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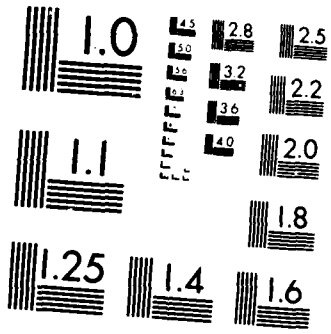


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This thesis examines a problem of government and media relations: war reporting. War reporting is a complex and vital part of journalism history. The thesis begins with a brief review of the methods employed by correspondents of previous wars to gain acess to the news. The focus, however, is on a more recent development --the exclusion of the media, during the first two days of the Grenada operation in 1983.

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Journalists in each war have claimed they provided the most thorough and comprehensive coverage to date. Chapter II provides a review of some of the journalistic innovations used at various times in history.

Technology is said to have influenced how the Vietnam War was reported. War coverage during this period was different from that during any of this nation's previous conflicts. However, a myriad of additional factors were involved in making this happen. Chapter III provides a review of the literature which focuses on the lessons learned by the media and the military during the Vietnam War.

Chapter IV is a review of the circumstances surrounding the exclusion of the media from the Grenada operation. It also attempts to juxtapose the difficulties of media management during the Grenada operation, against the lessons learned during coverage of the Vietnam War.

Chapter V is a specific review of the report published by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Media-Military Relations Panel, more commonly known as the Sidle Panel.

Chapter VI looks at the use of press pools as recommended by the Sidle Panel. Media pool procedures and objectives and the results of the tests conducted in 1985 are reviewed in this section.

To provide more insight into the problems involved in developing government policy concerning media access, interviews were conducted with Department of Defense personnel and with Washington correspondents. The comments of each person interviewed contribute to chapters four through six and the final conclusions reached in this thesis.

It is hoped that the information provided herein will be of assistance to those interested in journalism history, media access and war reporting, and policy formation. Students of journalism, in both the civilian and military sectors, may find the information useful in developing new public affairs strategies which will make war time reporting more effective.

MEDIA ACCESS AND WAR REPORTING:
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN AN OPEN SOCIETY
AND THE PERCEIVED NEED FOR GOVERNMENT CONTROL

CAPTAIN MARIANE F. ROWLAND
HQDA, MILPERCEN (DAPC-OPA-E)
200 STOVALL STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22332

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MEDIA ACCESS AND WAR REPORTING:
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN AN OPEN SOCIETY AND THE
PERCEIVED NEED FOR GOVERNMENT CONTROL

by

Mariane F. Rowland

Bachelor of Arts
Temple University, 1977

Master of Public Administration
University of South Carolina, 1985

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Lounds J. Stephens
College of Journalism
Director of Thesis

College of Journalism
2nd Reader

College of Journalism
3rd Reader

Dean of the Graduate School

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to examine one of the problems of government and media relations: war reporting. War reporting has been a complex and vital part of journalism history. The thesis begins with a brief review of the methods employed by correspondents of previous wars to gain access to the news. The focus, however, is on a more recent development -- the exclusion of the media, during the first two days of the Grenada operation in 1983, which strained the relationship between government and the media.

Journalists in each war have claimed they provided the most thorough and comprehensive coverage to date. Their claims were the result of the new technology of the period. Improved printing methods, the telegraph, radio, television, satellite technology and constantly improving means of transportation have each changed the way all news, and not only war news, is disseminated. Chapter II provides a review of some of the innovations used at various times in history.

The claims of "better and more thorough" coverage, continue. Obtaining, storing and processing information today is easier than ever. The United States is a more "open" society as a result of the technology available to its government and its citizens. This information glut, however, did not happen overnight. The value placed by Americans on the ability to use information reflects the growing cultural importance of

this skill in daily life.

One issue has gained more attention as a result of society's ability to obtain and process information with more ease and efficiency. It concerns media access to information. The Freedom of Information Act, the Pentagon Papers, and Watergate each influenced public perception about issues concerning access to government information. Media coverage of Vietnam also provides a backdrop against which to review military and media relations in light of this perception.

Technology is said to have influenced how the Vietnam War was reported. War coverage during this period was different from that during any of this nation's previous conflicts. However, a myriad of additional factors were involved in making this happen. Chapter III, therefore, is not an analysis of the media's treatment of the war, nor of government's response to the coverage. Instead, this chapter provides a review of the literature which focuses on the lessons learned by the media and the military during the Vietnam war.

Chapter IV is a review of the circumstances surrounding the exclusion of the media from the Grenada operation. In addition to providing a review of the opposing perspectives on this issue, Chapter IV also attempts to juxtapose the difficulties of media management during the Grenada operation, against the lessons learned concerning coverage of the Vietnam war. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight instances where government and the media used the "lessons learned."

Chapter V is a specific review of the report published by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Media-Military Relations Panel, more commonly known as the Sidle Panel. The panel's report, and comments made to the panel both during and after publication of the report, are summar-

ized in this section.

Chapter VI will look at the use of press pools as recommended by the Sidle Panel. Media pool procedures and objectives, applied in two tests of the Department of Defense media pools during 1985, and the results of the tests are explained in this section.

To provide more insight to the problems involved in developing government policy concerning media access, interviews were conducted with Department of Defense personnel and with Washington correspondents. These interviews form an integral part of this thesis' research. The responses to questions concerning current Department of Defense policy on media relations, the Sidle Panel and press pools, complement the current literature on these subjects. The comments of each person interviewed contribute to chapters four through six and the final conclusions reached in this thesis.

War reporting has been extensively researched. The advent of new information technology, however, requires a more thorough review of how government policy concerning media access is affected. It is the purpose of this thesis to provide a status report on how the military and the media are confronting the question of media access to military conflicts, raised during the Grenada operation. The thesis chapter notes also serve as a source which consolidates heretofore widely dispersed information on this topic.

It is hoped that the information provided herein will be of assistance to those interested in journalism history, media access and war reporting, and policy formation. Students of journalism, in both the civilian and military sectors, may find the information useful in developing new public affairs strategies which will make planning for war time

reporting more effective. And, perhaps, these strategies and proposals will help ensure the preservation of the label "open society" as applied to our society.

## CHAPTER II

## THE "BEST" WAR REPORTING YET: A REVIEW OF THE INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY ON WAR CORRESPONDENTS' ACCESS TO THE NEWS

Government's response to the ability of war correspondents to obtain and transmit news has changed with each military conflict. Several trends become evident in reviewing this historical evolution. Initially, as newsgathering and transmission techniques became more efficient, government felt compelled to increase the control of the information flow during times of war.

This chapter identifies the primary technology that was available to correspondents during seven of the United States' military conflicts and how reporters used this technology to report the news. It will discuss how government on some occasions chose to control access of reporters to the news but at other times chose to impose censorship instead.

This increased government control, although not necessarily always effective, was evident during the Civil War and Spanish American War. The trend, however, did not continue. For example, the government did not completely control and censor the press in Vietnam. Instead, the perceived need for governmental control over war correspondents has fluctuated widely.

The pendulum has swung from the laissez-faire control of the Revolutionary period to its peak of institutionalized control during World Wars One and Two. The pendulum swung back, however, during the

Korean and Vietnamese wars. With the government's decision to control press access during the invasion of Grenada, the pendulum took yet another rapid swing.

## The Revolutionary War

The revolutionaries used the communications tools available to them effectively. They appreciated the press which made the printing of laws, journals and proclamations possible. Newspapers, pamphlets and handbills were recognized by politicians as important aids in winning the war.[1] Mass meetings and mob incitements were also effective tools for mobilizing public opinion in favor of the revolutionary movement.[2] Personal letters and word-of-mouth were also effective means of communicating the news.[3]

Although the press was one of the most powerful tools of the time, author Frank L. Mott noted that the patriots' coverage,

> ...was conditioned by the primitive techniques of eighteenth century news-gathering, by such facilities of communication as existed and by the stage of development at which the newspaper had arrived.[4]

Revolutionary newspapers went into about 40,000 homes, but each issue had a larger number of readers per copy than would be true today.[5] Although the press was used to spread the news of the revolution, alternative means of communication were important in light of the illiteracy of the period. Opinion leaders, well-read and informed on revolutionary issues, were sought out. The clergy and political leaders in the community used services and town meetings to address large groups on the issues of the revolution and in this manner were also effective in spreading the news.

There were thirty-seven newspapers in the colonies on April 19, 1775, the day of the battle of Lexington and Concord. Some of these managed to continue publication, some failed and others started later so

that at the close of the war thirty-five papers were still publishing.[6]

Most papers were weeklies, although some attempted on occasion semiweekly and even publication three times a week.[7] Critical supply problems were common for the press of this period. The printing trade experienced a shortage of capable printers, serviceable printing equipment and of printing supplies such as ink and paper.[8]

Paper supplies from England were almost completely cut off in 1775, and newspaper prices increased even though there were about seventy paper-mills in the colonies and the number increased during the war.[9] As a result, newspapers' page sizes were limited by this scarcity of paper and files of many papers show frequent changes in both the size and quality of paper.[10]

Because paper at the time was made of linen and cloth of any type was scarce during the war, saving rags was considered a patriotic duty.[11] In 1776, the Massachusetts House of Representatives ordered the local Committees of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety to appoint agents to receive rags for the mills.[12]

General Washington even supplied a printer of a newspaper near Morristown, New Jersey with old tent cloth and rags. He also furnished the printer with white paper out of the army's scarce supply -- all this to ensure that the soldiers had a newspaper.[13]

News about the war was gathered by three primary means: the haphazard arrival of private letters from friends, business letters or letters of official and semi-official affairs; word-of-mouth by ship captains, travelers or newcomers; and from clippings from other newspapers.[14] By today's standards, it took news a long time to travel regardless of the mode chosen.

The postal system at the time was not a very effective means of disseminating news. A Savannah patriot writing to Boston could not expect a reply in less than two months. A sailing ship sometimes took longer for the Atlantic crossing.[15]

The parliamentary post was given up in 1775, and William Goddard, of the Maryland Journal, established the "Constitutional" or American postal system. This was taken over by the Continental Congress in 1775.[16] The post, however, remained unsatisfactory throughout the Revolution. Bad roads, the interference of military campaigns and poor financing hindered its development.[17]

The partial breakdown of the colonial postal system did result in the development of an alternative system of newspaper distribution. It stimulated the development of a system of private postriders. A postrider would carry newspapers from the larger cities like Boston to the smaller villages.[18] It was not foolproof. Military operations continued to create obstacles for the postriders. They often had to seek alternate routes to avoid war-blockaded regions. This continued to delay the communication of news.[19]

Patriot organizations mistrusted the post and found it too slow. They needed expresses which would ride at night as well as in daylight, despite the dangers. The Committees of Correspondence provided a means of moving the news. In describing the coverage of the battles of Lexington and Concord, Mott noted the following:

> What with bad roads and slow sailing vessels, inter-colonial communication was slow, but in harmony with the old saw which tells us that bad news travels fast, the report of the fight at Lexington made surprising time.[20]

This was possible because the revolutionary committees of New England, using their own couriers and other Committees of Correspondence, cooperated

by sending their messages on to other towns so the news went at top speed. Newspaper exchanges also helped the news travel throughout the colonies.[21] Using the Committees of Correspondence and express riders it took less than a week to get word from Boston to Savannah.

Only three reports of the Lexington and Concord battle can be said to have been first-hand accounts. Others were written from information gathered from the three sources Mott described.[22] As a result, it took news from one day to six weeks to spread throughout the colonies.[23]

The benefits of using patriot papers to spread news was known by military officials. They believed that publishing orders in newspapers was the most effective way to distribute orders to widely dispersed bodies of soldiers.[24] For example, more than ninety percent of the contents of Holt's Journal, exclusive of advertisements, consisted of war news. This helps to explain why civil and military sources considered newspapers so valuable.[25] The Declaration of Independence first appeared publicly in the Pennsylvania Evening Post of July 6, 1776, and soon other newspapers published the document.[26]

Pamphlets were another means commonly used to spread information about the revolutionary movement. The most famous of these was Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," published in June 1776. About 120,000 copies were sold in the first three months of publication.[27] Paine's "Crisis Papers" also received great acclaim and were extremely effective in raising troop morale. Author Edwin Emery notes that it was significant that the week after Paine made his first plea through his pamphlet, the Revolutionary Army won a much needed victory at Trenton.[28]

In spite of the relative freedom of the press to operate, the period was not without public blunders due to "news leaks" like the ones

criticized today. In 1778 Thomas Paine was appointed Secretary to the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Congress. In this position he was able to obtain information that he later published in John Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet. Writing under the pseudonym of "Common Sense," Paine revealed in a letter to the paper that France had been providing secret aid to the American revolutionists before the Franco-American Alliance became official.[29] Congress was embarrassed. Because of his indiscretion in revealing official secrets of Congress during wartime, Paine was forced to resign his job as secretary to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.[30]

One author takes a different perspective concerning literacy during this period. The American Revolution is ranked, according to author Lynn Montrose, as one of history's most literate wars.[31] In addition to the press, diaries and personal journals have also provided historians with valuable information about this period. Montrose notes that the sheer mechanics of keeping such records would be enough to discourage anyone today.[32] The author explains,

> ...pencils were so much a novelty in 1776 that Thomas Jefferson noted the purchase of one for a schilling and a sixpence at a time when that sum would have bought a fat goose. Quill pens and an ink which faded to rusty brown served as implement of diarists (of the war) who wrote by the light of a dim candle or smoky fire...[33]

In spite of the difficulties inherent in times of war, the press was an effective means of distributing the news. Regardless of the form chosen, the most serious problem that faced communicators of this period was the time it took news to travel from point to point. It took six weeks for the news of Lexington and Concord to reach Savannah.[34] The revolutionary press reduced this time to one week through the Committee of Correspondence's use of express riders. By the time the United States faced the crisis of the Civil War, however, the discovery of the telegraph

would greatly reduce this problem for correspondents.

The problems of this wartime press were different from those of its counterparts of the future. Partisan papers were often run out of town by incoming opposition forces, regardless of their political position. The press, however, generally enjoyed the freedom to print what news it could gather about the battles, and "reporting the wars" was not yet occurring in the form it does today.

## The Civil War

Several technological developments were available to correspondents covering the Civil War which improved the way news was gathered and disseminated. The system of gathering European news from incoming ships was perfected. The railway post improved the speed in news delivery, and the telegraph was a major breakthrough in news transmission technology. The problem of control became more complicated, however, as technology made the transmission of news easier. Government and the press were forced to deal with the dilemma of a free press and its relationship with government when the nation is at war.

Emery described the Civil War as a case history of the problems government faces when trying to control war information. He noted:

> Even in time of war Americans believe they retain the right of knowing how efficiently their leaders and representatives are working. The problem is that if the press maintains its right to criticize leaders and programs might this not be detrimental to national security? The other problem is that if the press is restrained might this not pave the way for concealment of government failures? The problem in wartime is to preserve the balance between national security and the right of the public to know.[35]

The immediacy and accuracy in Civil War news gathering was also the result of several developments that followed the American Revolution. The U.S. Post Office by 1836 had established an express service that

allowed mail from New York to reach New Orleans in less than seven days.[36]

In the 1830s and 1840s railroads gradually began to replace the pony expresses. From twenty-three miles of track in 1830, the network had reached 9,000 miles by 1850. The railroad provided fast distribution and served as a communications agency.[37]

The steamship also contributed to the development of fast news gathering. Travel across the Atlantic was reduced from weeks to days. News systems using steamers, horses and the railroad formed a communication net that allowed news to travel from Halifax, the first port of call for the Atlantic steamers, to Washington, D.C., in less than fifty hours.[38] Although painfully slow by today's standards, this was a great improvement over the months it had taken news to travel great distances during the Revolutionary War.

The Post Office was also a vehicle for spreading war news. However, a few days after the Civil War began, the Post Office discontinued service to enemy areas.[39]

The visual elements of news reporting were lagging during this period. Although artists and photographers captured the Civil War in their work, the technology was not yet available to print pictures in papers. The war artist flourished instead in another medium during this period. More than 3,000 sketches and drawings of the war were published in four years in illustrated magazines.[40]

The most notable contribution to pictorial journalism in the 1860s was the work of pioneer war photographer, Mathew Brady. His photographs could not be used in newspapers of the time because a practical method for two-tone printing had not yet been perfected. Even though Brady's equipment was inferior to the box cameras of future generations, he pro-

duced one of the best records of this period. By the end of the war, he had collected 3,500 photographs.[41]

In order to keep pace with the public demand for war news, newspapers had to be able to print more papers and print them faster. On the Sunday after the fall of Fort Sumter, the New York Herald printed 135,000 newspapers -- a record press run for that date.[42] In 1863, William Bullock brought out the web perfecting press, which printed both sides of a continuous roll of paper on a rotary press.[43]

Coordination of the newspaper industry's newsgathering system initially focused on the shipping industry and was led by the New York dailies. Incoming ships were met by the privately owned boats of these papers. The boats would gather news before the larger ships had docked. To save expenses and consolidate their strength the dailies soon saw the wisdom of organizing.[44] The best date for the establishment of the organization that later grew into the modern Associated Press is January 11, 1849.[45] The agreement signed by six New York dailies, the Herald, Courier and Enquirer, Tribune, Sun, Express and the Journal of Commerce, provided that the partners of the "Harbor News Association" would operate two boats to gather news in the New York harbor from incoming ships. They agreed to share the costs of this enterprise, to sell the news to papers outside New York City and to set up membership rules.[46]

The biggest boost in the speedy transmission of news, however, came from the telegraph. On May 25, 1844, Samuel F. B. Morse made his historic transmission from Washington to his assistant in Baltimore, and a new communication system was born. The Magnetic Telegraph Company promoted Morse's invention, and the expansion of wire service across the country quickly developed.[47]

Telegraph lines reached Portland, Maine, by 1846 and Charleston, South Carolina, and St. Louis, Missouri, by 1847. Chicago and Milwaukee were connected in 1848. In October 1861 the telegraph reached Sacramento, California. By that time there were more than 50,000 miles of wires.[48]

Phillip Knightley noted in his book, The First Casualty, that the use of the telegraph resulted in war reporting that was not only more extensive than in any previous war, but also more immediate. Knightley explained that for the first time in American history it was possible for the public to read what had happened yesterday, rather than someone's opinion on what had happened last week.[49]

News-gathering efforts kept pace with these developments. In 1851, apparently because the selling of news by telegraph was becoming more important, the "Harbor News Association" signed a new agreement as the "Telegraphic and General News Association." The group was soon called the New York Associated Press and established a firm grip on cooperative telegraphic news reporting, selling its service to outsiders.[50]

Unfortunately, the ability of the telegraph to speed news thousands of miles soon became a liability for the press. Anticipating that war was imminent, the New York Herald strategically placed correspondents in the South. At the start of the war, its bureau obtained and filed what information it could about the Confederate States. From this information, the Herald was able to print enemy strength information so complete it raised suspicion at the War Office in Richmond. Several clerks there were arrested on suspicion of treason, and it was insinuated in the North that the Herald was too intimate with its contacts in the South.[51]

Incidents such as this and the coverage of the Battle of Bull Run were some of the nation's first experiences with the problems of an

unfettered press during times of war. As author J. Cutler Andrews notes in his book, The North Reports the War, certain shortcomings in the reporting of Bull Run were to become more evident as the war went on, i.e., "incomplete information, inaccurate statements, and artificial heightening of the dramatic effect of the narrative."[52] Andrews also notes that most of the unfounded rumors were distributed by telegraph.[53] These problems gave government a reason to enact censorship to control press actions during wartime.[54]

An attempt to reach a gentleman's agreement -- establishing ground rules -- did not work. So, on August 10, 1861, as a protective measure against further leakage of military information, the War Department issued orders that nothing "concerning military activities -- past, present or future -- could be telegraphed from Washington except after actual hostilities."[55] From these experiences, editors of the leading metropolitan dailies learned the necessity of testing the qualifications of their reporters.[56]

One of the most notable differences between war reporting during this period and that of the Revolutionary War is the mention of press accreditation in the literature. One such incident involved General William T. Sherman who was certain much of the military's failure could be blamed on information leaks by the press.[57]

The issue developed into a major conflict when Thomas E. Knox, a correspondent for the New York Herald, transmitted information that clearly violated military regulations of censorship. Sherman had the reporter arrested and could have had him hung for treason. In the end, President Lincoln intervened, Knox was freed, and Sherman got what he wanted -- the understanding that all correspondents must be accredited or recognized journalists and that they must be acceptable to commanders in the field.[58]

Although only a minor event, it foreshadowed options that future battlefield commanders, faced with similar problems, could opt to take.

