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THE NEWS MEDIA AND MILITARY OPERATIONS

by

Michael P. Erdle

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> *Complete wartime co-ordination and perfect co-operation can never be achieved between the press and military authorities. For the commander secrecy is a defensive weapon; to the press it is anathema. The task is to develop a procedure that takes into account an understanding of both viewpoints.*[1]
>
> *General Dwight D. Eisenhower*

One of the most important concepts that our nation's founding fathers insisted upon was the right of freedom of the press. Because of this democratic ideal, the American press has enjoyed a long tradition of covering wars involving American troops, side by side with the military men and women actively engaged in fighting those wars. One might assume that after two hundred years of mutual coexistence the military and the news media would have learned to work together. Unfortunately this is not the case. A significant problem currently exists in the relationship between the military and the news media--an almost inherent lack of trust between the two entities. This poor relationship has effected the type and extent of news coverage of military action throughout our nation's history. The problem stems from a lack of understanding and appreciation of each other's roles, or missions. Some have suggested that the press be excluded from covering military operations, but that policy would conflict with our desire as a free society to keep our citizens informed. The press must not be excluded from covering military operations, but our current military/media relationship detracts from both military operations and free, unbiased reporting. The challenge is to have a system that

satisfies both sides--providing free and accurate press coverage of military operations while protecting the security of the operations and the forces involved.

CHAPTER II

CURRENT U.S. MILITARY/MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

What is wrong with our current military/news media relationship? Unfortunately, there is no concise answer. An adversarial relationship exists that is common knowledge to members of both professions. A close examination of the characteristics of each profession and the issues that concern them will offer some insight as to the nature of the problem.

"Cultural" differences. The basic lifestyles of the military and the media are very different, if not completely opposite. A soldier is trained to be very disciplined--if he disagrees, he may at times offer his arguments, but then is expected to follow orders without question. There is a clear order of rank and a very well-defined career ladder. He cannot easily change jobs if he is unhappy or if he finds his chance for advancement blocked. He must avoid embarrassment in order to succeed, particularly in peacetime. The military officer has at least a college education, and most career officers have post-graduate degrees. Compared with his civilian counterpart he is poorly paid, despite the relatively higher degree of responsibility he manages. In wartime, he must defeat the enemy with "acceptable" force, losing as few men as possible while minimizing civilian casualties. Failure means disgrace, the futile deaths of his men and possibly the defeat of his country. His beliefs reflect those of Middle America, he tends to vote conservatively, and he subscribes to the ideals of "duty, honor, country."[1]

The journalist tends to be a very different type of individual than the military member. First, he tends to be

aggressive, being forced to "probe" for answers or ask the tough, straightforward questions without reservation or hesitation. The world of journalism has taken on the role of "watchdog" over government, seeking out the truth and providing that to the citizens. To be effective, the journalist must maintain his objectivity by finding a compromise between readily accepting and cynically doubting everything he hears.

Since Vietnam and Watergate, the news media has been accused of having a distinctly liberal bias. This accusation is definitely well-founded. A 1981 Lichter and Rothman study interviewed 240 journalists and broadcasters from the "big-league" news media and confirmed that suspicion. For example, during the presidential elections from 1964 to 1976, 86 percent voted Democrat. On the issues of abortion, affirmative action, and environmental protection, they heavily favored the liberal side. And 54 percent of these journalists described themselves as "liberals" or "left-of-center", while only 19 percent described themselves as "conservatives."[2]

The journalist often faces daily deadlines, making time a dominant factor in his work. It is important to note that most senior military men regard the "media" as an all-encompassing term, despite the significant differences and concerns between print organizations and television news. (Recognizing these different pressures and requirements, references in this paper to "media" will include both television and print organizations.) The news media is a very competitive business, and very commercially oriented. Good, sensational stories attract large audiences, and their "stories" are often just that--stories rather than mere news articles, shaping the news with an eye toward the average viewer's presumed interests.[3] The truly professional journalist will present an interesting

story without interjecting his personal opinions or imposing his values on the audience. The ultimate achievement for many journalists is to win the Pulitzer Prize. As in many professions, some can be driven by their attempts to achieve this lofty goal, without regard for what rules they break, who they may alienate, or the objectivity of their stories.

