

INTERNATIONAL COALITION AGAINST VIOLENT ENTERTAINMENT

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National Coalition on Television Violence(U.S.A.)
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Study Finds Television Violence World Problem

U.S.A. Leading Entertainment Violence Exporter

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The International Coalition on Television Violence(ICAVE), a coalition of groups from eight different countries, has released the results of the monitoring of 30 different television networks for violence. The results found that Americans see more TV violence than any other country monitored. The most violent channels were U.S. pay-cable movie channels, HBO(Home Box Office owned by Time, Inc.) and Showtime and The Movie Channel(owned by Warner Communications). These averaged over 20 acts of violence per hour. The broadcast TV channels with the most intensely violent programs were Fuji and Asahi commercial television networks in Japan with many samurai and detective programs of non-stop violence. CTV, Canada's largest commercial network, had the highest percentage of violent programs although two-thirds were imported from the U.S.A.

Violent U.S. exports made up 65% of all the violence on Canadian, English, Australian, and New Zealand TV. American commercial TV networks, ABC, NBC, and CBS, had the highest percentage of violent programs after CTV of Canada. They were also the origin for most of the violent programs found in other countries. American programming was four times more violent than Canadian, English, German, or Australian programming. Only Japanese commercial programming was as violent.

ICAVE presented awards to the 9 least violent networks at the United Nations in New York on December 15th. Receiving 1st place awards for the least violent and most beneficial programming were ZDF of West Germany and NHK of Japan. BBC-2

of England was given 2nd place while PBS of the United States received 3rd place. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation(ABC) and Channel 0/28 of Australia received Special Recognition for excellence. CBC of Canada, ARD of West Germany and WTBS of the U.S. received Honorable Mention awards. WTBS was the only commercial network to win any award. Commercial television was 8 times more violent on the average than public TV. Only BBC-1 of England and the two advertiser supported public networks in New Zealand, TV1 and TV2, carried large amounts of violence on public TV.

Some of the violent U.S. programs carried on TV in other countries included: Hart to Hart, Tales of the Gold Monkey, Cagney & Lacey, Remington Steele, Dukes of Hazzard, Mannix, Dracula, Chisum, Magnum P.I., Dallas, Dynasty, and Streets of San Francisco. ICAVE reports that violent U.S. programming is also common in many other countries not covered in the monitoring project including countries as diverse as Turkey, Spain, Peru, and the Persian Gulf states.

Dr. Thomas Radecki, M.D., a psychiatrist at the University of Illinois School of Medicine and research director for the project, explained that each coalition member taped the programs on videocassettes and sent them to Champaign, Illinois for monitoring. Dr. Radecki said, "We were very disappointed with what we found. In every country except West Germany, violence predominates on television. No channel was totally free of inappropriate violence. However, it was exciting to see the good work of the public TV networks in so many countries. These networks were not only low in violence but they were also very high in documentary and educational programming. They are doing a great public service. It appears that we need more public TV and less commercial TV.

ICAVE has found over 900 scientific studies and reports from 22 different countries* documenting the harmful effects of violent TV and movie entertainment. The National Institute of Mental Health in the U.S. has determined that the evidence of harmful effects is "overwhelming". The American Medical Association has stated that TV violence is causing an epidemic of violence in young people. Radecki stated, "U.S., Canadian, Japanese, and British governmental bodies have declared entertainment violence a significant health problem but have allowed the problem to get worse. The first TV generation in the U.S., Canada, England, Australia and in many other countries has grown up to be the most violent generation in each country's recent history."

David Scott of the Canadian Coalition Against Violent Entertainment noted that per capita murder rates in Canada have increased by 400% since 1960 and rates of attempted murders have increased by 1000%." Radecki added, "Similar massive increases in crime and violence have occurred in the U.S. and throughout Western Europe. Even Japan has experienced a 60% increase in adolescent crime since 1969

and laughing at violence or getting a thrill from viewing violence has been found to be a sign that violence and desensitization are being learned. Research from the University of Wisconsin on violent rape and female victim films common to American pay-cable and broadcast TV has found these to have a powerful effect in increasing rape attitudes in normal college males. One out of every three American women will be raped in her lifetime and over 35% of U.S. and Canadian males state that there is, at least, some chance that they would rape a woman if certain of getting away with it."