The telegraph also influenced the nature of reporting itself. The by-line "By Telegraph" became more frequent as war progressed.[59] Correspondents tried to save tolls by striving to be more concise.[60] As a result, the "summary lead" was developed during this period as were compressed stories that omitted opinion and hearsay.[61] The forerunners of today's newspaper headlines also were developed during this period. Bulletins, as they were called, reflected the latest highlights that came over the telegraph by the hour.[62]

Not all telegraphic developments were beneficial. The policy of "first come, first served" instituted by telegraphic companies soon resulted in abuses. In order to hold the wires until releases were ready to send, reporters would ask operators to send various chapters of the Bible.[63] Such practices led to the "fifteen-minute system," whereby no reporter was allowed to hold the wire for more than fifteen minutes at a time.[64]

Even as late as 1861, the telegraph had many technical deficiencies. Poor insulation made the wires susceptible to interference from electrical storms. Often during the storms, the current would become so weak the message could not get through.[65] And when the lines were jammed full, important news was not telegraphed, but instead sent north of Washington by mail or express.[66]

When the war began, no general system for preparing and transmitting news of public interest existed in the Confederacy.[67] To improve their effectiveness, editors of six newspapers, the Memphis, Tennessee, Appeal; the Atlanta, Georgia, Southern Confederacy; the Savannah, Georgia,

Republican; the Augusta, Georgia, Constitutionalist; the Nashville, Tennessee, Republican Banner; and the Charleston, South Carolina, Mercury, joined in January 1862, as a group to contract with telegraph companies to assure prompt transmission and strict privacy of news.[68]

They wanted a distribution service that would be beneficial to the press and public, but that would not harm government.[69] By February 4, 1863, the group was formally organized. Thirteen editors were present and fifteen newspapers were represented.[70] The group elected officers and approved the name "Press Association of the Confederate States of America." All forty-three daily newspapers in the Confederacy were members of the Press Association.[71]

Membership in the association allowed many reporters access to wire services they previously could not afford.[72] As a result, Confederate papers devoted proportionately large amounts of space to telegraphic reports.[73]

The telegraph line in 1863 in the South extended from Frederickburg, Virginia, to Chattanooga, Tennessee, Meridian and Mobile, Alabama, and along the Atlantic coast.[74] Through the Press Association, Southern editors could transmit at half rates on the military telegraph lines. They were allowed a weekly, news report on the South not to exceed 3,500 words, for which they paid twelve dollars.[75]

The Southern press also experienced shortcomings with telegraphic reports. Although usually this was the medium by which information about major news events first reached the newspapers, the stories were often full of "comments and opinion, and stale and dull news."[76]

Southern press censorship was relatively effective during the first two years of the war, but became progressively less so after that time.[77] The principle reason for this, according to Andrews, was the opposition to

censorship by the Press Association.[78]

In the North, reporters had no major problems getting to the news they wished to cover. Censorship of the news reported was the biggest obstacle. The federal government imposed official censorship, in April 1861, of news by telegraph and restrictions also applied at times to mail and express dispatches as well. Andrews noted, however, that censorship was haphazard at best. The most serious criticism of the Northern press was that it consistently printed information vital to national security. Andrews held newspaper editors liable for this shortcoming. He believed that where government failed, the editor, not the newsman, in the field, should have had the foresight to weigh the consequences of publishing certain war news.

## The Spanish-American War

Arthur Brisbane describes the difficulties of the newspaper in wartime in an 1898 article for Cosmopolitan magazine:

> To secure the boats, arrange telegraph facilities;
> To get the news into the office first, into the newspaper first, on the street and all over the country first...
> To exercise discretion and reasonable conservatism without falling behind in the great fight for news priority and supremacy...[79]

There was now another way to get the news into the office first. The telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876, and there was one telephone for every 100 persons by 1900. Intercity lines covered the country. With the telephone, reporters could call in news on fast breaking stories.[80]

Railroads, with 93,000 miles of track in 1880, reached a near saturation point of 193,000 miles of track by 1900. The federal postal service, still the primary means of communication, greatly extended its free

carrier service in cities during the 1880s and 1890s and instituted rural free delivery in 1897. Congress, by clearly defining second-class matter in the Postal Act of 1879 and by providing a one-cent-a-pound rate for newspapers and magazines in 1887, opened the way for cheap delivery of publications.[81]

The Atlantic cable began operating in 1886 and linked the United States to London and to another cable stretching eastward to India and the Orient.[82] Cable service connected Santiago, Cuba; Kingston, Jamaica; Mole St. Nicolas, Haiti; Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo; and San Juan, Puerto Rico. From Mole St. Nicolas, the cable office most used by correspondents, a line went to New York.[83] Cable lines were also established to points north from Key West.

Faster presses and new printing processes gave the press the ability to increase its volume. New developments in paper-making significantly lowered the cost of newsprint. In 1850, 750,000 copies of daily newspapers were being printed. By 1890, this number had reached 8,300,000.[84]

The New York Herald was the first paper of this period to attempt to match the speed of transmission of pictures with that of telegraphing words.[85] Halftones were already used to a limited extent in the Sunday feature and magazine section of the New York Tribune. The New York Herald, using a process call "phototelegraphy," sent pictures (line drawings) from Key West to New York on March 12, 1898.[86]

A market for the press -- the urban areas -- was also growing. In 1840, only a single city had more than 250,000 people. By 1890, there were three cities with more than one million and eight others with more than 250,000.[87]

The period in United States history leading up to the Spanish-American War seems to explode with technological innovation. The country

was wired for communication. The nation was experiencing its "industrial revolution," and the population was beginning to migrate to the cities. Author Joseph Mathews notes that in war, as in peace, the press of a country reflects the characteristics of the society of which it is part. Speaking of the coverage of the Spanish-American War, Mathews said that the American press reported the wars as they were fought and introduced a spirit of competition.[88]

Authors of journalism history in America cover this period extensively. It is romanticized by some, but more often described by others as one of the low points in journalism history. It has been charged that many correspondents established headquarters at Key West and wrote "news" dispatches based on rumors and unconfirmed reports received from Cuba.[89]

It is also referred to as the period of yellow journalism, sensationalism and other extremes in news reporting.[90] In this war, more than others in the nation's history to this period, the press seemed more determined to get to the news. According to one author, several methods were considered. For example, one idea was to send cameras to every ship in the American Navy and offer five hundred dollars for the negative of a "good battle scene" if it should reach the home office before any other paper got it. A cote of carrier pigeons was established at a telegraph office near Key West for service on dispatch boats. And last but not least, a portable balloon was sent to Key West to be taken out on a news yacht. The idea was to send a reporter up in the balloon. From this vantage point he would report by wire to the man below, who would have the pigeons ready to fly.[91]

Government, however, was just as determined to hinder press access to the news. The need for secrecy was apparent. Cables allowed fleet

commanders to get orders while at sea if near a cable terminal. On the other hand, cables also made it possible for the enemy to receive in Madrid reports of United States military and naval plans and to make use of the information in messages to commanders in Cuba. The very technology that made this trans-Atlantic communication possible seemed to make controlling its use more necessary.[92]

It was to evade the Havana cable censorship established by the Spanish, that press dispatch boats were chartered to carry news to Key West. William Randolph Hearst, owner of the New York Journal, was the first to recognize the need for them. His competitors at the World and the Herald also employed press boats. The press boats were allowed to follow the squadron enroute to battle. The military, however, made no special effort to alert the press to the details of their sailings.[93] Author Charles H. Brown noted:

> This experience of beating the Spanish censorship as if it were a game may account in part for the later exploits of correspondents in recklessly disregarding national security and resorting to trickery to get information past the censors (later) during the war.[94]

By the time the United States became involved in the Cuban conflict, the American government was taking steps towards censorship as well. Controlling the means to communicate the news, however, appeared to be more important than controlling the correspondents themselves. On April 4, 1898, two weeks before the United States' official entry into the conflict, Admiral William T. Sampson, commander of the fleet, was ordered to be prepared to take possession of the cables at Key West.[95] By controlling cable offices at Key West, Tampa and New York City, the government could control information the newspapers received from their correspondents.

On April 26, 1898, the Post Office Department announced no letters, packages or other mail would be sent to any post office within the jurisdiction of Spain. The order was designed to prevent information from getting to Spain or its Caribbean possessions.[96]

One of the problems of allowing press access to the news, while controlling its publication through censorship and direct control of the transmission systems, was that it did not prevent the stateside printing of rumors and misinformation.[97]

Lack of responsibility was evident not only in the printing of rumors but in the publication of information that could aid the enemy. The competition to print the latest news regardless of the consequences is attributed, by Charles Brown, to the bitter competition between the rival papers of William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer. Brown contends that because of the journalistic spirit of the times, war correspondents were heroes who could gain fame more easily through daring exploits than by sound reporting.[98]

War correspondents were not the only ones, however, to blame for information leaks. Brown notes that military and civilian government officials were also at fault. Glory seekers and army commanders revealed information to favorites among the correspondents in return for good press reports.

Attempts at censorship were feeble at best. The government made the usual accusations that the press was divulging information that would aid the enemy. And, although this did happen, there was no stringent effort by government to control press access or to censor the news.

As in the Civil War, the press was guilty of publishing news that was detrimental to military actions. Censorship was not effective and

press correspondents were free to enter the war front as they chose. Indeed, their newspapers provided them with the resources to island-hop as necessary to cover a battle. The major dailies spent large sums outfitting ships and hiring well-known correspondents to ensure the story was not only covered, but appealing to as many people as possible. The problem of news coverage versus the need to protect military operations, however, was still unresolved.

World War I

As with previous wars, World War I whetted the public's desire for war news. The telephone and the trans-Atlantic telegraphic cable were two new forms of communication used by war correspondents of this period. News could be sent over greater distances. Although radio was extensively tested prior to World War I, upon the United States' entry into the war, all commercial testing and use of radio broadcasting stopped. The federal government took over all radio operations and the medium did not develop commercially until the end of the war.[99]

This chapter does not focus on technology, however, as no really major innovations were used during this period. The telephone was an improvement over voiceless telegraph, but it still represented an improvement within the parameters of point-to-point communication methods. Instead, this section will focus on the obstacles reporters now faced in getting the news.

During World War I, government control of Army information was carefully implemented. Government control involved censorship as well as the physical control of correspondents themselves. A laborious accreditation process and numerous General Orders issued by the Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces dictated the appearance, behavior and move-

ment of correspondents covering the war. This effort to completely control the press seems to have been the most comprehensive up to that time.

There were about 500 American correspondents for newspapers, magazines, press associations and syndicates in Europe by 1915, and the number increased when America joined the war.[100] However, of these correspondents, only about forty actually covered the war.[101]

It is possible that the number of American correspondents covering the war was limited by the accreditation process and the expense incurred by the newspapers or news agencies. Unlike their predecessors, American correspondents of World War I were subject to stringent controls. Cedric Larson in the December 1940, Journalism Quarterly explains this process in detail. Larson notes that on September 12, 1917, specific regulations for war correspondents were published "for the information and guidance of all concerned." The regulations described war correspondents as either "accredited" or "visiting."

The regulation explained how applications for accreditation were to be made to the Secretary of War. Certificates verifying character and physical qualifications, photographs, and the name of the paper or agency represented were some of the detailed information required.[102]

Knightley makes a point of emphasizing the cumbersome nature of this process.

> Correspondents had to appear personally before the Secretary of War or his designated representative...swear to "convey the truth to the people of the United States,"...had to write (not type) an autobiographical sketch to include an account of his work,...his experience...his character and his health. He had to say what he planned to do when he reached Europe and where he planned to go.[103]

Accredited correspondents were required to wear an "American officer's uniform, without insignia, and with a green brassard bearing the letter C

in red."[104] Accredited photographers wore the same uniform except that the brassard was blue with the white letter P.[105]

Accredited correspondents were also required to sign an agreement acknowledging the rules of censorship and limitations of their press movements.[106] The orders of September 12, 1917, also stated that correspondents "will be governed in movement by the direction of the press officer." They were also to avoid conduct detrimental to the morale or discipline of the soldiers. They also acknowledged that a breach in any of the regulations could result in their restriction from covering any military operations or even result in their return to the United States.[107]

The organization of the accredited correspondent was required to pay $1,000 to the Army to cover equipment and maintenance expenses. A $10,000 bond was also required to be posted to ensure that the correspondent would behave. If there were any infractions of the rules, the $10,000 was forfeited and given to charity.[108]

"Visiting" correspondents were restricted by minor guidelines. For example, they could wear anything but the uniform of the accredited correspondents. They also had to obtain permission from the War Department or the Commander-in-Chief to visit the Army. While in the war zone, they were under the supervision of a press officer or obtained papers that delineated the areas of access. They were also required to sign a paper agreeing to follow the rule of accredited correspondents.[109]

A difference between the two was that although accredited correspondents were "under the direction of a press officer," they were not necessarily accompanied by the press officer. They were provided passes and identity cards and were authorized to travel within the areas identified by general headquarters.[110] Although rules were strict, accredited corres-

pondents could visit the front.[111]

In defense of this system of controls, Larson notes that

> ...the first World War on the Western Front was a fairly slow and stable system of trench warfare. Lines of communication and supply were the arteries that supplied the sinews of war with energy and resources to carry on the fray.[112]

In the environment Larson describes, government control of the press was of paramount importance. Information leaks could benefit the enemy and have immediate consequence. The military, however, in restraining the press did not mean to imply distrust. On June 15, 1918, general orders number ninety-six was issued to clarify the attitude of the military towards the press.

The order acknowledged the duty of the press to keep the American public informed. It stated that the American Expeditionary Forces were expected to support accredited correspondents as necessary so that they could perform their duties efficiently.[113]

World War II

World War II correspondents could communicate by wireless, radiotelegraph, telegraph, telephone, cable, newsreels, and of course, by mail. Radio broadcasts brought the news of the war front with unprecedented immediacy. For the first time, the American public had live news coverage. A reknowned broadcaster of this war, H. V. Kaltenborn, noted that during World War I, the American public got their news from "extras," hawked on street corners. In World War II this changed. During World War II sixty million radio sets hourly informed America of the latest developments on the fighting fronts.[114]

Although World War II brought domestic production of radio equipment to a standstill, advertising revenue continued to climb. The public's demand for war information doubled the number of news programs in the first

half of the war.[115] Americans heard network broadcasts from London, Paris, Berlin, Prague, Cologne, Nuremberg, Budapest, Padua, Trieste, Rome, Udine, Geneva, Godesberg and Munich.[116] Broadcasts from Europe were sent to Cape Town to Buenos Aires and to New York, all by shortwave. Occasionally, direct cross-Atlantic communications were disrupted by electrical storms. Networks learned, however, to re-route broadcasts via telephone lines and cables.[117]

One of the new challenges facing this generation of media and government personnel was the realization that radio could not be censored at the borders in the same fashion as telephone, cable, radiogram, or mail communications.[118] Government was swift to implement control over the measures that could bring news to the American public.[119] Most of the 14,462 persons in the Office of Censorship were engaged in the mandatory censorship of mail, cables, and radio communications between the United States and other countries.[120]

A code of wartime practices for American Broadcasters was established in January 1942. According to Kaltenborn, in keeping with the American tradition of free speech, the provisions of the code were worked out by the radio industry "in friendly collaboration with the government. The code was enforced by a member of the broadcasting profession," and the author noted, "the government (did) not impose arbitrary restrictions."[121]

The "European Roundup," the pattern and style of broadcasting used to report war news, was developed during the 1938 Munich broadcasts, according to author Michael Emery.[122] Between September 10, 1938, when Czech President Eduard Benes broadcast his nation's desire to resist Hitler, and the final four-power agreement at Munich on the 29th, CBS devoted 471 broadcasts to the crisis. NBC offered 435 broadcasts over

its Red and Blue networks. MBS had limited coverage, a total of sixteen hours airtime, versus forty-eight hours of CBS and fifty-nine hours for the two NBC networks.[123]

When World War II finally came, the networks had matured greatly. Networks were cognizant of their potential and were ready to continue foreign broadcasts in depth.[124]

When the war began, the United States was making one radio broadcast a day over the British Broadcasting Corporation's facilities. At the end of 1942, there were twenty-one, American-run, short wave transmitters, beaming 2,700 programs a week to Europe and Africa alone in twenty-four different languages.[125] About 500 American correspondents were abroad at one time. Altogether, the United States armed forces accredited 1,646 different persons.[126]

Development of mobile units and the use of tape recordings increased radio coverage. Direct reports were available from battlefields and from bombers flying over Berlin and Tokyo. The action of D-Day and news from other centers of action were also reported live.[127]

What made World War II difficult to cover was that it was fought on many different fronts, each with its own communications problems. World War II reporters covered battle action all over the world.[128] Censorship, accreditation, and access were issues, but not to the extent they had been in World War I. Knightley notes press pools were used to ensure the coverage of major news stories.[129] He also explains that if the Pacific correspondent, for example, was able to scoop a story, distances in the Pacific were so great and communications presented such a problem that he was almost certain to be beaten by the official communique.[130]

Correspondents were free to go where they wished, but they were often dependent on the military for transportation. The coverage of D-Day, for example, required the cooperation of the press and the military. According to Knightley, the press was treated as just another branch of service during the planning of the operation. Everything was done to ensure the press got the story, to include the accreditation of 558 correspondents and the provision of censors on the assault craft and even on the beaches.[131]

Although censorship and transportation problems plagued the war correspondent, the mandatory uniforms and the other restrictive measures of World War I were not as prominent. It appears that the way in which the press was managed was also changing.

When the United States became involved in Korea, however, it was a different type of war. During World War II, correspondents enjoyed a relationship with the government that was never again to be the same. It is not so much the result of any transgressions by either press or government during this war. It is perhaps the result of a maturing press, one more cognizant of its role. This war has been called by some the training ground for Vietnam.

## The Korean War

The major technological development during this period was the commercial use of television. Television was tested as early as 1928, when the Federal Radio Commission (later the FCC) granted the first experimental license for visual broadcasting to RCA's W2XBS. By 1937, seventeen stations were operating under non-commercial experimental licenses. The 1939 World's Fair in New York City was television's debut.[132]

But as radio development was postponed until after World War I, likewise, commercial television in the United States did not expand until after World War II. Although some ten commercial stations were serving 10,000 to 20,000 television homes across the United States, commercial telecasting ended early in 1942.[133] After World War II, television's growth was further hindered by problems involving the placement of television in the electromagnetic spectrum. In response to this problem, the FCC set aside channels two to thirteen in the VHF band in March 1947.