Biased reporting. The military is very critical of what it sees as editorializing and biased reporting by the news media. The accusation stems from the premise that some journalists or news organizations will only present one side of the story--that which supports their personal views. In the course of conducting its self-appointed task of watchdog over the government, the news media is often very critical of the military, and the military is naturally sensitive to this criticism, particularly when the military feels the reports are unfair, or "biased." Much has been written of the popular opinion in military circles that the press, not the military, lost the Vietnam war by swaying American public opinion against the war, promoting their private views rather than just reporting the facts. (Most would agree, however, that the operational limitations placed on the military commanders by our political leadership significantly degraded our military effectiveness and hindered the overall war effort, regardless of public opinion.) The power of the media in molding American public opinion cannot be underestimated. And that power is largely unchecked, except for the constraints of national security and the "ethical standards" which news editors may elect to apply to themselves.

There are many examples of this biased reporting, but a very recent incident gives a clear illustration of the problem. Famed anchorman Walter Cronkite recently appeared as a guest on

Cable News Network's (CNN) "Larry King, Live" television program. In response to a comment from a caller, Cronkite spoke of the tremendous pride he felt knowing he had made a significant contribution toward turning American public opinion against the Vietnam war. (It is important to make a distinction between television coverage and print. Because of the nature of television coverage, unprofessional treatment of the news has a more widespread, instantaneous effect than does a newspaper or magazine article.)

The United States is currently experiencing an interesting reaction to the widespread perception of media bias in its coverage of the demonstrations against the war in Iraq. There has been widespread dissatisfaction with the amount of "air time" given to the anti-war demonstrations. Huge pro-war rallies are springing up across the country, in support of the war and President Bush's handling of the situation. When the marchers are interviewed the consensus reaction seems to be that the anti-war demonstrators shouldn't get all the attention--"it sends the wrong signal, not only to our troops, but to Saddam Hussein!" Recent Gallup polls indicate that at least 80 percent of Americans are in favor of the war. These pro-war demonstrations are an indication that the "silent majority" understands how powerful the media is in molding public opinion, and the need to counter the perceived "biased reporting."

Misunderstanding and Ignorance. Both the press corps and the armed forces are responsible for neglecting the issues that strain the military/media relationship. The ignorance displayed by members of the press corps regarding military operations can be witnessed in the daily war briefings conducted in Saudi Arabia and the Pentagon. This lack of

understanding of military operations only wastes time for those who do understand, frustrates the military briefers, and can't help but confuse and/or irritate the American public. One example is the endless insistence by members of the press for the military to provide accurate, timely assessments of the bombing attacks on Iraq, when such a request is virtually impossible to accommodate. Pete Williams, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD[PA]), has spent what seems like hours on national television trying to educate the press regarding bomb damage assessment (BDA), particularly about how adverse weather effects those operations. The entire nation has witnessed the growing suspicion among members of the press that, because there was very little proof, the military briefers were lying about the brilliant successes we were enjoying. After several days of explanations from Mr. Williams, and a merciful clearing of the weather, some proof was provided. The tensions and suspicions could have been avoided had the members of the press possessed some basic knowledge of military operations.

From a military perspective, the press is not only ignorant of modern military operations, but of warfare in general. Military leaders feel the press is often overly critical of the military, expecting perfection when perfection in warfare is impossible.[4] Clausewitz' references to "the fog of war" are legendary and universally accepted, but it seems the American press has little understanding or appreciation for this concept. No one could have anticipated the level of success the Allied air forces have had thus far in the war with Iraq. The extremely low numbers of airplane losses are impressive even by peacetime standards, considering the number of sorties being flown every day. Coupled with the fact that

an enemy is shooting back, the loss rate is nothing short of phenomenal. The significance of all this--the most comprehensive, certainly the most impressive, military air campaign in history--seems to be lost on the press, as they are more concerned that six U.S. Marines may have been killed by friendly fire (an unfortunate, grim reality of war.)

