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THE FUTURE MILITARY-MEDIA RELATIONSHIP:
THE MEDIA AS AN ACTOR IN WAR EXECUTION

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by

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the official policy or position of the US government or the Department of Defense.

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Preface

Like many American's, I "tuned in" to the Persian Gulf War via the Cable News Network (CNN). To be honest, the impact CNN was creating on the military-media relationship was lost on me at that time; CNN just had the best war coverage available. My ACSC studies enlightened me as to CNN's impact and prompted my inquiry regarding the media's role in war execution, an inquiry that led to this thesis effort.

My intent with this thesis is not to answer the military-media relationship question, but rather to examine the trends underlying the historical relationship between the military and the media, to present some of the current and future issues confronting this relationship, and to take a stab at defining the media's role in war execution. A set of military-media relationship guidelines, or rules, drawn from the literature are also provided. Hopefully, these guidelines and my recommendations will promote further discussion regarding the role of the media in war execution.

I would like to thank two individuals. First, my thanks to my faculty research advisor and course instructor, Lt Col Steve Marr, for giving me free reign during this research. Secondly, my sincere appreciation to my wife, Christy, for tolerating yet another (and last?) thesis writing exercise.

Abstract

Technology has changed not only the nature of modern warfare but also how the media covers warfare. Technology has made the media an active and influential participant in armed conflict informing and influencing American public opinion. Public support is crucial to military operations. The military must address the military-media relationship since US adversaries increasingly target the US media to erode crucial public support. This research examines potential military use of the media weapon.

Drawing on journal articles, technical reports, and various texts, this research examines some historical trends, addresses current and future issues, compiles some guidelines for use in modern military-media relations, and examines media considerations in current doctrine. Five categories of issues are discussed: media access to the conflict, media's influence on public support, the inherent biases in media reporting, how the media is targeted to influence public support, and various changes confronting the military and the media.

The compiled rules fall into five categories: planning, general guidelines, use of presentations and briefings, dealing with real-time coverage and satellite imagery, and finally concepts applicable to the modern information-intensive world.

Published doctrine is somewhat vague regarding media considerations during war execution, but fairly comprehensive considerations are found in doctrine for military operations other than war. Both general and specific doctrinal aspects are discussed.

Many realize the media can be a weapon of war. Failure to recognize and counter enemy usage of the media could lead to avoidable military failures.

Chapter 1

Introduction

A free press is fundamental to our democracy. Any limit on that freedom is dangerous.

—Army Brig Gen Scott Magers

Unless we are prepared to fight the media war fairly but with every resource at our command, we will effectively surrender that vital ground to the enemy.

—Wing Commander H. H. Pyper

The media¹ has been present at all of America's armed conflicts. The most memorable images of war exist due to the media, the print media and in particular the film media. Consider the following examples.

World War II (WWII) field correspondent accounts brought home the stark realities of war. Ernie Pyle's poignant account of the death of Capt Waskow is a classic; for example, Pyle's observation, "You feel small in the presence of dead men, and you don't ask silly questions."² Photographs by *Life* of dead soldiers on the beach at Buna, New Guinea³ shocked the American public, and were rarely published thereafter.⁴ The media deemed American(s) unprepared for such harsh realities of war and acted accordingly.

The media delivered the grim realities of WWII as well as its glory. Photographs of Dresden after the Allied firebombing and Hiroshima after the first atomic bomb blast

testify to WWII devastation.⁵ However, the image of five Marines and a Navy corpsman planting the American flag on the Suribachi summit remains one of the most glorious and memorable images of war; a monument to this memory greets visitors to Quantico, Virginia.⁶

As Howell points out, “The Vietnam War’s two most famous filmed sequences were the point blank execution by pistol shot to the head of a Vietcong prisoner...and that of the little Vietnamese girl running naked down the road, her body burned by napalm...”⁷ However, in 1973 Sal Veder captured the joyful return to U.S. soil of prisoner of war Lt. Col. Robert L. Stirm, a reception led by the open arms of his teenage daughter.⁸

More recently, the infamous photo of a dead Iraqi mother holding her dead infant daughter after a gas attack on Halabjah in March 1988 depicts the cruelty of Iraq’s Saddam Hussein against his own countrymen.⁹ Coalition offensive actions against Saddam’s forces in the 1990 Persian Gulf War ceased abruptly after images of the “Highway of Death” were broadcast and published producing perceptions the coalition was “piling on” destruction.¹⁰ However, Americans also remember aircraft video footage of aerial precision weaponry hitting bridge and air shaft targets with tremendous accuracy.

Many consider the American media a fourth branch of government and often refer to the media as the “fourth estate.”¹¹ The media serves two vital functions for democratic societies: (1) inform the public on what policies its government is pursuing and how those policies are being executed, and (2) independently record for history what happened.¹² The media provides another system of checks and balances in American democracy.¹³ The media covers the American military allowing for “public examination of the purpose and

goals of armed conflict.”¹⁴ Media success in this role has caused tense relations between the military and the media over the years.

Famed war theorist Carl von Clausewitz dubbed as the “remarkable trinity” the crucial relationship between “people, their government and their Army.”¹⁵ The media links together the remarkable trinity.¹⁶ Figure 1 depicts this relationship.

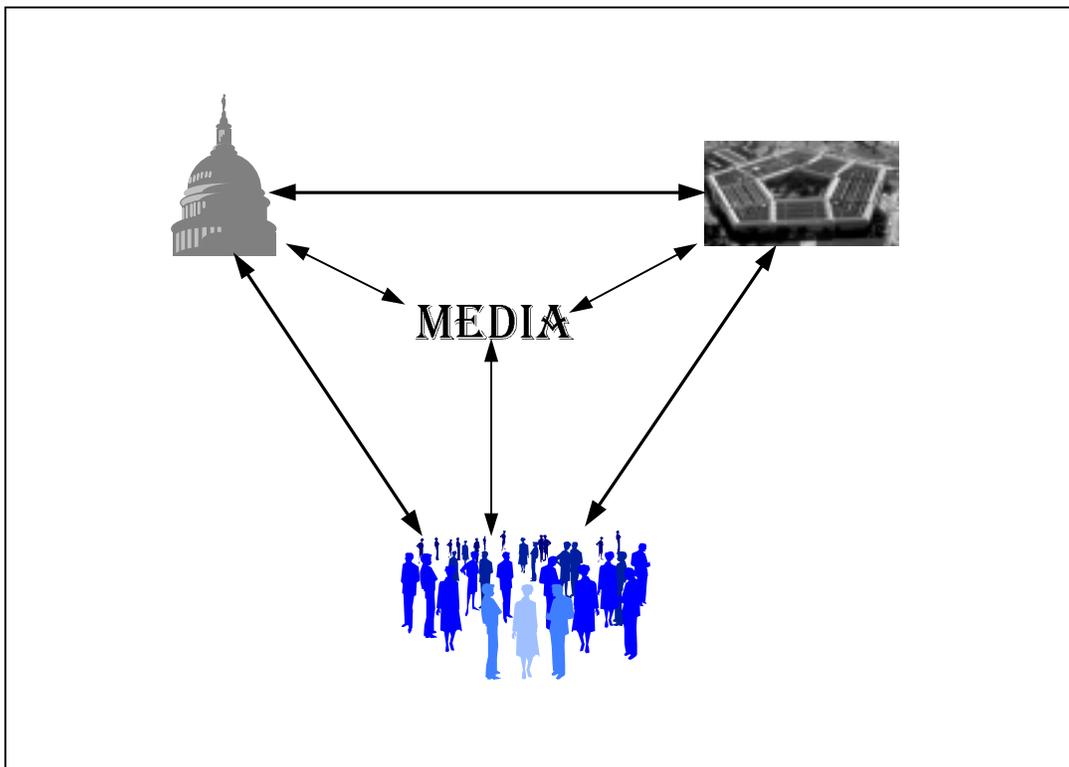


Figure 1. Remarkable Trinity Revisited

Positive public opinion is crucial to military success, particularly during armed conflict.¹⁷ The media is the American public’s representative in contemporary military operations. As America’s military becomes increasingly involved in operations other than war around the globe, public support will become more important. Influential media coverage of such military operations can have a significant impact on mission success.

