

THE MODERN MEDIA:  
THE IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Strategy

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

THE MODERN MEDIA: THE IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY,  
by MAJ Simon J Hulme, 96 pages.

The end of the Cold War brought a change in role for a majority of the armed forces of the western nations. The operational emphasis moved from defensive posturing and expected total war, to employment possibilities across the whole spectrum of conflict. It seems that the western military forces have been employed as tools to further foreign policy outside the normally expected and declared policies of their governments. Moreover, it also seems; that western governments flex their positions with regard to foreign policies based on the media coverage of international events. The primary thesis question was designed to discover whether the media has had an effect on foreign policy or not. This was broken into three parts: (1) the possibility of media effect; (2) the chance of employment of that effect, and (3) a short recent historical study of the media effects, with regard to foreign policy. Although the thesis concluded that the modern media did have an effect on foreign policy, research has led the author to develop a basic theoretical model to assist in the definition of media effect when compared to certain foreign policy issues. It is suggested that further study develop this initial outline and model.

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My special thanks go to my wife Louise, who not only had to endure countless hours alone, whilst I sat typing or reading, but when I did finally emerge from the study, she was subjected to hours of conversation relating to the thesis. My appreciation goes to her most of all, because she gave birth of our first child William whilst this paper was being written, and still managed to take care of the three of us while I remained at study.

William also played his own part in the production of this thesis; his smile provided the light and inspiration to continue studies on the long dark winter nights of research.

Because of the two of them, this thesis has been completed.

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## ACRONYMS

ABC	American Broadcasting Corporation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable Network News
DIME	Diplomatic, information, military and economic instruments of national power
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NSS	National Security Strategy
PDD	Presidential Decision Directive
WWW	World Wide Web
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### General Introduction

It is a truism that governments make decisions with regard to foreign policy in the interests of their parent nation. For most nations their national security policy or equivalent, permits or evens fosters a need for intervention in humanitarian operations or other contingencies that further the interests of the nation itself.

Nevertheless, one must ask oneself several questions: why do governments react to and involve themselves in international crises? What triggers a change in national policy from no intervention to deployment of forces? What rationale is employed in deciding whether to intervene in a global situation or not? What discerns the requirement for intervention in one crisis or another? One would assume that these decisions and answers to these questions are based solely on logic ratified by members of a council who have the national interests at heart and seek to further their own nations position or interest, based on the implementation and employment of the constituent parts of a set national strategy.

*The National Security Strategy for a New Century (NSS)* of the United States of America (USA) talks of national interests as early in its text as its introduction. The NSS mentions the following three categories of interest: vital, important national interests and humanitarian and other interests.<sup>1</sup> Out of these three categories, the last two of them can be adapted to fit a majority, if not all of the contingencies, worldwide; allowing or affording the USA national credibility, and a position from which to argue for

international legitimacy in any international action that the government may wish to take outside its borders.

It is not the perceived legitimacy of an action that is at question, but what factors force the implementation of a change in foreign policy.

Today, it is not simply the fact that decisions have to be made, it is the speed at which they have to be made that matters. The spread of technology coupled with the speed of communications has made the world a twenty-four-hour news theatre; global stock market trading continues long after either Wall Street or the London Stock Exchange has closed for the evening. The constraint of time has been removed from many agencies and companies. It is more than just the factor of continuous activity that needs to be considered, things also occur at a faster rate. Computers have increased dramatically in speed over the last ten years; satellites have facilitated clearer and cheaper communications. Electronic innovations have introduced smaller, lighter and cheaper media equipment enabling faster program and report production and transmission. This increase in tempo has placed a greater burden on most decision makers around the world, and not just in government. Not only do people have to decide more quickly, they must also be capable of making those decisions or issuing direction at any time of day or night. It is now not possible to hold a decision until the next day or even following week; the effect could be too costly either monetarily or politically.

However, there is one organization standing on one side of this technological fence, harnessing these enhancements in capability and technology--the media. The advances in technology have influenced the capabilities of the media as much, if not more than any other organization around the world. Like other businesses today, the

media has harnessed and embraced the latest technology and turned its employment into an art form.

### Background

Before the thesis topic can be examined in detail, one must first consider how the possible effect of a particular factor on governmental decisions could be explained. For the purposes of illustration, the “factor” could be one of several things or indeed a combination of factors; it need not necessarily be solely media influence. For the purposes of this illustration, the definition of factor need not be expanded.

If one imagines the “policy balance” as two extremes in foreign policy sitting at either end of a seesaw, with the factor acting as the fulcrum; as shown in figure 1. At one extreme of the seesaw the model illustrates a policy of action or intervention in a crisis, in the middle status quo, and at the far end a policy of non-intervention or if the nation is already acting in some way then a cessation of action. In the case of this illustration a positive or negative effect has been shown. Imagine that the fulcrum can move in either direction as a factor or factors can do to influence foreign policy.

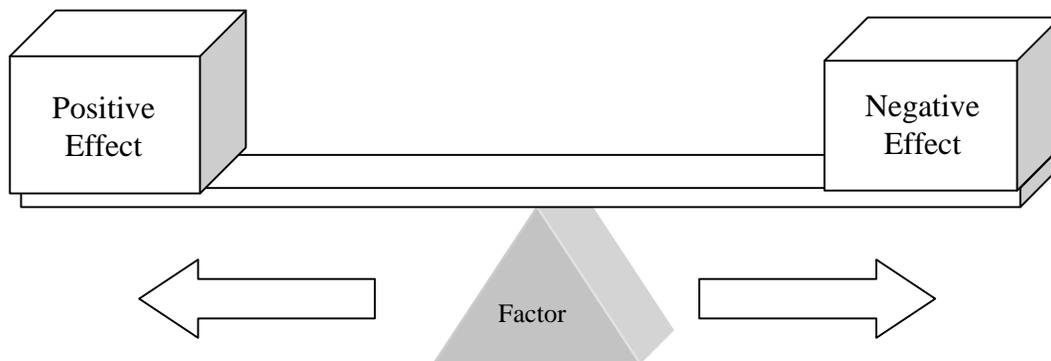


Figure 1. The Balance of Foreign Policy

The factor now has the ability to affect or not to affect the situation at all. Where and on whom this factor acts is beyond the scope of this thesis. This paper will examine whether the media is such a factor, which can, and possibly has shaped foreign policy.

[Television] has demonstrated its power to move governments. By focusing daily on the starving children in Somalia, a pictorial story tailor-made for television. TV mobilized the conscience of a nation's public institutions. Compelling the government into a policy of intervention for humanitarian reasons.<sup>2</sup>

The hypothesis articulated in the above quote supports the fact that the media has the ability to manipulate or shape foreign policy. To the contrary, one may also feel that Peter Black's opinion is more accurate: "Belief in television's influence is rather like belief in life after death. Most of us would like to be able to prove it, but the evidence is inconclusive."<sup>3</sup> Many people also feel that the evidence to support the influence of the media is purely subjective, and therefore hard and fast proof is difficult to substantiate. Nik Gowing notes that the reaction of many politicians and decision makers he has interviewed whilst pursuing answers to a similar line of questions, is often amusement. "No one is immune from the power of television coverage," but it seems that few decision makers are prepared to admit that they have been influenced by it.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it seems on the surface that there is some possibility of media influence on either the population or the government. This influence or pressure could be achieved in three ways: first by either affecting the public who will pressure governments to make decisions. Second, by directly affecting the decision makers themselves by prompting them to act preemptively to shape public perceptions of what they have just seen in the media, and third, by causing a political reaction because of an anticipated or perceived public response to televised issues. Arguably, the intended implementation of this action

could also be considered a form of spin control, thereby making specific changes concerning how policy is carried out.

Another factor that may assist the media in its ability to influence policy decisions may be the informational revolution in which society currently sits. Computing power has doubled every eighteen months for some years now, and is estimated, according to Moore's Law, to continue doing so.<sup>5</sup> This has meant that information can be sent globally in a fraction of the time it used to take. The information being beamed around the world is now "real-time" meaning that the target audience sees pictures as the incident happens and perhaps more importantly in the context of this paper, as the politician does.

This change in information immediacy has already had a dramatic impact on the way in which nations wage war and conduct operations. It has also facilitated an increase in the flow of harrowing pictures being beamed around the world instantaneously. This has increased public awareness. The public is more aware of what the military do, how operations are executed and more importantly, for what a military force can be used. More important and pertinent to this thesis, is the fact that the general public are inundated with timely pictures portraying human suffering, be it at the hands of aggressors or famine. These pictures and information may have the potential to influence. This newfound capability of faster transmission and production coupled with the possible ability of the media to affect the conduct of foreign policy had been dubbed the "CNN effect," the "CNN curve," or the "CNN factor." For the benefit of this thesis, the term CNN effect will be used. This influence may come from two directions as eluded to earlier: (1) the direct influence upon governments, or (2) an influence on public

opinion which in turn effects governmental decisions with regard to foreign policy and can therefore be considered an indirect influence on foreign policy. To support this theory, it seems that foreign policy adapts to meet the most immediate requirement. If one keeps these sudden changes or swings in mind, it seems that foreign policy is no longer set in stone. As foreign policy shifts from one emphasis to another, so do diplomatic, informational, economic and military sanctions or influences, it could also be considered indicative of a media driven effect.

William Perry and Ashton Carter have developed a three-tier structure in order to assist in understanding categories of national security interests. "List A" includes those nations which present a threat to US national survival, the old Soviet Union for example. "List B" are those nations that are an imminent threat to the nation such as Iraq and North Korea. Finally, "List C" are those nations who are considered "important contingencies that indirectly affect U.S. security but do not directly threaten US interests."<sup>6</sup> It is clear that since the fall of the Soviet Union, lists B and C have dominated the news, more importantly it seems that foreign policy relating to list C is easier to influence using the means available to the media. The continual deployment of military forces is felt most by the armies of today and may be indicative of the nature of military operations that are currently undertaken. The rationale for the employment of the military instrument of power is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is the increased tempo of military operations, which may be indicative of the increased level of foreign policy implementation and possibly indicative of the impact of the media on that foreign policy. This link, the author feels, may be too difficult to prove. However, the proving or

disproving of a link between the modern media and foreign policy changes, illustrated by the employment or removal of military force is possible within the scope of this thesis.

On the surface the amount of media influence depends on the nature of the problem and perhaps can be further subdivided into other categories of influence. Stephen Livingston breaks media into three forces: accelerant, impediment and agenda setting agency.<sup>7</sup> This model in combination with the Perry-Carter model will be employed within this thesis in order to assist in clarifying the level of effect the media has had.

### Scope

Both the thesis topic and the primary question have purposely not defined the parameter as to which nation's foreign policy and media is being considered during this research. One could look solely at the United Kingdom (UK) or United States of America; however, the author considers that an assumption of commonality with regard to two nations can be made when looking at the effect of the modern media. The thesis will remain, however, within the confines of those two nations only.

The scope of this thesis will also be maintained within the employment of military forces to illustrate changes in national policy. The other elements of the DIME, diplomacy, information and economics will not be addressed in this paper.

### The Research Question

The primary question related to the topic of this thesis is: Does the modern media effect the decisions made by governments with regard to foreign policy?

In order to answer this question and therefore the thesis statement itself, one must break it down into a series of subordinate or secondary questions; these will be addressed in detail within this thesis. The secondary questions that flow from this, are threefold:

Can the modern media produce an effect, does that effect matter and finally where has the media had an influence on foreign policy are the questions that which will provide the evidence to support the thesis findings. In answering the first question, it is intended and indeed necessary to examine in detail the capabilities of the modern media in order to either prove or disprove that an effect can be achieved. In addition, by answering this question it may be necessary to look at the technical developments that have taken place, which have facilitated an increase in speed and timeliness of media reporting for example; or to consider the proliferation of media coverage. It is not the intention of the author to become embroiled in the technological competencies and complexities of the latest media equipment, but simply to illustrate, if necessary, the current media capabilities.

Although the detail of the thesis methodology will be covered in chapter 3, this secondary question leads to several tertiary questions such as: (1) on whom does the media act? (2) Does the speed of modern media reporting have the ability to affect the balance of foreign policy? (3) What is the *saturation* level of media coverage the public and politicians are exposed to in today's society? Finally, (4) In establishing this level, one will be able to ascertain whether it is possible or even likely that media coverage could be so widespread as to be capable of influencing political decisions. In researching this issue, it is intended not only to establish the effect that the frequency of news reports

in the modern media may have, but also to ascertain from where the population currently receives its news coverage.

The thesis will then compile evidence either supporting or refuting the primary question, which fits the criteria defined above. In the expected absence of first-hand evidence, as no primary research will be conducted, the weight of collected, analyzed, and assimilated information within the defined criteria will either substantiate or refute the idea that the modern media is capable of having an effect on foreign policy.

### Assumptions

There are several assumptions made while studying this thesis:

The primary assumption is that public opinion does and will have an effect on foreign policy. The public places elected officials in power, and therefore, politicians are accountable to the public. From this argument one could argue that politicians should follow shifts in public opinion, but the issue runs much deeper than that. It may also be possible that a politician will act in order to avoid a public reaction to an event or indeed react because of a perceived or anticipated public reaction to an incident. This makes the categorization of the reaction difficult to measure within the limitations of this paper and is the reason for it not being studied in this thesis.

The author also assumes that because of globalization and internationalization, the term media encompasses the global media as a mass, which includes the media of both the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The thesis will also assume that the media is “pure” in nature--free from political bias when reporting current news and events. The thesis does not have the time or the scope to consider the ideology or hidden agenda of the media. This thesis intends to look

at the effect of reporting and not what or why things are reported, there will be no consideration of spin or semiotic creation of reality by the press.<sup>8</sup> Put simply, the question, as to what reason does the media has for effecting foreign policy will not be answered.

Another assumption is that the informational revolution has had an effect on the immediacy of media reporting; the extent of which, will be looked at in the thesis.

### Key Terms and Definitions

Modern media is that which has the current capabilities available to them to prosecute timely, effective and accurate coverage of a global event from anywhere on the planet. This could be seen as *immediacy*, which may be further defined as, instant, instantaneous, speedy or swift.<sup>9</sup> For this thesis, the author will review some of the changes that have occurred in the area of information technology which have contributed to an improvement in the immediacy of media reporting. The relative immediacy of the media will be addressed within this thesis.

*Foreign Policy* for the purposes of this thesis is the policy of either the USA or UK outlined in national or foreign policy actions that can and is influenced by the employment of the instruments of national power. Examples of the employment of the instruments of power will be confined to the employment of, or change in, force posture or even geographical position of the military from events in recent history.

Probably the most important issue for clarification is that of the definition of the term “CNN effect,” “CNN curve,” or “CNN factor. A term, which is used randomly and often incorrectly by both the media and the military. The definition of which, lies in the fact that the media now have the capability to produce, broadcast and prosecute the

publication of a news story faster than ever before. This has a possible commensurate effect on the political decision-making process and on the public as a whole. Warren P.

Strobel puts the definition of the CNN effect in a succinct manner when he says:

Where television's instantly transmitted images fire public opinion, demanding instant responses from government officials, shaping and reshaping foreign policy at the whim of electrons.<sup>10</sup>

The CNN effect for the purposes of this paper, is defined as: the effect produced by the speed of media reporting being capable of reaching a target audience as events occur anywhere in the world.