The military is far from blameless in its associations with the press. The average officer is instructed to refer all questions from members of the press to Public Affairs. With the exception of public affairs officers and high-ranking military leaders, no one in the military is trained to deal with the press. An inherent distrust, even fear, of the press corps is keenly developed in not only officers but all members of our armed forces. It is an attempt to avoid the embarrassment of having one of the troops misquoted, quoted "out of context", or even accurately quoted when the soldier was "exercising his right to complain." The press views this obvious avoidance as an attempt to hide something.

Mistrust. Where did this mistrust originate? Obviously, Vietnam was not a warm experience between the military and the media. But the problem may have started before Vietnam. The U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 was the first time in historical memory (which means, for most Americans, World War II and after) where U.S. troops in the field became the subject of adverse criticism. Units engaged in combat have generally been immune from critical analysis by the press.[5] One reason for this newly found criticism was the Johnson administration' insistence on officially maintaining a neutral status for the .S., which was in turn echoed by the military public affairs officers, despite obvious evidence to the contrary. Beyond the LBJ administration, both the press

corps and the military contributed to the quickly developing strained relationship. The commanding general admitted that "our handling of the press was not well done." Military briefers often refused comment or misrepresented the facts when confronted with discrepancies, reinforcing the media's skepticism. Some correspondents discounted official stories that were correct, and others intentionally distorted news for the sake of a good story.[6] One incident occurred after an anti-American rally, when a journalist asked several of the demonstrators to recreate the effects of the demonstration for the benefit of the television camera. The journalist then proceeded to give stage directions to the demonstrators, and described the action to the television audience as a spontaneous event.[7] News of these isolated instances spreads like wildfire among the soldiers and tends to destroy the reputations of even the most conscientious journalists.

Speculation. The war against Iraq has highlighted the controversy of speculation on future military operations. This is particularly annoying to military commanders, who hear military "analysts" (usually retired military officers) often predict with great accuracy the commander's next move. Far outweighing any entertainment value, the negative effects of speculation can range from providing useful information to the enemy to destroying morale both at the front and at home. For example, a columnist during World War II estimated that any attempt to land forces on the defended northwest coast of Europe would result in eighty to ninety percent casualties. This "irresponsible statement" created doubt and uneasiness within the command, and a great deal of time and effort was necessary to overcome its negative effects on morale.[8] Speculation often results from a lack of anything interesting

for the press to report, and seems to be more of a factor on television than in the print media, where entire sections or pages are often devoted to editorials. When nothing new or interesting is happening in the war zone, the television network is still faced with the problem of finding an interesting story for the viewers. The problem is particularly acute for a network like CNN that devotes 24 hours a day to reporting news.

The significance of speculation has not been lost on the public. During the Falklands War, the BBC was subject to severe criticism by the British public for airing the educated opinions of recently retired officers who "supplied tactical options" to Argentina.[9] Since it is impossible to determine whether or not the enemy is learning anything by watching these sessions on television, the military leaders can't understand why the networks would be willing to take that chance. During World War II, the amount of speculation was of great concern to General Eisenhower:

> "It seemed certain that if reporters seeking items of interest for their papers and radio networks should continue to report upon activities throughout the theater, the enemy would soon be able to make rather accurate deductions as to the strength and timing of our attack, even if we should be successful in concealing its location."

General Eisenhower then resorted to a drastic measure. He brought the media into a briefing room, closed the door, and gave them a detailed briefing of the Sicilian invasion plan, scheduled to begin in one month. He told them he was relying on the integrity of each of them to keep this important operation a secret, and reminded them of the thousands of lives that depended on their secrecy. The journalists were shocked, and reacted by reporting about everything except a possible invasion. General Eisenhower admitted later that he took a big

chance, and would not recommend his solution to other commanders.[10]

Beyond the problem of security, speculation by the press tends to deepen the distrust between the military and the news media. Pulitzer Prize winner Seymour Hersh wrote a Sunday magazine article in a February 1987 issue of the New York Times that the primary goal of the Libyan bombing raid was to assassinate Gadhafi. Hersh's argument was based on these "facts":

> "'There was no executive order to kill . . . there was no written record . . . Even the official bombing orders supplied by the White House to the Pentagon did not cite as targets the tent where Gadhafi worked . . . The shielded orders explain a series of strong denials.' In other words, because there was no proof, it must have been so."[11]

CHAPTER III

MEDIA COVERAGE OF OPERATIONS--PROS AND CONS

Why should the press be permitted to cover military operations during wartime? Doesn't their presence constitute a threat to security? What effect does their coverage have on public opinion? Who should be responsible for their safety and well-being? These are extremely important and controversial issues within both the media and the military.