CNN coverage of the Gulf War changed forever the nature of media war coverage. The media used live TV feeds and instantaneous global communications to figuratively “bring the public to the war.” Doctors even coined the term, “CNN effect” to describe constant viewing of war coverage.¹⁸ Live coverage also reinforced informational aspects of war execution. Iraq manipulated media images for propaganda purposes. Coalition press conferences directly informed the American public (bypassing the media) and helped deceive Iraq regarding Coalition war plans.¹⁹ In short, media coverage was an active instrument of war. Future wars will see more of the same, and as Wing Commander Pyper notes, the military must prepare for these types of future wars.²⁰

This thesis examines the current military-media relationship and how effective relations between the military and the media are a weapon in a media-intensive war. Chapter 2 examines historical trends in the military-media relationship. Chapter 3 examines current and future issues in the military-media relationship. Chapter 4 compiles “rules” useful for creating effective media relations to legitimately influence public opinion.²¹ Chapter 5 examines how current published joint doctrine accommodates the military-media relationship. Finally, Chapter 6 provides recommendations and concluding remarks.

Notes

¹Throughout this thesis, the general label “media” will include print (newspapers, magazines) and film (photographs, newsreel, and video) journalists.

²Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1943), 106.

³Philip B. Kunhardt Jr, *Life: World War II* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 216.

⁴Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines* (New York: Priority Press Pubs, 1985), 29.

⁵Kunhardt, 367, 414-415.

⁶*Ibid.*, 396.

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⁷Maj Cass D. Howell, "War, Television and Public Opinion," *Military Review* 67, no. 2 (February 1987): 73. The Vietcong prisoner was executed by General Nguyen Ngoc Loan. The 1969 Pulitzer Prize photograph was taken by Eddie Adams of the AP. The child photograph also won a Pulitzer Prize, in 1972 for Nguyen Kong. See George Esper, *The Eyewitness History of the Vietnam War, 1961-1975* (New York: Villard Books, 1983), 105, 151, respectively.

⁸Sal Veder's photograph also won a Pulitzer Prize.

⁹Thomas B. Allen et al., *CNN: War in the Gulf* (Atlanta, Georgia: Turner Publishing, Inc., 1991), 51.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 27.

¹¹Lt Col Marc D. Felman, "The Military/Media Clash and the New Principle of War: Media Spin," (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1995), 2.

¹²Capt James B. Brown, "Media Access to the Battlefield," *Military Review* 72, no. 7 (July 1992), 11.

¹³Braestrup, 13.

¹⁴Capt John E. Boyle, "Emerging News Media Communication Technologies in Future Military Conflicts," AFIT/CI/CIA-91-019 (Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio: Air Force Institute of Technology, 1991), 25.

¹⁵Col Harry G. Summers Jr., "Western Media and Recent Wars," *Military Review* 65, no. 5 (May 1986), 6.

¹⁶Summers, 6, refers to media as an unofficial link between the military and the government. Felman, 11, views the media as an umbrella over the entire trinity. This thesis considers the media as a conduit for information and perceptions between elements of the trinity.

¹⁷Joint Publication 1, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States, 10 January 1995, III-12.

¹⁸Lt Col Frank J. Stech, "Winning CNN Wars," *Parameters* 24, (Autumn 1994), 17.

¹⁹Stephen Aubin, "The Media's Impact on the Battlefield," *Strategic Review* 20 (Winter 1992), 58-59, recounts how CNN military analyst retired Major General Smith predicted General Schwarzkopf would deceive the enemy and the press, and how later during the conflict General Schwarzkopf never discouraged media interest in an anticipated Marine Corps amphibious operation, when in fact no such landing was ever intended.

²⁰Wing Commander H. H. Pyper, "The Media in Modern Warfare - Friend or Foe?" *Hawk* (1992), 60.

²¹*Ibid.*, 58.

Chapter 2

Background

The media adds another dimension to the battlefield.

—Capt Ellen K. Haddock

Any research addressing the military-media relationship is incomplete without some historical accounting. Good chronological summaries already exist, such as those by Braestrup,¹ Cox,² Felman,³ and Andrews.⁴ This chapter briefly examines three important historical trends in the military-media relationship: decreased event-to-news timespan; censorship and operational security concerns; and how public support is increasingly influenced by the media and targeted by US adversaries.

Decreased Event-to-News Timespan

Technological advancements in media coverage capabilities have shortened considerably the time between a military event occurring and its publication. The Mexican-American War saw two important advancements: the telegraph and the establishment of a dedicated news network.⁵ The telegraph, though unreliable due to cable cutting, was very timely. In fact, President Polk learned about a US victory at Vera Cruz not through military channels but via telegram from the publisher of the Baltimore Sun.⁶ To ensure a continuous news flow, the media established a dedicated pony express and a

network of field correspondents. The willingness of the media to expend such effort to cover a war reflected a change dictated largely by growing commercial competition among newspapers.⁷

Telegraph technology continued to expand and improve so that by the time of the Civil War, the media could publish military information while events were actually occurring.⁸ Newspapers quickly became a source of intelligence.⁹ As a result, the Civil War saw the start of military censorship of the media, a practice that would continue until the Vietnam War 100 years later.

War went live via radio in WWII, which was then America's primary news source.¹⁰ Wire services transmitted both text and print information across the Atlantic, keeping Americans well informed about events in Europe. Newsreels brought motion pictures of the war to the American public. Reporting speed still outpaced war events. For example, B-29 crews returning from bombing missions over Japan could listen to radio broadcasts describing their mission results while the planes were still 1000 miles from base.¹¹ The military-media relationship reached a high point during WWII despite censorship practices. There was a feeling of mutual trust¹² and the reporting was generally accurate,¹³ though for the most part the reporting served to bolster public support versus remaining objective.¹⁴

Television coverage of war began with Vietnam.¹⁵ War scenes filmed during the day made the evening news in America the same day.¹⁶ Initially, the military-media relationship in Vietnam was good; there was no censorship, reporting guidelines were in place and working well, the press had free access throughout Vietnam, and the reports were

generally favorable to the military and the war effort.¹⁷ However, media coverage of the 1968 North Vietnamese Tet Offensive changed this relationship.¹⁸

Long before Tet, to counter media video images and maintain public support, American leadership launched a public relations campaign which included daily press briefs demonstrating positive progress in prosecuting the war in Vietnam.¹⁹ The Tet offensive surprised the media by demonstrating a North Vietnamese capability believed destroyed. The nightly news images no longer matched the created media (and public) perceptions of the status of the war. Despite a US victory, the Tet experience led to a military “credibility gap” that remained until the conclusion of US involvement in Vietnam.

Television went live and the media went “on line” during the Persian Gulf War. CNN featured 24-hour coverage, creating a new standard for media war coverage. Mobile satellite disks provided real-time video coverage of the battle, a capability most media representatives thought impossible as late as 1983.²⁰ Electronic mail, digital transmission of photographs and the facsimile further improved reporting capabilities.²¹ In short, the media, and through the media the public, were suddenly and seemingly forever placed “at the tip of the military sword.”

Censorship and Operational Security Concerns

When media coverage speed exceeds military movement speed, media publication (or broadcasts) can impact military operations, in particular the security of military operations. Censorship of media products and controlled access to the battle area are historically the methods used to maintain operational security.