### Limitations

In order to answer the primary questions successfully and keep the length of the study within reasonable limits, some of the limitations placed on this thesis must be defined.

The research will not look at the changing character of media reporting from the patriotic (almost propagandist) reporting of World War I to the modern, unbiased reporting of today's media (where any bias is either suppressed or hidden). It is intended that this change in media style will only be defined in the thesis, and underlined by changes in globalization and the need for the international credibility of media. The intention of this is twofold; firstly, to inform that this evolution of media character has been considered, and secondly, to assist in the definition of a baseline for the thesis subject.

Although the implementation of national foreign policy involves the use of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power, this thesis will illustrate a change in foreign policy with a military example. In essence

therefore, for the purpose of this thesis one should consider “foreign policy” to mean military intervention, withdrawal or operation continuation.

The next limitation is on whom the media has an effect. It is assumed for the purposes of this thesis that the media can have a direct effect on a government or on the people of that nation. They may also influence the populace, who in turn may attempt to influence the government as a second order effect. For the purpose of this thesis, all these forms are considered a generic influence. The author acknowledges that the media impact on a government, may cause changes to foreign policy either on the grounds of a perceived national requirement, or because they believe that the electorate would require some sort of change on the part of the politician. The thesis question does not require a detailed study of how the media affects policy through its influence.

### Delimitations

The studies behind this thesis make no delineation between the UK and the USA. Although the thesis author acknowledges that differences between the two nations with regard to the modus operandi of the media and indeed the national instruments of power, the essence of this thesis is the overall effect of the modern media, and therefore it is considered unnecessary to separate two nations who are similar in many ways.

The thesis will also not consider whether action taken or decisions made in light of media coverage are correct from either a moral, judicial, or an ethical point of view. Nor will it attempt to look at specific branches of government and their roles within a decision-making process. It is not the aim of this paper to study the process but the possible media effect on that process.

The final limitation is the fact that the thesis is not concerned as to how the media influences foreign policy or for what reason.

### Significance of the Study

The author considers this study significant because of the new informational era into which the human race is entering. The improvements in information technology, which have been made since the end of World War I, have been astounding. The changes in technology in the last few years have been astronomical in proportion to the technological changes earlier this century. There is no reason to suspect that the rate of change will slow in the coming years.

The author believes that this thesis is important for the following reasons:

The speed of change in the information arena means that the immediacy, availability, volume and frequency of media coverage will increase and may therefore have more of an effect on the foreign policy decisions made by governments.

Policy makers should be aware of this change and the effect, if any, that it will have, as indeed should those who will be employed as an instrument of national power. Finally, this study is significant to the public, whose right it is to know and who should understand the effect that timely saturated media coverage can have on the decisions made by their elected leaders.

During the course of the production of this study, and by pulling together some of the issues that have been researched by other people, it has become apparent that there is the possibility that a model can be designed that attempts to replicate the effect of the media on certain types of foreign policy. The description of this model and findings from some of the study are found in chapter 5 to this thesis. This model is by no means

complete, and will require further definition and refinement in future study. The model is simply a by-product of the study that has gone into answering the primary question of this thesis.

### Summary

In summary, there has been a significant revolution on the methods of information dissemination in recent years. These changes mean that information and news are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks of the year in a multitude of forms and locations. The CNN effect has ensured that news is seen as it happens by everybody, leaving the politician and policy maker little time to consider the implications of what everybody else is also seeing. This along with a potentially more politically and internationally astute population, and the proliferation of information by so many outlets may give rise to the possibility that the new all-informed nation will affect foreign policy more now than they ever have in the past. This thesis aims to determine what effect the modern media has on the shaping and changing of foreign policy.

On the completion of this thesis, three questions will have been answered: Does the media have the capability to have an effect? If so, does that effect matter? If it does, the final question will be to consider whether or not there has been an effect on foreign policy by the media.

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<sup>1</sup> The White House, US National Security Strategy: A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington D.C: The White House, December 1999), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard C. Cohen,. "A View from the Academy," in W. Lance Bennett and David L.Paletz. eds., *Taken by Storm: The media, Public Opinion, and US Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*. Chicago University Press, Chicago. 1994, 9-10.

- <sup>3</sup> Peter Black, *The Mirror in the Corner* (London: Hutchinson press, 1972), 226.
- <sup>4</sup> Nik Gowing, "Real-Time Television Coverage of Armed Conflicts and Diplomatic Crises: Does it Pressure or Distort Foreign Policy Decisions?" (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994), 4.
- <sup>5</sup> Intell Corporation, Moore's Law, [Database on-line]; (accessed 17 Feb 01); available from <http://www.intel.com/intel/museum/25anniv/hof/moore.htm>; Internet.
- <sup>6</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Redefining the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* 78 (Jul/Aug 1999): 24.
- <sup>7</sup> Steven Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention." (Research paper, Harvard University J. F. Kennedy School of Government, June 1997), 2.
- <sup>8</sup> Frank J. Stech, "Winning CNN Wars," *Parameters* XXIV (autumn 1994): 42.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 7th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 499.
- <sup>10</sup> Warren P. Strobel, "The CNN Effect." *The American Journalism Review Supplement* (May 1996): 33.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Background

Whilst researching this thesis numerous articles, books, and theses fell, were thrust, or simply landed in the lap of the author. It did not take long to realize that the direction from which this thesis looked at the media political interplay was almost unique. That fact alone raised concerns as to whether there would be any available research materials that could be employed in exploring the topic. Ironically, it was from the Internet, a medium that will be looked at in some detail in this thesis that a majority of the literature and information came from. It was also on the World Wide Web (WWW) where most of the research information used in answering some of the secondary questions was gained.

The literary research for this thesis was conducted in three stages, two of which fit the research methodology that will be outlined in chapter 3; the first and also the method outside the definition of the thesis study model simply set a background against which the author could work. In line with the research methodology, the author initially looked at the ability of the media to influence decisions and why this ability, if any, was important. The author then searched for examples in order to illustrate where the media had influenced political foreign policy decision-making previously.

There were many books available which enabled a knowledge baseline to be established with regard to the effect of the media on foreign. Most of these looked at the relationship of the government or military to the media, not the effect of the media on foreign policy, and none of the works discovered looked at the effect or potential effect of

the modern media (as defined in this thesis) upon the decisions made by governments with regard to foreign policy. There were however several other important literary finds which enabled the research for this thesis to be completed.

### Current Literature

#### General Media Political Relationship

Before the author could embark on a thesis of this nature, it was considered important to establish a knowledge baseline from which to understand the thoughts and practices behind the relationship between the media and government and ultimately foreign policy. In doing so, the following books were found to be useful:

Doris Graber, professor of political science at the University of Illinois at Chicago, edits *Media Power in Politics*, a book that covers the whole area of the influence of the media in modern politics touching slightly on the issue of information technology.<sup>1</sup> It does however set the scene with regard to the influence the media has had in shaping political thought and policy. The book is a collection of works from various authors; each work looks at a different aspect of the media's influence in politics. One of the most useful works contained in the book is that of Patrick O'Heffernan "Mass Media Roles in Foreign Policy." This article was of particular importance as it contained the analysis of twenty-five in-depth interviews conducted by the author with senior government officials between November 1977 and March 1988 along with data from several other sources.

Similar in nature to Graber's book is *Media and Public Policy*, edited by Robert Spitzer, the professor of political science at the State University of New York at Cortland. The book takes a systematic approach to the study of the media and policy utilizing

several authors and illustrating evidence with case studies. The book focuses on the effect of the media on foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> This author does not see the above works as a panacea for the subject of this thesis but simply as a detailed start point for research.

Finally, in the category of general information relevant to the media political relationship as a whole, two articles by John Keegan written for the broadsheet British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* in April 1999 added a little more insight into this complex area.<sup>3</sup>

This review of the relationship between governments and the media gave a valuable baseline from which to work and refer back to during the development of this thesis.

### Modern Media

As the author alluded to in the introduction to this chapter, there are few works relating the issue of modern media currently available; these are detailed below and have been reviewed and included in the analysis of this thesis.

*Distorting Defense: Network News and National Security* by Stephen P. Aubin sheds some insight onto the CNN factor and its effect on foreign policy.<sup>4</sup> However further detailed analysis came from the following articles and periodicals:

“The CNN Effect,” by Warren P. Strobel sets a good background to the understanding of the CNN effect it is limited by the fact that the article was written in 1996 and as such is slightly dated. It does not contain information or any consideration as to the technological advancements that have taken place in the meantime.<sup>5</sup>

A previous Master of Military Art and Science thesis, which has provided some information on this topic, was “The Media: An Influence on the US Foreign Policy and

Military Policy by any Other Means,” by Michael A. Scully.<sup>6</sup> Scully’s monograph considers the effect of the media on military operations at the operational level and the shaping of foreign policy to support that. This offers a slightly different perspective to this thesis but nonetheless useful.

Probably one of the most useful articles is a research paper that was written by Nik Gowing during his fellowship studies at Harvard University in 1994, “Real-Time Television Coverage of Armed Conflicts and Diplomatic Crises: Does It Pressure or Distort Foreign Policy Decisions?” As the title suggests this paper looks in detail at the effect of real-time television providing a valuable source of reference for this thesis.<sup>7</sup> The reader of this thesis should realize that the paper written by Gowing only considers the medium of television and does not look in any depth at the other forms of modern media. Gowing goes on to conclude that there is perhaps some influence by the media on foreign policy, but believes that nations are restricted in their capability to intervene because of force capabilities and resources.

*Vote.com* is a relatively new book covering the effect of the Internet on American politics in general.<sup>8</sup> Pertinent to this thesis, the author of *Vote.com*, Dick Morris examines the impact and potential impact of the Internet on the media, and in particular the potential impact of the Internet and cable television on the whole “fourth estate”-- media power. The book as its title suggests examines the effect of the Internet on the estate of the media and sees the Internet as a future conduit for public opinion and electoral polls, circumnavigating the traditional media.

Two final theses relating to modern media and looking again at the CNN effect are “Breaking News: A Study of the Effects of Live Television Coverage During Armed

Conflicts,”<sup>9</sup> by Captain Sean McKenna, US Air Force, and “Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention,”<sup>10</sup> by Steven Livingston. The first thesis looks at the effect the media has on operations and foreign policy due to the access that is afforded them during operations, and the second focuses on how the CNN factor affects the type of military operation that may be employed. Livingston’s paper provided a great deal of information with regard to the timeline and actions leading to the US deployment and aid to Somalia, a case study in the paper.

#### The CNN Influence by Effect

It is the last listed work by Stephen Livingston that assisted in the structure of this thesis. His categorization of the CNN effect into possible media effects on foreign policy: accelerant, impediment, and as an agenda setting agency.<sup>11</sup> These can further be divided into subgroups, which are outlined in chapter 3 of this thesis. This classification of media effect has been most useful in developing a thought process by which to structure the effect of the media and to provide a base from which to develop new ideas in relation to the definition of “effect.”

#### Modern Research Data

It is worth noting that Internet sources provided a majority of the reference information used to answer the first two parts of the thesis’s primary question. Listing each source separately, as the bibliography does, is a duplication of effort and impractical in the format of this paper. It is important to note that there is a plethora of locations on the Internet from where sources have been attained, probably the most valuable source of

polling and research information was the Pew Research Center.<sup>12</sup> In particular, the biennial review of the medium of television, has proved to be immensely valuable in the development of this thesis.<sup>13</sup>

### Case Study Evidence Works

Finally in the realm of evidence to support the thesis research, the following books and articles have proved to be the most valuable:

*Battle Lines*, by Peter Braestrup, looks at the effect of the military and the media, and it sheds some light on the question of intervention and force withdrawal.<sup>14</sup> Although Braestrup's book could fall into the category of general works, it does use case studies from various operations and campaigns to illustrate points.

*War, Presidents and Public Opinion*, by John E Mueller, focuses on the impact of the media on public opinion by using the Vietnamese War and Korean War as case studies.<sup>15</sup> Although in its content, it provided a background to historical effects of the media, because of the period that it covers, it was of little value apart from providing background information; and was therefore incidental to the development of this thesis.

Brining the evidence up to the modern day is Jonathan Mermin's article written for the *Political Science Quarterly*, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy."<sup>16</sup> This paper is aptly described in its title; it looks in detail at the intervention of US troops in Somalia in 1992 but does not consider in any detail their hasty withdrawal almost twelve months later. The paper proved useful for the development of the case studies contained in chapter 3.

### Summary of Literature to Date

Within the sphere of the study of the effect of modern media on the foreign-policy decisions, the amount of written information is limited. The more general and historical media-government relations books listed at the beginning of this chapter facilitated an understanding of the problem in general, but it was the more recent works which enabled a more detailed analysis of the primary question. The best source of analytical data has been the Internet that proved immensely valuable in conducting this thesis using modern, accurate and relevant information.

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<sup>1</sup> Doris A. Graber, *Media Power in Politics* (Washington DC: Congressional Quality Press, Inc., 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Robert J. Spritzer, *Media and Public Policy* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> John Keegan, "Analysis: Wars Cannot be Won by Press Release Alone." *The Electronic Daily Telegraph*. [Journal on-line] 17 April 1999. (Accessed 7 Sep 00); available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/et?ac=002770785453005&rtmo=V6Mrk6K&atmo.../wmed217.htm>; Internet. See also, "Wars Are Not Won By Spin Doctors," *The Electronic Daily Telegraph* [Journal on-line] 25 April 1999; (accessed 7 Sep 00); available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/et?ac=002770785453005&rtmo=VpuwiGxx&atmo.../wkeeg25.htm>; Internet.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen P. Aubin, *Distorting Defense- Network News and National Security* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Strobel, "The CNN Effect."

<sup>6</sup> Michael A. Scully, "The Media: An Influence on the US Foreign Policy and Military Policy by any Other Means" (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Gowing, "Real-Time Television," 1-111.

<sup>8</sup> Dick Morris, *Vote.com*. (Los Angeles: Renaissance Books, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Capt Sean McKenna, USAF, "A Study of the Effects of Live Television Coverage During Armed Conflicts" (Master of Art Thesis, University of Colorado-Boulder, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Livingston.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>12</sup> The Pew Research Center [Web site on-line]; (accessed 18 Jan 01); available at <http://www.people-press.org>; Internet.

<sup>13</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Investors Now Go On-line for Quotes and Advice," [Journal on-line] (accessed 10 Jan 2001); available from <http://www.people-press.org/media00rpt.htm>; Internet.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Braestrup, *Battle Lines, Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force and the Media* (New York: Priority Press Publications, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (London: University Press of America, 1985).