The 1948-to-1951 period is the generally accepted date for the arrival of national television networking. In January 1949 the Midwest and the East Coast were linked by coaxial cable and by September 1951, the West Coast link-up occurred.[134]

Television continued to grow, but so did its problems. In order to solve technical-interference problems, provide for the increased demand for licenses, and study color television systems, the FCC froze new station allocations on September 30, 1948.[135] The Korean War became another reason for keeping the freeze, which lasted until July 1, 1952.[136]

During these years, the RCA compatible-color system was adopted, UHF channels fourteen to eighty-three were added to VHF channels two to thirteen and 242 station allocations were reserved for educational television. During the period between 1948 and 1952, one of every three American families bought a television set at an average cost of $300.[137]

Although this new technology offered the potential to give news gatherers more immediacy than ever before, the Korean War was not covered by television as Vietnam would later be. The technology needed for live coverage, i.e., the satellite relays of the 1960s, was not available. Instead, broadcast coverage was essentially by radio, with film being shot

for television and newsreels. The print medium continued to give Americans the visual account of the war. By September 1950, about 300 correspondents from nineteen countries were reporting the war from Korea.[138] Emery noted:

> David Douglas of Life was taking the first of his great Korean War photographs and Life's July 10, 1950 issue brought home the war to a country not yet linked by television.[139]

Government policy concerning the control of war correspondents was not implemented concurrently with the United States' involvement in the Korean War. Initially no censorship restraints existed. General Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief of United Nation forces, left correspondents to their own devices and the press and radio operated without adequate military supervision or censorship. As a result, some lost their accreditation.

On July 25, 1950, about three weeks after the first American troops saw combat, the Army expanded the censorship code to rule out criticism of decisions made by United Nations commanders in the field or of conduct by allied soldiers on the battlefield.[140] By December 21, 1950, full censorship was imposed on newswires, broadcasts, magazine articles and photographs from Korea. In January 1951, correspondents were placed under the complete jurisdiction of the Army.

The press was allowed access to the battlefront, but Army censorship, poor communication facilities and lack of transportation to the battle areas made correspondents dependent on the military for these services. Correspondent Marguerite Higgins said coverage of the Korean campaign was "dominated by the battle of communications -- trying to get the story out...and trying to find transportation."[141] There was one military telephone line to Tokyo that was rationed to each reporter for a few minutes between midnight and 4:00 a.m. Some tried using carrier pigeons,

but they were ineffective.[142]

The relationship between the press and the military grew strained. The military did not want reports that could give "aid and comfort to the enemy" to be published. Reporters were torn between honoring this request and reporting the facts. Some of the questions they raised concerned the South Koreans' killing of their "political prisoners," the lack of equipment or equipment in poor condition that the American troops were using, the behavior of some American POWs, and the political implications of United States' involvement in this United Nations police action. Correspondents who questioned the motives of their government were seen as unsupportive of the war effort. Enough pressure was provided so that some were silenced.

The other side of the argument, however, was that it was difficult to draw the line between constructive criticism and malicious attacks, especially when a nation was at war. Emery's dilemma of war reporting, described earlier, still exists. Emery questioned how the press during wartime might maintain its right to criticize government programs and leaders without detriment to national security. Correspondent Edward R. Murrow, broadcast veteran of World War II, noted:

> I have never believed that correspondents who move in and out of the battle area, engage in privileged conversations with commanders and with troops and who have access to public platform, should engage in criticism of command decision or of commanders while the battle is in progress.[143]

The growing discord between correspondents and the military was epitomized by the coverage of the United Nations peace talks. Under General Matthew Ridgeway, General MacArthur's successor, "correspondents were not allowed to cover the talks, to inspect documents presented at the negotiations and were allowed to see only those maps prepared espe-

cially for them by the U.S. Army public relations section."

The information the Army presented correspondents about the negotiations was often slanted and often wrong. The misinformation in the briefing process came to light when Western correspondents compared notes with reporters covering the peace talks for the North Korea-Chinese delegation. Wilfred Burchett and Alan Winnington, correspondents with Ce Soir, a Paris left-wing newspaper, and the London Daily Worker, respectively, were allowed access to the meetings and to view documents presented at the meetings. They willingly exchanged information with American correspondents. Not all American correspondents maintained relations with these two as they had been labeled "Communists." Those that did, however, were able to observe the discrepancies in the information presented.[144]

Several things were different about war correspondents during this period. Difficulties in transportation and communication made the correspondents' work difficult. It appears that the correspondents of World War I and II had more facilities available to them. The real problem, however, was not in how they got the message back, but in what the messages were saying.

That this was a United Nations police action influenced to some degree the nature of the reporting itself. This was a first in the United States history. As such, it required a different kind of reporting and demanded that different questions be asked. The homefront propaganda offices of World War I and II, whose efforts built public support for their respective wars, were not present. In their place was a press, which, although tentative in its attempts, was questioning nonetheless. Correspondents reviewing this period most commonly express regret at not having been more forceful.

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[112]Larson, "Censorship of Army News During the World War 1917-1918," p. 320.

[113]Ibid., p. 321.

World War Two

[114]Frank L. Mott, Journalism in Wartime (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1943), p. 111.

[115]Hiebert, Mass Media III, p. 333.

[116]Michael C. Emery, "The Munich Crises Broadcasts: Radio Comes of Age," Journalism Quarterly, vol. 42, no. 4 (Autumn 1965):580.

[117]Ibid., p. 590.

[118]Mott, Journalism in Wartime, p. 111.

[119]Edwin Emery, The Press and America, p. 524.

[120]Ibid., p. 525.

[121]Mott, Journalism in Wartime, p. 115.

[122]Michael Emery, "The Munich Crises Broadcasts: Radio Comes of Age," p. 576-580.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Ibid., p. 590.

[125]Edwin Emery, The Press and America, p. 527.

[126]Ibid., p. 528.

[127]Ibid., p. 530.

[128]Stein, Under Fire: The Story of American War Correspondents, p. 94.

[129]Knightley, The First Casualty, p. 295.

[130]Ibid.

[131]Ibid., p. 322.

The Korean War

[132]Hiebert, Mass Media III, p. 352.

[133]Ibid.

[134]Ibid., p. 355.

[135]Ibid., p. 354.

[136]Erik Barnouw, The Golden Web (New York: The Oxford Press, 1968), p. 285.

[137]Hiebert, Mass Media III, p. 354.

[138]Emery, The Press and America, p. 535.

[139]Ibid., p. 533.

[140]Knightley, The First Casualty, p. 337.

[141]Margueritte Higgens, War in Korea: The Report of a Woman Combat Correspondent (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1951), p. 51-52.

[142]Knightley, The First Casualty, p. 338.

[143]Stein, Under Fire: The Story of American War Correspondents, p. 94.

[144]Knightley, The First Casualty, p. 352.

# CHAPTER III

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM VIETNAM

People who study the Vietnam War can become inundated in the literature of this period. The material treats many aspects of this complex war. There are personal accounts of the soldiers who fought the war and the accounts of the reporters who tried to cover their story. There are texts that analyze the political implications of American involvement. Other books discuss the military strategy of this war, and history texts provide a detailed review of Vietnam, a nation long besieged by war.

Another area that received considerable attention both during and after the Vietnam War was how the media reported this war. A related topic is the military's response to the media's war reporting efforts. Reporting during this period is earmarked by the media's ability to gain access to the battle areas. Censorship of war reporting, although considered by General William C. Westmoreland, former Commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam, was never implemented during this war.

Instead, "ground-rules" were used as a new and apparently effective alternative to censorship. Correspondents successfully used these ground rules as guides concerning the kind of information that could be published or broadcast. Barry Zorthian, then the first director of the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office and Counselor of Embassy for Information in Saigon, could recall only four or five cases during the war where reporters lost

their accreditation as result of publishing information that could aid the enemy.[1]

The Vietnam War is sometimes referred to as that point where the relationship between the military and the media became strained and began deteriorating. In following this argument the media are characterized as responsible for the loss of the war, for taking an unpatriotic stance by highlighting the failures of military performance and for exploiting the war. Television has been the most popular target of this criticism. After all, the argument continues, Vietnam has been called the "television war" because television brought the horror of the war into thousands of American homes night after night and year after year.

In contrast, it was not until some months after American involvement in World War II that the first pictures of dead American soldiers were published in the United States. Some arguments contend that the press of the time was solidly behind the government in the war effort and chose not to publish these types of photographs. Another argument is that censors of this period deemed that such photographs would undermine the war effort and would give aid and comfort to the enemy. As a result, they were able to effectively prevent their publication.

Whatever the reason, the rules changed for correspondents in the Vietnam War. Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from reporting of this period, the issue that surfaces most in the literature, is that the war was not fully covered. This is not to say that there were not enough reporters. By March 1969, it is estimated that there were 170 Americans accredited.[2] It does imply, however, that not all sides of the story were adequately reported. This may be one of the reasons that some believe reporting of this period intentionally under-

mined American efforts in Vietnam.

Access to the news is the common thread to the problem of unbalanced reporting. Charles Lewis, speaking as Washington Bureau Chief of the Associated Press said during the PBS series, "The Military and the Media," "Without access, I don't have a story...With access a story is possible."[3]

Although easy accreditation procedures seem to have contributed to the overabundance of reporters, these procedures were the only control mechanism in effect. More than control the press however, accreditation really served as a census device by which the number of reporters could be accounted for.

Because departure from Vietnam did not mean loss of accreditation, this also caused the list of accredited correspondents to grow and resulted in inflated numbers. Also, among the hard-core fact-finders on the list there were the freelancers, secretaries, interpreters and television sound and cameramen. Relatively few of these correspondents, about forty according to Braestrup, saw any combat at battalion level or below, before the Tet offensive.

Accredited correspondents were allowed more freedom than their predecessors. To receive accreditation, an American correspondent needed a letter from the agency being represented. The U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was the accrediting agency. There were some benefits to being accredited. For Americans accreditation privileges included, but were not limited to, access to daily military briefings, military transport, press centers and access to the military exchanges and officers' dining facilities.[4]

In reviewing press coverage of the Tet offensive, Braestrup noted that reporting could have been more effective had reporters divided up

the "beat." Instead, the tendency was towards pack journalism. The result was the over-reporting of isolated stories about the war. Coverage of this period, Braestrup noted, may have benefited by a pooled press effort. He contends that had correspondents divided the beat and pooled their efforts, they may have been able to provide the depth and scope that reports from Vietnam were lacking.[5]

Richard Halloran, a Washington-based correspondent for The New York Times who regularly covers the military in the field, agrees with Braestrup. Halloran said that pooling, or "splitting the story," is a common practice among reporters. Rivalries are put aside while correspondents share facts pertinent to the angle they covered. Although the facts are pooled, each reporter remains responsible for developing these facts into a cohesive story.[6]

This sharing of information between reporters who have covered different angles of the same story is more applicable to the long-running story than to the new, just-breaking story. Perhaps if more angles had been pursued, a more comprehensive story about American involvement in Vietnam could have emerged.

A common criticism of war reporting during this period, therefore, is that although correspondents had more freedom to operate than in previous wars, this freedom did not result in comprehensive reporting of the war. The blame cannot be placed solely on the media, however. Several factors seemed to have restricted or influenced the war reporting effort: the terminology that evolved to describe the American involvement in this new and different type of war; the difficulty in gaining access to North Vietnam in order to report that part of the story; and the failure of the press to fully cover the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

The words chosen to describe the war played an important part in framing the war for the American public. It is a problem worth considering by those interested in effectively communicating the government's message to the public. Phil Goulding, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) for two years, noted that credibility problems were caused throughout the war by government's poor choice of words. The problem is exemplified by the use of the words "pinpoint bombing" to describe the American bombing effort. Goulding says this phrase carried the implication that a successful bombing run would destroy only specific targets such as bridges, railroads or ammunition areas. The tremendous impact of using these poorly chosen words, however, was only felt after the fact. Goulding explained:

> During the Johnson-McNamara years, the bombing of military targets in North Vietnam was carried out with greater care than any bombing in history. In military jargon, this was pinpoint bombing, and civilians in government from the president down quickly picked up the words...
>
> No Washington official ever thought or said there were no civilian casualties (yet)...When government said "pinpoint" often enough, it fostered the perception that there were almost no civilian casualties.
>
> Relatively speaking casualties were extremely limited. But U.S. people were nonetheless shocked when Hanoi photographs of the worst examples of bridge bombing were disseminated in North Vietnam, brought to this country by journalists and shown on American television. Viewers saw blocks of houses leveled at either end of the bridge with numerous bodies. The effort did not look very pinpointed to the family in the Denver living room. Credibility was shattered again. We were stupid to call it pinpointed.[7]

Correspondent Harrison E. Salisbury's reports for The New York Times and his book, Behind the Lines: Hanoi, provide another example of how news reports from correspondents in Vietnam seemed to contradict government reports. One reason Salisbury's reporting from North Vietnam of the results of the American bombing effort on Hanoi made such an impact was because the devastation he described did not coincide with the

American public's perception of the government's bombing efforts.[8] The contradiction may have been eliminated had government been able to predict the negative effect of its terminology and present its information more clearly. The lesson learned is not that words chosen will make the atrocities of war any less horrible. Instead, government efforts to accurately report, regardless of how undesirable the news, will most likely result in more credibility in the long run. As Goulding explained, "If it is all going to be said in the end, you might as well say it at the beginning."[9]

Fighting the loss of credibility, the result of poorly chosen words, is just one of the problems of coverage of the period. For all the openness in Vietnam, there remained other aspects of the war which required more attention.[10] "There was the occasional Communist correspondent's dispatch and an occasional visit to Hanoi along the lines of Harrison Salisbury in December of 1966."[11] But, critiques of reporting during the Vietnam War, have emphasized the need for more analysis of other issues, such as a questioning of the political and economic reasons for American involvement in the war. Zorthian contends there was no comprehensive coverage and noted, "The handicap of a half-covered war is an enormous one."[12]

Veteran correspondent, Howard K. Smith, made a similar and eloquent statement:

> Reporters like to say they covered the Vietnam War more fully, more thoroughly than ever a war was covered before. That's not true. They covered one-third of the war more fully, our one-third: Americans killing and being killed, the kind of pictures seen over dinner every night that divided the nation into passionate doves and passionate hawks.
>
> The South Vietnamese one-third was almost never covered or mentioned, though they carried out more numerous actions than we did. The North Vietnamese part was one-third of the war we couldn't cover, but at least we could have reported what they were doing in areas available to us.[13]

Braestrup concurs with this position. He explains that correspondents did not spend enough time in the field with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, although much was written about how badly the South Vietnamese did as soldiers.[14] Although the 18th, 25th, and 5th Divisions of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam around Saigon were written up for their poor performance, Braestrup noted, only eight U.S. newsmen out of 170 accredited visited any of them. "Because it was easier to cover American troops, our reporting of the war has been 'ethnocentric' since the U.S. buildup began."[15]

Until early 1967, the vast majority of the reporting of Vietnam was positive. Possibly to the detriment of all, as later studies would show, what was reported from Vietnam was the information that was provided by the military and their spokesmen. In their commitment to hard news, reporters valued the official who could be quoted directly and the press conference transcript or the press release that could be referred to. Too often, however, these sources were merely "official window dressing."[16] The works of Lichty and Braestrup corroborate these findings.[17]

Some media critics argue that reporting should have interpreted the news and not merely reported it to the public. Fred Friendly described the dilemma. "It was a unique responsibility to avoid bringing aid and comfort to the enemy without doing commercials for the Pentagon." He believed the problem was the result of the inability of the press to relate four major stories in Vietnam: the military, diplomatic, political and economic stories. The press failed to both understand the complexity of Vietnam and to assemble a comprehensive profile early enough to make a difference.[18]

The argument is that had this analysis of government been more

effective, American public opinion would have consolidated and would have polarized sooner. Government, in reaction to this consolidated public opinion, would have been motivated to respond either for or against involvement in Vietnam. As it was, status quo opinion prevailed in most government circles.

It was not until the aftermath of the 1968 Tet offensive that this consolidation both in public opinion and within government circles occurred. The publication of the "Pentagon Papers" and later interpretations of the battle at the Gulf of Tonkin also served as pivotal points for government and media relations.[19] They are important to this argument in that press analysis of these events reflected the differences in what government was saying versus what was actually happening on the ground in Vietnam. These are discrepancies that further deteriorated media and military relations. As a result of these incidents, government was put in a position where its word was automatically questioned until proven correct.[20]

Perhaps it is this adversarial relationship, this questioning of motives and policy, that the military interpreted as unpatriotic and unsupportive reporting of the war. Maybe this is another reason why the military view the press as unfriendly forces. Some believe that the media deliberately reported in unfavorable and unpatriotic terms. This is an old myth that too many in the military carry around and use as reason to avoid any contact with the press. It is a sentiment reflected in Colonel George E. Day's remarks in a seminar at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, home of the Army's Defense Information School.

> The press took Lowell Thomas' and Ernie Pyle's reputations of objective and honest reporting. They unloaded a lot of absolutely incredible falsehoods on us through the course of that Vietnam war.[21]

Major General Charles B. Bussey, presently the Army's Chief of Public Affairs, provided an insightful explanation of the problem. He noted that too many senior officers are carrying around misconceptions about the damage done to the military by the press during the Vietnam War. Most of these misconceptions, he explained, are not the result of first-hand experiences, but instead are the perpetuation of second-hand accounts that are not entirely true.[22]

A recurring criticism of the military's handling of the press during Vietnam is that the truth was not always told and that news, especially bad news, was difficult to disseminate.[23] This contributed to the credibility problem. These problems did not develop overnight, and they seem to be perpetuated by the growing antagonism between the military and the media.

Major General (U.S. Army, retired) Winant Sidle, who in 1967 was Chief of Information, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, believes attitude and the management of bad news are two issues that need to be addressed as a result of Vietnam. One of the key problems since Vietnam, according to General Sidle, is that many public affairs officers and their commanders hate the press.[24] He believes that perhaps an important lesson to be learned from Vietnam is to "treat the bad news the same way you treat the good news," which is another way of saying that the military must admit its mistakes.[25] The credibility of the military is at stake, and failure to do so can only weaken efforts towards improving relations between the military and the media.

Admitting mistakes is a tactic with which General Bussey concurs. Inviting the press in and explaining the facts prevents further allegations of a cover-up and can defuse a potential three-week story to a

fizzling one-day news item.[26] General Sidle explained:

> If a newsman gets to believe that you are going to fight to admit your mistakes, he begins to look on you pretty favorably, and this often creeps into his overall coverage. I've seen many reporters in Vietnam begin to pay attention to what we were saying after they realized that we were really trying to help them and to be honest.[27]

Colonel Gary L. Werner, Commandant of the U.S. Army Defense Information School, does not agree completely with this position. Instead he advocates that in some instances, a "response to query" basis may be a more effective way to manage unfavorable news. Colonel Werner explained that sometimes escalating a local problem to higher levels within the Army may make it appear more newsworthy in the eyes of the press. In this respect, he advocates releasing information about some problem situations, but, only in response to inquiries. Colonel Werner emphasized that when information is released, the maximum amount should be made available with minimum delay.[28]

Lieutenant Colonel David R. Kiernan, author of a forthcoming book on media and military relations, makes a convincing argument to the contrary. Bad news, according to Colonel Kiernan, must be treated the same as good news. Not to do so means the possibility of being faced with two bad stories: the first one, of an alleged cover up and the second, the "bad news" story itself.[29]

Dispensing information, however, is not enough. Discussions concerning the military's inability to put out information often refers to the MACV Daily Briefings, sometimes called the 5 o'clock Follies.[30] The misnomer seems to have been given because the briefings were the source of confusion caused by not always leveling with the press. It was hard to distinguish the news from the mundane in the massive amounts of information available at these briefings.

General Sidle agrees that the military did not always level with the press. The Pentagon published information, but not always at the right time. Sometimes public affairs officers did not tell the whole story, but it was because they did not have the story to tell.[31] It was a situation that grew worse as the military's credibility was questioned more often.

