JPM718: Presentation Handout

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Reading’s Title: Beyond anything …: beheading videos

**1. Summary of the Reading**

*Research problem: Visual studies on conflict and terrorism are widespread. Yet, the study on the politics of the beheaded victims’ original Western country is insufficient.*

*The article studies how the violent images of ISIS impacted the military mobilisation and operation of the US and UK.*

*1, the beheaded images are circulated in modern media forms. They catch attention.*

*2, Beheading violence is more shocking than gun shot or bombing.*

*3, Politicians have been building a discourse of evil and fighting evilness to legitimise militatery operation against IS.*

*4, the attention surrouding beheading has focused on western victims. Yet, beheading and other forms of violence happen to non-western victims under terrorist rule and Saudi Arabia etc.*

*5, While the audience focus on beheading, they neglect the violence and victims from the escalated military operation.*

Conclusion: the videos play a vital role in shifting the discourse from humanitarian crisis into a national security issue that requires a harsh military solution.

**2. Critical Analysis**

*Strong:*

*The videos are used to legitimise military operations. No sufficient attention has been given to non-western cases.*

*Weak:*

*No alternative solutions are available while the public has focused on beheading videos and required a response. There is an audience cost. Politicians have to fight back even with collateral damages.*

**3. Relation to the Main Reading**

*Reflection 1: A beheading video makes a good story. 150 terrorist victims from bombing are just a number. Images of a beheaded victim with wide circulation on social media have power.*

*Reflection 2: Beheading leads to stronger military retaliation that leads the fall of the terrorist organisations. Yet, their rationale as an organisation is rationalistic: showing resolve, outperform competititors, attracting supporters. I have one question: why would this kind of violence be attractive to terrorist supportive audience? Why would people support this kind of violence?*

*Reflection 3: Since this kind of terorrist violence has calmed down in the West, will it decrease for China with China’s expanding interests in the developing world. China enters the middle east differently from the US’ military method. Will economic expansion with infrastructure sides on sacred land cause the same effects of violence?*

*Reflection 4: China tries to legitimise its assimilation ethnic policy in Xinjiang as anti-terrorism operation. Why did not that work for international audience?*