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Mermin, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy," *Political Science Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (fall 1997): 385.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Writers too often and too easily slip back and forth between related but otherwise conceptually distinct understandings of the [CNN] effect or effects in question.<sup>1</sup>

#### General

Proving that anything does or does not have an effect on the decisions made by politicians is always going to be difficult especially without primary research. Even then the research will only apply to those interviewed, it also seems that interviews do not always get to the bottom of the matter, more than likely for the reasons Gowing experienced in chapter 2. Any governmental decision should be made with the best interests of the electorate and the country in mind. This would indicate to the average person that these decisions are made based on sound facts and a sturdy, robust decision-making process. One of course realizes that this is probably not always the case and that other influences come into play when making any decision. It would be difficult to make a decision without one's own perceptions entering the decision-making process. It is with this in mind that one should understand that the answers being sought by this thesis are not as cut and dried as the answers sought by other studies. One will recall Peter Black's quote from chapter 1; "Belief in television's influence is rather like belief in life after death. Most of us would like to be able to prove it, but the evidence is inconclusive."<sup>2</sup> After study, this may prove to be the case, and it may simply be the weight of evidence that will tip the balance in either direction as far as the thesis proof is concerned. There will probably not be a clear answer with regard to the primary question, but based on a sound logic already mentioned in the opening chapter and soon

to be expanded upon here. The author intends to prove or disprove the belief that there is some influence excerpted by the modern media on the decision made by governments with regard to foreign policy.

This chapter will expand on the already mentioned research methodology illustrating the methods and models employed during the research of this paper. Perhaps more importantly the chapter will examine how the author intends to draw together the strands of evidence in a logical sequence, supporting with evidence some of the arguments and finally illustrating the thesis outcome with evidence drawn from the examples in recent history.

The Primary Question: What Effect Does the Modern Media Have On the Decisions Made by Governments With Regard to Foreign Policy?

Initially the thesis will look at the thesis statement and draw out the primary question in this thesis: What effect does the modern media have on the decisions made by governments with regard to foreign policy? One can clearly see that there are several aspects to the question that lead on to secondary and ultimately tertiary questions. Nevertheless, in order to prove or disprove the thesis one must define the effect that the modern media may or may not have. In order to do this the thesis will follow the format of the model shown in figure 2.

Studying figure 2 exposes further questions that will be answered during the development of this thesis. The questions contained in the ellipses on the right-hand side of the figure will be the secondary questions for this thesis to which an affirmative answer will facilitate the progress of research and the thesis itself.

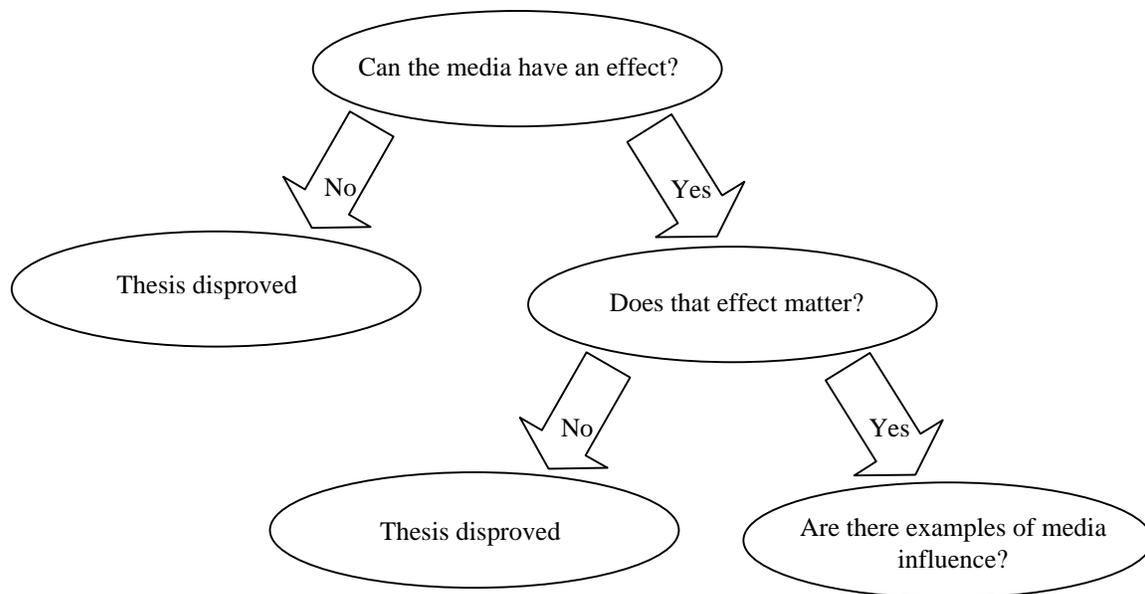


Figure 2. Thesis Methodology Flow Chart

Taking each of the secondary questions in turn, the thesis will now look at the tertiary questions that need to be answered by the research. Before one begins examining the questions that will answer the thesis’s primary question, some definitions and models need to be clarified.

### The Three Media Effects

The three potential media effects or outcomes of media action were defined by Stephen Livingston; who argues that there are three possible basic media effects on foreign policy: (1) the media force can either manifest itself as an accelerant, (2) impediment, or (3) act as an agenda setting agency.<sup>3</sup> These can further be divided into subgroups; he calls the complete definition the “Conceptual Variations of the CNN Effect.”

The *accelerant* shortens not only the decision-making process and amount of time available to decision makers in producing a policy, but also acts as a force multiplier in assisting the sending of signals between national leaders; a phenomenon not uncommon in most foreign policy issues that receive media attention.

The media as an *impediment* comes in two forms: first, *Emotional pressure*, which in this scenario is where both government and political morale may be undermined by poor TV coverage. Secondly, where real-time media coverage presents a direct *threat to operational security*, the definition of this effect is clearly self-evident but will not be examined by this thesis.

The third and final media effect is as an *agenda setting agency*. Within this role the media would be capable of compelling military intervention by covering global issues and raising the profile of the event on the political ladder. This thesis will consider the implications of the media in all three roles, but it will not look at the impact of the media on operational security.

To refine the definition a little further, the media influences, for the purposes of this thesis, will be broken into the following categories shown in table 1. The author has taken the liberty of adding an additional two criteria from those listed in Livingston's definition. The sub-effect of speedy implementation of an already mandated policy has been added under the "Accelerant" media influence category. Conversely, and in keeping with that thought process, the media can also inhibit the political decision-making process by flooding the decision makers with information. Therefore, with the exception of the media influence on operational security and the media as an inhibitor in

the decision-making process, all of the remaining influences of the media will be examined within this thesis.

It is not the intention to examine this model, but simply use the amended version shown in table 1 to illustrate and clarify the definition of the possible effect the media may have on foreign policy.

Table 1. Explanation of the Categorization of the Media Forces

Type of Media Influence	Description	Remarks
Accelerant to positive action	Political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	
	Speeds the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	
Impediment to positive action	Political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	Will not be covered in this thesis
	Where coverage of an incident will degrade public will and support for an ongoing operation or diplomatic initiative	
	Slows the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	
	As a threat to operational and national security	Will not be covered in this thesis
Agenda Setting Agency	Raises an unknown issue to a position where it produces political pressure for action	

### The Secondary Questions

#### Can the Media Have an Effect?

In order to have an effect, defined as, a change (characterized by an action or reaction either positive or negative in nature) the media must have an influence on a

decision maker. Whether the media influence is a direct effect on the politician or a secondary effect via the public, which then causes a reaction from the politician, because of a true or perceived effect on the public is not important in the context of this thesis. In simple terms, it must be possible for the modern media to have an effect. Proving that the modern media can have an effect will remove what could be considered a slightly subjective approach to the paper ensuring a more scientific and possibly objective angle. It is in the answering of this secondary question that the following two tertiary questions are explored. Firstly, in order to have an effect it must be effective in the following ways:

The presentation must be effective, which may mean that it should be either audio; visual or a combination of both. This thesis will endeavor to discover whether the modern media is actually effective in its presentation.

The issues covered should also be timely and relevant but above all, they should be capable of being seen. The thesis will look at the “saturation,” the amount of news by availability that is available today, and analyze the impact of this phenomenon on the audience.

The thesis at this stage may need to look further as one would expect, in order to ascertain what stimuli are most effective psychologically. For example, is a visual effect better than a verbal one; does the combination of audiovisual effects matter in influencing a person’s emotional opinion? For this, the paper will need to digress from the core subject in order to complete the definition and enable this question to be answered fully. Once the fact has been determined whether the media has the capability of producing an effect or not, the thesis will move to the next secondary question.

### Does the Effect Matter?

If the thesis proves that it is possible for the media to have an effect, one must consider whether that effect is important. Does the effect that the media may possibly have, actually have the potential to influence someone? To achieve this one must look at whom and how the media effects.

For the effect to matter one must now look at what effect the saturation of information of any sort will have on the populace as a whole. The thesis will then look at the current saturation of media coverage on both the television and the Internet. In combining this hypothesis with the phenomenon of the CNN effect in its most generic form, one should be able to prove that the effect, (almost by scientific definition) is important, and therefore does matter. It is this scientific analysis that may lead to the production of an efficacy model at the end of the thesis.

### Where Has the Media Had an Effect on the Decisions Made by Governments?

Finally, in order to complete the thesis and ascertain the effect of the media on foreign policy, one must look at examples in recent history that either substantiate or refute the possibility of modern media influence. Areas of military activity and influence in recent years that will be examined are Somalia and the Balkans. These examples have specifically been chosen for several reasons. Somalia is a relatively discrete operation for the USA and offers some clear examples with which to illustrate this thesis. Bosnia and Kosovo, on the other hand, are much more complex. The political intricacies of the Balkan region threaten to cloud any analysis of foreign policy implementation.

Nevertheless, the various conflicts in the region in recent years offer valuable examples for inclusion in this paper.

This part of the thesis will endeavor to pull together the discoveries from the first two secondary questions and utilize recent events in foreign policy to illustrate the hypotheses developed earlier in the paper.

### Summary

The complete thesis methodology is summarized in figure 3.

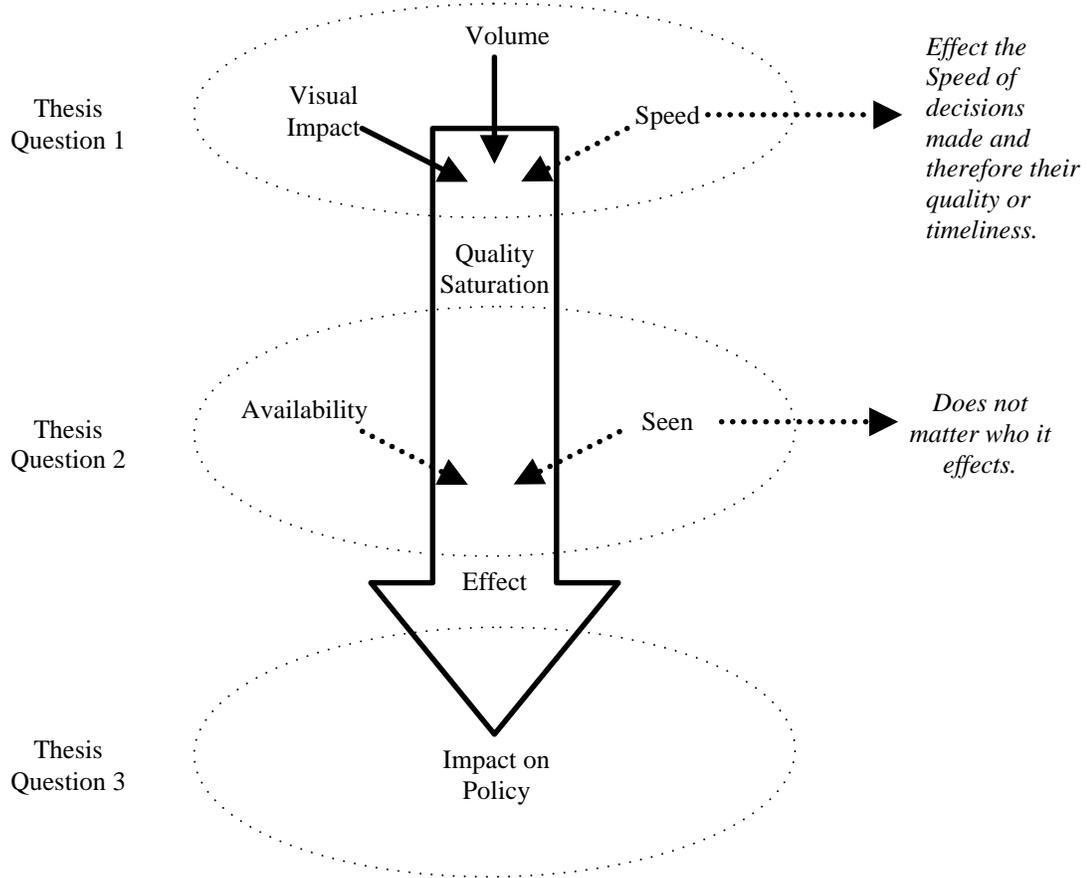


Figure 3. Summary of Thesis Methodology

A combination of speed, visual impact, and volume leads to a level of “quality saturation.” If that level of saturation is sufficient combined with an effective broadcast or report, and if the media product is available, then the media article should have an effect. Linking that effect to a change in foreign policy, as defined in the thesis, will be difficult and will be done by using examples of recent events where there have been a perceived impact on foreign policy because of the action of the modern media.

Finally, it may be possible, using evidence gained during the research and development of this paper, to produce a model describing the effect of the media on certain types of policy depending on the type of foreign policy being described. This model has been developed and explained in chapter 5.

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<sup>1</sup> Livingston, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Black, 226.

<sup>3</sup> Livingston, 2.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### Can the Media Have an Effect?

For the media to have an effect, like all things in physics, it must apply a force. However, in order to apply such a force the media must have something to apply such as a story, which will have an effect, and the media must also be capable of applying that force--be seen. It seems simple enough, that in order to answer the first part of this thesis question, one must show that the media is capable of: (1) having something tangible to apply, and (2) be capable of applying that something, at the right place.

Recent improvements in technology have had a direct impact on the capability modern media in several ways:

1. Modern satellite communications have broken many of the barriers to news production. There are few, if any places left on the planet that cannot be covered by satellite communications. This means that once it is produced, a television story can be beamed back to the home studio almost instantly for airing on the next news program or even live if necessary. This real-time television and news coverage has brought instant pictures into the living rooms of a more educated and open-minded voting public.

2. The television news media in combination with modern technology also has the power to generate news where there is no story. Author, social scientist and correspondent, Nik Gowing argues that the satellite dish and its method of generating live conversation at the site of an incident can be used to produce news, instead of simply reporting on it.<sup>1</sup> The phenomenon will not be looked at in depth but suffice to say--a reporter talking to is co-presenter live on air from the scene of a mediocre news story has

the perceived ability to promote the credibility and importance of that story. Admittedly, the fact that the cameras are there in the first place may raise the importance of the issue anyway.

3. The speed of the transmission of the news reduces the time available to make decisions at critical level in government. This increase in the speed of news item production and transmission has been facilitated by the reduction in size and cost of the media production equipment. Commensurate with this portability, is an increase in the speed of the transmission of the finished news report or article, but more importantly than the speed with which a report can be sent, it is the second-order effect of that speed on time available to those who make decisions. The time available to analyze, consider and decide on the best option has been severely reduced in recent years. This reduced decision-action timeline will be considered later in this chapter.

4. The amount of news coverage available has increased exponentially in the last few years. Modern technology has also meant an increase in availability for the news media. Television coverage of news events is more than just twenty-four hours a day business demanding answers and opinions from leaders and the public alike, at any time of the day and night. The availability of the screens on which to view the news is also increasing. The most recent addition to the mediums of news proliferation is undoubtedly the Internet.