Good intentions do not count in this information-oriented world. Instead government must be committed to informing the public. Regardless of how well intentioned the objectives of the MACV Daily Briefings were, merely putting out the information was not enough. "Government," according to Goulding, "must also provide enough information so that the public can participate intelligently in major policy decisions."[32] Government can make an effort to gain the support of the people, can learn to operate in an open society and can be committed to informing the public, but the job does not end here. "Unless the government actively and positively pursues the specific objective of not misleading the people, all other efforts are in vain."[33]

Public affairs officers are an important part of this dissemination process. They should contribute to the efforts to make government more open because, Goulding explains,

> ...it is right, because it is moral, because it is just. But we also have to be these things for pragmatic reasons as well: If we fail to be believed, if we fail to be honest, if we fail to be open, then we fail to achieve our goal of effectively representing the interests of our government and our people.[34]

Some of the literature of this period proposes that it is time to close the door on this period of history. Others argue that for all the "lessons learned," we have failed to learn from Vietnam. Whether one learns or not is not sufficient reason to close the door. Each of this

nation's wars has provided the United States government the opportunity to work with the press. The mistake of closing the door on this period of admittedly difficult relations with the media is described by Colonel Harry Summers in his book, On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context. Summers explains that Vietnam may have been a different war had the lessons of previous wars not been so readily dismissed. He says,

> ...the majority of on-the-scene reporting from Vietnam was factual -- that is the reporters honestly reported what they had seen first hand. Much of what they saw was horrible, for that is the true nature of war. It was this horror, not the reporting that so influenced the American people.[35]

Colonel Summers quotes General Weyand in counseling what must be done in the future.

> As military professionals we must speak out, we must counsel our political leaders and alert the American public that there is no such thing as a "splendid little war." There is no such thing as a war fought on the cheap. War is death and destruction. The American way of war is particularly violent, deadly and dreadful. We believe in using "things" -- artillery, bombs, massive firepower -- in order to conserve our soldiers' lives. The enemy, on the other hand, made up for his lack of "things" by expending men instead of machines, and he suffered enormous casualties. The Army saw this happen in Korea, and we should have made the realities of war obvious to the American people before they witnessed it on their television screens. The Army must make the price of involvement clear before we get involved, so that America can weigh the probable costs of involvement against the dangers of noninvolvement...for there are worse things than war.[36]

It would have been difficult, even in the aftermath of the Korean War, to predict the role that the increasingly pervasive media would play in future wars. Korea provided a warning of problems to come. It was a foreshadowing that was not carefully reviewed for its application to the Vietnam situation although later books, such as Summer's work, clearly identify the similarities of the two conflicts.

At this point in history it is fair to say that government and the media have had much exposure to the roles they play in this open society.

The argument of not being able to foresee certain implications of secrecy in government during war time cannot hold its own in future conflicts. The lessons are there for the learning.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Barry Zorthian, "Vietnam: The Media, Censorship Unacceptable," Vietnam 10 Years Later: What Have We Learned? (Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.: Defense Information School, 1983), p. 52.

[2]Peter Braestrup, "Covering the Vietnam War," Nieman Reports, vol. XXIII, no. 4 (December 1969), p. 8. Peter Braestrup is often cited for his work in journalism history and his comprehensive review of media coverage of the Tet offensive. Braestrup is also the editor of the 20th Century Fund report, Battle Lines, which reviews media-military relations.

[3]"The Military and the Media: A Question of Access," Media and Society Seminars (New York: Columbia University, 1985), p. 15.

[4]Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 373.

[5]Peter Braestrup, The Big Story (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 24.

[6]Interview with Richard Halloran, Washington correspondent, The New York Times, Washington, D.C., 1 November 1985.

[7]Phil Goulding, "A Lesson from Vietnam: The Truth is Not Enough," Vietnam 10 Years Later: What Have We Learned? (Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.: Defense Information School, 1983), p. 39.

[8]Harrison E. Salisbury, Behind the Lines: Hanoi (New York: Harper & Row, Inc., 1967).

[9]Goulding, "A Lesson from Vietnam: The Truth is Not Enough," p. 34.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Zorthian, "Vietnam: The Media, Censorship Unacceptable," p. 53.

[12]Ibid., p. 53.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Howard K. Smith, "Lessons of Vietnam: Passions Still High," Vietnam 10 Years Later: What Have We Learned? (Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.: Defense Information School, 1983), p. 14.

[15]Braestrup, "Covering the Vietnam War," p. 10.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Jules Witcover, "Where Washington Reporting Failed," Columbia Journalism Review, vol. IX, no. 4 (Winter 1970-71):23.

[18]Lawrence W. Lichtey, "Media Influence: TV Versus Public Opinion," Vietnam 10 Years Later: What Have We Learned? (Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.: Defense Information School, 1983), p. 38.

[19]Fred Friendly, "TV at the Turning Point," Columbia Journalism Review, vol. IX, no. 4 (Winter 1970-71):13.

[20]Don Stillman, "Tonkin: What Should Have Been Asked?" Columbia Journalism Review, vol. IX, no. 4 (Winter 1970-71):21.

[21]Zorthian, "Vietnam: The Media, Censorship Unacceptable," p. 54.

[22]Colonel George E. Day, "Remarks of a POW: Cracks in Society," Vietnam 10 Years Later: What Have We Learned? (Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.: Defense Information School, 1983), p. 78.

[23]Interview with Major General Charles D. Bussey, Chief of Army Public Affairs, Washington, D.C., 5 November 1985.

[24]R. W. Apple, "U.S. Said to Press Sharply for Good Vietnam Reports," New York Times, 1 January 1968, p. 1.

[25]Major General (U.S. Army, retired) Winant Sidle, "Public Affairs: Open Lines Important," Vietnam 10 Years Later: What Have We Learned? (Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.: Defense Information School, 1983), p. 85.

[26]Ibid., p. 88.

[27]Bussey, interview.

[28]Sidle, "Public Affairs: Open Lines Important," p. 88.

[29]Interview with Colonel Gary L. Werner, Commandant of the Defense Information School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, 13 November 1985.

[30]Interview with Lieutenant Colonel David R. Kiernan, Chief of Public Affairs, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 13 November 1985.

[31]"Let's Say it Right," Columbia Journalism Review, vol. IX, no. 4 (Winter 1970-71):33.

[32]Sidle, "Public Affairs: Open Lines Important," p. 89.

[33]Goulding, "A Lesson from Vietnam: The Truth is Not Enough," p. 31.

[34]Ibid., p. 32.

[35]Ibid., p. 36.

[36]Colonel Harry G. Summers, On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context (Carlisle Barracks, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1981).

[37]Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

## COVERING GRENADA: PERSPECTIVES ON THE PRESS RESTRICTIONS

On October 25, 1983, shortly after 9 o'clock in the morning, President Ronald Reagan informed reporters and the nation from the White House briefing room about the invasion of Grenada. He said, "Early this morning, forces from six Caribbean democracies and the United States began a landing or landings on the island of Grenada in the eastern Caribbean."[1]

The invasion of Grenada marked the first time since the end of the Vietnam War that the U.S. had committed its troops to combat. Many were surprised at President Reagan's action, which came only two days after the death of 229 Marines in Beirut, Lebanon.[2]

There were several precipitating events that led to the U.S. involvement in Grenada: the murder of deposed Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and members of his government, followed by the collapse of all governmental authority; violence; and the prospect for further violence. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) asked the United States, Jamaica and Barbados for help. On October 23, 1983, the United States received this formal request and agreed to assist.[3]

The Governor General of Grenada, Sir Paul Scoon, the only remaining legitimate authority on Grenada after the coup, made a confidential appeal to the OECS and the states of the region to help restore order on the island.[4]

The resulting U.S. operation was conducted by the United States

with the sole purpose of protecting the lives of 1,000 Americans who were trapped on the island after the bloody, left-wing military coup.[5] Some thirty hours later, the televised scenes of American students kissing the tarmac on their return to Charleston, South Carolina, testified to the dominant feeling among them that the President's action had been justified.[6]

In a statement given to the Armed Services Committee Hearing on the "Lessons Learned as a Result of the U.S. Military Operation in Grenada," the Honorable Fred C. Ikle, Undersecretary for Policy for the Department of Defense, called the Grenada operation a success. He was careful to explain the operation was not without its costs and the committee report outlines the figures pertaining to civilian and military casualties, equipment losses and addresses related policy issues.[7]

Following is a review of comments made during the full committee hearing on January 24, 1984. This chapter does not address whether the students evacuated were in any real danger or whether the U.S. commitment of troops was in violation of the War Powers Act. The focus is on media access.

Selections from periodicals covering the Grenada operation and information from personal interviews are also used to develop a forum. On one side of the issue are those who believe the government has a right to control information when the security of military operations is at risk. On the other side are those who believe that correspondents' access to military operations has been allowed throughout U.S. history and that their restriction during the operation in Grenada was in direct contradiction to this tradition.

Each position is developed with the supporting arguments of their respective advocates. The chapter closes with a review of media commen-

tary addressing the surprising public reaction in favor of the press ban and the sometimes vehement attacks on the press.

Government's Decision to Restrict the Press

In his report to the Committee on Armed Services, Ikle refers to the questions raised regarding access by the media during the initial days of the operation. He states that a group of fifteen reporters chosen from a pool went in two days after the operation began. This number increased immediately the following day and unrestricted access was allowed and made possible as of the fifth day.[8]

According to Ikle, access for the press was not arranged during the very first hours and days of the operation because of the short planning time and the need for secrecy. It was also decided, according to Ikle, not to burden planning and preparation efforts or to burden combat elements with the additional task of providing access for the media at the beginning of the operation.[9]

At a Pentagon press conference held eight hours after the President's October 25 announcement, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and General John Vessey Jr., then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, briefed reporters in Washington on the progress of the fighting while attempting to explain why journalists were not being allowed to observe it.[10]

The reasons cited were the necessity for complete secrecy and the military's concerns for correspondents' safety. Mr. Weinberger at the time did not speculate as to when reporters would be allowed in the area. He said, "I hope as soon as tomorrow...I wouldn't ever dream of overriding the commander's decision that he was not able to guarantee any kind of safety for anyone."[11] A pool of U.S. reporters was allowed to go to Grenada late October 27, 1983.[12]

In a statement made approximately one week later Weinberger re-emphasized that the press was not needed on Grenada during the first hours of the operation. He said that absolute secrecy was needed, "to ensure success of the mission and to prevent the Grenadian or Cuban troops from strengthening resistance or from taking students hostage."[13]

In the midst of the initial turmoil surrounding the press restriction and its implications, there was also a lot of finger-pointing as to who was responsible for the decision to keep the press out. According to the Honorable Langhorne Motley, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State, the recommendation not to include the press during the initial part of the operation originated in the senior group involving State, Office of the Secretary of Defense and the chairman's (Joint Chief's) office. The recommendation was approved by the Secretary of State including the President. It was a decision, Motley explained, limited to the initial part of the operation. Motley concludes that as a result it was, "left to a certain degree to the latitude of the on-scene commander to decide when it was safe for them to come in..."[14]

The decision to let the on-scene commander determine when it was safe to allow reporters in the area probably precipitated comments that the on-scene commander was the one responsible for the decision to keep the press out.

One of the questions concerning the decision to restrict press access was posed by Mr. Roy Dyson, representative from Maryland. Dyson asked about the quality of military intelligence concerning the mission and posed the question, "Did we send our troops in blind? If we did, is that why we didn't have the press go along with them?" "If I was Presi-

dent of the United States," Dyson continued,

> and the whole Grenada invasion (had) been a feather in our cap...image-wise...and I was an image-maker in this administration, I would want everybody from The New York Times to one of my local newspapers going in there to show what a good job we did. Were we afraid that would not happen? Is it possible we were afraid this could have bombed out on us?[15]

Ikle responded by saying the concern was not that the observations of the media might be negative. Instead he emphasized it was the very compressed reaction time to plan the operation that precluded planning for the press. Ikle explained that during World War II, a working relationship with the press had been established that could be used to implement the press pools used for the Normandy invasion. No such plans existed for this operation, and therefore the comparison, Ikle believed, was not applicable.[16]

U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz, in response to a comment that the ban overturned a U.S. tradition, said reporters now "are always against us and so they're always seeking to report something that's going to screw things up."[17] Echoing a similar sentiment, Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf, deputy commander of naval operations for surface warfare, said reporters were barred partly because "there is a lot of resentment of the press in the armed services, particularly the Army and Marine Corps."[18]

Henry E. Catto Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs from March 1981 to September 1983, in an insightful Washington Post article, agreed that the constraints of time and the need for tactical surprise made press participation in the initial launch impractical. He pointed out that the logistics of supporting a press entourage that quickly grew to be hundreds strong would have posed a problem for the military during their mop-up operations. There was also the possibility, Catto noted, that frantic Cuban or Grenadian soldiers might take a correspondent hostage.[19]

Catto made an especially salient point concerning the military's management of news. He said that the turmoil surrounding the Grenada press issue was further complicated by the "military's unwillingness to listen to its own public affairs people." One public affairs officer told Catto, "We have done more to hurt the military in the last few hours than any enemy in the last 200 years."[20]

Catto cited examples of the extremes the military took to control the press. The military buzzed small ships carrying reporters and their equipment. In another incident the Washington Post's Edward Cody, Miami Herald's Don Bohning, Newsday's Morris Thompson, and Greg Chamberlain of Britain's Guardian, made it to the island before American troops landed. They were detained onboard the U.S.S. Guam, a helicopter carrier, after accepting the U.S. military's offer for assistance in filing their dispatches.[21] Both incidents, according to Catto were "foolish."[22]

To Some, The Press Ban Was Not Necessary

Arguments against the press ban are just as plentiful. One of the issues the press felt strongly about concerned whether or not government lied about its intentions to invade Grenada. Les Janka, White House deputy press secretary for foreign affairs, resigned over this controversy. He stated his credibility had been severely damaged by the dissemination of incorrect information, which the administration acknowledges occurred repeatedly during coverage of the event.[23]

White House press spokesman Larry Speakes complained to senior White House aides saying that had he known the facts, he could have kept the secret without telling an outright lie. "I could say, I'm sorry I can't answer that question. Or, I'll check on that."[24] The latter would have been a feasible answer that Speakes could have provided had he known

more about the operation.

Credibility is one issue which often surfaces in all these arguments. It is difficult to establish a firm rule that is sure to be applicable to all future military operations. Richard Halloran of The New York Times believes part of the solution is to limit who you tell and that it may be necessary to take some media personnel into your confidence. Halloran also explains that a standard response whenever military operations are concerned may also work.

> It may be necessary to use a statement like "I cannot confirm or deny military operations before they take place." If that is a standard answer, then you haven't lied to me, you haven't misled me, you haven't told me anything I can use and you have preserved security and you've been loyal to (your) commanders and you've followed his orders.[25]

ABC Paris Bureau Chief Pierre Salinger, a former press secretary who was left in the dark about the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 by President Kennedy, said, "You can always make a deal with the press when it knows it is dealing with a national security situation."[26]

In an information vacuum, the media have only the option to turn to sources that are available. The sources for the other side of the story sometimes used during this incident were in Havana.[27] Correspondent Fred Hiatt of the Washington Post noted that when the government is unwilling to share the complete story, reporters will need to find information for their story nonetheless. They may talk to officials who,

> may have not been cleared to talk, who may or may not have grievances which render their version of an event suspect... but if you are not permitted to get a balanced version of events then those with grievances are likely to be heard loudest.[28]

Whether it's grievances or propaganda, each results in the same -- the distortion of the news -- and the American public suffers.

Advocates of the press ban emphasized that the press was allowed to

view the operation late on day two. Other reports indicate, however, that the first visits were not as "free" as some have indicated. News executives felt that they had got what one of those reporters, ABC correspondent Richard Threlkeld, called, "a worm's-eye view, just a little segment of what was going on."[29]

Thomas Griffith wrote in Time magazine that one of the "sadder aspects" of the Grenada invasion was "the hostility of this country's highest brass toward the press." Griffith believes the military took the British concept employed during the Falklands Islands too far. The British government was able to delay news coverage and hold back pictures, but at least reporters were there. Griffith notes that because of the press ban, the United States has no such independent record.[30]

Griffith supports the press pool concept and believes representatives from the media should have been selected, briefed and told of the necessary constraints. These constraints, Griffith states, would have been honored. Griffith emphasizes that maybe the lessons of previous wars still need to be learned. "The U.S. got off to a wrong start by trying to shut off the facts. If we are lucky, perhaps this is one post-Vietnam lesson we have now learned."[31]

## Public Response to the Press Ban

The public's support for the press ban gave the Reagan administration a boost at a critical time. It also caused some media analysts to ponder why this was so. Letters to the networks and newspapers reflected this government support. NBC commentator John Chancellor believed the restriction may have been imposed for political reasons. He pointed out, however, that letters sent to NBC ran 10 to 1 in favor of the press restriction.[32] A Gallup Report poll published December 1983 showed that

during the period of November 18-21, 1983, fifty-nine percent of the nation "approved of the way President Reagan was handling the problem... the situation in Grenada."[33] Numerous articles talked about the majority of readers who expressed an almost gleeful attitude in telling the press they "finally got theirs." A minority emphasized the danger in the censorship the press ban represented.

Media responses are equally varied. Some analysts tried to tell readers why they were wrong in supporting the press ban. They seemed to accuse the reader of being ignorant for supporting such a position. Others were more reflective and introspective about the problems affecting journalists today. Instead of attacking those who did not support them, they looked for the possible reasons as to what unleashed the public apathy to their plight. Following is a look at some of the critics' responses to the press ban.

David Broder, in an article in The Los Angeles Times, strongly opposed the press ban and was disheartened by the public's support of it. He said there were several reasons why such support was misplaced -- the first being that government control of information gives government control of its citizens' minds. Although the author acknowledged that the public had some valid complaints against the press, none of the problems were as dangerous as control of information for, as he noted, "a monopoly of information is the most dangerous monopoly of all."[34]

Lou Cannon, of the Washington Post, said that the hostility of the press to some administration officials is misdirected. Cannon thinks the Reagan administration succumbed to the paranoia that hurt previous presidents, most notably former President Richard Nixon. It was this paranoia that led to the secrets and wiretaps of what became Watergate.[35]

Drew Middleton, in an extensive article for The New York Times Magazine, said there was little doubt in the minds of experienced observers that post-Vietnam military attitudes influenced the decision to shut the media out of the early stages of the Grenada operation. He said, "The majors and commanders of the Vietnam War who believed the media had worked against the American command there had become influential generals and admirals determined not to expose the Grenada operation to what they continue to view as a hostile adversary."[36]

Middleton also supports the position that the military is not entirely to blame for the exclusion of the media. "It was James A. Baker, then White House Chief of Staff, who accepted on behalf of the President restrictions imposed by the military on the media."[37]

Another reason for the exclusion was that new techniques, involving special military forces, were to be employed in the invasion. According to knowledgeable observers, these new techniques were not evident.[38] Middleton explained that the dispute over the press ban has far-reaching implications.