Free Press in a Democracy. The most compelling argument in favor of press coverage of military wartime operations is the requirement to keep our society informed. As citizens of a democracy, we have both the right and the responsibility to participate in our government. The media serves a valuable role in keeping the American public informed of the activities of the government. The military naturally falls into the same category as the government, and the public should know if their military is capable of doing its job. During wartime, the public needs to know if we are winning or losing, and where we stand in relation to our objectives in the war. As much as military leaders dislike the implication, the press also needs to insure the information that is reported is as accurate as possible, and not merely propaganda. Having the media in the war zone lends credibility to the information being reported.

The press can provide a tremendous morale boost for both the troops in the field and the folks back home anxiously awaiting their return. General Eisenhower placed tremendous value on the interviews with soldiers on the front lines. It made them feel appreciated, and not forgotten.[1] And the sense of relief and reassurance provided for the friends and

relatives at home is equally as important. The significance of this morale boost for both the soldiers and their loved ones is impossible to quantify and should not be underestimated.

Security. The strongest argument against press coverage in the war zone is security. The introduction of hand-held television cameras and live coverage has made security a key issue in press coverage of military operations. It is common knowledge that Saddam Hussein watches CNN, and it is no surprise that CNN was the only network allowed to remain in Baghdad when all other western journalists were expelled. With the enemy watching these live broadcasts, even an unintentional slip of the tongue by a well-meaning reporter, or even a military briefer, could conceivably cost many American lives and possibly cause entire operations to be changed or cancelled. Understandably, military leaders are extremely sensitive about security.

The press corps feels that the military is overly sensitive to security, but there have been numerous examples where irresponsible reporting through a lack of concern for security has effected military operations. In the Falklands War, the BBC announced that a high percentage of Argentinian bombs were not exploding when dropped on British ships, such as the *Broadsword*. The British believe that the Argentinians switched at that time from tail-fuzed to nose-fuzed bombs, and the *Coventry* was sunk shortly thereafter.[2] Before the battle for Goose Green, the BBC announced that the 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment was within five miles of Darwin. The Argentinians then strengthened their positions in defense.[3] There have been several examples of irresponsible reporting in the current war with Iraq. On 22 January 1991, NBC Pentagon correspondent Fred Francis explained to the entire country (and

anyone else who have been listening) the detailed process of detecting Scud launches and notifying the Patriot missile crews. Mr. Francis' explanation included the specific altitude of an overhead satellite, and reference to "a base in Colorado Springs." Since that time, the Scud attacks seem to have only occurred during periods of cloud cover. And on 7 February 1991, CNN reported that American aircrews were having difficulty finding Iraqi targets because they were so well dug-in. These are all examples of irresponsible press reporting that have potentially, if not actually, helped the enemy.

Public Opinion. Is public opinion important to military operations? What effect does press coverage of military operations have on public opinion? The answer to the first question is yes. Public opinion effects the morale of the troops, which translates to their effectiveness as a fighting force. A military unit with morale problems will have questionable effectiveness in battle. And if the troops know that the people back home do not support their actions, morale will suffer. Commanders must be aware of public opinion as well. General Eisenhower addressed the issue:

> ". . . the necessity, in modern war, for a commander to concern himself always with the appearance of things in the public eye as well as with actual accomplishment. It is idle to say that the public may be ignored in the certainty that temporary misunderstandings will be forgotten in later victory."[4]

Because of their widespread accessibility, especially for the television news media, the press can have a tremendous impact on American public opinion. That impact can be in support of, or in opposition to, the military action. War is such a terrible thing that the press would have little trouble bolstering opposition to the war by giving the American people a steady stream of the horrors of war and criticism of the

military. The American public experienced just this sort of persuasion during the Vietnam war. The soldiers who fought in Vietnam were scorned, and the country has finally realized the injustice and unfairness in that attitude. The pro-war rallies mentioned earlier are in large part a reaction by the majority of Americans, who are in favor of the war with Iraq, to the perception that the press is attempting to sway public opinion against the war.