All of the above factors combined have the ability to pressure decision makers and shape public opinion, which in turn affects the politician. This combination of speed of production, transmission, pressure for potential decision time and the fact that the

news is everywhere has amounted to a capability to produce a force that can have an effect.

### Does Speed Matter?

The increased speed of the modern media has manifested itself in two distinct forms: (1) the impact of faster communications, and (2) faster production of stories. As second order effect, the impact of this on the twenty-four hour news cycle and the political decision-making process has been dramatic. This phenomenon has had a dramatic impact on the time available for the whole political decision-making process. Moreover, the twenty-four hours news capability has also had an impact. No longer do decision-makers have the luxury of waiting until the next day or even over the weekend. The last President to enjoy the “luxury” of the protection of time was Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis, where he had six days grace in which to plan and seek advice from his top aids and assistants before the pressure of the press and public turned toward him.<sup>2</sup>

### Speed of Transmission

Clearly the speed of reporting will have an effect on the decision-making process, not only can news be sent around the world faster it has directly affected the length of a “news cycle.”<sup>3</sup> This effect of speed is what is understood by most to be the actual heart of the CNN effect. Advancements in modern technology have meant that television coverage of events can be “real-time.” This means that an event happening on the other side of the world is seen by the politician and the public at the same time it occurs.

The speed of transmission has also brought a change to the information gathering systems used by the United State of America.<sup>4</sup> Marlin Fitzwater, former presidential press secretary remarked that the Department of State was too slow a system of

information collection to be used in time to make decisions. “Intelligence agencies . . . must be prepared to defend their assessments against the evidence presented on television or other real-time media, such as the Internet or telephone.”<sup>5</sup> This was a clear indication that the media were inside the decision action cycle of the State Department, at least.

### Impact on the Decision-Making Process

The second order effect of this increased transmission speed is the fact that officials do not have the luxury of time. They must be prepared to react and respond more quickly than ever before. This phenomenon is a double-edged sword; the politicians have also been given the ability to influence the news themselves, twenty-four hours a day. As a positive political effect, the speed of the media and the increased number of repetitions of a news cycle throughout the day have enabled the policy makers to use this effect to shape public opinion themselves.<sup>6</sup> The most natural assumption relating to a reduced decision cycle is of course, that the increased amount of speed and impact on the decision-making process causes haste and therefore forces incorrect decisions to be made. On the other hand, former Secretary of State James A. Baker III would argue that this symptom of increased transmission speed, at least forces the politicians to have to make a decision.<sup>7</sup> Both schools of thought are equally valid, as there is a fine line between considered decision and rushed reaction particularly when unprepared for a rapid response.<sup>8</sup>

It seems therefore, that the increased speed of the media does produce twenty-four hour a day live news coverage; an effect of which is a reduced decision-action cycle for the politician. This is a factor, which can be either a help or a hindrance in the political process.

## What Volume of Media is Available?

Globalization of the media has meant more to the information collection community, simply than a spread of the collection capabilities and passage of information between those agencies; it has also meant a spread of the proliferation of news media. The news is everywhere, bars, and hotels and even in the street. Ben Mackintyre gives a clear example of the current level of saturation of the media:

In times of crisis or high drama, America turns to CNN. In bars, airports, aircraft, hotel lobbies, corner shops and anywhere else where people might pause and watch, the news pours out in a steady, heady stream.<sup>9</sup>

The results in a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center at the time of the release of the Starr Report, relating to the Clinton impeachment trial in 2000 were interesting. Of the 2018 people polled, all of which had heard of the report, 28 percent read the report in a newspaper, 15 percent saw the finding on television and 11 percent read it on the Internet.<sup>10</sup> The estimated number of people who accessed the report online was twenty million, almost 10 percent of the population of the USA. Also interesting was the fact that of those who read the report, 32 percent read it on a network site, 17 percent on the House of Representative's site, 15 percent on a newspaper site and 31 percent on another web site. These figure simply go to illustrate the fact, which will be looked at later in the chapter; that the Internet is becoming one of the primary sources of news for the western audience.

Both the television and Internet operate twenty-four hours a day. A simple enough fact in itself but one must remember that there are several, trustworthy, constantly updating news agencies on the Internet who facilitate a perpetual outlet for the news and views of the media. In simple terms, there is an inconceivable amount of live, video and

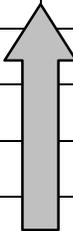
sound news footage constantly being updated and amended for viewing by the general public.

### Does Quality Matter?

The fact that people react better to pictures and sound combined than to either effect alone is common knowledge.<sup>11</sup> However, the effect of these two mediums together more often than not make the event “seem utterly real,” wrote Walter Lippmann in 1922.<sup>12</sup> Radio, although probably the most listened to medium available to the media has no visual impact, neither to some extent do still pictures contained in newspapers. Black and white newspapers have an even lower graphical effect on the mind of the reader. On a sliding scale of quality and therefore arguably, efficacy, the following order of media visual effectiveness would probable hold true: television, Internet, color newspapers or magazines, black and white print newspapers, and finally radio. One could categorize the various news media into a list of efficacy as shown in table 2.

Table 2. News Media Listed by Efficacy

Media Effect Category	Media	Effect
1	Television	Greater
2	Internet	
3	Color printed media	
4	Monochrome printed media	
5	Radio	Lesser



The most modern and unexplored area of media conduction is the Internet, the detailed analysis of which will come later in this chapter, one should note at this point, that the internet is not just text medium or at best an easily updateable magazine. It contains moving images, the ability to watch moving images on the Internet is as simple as changing the television channel by remote control. This moving imagery is important; vision and sound have the potential to target more of the population, simply, if only by not discriminating against those with disabilities.

Returning to the polls and public opinion, another 1999 Pew survey discovered that 63 percent of the American population thought that television news was too full of violence. The same survey in 1993 found that only 52 percent of the population thought the same thing.<sup>13</sup> An interesting fact to consider, when people claim that audiences are becoming immune to television violence, one would assume the figure to have decreased if that were the case.

Today's society has a "highly visual nature," argues Hoffman, in his book analyzing visual intelligence. He sites music videos and major motion pictures as examples of the impact of visualization and how there effect can draw an audience. Hoffman believes that an individual actively looks for visual stimulation. More than that, he goes on to say that this combination of video and sound can sway emotion and perceptions, "advertisements which daily manipulate our buying habits with sophisticated images."<sup>14</sup> Images change our perception and opinion of issues and have the ability to influence emotion.

Basically the facts seem to support the idea that quality does matter, both in the standard of material being broadcast, the method by which it is broadcast, and as

importantly in the accuracy of the information being distributed. Written coverage of events can never stir the same raw emotion as the effect of sight and sound.<sup>15</sup> Madeleine Albright, knowing the power of television pictures and sound, used the television media to promote the 1999 bombing of Serbia.<sup>16</sup>

There is a dichotomy with Internet information in that the number of people accessing it is increasing and the format for viewing it is improving in quality, but there is no method, yet, of policing the information that is placed on the Web. This is an issue that is beyond the scope of this thesis but does warrant further study as the impact of false information has far reaching consequences, not just for foreign policy but for the information age as a whole.

#### Is It Therefore Possible, for the Media to Have an Effect?

In sum, there is little doubt he the news media has the capability to affect the feelings and perceptions of the voting public. Assessing the value or credibility of the information sold by the media is not possible within the constraints of this paper. However, it is important to note that the combination of hard hitting visual images combined with sound have a direct effect on the mind of the person viewing the effect; more so than the print media.

The modern media effect is not a simple matter of news proliferation. The secondary CNN effect of increased pressure on the decision-making process is a serious problem, which politicians have more or less learned to live with.<sup>17</sup> There is now a clear delineation between news and information.

It could be argued that images of atrocities throughout the world add credence to an already formed and implemented foreign policy. That having been said, the media

play a crucial role in affecting public opinion. In the words of Jordan, Taylor and Mazarr “Television has become the principal source of national and international news and opinion for most Americans.”<sup>18</sup>

Simply because the speed of news has increased thereby reducing decision-making time and the fact that it can place the events of the day on the lap of the consumer during his evening meal does not mean that there is a direct media influence on foreign policy. It does mean that from the evidence seen so far in this thesis, the media has the capability to produce an effect.

If this is the case and the media can and do have an effect on the population at large, and possibly even the decision makers themselves; one must now consider whether that effect matters.

#### Does That Effect Matter?

The products of the modern media are everywhere. As this thesis pointed out earlier, news mediums surround everyone. The amount of news is not important if it cannot be seen or it is seen by the wrong audience. Jordan, Taylor and Mazarr argue: Congress is particularly sensitive to outpourings of public opinion. “The morning paper and the television news, the latest public opinion poll and the hometown press coverage of issues . . . are scrutinized by legislators.”<sup>19</sup>

Following on from arguments proposed earlier in this chapter that the modern media does indeed have the strong capability to produce an effect. The thesis research must now look at where that effect is focused, or is allowed to act. One should note that it is not the intention of this thesis to consider the rationale for media focus nor the content of the information carried by the media.

In keeping with the laws of physics, the force that the media has now created must act on a body to affect a change, in this case, in policy. It is worth noting the parallel between the main hypothesis of this thesis and Newton's first law of motion:

An object at rest tends to stay at rest and an object in motion tends to stay in motion with the same speed and in the same direction unless acted upon by an unbalanced force.

Sir Isaac Newton

One can see the correlation; the impact of the media (the force provider) and its news items (the force), on the politicians (the owner of the body), and their policy (the body). Therefore, for there to be a body on which the media force acts, the force must be capable of hitting a mass of the population for the effect to matter. In the words of the thesis question, the modern media must be capable of striking the population, to do so; the media must be available and be capable of being seen. Figure 4 explains this effect.

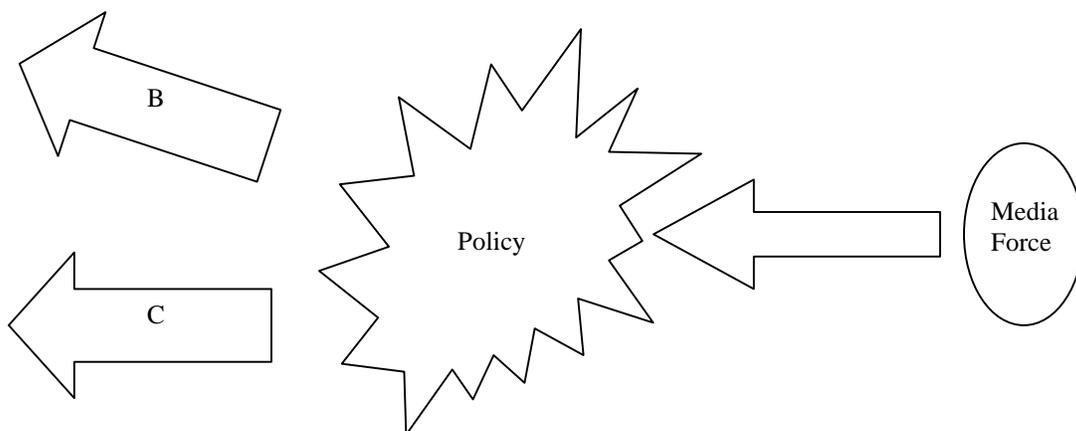


Figure 4. Media Action and Outcome on Foreign Policy Direction

When a media force acts on a specific foreign policy, it may produce effect B, a change in direction or effect C, an acceleration of policy. A point to note is that a change in direction may also be a reversal of policy.

Worldwide there are currently a total of 407 million Internet users 6.71 percent of the world's population, a rise of 391 million from the original figure of sixteen million (0.39 percent of the population) estimated in December 1995. This increase, is not only indicative of globalization and the information revolution, but indicates a massive spread on technology in just five years.<sup>20</sup> This means that more people are aware of their surroundings and have the capability to reach for information and news much more easily than ever before. Televisions are also everywhere, 98 percent of American households have a television set and 79 percent of the population has a satellite or cable system.<sup>21</sup> This increase in type one and two media conduits is only important if they are used and the news they convey is available.

#### Where do People get Their News: Is News Available?

For the modern media to be effective it must capture the attention of the preponderance of the viewing audience, in other words, it must be seen by a sizable proportion of the population. Therefore, in order to meet the criteria for this thesis, the news digesting public must get a majority of their news from modern media sources; from television and the Internet. This hypothesis is relatively easy to prove: in 1994, CNN claimed to have an audience of fifty-five million potential viewers, which was 1 percent of the world population. Today that figure is much larger, and when combined with those who use the Internet as a news information service, make about 3 percent of the world population.<sup>22</sup>

In a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center results indicated that the Internet was one of the primary sources used by people for following the events of the American Presidential elections in 2000. This figure seems to have been reasonably stable over the last few years, the more interesting finding is the almost meteoric rise in the number of people who have access to, and who actively use the Internet for their news gathering.

### The Internet

In his recent book, *Vote.com*, Dick Morris raises some interesting views as to where the Internet revolution will take us, especially with regard to its influence on the media as the Fourth Estate.<sup>23</sup> He goes on to show that the Internet will overtake television as the primary source of news for most Americans. Even today, according to a 1999 Dresner, Wickers and Associate's poll, almost twenty-seven million Americans over the age of sixteen say they often read news and sport articles on the Internet.<sup>24</sup> The report goes on to say that seventy-four million Americans, almost a third of the population, use the Internet over the course of a two-month period. The growth of the Internet is indeed "phenomenal," as Morris would want us to believe. This will not be an overnight revolution, the Internet, has not and probably will not replace television as the primary news source some for years to come.

The advantage that the Internet offers is a more balanced and in-depth coverage that television cannot afford. The Internet surfer himself can trawl in a relatively short period of time for the news coverage that he or she wants to see. Morris argues, "ABC, CBS and NBC are no longer the rulers of television audiences. In 1978, 90 percent of American households tuned into their programming, only 45 percent do so today."<sup>25</sup>

More recently, it was evaluated that those people have migrated to the Internet. CNN claims that 60 percent of the US population has access to the Internet; either at home or at work totaling 168 million Americans who use the Internet.<sup>26</sup>

One final note on the capability of the Internet to influence is that it has the capability of reaching into the office and workplace. Where several years ago the radio alone could penetrate into the workplace, now the Internet has the capability to bring moving pictures and sound onto the manager's desk, all day long.

### Television

“Television is our medium of choice and it starts at a young age.”<sup>27</sup>

Mazurkiewicz argues that the television provides the preponderance of news for the American population and it becomes a primary source at young age. This ingrained need for television news above other media outlets has detracted from the number of Americans who read their news from the papers. Interestingly, it is not just television news programs that are considered purveyors of the news; in a Brill's Content Survey poll, 38 percent of Americans see talk shows as a viable alternative to news programs for gathering current affairs related information.<sup>28</sup> Television still remains the major source of news for the American public, in another Brill's Content survey, the results in table 3 were obtained in March 2000 when the public were simply asked, “Where do you get your news?”

Since the data in table 3 was collected, figures as recent as June 2000 indicate that the number of people getting news from the television had remained almost constant at about 54 percent where the number getting news from the Internet, daily, had risen to 15 percent.<sup>29</sup>

Table 3. Where People get their News

Sources	Percentage March 2000
Television	49.5
Newspapers	25.5
Radio	11
News Magazines	5
Internet	4.9
Friends/Family	3
Don't Know	1.2

Do Those That See It Matter?