When sensitive military information found its way into Northern and Southern newspapers during the Civil War, generals on both sides clamored for changes. Voluntary media controls failed.²² Instead, telegraph lines became military-controlled assets, easing the censorship task, and the military could shut down offending newspapers.²³ Severe media censorship by military leaders on both sides was common, but unevenly applied and largely dictated by the whims of particular leaders.²⁴ Military-media tensions began surfacing.

These tensions further increased during the Spanish-American War. Publication of sensitive information regarding ship movements led to government-imposed media restrictions.²⁵ These incidents of published ship movements still serve as the legal basis for military exemptions to media challenges to the military's right to control battlefield access and to control publication of media-held information deemed a threat to operational security.²⁶ By WWI and continuing with WWII, censorship was standard policy and instituted immediately upon US entry into each war.

Censorship disappeared briefly during the Korean War.²⁷ However, the lack of military-developed reporting guidelines and confusion on the part of the media on what to report, led to a media request for formal censorship which remained in place for the remainder of the war.

Censorship as a practice disappeared in the Vietnam War.²⁸ Reporting guideline compliance meant very few media-based security incidents occurred.²⁹ However, misinformation provided to the media led to a military credibility gap. Continued media questioning of US involvement in Vietnam, increasingly negative reporting of military actions,³⁰ and a general erosion of US public support for the war effort helped push for the

eventual withdrawal of US troops. A general mistrust between the military and the media ensued with a fairly common (mis)perception among military officers that the media was a prime cause of the defeat in Vietnam.³¹ Interestingly, the Army's official histories credit media reports as often more accurate than public statements of the administration.³²

This mistrust and operational security concerns led to excluding the media from covering the initial Grenada operations in 1983. Ensuing media objections led Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) General Vessey to appoint Major General Sidle (USA, Ret.) to lead a panel investigating the military-media relationship. The Sidle panel recommendations included creating a DOD National Media Pool to provide media access to initial military operations.³³ The first test of the pool system failed when Secretary of Defense Cheney called the pool out too late for adequate planning to accommodate media operations in Panama.³⁴

The most recent US conflict, the Persian Gulf War, saw a successful media pool deployment. However, the significant role of the air campaign and the limited ground action restricted media coverage of actual conflict. Post-conflict, the media complained of military "access control" whereby the military shaped media images by excessively controlling media access to the action and controlling all information regarding the conflict. These perceived controls led some members of the media into court to file suit for unrestricted battlefield access. The war ended before there was a court decision, but the issue remains unresolved.³⁵

Public Support: The Military Achilles Heel

As Figure 1 depicts, the public is part of the Remarkable Trinity espoused by Clausewitz. Public opinion can spur action and it can cease actions. Our enemies, and our own leaders, know this and exploit it using the US media as their weapon.

Media's influence on national politics and policy arrived with the Spanish-American War. William Randolph Hearst, owner of the New York Journal, favored American intervention in the Cuban uprising against Spanish rule.³⁶ Hearst is credited with replying via telegram to one of his field correspondents in Cuba seeking permission to return to US soil, "PLEASE REMAIN. YOU FURNISH PICTURES. I WILL FURNISH WAR."³⁷ When the American battleship *Maine* exploded, headline stories inflamed public opinion with phrases like "Remember the Maine!" US involvement in the Spanish-American War followed soon thereafter.

Censorship and propaganda worked hand-in-hand during WWI and WWII, mostly to maintain US public support for the war effort. The British actually targeted the American media to garner public support for US entry into the WWII.³⁸ Thus, as early as the 1940s, the American public was a target of influence. In general, during these world wars, the media willingly published material intended to keep crucial public support high, thus losing their objectivity along the way.³⁹

Despite enemy propaganda campaigns in earlier wars, the Korean War seems to represent the point where our enemies realized the media is a weapon against US public support. Chinese negotiators stalled negotiations, prolonging the stalemated war, to increase UN casualties and erode US public support.⁴⁰ During the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein used staged media images in his own propaganda campaign.

More recently, media influence has again become an issue. Operations in Somalia and Rwanda received significant media attention. Public outcry occurred after the broadcast of scenes of a dead US soldier being dragged through the streets. Some even suggest the media must provide a focus on a world event for it to become truly important among world leadership.⁴¹

The media will continue to influence public opinion and will increasingly be a target for eroding US public support, an issue addressed in the next chapter.

Notes

¹Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines* (New York: Priority Press Pubs, 1985).

²Col Charles W. Cox III, "The Media: The Military Commanders Friend or Foe?" (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, Air War College, April 1995).

³Lt Col Marc D. Felman. "The Military/Media Clash and the New Principle of War: Media Spin," (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1995).

⁴Peter Andrews, "The Media and the Military." *American Heritage* 42, no. 4 (July/August 1991).

⁵Loren B. Thompson, *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 7.

⁶Ronald L. Schultz, "Combat Media Coverage Principles: Doomed to Failure," (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: Army War College, 7 April 1993), 4.

⁷Thompson, 8.

⁸LCDR William N. Nagy, "Department of Defense Combat Coverage Principles: Will They Serve Us in the Future?" (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1995), 19.

⁹Thompson, 10.

¹⁰Everette E. Dennis et al., *The Media at War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict* (New York City: Gannett Foundation Media Center, 1991), 39.

¹¹Ernie Pyle, *Last Chapter* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1945), 37.

¹²Censorship is generally credited with fostering this trusting relationship in that troops felt confident openly discussing matters with the media without fear of violating security via published reports when the press are prevented from publishing such information. Additionally, press restraint further contributed to this mutual trust relationship.

¹³Cox, 7.

¹⁴Schultz, 11.

¹⁵Cox, 7. Colonel Cox quotes CBS' Morley Safer, "This is television's first war...The camera can describe in excruciating, harrowing detail what war is all about. The cry of

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pain, the shattered face—it's all there on film, and out it goes to millions of American homes during the dinner hour.”

¹⁶Not only was television providing the images, the widespread use of jet engine technology further improved transportation technology enabling quicker movement of media materials within and out of the theater.

¹⁷Maj Paul Ambrose Darcy, “The Future of the Military-Media Relationship,” (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1993), 34. Interestingly, Cox, 7, and Nagy, 30, offer differing opinions regarding the tone of early media coverage in Vietnam.

¹⁸Thompson, 43.

¹⁹Dennis, 15, and Schultz, 13.

²⁰Braestrup, 175-176.

²¹Dennis, 35.

²²Felman, 4.

²³Dennis, 9.

²⁴Capt William A. Wilcox, Jr., “Media Coverage of Military Operations: OPLAW Meets the First Amendment,” *The Army Lawyer* (May 1995), 46. For instance, General Sherman, much maligned by the media, banished all correspondents. General Grant regulated any media accompanying his army. Shultz, 4, relates how General McClellan required a gentleman's agreement with the accompanying media.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 9.

²⁶Wilcox, 50-51. The landmark case of *Near vs. Minnesota*, 1931, concerning the media's right to publish. Wilcox cites Chief Justice Hughes, who observed that the right to publish was not unlimited, stating, “No one would question but that a government might prevent . . . publication of sailing dates of transports or the number or location of troops.”

²⁷Frank Aukofer and William P. Lawrence, *America's Team, The Odd Couple: A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military* (Nashville: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1995), 39.

²⁸Thompson, 42.

²⁹Dennis, 14. This approach worked. In the period of 1964-1968, there were over 2000 correspondents covering Vietnam, yet there were only 6 violations of the established reporting guidelines.

³⁰Some of this negative reporting was quite legitimate such as in the case of the My Lai massacre incident involving Lt William Calley.

³¹Cox, 7.

³²Thompson, 47.

³³Braestrup provides the complete Sidle panel recommendations. See A. J. Langguth, “The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs' Study on Military-Media Relationship,” in *The Military and the Media*, ed. William Schneider et al. (Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, Ca.: The Keck Center for International Strategic Studies, July 1984) for insights regarding Sidle panel proceedings.