Logistics and Safety. The issues of logistics and safety add to the controversy regarding the media in the combat zone. Most would agree that the media presence in combat adds to the logistical burden for the military, and some would argue that is reason enough to keep them out. General Eisenhower admitted of the additional administrative burdens as well, but felt "it paid off in big dividends because of the conviction in the minds of all that there was no attempt to conceal error and stupidity."[8] There will always be debate regarding the burden of responsibility for the military to provide for the safety of the news media in the combat area. Many members of the press claim that they want no special favors, that they are there of their own free will and are willing to risk being wounded or even killed while doing their jobs. For the commander in the field, however, an additional member of his party means additional responsibility, especially when that additional member is not trained for combat, offers no fighting capability, and has little hope of defending himself. The strengths and weaknesses of each of these factors must be weighed in determining whether or not the press should be permitted to cover military wartime operations.

Decision. Despite the added burdens on the military, the press must be allowed to cover military operations during

wartime. One of the basic premises of our government is that we will maintain civilian control of our military. The American people must know what the military is doing, and have a good idea of its capabilities and limitations. Channeling information from the front to Washington through military channels would fulfill that requirement, but that method would rightfully raise doubts as to the reliability of the information. The news media reporting from the battle area lends vital credibility to the information provided to the American people.

CHAPTER IV

INCORPORATING MEDIA INTO MILITARY OPERATIONS

Allowing press coverage of military operations during wartime introduces added burdens on the military commanders, which complicates the commander's mission considerably. But the benefits gained from news media coverage of operations far outweigh the drawbacks. How, then, should the press be incorporated into military operations? Should they be placed under any restrictions? Should the military impose censorship on their reporting? Should television cameras be permitted at the front? The operational commander must consider each of these questions to effectively handle the media in his theater of operations.

Uncontrolled access. Allowing civilian media representatives to intermix freely among the military personnel in the battle zone raises the immediate concern for security. In the age of instantaneous communications around the world, a spy living in the enemy's camp would be even more valuable now than ever before. It would be relatively simple for an unmonitored civilian, whether a member of the press corps or not, to gain all sorts of valuable information, to be transmitted to to the enemy at the time and place of his choosing. This does not mean that members of the press are assumed to be spies. But even during peacetime, civilians are not authorized to roam around unattended or unescorted on a military base, and to expect such treatment during wartime is ludicrous. The safety and well-being of the correspondents is also a concern, and they are at extreme risk when they operate independently. (No one yet knows what happened to the four CBS

journalists who disappeared near the Kuwaiti border several weeks ago.) Providing an escort for every journalist is certainly unrealistic, because the military simply doesn't have that kind of manpower to spare. (There are currently approximately 1,050 journalists in Saudi Arabia covering the war with Iraq.)[1]

Press Pool. The use of press pools has become an operational necessity. In 1984, General John W. Vessey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, initiated an effort to set up procedures for accommodating the media. General Vessey appointed Major General Winant Sidle to convene a panel of military officers and retired journalists to propose some workable arrangements for incorporating the press into military operational planning. The Sidle panel made several recommendations including the formation of press pools when it becomes apparent that pooling will provide the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation.[2]

The war with Iraq is an excellent example of the requirement for a press pool arrangement. With approximately 1,050 journalists concentrated around Riyadh and Dhahran, the only feasible way to accommodate them all is through the use of press pools. The war to this point has been almost exclusively an air battle, with very little to report on "the front lines" since most of the action has taken place behind enemy lines. These pools cover virtually every aspect of operations, from visiting troops at the front lines to observing operations on aircraft carriers, and rotate every two to three weeks. Currently in Saudi Arabia there are fourteen press pools, each containing between five and eighteen members, depending on location. Correspondents must agree to "pool", or share their

information with other members of the pool. The emphasis is on providing accurate information to the American public, not on providing opportunities for correspondents to win the Pulitzer Prize.