The Starr Report poll conducted by the Pew center also included some of the demography of those who viewed the document online.<sup>30</sup> Thought seniors were the group most likely to have read any part of the report they were unlikely to have gone online to get it, in fact only 2 percent did so. The striking contrast is that 12 percent of those who went online were under thirty years old. This would either indicate that it is the younger population who use the Internet more--no surprise; or the fact that the younger population are becoming more interested in politics. The answer to that issue probably lies somewhere in between the two camps. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is the younger end of the employed personnel that use the modern media for news and information collection. Although these people may not be the central characters in the decision-making circles as yet, they are the advisors and aids to the current group of decision makers, and will in due course move into the shoes of their masters, at present they do have the ear of the decision maker. Pew research results supported this fact when it said, “ As large numbers of younger Americans turn to the Internet for news, the

audience of the traditional media is aging.”<sup>31</sup> Out of these, it is assessed that they are the better-educated and are a more influential proportion of the population, “they are more affluent, more well educated Americans.”

As for those that see the modern media--research seems to suggest that the young upwardly mobile future leaders are absorbing a majority of their news from modern sources. There is clearly a link between the modern media and the policy maker, either directly or through those around them. The short answer to this tertiary questions is that those who see the modern media do matter.

#### So, Does the Effect of the Modern Media Matter?

It is not simply a matter of news proliferation. The CNN effect struck the policy maker hard in the mid nineteen-nineties; a problem they have more or less learned to live with.<sup>32</sup> For whatever reasons a story is chosen as newsworthy and is selected for broadcasting, ABC news editor Ted Koppel argued that, “television fills the vacuum only when presidents fail to develop and sell rationale for the US.”<sup>33</sup> This may suggest that there does not even need to be a reason to broadcast a story, nevertheless, the American public still continue to place a high value on the importance of news, almost 75 percent of Americans think news is as important as ever.<sup>34</sup> This may be a dangerous situation where the news media fills a void with policy driving news that is then soaked up by the American public.

It is simply not true that television audiences are becoming increasingly immune to violent television scenes. It is probably true, that the impact of the scenes of starving children during the 1984 Ethiopian famine were greater at the time they were shown than they would be if they were shown today. The fact that the coverage of the 1984 disaster

gathered millions of dollars in aid has been likened to a “sugar rush”; the effect will not be the same the next time something of this nature occurs.<sup>35</sup> This in itself is a disturbing fact, which raises questions about our moral fabric, but it does mean that the possible power of the images transmitted as news is being mitigated. The Pew report cited earlier in the chapter would bear this fact out.

More importantly, the same report shows that out of all forms of graphic media, video, television and Video games, the public considered that the top two most violent mediums were television and the Internet with 39 and 36 percent respectively. The fact that that violence on the television continues to affect and permeate lives of the viewer seems to be a recurring theme.

The conclusion one can draw from all this is that the public is not becoming immune to the television violence. The percentages of those who think television is violent remains the same today as it did in the early nineteen-nineties also; 70 percent of adults polled in May 1999, thought that there was too much violence portrayed on television as a whole. The fact that there is a significant number, who consider news violent, who are not becoming immune to television violence, would also indicate that the media is reaching its audience and having an impact on them.

A second issue and further evidence that the media is having an effect on the population, is the fact that people are simply becoming more selective about the information and news they wish to see. The American public is becoming an event driven news nation.<sup>36</sup> People tend only to be interested in the news when it suits them or when something interesting happens--supporting the fact that the media can have an effect at least on the public. Interestingly, when the Pew Research center conducted its

biennial review of television news habits in June 2000, it found that, if a terrorist incident happened in the USA 66 percent of the population would follow the story on the television. A further 10 percent would follow the incident on the Internet and radio with only 5 percent would wait for a print source to cover the incident.<sup>37</sup>

The conclusion from this is that the modern media is increasing in popularity; more people obtain their news for television than any other medium. The other conduit for hard hitting graphic images, the Internet, currently has the same news circulation as most of the remaining forms of media, and more importantly is set to rise in popularity and availability. From the demographic considerations, one sees that it is the younger generations who embrace the new news technology the best possibility indicating that there will be an increase in the interest and therefore potency of the modern media in the future.

To summarize this secondary thesis question, the media can produce an effect that is seen by people who matter. What is more important, is the question whether the modern media has had an effect in recent years on decision made with regard to foreign policy--has there been an effect.

### Has the Modern Media Had an Effect?

#### Background

The nature of warfare changed dramatically in the latter half of the twentieth century. From the end of World War II, the last “total war” in the west where the United Kingdom fought for its very existence; the western nations within NATO were caught in a Cold War with the Soviet Union. In 1990, what nations had come to expect to be a lengthy standoff also changed, initiated with the demise of the old soviet regime and the

shift within the communist block countries to a more democratic style of leadership. The demise of the Warsaw Pact consequently forced western governments to pursue foreign policy and international ambitions through limited conflicts that pose little or no threat to the survival of the nation state. This shift from large scale warfare with the nations survival at stake, to small, limited operations to further foreign policy has made it more difficult for a government to ensure public support for its actions. As was demonstrated by the American population's loss of support for the Vietnam War in 1968; the center of gravity for most if not all nations involved in a limited war against an adversary using total means, is national will. The media has a direct and powerful link into this variable. This fact now means that governments will use methods available to them to illicit public support for foreign policy decisions but in doing so they are arguable equally vulnerable to the influence of these mediums on the opinion of the populace. By using two case studies, this thesis will now consider whether there has been an influence on foreign policy by the media.

### Somalia: The Media Influence

With the possible exception of Vietnam, Somalia is probably the most cited modern example of how the CNN effect, changed US foreign policy. Pundits extol the reasons for initial US and international aid assistance in the east African nation, followed by military intervention and finally troop withdrawal, as shining examples of “the media influence” on foreign policy. However, these shining examples turn out to be more like mirages than the expected indisputable “concrete evidence” of cause and effect. Michael Mandelbaum would have us believe “televised pictures of starving people (in Somalia) created a political clamor to feed them, which propelled the US military into action.”<sup>38</sup>

This is not quite the full story. It is also not true to say that “American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media Driven Policy”<sup>39</sup> This author would argue that any media influence on a foreign policy decision whether purposeful or not, whether intended to delay or advance action, is an effect nevertheless.

One should remember the three categories of media influence as described in the previous chapter. Livingston’s model affords one the ability to compare effects of the modern media on foreign policy. In order to have an effect, the media does not necessarily have to place a new news item on the front page of the metaphorical newspaper; nor does it need to force the deployment of US or UK troops the following week to a country three quarters of the population did not know existed until the headlines hit.

### Intervention and Aid (1992)

One must first consider the events leading to the US military intervention and aid assistance in Somalia in 1992. In this case people believe that media interest in the events at the time are indicative of the effect that the media had on events in the USA and eastern Africa. That is probably a reasonable assumption to make and one that will be followed throughout this analysis.

The two most popular schools of thought concerning media coverage of the Somalia situation on 1992 excluding the CNN effect are: first, simple media curiosity and second, the media following what had already been declared a probable US course of action in the region. A third and more supportive line of reason is that certain senators and politicians employed the media purposely in order to generate interest or support a groundswell of feeling in the US population, in order to promote a policy of intervention.

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the media are to be considered unbiased, but that does not preclude the discussion on their deliberate use by others and therefore, their effect on the feelings of the population.

Many people believe that the first reason Somali stories reached the headlines was simply because of media curiosity, similar to that which sparked the coverage of the Ethiopian famine in 1984. This fact is probably accurate to a point, but is outweighed by the amount of evidence that suggests that US media interest in the story arose after Washington had already declared possible US action in the area. In the words of Jonathan Mermin, “if television inspired American intervention in Somalia, it did so under the influence of governmental actors--a number of senators, a House committee, a presidential candidate and figures within the Bush administration.”<sup>40</sup>

Other sources confirm that the amount of television coverage of the Somali famine was initially limited, only fifteen news stories on three networks prior to the August 1992 even though the reporters were assisted in getting to Somalia by international relief agencies.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, after the presidential decision by Bush to begin the airlift, the numbers of reports increased.<sup>42</sup>

At least in the case of aid to Somalia it seems that media interest was not simply, idle curiosity and an attempt to follow a story that had the potential to be as big as the Ethiopian famine of almost ten years hence. It seems more probable from the weight of evidence, that the media followed an already declared interest of the government at the time.

This anomaly was repeated later in the year when troops were sent in to protect the aid that had been delivered into Somalia. As Jonathan Mermin again points out in

detail, the number of stories relating to Somalia covered by the major news networks increased shortly after a governmental announcement or decision to move troops to the region.<sup>43</sup> The timings between the two events are admittedly tight, in fact, less than twenty-four hours, but have been proven to be sequential in nature, nevertheless.

There are two possible exceptions to the increase in coverage in July 1992, the first increase occurred following the visit to Somalia of Senator Nancy Kassebaum, chair of the Subcommittee on Africa of the Senate foreign Relations Committee and second the independent run of news stories in early May 1992 by CNN.

Senator Kassebaum indicated that she supported sending military aid to Somalia, a position contrary to that of the Bush administration. The increase in coverage following her announcement and the unique run of CNN Somalia stories alone do little for the Somali cause. However, when combined with Congress' concerns over the Somali issue in April, Kassebaum's statement, the seemingly lack of US interest in Bosnia at the time and what is believed to be an indispensable contribution from the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), which made "good television," the US government announced the airlift less than three weeks later.<sup>44</sup> Arguably, the deciding factor, which tipped the scales in favor of assistance, was the combination of emotional television coverage being sound around the start of the presidential election campaign in the fall. It has been argued "television framed Somalia in a way that inspired emotional reaction."<sup>45</sup> The issue at hand was the portrayal of a "bewildered little girl" which undoubtedly had an impact on the Bush campaign gearing up for an autumn start.

It seems that Mermin was correct when he said, “Instead of being out ahead of Washington, television appears to have acted in concert with congress and the White House.”

#### The Withdrawal of Assistance (October 1993)

The issue of media involvement in the withdrawal of US troops from Somalia is to that of their involvement. Few people would argue that the scenes of the desecration of the body of a dead US soldier in the streets of Mogadishu in October 1993 sped up the moves to withdraw US forces from Somalia. More importantly, however, is the fact that President Clinton had already contacted the United Nations (UN) and Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, through Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and informed them of the United States’ intention to withdraw troops from the region. The plans for the withdrawal of US forces were already underway when the images of Staff Sergeant Bill Cleveland began to appear on the World’s television screens.<sup>46</sup> The effect of the television pictures was not as dramatic as first expected.<sup>47</sup> Probably the most ironic issue here is that just two years earlier President George Bush had stated, whilst prosecuting the Gulf conflict, that the “Vietnam syndrome” of the media effect on public opinion had been conquered.<sup>48</sup> There is little doubt that the impact of the pictures of the failed Special Forces raid into Mogadishu had some effect on the US population. It is also probably indicative of the nature of the CNN effect that the decision to withdraw forces was made so quickly that there was little opportunity for opposition to the US force presence to be heard. For a full analysis of this effect one would have needed to wait and see if there was such a strong public outcry over a longer period of time, and secondly, to

see what the media made of a protracted conflict by analyzing the amount of coverage it would have been given.

Livingston points out that another reason which supports the fact that the media, and in particular the CNN effect may be overstated as an agenda setter, is *Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25)* issued in May 1994.<sup>49</sup> The essence of the PDD is that it makes the deployment of US forces at the whim of the President, more difficult. Congress must approve the deployment after several stringent conditions have been met, including a withdrawal date and a clear statement of American interest.<sup>50</sup>

Some people would also state that the clinching argument for the classification of “minimal media impact” in the case of the US deployment and withdrawal from Somalia is the fact that the US had already been sending aid to Somalia almost a year prior to the news media becoming interested in the events in West Africa. In 1991, the United States’ Agency for International Development had already shipped 12,000 tons of food to the country.<sup>51</sup>

There are factors and opaque issues that distract from one’s ability to focus on the matter of the impact of the media on foreign policy with regard to Somalia. This “fog” will probably exist and cloud many similar situations in the future.

That problem notwithstanding, by either accident or design, there was clearly some media influence on foreign policy at the time. Media coverage of the crisis was heightened only after political interest in the situation had been shown.<sup>52</sup> In the case of Somalia, the media did not by the definition used in chapter 3; produce an “agenda-setting” story in any of the above cases. It did fulfill the role of an accelerant and undoubtedly played a role as an impediment during the end of the Somalia operation.

Interestingly enough it is the next area of military intervention that has been argued to be an additional influence on the issue of US involvement in Somalia.

### The Balkans: A Policy from the Media

It is much more difficult to analyze the media influence on the Balkan arena for several reasons. First, the conflict and troop deployment happened over a protracted period, and is still an ongoing operation. Second, the actors or variables involved in the complete political and sociological issue are far more complex than those in Western Africa. There is a good chance that the issues in Bosnia would have turned the heads of world leaders even without the intervention and assistance of the world's press.<sup>53</sup> Finally, The personalities of the heads of various countries is considered to be a factor in the actions taken by those nations; Neumann believes that Bush would have reacted differently than Clinton did in regard to the images coming from the Balkan area.<sup>54</sup>

To that end, the thesis has concentrated on issues where a clear distinction between the overlapping issues can be made and where some of the complex political variables can be removed. Without this clarification, the evidence selected may not be as refined as possible and therefore cloud the deductions and conclusions.

In April 1993 Martin Bell, a British news reporter working for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) filed a report from a small Muslim village just north of Vitez. What made the report so remarkable was not its content, showing scenes from the massacre in the village, but simply the effect that the story had. This short report brought a war into the living rooms of millions of television viewers. This coverage did not move the problem up on the political agenda, at least not publicly.

John Fox, an Eastern European specialist in the state department at the time of the initial Bosnia incidents, recalled the effect on him of “The mounting images.” The images in question were those of a busload of Bosnian school children caught in the crossfire of an ethnic battle. Fox and two other colleagues resigned in disgust at the lack of action by western governments.<sup>55</sup> Surely, this is a clear example of lack of influence that television coverage had on foreign policy. Another example of governmental reaction to the media coverage of a child was the story of Irma, a small girl who had been severely wounded in the fighting for Sarajevo. British television told her story in July 1993. The fact that the initial response by the British government was a knee-jerk reaction,” was clear. The UK immediately dispatched a special aircraft to fly her and another forty casualties back to the UK for specialist treatment. The UN headquarters cynically referred to Irma as “Instant Response to Media Attention.”<sup>56</sup>

British intervention in Bosnia was arguably triggered by the television scenes of the mortaring of the bread queue in Sarajevo in May 1992, which were followed soon after by film of the Omarska mine concentration camp. There was considerable pressure from the media to send troops to Bosnia. The continuing television coverage kept goading ministers into action; whether or not to send troops to Bosnia became the constant subject of debate in Britain and elsewhere. It was noted:

It is hard to believe that, without the television picture on the screens in the United Kingdom, British Troops would ever have been dispatched to a part of Europe that could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be held to be a vital national interest.<sup>57</sup>

No military action was taken. The British Home Secretary at the time, Douglas Herd and Germany’s Foreign Minister both stated that sanctions should be given the chance to work. In fact, upon the imposing of sanctions by the United Nations Security

Council, key national players were telephoning Serbia to assure them that they need not fear a military threat, and so the bombing of Sarajevo continued.<sup>58</sup>

In the United States, there was similar television coverage to the incidents, but again there was no intervention. President Bush had decided that there would be no intervention by American troops and was adamant in this policy. In fact, most Americans were opposed to sending troops to Bosnia in the first place and despite Clinton's later speech, deeper analysis of the subject showed that a majority of the US population was ambivalent about the whole issue. There was a general feeling that the news had been distorted and the US people had not been given all the facts.<sup>59</sup>

The second Sarajevo marketplace incident did finally bring military action in the form of air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. This is a perfect example of the chicken and egg principle. Neuman states that the press did not lob mortars into the market square in Sarajevo, the Serbs did. Television did not force a military operation, the antagonists did. Neuman says, "The Serbs moved foreign policy, not television pictures."<sup>60</sup> Television was employed more as a messenger in the Bosnia scenario than a tool to influence foreign policy. As soon as public interest was aroused, President Bush stamped on it by reminding the US population of the violent history of the Balkans. Even when UN peacekeepers were taken hostage, no action was forthcoming.

