on any future disarmament negotiations unless they were conducted on Soviet terms." In a front-page story the next day, *Népszabadság* gave its account of Khrushchev's last day in New York, citing him as follows: "We leave in a good mood as we believe there are signs of hope for a solution of major international problems . . . We are especially satisfied over the decision on liquidating the colonial system . . . The Soviet Union will do everything in its power to achieve general and complete disarmament . . ."

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Every newspaper presents a fragmented and synthetic image of the world. It highlights its own set of significant realities from its own social and cultural vantage point. The *New York Times* tended to highlight procedural moves, gains, threats and conflicts. In comparison with the communist paper, it emphasized method rather than substance, and the tension-arousing rather than mutually acceptable or even neutral aspects of events.

This perspective serves needs for producing and selling news and other commodities on behalf of clients with conflicting views but common stake in rules of the game. The standards we hold are most applicable to reporting the programs of a contest—business, political, athletic, personal—from a more or less detached vantage point, but with primary emphasis on the clash, the color and the score. The detachment is especially noticeable in skirting the ideological content and substance of what is at stake in the game. Our penchant for procedure and conflict is clearly evident (and, in a nuclear age, somewhat disconcerting).

The analysis appears to confirm the

hypothesis that *Népszabadság*, even in comparison with such a respected organ of Western journalism as the *New York Times*, tended to give priority to the substance of issues generally accepted to be of major daily concern and hope to most people around the world. Of course, it highlighted communist initiative on behalf of such common aspirations.

The communist national press serves clients with a common stake in the ends to be achieved but changing and even varied views about the rules of the game. The definition of significant realities in the communist press is keyed to communication on the broadest basis of common needs. Strategy, procedure, conflict are not neglected; they are treated as subordinate means to universal ends. Primary emphasis is upon the ends themselves.

The ends are defined clearly, emphasized daily, and espoused enthusiastically. They implicitly sweep aside the "game theory" of "objectivity" in preference to the claim that aspects of reality to be most emphatically "objective" about are the bread-and-butter promise and substance of the great issues of our time and the "objective requirements" of a radical transformation of life.

We make allowances for the fact that while our news emphases might reflect and shape prevailing modes of communication, they do not necessarily express official policy. But to the *world news reader* our emphases appear as straightforward expressions of policy priorities, objectives and intentions. Nor does he customarily share our interpretation of private corporate controls as "freedom" versus public corporate controls as its opposite. He can note that each national press uses such freedom as it has to highlight those aspects of events which fit its perspective. He may not be aware that it is our very concept of "objectivity" which makes the *New York Times* relatively even-handed in spotlighting strategic moves in the East-West conflict. He is more likely to feel

that the aspects of reality we choose to be most emphatically "objective" about seem, from his point of view, somewhat parochial. Over most of the world today, the din of procedural contest grates on the ears of hungry people impatient to get on with long-promised transformation of their daily lives. They have little choice over the means; they do not want to be further delayed or even destroyed by conflicts over how to reach their ends.

The then-Senator John F. Kennedy wrote in a book review in the *New York Times* of February 8, 1959, that ". . . it is inevitable that foreigners, to a degree, fail fully to understand American society and its dynamics . . . What really matters is whether our policies and actions in the world appear to overlap significantly with the aspirations of other peoples." The inescapable conclusion of this pilot study is that they do not.

Our perspective of emphases appears at best irrelevant, at worst running counter to a tidal wave of pent-up aspirations bursting the dams of the old power structure. The communist press rides the crest of this revolutionary tidal wave with our implicit consent and assistance. In comparison, our vantage point appears to be that of a grim holding operation based on remnants of the established order, preoccupied with the mechanics of a fascinating—if deadly—game of power, and using the scorecard for an agenda.

Perhaps only historical evidence can confirm the adequacy of standards for appraising the global communication roles of mass media. There is certainly enough such evidence to warrant serious consideration of the assumptions, findings and conclusions reported here. But our approach needs confirmation on a broader basis. We invite extension and discussion of this and similar approaches relevant to media roles in world communication, not as we wish them to be, nor as they satisfy our own yardsticks, but as they actually are.