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³⁴Maj Melissa Wells-Petry, "Reporters as the Guardians of Freedom," *Military Review* 73, no. 2 (February 1993), 33.

³⁵Wilcox, 48.

³⁶Nagy, 20.

³⁷Schultz, 5.

³⁸Nagy, 23. The British employed novelist Sir Gilbert Parker to analyze the American press and determine where [the British] might influence the [American] press.

³⁹Schultz, 11.

⁴⁰Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 195.

⁴¹Seminar discussions, Air Command and Staff College, Academic Year 1997.

Chapter 3

Issues in the Military-Media Relationship

It is no longer possible for a free country to fight even a limited war in a world of modern communications, with reporters and television cameras on the battlefield against the feelings and wishes of the people.

—James Reston
New York Times

Despite the long history of cooperation there remain many unresolved issues underlying the military-media relationship. This chapter groups some of these issues into five broad categories describing particular issues within each category.

Media Access to the Battlefield

Media access to the battlefield is surely *the* hot issue in the military-media relationship. The issue centers around the First Amendment to the Constitution and the freedom it guarantees.¹ One media argument is the media's right of access to the military-controlled battlefield. However, the First Amendment simply guarantees equal access for the public and the press and Court decisions have held that military functions, bases, combat zones, are not generally open to the public.² Another argument posed by the media is the public's right to know. However, this is not a legal concept³ and is unsupported in the courts.⁴ Is the media access issue clearly something the Court should decide? No. Pressed to decide, the Court will decide in the military's favor in the best

interest of the country. The media loses access to cover the story, the public loses information about the conflict, and the military loses its public support.

The military's concern with media access focuses on operational security as well as the media's physical security.⁵ However, the historical record suggests media trustworthiness despite some slip-ups.⁶ As Arthur Lubow notes, "Mutual mistrust is part of the shared heritage of soldiers and journalists in time of war. So is mutual accommodation."⁷ Physical security will always remain an issue. The media will absorb their share of casualties when involved in front-line coverage despite military concerns.⁸

Another issue is satellite feeds from the front.⁹ As previously discussed, neither the military nor the media favor censorship since that practice ended with Vietnam.¹⁰ But can censorship at the source,¹¹ and the dangers inherent with live coverage¹² from the front, be reconciled with the need for operational security? Furthermore, is live coverage really necessary to keep the public informed or are tape delayed stories sufficient? This author cannot foresee justifying media access for live battle coverage under any circumstances since tape delayed stories will suffice.

Another access issue is media pools. Media pools provide media access to initial military operations. However, the media dislikes pooling and clamors for rapid dissolution of all media pools. The media prefers free access to the operations area. However, the military cannot allow large numbers of media representatives to freely roam an area where there is armed conflict, especially when the media is providing live video coverage. Therefore, media pooling will remain despite media objections.¹³

Media Influence on Events

The influence exerted by the American media on military events really burst on the scene during Vietnam. Television played a major role shaping America's image of the conflict.¹⁴ The Tet offensive was a turning point as public opinion shifted away from support for the war.¹⁵ Did the media lose the war because of their coverage? Definitely not. The media publicized the poor political and military strategy in Vietnam leading to the public's questioning of US involvement. However in 1968, when Walter Cronkite stated on national television, "I think that it is time for us to face the facts in Vietnam--that we are in a no-win situation and it is time for us to get out...",¹⁶ many in America got interested in Vietnam and agreed. After all, the most trusted man in America had spoken.

The "trusted media representative" aspect, epitomized by Walter Cronkite, is an issue also referred to as the "TV personality." The Gulf War again sets a standard. Every network employed "military analysts" and along with the CNN correspondents, they became household names almost overnight.¹⁷ Their analysis was often the first analysis American's received regarding war events. Such perceived truths are difficult to counter, particularly in a fast-paced, information-intensive, war-time environment.¹⁸

The TV medium, particularly CNN, have become *defacto* intelligence sources. Secretary of Defense Cheney and CJCS General Powell referenced CNN during the Gulf War as one of their intelligence sources.¹⁹ Defense officials routinely use the media to keep abreast of current affairs.²⁰ The Navy has even made CNN available on all their ships to keep their sailors informed.²¹ Should the military use commercial news for intelligence purposes? Yes, for instance the next military operation other than war may be in response

to a CNN special report. A public affairs officer (PAO) viewing CNN could possibly anticipate his command's next major tasking by assessing situations of interest to CNN.

The TV has also become a diplomatic channel. President George Bush²² and members of Congress²³ communicated directly to Iraq's Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War via televised press conferences and floor debates, respectively. Is TV really an appropriate or effective diplomatic channel? Yes, as an information asset TV enhances the US diplomatic instrument of power. However, problems arise when sending mixed signals, when the signals come from the wrong people, or when media orchestration conflicts with military strategy thereby affecting military outcomes.²⁴

Inherent Media Biases

Despite the media's best intentions, coverage of military conflicts contains inherent media biases.

The "fog of war" makes in-depth analysis difficult in war.²⁵ The journalist on a daily deadline must (of necessity) submit stories based on incomplete information, yet does so while writing with an air of authority. Live TV coverage exacerbates the problem further since video images carry their own perceptions.²⁶ Combine the fog-of-war with media deadlines and reporting will inadvertently become biased.

Television adds its own particular bias. A typical TV news spot is 15 seconds, yet it produces tremendous perceptions with its combination of video and concise wording.²⁷ This tremendous compression of information, video and careful wording, invariably distorts the conveyed message.²⁸ Careful wording and video labeling involve subtleties in

meaning often lost on the audience.²⁹ Thus, TV gets the message out quickly but of an insufficient depth to present the situation accurately and unambiguously.³⁰

The particular result of the TV vignette is the “first impression (or perception) problem.”³¹ As Cochran quotes a TV newsman, “We hit hard with the visuals and leave the broader explanation to the press.”³² With military coverage, who ensures the press provides the broader explanation of the visuals to the public? The press is hardly the watchdog for the television media leaving the military to clarify television’s messages.

Competition creates media coverage bias as well. The “scoop” is a means of success.³³ However, scoops based on inaccurate or incomplete information create misleading reports and a first perception problem. This situation will worsen as communications and computing costs continue to plummet and new outlets for information become available thereby increasing media competition for military coverage.

Finally, personalities create biases. Too much of a focus on a TV personality may lead to broadcast decisions based on fame motivations versus fact motivations.³⁴ Journalists are individuals and as such craft their stories according to their own knowledge, experiences, and comprehension of the current situation.³⁵ They order their facts and choose their words and in so doing convey their own image of the situation.³⁶ The media is also a business and targets an audience to buy their product.³⁷ Of course there are the less common media biases, such as a penchant for the sensational, finding accounts of wrong doing, or the search for the Pulitzer Prize story.³⁸ All stories carry a message and can have a tremendous impact.