> Operations today -- whether in Grenada, Lebanon, or the Falklands -- all have the potential to quickly expand to a conventional conflict of a much larger and deadly scale. The present tendency to muzzle the media is dangerous. Democracies only win wars when they have popular support. That support can only come from an informed public. If there is censorship, then let it be flexible enough to tell the bad with the good. If correspondents are killed, so be it. A lot of good men will die. These are dangerous times. Only an informed America will weather them.[39]

The Reagan administration has been previously criticized for wanting to control information about government activities. To the administration's detriment there are several actions that support these accusations. The McCarran-Walter Act passed during the "McCarthy" period in 1952 was used by the administration to ban controversial foreign speakers from

visiting this country. Banned individuals have included Nobel Prize-winning authors, anti-nuclear advocates, politicians and scholars.[40]

The administration's efforts have also been directed towards keeping people in. The U.S. Information Agency, according to one author, since 1981 has covertly compiled a blacklist of people deemed unfit to represent the United States in an overseas speakers' program. Among those on the list are Walter Cronkite and Ralph Nader.[41]

By executive order, President Reagan changed the guidelines for the classification of information so that almost anything can be labeled top-secret if the administration does not want to divulge it. Through changes in the Freedom of Information Act guidelines, the Justice Department made it possible to restrict the flow of information by charging large sums of money for processing requests for information. The exclusion of the press from Grenada is seen, therefore, as one more step in the direction of an information lockup, which seems to be the policy of the Reagan administration.[42]

Floyd Abrams is quoted in Vital Speeches as saying that these attacks on the press are not reflective of a conspiracy. He doubted, unlike the previous writer, that there was a declared or thought-out policy to this effect. He believed, however, because there is no formal guideline concerning the withholding information, that these actions are more threatening. They reflect a shared view -- the suppression of information -- a perception which is bound to lead to similar actions.[43]

In a related Washington Post article, Catto explained that the costs of excluding the press outweigh the advantages of having them. The press informs the people of how their soldiers' lives and their nation's resources are being spent. For this reason, they are a necessary presence

in any operation. Catto said that the move in Grenada carried far-reaching political implications for the Reagan administration. "It is unfortunate," according to Catto, "that the administration alienated a force that must report and interpret this farsighted action." Catto believes this country is well-served by its military, but he is quick to point out that he wants "them to be our country's defenders, not the filters of our information."[44]

The most convincing arguments in the midst of the controversy, however, were those that did not try to place the blame on people or institutions. They looked instead at the issues beneath the surface of public outrage. These analysts saw that there has been a continuous flow of indicators of the public's discontent with the media of the 1980s. Their support of the press ban should not have been a surprise. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution said, "Rather than mounting a constitutional soapbox the press might better spend its time contemplating why it was not informed and invited."[45]

First of all, people are tired of intrusions on their privacy when no apparent public good is served. Clurman, chairman of the board of Media and Society Seminars (a program of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism), wrote in The New York Times that some people are appalled by the sight of swarming newsmen. A recent example was provided when some of the grief-stricken families of the Marines killed in Beirut, were pressed to explain how they felt after the death of their sons.[46]

Liz Trotta of CBS said, "Vietnam was a real war for real correspondents. This is ridiculous to see the press becoming part of the main story. Why should anyone expect the U.S. military to take 400 reporters with them on an invasion?"[47]

Fred Bruning, a Newsday writer, acknowledged that at least since

Vietnam, government and media relations have been strained and sometimes hostile. Although he acknowledged that the public may have cause to distrust the press, he seemed to imply that it was the public's desire not to hear "bad news" that resulted in their support of the press ban. It is the business of journalism, according to Bruning, "to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. The worry was and is that reporters will operate to capacity and get the bad news into print...." Bruning implied that the public is not educated sufficiently to realize that learning about the bad news is necessary for an effective demographic government.[48]

One critic of Bruning's position, Barbara Amiel, responded with skepticism. She agreed that the reporting of bad news is necessary, but said there is one key question to ask.

> ...what if the media is on the grip of a fashion in which the press confuses the afflicted with the comfortable? What if it confuses the victim with the enemy?...What if it misidentifies issues and goes with some consistency against the perceptions and common sense of a majority of people in the country?[49]

Amiel explains that the American people are tired of advocacy for advocacy's sake and "started to look at the press as one that was gratuitously opposed to their hopes, values and traditions." Amiel says the public's "gotcha" attitude towards the media's exclusion in Grenada was understandable in light of these trends, but it is also a dangerous reaction. It is precisely because the press has the important responsibility of reporting the bad news as well as the good, Amiel explains, that it must also report with intelligence "and responsible enough not to be caught up in whatever fashion is blowing in the wind."[50]

Gale E. Klappa, speaking at West Georgia College, reviewed the anti-media backlash and suggested there were ways to restore the public's

respect toward the media. Klappa believes the 1970s were the heyday of modern journalism. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the Pentagon Papers and Watergate, the press was enjoying coming through a period unscathed while government institutions and American values were being questioned and "rocked" from their foundations. Klappa says the decline for the press from this point was gradual. The first questioning came from the coverage of Three-Mile Island where a presidential commission faulted the news media for generally poor coverage of the event.[51]

Other mishaps contributed to the decline. In 1981 Janet Cooke had to return the Pulitzer Prize because the story that won her the prize was a fabrication.[52] A similar incident, involving plagiarism happened to a New York Times reporter.[53] The decline continued. More recently television has been the target of criticism concerning invasions of privacy. Television was accused of intruding beyond the scope of reporting during coverage of the Beirut Massacre, during the bombing of the two Japanese airliners and every time the public was forced to witness first-hand the grief of "survivors." George Will called it the "pornagraphy of grief."

Klappa does not think the media have gotten the message yet, however, and that the swing of anti-media backlash will continue for several years. The trend in media suits is one example. Media takeover attempts provide another, and the exclusion of the press from Grenada is just a continuation of the expression of skepticism towards the press's ability to report the facts.[54]

Klappa says claiming the public is ignorant and developing public relations campaigns to remedy the problem is not the answer. Instead reporters must learn the intricacies of their beat -- learn their subject. It is also necessary to get back to the facts, to the basics of reporting.

"The public has grown tired of interpretive journalism," Klappa said, and "with superstar media celebrities. We need journalists with a sense of perspective -- journalists who can tell a real front page story from a back page filler."[55] Reporters also need to admit mistakes in "headlines that are just as dramatic as the original story."[56] And, finally, Klappa also reminded listeners of the importance of reporting the good news, too. Americans are tired of negativism in the news. "In recent years the news media appear to have inverted the saying -- No news is good news. They've made it read -- Good news is no news."[57]

It is possible that "compressed" operational planning was a major reason that press planning requirements did not receive adequate attention prior to the Grenada operation. It appears, however, that no effort was made to address the public affairs coordination following the invasion. There was no evident planning to address how the press would cover this event, nor was there evidence that the implications of a press ban were considered. Instead, the military response to press demands seemed exactly that -- a reaction to events that should have been foreseen.

The military's fumbling of press relations in Grenada is especially surprising in light of the tremendous amount of literature that addresses the "lessons learned" in Vietnam. In response to internal studies on military media relations, emphasis in military senior service colleges and information schools was on the importance of "good press relations." It is baffling how in the midst of such progressive efforts and such excellent literature in the field, such as Summer's On Strategy, how the military could do an about-face.

Another aspect of the Grenada issue is the public reaction in favor of the press ban. It surprised some, and it elated government officials

who could then along with the public point to the press and say "gotcha." The reaction caused some media analysts to castigate the public for such short-sighted views. It caused others to reflect on its past performance. A review of the performance and of the exploitative methods of some media, especially television, showed that perhaps that was not all that was exploited. The American public seemed to say in the aftermath of Grenada that finally the press "got theirs."

More deliberate reflection on the implications of the Grenada press ban seemed to point out several things. The military's restrictions were uncalled for if the sole reason was for the purpose of guaranteeing correspondents' safety. If, however, logistical requirements, such as limited transportation, precluded unlimited access then alternative plans should have been worked out. If mission security was vital, the military should have addressed, during operational planning, how correspondents would be informed and how their eventual access to the operation would be implemented. Instead the record shows a very lackadaisical approach being taken by the military towards public affairs considerations.

The Grenada press relations fiasco did serve a purpose. It served to uncover some serious faults in how the military incorporates public affairs planning into its operational planning. It uncovered some latent hostilities, beyond healthy antagonisms, in media-military relations. Most important, however, is that Grenada served as a catalyst. It gave the military and the media a push away from complacent, and not totally effective, adversarial behavior and has caused both to re-evaluate their roles and functions.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Ed Magnuson, "D-Day in Grenada," Time, vol. 122, no. 20, 7 November 1983, p. 28.

[2]Ibid., p. 22.

[3]Full Committee Hearing on the Lessons Learned as a Result of the U.S. Military Operation in Grenada. Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, Ninety-eighth Congress, Second Session, January 24, 1984, Document 983-84/43 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), p. 1.

[4]Ibid., p. 2.

[5]Magnuson, "D-Day in Grenada," p. 22.

[6]Ibid., p. 28.

[7]Full Committee Hearing, p. 2.

[8]Ibid., p. 3.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Magnuson, "D-Day in Grenada," p. 65.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Facts on File (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1983), p. 811.

[13]Caspar W. Weinberger, "No: Secrecy Was Needed for Citizens' Safety," Los Angeles Times, vol. 102, 13 November 1983, p. 1.

[14]Full Committee Hearing, p. 20.

[15]Ibid., p. 34.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Facts on File, p. 944.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Henry E. Catto, Jr., "Dateline Grenada: Media and Military Go At It," The Washington Post, vol. 106, 30 October 1983, p. C7.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Janice Castro, "Keeping the Press from the Action," Time, vol. 122, no. 20, 7 November 1983, p. 65.

[22]Catto, "Dateline Grenada: Media and Military Go At It."

[23]Facts on File, p. 830.

[24]Castro, "Keeping the Press from the Action," p. 65.

[25]Interview with Richard Halloran, Washington correspondent, The New York Times, Washington, D.C., 1 November 1985.

[26]Castro, "Keeping the Press from the Action."

[27]"The Hush is In," The Nation, vol. 237, no. 15, 12 November 1983, p. 452-3.

[28]Interview with Fred Hiatt, Washington correspondent, The Washington Post, Washington, D.C., 28 October 1985.

[29]Castro, "Keeping the Press from the Action."

[30]Thomas Griffith, "Newswatch," Time, vol. 122, no. 21, 14 November 1983, p. 76.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Castro, "Keeping the Press from the Action," p. 73.

[33]"Reagan's Handling of the Situation in Grenada," Gallup Report, Report No. 219 (December 1983), p. 29.

[34]David S. Broder, "Muzzled Press: Why Should Public Care?" Los Angeles Times, vol. 102, 7 November 1983, p. 5.

[35]Lou Cannon, "Media Choose Wrong Target in Hitting Subordinates," The Washington Post, vol. 106, 7 November 1983, p. A3.

[36]Drew Middleton, "Barring Reporters from the Battlefield," New York Times Magazine, 5 February 1984, p. 37.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Lois P. Sheinfeld, "Washington vs. The Right to Know," The Nation, vol. 240, no. 14, 13 April 1985, p. 426.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Floyd Abrams, "Will the First Amendment Survive the 1980's," Vital Speeches, vol. 51, no. 13, 25 March 1985, p. 412.

[44]Catto, "Dateline Grenada: Media and Military Go At It."

[45]Otto Friedich, "Anybody Want to Go to Grenada," Time, vol. 122, no. 21, 14 November 1983, p. 73.

[46]Richard M. Clurman, "The Media Learn a Lesson," New York Times, vol. 133, 2 December 1983, p. A27.

[47]Friedich, "Anybody Want to Go to Grenada," p. 73.

[48]Fred Bruning, "Why People Distrust the Press," MacCleans, vol. 97, 16 January 1984, p. 9.

[49]Barbara Ami l, "A Question of Press Credibility," MacCleans, vol. 97, 20 February 1984, p. 13.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Gale E. Klappa, "Journalism and the Anti-Media Backlash," Vital Speeches, vol. 51, no. 12, April 1985, p. 377.

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[57]Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

## THE SIDLE COMMISSION

There was one positive result from the media and military turmoil and conflict surrounding the Grenada operation. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) General John W. Vessey Jr. appointed a panel of officers and journalists in November 1983, called the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Media-Military Relations Panel, to review the news restrictions imposed in the initial days of the Grenada invasion. The panel was given the mission of proposing written guidelines for press coverage of future military actions.[1]

The 14-member panel was chaired by retired Army Major General Winant Sidle. General Sidle was Chief of Information for the military command in Vietnam and is presently director of public relations for the Martin Marietta Corporation.

The panel was more commonly called the Sidle Panel. The CJCS initially invited major umbrella media organizations and Department of Defense (DOD) organizations to provide members for this panel. Although the major news organizations agreed to cooperate fully with the panel, they chose not to provide members. The reason given was that it was inappropriate for media members to serve on a government panel as conflicts of interest could arise.[2] The CJCS acknowledged the media's position and invited instead media representatives who were retired or in academic fields.

The military members chosen represented the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OJCS), the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs (ASD, PA) and each of the four military services. The panel members, as identified by the Sidle Panel report, were:[3]

1. Captian Brent Baker, United States Navy, Assistant Chief of Information (Operations), Department of the Navy.

2. Keyes Beech Baker, retired war correspondent, bureau chief and Pulitzer Prize winner.

3. Scott M. Cutlip, former Dean, Henry W. Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia.

4. John T. Halbert, Assistant Director of Public Affairs, Department of the Air Force.

5. Billy Hunt, Chief Plans Officer, Office, Chief of Public Affairs, Department of Army.

6. Colonel George Kirschenbauer, United States Army, J-3 Office, OJCS.

7. A. J. (Jack) Langguth, Professor of Journalism and Chairman of Print Classes, University of Southern California School of Journalism; retired war correspondent and bureau chief.

8. Major Fred C. Lash, USMC, Chief, Media Branch, Office, Director of Public Affairs, United States Marine Corps.

9. Captain James Major, USN, J-3 Office, OJCS.

10. Wendell S. (Bud) Merick, retired war correspondent and bureau chief.

11. Colonel Robert O'Brien, United States Air Force, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs).

12. Richard S. Salant, President and CEO, National News Council, former Vice President, News, Columbia Broadcasting System.

13. Barry Zorthian, Senior Vice President, Gray and Co.; former Vice President, Time Inc., and Chief, Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office, Saigon.

The panel held public hearings February 6-9, 1984, to discuss the access of journalists to U.S. combat zones. During twenty-one hours of open session meetings the panel heard twenty-eight news media leaders from eighteen major news organizations. They also heard from the top public

affairs officers of the different services.[4]

Written comments from twenty-four news organizations also provided input to the panel's study.[5] Prior to assembling the panel, a questionnaire was mailed to all participants. It was also sent to organizations and individuals who had expressed interest in the subject and to experts on the topic.[6] In the questionnaire respondents were asked what kinds of operations they thought they were entitled to cover and how the coverage might be structured.[7] Responses from these questionnaires provided some of the written comments the panel reviewed.

In all, there were three days for media and military presentations in open session and two days for panel study and deliberation in closed session. The President of the National Defense University at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., was host for the group.[8]

## The Panel Hearings

At the same time that professional media personnel decided not to participate in the panel they issued a statement addressing press access to military operations. Representatives of ten media organizations prepared a position paper to be presented to the Sidle Panel. The group was headed by William C. Marcel, publisher of the Forum of Fargo, North Dakota, who was president of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, and Creed C. Black, publisher of The Lexington (Kentucky) Herald-Leader, who is president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.[9]

The group asked Congress to investigate the handling of the Grenada incident, pushed for policy that would allow both the military and the media to meet their objectives, and requested official affirmation of "the historic principle that American journalists, print and broadcast, should be present at U.S. military operations."[10] The media's statement

says that, "When essential, both groups can agree on coverage conditions which satisfy safety and security imperatives while in keeping with the spirit of the First Amendment, permitting independent reporting to the citizens of our free and open society to whom our government is ultimately accountable."[11] Black told the opening session that he was "glad to see your mission is to see how the press can be accommodated, not if."[12]

William Leonard, former president of CBS News and spokesman for the National Association of Broadcasters, warned against establishing inflexible rules.[13] Seymour Topping, then managing editor of The New York Times, and Benjamin C. Bradlee, Washington Post executive editor, agreed that "pre-Grenada rules" worked well. Both Bradlee and Topping urged flexibility in establishing strict guidelines because, "the what if's of national security are endless," and the "situations which could occur are so diverse."[14]

Another speaker John Seigenthaler, reminded the panel that "history demonstrates that the American press can keep secrets, honor justifiable news embargoes and help protect the safety of our troops." Seigenthaler, publisher of the Nashville Tennessean and editorial director of USA Today, was spokesman for the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi.[15]

Seigenthaler also supported the idea of a press pool as did another speaker before the panel, Major General Lyle J. Barker Jr., the Army's Chief of Public Affairs at the time.[16] In a "pool," a group of reporters is chosen to cover an action. They then make their notes available to reporters who are unable to go along. Colonel O'Brien, was the panel member who suggested a national rotating "pool." In this pool, several news organizations would be identified in advance for "preset periods of

time."[17]

General Barker also suggested the training of journalists by the military to enable them to enter the war zone prepared.[18] One of the criticisms of Vietnam War reporting was that some correspondents had no knowledge about the military as an organization or with the language necessary to describe its elements and weapons systems. As a result, it may have been difficult for these correspondents to understand the sensitive nature of some information that could unwittingly give away tactical and strategic plans. Consequently, it would have been more difficult for the less knowledgeable reporters to judge whether the information they were reporting would give "aid and comfort to the enemy."

Panel Recommendations

General Sidle explained that the panel was convened to make recommendations regarding the question: "How do we conduct military operations in a manner that safeguards the lives of our military and protects the security of a military operation while keeping the American public informed through the news media?"[19]

When submitting his report to the CJCS, General Sidle told General Vessey that there were three areas the panel did not address. First was the matter of First Amendment rights. The panel felt this was an area best left to the legal profession and the courts.[20] Neither did the panel attempt to provide an assessment of media handling at Grenada.

The final issue concerned the matter of responsibility of the media. Sidle explained that although this was not discussed in the report, those representing news organizations before the panel fully understood their responsibilities. Sidle says the comments of one speaker summarized this commitment: "The media must cover military operations comprehensively,

intelligently, and objectively."[21] Sidle went on to say:

> The American people deserve news coverage of this quality and nothing less. It goes without saying, of course, that the military also has a concurrent responsibility, that of making it possible for the media to provide such coverage.[22]

In the following section, each of the recommendations of the Sidle Commission is shown verbatim as it appeared in the report in insure clarity and to avoid misinterpretation. The panel also provided comments after each of the recommendations. These comments addressed subject areas on which the panel could not reach a consensus. They also explained the intentions of the panel in formulating the recommendation. These comments have been edited to provide the ideas central to each one.

Recommendation 1:

That public affairs planning for military operations be conducted concurrently with operational planning. This can be assured in the great majority of cases by implementing the following:

a. Review all joint planning documents to assure that JCS guidance in public affairs matters is adequate.

b. When sending implementing orders to Commanders in Chief in the field, direct CINC planners to include consideration of public information aspects.

c. Inform the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) of an impending military operation at the earliest possible time. This information should appropriately come from the Secretary of Defense.

d. Complete the plan, currently being studied, to include a public affairs planning cell in OJCS to help ensure adequate public affairs review of CINC plans.

e. Insofar as possible and appropriate, institutionalize these steps in written guidance or policy.

In their comments the panel explained that this first recommendation was designed to address the need for mandatory public affairs planning. It asks that planning for military operations include planning for public affairs requirements as well as operational requirements. The panel

designed recommendations la, b, and d, to insure that a review of public affairs requirements occurs at every appropriate level. At the time the Grenada operation was planned and up to the time the Sidle Commission was meeting, provisions existed to include public affairs planning, but it was "neither mandatory nor certain that joint planning documents adequately covered these requirements."[23]

The panel acknowledged the difficulty in trying to determine all cases in which public affairs planning should be included. They emphasized instead the need to review public affairs needs of each operational mission. "Strictly covert operations will require, for example, public affairs consideration if only to be sure that after-action coverage adequately fulfills the obligation to inform the American people."[24]

One issue of major concern for military public affairs officers concerned how commanders relate to their PAOs. According to the panel there were indications that some commanders take the position that telling something to his public affairs officer is tantamount to telling it to the media."[25]

Sidle noted that "many Army personnel -- active, reserve and particularly retired -- say the press cannot be trusted."[26] All members of the panel "decried this tendency." They pointed out that "public affairs officers are just as dedicated to maintaining military security as are operations officers and must know what is going on in a command if they are to do their job."[27]

A similar argument surfaced when White House spokesmen Larry Speakes and Les Janka were faced with explaining the Grenada operation they had hours before denied. The evidence stacks up in favor of informing the public affairs officer. There is no doubt on the part of these officers,

both those in uniform and out, that a well informed spokesperson is the command's most effective public affairs tool. Sidle explained:

> The fact is that in the United States the main source of information for the public is the news media. If the military wants to tell its story to the American public, it must do so primarily through the press.[28]

Recommendation 2:

> When it is apparent during military operational planning that news media pooling provides the only feasible means of furnishing the media with early access to an operation, planning should provide for the largest possible press pool that is practical and minimize the length of time the pool will be necessary before "full coverage" is feasible.