To gain access to a pool, a reporter must first obtain a visa and transportation to Saudi Arabia. Upon arrival, he must complete some paperwork required by the Saudi government. Then after registering with the United States at the Joint Information Bureau he may sign up for one of the pools. The only priority for selection is "first come-first served." It is a relatively simple process once he arrives in Saudi Arabia. But there is currently a waiting list of 3-4,000 journalists, mainly because of the lack of facilities to support them in theater. There are no background investigation prerequisites to registering with the media pool.[3]

Censorship. General Eisenhower believed that the commander is obliged to cooperate with the government to maintain civilian morale, and that the civilians are entitled to know things that aren't secret.[4] Yet correspondents were subject to stiff military censorship throughout World War II.[5] The Korean War began with a policy of voluntary censorship, which proved unworkable, and at the request of several journalists the military returned to a policy of formal censorship.[6] There was no U.S. military censorship in Vietnam, and except for the complete exclusion during the initial phase of operations, the press coverage of Grenada was not censored.

Censorship during wartime may be the most controversial issue in the minds of the press. The word itself connotes visions of repression and totalitarianism to most Americans. But is censorship necessary, or even desirable, in reporting military wartime operations? This question was well-stated in

the summary by the British House of Commons after reviewing the handling of the press during the Falklands conflict:

> "Wars fought to preserve democratic values put pressure on those values as it becomes necessary to withhold information for reasons of operational security. We regard such censorship as acceptable but at what point does it begin to interfere with the proper functioning of democracy?"[7]

In the past we have regarded censorship as acceptable during wartime operations. The press would argue that the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees their right of freedom of the press, and therefore they should be allowed to cover military operations without censorship. The counter-argument says that freedom of the press does not imply freedom of access, or the freedom to go anywhere to get the news. Article II of the Constitution appoints the President as Commander in Chief, and gives him authority over foreign and military affairs. Therefore, the President has the authority to decide how the military affairs will be conducted, and ultimately how the press will be utilized.[8]

Despite the almost daily protests from the members of the media, they are not being subject to censorship by the U.S. military. Instead, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OASD[PA]) published a list of items that the media should not report, primarily for security reasons. (see Appendix I) Public affairs officers examine material for its conformance to the ground rules. Any censorship coming from U.S. military public affairs officers is not authorized by the Secretary of Defense. Disputes about whether material should be reported are forwarded to the OASD(PA) where Pete Williams can discuss the issue with the reporter's news organization. The list of ground rules given to every member of the press clearly states that the originating reporter's news organization makes the ultimate

decision whether to report any controversial item. After more than three weeks of reporting on the fighting in Iraq, a total of only three reports have been forwarded to the OASD(PA). Two of those three reports were published.*

Television. Comparison with press handling during past wars is not necessarily relevant to the problems faced by today's military commanders. Although the Vietnam War is sometimes called the first television war, the equipment allowing satellite hook-ups and instantaneous reporting was not available then. Live television broadcasts that potentially provide the enemy with real-time information could seriously degrade military operations. The use of television for live coverage from the front represents a serious threat to security and should be monitored closely.

Live television pictures can also overstep the bounds of decency with regard to treatment of casualties. No one should have to witness the horror of their loved one being killed or wounded, and that possibility certainly exists with live cameras at the front. Filming such scenes as the unloading of coffins from transport planes is not only insensitive and disrespectful, but serves no value to the public.

Live television coverage presents one of the biggest challenges facing the operational commander when dealing with the news media. Because of its immediacy, even honest mistakes cannot be corrected. In some cases (such as in a heated battle) it might be completely appropriate for the commander to turn the cameras off, and he must be prepared to do so. But a live interview of a soldier, seen back home by his family, is something they will never forget and can have a tremendously buoyant effect on morale, both at home and at the front.

CHAPTER V

SOLUTIONS

Military Planning. The current arrangement in Saudi Arabia with the press pools is a good one, and might serve as a basis of reference for future operations. It is important, however, that all current military plans be reviewed to insure those plans reflect the lessons learned in dealing with the press. Military leaders must not continue to think of the press as an "extra" to be handled by Public Affairs. Using Operation Desert Storm as a model, plans should be reviewed to insure we are at least logistically prepared to accommodate the press. But beyond just planning, the military needs to exercise the press portion of the plan in the same manner all other portions are exercised.