Use of the media

Any military, friendly or enemy, uses the media during wartime. The US no longer propagandizes via the media preferring instead truthful reporting.³⁹ However, our adversaries treat the US media as a propaganda target and the media must understand this fact.⁴⁰ Starting with the Korean War, our enemies have consistently attacked US public support using the media as a weapon.⁴¹ The Chinese maintained the Korean stalemate along the 38th parallel knowing media coverage of mounting US casualties would erode public support. The North Vietnamese used the media for propaganda,⁴² as did Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War.⁴³

Other uses of the media are more noble. A legitimate use of TV is to communicate US military objectives to the American public and to the enemy. Informing the American public aids their understanding of ensuing military events. Informing the enemy can possibly avoid hostilities altogether by broadcasting evidence of resolve and ability to achieve stated objectives. Saddam Hussein first suggested negotiations over TV near the end of the Gulf War.⁴⁴ Thus, the media can facilitate conflict termination before and during hostilities.⁴⁵ Finally, public relations efforts aimed at achieving unit recognition serves to inform the public about their troops, promote public support for the military efforts, and sustain the will of the soldiers on the battlefield.⁴⁶

The Military and the Media in Changing Times

Technology is changing everything. Driven by computer, communication, and transportation advances, the “information age” is overwhelming us and impacting media coverage of military operations. The decreasing cost of communications and an explosion

in media outlets means more media coverage of military operations.⁴⁷ Within five years the Motorola Iridium satellite constellation promises a true global cellular telephone system.⁴⁸ Cellular technology and portable satellite systems make live coverage of the battlefield a reality, increasing military concerns for operational security.⁴⁹ Global communications provides simultaneous coverage from anywhere on the globe. Computers and multi-media technology allow a merging of information from independent sources to create a comprehensive picture, even though much of the information is actually uncertain. The military will confront these images and must respond quickly and accurately to resulting media questions and concerns.

Technology also makes independent media coverage more difficult. Media coverage adapts well to ground campaigns but, “An air war, by its very nature, is extremely difficult to cover.”⁵⁰ Air and ground-based precision weaponry de-emphasizes ground operations. Such a situation arose in the Gulf War prompting renewed media concerns over military access control. The issue boils down to accommodating media coverage of military operations when military technologies permit long-range, stand-off attack.

The bottom-line is, like it or not, technology advances have made the media a direct and influential participant and factor in future military operations.⁵¹

Notes

¹Marshall Silverberg, “Constitutional Concerns in Denying the Press Access to Military Operations,” in *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage*, ed. Loren B. Thompson (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 166.

²*Ibid.*, 170. Additional Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines* (New York: Priority Press Pubs, 1985), 127, points out that courts have ruled right of access for the press applies to those things traditionally open to the press. However, the courts have always provided exemptions to traditional military access when pressed to decide the issue.

³Maj Cass D. Howell, “War, Television and Public Opinion,” *Military Review* 67, no. 2 (February 1987): 78.

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⁴Lt K. A. Cochran, "Press Coverage of the Persian Gulf War: Historical Perspectives and Questions of Policy Beyond the Shadow of Vietnam," (masters thesis, Monterey, Ca.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 1992), 12.

⁵Frank Aukofer and William P. Lawrence, *America's Team, The Odd Couple: A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military* (Nashville: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1995), 25.

⁶For instance, Gen H. Norman Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Linda Grey Bantam Books, 1972), 439-440, tells of two incidents in the Gulf War: a live feed on CNN from the 82nd Airborne Division location and a battle plan map printed in *Newsweek*. Neither instance led to problems, but could have were Iraq more capable in their intelligence gathering and processing functions.

⁷Quoted in Alan D. Campen, ed., *The First Information War* (Fairfax, Va.: AFCEA International Press, 1992), 87.

⁸Col Wallace B. Eberhard, "A Familiar Refrain but Slightly Out of Tune," *Military Review* 67, no. 2 (February 1987), 84. In Vietnam, 45 journalists were killed.

⁹Silverberg, 174. Based on the Silverberg's discussion of real-time coverage and its legal implications.

¹⁰The practice of censorship has ended, but the issue is still alive fueled by the military's refusal to remove any and all censorship considerations. As recently as 1992, the Pentagon and media representatives failed to reach agreement on the censorship issue during negotiations to develop combat coverage principles.

¹¹The concept of censorship at the source is voluntary censorship by the media, who in turn are fully aware of, and agree to, an established set of reporting guidelines. The media are fully informed to the extent necessary for them to do their job and thus avoid releasing damaging information.

¹²Dangers include the immediate perceptions generated by the image broadcast, the lack of sufficient information for military leaders and media representatives to adequately explain the broadcast images, as well as the possible compromise of unit location and military intent on the battlefield.

¹³Based on discussions presented in Col John M. Shotwell, "The Fourth Estate as a Force Multiplier," *Marine Corps Gazette* 75, no. 7 (July 1991): 76.

¹⁴Howell, 72.

¹⁵Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines* (New York: Priority Press Pubs, 1985), 11. Before the Tet Offensive, opinion polls listed 56% of respondents as "hawks," those favoring the war, and 28% of the respondents as "doves," those against the war and favoring peace. After Tet, these percentages shifted to 41% and 42%, respectively.

¹⁶Howell, 74.

¹⁷Maj Gen Perry M. Smith, *How CNN Fought the War: A View From the Inside* (New York, New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), 99. General Smith dedicates an entire chapter to television military analysts, Chapter 13, pages 99-114.

¹⁸An excellent contemporary example of this influence is Oprah Winfrey's book-of-the-month program for which she will sometimes dedicate a show to discuss the book with

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the author. Of the two novels she has discussed (at least the two the author is aware of), both have skyrocketed to the top of the best seller list. The author bought both.

¹⁹Capt John E. Boyle, "Emerging News Media Communication Technologies in Future Military Conflicts," AFIT/CI/CIA-91-019 (Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio: Air Force Institute of Technology, 1991), 59.

²⁰Loren B. Thompson, *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 63.

²¹John H. Petersen, "Info Wars," *Naval Institute Proceedings* 119, no. 5 (May 1993), 90.

²²Lt Col Frank J. Stech, "Winning CNN Wars," *Parameters* 24 (Autumn 1994), 38. Also, Lt Col Stuart W. Wagner, "Operational Art on the Superhighway...Success with the Press," (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, 1995), 5.

²³Lt Col Marc D. Felman, "The Military/Media Clash and the New Principle of War: Media Spin," (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1995), 19.

²⁴Stephen Aubin, "The Media's Impact on the Battlefield," *Strategic Review* 20 (Winter, 1992), 56.

²⁵"Fog of War" is generally credited to Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, where he characterizes the uncertainty, the unexpected, and the confusion associated with conflict. Lt Christopher Devereaux, "Combat Leadership and the Media," *Naval Institute Proceedings* 121, no. 7 (July 1995): 65, quotes Clausewitz, "The great part of information obtained in war is contradictory, a still greater part is false, and by far the greatest part is of a doubtful character."

²⁶Boyle, 66.

²⁷David C. Martin, "Covering the Pentagon for Television: A Reporter's Perspective," in *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage*, ed. Loren B. Thompson (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 85.

²⁸Lt Christopher Devereaux, "Combat Leadership and the Media," *Naval Institute Proceedings* 121, no. 7 (July 1995): 63.

²⁹Martin, 84.

³⁰Braestrup, 138.

³¹Felman, 9. Felman's thesis discusses "media spin" as a principle of war, and discusses this first impression problem. The first impression problem is a particular focus in Rear Admiral Brent Baker, "Decisions at the Speed of Satellite," *Naval Institute Proceedings* 118, no. 8 (August 1992), 69-71.

³²Cochran, 54.

³³Martin, 83.

³⁴Col Charles W. Cox III, "The Media: The Military Commanders Friend or Foe?," (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, Air War College, April 1995), 20.

³⁵Braestrup, 136.

³⁶Paul Mann, "The Washington Defense Journalist: An Eighteenth-Century View," in *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage*, ed. Loren B. Thompson (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 85.

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³⁷Alan Hooper, *The Military and the Media* (Aldershot, England: Gower Publishing Company, Limited. 1982), 20. According to Hooper, this targeting of the audience is more prevalent with the newspaper, or printed, media.

³⁸Cox, 20.

³⁹CWO3 Eric R. Carlson, "The Media as a Force Multiplier," *Marine Corps Gazette* 75, no. 10 (October 1991), 50.

⁴⁰Felman, 21, discusses the need for foreknowledge of enemy's [propaganda] intentions to create negative spin, which is simply combating enemy propaganda.