This recommendation reflects the essence of the commission's report. Comments were extensively developed to explain the reasons for this recommendation. Media representatives appearing before the panel opposed pools in general, but agreed that they were acceptable if necessary for early access. The media members across the board agreed that pools should be terminated as soon as possible and "full coverage" allowed.[29]

"Full coverage" was determined to be a relative term, and some agreed that there may be instances where not all bona fide reporters could cover an event. Colonel Gary Werner, commandant of the Defense Information School, agreed. Colonel Werner explained that logistical, security and operational requirements of certain operations may prevent unrestricted access even after press restrictions are lifted. He emphasized the importance of calculating all requirements in order to predict the impact of opening up an event to more reporters. This is especially true in those instances where the military remains responsible for providing transportation, communication and other support requirements for the press.[30]

Another area of contention among media and military representatives

concerned the timing of pool notification. Some panel members believed that pool notification should be delayed until the first military personnel have reached the initial objectives, as an absolute guarantee for mission security. Media members generally did not agree with this position. The panel did not reach a consensus on this position, but agreed that if the military carefully planned transportation and used correspondents located near the scene, they could probably ensure that media access requirements are satisfied.[31]

Although media representatives did not agree on when pool members should be notified, all agreed that the media should be allowed access as soon as feasible. Panel members recognized that in many areas of the world the military will encounter a press presence regardless of the decision made concerning pool coverage. This is another consideration that needs to be addressed during the initial public affairs planning.[32]

Neither the media nor the military panel members agreed on whether full-time media employees, who are not U.S. citizens, should be used in a pool. The panel suggested this issue be addressed case-by-case because public affairs experiences in Vietnam provided examples where such employees were reliable.[33]

Another area of discussion concerned the process used to select the pool. The media representatives generally agreed that Department of Defense (DOD) should select organizations to form the pool, while the news organizations remain responsible for selecting specific correspondents.[34] The panel did not reach a total consensus as to what news organizations should make up the pool. All agreed an important criterion was selecting an organization with the largest American audience. Panel members also agreed that DOD should consider the following when making

the pool selection:[35]

1. The Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) were to have priority among the wire services. In cases requiring immediate action and smaller pool representation, a photographer from one and a reporter from the other could provide a two-person tool.[36]

2. For television, at least a two-person pool (one correspondent and one film/sound person) could do the job, although minimally, for a short time. It was generally agreed that a larger team is better and that TV pool representatives must have a high priority. The question of radio participation was not resolved at this time.[37]

3. For news magazines, one reporter and one color photographer would suffice. For daily newspapers at least one reporter is necessary. Although newspapers use wire service reports and photographs, it was agreed a newspaper pooler was "needed for the special aspects of newspaper coverage..."[38] Circulation of the paper, whether the newspaper has a news service, whether the paper specializes in military and foreign affairs, and whether it covers the Pentagon regularly were identified as important factors to be considered in selecting the newspaper reporter.[39]

Finally, in preparing this recommendation the panel addressed one of the issues that surfaced when the press was restricted from immediate access to the Grenada operation. Media representatives "emphasized the readiness of correspondents to accept, as in the past, the physical dangers inherent in military operations and agreed that the personal security of correspondents should not be a factor in planning media participation in military operations."[40]

Recommendation 3:

That, in connection with the use of pools, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend to the Secretary of Defense that he study the matter of whether to use a pre-established and constantly updated accreditation or notification list of correspondents in case of a military operation for which a pool is required or the establishment of a news agency list for use in the same circumstances.

There was no agreement among those who appeared before the panel nor among panel members as to which option to use. The panel envisioned, however, that DOD would select the agency, while the agency selects the individual or individuals to be its representative in the pool. This was the favored option. The panel could not agree on whether DOD should also approve the individuals named to be pool members. Media representatives were against such approval. Other panel members, however, believed in the case of an extremely sensitive operation, DOD should have such authority.[41]

Recommendation 4:

That a basic tenet governing media access to military operations should be voluntary compliance by the media with security guidelines or ground rules established and issued by the military. These rules should be as few as possible and should be worked out during the planning process for each operation. Violations would mean exclusion of the correspondent(s) concerned from further coverage of the operation.

Media representatives agreed to the use and support of ground rules as opposed to formal censorship of any type. It was agreed that ground rules used in Vietnam will provide a starting point, but, that public affairs officers must weigh each situation for its unique requirements.[42] "All media representatives who addressed the issue agreed that the (use of) ground rules worked out satisfactorily in Vietnam."[43]

Recommendation 5:

Public affairs planning for military operations should include sufficient equipment and qualified military personnel whose function is to assist correspondents in covering the operation adequately.[44]

This recommendation is designed to provide personnel who, "acting as agents of the on-scene commander, will keep correspondents abreast of the situation, arrange for interviews and briefings, arrange for transportation, ensure they are housed and fed if necessary, and be as helpful as possible consistent with security and troop safety."[45]

Media representatives agreed that escort assistance was generally more necessary in the beginning of an operation than later. They also agreed that although escorts should not try to direct, censor or slant coverage they would be helpful in identifying possible ground rule violations or security problems. The panel concluded that the on-scene commander will decide how long escorting should continue after an operation begins.[46]

Recommendation 6:

Planners should carefully consider media communications requirements to assure the earliest feasible availability. However, these communications must not interfere with combat and combat support operations. If necessary and feasible, plans should include communications facilities dedicated to the news media.[47]

Media representatives unanimously preferred establishing their own communications. They agreed however, that if none exist, access to military communications was necessary, especially in opening stages of an operation. The panel was in agreement that "permitting media coverage without providing some sort of filing capability does not make sense unless an embargo is in force."[48]

The panel briefly discussed the impact of communications availability on press pool size and on the deadline requirements of the different types of media. For example, magazine reporters usually have more time to file making courier service a possible solution to filing requirements.[49]

Recommendation 7:

Planning factors should include provision for intra- and inter-theater transportation support of the media.[50]

The panel did not provide additional comments on this recommendation. The final recommendation of the Sidle Commission was perhaps the most far-reaching. It addressed the most difficult issue -- that of media and military relations. Instead of talking about procedures or systems, such as press pools or communication facilities, it tackled this amorphous subject. The panel outlined several hard hitting recommendations aimed at making the possibility of "improved relations" more than something that happens on paper.

Recommendation 8:

To improve media-military understanding and cooperation:

a. CJCS should recommend to the Secretary of Defense that a program be undertaken by ASD(PA) for top military public affairs representatives to meet with news organization leadership, to include meetings with individual news organizations, on a reasonably regular basis to discuss mutual problems, including relationships with the media during military operations and exercises. This program should begin as soon as possible.

b. Enlarge programs already underway to improve military understanding of the media via public affairs instruction in service schools, to include media participation when possible.

c. Seek improved media understanding of the military through more visits by commanders and line officers to news organizations.

d. CJCS should recommend that the Secretary of Defense host at an early date a working meeting with representatives of the broadcast media to explore the special problems of ensuring military security when and if there is real-time or near real-time news media audiovisual coverage of a

battlefield and, if special problems exist, how they can best be dealt with consistent with the basic principle set forth at the beginning of this section of the report.[51]

The panel "was convinced" of the usefulness of meetings between media and military representatives to identify and discuss their problems. They acknowledged that it had been done on occasion in the past, but that there was a need for more. The panel envisioned that the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs or his representatives would meet with the "senior leadership of both media umbrella organizations and individual major news organizations."[52] The panel recommended that commanders in the field implement similar meetings with local and regional media in their areas.[53]

In addressing the need for more instruction in the military service schools, the panel emphasized the need for military personnel to gain more exposure to the media earlier in their careers. Both the panel and the media representatives "lauded" the efforts underway today to incorporate useful public affairs instruction in service schools and colleges.

The panel noted that "many officers are sheltered from becoming involved with the news media until they are promoted to certain assignments where they suddenly come face-to-face with the media. If they have not been adequately informed in advance of the mutual (need for)...each other, they sometimes tend to make inadequate decisions concerning media matters." In this respect, "several media representatives told the panel they would be, and in some cases have already been, delighted to cooperate in this process by talking to classes and seminars."[54]

Media representatives were equally enthusiastic about making an effort to familiarize their employees with the military. This could be accomplished by visits of commanders and/or the appropriate people to

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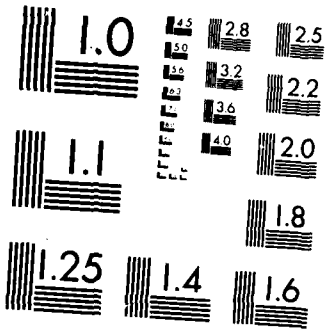


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newspaper organizations. "It was also apparent that some media are concerned with this problem to the point that they are taking an introspective look at their relations not only with the military but with other institutions."[55]

Before closing the hearings the panel made known that the OJCS had adopted procedures to plan for the press during combat operations. The procedures were formed to reflect guidance from Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger. Weinberger directed that military officers make information "fully and readily available to the press, public and Congress. Information may only be withheld," according to the directive, "when disclosure would adversely affect national security or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces."[56]

Publication of the Report and Responses from the Media

The Defense Department released the findings of the Sidle Panel on August 23, 1984. In a statement for the press, Weinberger directed implementation of those portions of the final report that meet the panel's criterion of providing maximum news media coverage of U.S. military operations "consistent with military security and the safety of U.S. forces."[57]

"Those portions" does not mean to imply that there are parts of the report subject to negotiation. Michael I. Burch, then Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs explained in a press conference the same day that the Sidle Panel had made recommendations for implementation that fell outside the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs area of responsibility. For example, actions concerning the type of equipment public affairs officers in the field need falls outside the ASD(PA)'s area of responsibility and would be the responsibility of another agency

to coordinate.

In commenting on the just-released report, Weinberger said he was in general support of the findings, but stressed that the degree of future media access would depend on the nature of the operations and that final authority would rest with Pentagon civilian officials and military officers.[58]

The Sidle Panel report received mixed reviews upon its release. Some believed it was a positive effort by the military to improve media-military relations. Others say that some of the wording in the report allowed too much discretion to the on-scene commanders and the results of such leniency would be another Grenada.

In a hard-hitting editorial, the Washington Post echoed some of these fears. The panel recommendation to insure the military considers the press when planning operations is the same mistake, according to the Post, Mr. Weinberger made in Grenada,..."he let the military make the rules." This is a grave mistake, according to the Post, because, "The military will always be tugged toward imposing restrictions of the sort that the Pentagon is already imposing in the guise of post-Grenada reform." The Post strongly advocated public involvement in the issue of press access.

> The public's timely and full knowledge of military operations is a civilian responsibility, not to be lightly handed off even to military officers much more warmly inclined toward the media than were the commanders at Grenada. Press coverage is a political question, not an operational one. That is the distinction that cries out to be restored.[59]

In a separate article, The New York Times voiced similar fears, albeit not as dramatically. There was some concern among journalists, according to Charles Mohr of the Times, over the selection of journalists, the determination of pool access, the use of press escorts, and over facilities for journalists. Mohr noted, however, that according to Colonel

O'Brien, a panel member and deputy ASD(PA), there would be no attempts by DOD to exclude any journalist nominated by a news agency except in the case of physical disability.

Another area of concern to some reporters was the reference by Burch in the report to instances when access would have to be decided on a "case-by-case" basis. As mentioned in the Washington Post article, there was some fear that this would give the military too much flexibility and would again result in the exclusion of reporters.

Referring to the question of facilities for journalists, Mohr cautioned the military against using this as an excuse to exclude the press. They were reminded that in Vietnam transportation, lodging and other support activities had not been a problem. In closing, Mohr said there was doubt as to the need to use escort officers. They acknowledged that although sometimes they are helpful, "for the most part correspondents have found them a hindrance to news gathering."[60]

By October of the same year the Pentagon had calmed at least one of these fears. Pentagon and media representatives agreed on a plan that called for the formation of an 11-member core group or pool of correspondents.[61] The pool members would be selected by their own agencies.

The television industry was represented most heavily in the pool. Each major network (ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN) was represented, and a film and sound crew of two people would serve all four networks. The Associated Press and United Press International would supply one correspondent each. One correspondent would represent the three national news magazines of Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News and World Report. One photographer from an unspecified organization and one correspondent from an unspecified radio network would complete the pool.[62]

The proposed pool immediately met opposition from the daily newspaper industry, which was not represented by even one reporter in the pool.[63] The Pentagon quickly gave in to media pressure, however, and agreed to add a daily newspaper correspondent to its proposed pool.[64]

Another issue raised by the process of trying to establish a pool and the procedures for its operation concerned the use of ground rules. According to Richard Harwood of the Washington Post, the existing rules were more akin to heavy-handed censorship than they are to a moderate form of restriction on certain types of information. Harwood noted that according to the ground rules, accredited correspondents "are prohibited from transmitting any military information unless officially released by the U.S. friendly forces commanders or their representatives.[65]

According to Harwood, certain types of information were "not releasable under any circumstances." This prohibition included references to,

> future military plans or operation; information on any "vulnerabilities, weaknesses or shortfalls in American units; information on in-progress operations against hostile targets," and information on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of enemy tactics or operations.[66]

In spite of all efforts, it appears that press presence is still only very conditionally guaranteed, at best. According to Harwood, the directive from the Pentagon suggests that creation of a national pool, "does not ensure its deployment with U.S. Forces going into action."[67] Two conditions have to be met. First, the host country has to accept the presence of the news media. Second, the use of the pool must be approved by the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commander of the operation, each of whom presumably, Harwood explains, has veto power.[68]

The fears addressed are worth noting if only for the following

reason. The military was able to methodically address some of the problems concerning military and media relations that seemed to explode in the aftermath of Grenada. The Sidle Panel report, the product of this review process, made several recommendations that can realistically be implemented according to some. There are fears, however, which remained for those on both sides of the issue -- fears that the press may compromise operational security of a military mission and fears that the military may exploit and use the "case-by-case" option in some of the recommendations to again exclude the press. These fears are well worth noting for the record, if only to say at some future time that there was little truth in any of them.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Jonathan Friendly, "Pentagon's Panel on Press Coverage to Meet," New York Times, 5 February 1984, p. 8L. For a related article, see Jonathan Friendly, "Panel to Review Curb on the Press," New York Times, 7 November 1983, p. A16.

[2]Jonathan Friendly, "Accord Asked on Reporting of U.S. Military Operations," New York Times, 11 January 1984, p. A10.

[3]Report of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Media-Military Relations Panel (Sidle Panel), Report released August 23, 1984, Major General (U.S. Army, retired) Winant Sidle, Chairman.

[4]Winant Sidle, "The Military and the Press: Is the Breach Worth Mending?" Army, February 1985, p. 22.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Sidle Panel Report, Introduction.

[7]Friendly, "Pentagon's Panel on Press Coverage to Meet."

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[10]"War Reporting Then and Now," America, vol. 150, no. 4, 4 February 1984, p. 62.

[11]"Text of Journalists' Joint Statement," New York Times, 11 January 1984, p. A10.

[12]"In Wake of Grenada Panel Favors Coverage," The Washington Post, 7 February 1984, p. D1.

[13]Facts on File (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1984), p. 93A2.

[14]"Strict Media Rules Opposed for Future Military Actions," The Washington Post, 7 February 1984, p. D1.

[15]Facts on File.

[16]Ibid.

[17]"Media Panel Suggests Pool for Future Battle Coverage," The Washington Post, 8 February 1984, p. A13.

[18]Facts on File, 8 February 1984, p. 93A2.

[19]Sidle, "The Military and the Press: Is the Breach Worth Mending?" p. 23.

[20]Sidle Panel Report, Cover letter to CJCS.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 7.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., p. 8.

[26]Sidle, "The Military and the Press: Is the Breach Worth Mending?"

[27]Sidle Panel Report, p. 8.

[28]Sidle, "The Military and the Press: Is the Breach Worth Mending?" p. 25.

[29]Sidle Panel Report, p. 8.

[30]Interview with Colonel (U.S. Army) Gary L. Werner, Commandant of the Defense Information School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, 13 November 1985.

[31]Sidle Panel Report, p. 9.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., p. 8.

[35]Ibid., p. 10.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., p. 11.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid., p. 12.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid., p. 13.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid., p. 14.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., p. 14-15.

[52]Ibid., p. 15.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid., p. 16.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Facts on File (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 9 February 1984), p. 93A2.

[57]News Release, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), 23 August 1984, No. 450-84. For a related article, see Janice Castro's "Peace Pact on War Coverage," Time, vol. 124, p. 73 and Jonathan Friendly's "News Media and Grenada Report is Due," New York Times, 3 June 1984, p. L33.

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[59]"Covering the Next War," The Washington Post, 31 August 1984, p. A20.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Richard Harwood, "Pact Reached on Media Pool to Cover Military Operations," The Washington Post, 11 October 1984, p. A1.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid., p. A7.

[64]"Pentagon Rules on Newspapers," The Washington Post, 30 November 1984, p. F1.

[65]Richard Harwood, "Pentagon to Add Reporter from Daily Paper to Pool," The Washington Post, 12 October 1984, p. A1.

[66]Ibid., p. A9.

[67]Ibid.

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# CHAPTER VI

## TESTING THE PRESS POOL

The press pool concept was tested twice by the Pentagon in 1985 -- once in April and again in September. The first test had its problems. There were leaks of the event before the Pentagon officially released word of the test and immediately accusing fingers were pointed in both directions. Some of the military said they knew all along that members of the press could not keep a secret. Media representatives, on the other hand, said the military may have conveniently leaked the information to ensure the pool test would fail. Equipment and filing capability for the press also contributed to the obstacles encountered during the first test.

Regardless of the issues surrounding the mishaps of the first test, the fact remains that both the military and the press had the initiative to take the first step towards implementing the recommendations of the Sidle Panel -- that of forming a national pool that could be notified and ready to accompany U.S. troops with minimum notice and preparation time before hand.

### Pool Procedures

Colonel Dante Camia has been the chief project officer in coordinating and implementing the Sidle Panel recommendations. During an interview in November 1985, Colonel Camia provided material that described the press pool operations as well as explained the objectives of the testing process and procedures.

When the pooling process was resolved, it was agreed the pool would contain members of the daily newspapers, the wire services, television, radio and the national magazines. The Department of Defense (DOD) presently maintains a list of participating agencies. Each agency in turn is responsible for providing DOD with two contacts that can be reached both during and after working hours.

Colonel Camia explained that the contacts in each organization are at high-enough levels to insure several things. First, they must be able to commit a representative without further internal or external notifications. This limitation on contacts is important so as to avoid compromising operational security. In addition these contacts, usually bureau chiefs, must also instruct their representatives on what equipment to use and what ground rules must be followed. Colonel Camia emphasized that the military has no interest in knowing who the pool correspondents are.

> We don't need to know. They need to know...All I need to know is that we have an organization that's participating (and) a point of contact that is well informed...(and) who assures me that their selected individuals, male or female, are ready to deploy.[1]

No formal procedure presently exists concerning the management of the press pool. However, Colonel Camia, DOD's expert on the subject, has developed an extensive file of information on the pool concept. The file incorporates the Sidle Panel report, as well as agendas, contact lists, planning criteria, sample press messages and after action reports. Colonel Camia said that most likely, after several repetitions of the pool test, the file will be put in a standard package.

As presently established, news agencies representing one of the five major news media -- radio, television, wire services, newspapers and national magazines -- are on alert for a three-to-four-month period.

After this period, a different representing group is selected. During the time they are "on-call," prospective pool members must be ready to participate in a pool exercise at any time. To help correspondents prepare themselves, DOD prepared a memorandum for the bureau chiefs, the subject of which was, "Suggested Items for Pool Reporters." In the memo, reporters were told that they will "experience the same conditions as troops," that they will be provided "military equipment such as canteens, web belts, ponchos and first aid kits," and that, "pool members are responsible for the rest of their gear."[2]

Reporters are also responsible for carrying their own equipment. Outfitting for the trip is much like that used for wilderness backpacking -- equipment that is even suggested for use.[3] The physical stamina needed to carry a sixty-plus pound pack is also a requirement. Colonel Camia emphasized the importance of over-all readiness:

> We want to make sure that these people are in the same physical shape as the escorts and...have the...equipment necessary to actually deploy and remain in the field with deployed military personnel. We can't afford nor can the deployed media afford a casualty because someone has slipped on a wet stone or simply that they cannot walk the distance that will be expected of them.[4]

Other items that need to be in order are passport and immunization records. A valid U.S. passport is an absolute. In its memorandum to bureau chiefs, DOD was also very specific concerning the types of shots needed and the documentation necessary for certification of vaccination. The memorandum also explained where these items could be obtained.

