

American telly invasion

We watch their sitcoms and rush to check out the latest Hollywood flicks, so is it any wonder that our obsession with America has hit the news bulletins more than other countries? But is this really fair? Nick Barrett investigates...

America is the most powerful country on Earth but am I the only person who is sick and tired of hearing about Americans in the news? Or are we simply obsessed by the United States?

I visited a popular news website to find out information about global affairs, and all I saw were images of Hollywood celebs, and stories like "Bush apologises for insulting a reporter for wearing sunglasses" and another one involving an American guy with an alligator in his swimming pool - pretty irrelevant compared to all the major problems in the world.

It seems like the British media is acting as a parasite on all things American. We rarely hear about events in the rest of the world, even if they are more important.

2005 was a memorable year when major natural disasters hit both the East and West.

Five days before 2005 started, South East Asia and East Africa was hit by the Boxing Day tsunami that went on to kill an estimated total of almost 300,000 people.

The British media reported very well on this but coverage was mostly centred on British holidaymakers and not about the damage done to local communities and human cost.

Then came hurricane Katrina on the 29th of August, which hit the American city of New Orleans. Many died and many more were left homeless and stranded as the city was left flooded.

The British media reported day after day on the flooded city while the aftermath of the tsunami was temporarily forgotten.

New Orleans coverage continued for weeks and weeks after the disaster with continuous updates from the scene which even overshadowed reports of an earthquake in Pakistan which had a final death toll 63 times higher than that of New Orleans.

Although the earthquake was reasonably well reported on, it was secondary compared to the reports of the recovery of New Orleans.

It seems that while terrible things go on around the world all eyes stay on the West, especially the US. Some people think this is not just because America is a superpower but also because British TV is now importing more shows and films from America than ever before.

People also watch the news for entertainment and that may account for some of the American interest.

But it is also down to American entertainment, which seems to be getting more popular by the day. If you pick up a magazine, watch TV or listen to the radio, it is impossible to avoid a segment about American celebrities, television shows or music.

It appears we are more interested in America than any other country. It seems strange that British news may be able to have a correspondent in every state of America but not in every part of Africa, South America or Asia.

I think we need to restore public interest in the rest of the world and global affairs. But in the meantime America will probably go on to dominate the news while we continue to watch Hollywood films and US sitcoms. If this continues what's to stop us totally losing interest in the rest of the world?

About this article

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