⁴¹Max Hastings, "The Media and Modern Warfare," *Conflict Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (Summer 1989), 7.

⁴²Hooper, 113.

⁴³Braestrup, 23. For instance, Peter Arnett of CNN was allowed to remain in Iraq during the war. Hussein trusted CNN. Arnett was allowed to interview Hussein, but was used as a pawn for propaganda purposes, such as the filming of US warplanes bombing an alleged baby milk factory, a facility targeting for its chemical weapons production.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 133.

⁴⁵Sqn Ldr Sam Allotey et al., "Planning and Execution of Conflict Termination," ACSC/DEC/053/95-05 (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air Command and Staff College, 1995), 18.

⁴⁶Hastings, 8.

⁴⁷Gen Michael J. Dugan, "Perspectives from the War in the Gulf," in *Defence and the Media in Time of Limited War*, ed. Peter R. Young (London, England: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd. 1992), 178.

⁴⁸Petersen, 88.

⁴⁹Aubin, 57, and Baker, 72.

⁵⁰Ross Gelbspan, "The Sky's the Limit: The Pentagon's Victory over the Press, the Public, and the Peaceniks" in *The Future of Air Power in the Aftermath of the Gulf War*, ed. Richard H. Shultz, Jr and Robert L. Plaltzgraff, Jr (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, July 1992), 296.

⁵¹Based on Campen, 87.

Chapter 4

Rules for Winning with the Media Weapon

In future conflicts, the employment of effective communications with the media and the public will be on a par with employing weapons effectively.

—Brig Gen Ronald T. Sconyers
Airpower Journal, Fall 1995

In addition to the many issues confronting the military-media relationship, the literature contains many applicable guidelines and practices. These “rules” are presented in five general categories.

Planning for the Media

US leaders must clearly establish and communicate their objectives for any military operation. Clear objectives enhance military effectiveness and enlist public support once communicated to the media.¹ This failure to define US objectives was a fundamental problem in Vietnam, one the Johnson administration was unable to resolve.² As Stech discusses in *Winning CNN Wars*, clear communication of US objectives allows the CNN images to enhance the public’s image of how the military objectives are being achieved.³

Develop and publish reporting guidelines. Reporting guidelines work and are acceptable to both the military and the media.⁴ Guidelines facilitate security-at-the-source, promote mutual military-media trust, and establish the reporting boundaries.⁵

Contingency planning must accommodate media coverage. This planning must address initial media pool deployment, general disbanding of the pooling structure, and those particular situations where pooling remains in effect. Accommodating the large number of media representatives, both US and international, covering the military operation is a challenge. Use of military transportation and communication assets for media support require planners to deconflict asset usage with military requirements.⁶ In short, the commander must ensure incorporation of the media into the overall planning process.⁷

In addition to planning for media accommodation, military planners should prepare participants for the area of operations (AOR). This includes planning education and familiarization requirements for the AOR. Educate the media regarding current military tactics and systems. Educate the media as to how the enemy might exploit them for propaganda purposes.⁸ Explain access limitations imposed in the AOR, with sufficient rationale regarding access limitations and the size of the pools accommodated.⁹ It is also important to make the troops aware of dealings with the media, a rule used to positive effect by the Marines during the Gulf War.¹⁰

General Guidelines to Media Success

Gen H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief US Central Command during the Gulf War, issued the following guidelines to his subordinates regarding media relations:¹¹

- Don't let them intimidate you;
- There's no law that says you have to answer all their questions;
- Don't answer any question that in your judgment would help the enemy; and
- Don't ever lie to the American people.

Adm Brent Baker, Chief of Information for the US Navy, and Sidle Panel member, offers several other guidelines:¹²

- Insist on time to reply (avoid conjecture);
- Inform the public proactively (versus reactively);
- Realize reporters' agendas will vary; and
- Don't be thin-skinned.

Additional guidelines drawn from the literature are:

- Don't be a cheerleader;
- Establish, cherish and nurture your credibility; and
- Consider the media an asset, not a burden.¹³

Some discussion of these guidelines is in order. "The worst thing you can do is lie."¹⁴

General Schwarzkopf based his "don't lie" policy on his Vietnam experience, so that it implicitly includes not intentionally misleading the media and public (as was done in Vietnam.)¹⁵

Avoid uninformed conjecture. Rapid communications and imagery make possible the real-time broadcast of information, through outlets like CNN, before the information processes through military intelligence channels. The media is apt to surprise the military spokesperson with questions concerning that information. During Vietnam, briefer's refusal to comment or attempts to hide problems fueled media skepticism of the military.¹⁶ Get back to the media with an informed response if necessary.

Provide all information possible, truthfully and as early as possible. Proactive informing short-circuits a media penchant for conjecture in the wake of an information vacuum. Further, as Braestrup discusses, history shows that an enemy will provide the media their own version of any information we fail to provide.¹⁷ Do not overstate information to garner support or act as a cheerleader to maintain public support. To do so

risks loss of credibility, a mistake that haunted the US military leadership during Vietnam.¹⁸ Political leaders must handle any cheerleading tasks.

Employment of Presentations

The press conference provides a means for the military to communicate directly to the public (or the enemy).¹⁹ This was re-emphasized during the Gulf War with daily press conferences in both Washington D.C. and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. These press conferences provide an opportunity to target audiences with the desired message.²⁰ This capability to bypass the media, going directly to the public, was a media criticism of Gulf War coverage.²¹

PAOs should develop and maintain a press conference strategy throughout the conflict to balance media concerns within an overall information strategy. This strategy should include “sound bites,” something the military is already teaching senior leaders to consider.²² Effective sound bites help provide the print and video coverage the military desires. The military must keep abreast of media concerns and agendas to ensure press conferences proactively inform the media and the public.²³ This ensures presentations align with overall national and military objectives, press releases never contain lies and address bad news early, and affords the military the chance to entrust the media with sensitive information, when delayed publication serves the needs of both military security and media freedom to publish.²⁴

Finally, presentations must establish and maintain credibility. This starts with credible spokespersons. Qualifications include: senior leader, skilled communicator, dynamic, and knowledgeable of military actions with the freedom to discuss matters brought up during

questioning.²⁵ The messages conveyed must be convincing and simple.²⁶ Maintaining credibility involves using honest communication and not hiding information from the media.²⁷ For instance, protection of government credibility was one of Secretary of Defense Cheney's principles in developing his press policy for the Gulf War.²⁸

Front-line Coverage and Real-time Coverage

Two outcomes of advancing technology warrant specific discussion: satellite imagery and up-link coverage from the front; and the "danger" of immediate, or real-time coverage.

Modern warfare is difficult for the media to cover unless the media actually travels with military units.²⁹ Cellular phones and portable satellite dish represent a threat to operational security³⁰ and thus some advocate a no coverage policy.³¹ However, such a policy is merely censorship by access control³² (this was another media gripe with Gulf War coverage, and not advisable for future military operations).³³ The solution is to allow the camera at the front, but as Walter Cronkite stated during Congressional testimony, "...you do not permit the satellite up-link with live coverage of what they are taping."³⁴ Any deviations from this policy require explicit approval by the on-scene commander and accomplishment under the review of the military pool escort.

Satellite imagery requires strict control, but this task will increase in difficulty as the number of satellite companies offering commercial imagery increases.³⁵ The ethical question that will arise is what are viable military options when confronted with a commercial vendor who refuses to discontinue providing sensitive satellite imagery? The US may require taking justified military actions against satellites deemed a threat.

Finally, immediate news coverage may cause media requests for immediate responses from the military spokesperson. The military should clearly articulate a policy of careful examination of data before answering requests for information. This analysis time must be as short as possible, yet sufficient to form a relatively complete and accurate picture. The resulting response to the media must address each of the media concerns.

Fighting the CNN War³⁶

This chapter closes with a set of catch phrases emphasizing the types of things the military commander might consider in future *CNN Wars*.