"Entertainment violence is heavily promoted in Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. In the U.S. alone we have found that almost \$1 billion is spent each year promoting violent entertainment. This is false and deceptive advertising of the most dangerous nature. We are presenting specific legislation to require counter-advertising here in the U.S. and are suggesting this legislation be passed in each country worldwide. This strategy was very effective in the U.S. when used against cigarettes from 1967 to 1970 until pushed off of TV by the cigarette companies who helped legislation to ban all TV advertising of cigarettes in order to get rid of the counter-advertising. By simply giving viewers the honest information and letting the viewers chose, the popularity of violent programs will decrease considerably. We must educate our citizens as to the dangers of violent entertainment. We can only pump so much violence into our peoples before we explode."

Dr. Arnold Goldstein, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Research on Aggression at the University of Syracuse agreed with ICAVE. Dr. Goldstein has recently edited the book "Aggression in Global Perspective" (Pergamon Press) which looks at violence in 18 different countries. Goldstein states, "The impact of America's mass media on behavior remains immense. One of it's effects is to increase the level of violence in America and many other countries. The evidence leaves little room for doubt. The very heavy diet of violence on American TV is a very substantial contributor to both the acquisition of aggressive behavior and the instigation of its actual enactment. The pernicious effects of TV violence go further, and extend to the substantial decrease in sensitivity, concern and revulsion to violence among the general viewing audience. Higher and higher levels of violence become more and more tolerable. We believe that much of American TV is appropriately viewed as dangerous and promotes the worst in American behavior. Our research finds similar harmful effects in South American and Europe. Action must be taken to correct this dangerous situatin if we are to reverse the worldwide spread of violence."(telephone: 1-315-423-3596)

and a 200% increase in school violence."

Other coalition members agreed that entertainment violence is a worldwide problem and that immediate action is necessary. Max Abbott, Director of the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand says, "The networks spend large sums promoting violent programs but never warn the viewer that violent entertainment has harmful effects. They have increased the violence in the past year even during the children viewing hours. What happens in the U.S. is absolutely crucial to the situation here since 76% of the violence comes from the U.S. We must hold New Zealand's public networks responsible for their program selection."

Mary Whitehouse of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association stated, "The evidence of harm here in England is clear. Dr. William Belson's research found that TV and movie violence is a major cause of violence among adolescent English viewers. We take this survey information seriously and seek corrective action."

Christina Crowther of the Youth Protection Society in West Germany said, "We are very concerned about the problem of videocassettes showing intense violence. These have been proven to have major harmful effects even on healthy adult viewers. We are also concerned about the findings of pay-cable TV from the U.S. since some companies are planning the same for here. We agree with the ICAVE goals to correct the situation."

ICAVE's proposed agenda is being studied by each member country:

- 1) Counter-advertising should be required by law so that for every 2 or 3 ads promoting violent entertainment, there is one ad space given to warn viewers about the dangers of violent material;
- 2) Better movie, TV, and videocassette rating systems that take violence seriously, restricting it to adult viewers with warnings;
- 3) require non-violent pay-cable movie networks as alternatives if violent networks are permitted;
- 4) more public TV channels;
- 5) Prohibit adult violence and sexual violence totally from broadcast or cable TV.

Dr. Radecki stated, "The research suggests that 25% to 50% of the violence in the U.S. comes directly or indirectly from entertainment violence. The culture of violence that is being bred by the U.S. and foreign entertainment industries is a great threat to peace and democracy in our world. Research shows that such programming increases not only family violence and criminal behavior, but also attitudes favorable toward militaristic solutions, distrust, and selfishness. Research shows increases in violence even in the communist country of Poland coming from violent TV programming."

Radecki noted that it is a common misconception that only children are affected by TV violence, "Violent entertainment has major, harmful influences on adult viewers. Over 200 research studies on normal adults show important harmful effects. However, adult viewers are almost always unconscious of these effects. Enjoying

and laughing at violence or getting a thrill from viewing violence has been found to be a sign that violence and desensitization are being learned. Research from the University of Wisconsin on violent rape and female victim films common to American pay-cable and broadcast TV has found these to have a powerful effect in increasing rape attitudes in normal college males. One out of every three American women will be raped in her lifetime and over 35% of U.S. and Canadian males state that there is, at least, some chance that they would rape a woman if certain of getting away with it."

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