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## TODAY'S "QUICK HIT": IS THIS AN EXAMPLE OF BIASED REPORTING?



By Stephen L. Bakke  December 24, 2016

### *Here's what provoked me:*

*Hey SB! Read today's Minneapolis "Star and Sickle"  ! Two news reports in the far right column of page one seem to offer a great opportunity to contrast the two headlines/titles to show a clear demonstration of biased news reporting. This could be an excellent "learning opportunity" for you and your readers. Can you figure out what I'm getting at, SB? – Stefano Bachovich – obscure curmudgeon and wise political pundit – a prolific purveyor of opinions on just about everything – SB's primary "go-to guy."*

*"Hold your water," Stefano! First, that's the Minneapolis "StarTribune" you're disparaging. And yes, I see what you're getting at – I think. I tried to work something up, and here it is – but I'm sure they won't publish this! I'll give it a shot anyway!*

### *Here's my response:*

#### **Is This an Example of Biased Reporting?**

Following are the headlines/titles for two news reports from page one of the December 24 edition:

- "Trump deepens nuclear worries – He sows confusion, using Twitter to make provocative comments."
- "U.S. allows resolution on Israel to pass – Abstaining from U.N. vote a break with past practice."

These are news reports, so the headlines/titles should be factual, not editorial in nature. The content of the reports in no way would mitigate an inappropriate title, so we don't have to investigate the content. The first title clearly gives editorial-type analysis by using subjective terms like "deepens worries," "sows confusion," and "provocative comments." The second merely provides the facts of what was done and that this was a change from past practice – just the facts.

For the first title to be consistent with the simple factuality of the second, it should have been phrased something like this: "Trump tweets reactions to Putin's comments on nuclear weapons – here's how folks are reacting."

Turning that around, here's how the second headline could have been "juiced up" to be consistent with the less appropriate editorial style of the first one: "U.S. stuns the world by allowing the U.N. to sanction Israel – Israel's status in the region likely diminished."

I wonder what other readers think?