Invoke the CNN Effect. The public, and many in the military, tuned into CNN for the duration of the Gulf War. The military must exploit this phenomenon. Get the information out and inform the public. Command and control warfare (C2W), “seeks to cause an enemy leader to change his mind, surrender, or accept conditions as they are.”³⁷ CNN may be the only source of information available to the enemy leader after air operations have removed adversary C2 systems.³⁸ Furthermore, a glut of information hides those inadvertent security leaks that occur during media coverage.

Control the Global Village. As communications and computer technology continue to advance and mature, the interconnected “global village” becomes a larger reality. The military can quickly establish some element of control using information. For instance, use unclassified web pages on the Internet. This is already common within the Department of Defense. Extend this capability during conflicts to provide published information, press releases, briefing transcripts, and prepared responses to video or picture images. The

intent is an information campaign, not propaganda, thus this easily falls within the purview of the public affairs mission to “inform,” becoming part of an overall information strategy.

Reinforce the Remarkable Trinity. Winning the CNN war boils down to understanding Clausewitz’s Remarkable Trinity. The military needs a mutually supportive trinity, so needs the media ally. The media is not going to purposely glorify the military, but it is not going to purposely vilify them either. Trust the media, involve the media, and allow them to do their task. Empower the PAO to make the media an ally.

Win the Perception War.³⁹ Images are powerful stuff. Ensure the public and the media clearly understand the facts behind the images. The enemy will exploit first perceptions with their propaganda campaign. A counter-propaganda, or meta-propaganda, campaign must fight this enemy tactic.⁴⁰ Petersen states, “the electronic press has become the prism through which most major happenings in the world are projected.”⁴¹ Control the prism. As John Leo notes, “Facts now have to play catch up with the image--and rarely wins.”⁴² The military must still attempt to win.

Support Your Media Military Expert. Another new wrinkle introduced during the Gulf War was that of the military analyst. Maj Gen Perry Smith was a CNN military analyst and his book, *How CNN Fought the War: A View from the Inside*, provides many personal insights into his duties. This media military expert will have precious and influential air time and will comment on images and reports from the front. These experts, for credibility purposes, will often be retired senior military leaders. The military should embrace these experts, keep them informed, and thus indirectly exploit their position to ensure accurate commentaries result.

Use the Media's Power. Much is written about the military-media relationship and media access rights. Not enough addresses those mutually supportive activities between the military and the media. For instance independent media reporting can assist the military effort by providing:

- Intelligence;
- Proof of atrocities and violations of laws of armed conflict;
- Assistance rallying local, national, and international support for nation building efforts; or
- Monitoring of civil affairs issues.

The media can assist military efforts if the military plans for and requests such assistance. Captain Haddock nailed the issue regarding the media when she stated, "...we must understand their strength and exploit that strength as a weapon."⁴³

Notes

¹Lt Col Stuart W. Wagner, "Operational Art on the Superhighway...Success with the Press," (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, 1995), 9.

²Lt Col Marc D. Felman, "The Military/Media Clash and the New Principle of War: Media Spin," (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1995), 10.

³Lt Col Frank J. Stech, "Winning CNN Wars," *Parameters* 24, (Autumn 1994): 50.

⁴Frank Aukofer and William P. Lawrence, *America's Team, The Odd Couple: A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military* (Nashville: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1995), 29. A survey conducted for the report found only 18% of the respondents were against using media reporting guidelines.

⁵Part of the agreed upon adherence to groundrules, or guidelines, is clearly established penalties for conscious violations of the groundrules. The consensus opinion among the sources cited for this research appears to favor a media-led enforcement mechanism. For instance, Braestrup, 141-142.

⁶Col John M. Shotwell, "The Fourth Estate as a Force Multiplier," *Marine Corps Gazette* 75, no. 7 (July 1991): 71-79.

⁷Maj Gen Paul E. Funk, "Accommodating the Wartime Media: A Commander's Task," *Military Review* 73, no. 4 (April 1993), 80.

⁸Felman, 21

⁹Aukofer, 45, 57. Aukofer and Lawrence discuss determining the optimum number of reporters covering a given conflict or crisis. This issue was extended in this thesis.

¹⁰Shotwell, 71-79.

Notes

¹¹Gen H. Norman Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Linda Grey Bantam Books, 1972), 344.

¹²Rear Admiral Brent Baker, "Decisions at the Speed of Satellite," *Naval Institute Proceedings* 118, no. 8 (August 1992), 71. Not all the guidelines provided by Adm Baker are included in the listing. In addition, clarifications were added parenthetically.

¹³Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines* (New York: Priority Press Pubs, 1985), discusses this aspect in depth, particularly emphasizing the WWII experience. Wagner, 219, discusses this in relation to the Gulf War.

¹⁴Funk, 79.

¹⁵Schwarzkopf, 344.

¹⁶ Maj Michael P. Erdle, "The News Media and Military Operations," (Newport, R.I: Naval War College, 11 February 1991), 9.

¹⁷Braestrup, 32. This discussion is based on a note to General Eisenhower from General McClure during WWII regarding press coverage of the Allied invasion at Normandy.

¹⁸Lt Col Douglas J. Goebel, "Military-Media Relations: The Future Media Environment and its Influence on Military Operations," (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air War College, April 1995), 4. Lieutenant Colonel Goebel points out how General Westmoreland was thrust into a "cheerleader" role, one better assumed by US civilian leadership. This role helped further erode military credibility along with the reporting inaccuracies published during the war.

¹⁹Ross Gelbspan, "The Sky's the Limit: The Pentagon's Victory over the Press, the Public, and the Peaceniks" in *The Future of Air Power in the Aftermath of the Gulf War*, ed. Richard H. Shultz, Jr and Robert L. Plaltzgraff, Jr (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, July 1992), 297.

²⁰Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War, Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1993), 171.

²¹Gelbspan, 297.

²²David C. Martin, "Covering the Pentagon for Television: A Reporter's Perspective," in *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage*, ed. Loren B. Thompson (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 86. Sound Bite - Phenomena of television wherein a statement, slogan, or some such catchy phrase is taken to summarize some event or issue. These are short in duration making them a nice fit into the 15 second news piece for the televised evening news, or a recorded message in radio news broadcasts.

²³Wagner, 219.

²⁴Brig Gen Ronald T. Sconyers, "Revolutionary Air Force Public Affairs: The Vision," *Airpower Journal* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1995), 49. The military-media relationship has a long history of military confidence in media's willingness to suppress a story temporarily for the greater good of the military effort. Two classic examples are the Normandy Invasion and the Atomic Bomb. In both cases, the media had complete knowledge but avoided publication until such time as operational security was no longer a concern.

Notes

²⁵Wing Commander H. H. Pyper, "The Media in Modern Warfare--Friend or Foe?" *Hawk* (1992), 58-59.

²⁶Stech, 40.

²⁷Gelbspan, 306.

²⁸Lt K. A. Cochran, "Press Coverage of the Persian Gulf War: Historical Perspectives and Questions of Policy Beyond the Shadow of Vietnam" (masters thesis, Monterey, Ca.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 1992), 82.

²⁹Aukofer, 46, 57.

³⁰Stephen Aubin "The Media's Impact on the Battlefield." *Strategic Review* 20 (Winter, 1992), 58, recounts the experience of Molly Moore of the *Washington Post*. Ms Moore was able to accompany Marine units in the field but was not allowed to use her satellite phone during that time.

³¹Marshall Silverberg, "Constitutional Concerns in Denying the Press Access to Military Operations," in *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage*, ed. Loren B. Thompson. (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 168-169, and Maj Cass D. Howell, "War, Television and Public Opinion," *Military Review* 67, no. 2 (February 1987), 77.