Specific operational security guidance is also provided for the DOD media pool members. The list of "Do's and Don'ts" is intended to help the notification process occur without alerting anyone outside the media pool. The list of media pool "Do's" tells correspondents:

1. Have worked out in advance what you are going to tell your family, close friends and co-workers about your absence (upon receiving the call requesting your presence as a DOD pool member.

2. Drive yourself, take a taxi or use another transportation system to get to assembly point without getting anyone else involved with your departure.

3. Have your equipment, clothing and other material needed for the deployment ready to go, but not in a place that would raise questions.

4. Make arrangements beforehand that will allow you to disappear with no significant disturbance in your work, neighborhood, and family.

5. Think hard about things you do or say that might be out of the ordinary or give indications/signals that you are doing something unusual. Could a good investigative reporter determine something unusual was going on?

6. Keep the fact you have been called away on the pool secret. Lives depend on your ability to do this.

7. Follow the ground rules and instructions given you by your Public Affairs Officer escort.[5]

The list of media pool "Do not's" is equally specific.[6] It tells correspondents "don't,"

1. Don't let your co-workers know you are in the DOD media pool.

2. Don't let the equipment you take with you give away that something "big" is going on.

3. Don't have a friend drive you to the assembly area. Don't call home until allowed to do so by the PAO escort. Don't use the telephone to notify your headquarters that the pool has been called away.

4. Don't be concerned if the story of your deployment is released in Washington, D.C., because it normally will be done that way. Remember your pool report will be the first on-scene report with information about the planning phase.

5. Don't let the clothes you pack signal where you are going. Have both warm and cold environment clothing in a location where they won't be missed.

6. Don't inadvertently talk about any information concerning your call-up, ultimate destination, etc.

Prior to departure media pool members are briefed by the escort PAO's for the operation. According to the test procedure, correspondents will not know whether the pool was called for a test or a real military operation. Escort officers tell pool correspondents, however, that they will be briefed on the operation as it progresses.

Correspondents are also briefed concerning the ground rules and operational procedures at their initial rendezvous point. The ground rules are hard and fast and correspondents have to acknowledge in writing that they will comply with the rules. If a reporter objects to going with the pool under these conditions, however, he or she is free to decline. They are asked not to tell anyone else about the operation, which, escort officers emphasize, is necessary to protect the safety of the operation, the troops and the remaining pool members.[7]

According to DOD, the ground rules are there to protect the operation and the troops involved while allowing "the greatest permissible freedom and access in covering the story..."[8] The ground rules tell correspondents:

> You may not mention to anyone the fact that the pool has been activated.
>
> You may not file stories or otherwise attempt to communicate with any individual about the operation until stories and all other material (film, sound bites, etc.) have been pooled with other media organizations. This pooling may take place at a briefing immediately following the operation or by filing from military or commercial communication facilities. You will be expected to brief other members of the press concerning your experiences at this briefing. (Detailed instructions on filing are provided at a later briefing.)
>
> You must remain with the escort officers at all times, until released -- and follow their instructions regarding your activities. These instructions are not intended to hinder your reporting and are given only to facilitate movement of the pool and ensure troop safety.
>
> Your participation in the pool indicates your understanding of these guidelines and your willingness to abide by them.

Administrative checks for the proper equipment, immunizations and passports are also accomplished at the rendezvous point. Correspondents complete an application for accreditation and are issued press badges and invitational travel orders, both important for identification purposes.[9]

The application for DOD accreditation collects demographic data, such as name, nationality, passport number, employer and the like on each reporter. In signing this form, the reporter confirms that he or she will abide by the ground rules and understands that violations can result in cancellation or suspension of accreditation.[10]

Pool Objectives

In planning for the test of the press pool, DOD developed specific objectives concerning media pools, which identify what is to be accomplished by establishing a media pool. The intentions of DOD are to ensure that information is made public through one of the most expeditious vehicles, possibly that of the media. This should calm the fears of those who believed the Pentagon would conveniently forget the press in future operations. The objectives are as follows:

> Support the goal of informing the public about DOD activities through the media.
>
> Provide the maximum amount of information, with minimum delay, which is consistent with operational security and troop safety.
>
> Provide that assistance to the media which is necessary for the professional performance of their owrk and which can only be provided by DOD.
>
> Maintain good relations with the public, Congress and the media.[11]

In addition to meeting the stated objectives, implementing a media pool for test purposes also exercises other components of the public affairs system. According to Colonel Camia, it tests the use of military communications for the filing of stories, the physical stamina requirements

of the correspondent, and determination of the newsworthiness of the event in relation to national security.

Colonel Camia explained that testing the media pool serves the additional benefit of training journalists and military members. He said that journalists have the opportunity to see DOD from a different perspective. They see troops in a realistic training environment. For the military, it is the best media relations training available because it is the most realistic. Colonel Camia explains:

> ...when you are out in the field commanding a battalion or company or a platoon and someone brings up the cameras, the microphones...and notebooks and are questioning what it is that you do in the field and (what) you can accomplish with your unit, that is the best media training that you could possibly get. It's better than DINFOS has in their "hotseat" training because we're talking real world media in a realistic,...simulated combat environment.[12]

## The Press Pool Test

In spite of the carefully planned operating procedures just described, the first test of the DOD media pool had its problems. Stories in the press described the shortfalls of the press pool test. Two of the weaknesses that DOD identified as a result of the first test were problems with secrecy and timely filing.

The first test of the pool included 10 reporters representing the Associated Press, United Press International, The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Mutual Radio, Newsweek magazine, and Copley Newspapers.[13]

Participants in the test acknowledged that breakdowns in communications were a problem. Apparently reports to Washington were delayed because Navy technicians were unable to make the telephones work aboard the helicopter carrier Nassau and because a teletype machine was busy with routine military message traffic.[14]

According to one report, television and radio correspondents were able to transmit their news with the assistance of reporters who were based in Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital. It is a convenience, according to one reporter, that may not be available in a war zone.[15]

The dispatches the military finally sent were transmitted, according to a New York Times report, "on an antiquated teletype machine aboard the Nassau, which transferred the messages to Western Union for overnight delivery."[16] This resulted in delays that were unacceptable to the media pool. The first dispatch arrived about twenty-one hours after it was written.

For more than two days reporters were told there was no communication equipment available for them.[17] According to Kim Willenson, in a Washington Journalism Review article, pool reporters later learned that troops were calling home every night from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. using an ERC-101 satellite telephone. They could dial any telephone in the United States. Reporters had been told that the ship had telephones, but that rules said they couldn't use them.[18]

One problem that contributed to the delay in timely filing was that the timing for the transmission of pool reports was thrown off when the Pentagon was forced to announce the pool test earlier than planned. Conflict arose at the test site between reporters who wanted to file a "real world" report and military who wished to continue with "pool test" scenario. According to the scenario, reporters flown in two days before H-Hour would not have filed stories until after H-Hour, the time the invasion started. Colonel Camia explained, that filing plans can be coordinated as required. In this case it was complicated by a conflict of interests. Apparently, guidelines for the press pool scenario did not

address whether reporters were free to report the "story" of their participation in the press pool, or whether they had to stick to the scenario and report on the military maneuvers which they were flown in to observe. This minsunderstanding may have contributed to delays in filing, yet it is one aspect not addressed in media reports of the first test.

Filing is of course a critical aspect of the pool process. If a reporter is on location, yet unable to file, then the benefit of access is reduced proportionately to the difficulty of filing. The press reports of the situation indicate that technical difficulties may have been compounded by escort officers who did not understand the importance of timely filing. Those who did not agree with Colonel Camia's position may have agreed with those who described escort officers as treating requests to file with "initially courteous indifference, and then hostile indifference."[19]

There were coordination problems as well that were said to have contributed to the breaches in security. Despite military requests to limit internal notifications, some additional personnel were alerted concerning the operation as a result of normal requests to establish communication requirements. For example, Bart Tassler, news director of the Mutual Radio Network at the time, called other radio networks the morning after the evening pool alert to notify them that they should arrange special telephone lines to receive a voice transmission from a Mutual reporter. The Pentagon said this tipped off other agencies and caused a flood of inquiries. Tassler said that arranging for telephone links had never been ruled out by the Pentagon and that the Pentagon had been informed about this notification arrangement, but had never responded.[20]

Another security problem may have occurred because the military

knew it was a practice test and did not enforce operational security procedures. The Washington editor of The New York Times, for example, drove his correspondent to the staging area and was allowed into the staging area without hindrance although he was not part of the pool.[21]

Despite the differences, reporters and Pentagon officials agreed that the pool remained a realistic method of allowing reporters to view initial operations. Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger remained committed to testing the pool concept, saying that this was a test and that it would be necessary to try again.[22] Michael I. Burch, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, promised a review of the pool test so that future operations would go smoothly. Burch said, "We have forgotten how to handle the press in the field since Vietnam."[23]

In an interview to discuss the press pool concept, Richard Halloran, a reporter for The New York Times, reflected on the problem of forgotten experience. He believes for the younger correspondent it is a matter of having to learn and not of having forgotten. Halloran recommended that prospective poolers talk with veteran war correspondents and ask them, "How do we communicate? How do we get the stuff out?" Halloran emphasized:

> The number one rule when you hit a new place, is to lay down a line of communication. That's also rule number two and rule number three, because the best story in the world is no good unless you can get it out of there.[24]

In response to the problems resulting from the first test General Sidle suggested the possibility of delaying the arrival of reporters until after the troops have landed and to consider mustering a pool without notifying the reporters' employers.[25]

In comparison to the first test, the second test of the pool was a success. According to Colonel Camia, where ten hours notification had

been allowed for the first test, only four hours was given the second time. The exercise time was reduced from five days for the first test to one day for the second. Having the exercise stateside instead of abroad eliminated the need to coordinate with the host nation for media access. These changes, according to Colonel Camia, helped improve the outcome of the mission. As Roy Gutman, a correspondent for Newsday and pool member on the second test, said, "The more modest effort was largely successful. The reporters were equipped, documented, on time and kept the secret."[26]

A twelve-person pool was used for the second test and was flown from the Washington, D.C., area to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The pool consisted of a UPI writer and photographer; an AP reporter; a reporter and color photographer from Time magazine; a reporter from Mutual Broadcasting; a reporter from Newsday, the Los Angeles Times and Newhouse; and a three-man TV crew from CNN.

The after-action report of the second test noted that although there were improvements, because of the "limited duration and scope of the exercise, the extent of improvement and whether similar improvement would be evident in an austere exercise area is uncertain."[27]

Colonel Camia acknowledged that there is a certain degree of artificiality in any test but that with each exercise more of this should be eliminated. Tests of the pool will continue, although not necessarily every quarter. Colonel Camia believes that tests like the second one are an adequate test of communications problems that may arise in a more remote area, such as that which the Honduras location of the first test provided, but also said more tests are planned.[28]

One of the benefits resulting from both tests of the pool is that filing problems have been addressed. Service communications procedure

regulations are being reviewed so as to give media pool traffic a higher priority for message processing, which should reduce filing time through military channels.[29]

Public affairs officers have also been instructed to be ready to host media pools any time and have been reminded that "reasonable access to key command and staff personnel is essential."

> Pools offer a rare opportunity to demonstrate conclusively our material readiness and just how good our soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen are...Commanders should view pool deployments as opportunities rather than burdens.[30]

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Interview with Colonel Dante Camia, U.S. Army, Director of Plans, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Washington, D.C., 4 November 1985.

[2]Memorandum from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), subject: Suggested Items for Pool Reporters (Washington, D.C.)

[3]Ibid.

[4]Camia, interview.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., ground rules memorandum.

[8]Ibid., airport briefing checklist for pool reporters.

[9]Ibid., application for DOD accreditation.

[10]Ibid., DOD media pool objectives.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Bill Keller, "Pentagon Says Secret Press Plan Went Awry," New York Times, 23 April 1985, p. A13.

[13]Bill Keller, "Pentagon Test on News Coverage Hurt by Communication Lapses," New York Times, 27 April 1985.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Jonathan Alter, Kim Willenson and Ann McDaniel, "The Pentagon Tests the Press," Newsweek, vol. 55, no. 18, 6 May 1985, p. 29.

[17]Kim Willenson, "Frolic in Honduras: The Pentagon Press Pool SNAFU," Washington Journalism Review (April 1985):17-20.

[18]Keller, "Pentagon Test on News Coverage Hurt by Communication Lapses."

[19]Bill Keller, "Weinberger Said to Back Press Despite Test," New York Times, 24 April 1985, p. A11.

[20]Alex S. Jones, "Pentagon's Press Plan: Balancing Two Sides," New York Times, 24 April 1985 (news analysis).

[21]Keller, "Weinberger Said to Back Press Despite Test."

[22]Ibid.

[23]Interview with Richard Halloran, Washington correspondent, New York Times, Washington, D.C., 1 November 1985.

[24]Keller, Weinberger Said to Back Press Despite Test."

[25]Roy Gutman, "Military-News Test Passes Muster," Newsday, 20 September 1985.

[26]Camia, interview, newspaper pool report.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid. (After ActionReport, message from the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C., to: AIG 8777 and others, subject: Public Affairs - Media Pool After Action Report, Message Number 071329Z, October 1985).

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

## CHAPTER VII

## PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA-MILITARY RELATIONS

Pentagon correspondents, military officials and Department of Defense representatives were interviewed this fall as an integral part of the research for this thesis. Correspondents who covered the Pentagon or who were involved in reporting military issues were selected for interviewing. Military personnel who worked with the Sidle Panel, who were responsible for implementing the panel recommendations, or whose primary duties involved Public Affairs issues were selected for interviews.

The seven correspondents interviewed as part of the thesis research were:

Millard Barger - Associate Editor, Armed Forces Journal

Norman Black - Pentagon Correspondent, Associated Press

Fred Francis - Pentagon Correspondent, NBC News

Roy Gutman - Washington Correspondent, Newsday

Richard Halloran - Washington Correspondent, The New York Times

Fred Hiatt - Washington Correspondent, The Washington Post

Dean Reynolds - Pentagon Correspondent, ABC News

The Department of Defense and military personnel interviewed and identified in this chapter are:

Major General Charles D. Bussey: Chief, Army Public Affairs

Major General Winant Sidle (U.S. Army, retired): Chairman of the Sidle Panel and presently Director of Public Relations for the Marietta Corporation

Robert B. Sims: Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs

Colonel William F. Smullen, III: Chief, Media Relations Branch, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs

Colonel Gary L. Werner: Commandant, Defense Information School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana.

The interviews were arranged over a two-month period and were then conducted during a two-week period during October and November 1985. The Army provided the funding for this research which exemplifies their commitment to act on and support initiatives to improve media-military relations.

Everyone who was asked agreed to an interview. Each person was asked questions concerning the press pool concept, media access to military conflicts and media-military relations. Although an hour of time was requested, each person interviewed was more than generous with his time and each was spontaneous, insightful and professional in responding to the questions. A wealth of information was obtained and the transcription of the tapes resulted in a file almost equal in volume to this thesis. A complete review of each interview would require more time and space than can be allotted in this project, therefore, only portions of the interviews which highlight the topic areas identified above have been isolated and incorporated in this section.

## The Correspondents' Perspectives

Accuracy, objectivity and timeliness sum up the responses from seven correspondents to the question, "What ideal should a correspondent strive to achieve in covering military actions?"[1] Across the board, correspondents believed these traits to be essential to the reporting process. Each, in his own words, described a commitment to telling the American people about what government was doing with their resources,

equipment and soldiers.

They also agreed that it is necessary that the news provide perspective on the issues being addressed. Pentagon correspondent for NBC News, Fred Francis, said, in covering the war, it is important that viewers at home realize what they see, hear and read is just one part of the big picture called, "the war." Correspondents need to help them see that, and as Francis emphasized, they need to "report with taste."[2]

Richard Halloran, correspondent for The New York Times, like Francis, believes consideration in reporting the facts is important. Halloran went on to explain that although the ideals or objectives of a war correspondent are really no different from that of a reporter covering anything else, however, there is something different about covering military action. Halloran does not advocate hiding the carnage of war but emphasizes that reporters must have some sensitivity to the particulars of war reporting.

> ...we are talking about a unique human endeavor if you will. I just think you have to have some understanding of not only the facts and the perspective, but the emotions that are caught up in this thing -- the fears... People go out there and die, for crying out loud, and they die horribly. And I think to try and hide that, or to somehow or other gloss it over, is just dead wrong. On the other hand, (reporting has) to be done with some sensitivity about Johnny Jones. His mother, Mary Jones, or his wife, Suzy Jones, at home have to be taken into account.[3]

Developing the perspective of a story was important to each of the correspondents interviewed. Associate Editor for the Armed Forces Journal, Millard Barger, emphasized that reading, talking to other people and gaining a perspective were necessary before you could write a story. Barger explained:

> ...how else can you have a fair and accurate story unless you are willing to learn about it...A lot of people say we are controversial and we obviously are, because we try to have a forum

> for a lot of different ideas and different ideas to a lot of people mean controversy. But, how can you have fair, accurate and informative stories without being informed yourself?[4]

Correspondents were also asked to describe their organizations' philosophy in dealing with the military. In accounting for their record of covering the military, reporters responded candidly. Francis said, "there are no hidden agendas," nor is the press trying to undermine government in any manner. He explained that the media have shown they are willing to cooperate with the military by participating in tests of the Department of Defense media pool -- a voluntary media effort.

Correspondent for the Washington Post, Fred Hiatt, described his newspaper's efforts to give readers "more of a flavor of what military life is about."[5] The Post and The New York Times, for example, have run stories about people in the military. These stories help readers learn about the soldiers and their units and show the reader that the military involves more than defense spending issues.

Correspondents were also asked whether the credibility gap between the media and military was growing. They were asked what the trend was in military-media relations, in the aftermath of Grenada, and in light of the Sidle Panel and Battle Lines reports. Correspondents were in agreement that the management of the public affairs planning for the Grenada operation and the media's response released a lot of hostility. As Francis said, Grenada was the "zenith" for military-media relations -- animosity between the two factions could not have been any worse than at that point. It represented the height of expressed antagonism between the two.

Associated Press Pentagon correspondent, Norman Black, agreed that the one act of excluding the press did much to poison the atmosphere immediately following the incident.[6] Black explained that the "issue was

not one of battlefield censorship. The issue was whether there was going to be anyone there to censor in the first place." Black said the military needs to work on guidelines for the press but cannot operate on the assumption that the press can be excluded. He said, "History is very clear on what happens vis-a-vis censorship, but you'll always find a reporter there to censor until Grenada."

Hiatt said that this administration has worked harder to control the flow of news and that the information that is released seems slanted to further government initiatives. Hiatt acknowledges that "more details than ever about Soviet military forces," are available but that for a well-informed public, information about other government programs, actions and initiatives need to be as readily available.

Halloran believes that Grenada released a lot of hostility and that since the conflict between the press and the military, he has been invited to several military, senior service colleges to address media-military issues. Halloran said, "a dialogue has been established, (and) although not all the problems are solved at least both sides are grappling with the issues."

