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Module 5 Comparative News Analysis

So far, as reported by Reuters, at least 55 people have died in a conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the often-disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region that, according to NPR, is threatening to now devolve into a full-scale conflict between the two nations as the conflict begins to expand. The British BBC report from a day ago quotes a different number from Reuters, claiming at least 23 dead; however, this discrepancy is understandable in the reporting of a situation that is currently escalating. Given that all three of these sources are considered highly factual, with both Reuters and NPR having never failed a fact check and the current mark against the BBC being an article about the COVID-19 misinformation not yet being proved to have caused death, it is unlikely that any discrepancy in numbers between the sources is due to any sense of bias or nonfactual reporting and is instead likely due to the difficulty in getting accurate information out of an active warzone. NPR, thus, makes what is likely the smart move to do in the situation and simply chooses not to mention any specific numbers, instead stating that “dozens of service members on both sides have been reported killed in a flare-up of violence that began Sunday morning” (Kim, 2020).

Reuters’s reporting continues to interest me in what they choose to include in their articles: while both NPR and the BBC include the historical context for the decades-old conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia since the Soviet Union fell apart, they instead chose to not mention it whatsoever in their reporting. If it’s an attempt to avoid bringing up the politics of the situation, that feels even more confusing, as they explain the current-day ties that threaten to drag Iran, Turkey, and Russia into the conflict between the two states; for an uninformed reader, not explaining the historical context leaves a lot to be desired. In contrast, both NPR and BBC include plenty of additional context that makes learning about the situation a lot easier, as well as bringing up more potential implications of the conflict: the BBC, for example, talks about how an oil and gas pipeline that connects the world through the area is at risk of disruption if the conflict continues. NPR also includes more comments by world leaders on the situation: while the BBC mentions Erdogan’s comments of support for Azerbaijan, NPR includes comments from Putin wanting to establish piece in the area and Trump saying "we'll see if we can stop it” in addition to Erodgan’s comments. NPR is also the only source of the three to mention the Armenian genocide by Turkey in 1915, as well. Historically, US-based sources have tried to avoid even mentioning this, and while NPR didn’t explicitly state that it *was* a genocide, they made it abundantly clear that many historians do consider it so – so what has changed in recent years to finally let us talk about it?

Reuters, despite being both extremely factual and nonbiased, makes no mention of the reactions by world leaders, and it confuses me to no end: it would not take much time, much effort, or much space to include even other leader’s remarks on the situation, so why do they not? The purpose of journalism is to inform citizens with the information we need to live our lives and in modern society a worldly view is needed, so why does Reuters seem to not try to do so?

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