³²Capt James B. Brown, "Media Access to the Battlefield," *Military Review* 72, no. 7 (July 1992), 16

³³Everette E. Dennis et al., *The Media at War: The Press and the Persian Gulf Conflict* (New York City: Gannett Foundation Media Center, 1991), xi.

³⁴Quoted in Baker, 72. The quote from Mr Cronkite came from testimony he provided regarding the issue of live television war coverage.

³⁵Concern over satellite remote sensing prompted the study, *Commercial Newsgathering from Space*, OTA-TM-ISC-40. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Technical Assessment, May 1987). Their concern was media desires for direct satellite ownership. The study acknowledged the sensitivity of the imagery information, but in 1987, satellite ownership was cost prohibitive. Commercial satellite imagery sources have negated the need to own and operate their own satellite to obtain and publish high resolution satellite imagery.

³⁶Frank Stech, in *Winning CNN Wars*, addressed how to accommodate real-time TV coverage during war execution. This thesis benefited greatly as a result and thus the play on his article title.

³⁷Lt Col Norman B. Hutcherson, "Command and Control Warfare: Putting Another Tool in the War-Fighter's Data Base," Air University Research Report No. AU-ARI-94-1 (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University, September 1994), 13-14.

³⁸Col John A. Warden III, "Air Theory for the Twenty-first Century," in *Challenge and Response: Anticipating US Military Security Concerns*, ed. Dr. Karl P. Magyar et al. (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, August 1994), 330. Colonel Warden relates a lesson from the Gulf War. Airpower knocked out Iraq's command and control system, but the coalition failed to fill the resulting information void with an alternative source of information, information that would of course be of the coalitions choosing.

³⁹Baker, 72. Admiral Baker actually finished his article with, "win the battle of the first perception."

Notes

⁴⁰Toffler, 168. The Tofflers describe a meta-propaganda campaign as one in response to an enemies propaganda campaign.

⁴¹John H. Petersen, "Info Wars," *Naval Institute Proceedings* 119, no. 5 (May 1993), 87.

⁴²Quoted in Felman, 25.

⁴³Capt Helen K. Haddock, "Media on the Battlefield: An Underestimated Weapon," *Marine Corps Gazette* 76, no. 10 (October 1992), 30.

Chapter 5

Joint Doctrine and Media Relations

All commanders must understand, teach, and apply joint doctrine as they prepare and train the men and women who wear America's uniform to fight our Nation's wars..

—Gen John M. Shalikashvili

This chapter examines how *published* joint doctrine addresses the military-media relationship. Joint Publication (JP) 1-07, Doctrine for Public Affairs in Joint Operations was unavailable for this thesis research.

General Guidance

The joint doctrine capstone documents, JP 1, Joint Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States and JP 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces are vague regarding the military-media relationship.¹ Each document recognizes the PAO as a key commander's staff member. Further, JP 1 views public affairs as one of three coordinated components of the informational instrument of power (psychological operations and public diplomacy being the other two) thus implying the importance of the media.²

A general reading among the various published joint doctrine documents finds at least five general guidelines:

- The PAO is a key commander's team member;
- Involve the PAO during planning to coordinate with various other operations;³

- Ensure accurate reporting to the public;
- PA credibility is too important to risk.

Crisis action planning doctrine and doctrine for military operations other than war contain more specific guidance.

Crisis Action Planning

JP 5-00.3, Joint Operations Planning and Execution System includes Planning Order and Warning Order examples, each of which includes provisions for PA guidance.⁴ Among the considerations are: policy on media coverage of the operations; media pooling decisions; number of media representatives anticipated; anticipated reporting ground rules; and anticipated PA personnel requirements. More particular considerations within the orders include: proposed or potential questions and answers for the media; planning of media coverage opportunities based on expected campaign phasing; and miscellaneous PA considerations. It is this second set of considerations that gets beyond general media considerations and gets into the area of proactive PA actions to exploit the media weapon. However, the military operations other than war (MOOTW) and Peacekeeping doctrine documents contain even better doctrine regarding media considerations.

MOOTW and Peacekeeping Doctrine

Joint doctrine for MOOTW and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) provide the most specific and comprehensive doctrine addressing media considerations, largely due to the important role the media plays determining the success (perceived or real) of these operations.⁵ Five particular considerations, beyond general media coverage

considerations, stand out in this doctrine corresponding to aspects of the military-media relationship covered in this thesis. The doctrine:

- Recognizes the speed of media reporting relative to event occurrence with resulting “perception problems” and potential reporting inaccuracies;
- Addresses considerations for media access to operations;
- Recognizes involved parties in the conflict might manipulate or orchestrate the media;
- Includes among PAO responsibilities a need for an awareness of media trends and concerns; and
- Includes media relations guidelines applicable to deployed troops.

Joint doctrine is still immature in its development. Some of the doctrine already adequately addresses media coverage issues and guidelines for MOOTW. However, additional doctrine should adapt this guidance to war execution to better exploit the media weapon.

Notes

¹Joint Publication (JP) 1, Joint Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States, 10 January 1995. JP 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), 24 February 1995.

²JP 1, III-12.

³Doctrine documents for Psychological Operations, Operations Security, Command and Control Warfare, and Civil Affairs specifically call for coordination with public affairs to ensure overall unity of effort.

⁴JP 5-03.1, Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) Volume 1 (Planning Policies and Procedures), 4 August 1993, Annex C and Annex E, respectively.

⁵JP 3-07, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), 29 April 1994. JP 3-07.3, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Peacekeeping Operations, 29 April 1994. Joint Task Force Commander’s Handbook for Peace Operations, 28 February 1995.

Chapter 6

Summary and Recommendations

The way of the warrior is to master the virtue of his weapons.

—Myamoto Mushaski
A Book of Five Rings

The media is a weapon available to anyone.

—Capt Ellen K. Haddock

The media has been present during each of America's military conflicts. The media has recorded for history American triumphs and its failures, man's glory in combat and his inhumanity. The media is America's fourth estate, the unofficial fourth element of government, the conduit among the elements of the Remarkable Trinity comprising the people, their government and their military.

There are many issues underlying the military-media relationship and, at best, the relationship will remain tenuous.¹ In fact, there is no ideal solution to the military-media relationship.² However, history has shown public support for our military is crucial and the media helps establish and maintain that support. Our enemies target US public support through the manipulation of our own media. The media is America's defense against that targeting.³

Though the military cannot, and should not, control the media and what the media appropriately produces, the military can and should exploit the capabilities of the media as

a weapon in war. This thesis compiled some “rules” drawn from the literature that may aid in the exploitation process.

Three recommendations come to mind based on this research. First, adapt the MOOTW and peacekeeping doctrine regarding media considerations to war execution doctrine. Also consider the guidelines proposed in Chapter 4 of this thesis to expand the doctrine. Second, combatant command PAOs should become more proactive in assessing media interests in the commander’s AOR. For instance, review CNN coverage to anticipate potential crises. Along the same lines, the PAOs can enlist appropriate Embassy assets to assess how potential adversaries might target the media during a conflict. Finally, media and Pentagon representatives should convene working groups to address pressing military-media issues such as real-time coverage, satellite imagery, and media access policies before such policies arise “on the fly.”

To conclude, hopefully this research identifies some pertinent issues, proposes some useful guidelines and provides a basis of discussion for future PAO roles, and the roles of the media in contemporary military operations. The media will have an important role in all future military operations. Both the military and the media must realize this fact and prepare accordingly.

Notes

¹Peter Braestrup. *Battle Lines: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Military and the Media* (New York: Priority Press Pubs. 1985), 9.

²Loren B. Thompson, ed., *Defense Beat: The Dilemmas of Defense Coverage* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 55.

³Col Harry G. Summers Jr., “Western Media and Recent Wars” *Military Review* 65, no. 5 (May 1986), 16.

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