Newsday Washington correspondent Roy Gutman was not as optimistic regarding the trend. He indicated there are still press conferences that waste the time of the press. These briefings damage government's credibility because no useful information is put out. Instead, as Gutman explained, correspondents are subjected to material which is "rehashed and rewarmed."[7]

Dean Reynolds, Pentagon correspondent for ABC News, voiced a related problem. In their report, members of the Sidle Panel expressed a concern that Public Affairs officers were not being kept informed by their com-

manders because of their close liaison with the media. Reynolds explained that even though the panel addressed the problem, "Public Affairs officers don't have a clue to what's going on and specifically because they talk to the press, they are cut off."[8]

When asked about the press pool concept, correspondents were sure that news from the press pool would be shared, however, they raised several issues concerning the advantages and disadvantages of using a pool to cover military actions. Hiatt indicated that a test of the pool versus using the pool in a real combat mission, with its inherent mission security risks, are two vitally different situations which may require equally different responses from the military.

Hiatt doesn't believe it is entirely wrong for the press to be excluded from an operation until that point where mission security is no longer critical. He explained that, "the press doesn't have security clearances, isn't part of the government and is taking some risk when it agrees to be part of some secret operation in a hostile environment." Hiatt did not imply that the press was unwilling to assume the risk of going into a hostile environment. He said he would like to see, at the minimum, that the military include the press after secrecy is no longer a factor. Hiatt agrees that the present tests of the pool concept, although not in total agreement with his perspective, are worth the effort. Hiatt said, "I think it is a good thing that the press and the military are willing to try it."

Francis believes a major problem with the press pool concept is timely filing and that, "the person who's controlling the pool (must also have) an appreciation of what our broadcast needs are. That was not demonstrated in the first (test) at all." Francis also indicated that a

more vigorous test of filing procedures would probably be accomplished if the pool were tested in a more remote location than Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Gutman said that the press notification procedure is an area which requires further discussion and indicated a balance must be struck between two much and too little notification time. The problem with too little time is that correspondents may not be able to meet the established rendezvous time. An inadvertent security violation is a more serious problem which may arise with excess advance notification.

Like Hiatt, Gutman suggests that perhaps a solution is to take reporters in on the second wave. A reporter's job is to research the facts and report them. He emphasized that if bound by the ground rules he would not report before allowed, but if not part of the group he would have to be as equally committed to researching what was going on. Gutman explained it is the nature of correspondents to be inquisitive.

> If somebody remains incommunicado for long enough everyone wants to know where the guy is...if there is tension somewhere and if there (are) other signs, people begin to put it together. I would start phoning around, making quite an effort. It is going to be inevitable.

Halloran was very emphatic in saying that the topic of pool coverage has been greatly overdone. According to Halloran, "a pool...should have a life of about twelve hours maybe twenty-four." He strongly contends that the pool has a very limited and specific mission.

> I think...some of the people have somehow gotten the idea that a pool is supposed to continue on for a long time and be the channel of communication between forces in the field and the people back home. No. It is to take care of a contingency at a very precise time, at a very precise place and then it's gone.

Correspondents, therefore, were in general agreement that the pool concept would work and that it was worth testing. As Halloran mentioned,

limiting the pool to a specific function and life span has not been emphasized enough in discussions and articles about the pool concept. Some agreed that correspondents may not necessarily need to arrive in the first wave. All agreed that the military, the American public and the media would benefit from military efforts to ensure media access to future operations.

Improved transportation to remote parts of the world and advancements in satellite transmission technology will make controlling access in the future more difficult and will also render the pool concept feasible for only shorter periods. Francis said these advances have to be addressed because the technology is available which now makes it possible to transmit from anywhere in the world. The problem with transmissions using satellite technology, is that enemy forces can pick up the same transmissions sent back to U.S. stations for editing. Francis warned that technology has advanced far beyond conventional thinking on how to control it.

Overall, however, correspondents think that ground rules have worked in the past and will continue to work in the future even as the communication environment becomes more fluid. They also agreed that if a reporter were to gain access to a "media-controlled" activity, although not a member of a pool, that "common sense," should be the guide in determining whether publishing information about the event would be detrimental to U.S. forces or American interests.

Hiatt emphasized that the circumstances surrounding the Grenada operation "are unlikely to repeat themselves in terms of having an island from which U.S. Navy ships can repel invading journalists. It is more likely that in future conflicts, Hiatt explained, that reporters will be able to gain access to the area without military assistance. In light of

these possibilities, developing a more cooperative attitude now is essential.

The Military and Department of Defense's Perspective

During interviews this fall, Department of Defense and military representatives were candid and specific in their comments concerning media relations. The current Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Robert B. Sims, was one of the people interviewed. Sims said that current government policy supports the principle, that to be effective, government must communicate its goals to the American public. Sims said that there is probably no stronger a proponent making that case than Secretary Weinberger.[9]

Sims emphasized that the responsibility for telling the military's story does not rest on his office alone. The public affairs officer in the field has the very important job of acting as liaison between government and the American public. Sims stressed that, "In order to communicate they (public affairs officers) have to be active, creative (and) sometimes aggressive in taking initiatives." Sims said this means that public affairs officers have to "be very professional, starting with being honest and open to the extent that they can, given the national security aspects of what we are doing."

General Sidle was equally as strong an advocate for developing press relations.[10] He emphasized that "at the top level and in a lot of lower levels" as well, more of an effort should be made to "get out and meet with the editorial boards of all the different types of media."

Sims believes that the so-called "adversarial" relationship between government and the media may be exaggerated. He said that his experience has been one of cooperation more than adversity." Sims acknowledged,

however, that there are,

> ...a lot of officers who have ideas about the press, don't like what they see in newspapers, on television and think there is some kind of cabal out there that is working against them. They need to know more about how the newspapers, television, and so forth, work, what they're trying to do and how they do it.

Colonel Werner, Commandant of the Defense Information School at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, said that in "the corps of Public Affairs officers, in all the services, we are rapidly losing experience in working with the press in combat situations."[11] He suggested that professional development programs can start as early as pre-commissioning to expose officers to the purpose and usefulness of a public affairs program. Werner said that training in different aspects of public affairs responsibilities, such as command information, public affairs in combat, or media relations, would help a soldier meet public affairs responsibilities throughout his or her career.

Sims said, that like other professions, the journalism profession is being filled by young people who have no understanding of the military. Sims believes that the orientation trips available for journalists are beneficial, "not (as) briefings, not to look at ships and planes, and so forth, but to actually see people perform their duties." According to Sims, it is essential that reporters "find out what kind of people we have serving in the military, why they are there, and what they are capable of doing."

Colonel Werner explained that training, especially with the media pools, will help inexperienced war correspondents prepare themselves for the war reporting. Werner said that some correspondents need to get away from the "zero defects syndrome" because even the best laid plans can go awry in the heat of battle. Werner explained.

> The thing I would like to get across to folks is not only "war is hell," but war is imprecise, unsurgical. Unlike the theorizing of the political scientists and armchair tacticians and strategists, war is unpredictable. War is full of intangibles and nothing goes according to plan.

Werner made it clear that the correspondent who reports with the intention of identifying how well a commander "follows a plan," will indeed miss the essense of the story. It is important, according to Werner, to capture the chaos of battle and to report this -- not necessarily as a flaw -- but as the reality of war.

Battle Lines: The Twentieth Century Fund's Task Force on the Military and the Media is one report published in the aftermath of Grenada by media representatives. The report asked the Department of Defense to emphasize the importance of both civilian and military public affairs personnel. When asked if this was being done, Sims responded that Weinberger has been very clear. In his meetings with senior leadership in the services and the department, Weinberger has said that he wants to have the very best people possible serving in public affairs assignments. As Weinberger's representative, Sims has said the same thing and has made a point to tell secretaries of each of the services that the qualities of people going into public affairs assignments are very important.

Two Army initiatives to develop media-military relations are worth mentioning at this point. They are especially noteworthy because they actively seek to establish more effective contacts with media representatives, they are enthusiastically received by military and press participants and they are programs which have the support of the Public Affairs hierarchy.

The Army's Public Affairs branch developed and presently teaches a Senior Communicator Workshop. General Bussey, the Army's Chief of Public

Affairs, says the workshop is a very effective means through which Army general officers and senior Department of the Army civilians learn about media relations.[12] In a one-on-one, three to four hour session, students experience "mock" media interviews. They practice several public speaking formats such as speaking in a talk show, giving a speech or participating in a "hostile" interview. Participants are videotaped, and then critiqued.

General Bussey has found that people are "hungry" for the opportunity to learn about how to be more effective in dealing with the media. He believes that everyone who participates in the course moves up at least one notch in their communication abilities. General Bussey said that very poor communicators become at least average and said, "if someone came in there as basically a good communicator, they left as excellent."

Where the strength of this program is in preparing its participants for future contacts with the media, the next program capitalizes on exposing senior military officials to media representatives. The results of the latter program have been an exchange of ideas that benefits both parties.

The Army's Media Relations Branch, under the direction of Colonel William F. Smullen, is coordinating the program whereby senior military officials "meet the press." Under Colonel Smullen's direction meetings between senior Army officers and editorial boards of various press staffs across the nation are coordinated. The program is especially beneficial, according to Colonel Smullen, because officers who may have been reluctant to talk to the press learn about the advantages of a well-orchestrated public relations program. Colonel Smullen emphasized that this program is effective because it has the support of the Army Chief of Staff and senior public affairs officials.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]The seven correspondents interviewed as part of the thesis research were: Millard Barger, Associate Editor, Armed Forces Journal; Norman Black, Pentagon Correspondent, Associated Press; Fred Francis, Pentagon Correspondent, NBC News; Roy Gutman, Washington Correspondent, Newsday; Richard Halloran, Washington Correspondent, The New York Times; Fred Hiatt, Washington Correspondent, The Washington Post; Dean Reynolds, Pentagon Correspondent, ABC News.

[2]Personal interview with Fred Francis, Pentagon Correspondent, NBC News, Washington, D.C., 30 October 1985. Direct quotes by Francis throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[3]Personal interview with Richard Halloran, Washington Correspondent, The New York Times, Washington, D.C., 1 November 1985. Direct quotes by Halloran throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[4]Personal interview with Millard Barger, Associate Editor, Armed Forces Journal, Washington, D.C., 1 November 1985. Direct quotes by Barger throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[5]Personal interview with Fred Hiatt, Washington Correspondent, The Washington Post, Washington, D.C., 28 October 1985. Direct quotes by Hiatt throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[6]Personal interview with Norman Black, Pentagon Correspondent, Associated Press, Washington, D.C., 30 October 1985. Direct quotes by Black throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[7]Personal interview with Roy Gutman, Washington Correspondent, Newsday, Washington, D.C., 29 October 1985. Direct quotes by Gutman throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[8]Personal interview with Dean Reynolds, Pentagon Correspondent, ABC News, Washington, D.C., 30 October 1985. Direct quotes by Reynolds throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[9]The people identified in this portion of the chapter are: Major General Charles D. Bussey, Chief, Army Public Affairs; Major General Winant Sidle (U.S. Army, retired), Chairman of the Sidle Panel and presently Director of Public Relations for the Marietta Corporation; Robert B. Sims, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs; Colonel William F. Smullen, III, Chief, Media Relations Branch, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs; Colonel Gary L. Werner, Commandant, Defense Information School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana.

[10]Personal interview with Robert B. Sims, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, Washington, D.C., 5 November 1985. Direct quotes by Sims throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[11]Personal interview with Major General Winant Sidle (U.S. Army, retired), Chairman of the Sidle Panel and Director of Public Relations, Marietta Corporation, Washington, D.C., 12 November 1985. Direct quotes by Sidle throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[12]Personal interview with Colonel Gary L. Werner, Commandant, Defense Information School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, 12 November 1985. Direct quotes by Werner throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[13]Personal interview with Major General Charles D. Bussey, Chief, Army Public Affairs, Washington, D.C., 5 November 1985. Direct quotes by Bussey throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

[14]Personal interview with Colonel William F. Smullen, III, Chief, Media Relations Branch, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C., 29 October 1985. Direct quotes by Smullen throughout the remainder of the chapter are excerpts from this interview.

# CHAPTER VIII

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of the closing comments in this chapter is to focus on some issues requiring further discussion. The comments will address the military's handling of the press during the Grenada operation and its efforts since then to improve procedures for including the media in future combat operations.

It remains a question why the press was so poorly planned for during the Grenada operation. In general, it appears that the military was rusty in coordinating the public affairs requirements for a combat operation. The experienced people and the ever-present, institutionalized directive (whether it be a regulation, field manual or the like), were not present. Other than those arguments, however weak, there was no justification for how the press was mismanaged.

One of the better things to occur as a result of the falling-out, however, is that the Department of Defense was forced to police itself in the area of media-military relations. A planning cell of three officers is now activated by the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the event of another immediate, military operation. In a separate but related action, the Army's Chief of Public Affairs is developing and implementing two new manuals which will address policy and procedure for public affairs activities in the field. Previously there were no such formal directives.

It is evident that two years after Grenada, the military remains

committed, at least in the Public Affairs channels, to actively pursuing a means of improving media-military relations. Media seminars are planned by the Army and Navy War Colleges. It was also evident among the military officials interviewed that to make the initiatives work, the support for driving the initiatives to the grass roots level has to come from the top levels of government. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Robert Sims, received on numerous occasions during the course of the interviews for this project, unsolicited praise for his support of initiatives designed to further media-military relations.

One of the issues brought to light, when considering the lack of press management in the Grenada operation, is how quickly the lessons of previous administrations were forgotten. The consistent turnaround of personnel in government, both military and civilian, make this sure to happen. It is the nature of the organizational beast.

So the question is, "How can we be sure that the lessons learned are in fact learned?" During the interviews for this project, the subject was raised several times that the journalism profession and military alike have inexperienced personnel. The initiative, drive and desire to perform well are there, but the experience factor is missing.

The one suggestion that surfaced most, in response to this problem, is the need to educate the participants. Through the media pool tests, media seminars and related efforts, journalists learn about the military. Both in the classroom environment of the seminar and through the field experience of the media pool exercise, the journalist sees the military from a perspective that the Pentagon environment alone cannot provide.[1]

Two cautions at this point. It is short-sighted to imply that only correspondents with military background will be able to cover military

actions with the proper perspective. This is not so. Instead, an active interest in the subject matter -- a desire to report with depth, accuracy, objectivity and balance -- are more important.

Second, any efforts by government to expose correspondents to the military must be devoid of propaganda, eyewash or efforts to sell. As Colonel Werner said in his interview this fall, "Every effort through this whole program ought to be unpersuasive. In other words, there should be no -- either apparent or underhanded -- attempt to persuade them to "Love thy Soldier."

For government participants, education provides the continuum for consistency, especially necessary in the cyclical pattern of government personnel turnovers. Without an established forum for exchanging ideas on a regular basis, it appears government will be forced in each iteration to relearn lessons past. The value of learning the lessons of history is as applicable to the strategy of public affairs as it is to the strategy of war. But more than cost involved in "re-inventing the wheel," is the fact that there is no need for this trial and error process to occur.

The recommendations of the Sidle Panel have been implemented, tested, revised and tested again. Specific procedures have been implemented to insure that public affairs planning occurs hand in hand with operational planning. There are some areas within the panel's comments, however, that warrant further investigation by the Department of Defense.

First, the panel report was specific in addressing the need for commanders to take public affairs officers into their confidence. The panel's report said that there was a prevailing sentiment that "talking to the Public Affairs officer was tantamount to talking to the press."

The implication of this statement is obvious -- there is still a reluctance on the part of some commanders to become involved with the media. It is one problem that has numerous, deep-seated reasons for existing, some of which have been identified in the preceding chapters of this paper. The most commonly cited one, however, is the self-perpetuating myth of a "previously, poorly covered war."

The problem is that this reluctance to incorporate the Public Affairs officer as a vital staff member, and the myth that media can only damage government efforts, continue to exist today. Press representatives and senior government and military personnel recognize that these sentiments continue to influence some commanders in the field.

This results in an inconsistency in the overall military drive to improve media-military relations and, consequently, some Public Affairs officers are not as well informed as they should be. They subsequently lose their credibility with the press which further reduces effectiveness. Commanders, at this point, have reason to doubt their public affairs officer's ability.

Again, education is one way out of this ineffective circle. The senior command must be made aware of the importance of a good Public Relations program. And, as successful Public Affairs officers in the field say again and again, it is equally the Public Affairs Officer's responsibility, as it is the commanders', to develop this awareness. The good Public Affairs Officer has to make him or herself accessible and indispensable to the commander. He or she must manage both internal and external command information and serve as an early warning system for the command, which allows the commander to keep his or her finger on the pulse of civilian community issues.

The military Public Affairs officer is aided in the performance of this duty by the very nature of the Army's dual-specialty, career progression system. The commander has an officer, who is not only familiar with the intricacies of the public affairs program, but knows the perspective of at least one other specialty. More important than whether an officer has combat arms experience or not, however, is that the Public Affairs officer is a "green suiter," and as such, is equally committed to the Army's overall mission.[2]

Another area requires additional inspection. The literature and interviews suggest that more specific objectives need to be established for addressing the implications of technological advancements on the question of media access to military conflicts. One concern is that transmissions intended for the United States can be picked up by enemy forces. These transmissions may contain information that inadvertently gives mission sensitive information to the enemy. The Sidle Panel recommended meetings with representatives of the broadcast media to discuss this problem and there is indication that these meetings have occurred. There is no reference in the literature, however, whether specific recommendations have been made or how this will be handled in the future.

A reference was made in the same report concerning the decision to allow foreign correspondents -- working with American news agencies -- to participate in the Department of Defense media pool. It was agreed that this would be decided on a case-by-case basis. The problem os such a nebulous status like, "case-by-case," is that it is too easily pushed aside in the critical planning for a real operation. Precise guidelines will be easier to follow in future planning efforts.

Some of the comments in this respect, also suggest the possibility

of using reporters "on the ground" to insure immediate access for reporters. One aspect concerning the reporter "on the ground" that has not surfaced in these readings is how foreign correspondents will be incorporated into the media pool, or will they? Both these issues do not, as of yet, have clear cut responses.

The idea of using reporters "on the ground" to expedite access brings forth another issue that may require further examination -- whether or not immediate access is necessary. Immediate access -- coming in with the first wave of soldiers during a military operation -- was sometimes questioned by reporters. The point made during the interviews for this project, however, was not that the media could not be trusted. Instead the question that was asked was whether it was necessary. More important to correspondents was that the military was actively working on how to include the press in future combat operations.

Future operations may need to be carried out with the same expediency and secrecy of the Grenada operation. Just as the average citizen is not involved in the immediate planning of a sensitive operation, some people have questioned the feasibility of letting outsiders, such as the media, participate in the planning process. After all, there is a difference between testing a media pool versus implementing it for a real operation where security is essential. Perhaps the military needs to rethink when it is really necessary to include the press at "H-hour."

This is not an argument against media pools and it cannot be emphasized enough that this is not to be construed as a ticket for excluding the press at the discretion of the ground commander. It is to say that the issue of immediacy may have been over-emphasized in the initial studies. What remains absolutely essential, however, is that coordination

to include the media as soon as possible must be considered during operational planning. If necessary, when security is no longer a factor, the press must be allowed access to the area of operation.

One additional area warrants further emphasis and that concerns the life-span of the pool. The pool should be seen as a temporary fixture, activated as an expedient resource for a specific purpose. This "life-span" may be prolonged if the media are dependent on the military for logistical support, such as filing, lodging or mess requirements. Under such circumstances the military would be justified in limiting press access until such time that the local economy can accommodate media members.

As of Fall 1985, the record looks good on both sides. The media and the military are, in the words of correspondent Richard Halloran, "grappling with the issues." However, both parties are far from that point where no more improvements can be made, so the initiatives must continue. Only time will determine the success or failure of these efforts.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Alan Hooper argues in his book about the Falkland crises that the lack of military experience on the part of journalists made it increasingly more difficult for exacerbated relations between the military and the press. Alan Hooper, The Military and the Media (London: Gower, 1982).

[2]Army public affairs officers are very likely to have had significant experience in combat arms, combat service support, or some other specialty because they follow a dual track professional development path beginning with their eighth year of commissioned service. See Lowndes F. Stephens, "The Professional Orientation of Military Public Affairs Officers," Public Relations Quarterly 23 (Fall 1978):19-24.

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