The Clinton administration was a different animal; Clinton fell into the trap of a reactionary policy. This led to him being eventually cornered into acting militarily in Bosnia, because of his actions within US domestic politics.<sup>61</sup> With Clinton's re-election pending and his belief in the fact that the Bosnia scenario had the ability to shape opinion polls he pushed the rhetoric of peace in the Balkans, hoping for a successful outcome. It

was perhaps ironic that in order to assist in the policing of a segregated Bosnia, he had to sell the deployment of 25,000 troops.

There is still a mountain of evidence to suggest that the impact of the media is limited at best and it seems to depend on the issue being pushed by the news story. Television pictures of incidents in Bosnia may have pushed diplomatic buttons, or forced another round of international talks, but they did little to force military intervention. Three years of media coverage, bloody scenes and violent images did nothing to induce the western military into the Balkan arena. A perfect example of this was the town of Gorazde, which was attacked by Serbian forces in April and September 1994. In the words of Neuman, "If television pictures swayed policy, Gorazde would have endured one massacre, not two."<sup>62</sup>

#### Has there been an Effect?

Because there is little concrete evidence to suggest that the media has had an agenda setting effect on the formulation of foreign policy, it does not mean that the effect is nonexistent. What does seem to be apparent is that fact that there is clearly some media impact on the speed of political forces. The increased rate of aid to Somalia can be attributed to that effect of modern media, and indeed for the speedy introduction of troops into the Former Yugoslavia. The Media, therefore, cannot be held directly responsible for those events. The media has a better impact in some situations than in others. The effect of television on the public's perception of the effectiveness and value of the US troop presence in Somalia after the terrible scenes of October 1993 was more marked, than their effect on the public with regard to the mortaring of the market in Sarajevo. The

bottom line is that the media seem to have more of an impact as an emotional inhibitor than as an agenda setter.

The media impact on policy seems also to depend on several variables least of which is the amount of media coverage given to a particular issue. As a development to this thesis, chapter 5 examines a possible model for evaluating the effect of the media on a prescribed foreign policy position that has been born of much of the research done in completing this paper

Seib's comment on media hubris is:

News coverage strikes at the somnolent, American conscience, polls reflect the change in attitude, politicians take note, and ultimately policy shifts-- incrementally or drastically.<sup>63</sup>

From this fact one would think that the most important issue is whether the media is deliberately employed as a tool to compound support for already made decisions. It is also arguable that the CNN effect offers officials the opportunity to support decisions that have already been made. It seems that in the case of Somalia certain politicians chose the media as a method of drumming up support for a policy of intervention and aid. There is little doubt that this effect could be achieved. It is however, beyond the scope of this thesis to speculate whether or not this has occurred. In the case of Somalia, it is safe to say that the media has an impact on foreign policy, not in its formulation and not in changing it, but simply, and importantly, in influencing the rate at which events occurred.

In the Balkans, the picture is a little cloudier, a fact that is indicative of this particular United Nations Multinational operation. Lee Hamilton, chairman of the foreign affairs committee, remarked in regard to the bombings in Kosovo in 1999:

Televised images quickly become a central part of the foreign policy debate. They affect which crises we decide to pay attention to and which we ignore. They affect how we think about these crises, and I have little doubt these televised pictures ultimately affect what we do about these problems.<sup>64</sup>

His words echoed in the opinion polls of the 1999 Kosovo crisis when polls showed national support rising for intervention after televised pictures of “fleeing Kosovar civilians.”<sup>65</sup>

There is little doubt that the media influenced the public perception of Bosnia and indeed to some extent forced changes in foreign policy. They certainly did not manage to single handedly force the movement of armies into a small nation along the Adriatic coastline. What television did was to elevate the issues to a national and international level. Placing issues in front of people as they ate their evening meal, forcing a reaction from the politician, which was not necessarily a foreign policy reaction, but a reaction all the same.

The media can affect certain parts of foreign policy and they can affect certain foreign policy issues completely. Because of the fact that it has become clear through research that it may be possible to categorize the media influence on foreign policy depending on several factor; chapter 5 to this thesis has developed a model that could be used to illustrate the effect of the media influence depending on the foreign policy it is attempting to target.

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<sup>1</sup> Nik Gowing, “Real-Time Television,” 3.

<sup>2</sup> Michael R. Beschloss, *Presidents, Television and Foreign Crises* (Washington, DC: The Annenberg Washington Program, 1993), 10.

<sup>3</sup> Strobel, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Livingston, 3.

- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Strobel, 35.
- <sup>7</sup> Livingston, 3.
- <sup>8</sup> Philip Seib, "Politics and the Fourth Estate: The Interplay of Media and Politics in Foreign Policy" *Harvard International Review*, 22, no. 3 (fall 200): 61.
- <sup>9</sup> Ben Mackintyre, "CNN Breeds a Nation of News Junkies." *The Times*, 3 June 1995, 13.
- <sup>10</sup> The Pew Research Center, "20 Million go online," 5.
- <sup>11</sup> Stech, 3.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 11.
- <sup>13</sup> Polling Report.com. "The News Media/Communications" [Report on-line]; available from <http://www.pollingreport.com/media/htm>, accessed 3 Feb 2001, 12.
- <sup>14</sup> Donald D. Hoffman, *Visual Intelligence: How We Create What We See* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Press, 1998), xii.
- <sup>15</sup> Johanna Newman, *Lights, Camera, War: Is Media Technology Driving International Politics?* (New York: St Martins Press, 1996), 243.
- <sup>16</sup> Seib, 62.
- <sup>17</sup> Strobel, 33.
- <sup>18</sup> Jordan, 129.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> NUA Net, "How Many Online?" 1.
- <sup>21</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Investors Now Go On-line," 5.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 6.
- <sup>23</sup> Morris, 182.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., xxi.
- <sup>26</sup> CNN Report, "Report: 60 percent."

<sup>27</sup> Greg Mazurkiewicz, "If You Read the News You Know" [Article on-line 26 April 2000]; available from [http://www.achrnews.com/CDA/ArticleInformation/features/BNP\\_\\_Features\\_\\_item/0,1338,1878,00.htm](http://www.achrnews.com/CDA/ArticleInformation/features/BNP__Features__item/0,1338,1878,00.htm); Internet; accessed 28 Jan 01, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Mazurkiewicz, 2.

<sup>29</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Investors Now Go On-line," 3.

<sup>30</sup> The Pew Research Center, "20 Million Go Online."

<sup>31</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Investors Now Go On-line," 3.

<sup>32</sup> Strobel, 33

<sup>33</sup> Mary E. Kortanek, "When Pictures Make Policy" *Congressional Quarterly Weekly* 52, no. 17 (April 1994): 1078.

<sup>34</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Investors Now Go On-line," 18.

<sup>35</sup> Newman, 243.

<sup>36</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Investors Now Go On-line," 21.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, "The Reluctance to Intervene." *Foreign Policy* 95, (Summer 1994): 10.

<sup>39</sup> Mermin, 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>41</sup> Strobel, 35.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Mermin, 391.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 397.

<sup>46</sup> Strobel, 37.

<sup>47</sup> Gowing, 59.

<sup>48</sup> Livingston, 4.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>50</sup> Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarian Policies* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, Headline Series, 1995), 36.

<sup>51</sup> Livingston, 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Newman, 228

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>56</sup> Hudson, 279.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>58</sup> Newman, 232.

<sup>59</sup> Susan Douglas, "Double Standards" *The Progressive* 60, no. 1, (Jan 1996): 17.

<sup>60</sup> Newman, 234.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>63</sup> Seib, 61.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 5

### THEORETICAL MODEL

#### Thesis Findings

The first finding from the study of this thesis is that the level of effect of the media depends on several factors; of which the most important consideration is that the media will probably not be the only force pushing for a change in policy. The media force may act either in unison with, or in a contrary manner to, the other influences that affect political decision-making. The outcome from the research conducted for this paper is that the media alone does not have the power to shape foreign policy. It may have the ability to reach and influence to some extent minor issues, and some smaller aspects of foreign policy, however. In essence, the media influence depends greatly on the effect it (as a corporation) is trying to achieve and on what it is attempting to act.

A second interesting point for consideration is that the policy, on which a change is attempting to be affected, will have a level of inertia. Clearly each foreign policy issue carries its own importance and weight; from the findings in this thesis, it seems that the success of media influence can be dependant on the policies it attempts to pressure.

For clarity, the findings of this thesis have been tabulated below. Table 4, summarizes the outcome of some of the research of this thesis. One will note that it is a further development on the Livingston table shown in chapter 3, in table 1. With the exception of the areas not covered in this paper, these have been noted in the outcome column, each type of media effect previously defined has been awarded a possible outcome on foreign policy influence. Table 4 highlights the fact that the modern media influence on foreign policy depends on which policy it acts. The aim of the table is to

summarize the best possible outcome of media effect depending on the type of influence being exerted.

Table 4. Outcome of Media Influence on Policy by Force

Effect	Type of Media Influence	Description	Outcome
1	Accelerant to positive action	Political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	Probably the largest effect. Can be either positive or negative
2		Speeds the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	Positive effect successful when supporting or enhancing an already stated governmental position
3	Impediment to positive action	Political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	Not covered
4		Where coverage of an incident will degrade public will and support for an ongoing operation or diplomatic initiative	Dependant on other factors, but can be shown to be reasonably effective. Especially when combined with effect 1
5		Slows the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	Not covered
6		As a threat to operational and national security	Not covered
7	Agenda Setting Agency	Raises an unknown issue to a position where it produces political pressure for action	Little effect if any, dependant on the size of the issue that is being influenced

In developing the thesis hypothesis further, one can now include the theory of William Perry and Ashton Carter who have developed a three-tier structure in order to

assist in understanding categories of national security interests. This structure breaks down into three country lists which are defined as follows: (1) “List A” countries are those nations which present a threat to national survival, the old Soviet Union for example. (2) “List B” countries are those nations that constitute an imminent threat to the nation such as Iraq and North Korea. (3) Finally, “List C” countries are those nations that are considered as “important contingencies that indirectly affect US security but do not directly threaten US interests.”<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that since the fall of the Soviet Union, lists B and C have dominated the news, secondly and more importantly it seems that foreign policy relating to list C countries is easier to influence using the means available to the media, than it is to influence the policies relating to countries on other lists. This seems to be borne out by the evidence of troop deployment. Western militaries are employed across the full spectrum of conflict with a preponderance of operations at the peacekeeping end of the spectrum and incidentally enough, in both list B and more likely, list C countries. This continual deployment of military forces is felt most by the armies of today and is indicative of the nature of military operations that are currently undertaken.

If one were to combine the two theories of Livingston and Perry-Carter and consider the impact of the media on certain policies by country list, as defined above, one could produce a table refining the findings of the thesis further. The effect of the media by country type is shown in table 5, which is further placed into a rank position relating to the maximum possible modern media effect on that policy. The ranking numbering used is simply: (1) is the most effect and (3) is the lowest. The results of this combination of theories may be similar to that shown in table 5.

Table 5. The Influence of the Media Factors by Medium and Event Type

Effect	Type of Media Influence	Description	Most Likely List of Influence		
			List A	List B	List C
1	Accelerant to positive action	Political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	3	2	1
2		Speeds the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	3	2	1
3	Impediment to positive action	Political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	Not covered.		
4		Where coverage of an incident will degrade public will and support for an ongoing operation or diplomatic initiative	3	1	1
5		Slows the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	Not covered.		
6		As a threat to operational and national security	Not covered.		
7	Agenda Setting Agency	Raises an unknown issue to a position where it produces political pressure for action	3		

It seems therefore that the influence of the modern media works best against list C country foreign policy issues. Policies relating to these nations are of course those issues which covert most public opinion and also those, which are the safest in terms of military risk.

It is now possible to further refine the effect of the media depending on the type of foreign policy, its direction and other possible factors. The aim of this thesis now

changes to describing the theoretical model developed during the research for this paper and suggesting ideas for its future development.

Possible Theoretical Development: Modern Media and Newton's First Law of Motion  
Defining the Force and the Mass

Background

It is from the preceding evidence in this thesis that the author has attempted to design a model that fits and clarifies the effect of the media on foreign policy. Chapter 3 outlines Livingston's view that the media has the potential to act in three ways with regard to its effect on foreign policy. These were: inhibitor, accelerant and agenda setter. The evidence in this thesis seems to concur with the hypothesis set out at the beginning of chapter 1--that was, the modern media can have an effect, that affect matters and there is evidence of a media effect on US foreign policy. It was whilst investigating the final part of the hypothesis; evidence of an effect, that it became clear that there may be a correlation between the effect of the media when viewed as a part of Livingston's three basic media forces and the type of policy as defined by Perry and Carter. This has now led the author to produce a simple model, with which it may be possible to describe or predict in part, the probable capability parameters of a media effect on a given policy.

Remembering the definition of Newton's first law of motion, the first part of which states that a body will remain at rest until acted on by a force. The amount of force to influence that body is directly proportional to the mass of the body and the surface on which it the body sits. For the purposes of this definition, one must assume that the surface on which the body sits has no coefficient of friction (one could further define the surface as the political climate or characteristics of the government in power). The

second part of the definition says that the aforementioned body will also maintain a steady course of speed and direction unless again acted upon by a force. Once again, friction or resistance to movement has been assumed negligible. For future development, one may wish to consider friction in terms of other external factors.

For the basis of this model, another assumption is that the “body” defined in Newton’s first law is in fact the foreign policy position of a particular government. One can later attempt to define the friction and resistance to change as necessary, but the important issue currently is the construction of the basic model.

Each foreign policy position or action stands within a framework of importance that defines its “mass.” For example, the US foreign policy position on intervention in a list C country has less “mass” than a list A country. It is therefore fair to say that a relationship between the media and policy could be described as illustrated in figure 5.