The Sidle report mentioned the use of press pools when necessary. As we have seen with Desert Storm, the correspondents get very frustrated when there is very little that is "new" or interesting to report. Remembering the value General Eisenhower placed on the press, the commander must do his best to provide as much freedom as possible to the journalists in the operational theater.

Officer Training. The military's present approach toward contact with members of the media has to change if the military/media relationship is ever to improve. The only training the average officer currently receives is to point the journalist in the direction of the public affairs office. Allowing officers the opportunity to talk with members of the press about unclassified subjects builds self-confidence in the officer and promotes trust with the media. After decades of

paranoia, we should have enough faith in our officers that they will exercise caution in whatever encounters with the press they might have.

Press Indoctrination. The problems of ignorance and mistrust will never disappear until the news media establishes a more active relationship with the military. Walking the halls of the Pentagon will never give the correspondents an appreciation or understanding of the military. The Pentagon should promote a nation-wide "Press Week" encouraging members of the local and national media to tour military bases and meet some of the people who are actually going to do the fighting. Accreditation into a press pool during wartime could somehow be tied to recent liaison with a military unit, as added incentive for participation. Those who haven't participated might then have more difficulty becoming accredited, thus losing pace, if only briefly, with their competitors.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

There is a place in military operations for news media coverage. Media coverage of military operations is important for the nation and for the morale of the troops in combat. Serious problems still exist between the military and the news media that strain this important relationship. We must aggressively pursue a remedy for the distrust that has been growing for decades. Our nation has shown a tremendous amount of confidence in our military since January 16, 1991. That should give us the confidence we need to withstand the criticism when we deserve it. The press must learn more about the military institution they criticize so well. A better understanding of military operations will make them that much more effective in seeing the truth and passing it on to the American public through an unbiased eye.

APPENDIX I

OPERATION DESERT SHIELD
GROUND RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR NEWS MEDIA

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OPERATION DESERT SHIELD
GROUND RULES

The following information should not be reported because its publication or broadcast could jeopardize operations and endanger lives:

(1) For U.S. or coalition units, specific numerical information on troop strength, aircraft, weapons systems, on-hand equipment, or supplies (e.g., artillery, tanks, radars, missiles, trucks, water), including amounts of ammunition or fuel moved by or on hand in support and combat units. Unit size may be described in general terms such as "company-size," multibattalion," multidivision," "naval task force," and "carrier battle group." Number or amount of equipment and supplies may be described in general terms such as "large," "small," or "many."

(2) Any information that reveals details of future plans, operations, or strikes, including postponed or cancelled operations.

(3) Information, photography, and imagery that would reveal the specific location of military forces or show the level of security at military installations or encampments. Locations may be described as follows: all Navy embark stories can identify the ship upon which embarked as a dateline and will state that the report is coming from the "Persian Gulf," "Red Sea," or "North Arabian Sea." Stories written in Saudi Arabia may be datelined "Eastern Saudi Arabia," "Near the Kuwaiti border," etc. For specific countries outside Saudi Arabia, stories will state that the report is coming from the Persian Gulf region unless that country has acknowledged its participation.

(4) Rules of engagement details.

(5) Information on intelligence collection activities, including targets, methods, and results.

(6) During an operation, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security or lives. This would include unit designations, names of operations, and size of friendly forces involved, until released by CENTCOM.

(7) Identification of mission aircraft points of origin, other than as land- or carrier-based.

(8) Information on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of enemy camouflage, cover, deception, targeting, direct and indirect fire, intelligence collection, or security measures.

(9) Specific identifying information on missing or downed aircraft or ships while search and rescue operations are planned or underway.

(10) Special operations forces' methods, unique equipment or tactics.

(11) Specific operating methods and tactics, (e.g., air angles of attack or speeds, or naval tactics and evasive maneuvers). General terms such as "low" or "fast" may be used.

(12) Information on operational or support vulnerabilities that could be used against U.S. forces, such as details of major battle damage or major personnel losses of specific U.S. or coalition units, until that information no longer provides tactical advantage to the enemy and is, therefore, released by CENTCOM. Damage and casualties may be described as "light," "moderate," or "heavy."

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GUIDELINES FOR NEWS MEDIA

News media personnel must carry and support any personal and professional gear they take with them, including protective cases for professional equipment, batteries, cables, converters, etc.

Night Operations -- Light discipline restrictions will be followed. The only approved light source is a flashlight with a red lens. No visible light source, including flash or television lights, will be used when operating with forces at night unless specifically approved by the on-scene commander.

Because of host-nation requirements, you must stay with your public affairs escort while on Saudi bases. At other U.S. tactical or field locations and encampments, a public affairs escort may be required because of security, safety, and mission requirements as determined by the host commander.

Casualty information, because of concern of the notification of the next of kin, is extremely sensitive. By executive directive, next of kin of all military fatalities must be notified in person by a uniformed member of the appropriate service. There have been instances in which the next of kin have first learned of the death or wounding of a loved one through the news media. The problem is particularly difficult for visual media. Casualty photographs showing a recognizable face, name tag, or other identifying feature or item should not be used before the next of kin have been notified. The anguish that sudden recognition at home can cause far outweighs the news value of the photograph, film or videotape. News coverage of casualties in medical centers will be in strict compliance with the instructions of doctors and medical officials.

To the extent that individuals in the news media seek access to the U.S. area of operation, the following rule applies: Prior to or upon commencement of hostilities, media pools will be established to provide initial combat coverage of U.S. forces. U.S. news media personnel present in Saudi Arabia will be given the opportunity to join CENTCOM media pools, providing they agree to pool their products. News media personnel who are not members of the official CENTCOM media pools will not be permitted into forward areas. Reporters are strongly discouraged from attempting to link up on their own with combat units. U.S. commanders will maintain extremely tight security throughout the operational area and will exclude from the area of operation all unauthorized individuals.

For news media personnel participating in designated CENTCOM Media Pools:

(1) Upon registering with the JIB, news media should contact their respective pool coordinator for an explanation of pool operations.

(2) In the event of hostilities, pool products will be the subject to review before release to determine if they contain sensitive information about military plans, capabilities, operations, or vulnerabilities (see attached ground rules) that would jeopardize the outcome of an operation or the safety of U.S. or coalition forces. Material will be examined solely for its conformance to the attached ground rules, not for its potential to express criticism or cause embarrassment. The public affairs escort officer on scene will review pool reports, discuss ground rule problems with the reporter, and in the limited circumstances when no agreement can be reached with a reporter about disputed materials, immediately send the disputed materials to JIB Dhahran for review by the JIB Director and the appropriate news media representative. If no agreement can be reached, the issue will be immediately forwarded to OASD(PA) for review with the appropriate bureau chief. The ultimate decision on publication will be made by the originating reporter's news organization.

(3) Correspondents may not carry a personal weapon.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), p. 299.

CHAPTER II

1. Battle Lines: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Military and the Media (New York: Priority Press Publications, 1985), pp. 133-135.

2. Ibid., p. 139.

3. Ibid., pp. 136-138.

4. Daniel P. Bolger, Americans at War, 1975-1986: An Era of Violent Peace (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), p. 447.

5. Lawrence A. Yates, Leavenworth Papers: Vol. 15, Power Pack: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-1966 (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1988), p. 173.

6. Ibid., pp. 173-174.

7. Ibid., p. 211.

8. Eisenhower, p. 237.

9. House of Commons, First Report from the Defence Committee, Session 1982-1983: The Handling of Press and Public Information during the Falklands Conflict (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982), p. vii.

10. Eisenhower, p. 169.

11. Bolger, p. 434.

CHAPTER III

1. Eisenhower, p. 301.

2. Martin Middlebrook, Task Force: The Falklands War, 1982 (London: Penguin Group, 1987), pp. 241-242.

3. Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, The Battle for the Falklands (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983), p. 239.

4. Eisenhower, p. 298.

5. Ibid., p. 301.

CHAPTER IV

1. Telephone conversation with LCDR Greg Hartung, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Washington, DC, 6 February 1991.

2. Battle Lines, p. 166.
3. LCDR Hartung.
4. Eisenhower, p. 299.
5. Battle Lines, p. 33.
6. Ibid., p. 47.
7. House of Commons, p. li.
8. Battle Lines, p. 130.
9. LCDR Hartung.

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