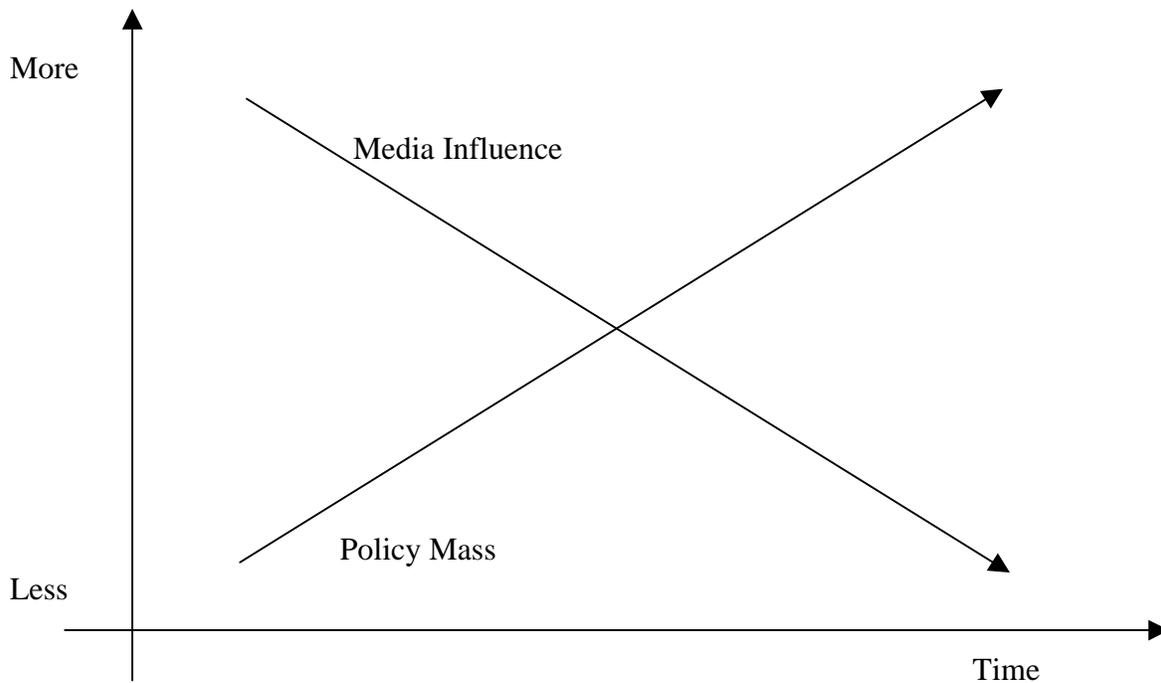


Figure 5. Media Effect and Policy Mass Relationship

Figure 5 illustrates the fact that increased policy mass means that the impact of the media on that policy is lessened.

The relationship is one of inverse proportionality; where as the mass of a policy increases the amount of effect capable by the influence of the modern media, decreases. A further variable, time, has been added to the figure, in this case simply to illustrate the fact that time will also mitigate the effect of the media on a policy and on its mass. One should not be blinkered by this fact, time is merely shown on the axis to illustrate the fact that if a policy position remains constant, its mass will increase as it is more difficult to change that position or stand, taken by a government.

#### Development of the Model

The start point for the development of this model would be the definition of policy and its mass. In the case of foreign policy, the factors that determine mass could be the NSS, current political climate, global issues other international actors and the amount of time a policy had been in place. The more factors that are involved in the definition of a particular foreign policy the higher the position of that policy in the NSS and therefore the greater its policy mass. Another important factor to consider in the definition of policy mass is the amount of risk inherent in that policy. A policy with little risk may have a lower policy mass than one with either greater political or military risk. This model has not gone so far as to allocate values for each policy mass nor derive a method of achieving this value, this is a suggested progression for the model in future research.

The second requirement is to examine the force applied to the mass. The force, which moves that mass, could be constituted of parts such as public opinion, media

pressure and political aims. Of course, the specific media influence would need to be examined to complete the second part of the model. For the sake of this model, the influence of the media is the only factor considered within the makeup of the force.

### Variations and Limitations

Limitations to the development of this model at this stage are simply research dependant. The preceding paragraph eludes to some shortcomings of the model, further to this are the following issues: The research conducted for the primary thesis question was limited by the constraints and boundaries placed upon it in chapter 1. All the variations of Livingston's model shown in this paper have also described those areas that have not been examined. One should note that there is a requirement to expand the research for this model in further study.

Variations on the development of the model and thesis may be to examine the effect of reversing a policy direction. Clearly, as in the physical world, momentum will play a part in defining the amount of force required to reverse a decision. If a policy is already moving in a set direction, in order to change the course of that policy one will require an amount of force that is less than the amount needed to reverse that decision. Once again, figure 5 may applicable in this scenario.

### Definitions

Most of the definitions outlined earlier in this thesis remain extant. However, in order to simplify the examination the possible effects of a media force on a policy, several further definitions must be explained.

## Policy Masses

A further development of this thesis is the definition of the term “policy mass.” The mass of the policy relates directly to the size, importance, flexibility, risk and malleability of the policy. In effect, this is the amount of inertia inherent in the policy and proportional to the amount of force required to influence the policy. The thesis has defined three policy masses, which are described below:

### Primary Mass Policy

A primary mass policy is a policy characterized by a high level of inertia, where the force required to begin its implementation or change its direction is great. A primary policy mass will more than likely be based on a list A nation and be supported by other weighty factors such as sensitivity, national importance, risk and other factors such as previous governmental positions on the issue. Primary policies because of their design, shape, and lack of countries to which they pertain are becoming increasingly less common.

### Secondary Mass Policy

Secondary mass policies will more than likely be based around list B nations. A secondary mass policy is somewhat less important than a primary mass policy; it will hold the interest of the general public but may not be constrained by historical precedent. Governments will be capable of flexing policy on this level of mass with a reduced level of fear of adverse political stability. Secondary mass policies form the majority of policy masses within the western world.

## Tertiary Mass Policy

The final policy mass is the easiest to sway with external influence. In this case, it will probably be based around a list C country; it may not have any historical precedent with regard to governmental position and probably be of limited interest to the public until it comes to the fore. The life expectancy of a news story relating to a tertiary mass policy is relatively short. Governmental decisions relating to tertiary mass policies carry a greatly reduced amount of risk in comparison to the other policy masses and are therefore easier to influence.

### Possible Outcomes

In a further development to Livingston's model, the possible visible, and therefore quantifiable outcomes to media influence used in this model are defined in table 6. Readers should note the addition of an eighth category--no influence. This has been included to assist with the summing up of the model and its findings.

Table 6. Media Influence Outcomes and Visible Effect

Effect	Type of Media Influence	Description	Visible Effect on Policy
1	No Influence	No affect on policy implementation	None
2	Positive	Political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	None
3		Speeds the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	Accelerated deployment of military forces or reduction in sanction deadlines
4	Negative	Political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	None

Effect	Type of Media Influence	Description	Visible Effect on Policy
5		Where coverage of an incident will degrade public will and support for an ongoing operation or diplomatic initiative	Withdrawal of military forces or cessation of deployment
6		Slows the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	Slowed deployment of military forces or relaxing of diplomatic sanctions
7		As a threat to operational and national security	Not Accessed
8	Agenda Setting Agency	Raises an unknown issue to a position where it produces political pressure for action	A policy will be developed by government

### Policy Implementation

Figure 6 shows an example policy implementation against time for a military crisis. The diagram has been kept simple for means of illustration but is detailed enough to illustrate some of the major moving parts and decision points within the escalation and decline of a military operation. The curve within the diagram represents the change in policy implementation against time for a set foreign policy position. The X-Axis represents time and the Y-axis, the quantity of policy information, the higher up the Y-axis the curve is, the greater the diplomatic elements of power that will be employed either in force or number. The points along the curve represent particular changes in policy where the media could have an effect. These are described as follows:

- I. This point on the curve is illustrative of the start of the diplomatic process; elements of the instruments of national power (DIME) will be employed as required.
- II. Failure of diplomatic endeavors and the start of military force deployment.

- III. Military action leading to a stabilization of the crisis
- IV. Start of the transition to normality and a decrease in military activity
- V. The transition to normality fails to be effective and an escalation in military activity is required once again.
- VI. Start of force withdrawal and the transition to a stable environment, possibly with the reintroduction, if halted, of other DIME sanctions.

Clearly, this is a simplified example that can be used to illustrate the thesis model. Other diplomatic endeavors will continue throughout any crisis, it is however simpler to exclude them from the illustration in figure 6.

It is not the intention of this paper to examine the influence of the media at each stage of the curve. The final theoretical model simply examines the effects of the media on each type of policy mass. The model diagram in figure 6 aims to explain the possible flow diplomatic and military operations in the broadest sense. It would be another embellishment of the model to assess the effect of the media at each stage in this process against policy mass.

### Analysis

The integration of the aspects defined above has been illustrated in figure 7. Figure 7 shows each policy mass as defined above as a solid deployment curve similar but less complicated than that shown in figure 6. The dotted curves illustrate the possible effect of a media force on that mass, by the media effect defined in table 6. The diagram is in theory, to scale, and therefore the greater the effect the greater the rate of change. The numbers shown adjacent to each dotted line, are the media effects defined in table 6.

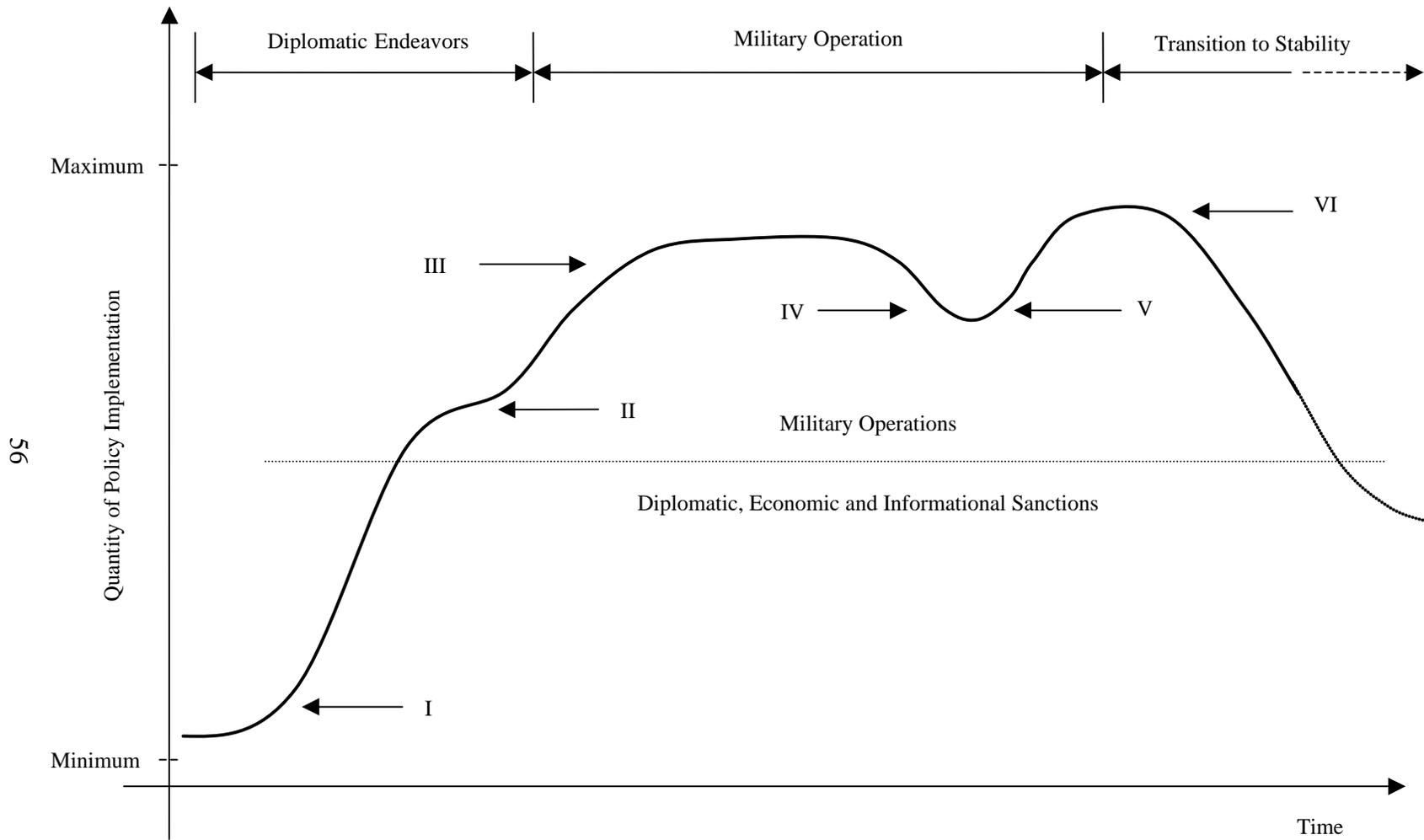


Figure 6. Policy Intervention Curve

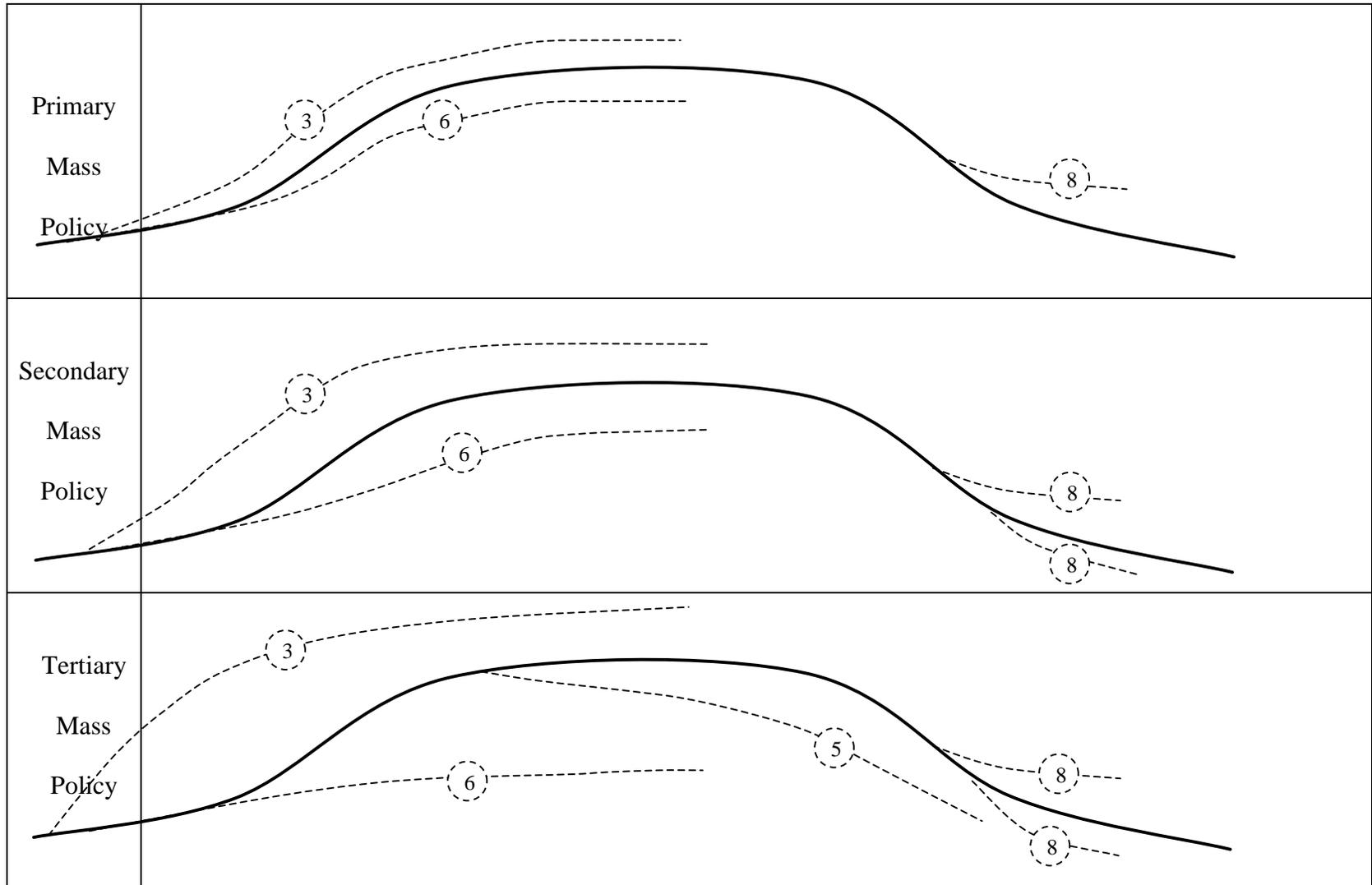


Figure 7. Media Effect by Policy Mass

### Possible Effects of the Media within Model Parameters

As figure 7 shows how the amount of influence of a media force depends upon the policy being influenced. In theory, the media could have a much greater effect on the amount of policy implementation for a tertiary mass policy, it may even be able to reverse the policy direction altogether and invert the curve shown in figure 7. Another effect not shown in figure 7 would illustrate the scenario where the media has the capability to produce enough force against a tertiary mass to reverse a policy implementation decision or even reverse the policy itself.

In keeping with Livingston's theory, if the force was constituted fully by the media influence alone and it managed to raise a policy issue to a certain level, this could be considered as the media acting in an agenda-setting manner. In order to achieve this by itself the media would need to apply a considerable amount of force, something that is perhaps beyond its capability.

In an attempt to summarize the whole thesis and the development of the model illustrated above; table 7 shows the estimated media effects against policy mass as defined within the model. Table 7 also shows the maximum and minimum outcomes of media force influence on a particular policy mass and also describes some of the possible other media effects and the most likely effects on policy.

### Development of the Model and Summary

In sum, media effects policy depending on several issues, the mass of the policy, the amount of media coverage and public interest in the story and as an embellishment to this model, depending on its position within a policy mass.

Table 7. Thesis Summary of Media Effect on Foreign Policy and Outcomes

Media Effect	Description	Description of Effect on Policy Mass			Comments
		Primary Policy Mass	Secondary Policy Mass	Tertiary Policy Mass	
1	No affect on policy implementation	The most probable effect of media influence on this form of policy mass	A likely effect of media force application	--	
2	Speeds political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	--	--	--	No visible effect
3	Speeds the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	Probable acceleration effect of deployment but only once political decisions had been made	Increased acceleration of deployment when compared to the effect on a primary mass. May be capable of elevating the final level of policy implementation	Greatly increased ability to produced an increased rate of military deployment	
4	Slows political decision-making process in the light of a new or ongoing issue	--	--	--	No visible effect
5	Where coverage of an incident will degrade public will and support for an ongoing operation or diplomatic initiative	Highly unlikely that there would be any media influence in this area	Possible but unlikely that the media will have this capability	Definite media capability. Emotional pressure on the population combined with a benign policy may force troop withdrawal	
6	Slows the parliamentary process and deployment process of an already mandated issue	Limited media capability	Possible capability	Definite media capability. Media may even have the ability to negate or reverse policy decisions	
7	As a threat to operational and national security	--	--	--	Not assessed
8	Raises an unknown issue to a position where it produces political pressure for action	Very limited media capability. Possible residual effect on an almost completed policy implementation	Possible but unlikely that this ability is within the grasp of the media	Possible capability to raise this level of policy into the political arena	

The model is by no means complete and several improvements have been suggested in chapter 6 for continued study. Suffice to say that the media does not have the effect that one expects with regard to foreign policy decisions. There is a gray area where the amount of media influence can be defined with the parameters of this model.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph S, Nye Jr., “Redefining the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* 78 (July-August 1999): 24.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS, FUTURE TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

Following the detailed analysis of several of the more “popular” CNN effect scenarios in this thesis, one can draw only one conclusion; that the primary thesis question has been answered by addressing the secondary questions in the manner outlined below:

Yes, the media can have an effect on its audience. There is little doubt that the combination of visual images and real time television production has the potential to have an emotional effect on the population of a nation if produced in the correct semiotic manner.<sup>1</sup>

Yes, that effect does matter. The media has the power to reach more people than ever before, but that effect is being reduced. As television viewing figures decrease and people move from other forms of media to the Internet the public is becoming more discerning about what they watch and read. As this paper has shown, people do not watch as much television news and choose to select what they watch and read on the Internet and cable channels than they have done historically. This simply means that the viewer will have the choice of what to watch; instead of watching harrowing pictures from the Sudan, he may choose to look elsewhere. This option is open to him today, however he is still confined by viewing choice to a certain extent. He or she will be able to select the news that interests them and not that which is shown to them. The public will eventually become less aware of the world around them and therefore the policies set

by governments to meet the need of the nation internationally. That fact can only have a diminished effect on the efficacy of the media.

Finally, there are examples where there has been some media influence on foreign policy. However, it is in this question area that some of the doubt lies. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the problem has been to establish the level of impact a story on the television or on the Internet may have. There are clearly examples of where the government of a nation has reacted, such as Irma in Sarajevo, Staff Sergeant Cleveland in Mogadishu. With these incidents alone, it remains difficult to say whether the military instrument of national policy was or was not employed against another nation, simply on the strength of a newspaper story. One must ask, to what level that effect changes policy and how any effect at all touches political decisions. Stephen Livingston has produced a wonderful study, which has been used throughout this paper quantifying the effect of the media by the type of military intervention.<sup>2</sup> After conducting the research necessary to complete this paper, it has become clear that it is possible to construct a model that may be useful for illustrating the effect of the media, or influence on a particular piece of foreign policy, as described in chapter 5.

### Future Trends

By early 1999, seventy-five million Americans over the age of sixteen were using the Internet, with 60 percent of them logging on every day. Internet use is growing by 25 percent per year. As everybody learns to log on . . . we Americans will use the Net anyway, increasingly and massively, to express our views to the government.<sup>3</sup>

One can now ask where will the CNN effect that is inherent in the cyber revolution take us. The answer is probably, “nowhere!” At least for the time being, and for several reasons:

1. The public is becoming increasingly immune to the effects of television violence whether real or simulated. Although the increased volume of graphic media coverage available perhaps tempers this phenomenon, nonetheless, the fact that the impact of scenes will be diminished in the future will almost certainly dull the effect of graphic news coverage.

2. There is also belief that the public's appetite for news coverage is in decline.<sup>4</sup> Figures seem to show that the population at large is not as interested in the news as once they were. In concert with this idea is the fact that time is becoming increasingly constricted and people seem to have less of it to invest in their own pursuits than in previous years. This is arguably forcing people to get the news when they can; and from where they can, today, this is increasingly from the Internet.

3. The one area that is declining in particular is the amount of time people spend watching or reading news. More than half of Americans (53 percent) say they wish they had more time to follow the news.<sup>5</sup> Only 55 percent of Americans reported that they had watched the news on television the day before.

However, research has also shown, that compared to 1998 where 57 percent of the population watched the television news and 10 percent of the news watchers went online for news, in April 2000 the figures were 57 percent and 20 percent respectively.<sup>6</sup>

4. The CNN effect has now peaked for the time being, there will be few developments in the near future that will markedly change the speed, depth, spread or accuracy of reporting. The public will not see a great change in the face of the media for several years.

5. Finally, politicians and policy makers have mastered the art of the short news cycle and twenty-four-hour news cycle; and are even using it to their advantage.

Overall it seems that the effect of CNN efficacy has reached a plateau and so has its impact on the public and the politician. For various reasons the effect will continue to be mitigated in the future, meaning simply, that the public will only be interested in what they want to be interested in, and therefore may not wish to have such an impact on foreign policy decisions. Future trends in viewing preference will be towards the Internet.

Although Internet connection speeds are currently slow and often unreliable, it has not discouraged a significant number of people from migrating to the “Net” in favor of more traditional forms of news entertainment and information. The increased numbers gaining information on the recent presidential election and the fact that more and more money from advertising is heading toward the World Wide Web illustrates this very issue.<sup>7</sup>

The Web brings its own changes to the media. Morris argues in *Vote.com*, that the old media is dead. Polls, he says, show that more and more people do not trust what is said or written in the press.<sup>8</sup> He believes that the Internet, a no axe to grind, organizations will provide the public the “unbiased, balanced and in-depth news coverage they want.” Morris says, “For writers the most noticeable change in the complexion of the media under the Fifth Estate is that the substance of the story will become far more important than where it is placed.”<sup>9</sup> It is also more than probable that those who read their news on the Internet today will do so tomorrow, because as it is the younger generation who utilize this modern medium, they will continue to do so in the future. The

Internet is growing more and more advertising is shifting from the broadsheet and tabloid newspaper to the Internet simply because that is where the public are migrating to.<sup>10</sup>

One has to ask oneself, what does all this mean for the future of the impact of the media on foreign policy? Today, these trends mean that there will probably be very little impact on the “media effect.” The demographic changes as to where people get their news are changing very slowly and seem to be based simply on the idiom with which one uses the technology one grew up. This fact implies that today’s information generation who are the aids and assistants to decision makers will become the decision makers who use the media with the most impact in the future. This may have more of an influence in the future as advertisers flee to spend their wears on the Internet, Forrester Research estimates that by 2004, half of all Internet advertisement spending will come from the traditional media, and newspapers will be the biggest losers.<sup>11</sup>

None of the facts listed above will influence the pertinence of this thesis simply for the fact that if one deleted modern media and inserted modern news in the title, the analysis would be the same. Because of the direction taken by this paper, to be limited in not considering the journalistic agendas behind stories it has been assured a certain amount of longevity. The impartiality of this work, like that of the Internet will endure.

Evidence suggests that the biggest hurdle to the Internet progressing is the fact most people are concerned about the accuracy of information posted on it. There are several apocryphal stories of people using information gained from the Internet that is clearly inaccurate, or even worse a complete fabrication. However, there is evidence that people are beginning to trust Internet sites, perhaps more than television and newspaper

print.<sup>12</sup> Time will tell if a regulatory body will control the information placed on the web and what effect that will have on the perceived reliability of stories.

This paper has not begun to consider the potential mediums for news which are beginning to find a place in the electronic market place, mobile phones and even smaller handheld organizers will mean the people will be able to be kept informed at all times of the day or night and in any location. Johanna Newman would not be perturbed by this fact, she believes that historically, leaders have feared new inventions such as Czar Nicolas II who feared the invention of the telegraph and forbade its use. Nevertheless, eventually they will learn to deal with the new technology and harness its capabilities.<sup>13</sup>

The next problem for the politician and policy maker may be Cybernews, as Philip Seib believes, “Cybernews is already an important medium that trumps the ‘CNN effect’ and all-news television in general because of the unlimited variety of sites that can be visited.”<sup>14</sup> In the future, it may be more pertinent to ask, “What effect the variety of news coverage will have on foreign policy?”

### Recommendations

There is evidence that intervention usually only occurs where there has been television coverage of an event and that the coverage only occurs because there is some interest in the country in the first place. It is suggested that future research may wish to concentrate on the accuracy of the news media and opinion broadcast on television or posted on the Internet. Nevertheless, until an independent regulatory body begins the almost impossible task of monitoring and censoring information contained on the net, one must double check the source of the information one is getting.

One may also wish to consider the methods that have been employed in harnessing the immediate effect of the media, or perhaps more interestingly, studying the ways in which policy makers have managed to overcome the pressures exerted by a twenty-four-hour, seven days a week news cycle. Unfortunately, there was neither the time nor scope available in this thesis to study the methods that have been developed to deal with a reduced decision action cycle.

Perhaps another interesting approach to the idea of media influence will be to examine the effect of the “credibility of news” on foreign policy, and to study the methods available for policing the truth in light of the open and unrestrained nature of the Internet as a news source. A slightly broader angle to this approach would be to study this in combination with the diverse nature of news and opinion on the Internet. Moreover, one need not be so dogmatic about accuracy; there may be merit in considering an approach to study looking only at the effect of broader based information outlets such as the Internet.

Finally, one may wish to develop the model described in chapter 5. In particular, one could examine the definition of policy mass, friction and media effect at or against certain parts on the policy implementation curve, figure 6.

It is more than likely that the CNN effect as it is currently known, has passed. Governments have managed to harness the power of the news media, mastered the reduced news cycle time and employed its capability to their advantage. Society is about to enter a new era of information proliferation. One where there is no boundary to the amount of information one can get, whether correct in its content or not. It will be

interesting to see what effect the diversity of opinion will have on the actions of the military.

### In Sum

Although, this thesis did not consider the media's agenda in its selection of what news stories to cover it is a fair assumption, that it is the combination of news items that draw the most people to the advertising space within the news outlet that will be selected for inclusion on the evening news. This conundrum of news as a business commodity brings yet another variable to the analysis illustrated above. However, all of the issues considered in this thesis have made it to the front page of the news media and, as has been argued, into the living rooms of millions of people. One should remember when considering the preceding model, that news items are chosen for specific reasons; few of these reasons are ideological. Because of this, the scope of the consideration of the above model needs to be much broader than the scope of this thesis in order to produce a fully workable model. This fact must be tempered with the belief that the news media has the greatest capacity to influence and shape people's opinions when the topic being covered is more remote from most peoples knowledge and experience; this is of course yet another variable for the earlier model.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly, the media has some influence on foreign policy, it affects the populace, the voter, and it therefore affects the politician or decision-maker. The difficulty arises in quantifying the amount of influence the media has. Overall, if one were to draw a single conclusion from this paper, it would be that it is perhaps safer and more accurate to say that a news story would have a more negative effect (an impediment) in the minds of the politician than positive (an accelerant). Somalia, although often argued to the contrary,

was an example where there was little if any media influence on foreign policy. It is an example of the impact of the media in a negative form, especially for military operations. It is always easier to remove forces than to deploy them when the threat of having casualties inflicted is reduced.

This thesis has also argued that the major news media conduits are the television and Internet simply because of their capability to carry the hardest hitting of mediums of moving pictures and sound simultaneously. The ways of harnessing these mediums will make an interesting study in the future. It will be interesting to see if the model outlined above will stand the test of thesis research and scrutiny.

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<sup>1</sup> Strobel, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Livingston, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Morris, 1.

<sup>4</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Investors Now Go On-line," 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>7</sup> Morris, 87.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>11</sup> ZDNet, "Old Media 2000: Beginning of the End." [Journal on-line dated Jul 2000]; (accessed 28 Jan 2001); available from <http://www.zdnet.com/filters/printerfriendly/0,6061,2601867-10,00.html>; Internet; 1.

<sup>12</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Investors Now Go On-line," 28.

<sup>13</sup> Newman.

<sup>14</sup> Seib, 64.

<sup>15</sup> Douglas, 1.

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